

## Assessing the Effect of Commercial Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Service on Youth Empowerment in Gusau Metropolis of Zamfara State

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### Abstract

The study sought to relate commercial laundry business to youth empowerment in Gusau metropolis of Zamfara State. A total population sampling of 50 respondents was used because the researchers want to minimize sampling error and obtain a highly accurate in-depth picture of the study population. The research study covered 12 commercial laundry and dry-cleaning businesses as a case study. There were a structured questionnaire of research questions and some variables deemed necessary to determine if there exist any relationship between the two variables under study. A mean statistical technique was adopted to analyze data generated. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between laundry business specially to include training sections with youth empowerment by making them self-reliant, creating jobs, entrepreneurship skills etc, for wealth creation to eliminate hunger and reduce poverty. It was recommended that the state's NDE should include laundry skill training in their youth empowerment programs.

**Keywords:** *Commercial, Laundry, Youth, Empowerment, Apprenticeship and skill*

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### **Background to the Study**

Commercializing laundry with apprenticeship programs is a sure way to youth empowerment as it offers opportunity for direct employment, self-reliance, job -ready skills, and entrepreneurial skills, reduction of poverty among other benefits to young people in Zamfara state at large and Gusau in particular. Laundry in its narrow sense has to do with washing of clothes and textiles and more broadly, it cuts across dyeing, ironing of those materials as well as folding them. Sri (2017) defined laundry as part of housekeeping which is responsible for washing all linen both house laundry and guest laundry. NAICS (2022) categorized laundry and dry cleaning under personal and household services and it includes establishments primarily engaged in providing “laundry services (e.g. washing, and drying clothing and linens) dry cleaning services, linen supply, and uniform rental.” Similarly, OECD (2021) sees the industry as “a segment of the service sector offering care solutions to consumers and businesses, employing both manual and automated cleaning techniques often involving eco-friendly and industrial goods solvents for delicate materials”. Commercial laundry and dry-cleaning service entails all activities involving cleaning of all kinds for the purpose of making money. This could be cleaning for individuals or for corporate organizations. Sri (2017) and Coco (2025) described commercial laundry as “specialized facilities or businesses where industrial washing machines and tumble dryers are operated by professional employees providing laundry services on a larger scale, primarily serving businesses and institutions like hospitals, restaurants, hotels, etc. with constant need for clean linens, uniforms rather than individual customers.” Knezevic (2023) and Nadialesa (2025) described entrepreneurship in laundry as a sure way out of financial hardship pointing out the benefits to operators and business customers such as time and cost saving, increased efficiency, cost effectiveness solutions, consistent quality, etc. The lucrative and profitability nature of commercial laundry offers operators a source of livelihood in a time of financial crisis as this period in Nigeria, making it a saving grace and source of empowerment for unemployed youth in Gusau Zamfara state who would want to save him or herself from hardship and financial embarrassment.

Youth empowerment is all about inducting the young minds into a life sustaining occupation to enable them fight challenges of life. Edupadi (2025) and UN (2020), defined youth empowerment as “a process where people gain the ability and authority to make informed decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people. Youth refers to the period between childhood and adulthood. The UN (2025) general assembly defined youth as “those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. ILO (2020) sees youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 29 years for labour market analysis. The Nigeria National Youth and Sports Development and the African youth charter which Nigeria aligns with use ages 15-35 years.

Empowerment may be seen as the process of gaining personal power, confidence, skills and autonomy to control one's life, make choices and positively influence one's environment. It is the impartation of laboural skills and sensitivity to an able bodied, mentally fit person or a group of individuals to enable them participate in harnessing and distributing economic and social resources for meaningful self-benefits and improvement of the society. The year 2025

report on SDGs for 2030 agenda stated “SDGs have improved millions of lives yet progress has been fragile and unequal. Millions still face extreme poverty, hunger, etc.” Marginalized communities, people living with disabilities, women and youths continued to face systematic disadvantages.

