Printing on Tie-Dyed Background – A New Approach in Tie-Dye

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Abstract

The study "Printing on tie-dyed background- a new approach in tie-dye" was an attempt at exploring the possibility of introducing a new approach of printing on tie-dye background. Many scholars have studied different aspects of tie-dye, but literature on this new approach is scanty and besides, such new technique of printing patterns on tie-dyed fabric appears to be inadequate and scanty in published literature and must necessarily elicit many questions such as how to go about it, the kinds of materials used in its productions, as well as the possible challenges encountered during the production process and the utility of the product. The objective of the study therefore includes the introduction of a new approach in tie-dye design, exhibition of the end product of printing on tie-dye fabric, as well as the arousal of interest in creativity, self-expression in the minds of the audience and adding more aesthetics to the conventional methods of producing tie-dye fabric design. The study was carried out in Imo State, located in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. The research design entailed a tie-dye production with a composition of indigenous musical instruments such as Usha, Ogene (Metal gong) and Ekwe (wooden gong) from Imo state that were printed on tie-dyed background. The study was carried out in a visual form showing the possibility of having these two techniques of fabric designs namely tie and dye and printing as one concept.

Key Words: Tie and dye, Printing, Musical instruments, new approach

Introduction

Textile is a household name with lots of designs. Textile designs involves lots of creative process and a highly complex skill set which depends on the development of concepts, technical knowledge, as well as the proper understanding of colour theory and design principles. In order to methodically translate ideas into unique designs and structures for knitted, woven, or non-woven fabrics, designers are expected to go the extra mile of sourcing the needed inspirations in addition to the use of a range of hand and digital tools. The textile world is a very broad area upon which humanity depends on in almost

every aspect of lives. The use of textile materials by man is daily, and covers a great deal of activities. Most importantly, textile designs are worn as clothes for unfavorable climate conditions of the environment, used to furnish homes and other numerous activities (Omuaru, 2002).

As obtainable in most creative disciplines, the design process for textiles starts with visual research and the assemblage of ideas often times from nature, art, architecture, and other primary sources to gather inspirations for color, surface, structure, as well as the development of patterns. Strickfaden et al., (2015) and Eckert (1997) contended that research affirms the importance of inspirational sourcing as a means of developing content for designs, eliciting new ideas, and in supporting effective design management. In addition, Eckert (2000) argued that inspirational source contributes to not only the aesthetic outcome of a design, but also shapes the process of designing. Motifs for textile designs could be sourced from traditional or cultural environment of the artist such as their musical instruments either for cultural revival or preservation of cultural artifacts.

Uzoagba and Olorukooba (1991) and Omuaru (2002) opined that several tribes in Nigeria produced beautiful traditional fabrics and they were very much appreciated in modern fashion world both in and out of Nigeria. These products ranged from hand woven to tie-dye, batik and many more forms of designed cloths such as *Aso-oke*, *Akwete*. Lately, the Kalabari cut thread called *pelete bite* is another style of fabric decoration that adds to the number. The designs of these African traditional fabrics are adorable and reflect the culture of the people.

A tie-dye design cloth is a fascinating craft and very popular fabric design amongst the West Indies and Yoruba in Nigeria (Uzoagba, 2002). At modern times, tie-dye making cuts across all boundaries. It is an industry that attracts both men and women with improved techniques and materials, as exemplified in this innovative printing on tie-dyed fabric which is one of the objectives of this research work.

Textile Printing

Printing is a process that is similar to dyeing in which a fixed pattern is applied to one side of the fabric by means of a dyestuff carrier paste (Omuaru 2002) and apart from exploiting the effects achieved by using natural fibres, according to Kadolph, (2007), the only way to introduce colour into textile designs is by printing, bleaching and dyeing. Textile printing is related to dyeing but, whereas in dyeing proper, the whole fabric is uniformly covered with one colour at a time; in printing one or more colours is applied

to it in certain parts only and in sharply defined patterns. Furthermore, in printing, wooden blocks, stencils engraved plates, rollers or silk screens are used to place colours on the fabric. Colourant used in printing contain dyes thickened to prevent the colour from spreading by capillary attraction beyond the limits of the pattern or design. Traditional textile printing techniques may be broadly categorized into four styles namely, direct printing in which colourants containing dyes, thickeners and mordant or substances necessary for fixing the colour on the clothes are printed on the desired background, the printing of a mordant in the desired background prior to dyeing clothes; here the colour adheres only where the mordant was printed. The third traditional category is the resist dyeing in which wax or other substance is printed on the fabric which is subsequently dyed; the wax areas do not accept the dye leaving uncoloured background against a coloured one and the discharge printing in which a bleaching agent is printed onto previously dyed fabrics to remove some or the entire colour. The resist and discharge techniques were particularly fashionable in the 19th century, as were combination techniques in which indigo resist was used to create blue background prior to block printing of other colours. However, most modem industrialized printing uses direct printing techniques. There are six distinct methods at present in use for producing patterns on clothes. These are hand block printing, perrotine or block printing by machine, engraved plate printing, engraved roller printing, stencil printing and screen printing.

