

EVALUATION OF THE PRODUCTION PROCESS AND CONSUMER ACCEPTABILITY OF THROW PILLOWS FROM INDIGENOUS FABRICS AMONG YOUTHS IN ILORIN, KWARA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the production and acceptability of throw pillows made from indigenous fabrics among youths in Ilorin, Kwara State. The specific objectives were to identify the types of indigenous materials suitable for throw pillow production, to describe the process of producing throw pillows using these materials, to investigate the challenges associated with their use, and to assess the level of acceptability of the finished products. A total of 100 respondents were randomly selected for the study. Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire and an evaluation scorecard, while the mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that adire (tie-dye), batik, and aso-oke fabrics were generally preferred and accepted for throw pillow production. Major challenges identified included the high cost, limited availability, and certain fabric attributes that affect usability. Respondents strongly agreed that the perceived expensiveness and scarcity of indigenous fabrics posed significant constraints, while issues related to vibrancy and outdated appearance attracted lower levels of concern. Among the fabrics assessed, batik was rated highest in terms of shape, finishing, and overall acceptability. The study concluded that throw pillows characterised by high-quality textiles, aesthetic appeal, and good structural form are more acceptable to youths. It further concluded that the high cost, unavailability, and limited diversity of indigenous fabrics hinder their wider adoption. Consequently, the study recommends diversifying fabric options, exploring cost-effective sourcing strategies, improving accessibility, enhancing fabric quality, integrating traditional fabrics into contemporary designs, and promoting cultural and environmental awareness to increase acceptability and contribute to youth empowerment.

Keywords: Acceptability, Throw pillows, Indigenous, Youth, Empowerment, Fabrics.

INTRODUCTION

Shelter is one of the basic needs of man, which is essential for his ultimate survival and functionality. However, housing must meet certain needs of man, such as protection, privacy, as well as comfort. In making a house a comfort zone, a number of things are required. Such things include furnishings, which in turn comprise hard and soft furnishings. While hard furnishings are basically the "hard" items that give comfort in the home, soft furnishings are vice-versa. One of the articles used in the home as soft furnishing is throw pillows (Anyakoha, 2015).

Throw pillows/cushions (Figure 1) are also known as scatter cushions. According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, a throw pillow is a small decorative cushion (made of cloth or leather that is filled with soft material, often has an attractive cover, and is used especially on chairs for sitting or leaning on) that can be moved around and used in different places.

Decorative pillows are commonly used to tie in colour accents within a room, often drawing on the colours in drapes, walls or area rugs. They can also be used to give a more casual feeling by looking as though they were thrown onto a piece of furniture. A fabric is a material made through weaving, knitting, spreading, felting, stitching, crocheting or bonding that may be used in the production of further products such as clothing and upholstery, thus requiring a further step of the production (Douglas, 2015). Fabric is a material made of fibres, a textile or cloth (Webster 2012).

Contemporary fabrics are materials that have been used in recent times. Contemporary fabrics for the production of throw pillows include cotton, velvet, wool, fur, leather, linen and chenille.

Indigenous fabrics are clothing materials produced or existing naturally in a particular region or environment. The most commonly made indigenous fabrics in Nigeria include Adire and Aso-oke. Adire fabric is the indigo-dye cloth made in Southwestern Nigeria by the Yoruba women

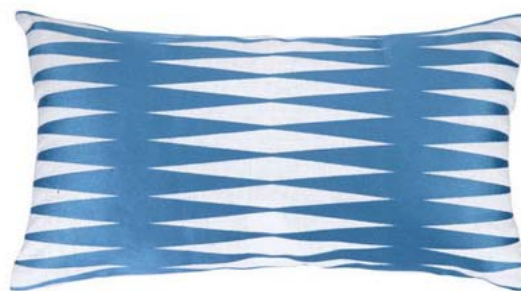
using a variety of resist-dyeing techniques (Wolff, 2014). Aso-oke fabric is a hand-woven cloth created by the Yoruba people of West Africa. Aso-oke means “top cloth” in the English language, denoting cloth of high status (Nnadi 2019).

However, the indigenous fabrics have long been associated with cultural heritage and traditional craftsmanship. However, as contemporary design

trends continue to shape consumer preferences, there is a need to explore the acceptance of products made from indigenous fabrics in modern contexts. One such application is the production of throw pillows using indigenous fabrics. These products can bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, especially among Nigerian youths (Lee & Martinez, 2019; Brown & Johnson, 2018).