Onweh, Akpan and Celeb (2022) stated that youths “constitute a significant proportion of populations globally yet, many lack opportunities for productive employment and decent livelihood”. Narrowing the youth population down to Zamfara state whose capital city is of particular interest in this study. Zamfara state has quite a large number of young people above 70% of the entire population. According to Platform (2024) the present governor of Zamfara state, His Excellency Governor Dauda Lawal Dare said “70% of our 6 million people are idle young men and women. This is what I inherited as the governor.” Going by the quote of the governor, it means that the larger part of Zamfara state population are wallowing in hunger and poverty due to unemployment and lack of steady source of income which leads these youths into taking hard drugs, committing unimaginable crime and social vices (sexual molestation of girls and women by armed bandits, killing of farmers, kidnapping of individuals, school children and demanding ransom as well as political thuggery”. This is where commercialization of laundry and dry-cleaning service with apprenticeship training comes in. This study attempts to X-ray the opportunities embedded in the laundry industry and how it can impact youths in Gusau; and turn their lives around for good for a more peaceful society and sustainable development in the state.

Commercial laundry offers youths huge entrepreneurial benefits owing to the fact that there is little or no barrier to entry in the laundry business, allows youths to start their own ventures with relatively low capital and within a short time build up to a scalable model and to digital integration. Most of them operate from home or rent small shops with used equipment. Commercial laundry business empowers Gusau youths making them self-reliant through entrepreneurship, business management skills, etc. to reduce poverty level. Daily Trust (2008) cited in All-Africa (2025) said that poverty can be alleviated through laundry business and production of soap. A case study of Murjanatu Mohammed Abba. Poverty reduction refers to measures put in place to alleviate the rate of poverty especially in the rural areas. Commercializing laundry and dry-cleaning services in Gusau, offer benefits such as high demand from busy professionals and growing urban populations, thereby offering operators high source of income generation, steady cash flow, relatively low labour cost especially with Laundromats. Avian (2024) declared that “Laundromat business is lucrative and profitable. Within the space of 6 months, can achieve about 85% of the projected revenue in the first quarter.” The story of two CEOs cited in Oneli and Iloani (2020) is proof that commercial laundry is one of the fastest businesses that can eliminate poverty. Mr. Mohammed the CEO of unique laundry Kubwa Abuja said “I started the business little in 2009 but as at now, I have branches in different locations here in Abuja with more than five employees. Through it shackles of poverty are broken in my life and family.” Likewise, the CEO of Decent Laundry Apo, Abuja also cited in Oneli and Iloani (2020) declared “some years back I thought I would end up on the street because I had no university degree but through hard work in the laundry business my social status changed for good. I started a laundry business in 2016 with N150,000 but presently I am racking in millions”.

Commercializing laundry with apprenticeship programs hardly comes to mind when youth empowerment is discussed but it is one of the surest ventures that can break the shackles of poverty in families and in young people. Adeyemi and Salako (2019) opine that commercial laundry requires “basic vocational training and minimal formal education making them attractive to under-skilled youths”. Potentials of young people in Gusau, could be unlocked with a mix of technical and transferable skills essential for career development in the laundry sector. Sri (2017), asserts that laundry service workers engage in physically and mentally demanding tasks, like sorting, washing, ironing and folding garments under strict deadlines.” Onweh et al (2022) opine that “life skill training augments the crucial cognitive or non-cognitive proficiencies necessary for holistic personal wellbeing and success of the youth.” Similarly, Funds for NGOs (2025), sees skill development as “a vital component in the fight against poverty by providing young minds with necessary skills and training to enhance their profitability and empower them to create their own businesses.”

