Dress Identity and Cultural Affiliation of the Yoruba Tradition in Social Functions in the South Western Nigeria.

By

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Abstract

The place of dress is not new in Yorùbá cultural practices and it is beyond a concept that can be undermined in Yorùbá cultural view. A Yorùbá person must not only wear a modern cloth that is in vogue, but must also barb or wear hairdo that agrees with current Yorùbá fashion. The objectives of the study assess demographic characteristics of respondent and examines necessary indigenous Yoruba clothing purchased for social functions, its also examines the societal and cultural values of Yoruba clothing consumption for social occasions; Cultural clothing presents dress as a non-verbal communication tool that individuals and groups use for social or cultural interaction. The study was carried out in Oyo, and Abeokuta. Four areas were randomly selected including aso-ofi craft centers and tie-dye production center. The data collected was subjected to descriptive statistical analysis, these include frequency distribution, mean, percentage, frequency count and standard deviation was used to present the data on the table. The use of cultural clothes among the Yorùbá people have become important communication tool to the society. The study recommends that the Yorùbá individuals should use their cultural attachments to developed identity to form part of the traditional orientation activities for people.

Dress, in Yorùbá culture, comprises of clothing human body and body adornments. The place of dress is not new in Yorùbá cultural practices and it is beyond a concept that can be undermined in Yorùbá cultural view. A Yorùbá person is expected to cover all his or her sensitive parts of the body with dress,

anyone whose appearance lacks these dressing quality will be regarded as being improperly dressed, 'naked' or insane. Therefore, in accordance with the high standards to the Yorùbá tradition; (Òmolúabi, meaning: some with impeccable manners). There are appeared traits of elegance in Yorùbá dressing style that conforms to both contemporary and modern fashion that relates its present dress style to the recent that does oppose to the memoir of the traditional past and seasonal change, Adeoye, (2005). Season, as used here, means change in fashion and has nothing to do with planting seasons or the seasonal changes. In other words, a Yorùbá person,



A cross section of Yorùbá indigenous cloths (**Source:** National Institute for Cultural Orientation, Iganmu, Lagos, Nigeria).

as part of his identity as an individual and as a member of a cultural societal group, is expected to possess a wardrobe of dress items and fashionable cloths and at least a full three pairs of aso-ofi. Aso-ofi or aso-oke is widely accepted as most

prestigious cloths in Yorùbá traditional fashion. A Yorùbá person must not only wear a modern cloth that is in vogue, but must also barb or wear hairdo that agrees with current Yorùbá fashion.

The broad objective of this study is to curb the excesses of elites in the selection of extravagant clothing.
The objectives of this study therefore
1.assess demographic characteristics of respondent;
2. examines necessary indigenous Yoruba clothing purchased for social functions
3. examine the societal and cultural values of Yoruba clothing consumption for social occasions;

2.Functions of Yorùbá Clothing

The Yorùbá clothing serves are purposely worn to showcase individual characters, these are adjudged by the wears household through the dress the individual puts on, apart from shielding human body from harsh weather and concealing person nudity, Labode, (2012). Cultural clothing presents dress as a non-verbal communication tool that individuals and groups use for social or cultural interaction. It is a silent language with a silent vocabulary, Braide, (2012). Clothing can convey a person's attitude and way of life, as well as their dignity and social standing (Sahoo, 2018).

Clothes are undoubted one of the ornate materials used by people from different culture as part of ascription of adornment that complete human fashion expression, (,2005). Clothing plays an important role in people's social life as one of cultural desire for the approval presentation of its traditional styles of appearance from which others culture shared through their dressing and perceptions.

The Yorùbá dressing has function as traditional aesthetic, satisfaction, modesty, status and identification. For instance, the appearance of Yoruba elites beautifully dressed to social gathering such as naming ceremony, wedding or festivals has enhance their cultural identities in the society. Through clothing the basic expectation are met and satisfied both physically and socially by elites that prove how clothing is also used to reflect the Yorùbá's cultural appearance and

interpretation. These emphasize importance of social interaction within the cultural frame works as a basis of passing messages that are linked to individual culture by acquiring meaning for perceptions that are interpreted as a culturally diverse in promoting further traditional interaction.