Problem Statement

Tie-dye fabrics make excellent fashion, dresses and costumes for schools, plays and pageants, scarves, ties, mats cushions, book covers, windows and door blinds. A great deal of research work and practices have been carried out in these fields and immense results and successes have also been recorded (Mahmoudabadi, Talebi and Jalili 2019, Hu, 2018, Fijul Kabir et al, 2019) but the new technique of printing patterns on tie-dyed background appears to be inadequate and scanty in published literature. In addition, the intrinsic knowledge of the product remains vague. Much questions that still ring in the minds of artists include: how to start and finish? what kinds of materials are involved in such productions? what problems do they encounter when producing such piece? and of what utility is this production?

Deriving from the foregoing, the objective of the study includes:

(a) The introduction of a new approach in tie-dye design.
(b) Exhibition of the end product of printing on tie-dye fabric
(c) Arousal of interest in creative and self-expression in the minds of students in Fine Arts department and students of other departments in general and

(d) Adding more aesthetics to the conventional methods of producing tie-dye fabric design.

Significance of the study

The significance of this research work cannot be over-emphasized because it will not only increase technical know-how for students in Fine and applied Arts department and gifted people out of school students but will also serve as a substitute for tie-dye products. In addition, it will enable the students to learn a lot about techniques and materials used in executing such works and provide good and viable economic environment to be self-reliant in this recessed economic world. Finally, it will lay solid foundation for people to be useful to themselves and the society at large.

Research Methodology

The study was carried out in Imo State which is located in the South eastern part of Nigeria. According to the National Population Commission [2006], Imo State has a population of about 3,934,899 people with an annual growth rate of 3.2 per cent. The State is divided into three zones namely: Owerri, Okigwe and Orlu.

The design entailed a tie-dye production with a composition of indigenous musical instruments such as *Usha, Ogene* (Metal gong) and *Ekwe* (wooden gong) from Imo State that were printed on tie-dyed background. The work portrayed expression and creativity in the use of materials, elements and principles of design. Data were collected by observations, oral interview, and information from art books, academic journals, magazines and internet services.

Data Analysis

Tie-dyeing is a fascinating craft requiring very little equipment. The fabrics were manipulated, bound or sewn so that during the dyeing process, some parts would resist the dye. These dyed and undyed areas formed unusual texture and patterns on the cloth**.**

Method of Production

The printing started with the thumbnail sketches followed by the production of the draft which served as a model for the larger ones. The production passed through five stages.

Tying the Fabric: The production (both for the draft and the main work) started by washing the fabrics to remove stains not visible to the eyes which could hinder the fabric from absorbing the dye solution very well and tying thereafter. The fabrics were then

folded into the number of times desired and tied with cotton thread. Pleating tying method was used to achieve the pattern on the fabrics.

Dye Preparation: There are different kinds and make of dyes. Each type has its process depending on the company that produced it. Vat dye or household or Dylon dye was used for this production.

Four packets of dye-fix were dissolved in a small quantity of hot water and added to the bath. Thereafter, eight spoonful of table salt or sodium hydrosulphite were added to the dye bath, eight spoonsful of caustic soda were also poured into the dye solution. The solution was thoroughly stirred.

Dyeing Procedure: Five metres of fabric was thoroughly washed and immersed in the dye bath and stirred. The soaked fabric was brought to simmer, stirred constantly to ensure even coverage for 20 minutes, and then dyed for another 20 minutes. The fabric was rinsed with clean water until water ran clean. It was untied and dried away from direct heat and sunlight.

Printing Process: Stencil printing technique was used in this production.
A composition of indigenous musical instruments from Imo State was drawn on a paper. The motif was cut out into stencil showing the perforated negative of the design. The stencil was placed on the tie-dyed fabric, foam- soaked ink was dabbed on the stencil already attached to the fabric, through the negative. The stencil was raised and a replica of the design on the stencil was achieved. This exercise was repeated until specific areas of the fabric were covered with the motif that formed the pattern.

