

FROM WASTE TO WEALTH: THE USE OF RENEWABLE MATERIALS FOR COSTUME AND MAKE-UP FOR INDUSTRIAL SUSTAINABILITY

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Abstract

Meeting the immediate requirements of “the society” without compromise is an arduous task in a derelict economy. Thus, in a dwindling economy, costume and makeup artists encounter difficulties in creating costumes and makeups that are visually appealing, environmentally friendly, cost-effective and ethical because of the difficult economic conditions. Hence, it deters the costume and makeup artists and makes them redundant. In trying to find a way out, the researcher investigated how costume and makeup artists can convert some of the numerous waste products within their environment to produce costumes that are beautiful, attractive, cheaper, and budget-friendly for production. Thus, encouraging environmental management, controlling pollution to achieve a healthy environment without compromising the future. Therefore, this paper explores the challenges and opportunities in sustaining costume designs and proffers solutions on how to make sustainable choices even in a depressed economy. To achieve this, the multimethod and the qualitative research methodologies, secondary and primary data and the Eco Marxian theory as propounded by Kari Marx were adopted. Conclusively, costume and makeup artists can create wealth from waste, make adorable costumes from discarded materials, thereby sustaining the business and making the environment friendly and more habitable.

Keywords: Waste, Wealth, Renewable Materials, Costume And Makeup, Industrial, Sustainability

Introduction

The downturn in the world economy has affected all industries, of which the costume and makeup industry is not an exception. This profound impact gave rise to a tighter budget at the

individual and company level. Thus, this has led to fewer opportunities, which has made it very difficult and almost out of reach for costumes and makeup artists to find work, and to make ends meet. This period of economic decline is characterised by a drop in GDP and a high unemployment rate. In addition, the environmental assessment of the costume and make-up industry has come under heavy scrutiny with many groups calling for more sustainable practices. The costume industry is a business that can lessen the suffering of the people by creating jobs; to turn waste into wealth calls for a demonstration of a high creative instinct, among other things. Therefore, this paper explores the challenges facing the costume and make-up industries and how sustainable practices can help to improve the industry's economic and environmental impact. Costume company viability, along with making the environment conducive for human existence and the well-being of the citizenry which cannot be overemphasised.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on the Eco Marxian viewpoint by Kari Marx. A German philosopher, he propounded the economic, historical revolutionary socialist ideas. He advocated against capitalism and had a great influence in the fields of economics, sociology, and political science. He showed the futuristic, exploitative, and unsustainable practices of materialism. His Eco Marxian viewpoint was all encompassing from the socio-economic and cultural viewpoint, which was a total compendium of ecological poise. Thus, employing the idea of equality to solve the environmental crisis, Karl Marx frowned at the capitalist industrial production and the overexploitation of the earth's resources beyond what the earth could accommodate. Furthermore, he emphasised a paradoxical viewpoint between the capitalist assumed growth ideal model and the earth's unlimited resources, which obstruct the basic nutrients and resources, thereby causing pollution because it does not dissolve into the soil. He saw the need for a drastic change to save the planet and that humanity must make a radical impact on the earth to achieve a comfortable human environment. Thus, Eco-Marxist combined the traditional Marxism political viewpoint with ecology and the green political practices to achieve a sustainable environment Albert (2020). This research work is based on this ideology and the principles of inter-relationship between man and nature Foster (1997).

From Waste to Wealth

The word waste is an environmental and social issue that is relevant in the Nigerian society. There is an unhealthy attitude of indiscriminate disposal of waste in every nook and cranny of our environment. Thus, it has become a health hazard and environmental pollution for both humans and animals. It is not every waste that is indeed detrimental to humans and the environment and must be discarded. Many of what is called waste were not needed by the person who threw them away. What is unwanted and unusable to one person is a substance and usable

in another form. Kostantinos et al (2022) identified different categories of waste that can be collected and used as renewable resources, ranging from municipal, agricultural, radioactive and explosive waste. Furthermore, waste materials collected will reduce raw materials needed for production and increase the circular economy. Materials recycled and recovered can be prefabricated to create valuable materials that can increase the revenues of the people. Many such materials can be converted from simple waste products, to rebuild complex and simple concepts that will be catchy, inviting, attractive and suit the purpose they were converted. This concept can be employed as a modern way of solving environmental issues and can also generate income, sustain small-scale industries by providing local raw materials that are affordable and accessible. This strategy will enhance effective waste management and the usability of such waste. According to Fushietal, et.al (2021), the issue of waste has caused terrible havoc, but in the real sense, it could be the daily work and wealth that some person seeks. People need proper education and enlightenment on how to handle and utilise waste for their benefit. Though waste collection, management and utilisation are termed a dirty and uncivilised job, education and exposition will help reduce the stigmatisation that is associated with people participating in waste collection.