Job opportunity in laundry, research has it that the laundry industry offers diverse job opportunities to reduce the problem of unemployment facing Zamfara youths. The available jobs include laundry attendant, ironer, dry cleaning machine operator, stain removal specialist, quality control officer, laundry dispatch rider, desk officer, laundry supervisor, manager, marketing officer, laundry equipment technician, laundry business developer, etc. Arippudin (2022) in consideration of parties that benefit in commercial laundry services stated that “consumers and laundry owners feel mutually beneficial, for consumers the costs incurred are proportional to the results obtained”. Arippudin (2022) opines that laundry entrepreneurs feel the same benefits because with an affordable price it attracts many consumers”. There is no doubt that a growing population of young people is essential for a state's vitality. However, when these young people are not empowered to contribute meaningfully in the society, it generates huge social issues such as increased crime and delinquency, social disintegration, cycle of poverty, wasted human capital, reduced economic growth, increased dependency burden, lack of innovation, etc. The above problems can be curtailed by investing in the laundry industry, due to its large market, profitability and steady cash flow. Bhute (2025) stated that “the global commercial laundry market is high and is estimated to be valued at USD 7.28 billion in 2025 and expected to reach USD 10.87 billion by 2032. Exhibiting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.90% from 2025-2032”. Empowerment of youth is employed to reduce inequality and promote long term economic development.” James (2017) stated that commercial laundry “empowers the youths by not only providing them with a source of livelihood but at the same time, creating wealth and employment for others. James (2017) stated that “Faith Ajeyi's passion for laundry operations stem from the desire to play a vital role in human hygiene, dignity and respect.” James (2017) said “Faith started her laundry business with N100,000 and operates from home but within a short space of time, has a lot of clients and is making good money”.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to determine the effect of commercial laundry and dry-cleaning service on youth empowerment in Gusau metropolis of Zamfara State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify the employment opportunities available to the youths in the laundry industry.
2. Discover entrepreneurial activities in the laundry service industry that youths can engage in.
3. Identify social impact and environmental sustainability of laundry services on youth empowerment.
4. Examine the various skills obtainable in the laundry industry that can empower Zamfara youths.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were asked to guide the study:

1. What job opportunities exist in the laundry industry?
2. How does professionalism in the laundry business improve society and bring about environmental sustainability?
3. What are the benefits of entrepreneurial activities in the laundry industry?
4. What are the skills the laundry industry offers young people?

### **Methodology**

Face and content were done by presenting the questionnaire to experts in the field of business and entrepreneurship education to assess the clarity and relevance of the variables suggested in relation to the research questions formulated. Content validity was done by aligning the questionnaire items with the research questions and the objectives of the research work. The researchers developed a structured questionnaire which contained 60 suggested variables under the four research questions. A 4-point likert type scale ranging from agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed was provided to the respondents for their responses to the questions. The entire population of 50 laundry and dry-cleaning business operators were used for the study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select laundry shops and participants for the study in order to gain an in-depth knowledge required. This consisted of entrepreneurs, workers and apprentices in the 12-laundry service centres from across the state capital of Zamfara State. Mean statistical techniques were adopted for data analysis.

### **Data Analysis and Results**

Data collected from 50 respondents of the 12 laundry and dry-cleaning business centres studied were analyzed using mean statistical techniques. This is because of the homogeneous nature of the data and for consistency and reliability. The criterion mean is 2.50 on a 4-point scale. Therefore, mean response equal to or greater than 2.50 was considered agreed. While any rated less than 2.5 was seen as disagreed.

**Research Question 1:** What job opportunities exist in the laundry industry?

**Table 1:** Mean rating of responses on job opportunities in laundry operations for youth empowerment in Gusau metropolis of Zamfara state:

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	Laundry attendant/Personnel	2.73	Agreed
2	Dry cleaner/stain remover	3.15	Agreed
3	Laundry ironer/presser	2.69	Agreed
4	Distributor/laundry item collector	2.56	Agreed
5	Flat work ironer operation	3.21	Agreed
6	Sorting and tagging jobs	3.28	Agreed
7	Tailoring/clothes mending	2.80	Agreed
8	Driving	3.60	Agreed
9	Laundry manager	3.10	Agreed
10	Quality control/supervisor	2.91	Agreed
11	Laundry equipment technician	3.31	Agreed
12	Receptionist/Front or desk officer	3.33	Agreed
13	Marketer/sales personnel	2.25	Agreed
14	Office cleaner	2.76	Agreed
15	Security personnel etc.	3.181	Agreed

Criterion mean = 2.50 on a 4- point scale

Table 1 above shows that all the respondents agreed that the job opportunities indicated in the table can be found in the laundry industry.

