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NIGERIAN TEXTILES AND FASHION AS A TOOL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JOB SECURITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

Clothing and Fashion are two inseparable terms. Clothing which is about the earliest format of human artistic expression, reflects man's environment, culture, society and community. Man needed to protect himself from harsh weather conditions and nakedness. Later on in the history of textiles, body adornment in the form of clothing became fashionable, a display of identity, profession and prestige. This eventually led to fashion. Fashion itself is the style accepted by a large group of people at a particular time and place. It is a universal formatting principle in civilisation. In recent times, the fashion industry in Nigeria has seen great revolution nationally and internationally. This paper is a study of Nigerian fashion between 1970 and the present day. It is aimed at identifying trends in Nigerian Clothing and Fashion, and recommends strategies for economic development and security for the 21st century. It is justified in this paper that clothing and fashion is a tool for economic development and job security in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Clothing, Fashion, Job Security, Economic Development.*

Background to the Study

Nigeria is made up of different cultures and religion which have affected their dressing. The people dress in many types and styles of clothing, with some basic similarities of each region. Since the Arab conquest, Islamic dress codes of modesty have influenced the clothing of Northern Nigeria and to some extent Western Nigeria. The men still wear full-length tunic and wrapped shirts with elbow-length or long sleeves known as kaftan made of cotton. Women wear veils after marriage.

The development of textiles for clothing started with leaves and animal skins. Single skins were worn as capes thrown around the shoulders made of a simple garment. Needles were made from animal bones and used for sewing animal fur and leather garments. Cloth and clothing are components of fashion. Clothing refers to fabric used for covering the body, while cloth refers to fabric or textile. The earliest garments were made of leather and non fabrics, which are included in category of clothing. Clothing remains a major creative focus for many people in the society. People invest substantial resources, time, material, money and labour with the secondary effect that as people create and wear clothes, they also make statement about themselves. Clothing is a principle medium through which identity is expressed and symbolized all over the world. Clothing remains a major creative focus for many people in the society. People invest substantial resources, time, material, money and labour with the secondary effect that as people create and wear clothes, they also make statement about themselves. Clothing is a principle medium through which identity is expressed and symbolized all over the world.

<http://www.internationalpolicybrief.org/journals/international-scientific-research-consortium-journals/intl-journal-of-business-vol3-no1-feb-2015>

Textile design is about creative decoration of fabrics and other allied products for clothing, drapes and furnishing. The decoration may be through dyeing, painting, printing, embroidery, appliqué or other decorative processes. The symbolized identities of the people are expressed physically in their dress style. In other words, people all over the world are identified by their dressing- Textiles. Clothing and fashion is a component of Textile design which is an area of the visual arts. It comprises of necessary creative skills with economic value which will inculcate proper education for self reliance and job security. The production of textiles is a strong tool for entrepreneurship in the Nigeria and the global market to help curb restiveness, reduce poverty, creates wealth through employment and highlights the region for tourism and industrialization. The textiles and fashion industry is a huge employer of labour. Between the 1970 and 1990 when all the textile industries were functioning, a lot of people were employed. The unnecessary militancy and restiveness was not there because the active populace had put their energy to useful venture in the industries.

Fashion is a subtle reflection of the social, political, economic and artistic forces of any given time. Fashion design is the art of creating new styles with correct application of the elements and principles of design to an acceptable standard for a larger group of people at a particular time and place. Fashion itself is a continuing process of change in the style of living, including dress and behaviour that is accepted and followed by large groups of people at any given time and place. The concept of Fashion implies a process of style change, because fashion in dress has actually taken very different forms at different times in History. Many cultures through History have followed fashion and in some way changed as a result of contact with other societies and competition for status within a society, Individuals have also had an impact on fashion change.