Renewable materials

The concept of the word renewable materials is built around the notion of sustainability. Hence, based on the capability of a system to maintain its process without adversely affecting its environment negatively. Renewable materials are made up of any item that can be replaced, recycled and replenished. They can be natural resources, man-made products, they can be “steel, plastics, glass, wood, bamboo, hemp, processed materials” etc. They are environmentally friendly and can be used as an alternative source to conventional materials. The company using these materials determines the choice of material that is useful and suitable for them. Renewable materials can be used in production companies, textiles companies, cosmetic industries, etc. It is meant to reduce production costs, better the environment and accelerate the bioeconomy.

Costume and Make-Up

Costume and make-up speak salient speech that can be decoded by the audience. The clothing introduces and describes the character on stage. Costume is as old as man; it has the capacity to speak the language of the past, the present and describe the future Shuaib (2020). Costume and make-up are the most important parts of theatrical production, filmmaking and television productions. Its existence can be traced to centuries ago where it was used to enhance the creation of characters and storytelling. The clothing and accessories worn by actors are referred to as costumes, while the make-up is used to heighten the physical appearance of the actors and actresses on the stage. Costume designers and make-up artists collaborate with directors and actors to achieve the inner pictograph on stage. Therefore they develop a look and style that speaks volumes about the character as portrayed in the script. The costume designer employed the use of various procedures and special skills to create the desired picture on the stage. The

make-up artist used contouring, highlighting and special effect methods to attain the anticipated appearance. A well-designed costume gives aesthetic value to stage performance, enhances the delivery of speech of actors/actress and helps to achieve elegant movement on stage Sanni (2023). A beautiful costume and make-up production brandish the production believable and realistic to the audience. Using costumes, the audience gets acquainted with actors, characters, social class, personality, profession, and background of actors on stage. Costume and make-up are as important in a production process as the lines rendered. Beyond the issue of selection of an appropriate costume and make-up for a particular production, it also helps the audience to recognise and ascertain the specific environment as portrayed by the director and playwright. Through costume and makeup up the ideology and directional notion is shown without a spoken word. To achieve a costume and makeup that is appealing and symmetrical involves a display of high creative instinct. Creativity is the most important skill exhibited by a costume artist. It is displayed in creating the right costume for a particular production, the right style, considering the age, period and tribe involved. Creativity enables the costume/makeup artist to experiment, explore and discover new grounds. To achieve great work, the designer, as a problem solver, employs the use deep critical thinking to help in solving problems and in making serious decisions on the selection of materials, building of costumes, choice of textures, colours, types of make-up, colours and designs must be in alliance with the costumes Badeji (2019). Idogho, et al (2025) advocated effective costume management skills in the film industry. They claimed that costume enhances the beauty and interpretation of the performance; thus, it helps to achieve the aims and objectives of the producer and the director. The costume designer is saddled with these huge responsibilities of managing costumes to achieve the total picturesque of the performance.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a global concept that has gained prominence in recent years. It involves navigating the financial, societal, and environmental systems and providing a balanced structure; by aiding and facilitating the immediate desires of the people and preserving a legacy for the upcoming generations. Sustainability cuts across diverse perspectives, namely ecology, social and economic views. The development of a maintainable balance is crucial in achieving long-term survival and can create opportunities for the achievement of universal sustainability. In 1987, the United Nations published a universal report known as “Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development” encouraged humans to be safety conscious in the way and manner of handling the environment, social, and financial exercises without passing the burden to the coming generation. According to the Nested Model, the three faces of sustainability were the environmental factors, social, and economic factors. They relied on one another to achieve the utmost degree. The economy cannot thrive without society, while the society and the economy depend on factors that influence the environment to achieve maximum progress. This model built its argument on the fact that a healthy, functional, and conducive environment can only be achieved when all the elements involved complement one another Georgiana (2022). Furthermore, in 2015, the United Nations Sustainable Development