Pageant of Cultural Dressing Theory

Quite numbers of private and public entertainment that consist Yoruba colourful dress costumes that are always on elaborate procession of people dressing in indigenous attire. The cultural dressing theory shows that a lot of viewers perceive one another to gathers information about the dress style and processes the pieces of information to form a coherent dressing strategy that forms a unified Yorùbá impression of dress tradition that enables a clear definition to the other culture. These recognize the importance of Yorùbá clothing as a cultural symbols and *oriki* (indigenous lineage verbal communication), that motivates the individual to interact both in establishing the self-identity and in the identification of other culture. Adepeko, (2010), in Yorùbá aso-oké self-identity, has written that, clothing as a non-verbal communicator motivates the wearer based on their clothing symbols. It must be noted that every Yorùbá person has *Oriki*. The *orik*i belongs to each family lineage and it guides every aspects of the Yorùbá social life, these include family crafts, trades and dressing which could be found in different parts of Yorubaland, most notably amongst the Oke-Ogun, Ijesha, Oyo, Ilorin, etc. in Western Nigeria.

In order to understand the clothing symbols that motivates the wearer expressions, one needs to understand:

a. Cultural background

The cultural background and environment revealed the identity of the individual.

b. Gender of the wearer

It is imperative that gender of the wear has to be revealed through the dress forms. Through these forms in dressing,

i. perception
ii. patterns
iii. processes

c. **People's Perception**

People interpret series of individual appearances to assess culture standard and socialization . All these are used as a paradox in Yorùbá culture, especially when

a well dressed individual with Yorùbá attire is sighted, people who are in doubt of his or her identity could say; '*Aso Nla, ko ni Eniyan Nla'* i.e. a well-dressed person is not necessarily a well- placed or highly remarkable person.



Dandogo is too costly to be sewn for fun (Sources: Personal Collection)

The Yorùbá place of dress in establishing individual identity and cloth symbols without prejudice to other indigenous casual dresses such as *jepé* that emphasizes the present position of individual that wears the cloth. It is posited that it serves as a caveat in the reality that cultural dress has espouses probably differ markedly

from an objective reality of the individual and, as such, individuals should separate a person's paraphernalia from his or her objective identity, Olaoye,(2005).

Compared to the earlier position, the second subsumes a paradox, if not a contradiction. This paradox or contradiction is made more pronounced in contemporary Yorùbá society, where clerics of religious organizations loudly admonish their followers to 'dress the way you want to be addressed'.

A quite number of developments have taken place in Yoruba land that has reflected on dress. These were noticed with the advent of Islamic and Christianity religions that spread to Yorùbá hinterland. The introduction of western education and neo-independence along with military rule came as impressive transformation to Yorùbá dress identification, Soremekun,(2002). This has all played fundamental roles as many individuals from southwest were involved in collective participation of dress culture in Yorubaland. Colonialism did, however, have a negative impact on the Yorùbá dress styles in southwest Nigeria. Some Yorùbá individuals experienced a new foreign dressing styles that became a condition that connected to any social functions within and beyond Yorùbá vicinities. Many Yorùbá people gained wealthy of foreign exposure: positive or negative, as a result of foreign dress influence.

Research Methodology

The study focuses on the procedures used for the study. The procedures are discussed under the following sub-headings: design of the study, area of the study, population of the study, sample size and technique of study, instrument of data collection, validation of instrument, reliability of instrument, method of data collection, and method of data analysis.

Research Design

In other to archive the purpose of the study, the survey research design was employed. The survey study employs questionnaire to determine opinions, preferences, motivations and perception of elites in the selection of extravagant clothing consumption.

Study Area
The study was carried out in Oyo, and Abeokuta. Four areas were randomly selected including aso-ofi craft centers and tie-dye production center .

Population of the Study
The target population is for male and female residence of the four selected areas..

Sample size and Sampling Techniques

Sample size
26 respondent were randomly selected from the four areas making the total number of respondent to be 104.

Sampling Technique
A two-stage sampling method was adopted as follows:

Stage 1:
The four locations was randomly selected among all areas in both Oyo and Abeokuta South western state.

Stage 2:
A total of twenty-six (26) respondent were randomly selected from each locations.

Sampling Procedure
Data were gathered with the use of questionnaire. The questions were of the Likert-like with the scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

Data collected was preceded by data processing and interpretation of the data as the next procedure. The answers of the participants were tabulated and the frequency, distribution, table of values, and percentage of the answers were determined.