Discussion and finishing: The designed fabric was starched and ironed to fix the colour, finally packaged and ready for display and appreciation.

Ekwe and Ogene



The musical instrument-*Ekwe* produces a distinct sound and for this reason, it is usually used for signalling an emergency, community meetings, or warning of intruders' presence. The *ekwe* is one of the most popular musical instruments in Igbo culture and it is produced from a simple tree trunk that is hollowed inside. They come in large, medium, and small sizes depending on the region. Common drums used in Igbo celebrations are the pot drum, slit drum (*Ekwe*), Iroko, and Egede drum. The size of *ekwe* depends on the event. These *ekwe* are used during coronations, rituals, and other cultural events.

In the earliest times, *Ogene* is used as a means of communication and singing devices. It is used in the community by the town crier to call for meetings and to announce the festival or to pass information to the villagers. Also in ancient times, *Ogene* were used for religious rituals, feasts, for announcing the arrival of royalty. And like drums they were sometimes used to pass information across great distances, using well-known rhythms as a form of language. The sound of a gong echoing across the hills could be used to pass messages from one town to another far faster than a man on horseback ever could.

Result and Appreciation: One was satisfied by looking at the work "Printing on Tie-dyed background' in its final presentation because a pre-determined objective of using visual to express one's mind has been achieved. After the final photograph taken, the project is ready for display and open for appreciation.

Assessment: Different people have different understanding in interpreting art work more especially a work of this sort where printing and tie-dye designs were merged together. To the uninformed, they may say, printing work should have been separated from tie-dye work. To others, it is a mix media design. But to the artistic eye, it is a way of expression and creativity. To the art students, it will serve as a motivating factor to express creativity in art works, while to students of other departments; it will challenge them to improve in their areas of study to create tangible record after their studies. It will enable the students learn a lot on the techniques and materials used in the execution of such work.

To the college community, it has added more reference materials to the existing one in the library and in the department. To the society, it has provided alternative to tie-dye fabric design for use. It will also be useful to the Imo State indigenes since it can be used as uniforms especially during dancing competitions.

Applications: Tie-dye (*Adire*) when completed is sewn for different wears and used for different occasions, such as traditional wear of the Yoruba called "Buba" for ladies, traditional wear of the Yoruba called "Agbada" for men, native long skirt and blouse for

outing, three quarter skirt and blouse for outings, costume for dancing competition and coronation of prominent persons.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations:

This research was designed to demonstrate the resultant effect of the combination of printing and tie-dye designed background. The project was carried out in a visual form showing the possibility of having these two areas of fabric designs as one concept. This was expressed where the pictures of indigenous musical instruments formed a pattern on a tie- dye background.

Conclusion: The essence of art is to develop and strengthen the dormant talent of individuals in a bid to make such talents profitable to both the person concerned and the society at large. This research work has clearly shown the dividends of such role and indeed its socio-economic importance to the society and Nigeria at large.

Recommendations: For further growth in creativity and self expression, it is pertinent to recommend that students should be encouraged to embark on practical projects to actually demonstrate their skills. The school should provide training materials for proper skill acquisition, encourage excursions for better exposure and enlightenments. Fine and Applied Arts should be well placed in the school curriculum to ensure that students get all round development as provided by the subject and to increase the technological development of the country.



Fig. 1:
Artist: Anyanwu Chinwe, Title: Akwa Igbo, Medium: Pencil, Size: 20x32cm
Year of Production: 2008



Fig. 2:
Artist: Anyanwu Chinwe, Title: Akwa Igbo, Medium: Pencil, Size: 20x32cm
Year of Production: 2008

Appendices



Appendix 1: The dyed fabric in the cooking pot to steam for 20 minutes



Appendix 2: Artist removes the dyed clothes from the boiling pot after 20 minutes.



Appendix 3: Artist tying the fabric with twine to form resist pattern on the fabric after dyeing process.



Appendix 4: Artist mixing the dye solutions in a hot water dye bath.



Plate 1:
Artist: Anyanwu Chinwe, Title: Tie-Dye (*Adire*), Medium: Tie-dye , Size: 5 yards
Year of Production: 2008



Plate 2:
Artist: Anyanwu Chinwe, Title: Akwa Igbo, Media: Tie-dye and Printing, Size: 5 yards
Year of Production: 2008

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