Bolster pillow



Lumbar pillow



Square pillow



Round pillow

Fig. 1: Different Throw Pillows

This research gap highlights the need for a comprehensive study that delves into consumer perceptions, preferences, and willingness to embrace throw pillows produced from indigenous fabrics, while also exploring how the production and marketing of such items can contribute to the economic and cultural empowerment of the youth population (Smith et al., 2017).

It is therefore obvious that the use of indigenous fabrics for throw pillow production is rare, particularly among our youth. Therefore, the study investigates the production and acceptability of throw pillows made from indigenous fabrics for our youth.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study was to investigate the production and acceptability of throw pillows produced from indigenous fabrics for usage among

youths in Ilorin, Kwara State. Specifically, the study determined:

1. Identify types of indigenous fabrics that can be used for a throw pillow.
2. Investigate challenges facing the usage of indigenous fabrics for throw pillow production.
3. Determine the acceptability of the throw pillow produced from indigenous fabrics.

Research Questions

1. What are the types of indigenous fabrics that can be used to produce throw pillows?
2. What are the challenges facing the usage of indigenous fabrics for throw pillows?
3. What is the acceptability of a throw pillow produced from indigenous fabrics?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design: The research design adopted for this study was a Research and Development and descriptive research design. The design is suitable for this study as it allowed the researcher to develop the product and seek opinions that are then tested statistically from respondents.

Population of the study: The population of the study comprised all youths in Tanke, Ilorin.

Sample for the study: The sampling of the respondents was done by using a simple random sampling technique, and one hundred (100) respondents were randomly selected for the collection of data.

Materials: Materials used were: dye source, Caustic soda, processed cotton thread, hydrosulphite, wax, fabrics, dye (green and orange), fibre (for filling), linen and ribbon. Utensils: plastic buckets, wooden stick, glove, twine, measuring spoon, wax foam, filler, extender, wheel or axle motor, sewing machine, needle and thread,

Methods:

Substrates Treatment: Three (3) yards of white cotton fabric were divided into two (one and a half yards each) were scoured to remove the starch before waxing (for batik only) and dyeing

Method of dyeing fabric: Four (4) tablespoons of caustic soda, two (2) tablespoons of hydrosulphite and two (2) tablespoons of dye (green and orange separately) were put inside a plastic bucket. One (1) litre of water was boiled and then added to the chemical gently. The scoured fabric was put inside the dye solution and was left for three (3) hours. It was then removed, untied and dried under a cool temperature before the fabric was rinsed.

Method of making batik: The melted wax was applied to the scoured fabric. Four (4) tablespoons of caustic soda, two (2) tablespoons of hydrosulphite and two (2) tablespoons of dye

(green) were put inside a plastic bucket. One (1) litre of water was boiled and added to the chemicals gently. The mixed chemicals were allowed to cool before immersing the waxed fabric. The wax fabric was then removed and dried to absorb the dye mixture. Three (3) litres were boiled to dewax the fabric. The dewaxed fabric was then washed, rinsed and dried.

Method of weaving aso-oke: The processed cotton thread was inserted into the spindle through the extenders. Pegs were tagged to the constructed poles. The two-step pedals were pressed to enable the cotton thread to open and the reeler was put through to one side. The spindle allows the reel to be finely set interchangeably. The cotton thread was thrown to be received with the other hand. The weaving continues, the cotton thread is woven and gradually extends forward. The drawer pulled the cloth forward and the weaving continues to give an end result as Aso-oke.

Method of making throw pillows: The fabric was cut into 2 pieces measuring sixteen (16) inches square. The linen (inner) was also cut into 2 pieces measuring 16 inches square. The inner was sewn while the fabric was pinned together on all four sides. The inner was then filled with fibre and sewn closed. The fabric was stitched and stuffed with the filled inner and stitched together with a zip opening.

Instrument for data collection: An evaluation score card and a structured questionnaire were developed for data collection.

Data collection and analysis: Data were collected from the respondents by administering the evaluation score card and questionnaire. The data collected were statistically analysed using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question I: Determine the type of indigenous fabric that can be used for throw pillows

Table 1: Types of Indigenous Fabrics That Can Be Used for Throw Pillow Production

S/N	Types of indigenous fabrics	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Tie-dye	2.2273	0.84046	Agree
2.	Batik	2.1136	0.83641	Agree
3.	Aso-oke (woven fabric)	2.1932	0.84225	Agree

Source: Field survey, 2022

The table shows that the identified types of indigenous fabrics that can be used for throw pillow production in the study area, which are Tie-dye, Batik, and Aso-Oke, are all liked and accepted. This is so as the mean of the responses of the respondents is above the 2.00 criterion mean (benchmark) set based on the 3-point scale adopted for the questions. A mean rating of an item by the

respondents which is above 2.00 is considered liked and accepted, while any mean below it is considered as disliked and rejected.

