

The Application of ISO 9001:2015 Principles in Soweto's Textile and Clothing Production SMEs

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Abstract

The paper aims to investigate the application of ISO 9001:2015 principles in non-accredited Textile and clothing production SMEs in Soweto. Given the increasing competition in the clothing sector, there's a continual need for innovative processes to enhance business performance and ultimately improve customer satisfaction and service. This research specifically delves into the context of Soweto Textile and clothing production SMEs, exploring how the adoption of ISO 9001:2015 principles can serve as a quality management system to enhance customer satisfaction. The paper underscores the potential for ISO 9001:2015 principles to positively impact the performance of Textile and clothing production SMEs in Soweto, while also highlighting the need for financial support to overcome barriers to accreditation. It contributes to the understanding of quality management practices in township-based businesses and offers recommendations for enhancing their competitiveness and sustainability. Random sample technique was used in this research to collect the relevant data. The findings of the questionnaire show that 61% of respondents never conduct quality audits in their organizations, followed by 34% of respondents who rarely conduct quality audits. The remaining 5% of respondents indicated that there were only occasional quality audits conducted. Township SMEs will benefit from applying ISO 9001:2015 in their businesses, as the application of ISO 9001:2015 principles will contribute to improving the Township SMEs systems by providing operations, which can enhance the overall business performance of township-based SMEs. Due to lack of financial ability for Township SMEs to fund the application of ISO 9001:2015, the Township SMEs will need to acquire funding for the accreditation of ISO 9001:2015, SMEs can apply for funding via government funding entities such as the Department of Small Business Development, by leveraging government funding opportunities and support services, Township SMEs can overcome financial barriers and access the resources needed to implement ISO 9001:2015 principles, ultimately improving their business performance and competitiveness.

Keywords

ISO 9001: 2015, Customer Satisfaction, Total quality management, SMEs, ISO 9001:2015; Soweto (South Africa).

1.1 Introduction

This study is based on SMEs operating within Soweto Township, Southwest of Johannesburg. The township comprises thirty-five ‘townships’, with some recognised as blocks and others as phases, while the dwellers themselves call it ‘ekasi’ (a Zulu term for township). It is the most famous and most populated black urban residential area in South Africa. The past years Soweto start seeing the emerge of Textile and Clothing Production SMEs such as the Sowetan clothing brands such as AMA KIPKIP. Another brand that became popular amongst the younger generation was Skhothane (Langa, 2019). Another was the Sowetan-based streetwear Thesis which became popular with the youth while promoting local youth culture. Ndlovu (2020) has states that:

The Thesis lifestyle streetwear brand started in 2007; its first retail shop was opened in Mofolo township, Soweto. The brand’s signature clothing is T-shirts and hats. Around 2016 the brand started experiencing noticeable market growth. This brand was established by using recycled clothing to assess the market. Today the brand has been in existence for more than 12 years.

Soweto continued to see growth in their textile and clothing sector with more streetwear labels emerging from the township like Mosfet, a clothing brand based in Senaone, Izinto a clothing merchant based in Meadowlands, as well as Shwe by Gugu based in Vilakazi Street to name but a few. Today, more individuals are exploring other areas of Textile and Clothing sectors within the township. By using the entrepreneurial approach, more SMEs as fashion designers, tailors, and sewing co-operatives have emerged within the township.

These emerging businesses and brands within the Soweto Textile and Clothing sectors are faced with various business challenges. One of these challenges met is trying to grow a business in an area that was systemically designed only to accommodate workers. Another challenge is successfully marketing Soweto Township as an industrial area (Development, 2014). SowetoTextile and Clothing SMEs are also faced with a barrier of not being able to afford a formal rented business space within the township. Most of these businesses operate from houses, garage spaces, or back rooms.

Previous research conducted shows that Soweto-based SME owners and managers cannot understand the importance of excellent quality systems to train their employees about quality and how this affects business performance and growth (Vijayavex, September 2014). SME owners will have to focus on gaining the confidence of current and potential customers. The businesses will have to prove to their customers that they can offer excellent quality products, as well as prompt and efficient services.

The Textile and clothing production SMEs constantly need to ensure they can attract good customer base, therefore customer Satisfactory plays a pivotal role in achieving sustainable customer base and retention. The continual improvement of internal processes that impact customer satisfaction and retain customers is of the most importance within Soweto Textile and clothing production SMEs. Application of quality system that will improve customer satisfaction while minimizing operational cost without compromising quality on product or service which contribute to customer retention.