Textiles and Clothing adapted from the missionaries, Colonial Administration, neighbouring communities and Modern Textile industries of the 20th and 21st centuries. They are the prevailing styles of adorning the body. This at some point in the fashion affected the traditional clothes which became obsolete and were almost squeezed out of market. The Colonial administration great influence on dress fashion in Nigeria as they were involved in the school system as teachers' and court clerk, with their hosts. The dress fashion during this period was mainly readymade imported dresses, which were easy and smart to wear to work. Eventually, technological influence came with the introduction of powered loom in Nigeria. According to Okeke (1997), the first powered loom introduced into Nigeria, a one man business, was in 1947 by the Mubi Textiles Limited, which used kerosene engine. In 1957 a modern Textile mill with 288 looms and 13000 spindles was established in northern Nigeria and since then, there has been a significant increase in the number of modern textile mills established in the country numbering about sixty-five by 1973-4.

In the 1970's through the 1990's quality of tailoring improved significantly as many professional tailors made their ways to Britain, Italy, France and Germany to further their training in the skill of modern design and dress making. Many of them returned to establish garment industries and tailoring shops, which since that period have increasingly improved and modernised dress fashion locally. Modern textile industries in Nigeria contributed to the improvement of the quality of the indigenous textile products in a number of ways. The design

quality of some of the factory-made fabrics influenced and enhanced the pattern application on native clothes, thereby modernizing them to keep abreast with the changing tastes of the modern Nembe Se fashion and clothing. Textile mills produced coloured woven fabrics for traditional costumes, shirting, blouses, and suits. The mills were owned by foreigners so they found it more economical and convenient to follow modern European design trends that are popular. They accepted designs only on order.

Textiles and dress is a symbol of identity. Okeke (1996) is of the opinion that textiles and dress are principal medium through which identity is expressed and symbolized all over the world. Bridgewood (2002) sees dress as a matter of ethnicity and a the wearer's place of origin. Chukueggu and Cyril-Egware (2009) collaborates that textiles reflects man's environment, his society and community and stand as means of non-verbal communication in revealing the culture and history of a people. This Welters (2002) observed that dress was once used to identify individuals as members of specific groups in Greece, and confirmed that the communicative power of dress is very visible. Cyril-Egware (2012) confirms that textiles and their use as dress are foremost in the expression of a people's identity. It is a significant aspect of a people's culture.

The dyeing of fabrics is the prerogative of men in the Northern part of Nigeria due to religious belief. It is practiced as a native industry which generates funds for their livelihood. In the Southern part of the country, places like Abeokuta, Osogbo, Oyo, Ibadan, Ogbomoso, Ondo, Akure, Owo and Ekiti, do not segregate in the dyeing industries, they have greatly popularized the trade whereby it does not only generate income for their families, but the art is sought for and patronized nationally and internationally. There is barely an Africa textile that has not been subject to change in response to internal and external influences.

However, Nigerian traditional textiles are currently making waves nationally and internationally even as they exist side by side with the industrially mass produced textiles. In spite of this development, this has not made any significant impact in the Nigerian economy in recent times. This may have been as a result of non existence of textile production culture in the region for economic growth and empowerment, or as a queue into the fashion trend. Textiles and fashion play vital rolls in the development of the Nigeria, educationally; politically, socially, economically and culturally. From field research, it became necessary to document the history and culture of twins especially in Nembe on fabric, which could serve as identity and as well industrialize the people for sustainable global economic development. symbol of relations between different ethnic groups. Adamtey (2008) sees traditional clothing as customary clothes that identify

The Effect of the Industrial Revolution on Textiles and Fashion

The First modern industry began with John Kay's development of the flying shuttle in 1733. The Industrial Revolution which took place in Europe (England) about the 18th century and at the beginning of the 19th century, impacted on the development of local fabrics in Nigeria. It led to the changes in the textile industries in Nigeria. Textile revolution flooded Nigerian market with cheap mass produced fabrics. The revolution contributed to the improvement of the quality of local fabrics and products in a number of ways. It created awakening among the Cotton yarns

were spun by machines and were readily available in different colours and qualities, and cheaper than the imported ones. These in turn fed the weaving section, making it possible for the local hand loom weavers to produce cheaper, colourful and quality fabrics. The pattern applications on Nigerian clothes were modernized, thereby keeping abreast with the changing tastes of modern Nigerian fashion.