Research Question II: Determine the challenges facing the usage of the indigenous fabric for throw pillow production

Table 2: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Challenges facing usage of indigenous fabrics for throw pillow production

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	Remark
1	They are expensive	3.94	1.34	Agree
2	They are not readily available	3.67	1.13	Agree
3	Tie-dye fabrics are not colourfast	3.97	0.82	Agree
4	Some of them are not presentable	4.07	0.69	Agree
5	Aso-oke is not a good fabric for throw pillow production	3.94	0.89	Agree
6	They spoil easily	3.77	0.96	Agree
7	They are flammable	4.03	0.85	Agree
8	They cannot be cleaned easily	3.60	1.17	Agree
9	Indigenous fabrics are not colourful	3.22	1.48	Agree
10	Indigenous fabrics are too old-fashioned for throw pillow production	4.05	0.84	Agree

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 2 presents the mean score, standard deviation and remarks on challenges associated with the usage of indigenous fabrics for throw pillow production. The table indicates that the respondents generally agree with the mentioned challenges, this is because they have a mean score that are above the mid mean score of 3.00. The most agreed-upon challenges include the perception that indigenous fabrics are expensive (mean = 3.94) and not readily available (mean = 3.67). Additionally, tie-dye fabrics not being colourfast (mean = 3.97) and some of them not being presentable (mean = 4.07) are also identified as challenges.

On the other hand, challenges such as indigenous fabrics not being colourful (mean = 3.22) and being considered too old-fashioned for throw pillow production (mean = 4.05) received relatively lower agreement levels. This implies that respondents agreed that indigenous fabrics are expensive, not readily available, not colour fast and presentable.

Research Question III: Determine the acceptability of throw pillows produced from indigenous fabric

Table 3: Evaluation Score Card on the acceptability of throw pillows produced from indigenous fabric

Sample code	Appearance	Shape	Texture	Finishing	Overall acceptability
Fur	4.48±1.49	4.53±1.85	4.90±2.05	4.5±2.03	4.60±1.86
Tie-dye	4.11±1.50	4.07±1.66	4.20±2.13	4.13±1.91	4.13±1.80
Batik	4.34±1.75	4.89±1.63	4.43±1.90	4.99±1.75	4.66±1.76
Aso-oke (woven fabric)	4.06±1.55	4.10±1.59	3.73±2.11	4.01±1.82	3.96±1.77

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 3 presents an evaluation scorecard that assesses the acceptability of throw pillows produced from different types of indigenous fabrics. The assessment is based on five criteria: Appearance, Shape, Texture, Finishing, and Overall acceptability. The results indicate that across all samples, Appearance scores range from 4.06 to 4.48, with standard deviations ranging from 1.49 to 1.75. This implies that the samples generally received positive evaluations in terms of their appearance, although there is some variability

in the ratings. For Shape, the scores range from 4.07 to 4.89, with standard deviations ranging from 1.59 to 1.85. The samples show variations in terms of their shape acceptability, with Batik fabric receiving the highest mean score for this criterion. Texture evaluations show scores ranging from 3.73 to 4.90, with standard deviations ranging from 1.90 to 2.13. Fur fabric received the highest mean score for Texture, while Aso-oke fabric received the lowest mean score.

Finishing scores range from 4.01 to 4.99, with standard deviations ranging from 1.75 to 2.03. Batik fabric received the highest mean score for Finishing, indicating that it was most positively evaluated in terms of this criterion.

The Overall acceptability scores range from 3.96 to 4.66, with standard deviations ranging from 1.76 to 1.86. These scores reflect the participants' comprehensive evaluation of the throw pillows produced from different indigenous fabrics. Batik fabric received the highest mean score for Overall acceptability. The evaluation scorecard implies that while all the indigenous fabric types received generally favourable ratings, there are differences in their performance across the assessed criteria.