ISO 9001:2015 is a standard designed to facilitate the achievement of consistent quality of products and services by offering measures to develop the quality management system of an enterprise. The success and failure of this system is what best assesses the performance of the business on the amount of product and profit as well as consumer and employee satisfaction (Kholopane, 2016). It will help to determine whether the evaluation of the application of ISO 9001: 2015 principles can function as an efficient tool for consistent business practices within the Soweto Textile and clothing production SMEs. ISO 9001: 2015 principles can function as an efficient quality tool for Textile and clothing production SMEs.

1.2 Objectives

The purpose of this study is to propose an effective quality system for Textile and clothing production SMEs operating within townships. The lack of customer confidence has led to low sales margins that affect profit margins and the overall company performance that led to high numbers of business failures within the Township SMEs. The study focused on improving customers satisfaction through the application of ISO 9001: 2015 principles. There is a need to ensure that township-based textile SMEs apply a Quality Management System (QMS) that will improve business practices and give a competitive advantage over other businesses operating outside the township and the country.

The study aims to determine whether the adoption of ISO 9001:2015 principles can enhance SME's business performance in a resource constrained business environment such as Sowetan textile and clothing production sector. This paper will explore how the application of ISO 9001:2015 principles within Soweto textile and clothing production can lead to business practice improvements and industry competitive advantage even beyond the county.

2. Literature Review

2.1 South Africa Small Business Sector

According to South African National Small Business Enabling Act (Act 102 of 1996) as amended in 2003 defines small and medium businesses by the number of employees, gross assets, and annual turnover, including cooperative enterprises and non-governmental organizations.

Township SMEs can be defined as a business or market operating in the township, with a high rate of informality and survival. These businesses can also be classified as micro-enterprises with a low income and annual turnover (Development, 2014). Cant and Rabie (2018) state that township SMEs are often overlooked as a pivotal sector that can contribute to the South African economy's growth and development. However, according to the later study by Wild and Cant (2021), South African SMEs are more likely to fail within the first year of operation, which is also stated by these researchers to be one of the lowest success rates globally.

According to Gauteng Economic Development, (2014) one barrier encountered by SMEs from policymakers is the lack of recognition by them that township business is a potential solution to job creation. As a result, there is failure to assist and support township businesses by offering appropriate advice and support.

This section defines SMEs in South African context and further outlines the challenges faced by SMEs which includes insufficient support from policymakers. Providing adequate support to Soweto SMEs could lead to township economic growth and development.

2.2 Manufacturers of Textiles

The section provides insights into the clothing, textile, footwear, and leather (CTFL) industry in South Africa, highlighting various aspects such as market size, trends, challenges, and opportunities.

Statistics South Africa (2022) provides information demonstrating that an estimate of the nation's clothing, textile, footwear, and leather (CTFL) market exceeds R180bn. The report also shows that there was a decline over the recent years in the dress assembling segment and further indicates that 3.2% of the dress assembling segment contributed towards the South African total assembling generation. (Mthente, 2012).

Research further shows that trades for manufactured textiles were worth R25bn in the year 2017, with completed material items representing some R14bn. However, despite experiencing a minimal improvement in the textile trade balance, this South African division remains dependent on the export market (Development, 2014). Therefore, cheaper imports especially those from China, remain a matter of concern. The importance of locally manufactured products is that they save time by ensuring faster delivery times and add value to the local economic development and Gross Domestic Product (Truett & Truett, 2008).

According to Vlok (2019), the South African industry is vulnerable and so they are drawn to cheap imports from China and Asia on a global level. The cost of labour and the economic impact of SA Trade Union strikes in the labour market are key factors contributing to this. In addition, import taxes may be as high as 22% on certain fabrics, which is the largest input cost to the clothing industry (Vlok, 2019).

Ntomnekhaya's (2010) study stated that the South African textile industry experienced pressure to become competitive. It further stated that due to imports from China and other foreign countries, more textile companies in South Africa were closing. The significant decline in the number of large textile manufacturing companies, however, opened opportunities for several emerging formal and informal SMEs which showed a significant increase.

This section highlights the challenges faced by the South African CTFL industry, including competition from cheaper imports and the need to improve competitiveness.