Goals formed a framework that integrated sustainability issues into the daily life of society. This was jointly accepted by all members, 17 goals were listed and designed to attain a verdant, more flourished and impartial world by 2030. The SDGs draw 169 practical schemes and 231 measuring instruments to attain a global community of sustainable-minded people. Hence encourages the communities to cultivate sustainability as a practical solution to address local and global social issues at all levels. Furthermore, because of the inquisitiveness of researchers, especially on sustainability in the Arts and Arts-related professions, many scholars have defined sustainability as being concerned only with ecological issues Hassall & Stephen (2019). Thus, without a critical look at how sustainability can be applied to culture, tradition, theatre, costume, and make-up. Adams (2006) observed viability in business and concluded that sustainability in business means employing business strategies, methods and procedures that positively advance the industry and benefit the stakeholders by giving immediate reward, also safeguarding the human and natural resources that will be useful for future business.

Sustainability and the Theatre

Sustainability means giving help and assistance to support a process over a period. It can cut across all professions; this concept emphasised that major changes are needed to avoid damage and losses. Thus, it encourages the breakdown of economic concepts in business transactions, focusing on how physical natural resources can provide a support system and help in maintaining economic production. It is assumed that environmental sustainability enhances the life care system that helps to prolong human life, reduce poverty, lack and inequality. Sustainability is a very important part of life, including the theatre. The theatre corrects society by taking storylines from society to produce drama that corrects the societal ills. The theatre industry has a very substantial impact on society from the costume and make-up section, set, lighting and props, etc. However, in many ways, the theatre industry can become sustainable if the practitioners look inward. Furthermore, employing the use of eco-friendly materials to design sets, costumes and write out educational drama that educates the populace on ways to sustain the business. Also, the use of salvaged and recycling materials for production can enhance longevity. Apart from classroom teaching, which introduced students to self-expression and societal consciousness, the theatre introduced society to itself through performances that expose negative attitudes, mindsets and conditions that are detrimental to the communal life of society. Sustainability can be more effective, impactful, and transcend generations if properly handled. This can be creatively achieved and be broadly spread across the globe and widely propagated through the nooks and cranny of society. Theatrical performance has a wider coverage that can raise awareness about issues and inspire the audience to take positive decisions that can influence the audience, especially among young audiences. The theatre has the capacity to increase environmental awareness, create an environmentally sustainable society by developing philosophy and practices that are inculcated into the teaching and learning methods. Through its production, the theatre can create a special medium of exposing the audience to the issues of sustainable practices, teach them the fundamentals and foster their innate zeal to achieve positive environmental conditions.

This practice can also help theatre companies to promote sustainable behavioural patterns among their staff and audience. Thus, they can do this by reducing waste and using environmentally friendly materials in the theatre. Also, story lines can address environmental and social issues, raise awareness, and inspire people to see sustainability as a necessity Hassall & Stephen (2019).

Methodology

The study employed the use of multimethod research methodology to collect data for this research work. This involved the use of qualitative research, and the analysis of online pictures retrieved online. The focus was on private costume companies and what they can do to reduce the cost of building costumes to the barest minimum, thereby encouraging patronage.

The population of the study – The study focused on 80 private costume and make-up companies within Nigeria, twenty each from the 4 zones: West, North, East and South of Nigeria. Twenty respondents from each company, so a total of 80 people were involved.

Questionnaires – A total of 80 questionnaires were distributed among eighty (80) private costumes and make-up companies within the four zones of Nigeria. Twenty (20) people from each company were given questionnaires, which made it eighty (80) people in all.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The questionnaires were divided into 5 sections. Section one was the demographic section, which collected respondents' personal information. Section two was on the effect of the economy on the company. Section three was on how the company has enhanced the sustainability drive in their environment, while the fourth section was about the future of the company and its implications in a depressed economy. The last section, which was question five, was on other materials employed to build costumes apart from the traditional clothing material used from the inceptions?

Section 1: Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

Table 1 What is your age?

Response	Respondents	Percentages
20-35	25	31.25%
36-50:	40	50%
50 and above	15	18.75%
Total	80	100%

Source: Field survey, 2025

From the above table, it was shown that 65 of the respondents, which was equivalent to (81.25%), were youths of different ages, while 50 and above, which was 15 respondents, were equivalent to (15%). This implies that more young people are involved in the costume and make-up business.

Table 2: What is your gender?

Response	Respondents	Percentages
Male	35	43.75%
Female	45	56.25%
Total	80	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

From this table, it shows that 35(43.75) respondents were Males, while 45 (56.25%) respondents were Females. But in all, both males and females were involved.

Table 3: costumes and make-up companies according to zones?