**Research Question 2:** How does professionalism in laundry business improve the society and bring about environment sustainability?

**Table 2:** Mean Rating of Response on Social Impact and environmental Sustainability of Laundry Operations on Youth Empowerment:

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	Enhance social status and youth confidence	3.70	Agreed
2	Laundromat fosters social interactions among the youths	2.91	Agreed
3	Youth become more responsible and participate in community building	3.25	Agreed
4	Crime rate and insecurity reduction	3.556	Agreed
5	Community access quality laundry services	3.15	Agreed
6	Reduction of street youths and bad gangs	2.64	Agreed
7	Reduction of political thuggery	2.761	Agreed
8	Community socio-economic life improve	3.20	Agreed
9	Hunger and poverty are eradicated in the community leading to improved standard of living	3.421	Agreed
10	Dignity and self-esteeming youths	2.60	Agreed
11	Eco-friendly laundry operations	2.46	Disagreed
12	Trained youths become eco-ambassadors promoting sustainable habits	2.15	Disagreed

Criterion mean = 2.50 on a 4- point scale

In the table above, respondents disagreed with two suggested variables on social impact and environment sustainability of the laundry operations on youth empowerment. However, they agreed on ten variables out of 12 variables which still show that there is strong correlation between commercial laundry and youth empowerment capable of bringing positive social impact and environmental sustainability.

**Research Question 3:** What are the benefits of entrepreneurial activities in the laundry industry?

**Table 3:** Mean rating of responses on entrepreneurial activity benefits in laundry operation for youth empowerment.

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	Youth start micro laundry venture due to low barrier entry and become economic independence	3.72	Agreed
2	Increase economic activities and stability	3.13	Agreed
3	Support for other businesses who outsource laundry services	2.45	Disagreed
4	Scalability and growth potentials	3.037	Agreed
5	Contribute to industry growth and state's development	3.343	Agreed
6	Source of revenue to the government	3.54	Agreed
7	Customer centered services and loyalty program	2.265	Disagreed
8	Digital marketing, online ordering and scheduling	3.11	Agreed
9	Create job for others, create wealth and eradicate poverty	3.732	Agreed
10	Establishment of standard Laundromat by government and private individuals	2.83	Agreed
11	Self-reliance and master of oneself	3.55	Agreed
12	Existence of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)	3.687	Agreed
13	Reduction in pressure for quest of white-collar jobs	3.64	Agreed
14	Increase in productivity through small scale laundry business	3.20	Agreed
15	Strong economy due to youth empowerment	3.47	Agreed
16	Competition among laundry operators for better output	3.16	Agreed
17	A thriving laundry business contributes to local economic growth	3.15	Agreed

Criterion mean 2.50 on 4-point scale

In table 3 results, respondents agreed on fifteen variables and disagreed on two variables that were suggested to analyze the entrepreneurial activity benefits in the laundry industry that positively impact the youths in Gusau Zamfara state.

**Research Question 4:** What are the skills laundry industry offers young people?

**Table 4:** Mean rating of responses on laundry skill acquisition and development for youth empowerment in Gusau, Zamfara state.