2.3 ISO 9001: 2015

The section discusses the importance and applicability of ISO 9001:2015, a quality management system standard, across various sectors including service organizations.

The below Figure 1 shows the eight principles of ISO 9001:2015 that Textile and clothing SMEs must adhere to when implementing ISO 9001: 2015.



Figure 1: Principles of Quality Management (BSI.,2019)

The ISO 9001:2015 applies to companies and organizations in all sectors. The process-oriented strategy also makes the service organizations standards applicable. Its general guidelines provide the necessary flexibility for today's varied company globe (Kubeka, 2017). The significance of the ISO 9001:2015 is that it is not only recognized by companies, but customers also understand the significance of quality. As the consumer is most crucial to a business, ISO 9001:2015 therefore focuses on customer satisfaction as a key aspect of quality management.

Under this quality management system of ISO 9001:2015 goods and services are improving and flourishing as the focus is on customer satisfaction. A company will generate procedures that operate smoothly and effectively with a mixture of continuous improvement and corrective behaviors under ISO 9001:2015 principles (ISO, 2019).

The customer determines the level of quality offered, as well as delivery by the organization. Vijayavex (2014) states that the attention given to the customer's requirements from an organization is the most important aspect in quality management systems. Quality management systems emphasis that the organization must be customer centered (Smit 2000). Therefore, according to the quality management system, any product or service that is perfectly manufactured or produced but cannot align with the potential customers' desires and expectations, reduces its value.

The below diagram shows the standard process to be followed by Textile and Clothing SMEs to be ISO 9001:2015 accredited, which is first identifying whether there is a gap in the ISO 9001:2015, identifying ISO 9001:2015 process, training employees, conducting internal TQM audits, management review the TQM system, then receive then the SME's gets ISO 9001:2015 accredited.

The below diagram shows the standard process to be followed by Textile and Clothing SMEs to be ISO 9001:2015 Certified, which is first identifying whether there is a gap in the ISO 9001:2015, identifying ISO 9001:2015 process, training employees, conducting internal TQM audits, management review the TQM system, then receive then the SME's gets ISO 9001:2015 accredited (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Steps to Becoming ISO 9001: 2015 Certified (BSI.,2019)

3. Methods

The sampling method used in this study is the systematic random sample. Random sampling was used to select the SMEs from Enactus. The small business forum database was accessed through the Enactus faculty advisor and small business forum representative. Furthermore, random sampling is used for a door-to-door approach.

The descriptive study is used to demonstrate the relationship between SMEs business performance and the application of ISO 9001:2015. The process of follow-up, checking, and re-checking the return of questionnaires is maintained throughout the duration of the survey.

The study used both primary and secondary data to collect information. The primary data being the information which the researcher collected from the process of observation, one-on-one interviews, record keeping and questionnaires with SME employees and owners.

4. Data Collection

This study employed a quantitative approach method of data collection. The application of ISO 9001:2015 is used to document the effectiveness of textile enterprises' business performance to ensure that they deliver quality products. To collect numerical data and descriptive data, the researcher distributed one hundred questionnaires to SME manufacturing business owners or employees who have existed for a minimum of two years or more around Soweto.

The researcher delivered the questionnaires to the respondents and collected them after a week. The researcher then called the SMEs representative to explain the study and set a date to deliver the questionnaire. The researcher then requested the SMEs representative to provide the delivery address. Upon receiving the address, the researcher physically delivered the questionnaires.

The researcher used custom tables, mean and standard deviation to assess the perception of ISO 9001:2015. The researcher also used a correlation analysis to check the impact of ISO 9001:2015 and business performance. The research instrument will consist of three sections A, B & C, section A will be demographics, Age, Business sector location, etc. Section B about the Understanding ISO 9001 system within SMSs in Soweto. Section C will be on forty-eight items based on eight measurements.

The paper aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of ISO 9001:2015 implementation in improving business performance within the Soweto textile and clothing production industry, using quantitative data collection and analysis methods.

5. Results

5.1 Pearson Correlation

Indeed, the Pearson correlation coefficient (often denoted as "r") is primarily used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. It can range from -1 to +1, where:

- ❖ +1 indicates a perfect positive linear relationship,
- ❖ 0 indicates no linear relationship,
- ❖ -1 indicates a perfect negative linear relationship.