Zones	Costume and Make-up Companies	Percentages
North	20	25%
South	20	25%
East	20	25%
West	20	25%
Total	80	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

The table above showed equal representation of companies from the four geopolitical zones, which was to enable the researcher to give a fair judgement.

Table 4: What is your highest educational qualification?

Response	Respondents	Percentages
Primary School	10	12.5%
Secondary School	20	25%
First Degree	35	43.75%
Secondary degree and above	15	18,75

Total	80	100%
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Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 4 shows the highest educational qualification of respondents. 10 (12.5%) respondents were Primary school certificate holders, 20 (25%) had Secondary school certificate, while 35 respondents, which was (43.75%) possessed first degree certificate and 15 (18.75%) had second degrees and above. This implies that most of the companies were small-scale businesses that employed both skilled and unskilled workers, which cut across all academic qualifications.

Section Two: -

Table 5: What is the effect of the economy on the costume & make-up companies?

Response	Respondents	Percentages
Lack of patronage	20	25%
Cannot pay employees so they closed.	15	18.75%
High cost of building costumes	30	37.5%
Many companies were on a part-time basis.	15	18.75%
Total	80	100%

Source: Field survey, 2025

From this section, it was gathered that 20 respondents (25%) agreed that the companies were all struggling to make ends meet because of a lack of patronage. 15 respondents (18.75%) agreed that many companies could not pay their staff, so they closed. While 30 respondents (37.5%) claimed that high cost of building costumes has affected the total cost of production. 15 respondents (18.75%) asserted that many of the companies were on a part-time basis. Due to the situation of the economy, many private theatre companies do not employ professional costume/ make-up artists for production; they made do with some of their cast / crew, so, some doubled as cast and costume designers all because of funding. Many of the private theatre companies do not have sponsors, which makes productions very difficult because of the huge financial involvement. The theatre audience has drastically reduced because of the economic situation of the land, which made people prioritise their demands according to their scale of preference. Thus, many private costume and make-up artists have folded up their companies; furthermore, many bear the name as a costume and make-up company but are involved in the building and selling of cloth to sustain the company. The decline in the economy has a serious adverse effect on costume and make-up artists because of the high price of materials for building costumes and

make-up kit, which has made the cost of producing costumes exorbitant and out of reach of the average drama director.

Section 3

Table 6: How do costumes & make-up companies enhance the sustainability drive in their environment?

Response	Respondents	Percentages
Building clothes& designing for babies &bridal showers.	20	25%
Many companies laid off their staff and engaged their apprentices.	30	37.5%
Building costumes for carnival and selling make-up kits	18	22.5%
Building, selling/renting out bridal costumes and make-up	12	15%
Total	80	100%

Source: Field survey, 2025

It was gathered that most of the companies have deviated from being full-time costume and make-up companies into so many things to sustain the business. 20(25%) of the respondents agreed that they via into building clothes and designing for babies and bridal showers. 30 (37.5%) respondents agreed that they laid off their staff and engaged their apprentices whenever there was job because they could not pay salaries. 18(22.5%) respondents produce costumes for carnivals and sell make-up kits. Lastly, 12 (15%) respondents build, sell and rent out bridal costumes and make-up. Thus, it has been a hard time for the costumes and make-up companies because of the high cost of things.

Section 4

Table 7: What is the future of the Costume and Make-up companies and their implications in a depressed economy?

Response	Respondents	Percentages
The future is not certain	20	25%
People's interest in the practical aspects of costume and make-up has dwindled.	30	37.5%
It might likely go into extinction if it is not properly handled.	15	18.75%
The costumes and make-up graduates will have no place to start/fall back to. Since the companies cannot sustain their workers.	15	18.75%
Total	80	100%

Source: Field survey, 2025

Thus, from this section 20 (25%) respondents claimed that the future of the costumes and make-up businesses is not certain. 30 (37.5%) respondents maintained that People's interest in the practical aspects of costume and make-up has dwindled. 15 (18.7%) respondents argued that costumes and make-up as a small and medium business, might likely go into extinction if it is not properly handled. 15 (18.7%) respondents stated that the costumes and make-up graduates will have no place to start/fall back to after school. Since the companies cannot sustain their workers by paying salaries, many of the workers left, which forced some of the companies to fold up. This implies that the future of these companies was not certain because they depend on the economy. Thus, from the findings it was gathered that both the workers and owners of these companies were mostly youths. The effect of the depression has been heard on these companies, whereby they have laid off their staff, which implies that more youth will be jobless and join the unemployment market. This has a negative implication on the nation and society at large. An idle hand is the devil's workshop; jobless youth can constitute a menace, criminals, hoodlums, and a societal threat. Costumes and make-up industries can absorb some of these youths, occupy them and keep them off the road. Like private theatre companies propounded some measure of solution by doubling cast an actress/ actor as a costume and make-up artist. This was to cushion the effect of the high cost of building a costume as a method of sustaining their company. Likewise, to keep the theatre business going despite the depression, private costume and make-