Research Instrument
The instrument for data collection was questionnaire organized into five sections based on the objectives of the research

1. Section A: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents
2. Section B: Examine unnecessary waste in the purchase of extravagant clothing among the Yorùbá people during social functions.
3. Section C: examine the societal and cultural values of clothing consumption among elites during family functions and weddings
4. Section D: determine reduction in wasteful practices in clothing among elites during family functions and weddings
5. Section E: evaluate the consumption of clothing materials among elites during family functions and weddings.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

The questionnaire was subjected to face validity by the researcher. A pilot study was conducted on 10% of the sample size in the study area to test the reliability of the research instrument. The questionnaire was regarded as reliable with a minimum coefficient of 0.8.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was subjected to descriptive statistical analysis,these include frequency distribution, mean, percentage, frequency count and standard deviation was used to present the data on the table.

Table A. 1:

Dress Identity and Cultural Affiliation Among Elites During Family Functions

Result in Table A. reveals that mean value ($\bar{x}$) of reduction in cultural practices in clothing among elites during family functions and weddings in the study area. Finding shows majority (64.4%) of the respondents (i.e. elites) agreed that they avoid purchasing clothing impulsively and only buy what they truly need for family functions was with the mean value of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.66), while majority (64.2%) of them agreed that they considering the environmental impact of clothing choices before making a purchase was with the mean value of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.64), majority (61.7%) of them agreed that investing in high-quality of Yorùbá clothing that can be worn to other family functions was with the mean value of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.61) and above half (54.8%) of them agreed that avoid purchasing of oversized Yorùbá cultural clothing materials was with the mean value of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.57) based on the reduction in cultural dress practices in Yorùbá clothing among elites in the study area.

Furthermore, above half (56.7%) of the respondents agreed to boosting of Yoruba dressing identity practice is essential for a more sustainable culture was with the mean value of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.56) and 56.7% of the respondents agreed that they recycling and reusing of Yorùbá clothing items after social or cultural functions help in promoting cultural identity was with the mean value of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.48) and above half (56.7%) of the respondents agreed that taking into consideration the longevity of Yorùbá clothing item before purchasing it was with the mean value of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.40) based on the reduction in wasteful practices in clothing among elites in the study area. Soremekun,(2002) pointed out that, fashion is a dynamic collective process yet it influences individuals' lives in a distinctively personal way in the society. It is through the process of fashion that new styles are created, introduced to a consuming public and popularly accepted by that public. Societal values influence indigenous people' choice of foreign dress styles (Labode and Braide, 2021).

Table A.2: Evolving Cultural Dressing Practices Among The Yorùbá People during Social Functions. (n = 104).

Evolving Cultural Dressing Practices Among Yorùbá People	SA(%)	A(%)	U(%)	D(%)	SD(%)	Mean
Recycling and reusing of Yorùbá clothing items after social or cultural functions help in promoting cultural identity	29(27.9)	30(28.8)	18(17.3)	16(15.4)	11(10.6)	3.48
Repairing or altering Yorùbá clothing items instead of discarding them	29(27.9)	21(20.2)	19(18.3)	14(13.5)	21(20.2)	3.22
Considering the environmental impact of cultural dressing choices before appearance	31(29.8)	36(34.6)	13(12.5)	16(15.4)	8(7.7)	3.64
high-quality of Yorùbá clothing that can be worn to other family functions.	33(31.7)	31(29.8)	19(18.3)	9(8.7)	12(11.5)	3.61
Avoid foreign purchasing clothing impulsively and	34(32.7)	33(31.7)	12(11.5)	18(17.3)	7(6.7)	3.66

only wear what I truly need for the function						
Taking into consideration the cultural attributes of Yorùbá clothing and dressing items before social engagements	33(31.7)	26(25.0)	12(11.5)	16(15.4)	17(16.3)	3.40
boosting of Yoruba dressing identity practice is essential for a more sustainable culture .	38(36.5)	21(20.2)	14(13.5)	23(22.1)	8(7.7)	3.56
Willing to be identified with Yorùbá dressing tradition for sustainability of cultural society	10(9.6)	14(13.5)	11(10.6)	39(37.5)	30(28.8)	2.38
Open to reused or buying used clothing for social functions	12(11.5)	11(10.6)	20(19.2)	24(23.1)	37(35.6)	2.39
Avoid oversized Yorùbá cultural clothing materials	28(26.9)	29(27.9)	22(21.2)	18(17.3)	13(12.5)	3.57