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	Skill in operating modern laundry machines	3.33	Agreed
2	Knowledge in the application of stain removal agents	2.821	Agreed
3	Skills in dry and chemical cleaning		Agreed
4	Digital marketing skill in laundry services	3.11	Agreed
5	Business management skill	2.62	Agreed
6	Customer centered service innovation skills in laundry business	2.75	Agreed
7	Sustainable and eco-friendly laundry practices skill	2.5	Agreed
8	Chemical application and pollutant release risk management in laundry services	3.73	Agreed
9	Sales and entrepreneurship skills	3.12	Agreed
10	Standard laundry operation skills	3.10	Agreed
11	Professional quality control management skill in laundry	2.75	Agreed
12	Professionalism in wedding gown restoration	2.822	Agreed
13	Effluent treatment plant management	2.51	Agreed
14	Mentorship skill in laundry services	3.321	Agreed
15	Apprenticeship skill crucial for self-employment	3.46	Agreed
16	Skill on fund generation for young entrepreneurs	2.47	Disagreed
	Criterion mean 2.50 on a 4-point scale		

In table 4 results, respondents agreed on fifteen suggested variables to analyze laundry skill acquisition and development for youth empowerment in Gusau metropolis of Zamfara state and disagreed on one. That is, skill on fund generation for young entrepreneurs.

### Discussion of Findings

Table 1 indicated that there exists a significant correlation between job creation in the laundry industry and youth empowerment in Gusau metropolis of Zamfara state. The findings showed that there are employment opportunities (direct jobs, technical and maintenance jobs, management and support jobs, etc.) for young people who would like to get involved in laundry operations and apprenticeship programs. The youths who gained such jobs have escaped temptations associated with idleness and have decent jobs.

Table 2 shows that commercial laundry, especially with training programs, minimizes negative impact laundry activities usually have on the environment through professionalism, eco-friendly laundry practices as trained youths become eco-ambassadors, more responsible and contribute to community building for a more peaceful and habitable society for all.

Table 3 indicated that commercial laundry business is a vital tool for youth empowerment in Gusau. As it fosters entrepreneurship opportunities for youths to start their own venture with relatively low capital and shortly build up to scalability. Gusau youths who operate laundry services no matter how poor their establishments are make huge profits as they have more clients than they can manage. They no longer seek employment rather they are employers of

labour as they need more hands to manage the business. Commercial laundry operators are financially independent, helping their families and contributing meaningfully to their communities.

Table 4 results revealed that the laundry industry through apprenticeship and mentorship programs have empowered interested youths in Gusau with different sustainable skills (job-ready skills, technical skills, etc.) The study proved that the youths with laundry skills and are practicing, are not involved in political thuggery, social vices and other criminal activities as they are pre-occupied with how to expand their businesses and make their money.

### **Conclusion**

The study assessed the effect of commercial laundry and drycleaning services on youth empowerment in Gusau metropolis of Zamfara state. Mean statistical technique was used and responses equal to or greater than 2.50 were regarded as agreed. While any lesser than 2.50 were seen as disagreed. The study indicated that there exists a significant correlation between the two variables and has proven that commercializing laundry services with training sections is a sure way to empower Gusau youths for a life sustaining occupation that would enable them to take care of challenges of life.

### **Recommendations**

Based on research findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. That Zamfara state Ministry of Youth and Sports should include laundry training in their vocational acquisition centre curricular where trainees at completion of the course might be issued with certificates such as commercial laundry operative apprenticeship certificate or certificate in laundry and dry-cleaning operation.
2. That laundry skills should be included in the vocational skills in the primary and secondary school curricula to enable children learn the skills required to operate commercial laundry at their formation age.
3. Zamfara state National Directorate for Employment (NDE) should include laundry skill acquisition in their youth empowerment program where core laundry skills, technical skills and business skills will be practically taught.
4. Private individuals, local government and state government should establish standard commercial laundry centres that shall include apprenticeship and mentorship sections in strategic locations in the state.
5. Trainees/apprentices should be encouraged by providing stipends or sponsorship to acquire relevant and quality laundry and dry-cleaning skills that will empower them to take care of their future.
6. That there should be sensitization targeting opinion leaders, parents, uneducated youths and school dropouts on the benefits of laundry entrepreneurship as a powerful tool for youth empowerment and the need to empower the youths for a more peaceful and crime free society.

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