The correlation coefficient is appropriate for continuous variables and can also be used when one variable is continuous and the other is dichotomous (e.g., yes/no, true/false).

It's important to note that while the Pearson correlation coefficient is widely used and interpretable, it measures only linear relationships. If the relationship between variables is nonlinear, other correlation measures or statistical techniques might be more appropriate.

Additionally, the magnitude of the correlation coefficient indicates the strength of the relationship, with values closer to 1 or -1 indicating stronger relationships, while values closer to 0 indicate weaker relationships.

5.2 Formulated hypothesis

H0: There is no relation between ISO 9001:2015 principles and business performance.

H1: There is a relationship between ISO 9001:2015 principles and performance business.

H0: ISO 9001:2015 principles do not impact business performance.

H1: ISO 9001:2015 principles impact business performance.

Pearson product on correlation of ISO 9001: 2015 understanding ISO 900: 2015 within SMEs and Business performance was found to an exceptionally low positive and statistically significant ($r=178.p<.005 \&001$), Context of the organization and statistically significant ($r=.229.p<.001$), the business performance was also found to incredibly low positive and statistically significant ($r=.185.p<.005 \&001$), further found that the leadership and business performance was incredibly low positive. The planning was found to be markedly low and negligible positive and statistically significant ($r=.000.p<.005 \&001$), The support according to the Table 1 was found to be low positive and statistically significant ($r=.405.p<.005$), The operation was found to be low positive and statistically significant ($r=.344.p<.005$), The performance and evaluation was found to be markedly very low positive and statistically significant ($r=.293.p<.005$), Lastly The improvement was found to be low positive and statistically significant ($r=.325.p<.005$).

It's evident that several factors (such as context of the organization, support, operation, performance evaluation, and improvement) exhibit statistically significant positive correlations with business performance. However, leadership and planning show either negligible correlations or no significant correlation with business performance, based on the provided information.

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)": This means that the correlation coefficient between the variables is statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level, considering both tails of the distribution. In other words, there is less than a 5% chance that the observed correlation coefficient occurred by random chance.

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)": Similarly, this statement indicates that the correlation coefficient is statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level, considering both tails of the distribution. In this case, there is less than a 1% chance that the observed correlation coefficient occurred by random chance.

Table 1: Correlation

	Understanding	Context	Leadership	Planning	Support	Operation	Performance Evaluation	Improvement	Business Performance
Understanding	1								
Context	0.077	1							
Leadership	-0.039	.307**	1						
Planning	0.090	0.091	.360**	1					
Support	.210*	0.190	.252*	0.026	1				
Operation	0.073	-0.064	-0.038	-.241*	0.173	1			
Performance Evaluation	0.060	0.161	.234*	0.196	.348**	.210*	1		
Improvement	0.039	0.146	.226*	0.040	.354**	.254*	.365**	1	
Business Performance	0.178	.229*	0.185	0.000	.405**	.344**	.293**	.325**	1

The researcher can assume that Hypotheses 1 (H1) and (H2) are moderately supported overall by the correlation coefficient. This shows that the intended in understanding ISO 9001:2015 within SMEs, particularly within the context

of the organization, leadership, support, operations, performance evaluation, and improvement, could lead to enhancements in township textile manufacturing SMEs' business performance. However, the study also indicates that while ISO 9001:2015 implementation and township textile manufacturing SMEs' business performance tend to exhibit a positive relationship, further factors may influence this dynamic.

This revised version clarifies the hypotheses being referred to, highlights the potential impact areas within SMEs, and acknowledges the complexity of the relationship between ISO 9001:2015 implementation and business performance.

The researcher can assume that H1 and H2 moderately supported overall by the correlation coefficient. This shows that the intended in understanding ISO 9001:2015 within SMEs, context of the organization, leadership, support, operation, performance & evaluation, and improvement would lead to improvement in township textile manufacturing SMEs business performance, although the study also indicate that while ISO 9001:2015 and township textile manufacture SMEs business performance tends to go up in response to one another.

Table 2: Model Summary

Summary Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.567 ^a	0,321	0,260	0,60984	2,127
a. Predictors: (Constant), Improvement, Planning, Understanding, Context, Support, Operation, Leadership, Performance Evaluation					
b. Dependent Variable: Business Performance					

The adjusted R-squared value of **0.260** indicates that approximately 26% of the variance in Business Performance can be explained by the ISO 9001:2015 principles included in the model (Table 3).