Table B. 1: Usage of Different Yorùbá clothing attires among indigenous People During Social Functions

Result in Table C. reveals that mean value ($\bar{x}$) of usage of Yorùbá clothing attire among people during social functions in the study area. Finding shows majority (74.0%) of the respondents (i.e. Yoruba People) agreed that they wear different indigenous clothing materials so that they can be mixed and matched to create various similar cultural outfits for several social functions was with the mean value of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.95), while above half (58.6%) of them agreed that they consider the origin of materials when buying clothes for the social functions was with the mean value of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.63), majority (60.6%) of them agreed that they give out cultural clothing materials they no longer need after the social functions was with the mean value of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.61) and above half (54.8%) of them agreed that they consider breathability and comfort when dressing in Yorùbá cultural clothing materials was with the mean value of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.55) based on the consumption of clothing materials among elites in the study area. Furthermore, above half (54.8%) of the

respondents agreed that they prefer buying from local designers, traditional weavers and artisans was with the mean value of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.52) and 55.8% of the respondents agreed that they reconsider the durability of Yorùbá clothing materials before buying was with the mean value of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.41) and above half (55.8%) of the respondents agreed that they buy new cultural clothing materials for different social functions was with the mean value of $\bar{x}$ = 3.35) based on the consumption of cultural clothing materials among Yorùbá people in the study area,.Shittu,(2022) noted that changing collections Yoruba cultural about every three weeks has induced consumers to act with a new behavior called "see now—buy now". Collections and new fashion items are not only seasonally brought to market, but increased during the year.

Table B.2: Consumption of clothing materials among elites during family functions and weddings

TABLE C

B:2:

Consumption of clothing materials among elites	**SA(%)**	**A(%)**	**U(%)**	**D(%)**	**SD(%)**	**Mean**
New cultural clothing materials for different social functions	22(21.2)	36(34.6)	17(16.3)	14(13.5)	15(14.4)	3.35
Respondents agreed that they reconsider the durability of Yorùbá clothing materials	34(32.7)	24(23.1)	14(13.5)	15(14.4)	17(16.3)	3.41
I prefer to wear Yoruba cultural clothing materials to the foreign ones	23(22.1)	30(28.8)	15(14.4)	26(25.0)	10(9.6)	3.29
I consider the origin of materials when buying clothes for the social functions	41(39.4)	20(19.2)	15(14.4)	19(18.3)	9(8.7)	3.63
I consider breathability and comfort when dressing in Yorùbá cultural clothing materials	34(32.7)	24(23.1)	18(17.3)	21(20.2)	7(6.7)	3.55
I give out cultural clothing materials I no longer need after the social functions	32(30.8)	31(29.8)	20(19.2)	10(9.6)	11(10.6)	3.61

I prefer buying from local designer and artisan	35(33.7)	22(21.2)	13(12.5)	30(28.8)	4(3.8)	3.52
I wear different indigenous clothing materials so that they can be mixed and matched to create various similar cultural outfits for several social functions	46(44.2)	31(29.8)	13(12.5)	4(3.8)	10(9.6)	3.95

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The Yoruba people in the study area require clothing education in order to reveal their identity on cultural clothing selection. The use of cultural clothes among the Yorùbá people have become important communication tool to the society. People use Yorùbá cultural clothing to express who they are, how they feel and what they believe; to express their socio-cultural identity, emotions, self-image and esthetic tastes they made out of traditional norms and ethics. Majority of the Yoruba people's dressing sampled were feel of the societal pressure in order to showcase their status and the cultural clothing brand they wear. They are often conscious to buy their cultural clothing items because the Yoruba trends in fashion. Also, many people agreed that they prefer cultural clothing for traditional dressing styles to foreign clothes and dressing styles and wearing luxury brands to enhance their social status anywhere they are found in the society.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Yorùbá individuals should use their cultural attachments to developed identity to form part of the traditional orientation activities for people.
2. This study also recommends that people should be able to differential acceptable indigenous Yoruba clothing from foreign ones.
3. There should be a way to teach and developed clothing education programmes by organizing seminars and workshops for the Yoruba people on modest dressing practices in the society for their benefits morally, socially and academically.

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