

# Clothing Recycling for the Production of Throw Pillows: A Strategy for Family Economic Sustainability

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## Abstract

*The study focused on clothing recycling for the production of throw pillows for family sustainability during economic hardship. Specifically, the study was guided by 3 objectives. Research and Development (R & D) design was used for materials and method. Prototype throw pillows were produced and subjected to a panel of 20 respondents to determine the aesthetics using the parameters for suitability of fabric, choice of design, colour, unit assembling, finishing and general acceptability. The parameters were assessed using a four-point rating scale with a cut - off point of 2.50 as acceptable. The findings show 11 uses of recycling old clothes into throw pillows (3.00-4.00); acceptability level on aesthetic attributes of recycling old clothes for production of throw pillows (4.00); and six economic advantages of clothing recycling into throw pillows. The conclusion is that clothing recycling can enhance family sustainability, stimulate local economy and contribute to environmental conservation during periods of economic hardship. Recommendations for the study are: Government and schools should establish entrepreneurship centers where individuals can be taught the uses of clothing recycling.*

**Keywords:** Clothing Scraps, Recycling Practices, Throw pillow, Family Sustainability.

## Introduction

Economic hardship often compels families to adopt innovative practices that not only cut costs but also support environmental sustainability. In recent years, clothing recycling has emerged as an effective way to transform textile waste into useful products. In a society where most families could earn a living through recycling, reselling and production of throw pillows. Clothing recycling is the method of reusing or reprocessing used clothing, fibrous material and clothing scraps from the household. Clothing recycling could also be defined as the process by which old clothing and other textiles are recovered for reuse or material recovery (LeBlanc, 2023). Gadkari and Burji (2024) view recycling as a dynamic process,

emphasizing that new creative product can be launched into the market using old garments. Recycling offers both economic and environmental benefits by earning money from piles of old garments and keeping the environment clean.

The clothing industry is one of the largest contributors to waste in many countries. In Nigeria, as in other developing economies, discarded clothing poses environmental challenges and economic opportunities. Recycling used clothes reduces landfill waste, greenhouse gas emissions and pollution while promoting economic development and addressing unemployment problems (Abu, 2023). According to Hertantyo (2022), recycling is a key component of modern waste reduction and is the third

component of the “Reduce, Reuse and Recycle” waste hierarchy. It involves selection, collection, sorting and processing of used clothes into reusable materials, requiring specialized machinery for effective execution. Brown and Taylor (2021) have documented the importance of recycling old clothes, noting its potential to reduce landfill use and lower production costs. Green (2020) also stresses that repurposing items like gowns, shirts and bed sheets into throw pillows can reduce reliance on expensive commercial products while addressing the issue of textile waste.

Throw pillows, or toss pillows, are small decorative furnishing items made from various textiles, including cotton, linen, silk, leather, microfiber, suede, chenille and velvet. These articles play a key role in interior design and come in different shapes, sizes and finishes such as tassels and piped edges (Hamilton, 2023). Throw pillows are essential for comfort and health but are traditionally expensive due to the use of new materials. In times of economic hardship, finding affordable alternatives becomes crucial.

Ngozi and Sonye (2021), defined sustainability as meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. This emphasizes the importance of sustainable practices such as clothing recycling. According to Steele (2025), sustainable fashion refers to the production and purchase of clothing in a manner that is environmentally friendly and socially responsible. Khandual and Pradhan (2021) further define sustainable fashion as a movement to produce and use clothing in ways that are better for both people and the environment. Al-Shihri (2023) describes four globally accepted approaches to sustainable fashion, these are environmental, social, cultural, and economic sustainability. Ibrahim (2021) adds that these approaches guide

sustainable practices within the fashion industry. Makinde, Fajuyigbe, and Ajiboye (2025) explain that economic sustainability in fashion entails transforming clothing at the end of its life cycle into new products, minimizing waste and conserving resources. During economic hardship, families face rising living costs and limited disposable income.

Recycled clothing offers an innovative solution to clothing challenges. Integrating recycling practices into throw pillow production aligns with broader environmental goals, supports local economies and provides families with cost-saving alternatives (Hawley, 2021). Such initiatives are crucial for policymakers, home educators, families and small-scale entrepreneurs (Ibrahim, 2021). Much of Africa’s clothing waste especially in Nigeria and Nasarawa State can be recycled into useful products. By checking closets, individuals may find garments suitable for recycling. This practice not only minimizes waste but also generates income and environmental benefits (Khandual & Pradhan, 2021).