Table 3: ANOVA

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15,644	8	1,956	5,258	.000 ^b
	Residual	33,100	89	0,372		
	Total	48,744	97			

The results in Table 2 show that $p=.000$, which is less than the chosen significance level (e.g., $\alpha = 0.05$), implying high significance. Therefore, the researcher can conclude that the model is statistically significant ($f(1.89) = 5.258, p = .000$).

The Demographic of Soweto Textile and Clothing SMEs

Table 4. above shows the results that indicate (94%) of the respondents were women, and (6%) were men. As shown in Table 4 the statistics represented by the respondents were as follows:

- o 45% of the respondents were between the ages of 46-55 years.
- o 33 % were around 56-65 years, and 20% were around 36-45 years.
- o 2% of respondents were above 26-35 years

Table 4: Demographics

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	6	6,0	6,0	6,0
Female	94	94,0	94,0	100,0
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
26-35 years	2	2,0	2,0	2,0
36-45 years	20	20,0	20,0	22,0
46-55 years	45	45,0	45,0	67,0
56-65 years	33	33,0	33,0	100,0
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-5 years	11	11,0	11,0	11,0
5-10 years	48	48,0	48,0	59,0
10-15 years	28	28,0	28,0	87,0
Over 15 years	13	13,0	13,0	100,0
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Lower than grade 12 (std ten or lower)	61	61,0	61,0	61,0
Grade 12 (Matric, std 10)	30	30,0	30,0	91,0
Post-Matric certificate	8	8,0	8,0	99,0
Baccalaureate degree	1	1,0	1,0	100,0

The Principle of ISO 9001: 2015 result within Soweto textile and clothing SMEs

Demographics of Textile and Clothing Manufacturing SME Owners/Employees:

The result indicates most active SME owners or employees in the Soweto textile and clothing manufacturing industry fall within the age range of 45-55 years. Women continue to dominate the Soweto textile and clothing manufacturing industry in the SME sector. There is a higher participation of older women compared to youth in Soweto Textile Manufacturing SMEs, potentially limiting diversity in clothing designs.

Access to ISO 9001:2015 Information and Certification

Regarding access to ISO 9001:2015 information:

- 34% strongly disagree.
- 39% disagree.
- 24% are neutral.
- 3% agree.

The results indicate most respondents lack access to ISO 9001:2015 quality system information.

Regarding access to ISO 9001:2015 consultants:

- 55% strongly disagree.
- 44% disagree.
- 1% are neutral.

that there is a significant lack of access to ISO 9001:2015 consultants among respondents.

Regarding knowledge about ISO 9001:2015 quality system certification:

- 50% strongly disagree.
- 38% strongly agree (indicating lack of knowledge).
- 12% are neutral.

The result shows that there is a lack of awareness or knowledge about ISO 9001:2015 quality system certification among respondents.

Regarding implementing ISO 9001:2015 in their companies:

- 62% strongly disagree.
- 38% disagree.

None of the SMEs represented in the study implement or apply ISO 9001:2015 in their organizations, as indicated by the majority disagreeing with implementation.

These findings suggest a gap in knowledge and implementation of ISO 9001:2015 quality system certification among Soweto textile and clothing manufacturing SMEs. Lack of access to information, consultants, and awareness about ISO 9001:2015 certification could potentially hinder the improvement of quality systems and processes within these organizations.

Soweto Textile and Clothing SMEs Financial Performance

Gap Analysis:

- 8% of respondents strongly opposed conducting a gap analysis.
- 36% of respondents were somewhat opposed.
- 26% remained neutral.
- 30% of respondents were somewhat in favor.

Gap analysis helps identify opportunities for improvement, organizational shortcomings, current business state, and assists in achieving business goals. It also aids in identifying required skills and attracting a talented workforce. Monthly Financial Targets and Sales Volume.

- 14% of respondents strongly opposed monthly meetings to discuss financial targets and high-sales volume pursuit.
- 40% were somewhat opposed.
- 17% remained neutral.
- 27% were somewhat in favor.

Effective financial planning and sales strategies are crucial for business success.

Capital to Cover Monthly Expenses:

- 15% of respondents strongly opposed the notion of having enough capital to cover monthly expenses.
- 64% were somewhat opposed.
- 21% remained neutral.