There was a massive growth economic, social and political change in the textile and fashion industry. Sewing machines were invented as against the handmade garments. These were first used to make civil war uniforms, later they were used for the mass production of everyday men's wear. Garments were cut and sent in a plant to homes for sewing. Entrepreneurs later brought workers and machinery together in factories to save time, cost and to keep count over production. Small groups and associations create their own costumes for identity. In later times, fashion became more organised in classes, each having different roles in economic, social and intellectual development. At some point, the class system became less ridged, making fashion even more generalized, indicating the economic level of people as well as their environment.

The 20th century witnessed a completely new situation in clothes, traditionally customized, now mass produced. Fabrics are more available and less expensive and the garment industry has grown by leaps and bounds, becoming an extremely important economic factor worldwide. At present automated and the various technical and scientific development of the post industrial system have shaped most societies. In Nigeria entertainers and world champions in various fields are the role models and idols in fashion.

Problem of the Study

How can Nigerian textiles and fashion serve as a tool for global economic development, when Nigerians themselves do not value their own products? This have led to poor visual documentation of the first clothing worn by several communities in Nigeria. Fashion schools where potential designers are trained are not properly funded. As a result of mismanagement of funds and bad administrators, the Nigerian textile industries which could feed the fashion sector are closed down.

Objective of the Study

This paper there for seeks to identify reasons for the irreparable depression of the Nigerian textile industries which was a high employer of labour, Identify areas of global economic development and Recommend policies to restructure the system for job security.

Research guide questions

- 1 Is there any reason why Nigerians do not value their own textiles?
- 2 Is there any significant difference between Nigerian textiles and fashion and what is found in Europe and America?
- 3 Is Nigerian textiles and fashion recognized globally as a tool for economic development and job security in the 21st century?

Methodology

Experimental method was used. The primary source was oral interviews drawn from the research guide questions. This was administered to Fashion students, certificate, OND & HND student, Undergraduates and post graduate students, Textiles and fashion lecturers, design houses, and event managers.

Nigerian Textiles and Fashion as a tool for global economic Development

The effects of Textiles and Fashion in global economy are enormous. There basic clothing's and fashionable clothing's. At different times in history, fashionable dresses have been taken in different forms. People initially wore clothes to cover their nakedness, protect their body from environmental hazards, modesty adornment or for ornamentation. Archaeological and anthropological evidence suggests that early people may have decorated their bodies with paint, tatoos and other types of body ornamentation even before weaving clothing made of fur or fabric. In recent times, nearly every person follows fashion to some extent. Few people dress in clothing's found in high fashion magazines or on fashion show run ways.

Discussion of Findings

Clothing serves social and symbolic purposes, making the industry very viable. An industry such as the textiles and fashion industry have the potentials of enhancing other area of Global economy such as factory work, transportation, communication, computerization for mass production, custom duty, import and export agents and agencies, Consumers / market, tourism - carnival, fashion show runway.

Textile and Fashion for Sustainable Development

Over the years, several governments have introduced measures aimed at curbing poverty for sustainable development by providing social amenities and establishing educational institutions, Better life for rural women, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Family Support Programme (FSP) and through seminars and conferences. This is because no nation can succeed without a viable and strong economic base. NEEDS in its inception encouraged co-operative societies among which were small scale hairdressers, textile producers in skill acquisition centers, weavers, printers, designers, embroiders etc for self reliance. This concept contributes significantly to the unemployment market as well as sustaining individual economic power, thereby curbing restiveness and other negative vices in the society.

The oil and gas industry has generated so much idleness leading to a lot of negative development especially in the Niger Delta region. Other economically viable industries are dormant and have increased unemployment leading to poverty especially in the oil rich Niger Delta. This have led to an assumption of an intractable life style of the people in the region, thereby forming various militant groups to pursue the resources control cause under the umbrella of the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND). Other militant groups include Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (INDPVF) and the Niger Delta People Salvation Front (NDPSF) to mentioned but a few. This took another dimension as militants resulted to bank robberies, hostage taking, and closure of flow stations.