up companies have to incorporate sustainability strategies into their company's agenda. This is the core of the research that they must look inward, and devise means and methods to keep the business going despite the bad economy.

Section 5

Table 8: Apart from the traditional clothing materials used from inception to make costumes, what other materials have your company employed/adopted to build costumes?

Response	Respondents	Percentages
Companies	80	100%

Source: Field survey, 2025

It was gathered from the above table that 80 (100%) respondents were used to the traditional textiles for making costumes for theatrical production. But they have not been able to see the relationship between costume companies and the issue of sustainability. The costume and make-up companies depended on the traditional method of costuming, which is the use of fabrics in building costumes. They use block printing to make designs and decorate patterns on fabrics. They also use embroidery to decorate and make beautiful patterns on fabric, also the use of bead work is another way of decorating fabric to create a complex design or to represent symbols and signs. These companies have not been able to creatively look inward and improvise by using what they can find within their environment to reduce the cost of production, thereby attracting theatre companies. Apart from making the environment hygienic, which will enhance healthy living, it will also sustain the business because less money will be expended on the production of costumes.

Waste to Wealth Approach

Table 9: How to employ renewable materials for costumes

Response	Respondents	Percentages
Creativity	20	25%
Look around your environment for waste that can be raw materials for your production.	20	25%
Have a clear picture of what you want to achieve.	20	25%
Do the selections / employ people to pick them for you.	20	25%
Total	80	100%

Source: Field survey, 2025

From table 9 above it was gathered that 20 (25%) of the respondents listed that to employ renewable materials for costume production, the person must be creative. 20 (25%) respondents agreed that to use renewable materials, one must look around the environment for waste that can be used as suitable raw materials for the production they wish to achieve. Also, 20(25%) respondents say that costume designers must have a clear picture of what they want to achieve. 20 (25%) respondents responded that costume designers must study their environment, identify those who can assist in collecting the waste or employ scavengers to assist in collecting the waste needed

Wealth can be created from waste if, indeed a close observation and an introspective feeling are considered. For the costume and make-up industries to achieve a high standard of renewable costumes, a thoughtful, creative, talented and skilful individual must be involved. In this research, a lot of waste that can be used to build costumes for production is itemised, such as bags, caps, cloths, floormats, table mats dresses were displayed. These will reduce the cost of production, thereby encouraging producers and sponsors of more production.

Pictures A



Men wear clothes made from rice bags.

This gown is made from dismantled rice bags.

Pictures B



Dress made from the daily times Paper.



Indomie wraps as costumes. Online material



Sweet wraps as handless dresses.



Different types of sweet and chewing gum wraps as dresses.

Pictures C



Shirts and bags made from Ghana must go sacks.
online materials retrieved 1st March 2025.

Pictures D



Lovely gown made from sacks.



Fashion gown made from sacks.



Clothes made from daily times newspaper, capri-sun packs, plastic bottles, nylons. These pictures were all online materials retrieved on the 1st of March,2025.

In conclusion, the paper suggests that for the costume and make-up companies to survive in a depressed economy, they must look inward. This should be done by adopting a sustainability strategy for the company. Thus, by using environmentally friendly materials to build costumes and adopting the use of recyclable materials to build beautiful costumes. These will be cheaper and help with waste control, which will make the environment friendly, neat, and beautiful. Nigeria is a country where waste is dropped indiscriminately; if these companies adopt this measure, many of these waste products will be off the street. For instance, cement bags can be used to build dresses, and Indomie wraps can be used to build beautiful costumes. Bags of rice, bean bags, Ghana must go bags, etc., these can all be converted to beautiful costumes. This method will sustain the life of the company no matter the level of depression in the economy. Instead of scaring customers away with high prices, it will build a fresh and unique relationship between the theatre companies and the costumes and make-up artists who will charge less because their sources of materials for production will not only be available, but they will also be locally sourced, affordable and not expensive.

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