Sufficient capital is essential for maintaining business operations and stability.

Business Performance Improvement:

- 6% of respondents strongly opposed the idea that the company's business performance improved in the past year.
- 59% were somewhat opposed.
- 30% remained neutral.
- 5% were somewhat in favor.

Business performance improvement is a key indicator of organizational success and stability.

These findings suggest various levels of support and opposition among Soweto textile and clothing manufacturing regarding key aspects of organizational management and performance. They underscore the importance of effective financial planning, performance assessment, and strategic decision-making for business success.

6. Discussion

Based on the findings of the study, it is evident that many non-accredited Textile and Clothing production SMEs in Soweto township face significant challenges, particularly regarding financial constraints and limited managerial capacity. These challenges hinder their ability to afford the implementation or accreditation of ISO 9001:2015 standards, which could potentially improve their performance and competitiveness in the market.

Given the economic and social context in which these SMEs operate, it is recommended that further research be conducted to explore how ISO 9001:2015 principles can be applied effectively to minimize operational costs without compromising product or service quality. This research should focus on developing strategies and frameworks tailored to the specific needs and constraints of Soweto Textile and Clothing production SMEs.

Additionally, there is a need for interventions and support mechanisms targeted at addressing the underlying challenges faced by these SMEs, such as access to finance, capacity building in entrepreneurship and management skills, and assistance in meeting financial targets. Collaborative efforts involving government agencies, industry associations, and development organizations could help create enabling environments and provide necessary support for the growth and sustainability of Textile and Clothing production SMEs in Soweto Township.

Recommendations

The recommendation for further research on how ISO 9001:2015 can be applied as a Quality Management tool to improve business performance and Customer competitive advantage while minimize operational costs for Soweto Textile and Clothing SMEs without compromising product or service quality is indeed pertinent. Implementing ISO 9001:2015 principles can offer several potential benefits to the Soweto textile and clothing SMEs.

The research identified the below potential areas for further research and exploring:

Process Optimization: Investigate how the implementation of ISO 9001:2015 can help streamline production processes within Soweto Textile and Clothing SMEs. This could involve identifying and eliminating non-value-added activities, reducing waste, and improving overall efficiency.

Resource Management: Explore strategies for optimizing resource utilization within SMEs, such as better utilization of existing equipment and facilities, optimizing inventory management practices, and identifying opportunities for cost savings in procurement processes.

Training and Capacity Building: Investigate the role of employee training and capacity building in ensuring effective implementation of ISO 9001:2015 standards. This could include training programs aimed at enhancing employees' understanding of quality management principles and their role in driving continuous improvement within the organization.

Supplier Management: Examine how SMEs can leverage ISO 9001:2015 requirements related to supplier management to build stronger relationships with suppliers, negotiate favorable terms, and ensure the quality and reliability of inputs and materials.

Cost-Benefit Analysis: Conduct a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis to assess the potential financial implications of implementing ISO 9001:2015 standards for Soweto Textile and Clothing SMEs. This could involve comparing the upfront costs of implementation against the potential long-term savings and benefits associated with improved quality, reduced rework, and enhanced customer satisfaction.

By conducting further research in these areas, policymakers, industry stakeholders, and SMEs themselves can gain valuable insights into how ISO 9001:2015 can be effectively leveraged to minimize operational costs while maintaining high standards of quality in product and service delivery.

7. Conclusion

The study was intended to look at the application of the ISO 9001:2015 principles and how it can influence the performance of a business in non-accredited Soweto Textile and Clothing production SMEs. The researcher observed

that most textile and clothing manufactures SMEs based in Soweto township lack adequate resources. These businesses often operate in constrained environments such as backyard rooms and garages with limited space. Additionally, they commonly utilize standard household sewing machines, such as Fenci multi-sewing machines, which may not be suited for industrial production demands. The researcher further observed the potential challenge faced by SMEs in Soweto Township in meeting the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 standards regarding resource management. Lack of proper infrastructure and equipment impacted on the efficiency and quality of production processes, further affecting the overall competitiveness and sustainability of Soweto textile and clothing production. Addressing these resource constraints may require interventions such as access to funding, technical assistance, or infrastructure development initiatives tailored to the needs of SMEs in Soweto.

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