Encouraging recycling practices will help maintain environmental cleanliness and promote entrepreneurship with lower capital requirements. Fashion designers and clothing stakeholders could set up recycling businesses, generating jobs and sustaining recycling practices across Nigeria. Economic hardship forces families to adopt sustainable practices to cut costs and conserve resources. This study explores clothing recycling for throw pillow production as a cost-effective and environmentally responsible approach to family sustainability during tough economic times.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. determine the methods by which

- old clothes can be recycled into throw pillows.
2. determine the acceptability level on aesthetic attributes of recycling old clothes in the production of throw pillows.
3. assess the economic advantage of clothing recycling

### Materials and Methods

The study adopted Research and Development (R & D) design. R& D method follows specific methods in the development of throw pillows by recycling old clothes. Steps were outlined on the production of throw pillows to examine the types of old clothes that can be recycled in production of throw pillows.

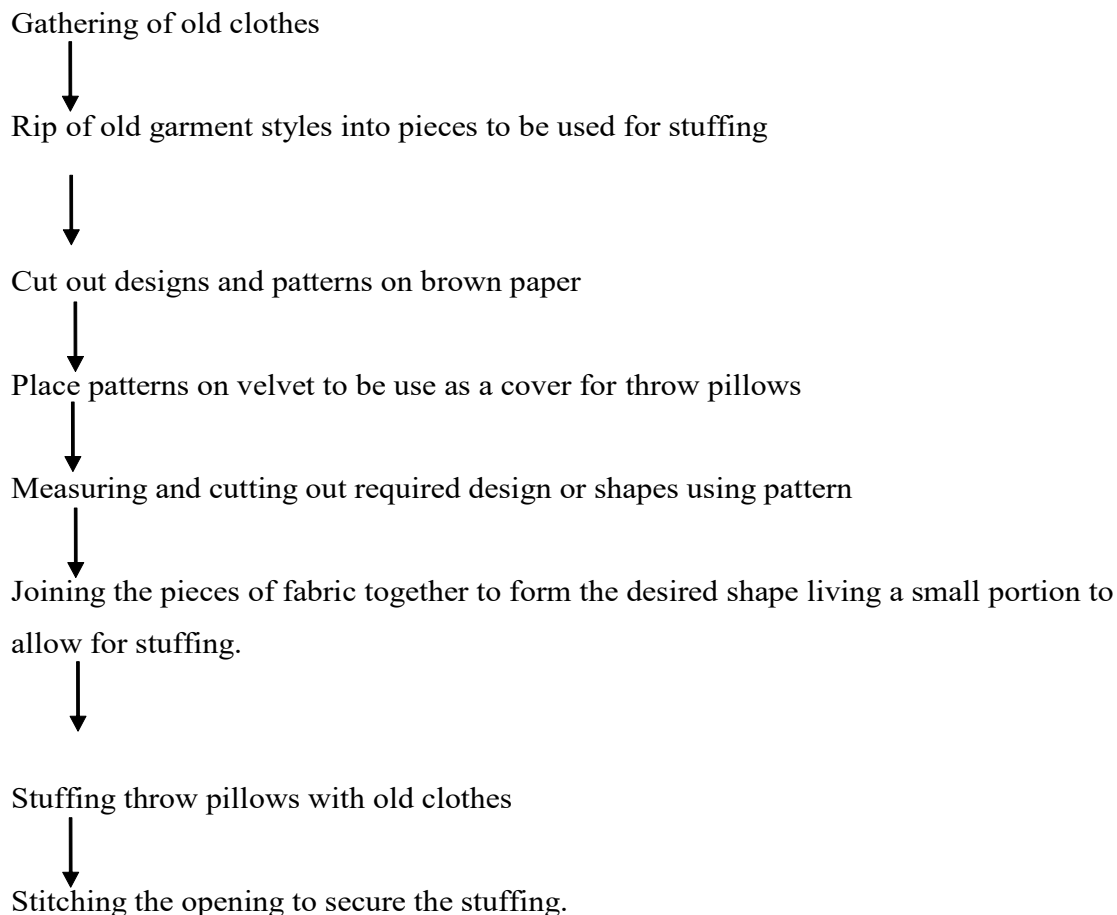
### Materials and Tools for the Production Processes of Recycling Clothes into Throw Pillows

The materials needed for the production processes of throw pillows: Old and unused clothes, needle, thread, brown paper, pencil, measuring tape, sewing machine, pins, ruler, zippers, buttons, iron and ironing board.

### Source of Materials

Old clothes were gathered, sorted, ripped off, cut out into the required shapes and sewn together using sewing machine. The production size is within the range of 14inches by 14inches throw pillows. Different shapes of throw pillows will be produced.

### Flow chart to show the processes of throw pillow production below.



**Flow chart showing production process of throw pillows using old clothes.** Flow chart procedures explain how old clothes can be recycled into throw pillows.

### Sample and Sampling Technique

The Panel of judges were sampled from 20 respondents who formed the panel of judges from the department of Home and Rural Economics College of Agriculture Science and Technology Lafia.

### Method of Data Collection

The finished product was accessed by 20

judges base on the acceptability level on the attribute of suitability of fabric, choice of design, color, unit assembling, finishing and general acceptability using four-point rating scale; Like Extremely (LE) 4, Like Very Much (LVM) 3, Dislike Very Much (DVM) 2, and Dislike Extremely (DE) 1.