The quest for amnesty with respect to militancy by the federal government of Nigeria was meant to rehabilitate and create an alternative source of livelihood for them. This effort however, has not been very successful, as several other idle youths in the region have taken advantage of the lucrative nature of hostage taking to form faceless robbery groups with their selfish aim.

Amadi (2012) is of the opinion that Nigeria is full of business potentials which if optimally harnessed, will completely eradicate the menace of unemployment and poor living standards. He further states that the Nigerian youths need adequate sensitization on, value orientation and attitudinal change in entrepreneurial development. In his entrepreneurship for national development, textiles and fashion are stated as lucrative and viable areas of enterprise for Nigerian youths.

Aniakor (2004), in Uzoagba (2004), states that "Art is a means of creating order out of chaos." He further stated that it is a way of thinking, a philosophical method that enables man to discover himself, clarify his consciousness and project them through effective works of Art which stimulates and nourishes both intellectual and emotional domains of human consciousness. From Aniakor's view, textiles as a visual art are a source or avenue to rehabilitate youths to become self-reliant and become useful to the society.

Textile design is an area of the visual Arts with necessary creative skills and economic value which will inculcate in the youths proper education for self-reliance and job security. Textiles encompass every human endeavor, without which the world will go naked. It includes clothing, furniture and soft toys. Ogunsiakan (2002) opines that textiles in several ways have shown that their importance to man particularly to Nigerians is prosperous and can alleviate the poverty syndrome that Nigerians have witnessed over the years. The production of textiles is a strong tool for empowering the youths, in the Nigeria economically to help curb restiveness, reduce poverty, creates wealth through employment and highlights the region for tourism and industrialization.

Conclusion and Recommendation

No society can develop and function effectively socially, politically, economically, technologically, industrially, educationally, religiously and aesthetically without clothing and fashion. The History of the world can be read in the clothing and fashion of a people and it contributes a lot in projecting their culture. It conveys the cultural occupation and activities of the society. It can be used to determine cultural values, beliefs, taboos, norms and geographical features of any ethnic group.

Empowerment involves the emergence of entrepreneurship education as a tool for empowering the Nigerian Youths. This can be achieved in textiles as a vocational course. There can be an overall sustainable development if Nigerian textile industries are revamped to meaningfully create and gainfully employ labour. The production of textiles is a strong tool for empowerment in global economy to help curb restiveness, reduce poverty, creates wealth through employment and highlights the region for tourism and industrialization.

With constant change in fashion, Nigerian textiles in form of tie/dye and batik, aso oke, akwete,

pelete bite, ankara, embroidery, appliqué and other areas of textile design have become a major source of economy, making waves nationally and internationally. They are used to sew modern dresses, costumes, furnishing and industrial wares. Nigerian textiles in form of tie/dye batik and ankara have recently taken over the fashion industry this is admirable in the styles and accessories from numerous ideas from various fashion centers. Even the people wear and make use of it extensively. The main area of focus is Nigerian Textiles and Fashion as a tool for global economic development and job security in the 21st century. Tie/dye batik though of Javanese origin is highly practiced in the western and northern parts of Nigeria. Raw materials for production are readily available. It will help alleviate poverty for sustenance of social, political, cultural and economical peace to help build a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens as stated in the National Policy on Education (1998). It will also lead to self employment, industrialization, tourism, enhanced cultural environment which will in turn lead to job creation and global market.

Research on adire indicates that its production has experienced highs and lows since its inception in the late nineteenth century. The tradition had seriously waned by the end of the Depression years but then reached a high point by the time of Nigeria's independence in the 1960s. It would have again disappeared by the 1980s were it not for enterprising and creative individuals such as the textile artist known as Nike, who brought adire production to new heights. Initially inspired by Ulli Beier and his art center at Oshugbo, Nike has successfully created workshops in three Yoruba towns (Oshugbo, Ogidi, and Abuja), where women actively engage in the production of both traditional adire and its wax batik derivatives. Nike's reputation as a textile artist, making her adire clothing visible to an international audience.

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