### The Final Prototype of Recycled Throw Pillows



### Method of Data Analysis.

The statistical tool used for analyzing the data collected is mean. Any response with a mean of 2.50 and above means the items is agreed while with means below 2.50 is disagreed. The mean score of the judges was used to determine the acceptability level.

### Results

Table 1 shows the mean responses for the 11 items on the use of recycling old clothes with the scores from 3.00 – 4.00, which is far above the cut-off point of 2.50.

**Table 1. Mean Responses on the Uses of Clothing Recycling in Lafia.**

| Items                                | Mean |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| 1. Production of Decorative articles | 3.70 |
| 2. Reduce excessive clothing Buying  | 4.00 |
| 3. Saves Disposable products         | 3.50 |
| 4. Used as fillings                  | 3.60 |
| 5. Reduces Environmental Waste       | 3.70 |
| 6. Reduces Pollution                 | 3.20 |
| 7. Saves Time                        | 4.00 |
| 8. Clothing Swap                     | 3.00 |
| 9. Charity donation                  | 3.00 |
| 10. Saves Energy                     | 3.50 |
| 11. Transforming to new garments     | 3.00 |

Table 2 shows the mean rating on the acceptability level on aesthetic attributes

of throw pillows made from recycled clothing at 4.00 as liked extremely. The

result shows that the aesthetic attributes of the throw pillows are above the cut-off point.

**Table 2: Mean Rating on Acceptability of Recycled Old Clothes in the Production of Throw Pillows.**

| S/N | Acceptability Level on Aesthetic Attributes | Mean |
|-----|---------------------------------------------|------|
| 1   | Choice of design                            | 4.00 |
| 2   | Colour combination                          | 4.00 |
| 3   | Unit assembling                             | 4.00 |
| 4   | Finishing                                   | 4.00 |
| 5   | General acceptability                       | 4.00 |

**Table 3: Mean Rating on Assessment of Economic Advantage of Clothing Recycling into Throw Pillows**

|    | Economic Advantages of Clothing Recycling         | Mean |
|----|---------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Cost saving                                       | 4.00 |
| 2. | Generate income to the home                       | 4.00 |
| 3. | Reduction of accumulated old clothes in the home  | 4.00 |
| 4. | Reduce waste on landfill litters with old clothes | 4.00 |
| 5. | Reduce carbon footprint pollution                 | 4.00 |
| 6. | Job creation Innovation                           | 4.00 |

## Discussion

The study focused on clothing recycling in the production of throw pillows for family sustainability during economic hardship in Lafia Metropolis. Old clothes such as jersey, jeans, velvet fabrics, Ankara clothing, curtains, trousers and shirt can be used to produce throw pillows. Old towels, bed foams, pillowcases and bed sheet can be recycled as stuffing in throw pillows production. Table 1 shows the articles that can be made from recycling old clothes into throw pillows and these includes: Making cleaning rags, Producing Tote bags, making quilts articles, throw pillow stuffing, Scrunches bags, charity donations, clothing swap, transforming to new garments among others. This finding is in consonance with that of Chavan, (2014) who revealed that Garments or other textiles that are no longer wearable can be used in a variety of ways, such as: Make dust cloths from it, give it to

children for playing dress-up, and use it in rag rugs. Use it to tie up plants in the garden, use as stuffing for toys or pillows, use in craft projects such as quilts; donate it for textile recycling at local recycling center. According to Hertantyo (2022), recycling is a key component of modern waste reduction and it is the third component of the "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle" waste hierarchy. The necessary steps in the recycling process involve the donation of used clothing, collection, sorting, and subsequent transportation to end users of used garments, rags, and other recovered materials such as furniture and mattress material, linens, draperies, cleaning materials, and many other items.

Table 2 shows the acceptability level on aesthetic attributes the produced throw pillows based on the following parameters: choice of design, color combination, unit assembling, finishing

and general acceptability. Table 3 is on the economic advantage of clothing recycling into throw pillows, Chika. (2023) noted the importance of textile recycling are as follows: reduce wastes and landfill space, reduce greenhouse gases produced when textiles are burnt, reduce air and water pollution, reduces use of new raw materials, creates economic development and helps to reduce unemployment problems. It further mentioned some African entrepreneurs who are successful in the business of waste recycling. These young men and women have created jobs, built wealth, and save Africa's natural environment.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

Clothing recycling for the production of throw pillows is an easy way to save money, stimulate local economies and contribute to environmental conservation and job creation during economic hardship. There are old clothes suitable for recycling into throw pillows and old clothing should not be thrown out. Based on the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Families should adopt recycling of old clothes into throw pillows as a sustainable practice to earn a living.
2. Entrepreneurship centers and tertiary institution including professional home scientist should be involved in the training of students and the unemployed on clothing recycling.

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