Discussion of findings

Table 1 presents an assessment of the indigenous fabrics suitable for throw pillow production, aiming to determine which types are favoured by respondents. The evaluation focuses on three types of fabrics: Tie-dye, Batik, and Aso-Oke (woven fabric). This implies that respondents not only found these indigenous fabrics acceptable but also exhibited a level of preference for them. This aligns with the findings of Chao et al. (2018), who highlighted the potential of indigenous fabrics to resonate with consumers due to their cultural and aesthetic appeal. These results provide valuable guidance for designers and manufacturers seeking to incorporate culturally significant fabrics into their product offerings. This is also in line with the findings of Li and Kim (2019), who discussed the impact of culturally relevant materials on consumer perceptions and preferences

Table 2 presents challenges surrounding the utilisation of indigenous fabrics for throw pillow production. The table indicates that respondents generally agreed with the challenges outlined in the statements, which implies that the perceived challenges are acknowledged by the respondents as significant considerations. One of the most pronounced challenges is the perception of indigenous fabrics being expensive. This aligns with the findings of Smith et al. (2019), who emphasised the cost-related concerns associated with incorporating unique fabrics into commercial production.

Additionally, the challenge of the limited availability of indigenous fabrics is a noteworthy concern. This finding corroborates the observations made by Johnson and Lee (2020), who discussed the supply chain challenges faced by designers seeking to source non-conventional materials for their creations.

The survey data also highlights concerns related to specific fabric attributes. For instance, the apprehension that tie-dye fabrics might not be colourfast is in line with the position of Thompson et al. (2018), emphasising the need for longevity in fabric aesthetics. Similarly, the observation that certain fabrics are not considered presentable, with findings of Chen and Kim (2017) regarding material suitability and perceived product quality.

The relatively lower agreement levels for challenges such as indigenous fabrics lacking vibrancy and being deemed outdated for throw pillow production suggest that respondents view these aspects with less concern. This finding aligns with the findings of Brown and Miller (2016) that traditional aesthetics can be revitalised and made attractive to modern consumers through creative design approaches.

The findings from Table 3 indicate that the samples of throw pillows, produced from different indigenous fabrics, garnered varying scores across the specified criteria, thereby shedding light on their acceptability in terms of different attributes.

Appearance results suggest that respondents generally provided positive evaluations regarding the visual appeal of the throw pillows. This aligns with the observations of Taylor and Clarke (2018), who emphasised the significance of the initial visual impression on consumer preferences and purchase decisions. The variability in the scores might be attributed to individual tastes and preferences in design and aesthetics.

Batik fabric received the highest mean score in terms of shape. This observation emphasises the role of shape in enhancing product appeal, corroborating the insights provided by Johnson et al. (2019) in their study on consumer preferences in home decor.

The Finishing category reveals that Batik fabric achieved the highest mean score, signifying that it was most positively evaluated concerning finishing aspects. This is in line with the study of Smith and Jones (2017), underscoring the importance of meticulous finishing in ensuring product quality and consumer satisfaction.

Finally, Batik fabric achieved the highest mean score in terms of Overall acceptability, implying that it received the highest comprehensive approval among the respondents. This aligns with the comprehensive nature of overall acceptability assessments discussed by Brown and Miller (2019), who highlighted the holistic evaluation

process consumers undertake when assessing product suitability.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the use of indigenous fabrics (Tie-dye, Batik, and Aso-Oke) for throw pillow production, focusing on their acceptability and associated challenges. Findings revealed that all three fabrics were well-received, with mean scores indicating suitability for throw pillows. However, challenges included high costs, limited availability, poor colourfastness, and some fabrics being perceived as less presentable, though concerns about being old-fashioned or lacking vibrancy were less significant. Acceptability evaluations showed all fabrics rated positively for appearance, shape, and finishing, but Batik excelled in shape, finishing, and overall acceptability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that:

1. While the identified indigenous fabrics are generally accepted, considering a diverse range of options could cater to different preferences and broaden the appeal of the throw pillows.
2. To address the challenge of high costs associated with some indigenous fabrics, exploring cost-effective sourcing methods, local production, or strategic partnerships could be considered.
3. Efforts can be made to streamline the supply chain of indigenous fabrics, ensuring they are readily accessible to manufacturers.
4. Developing techniques to enhance colourfastness and presentation of indigenous fabrics could mitigate challenges related to these aspects.
5. To counter perceptions of being old-fashioned, incorporating traditional fabrics in contemporary and innovative designs could attract a wider audience.
6. Educating consumers about the cultural and environmental value of indigenous fabrics could contribute to their greater acceptance and appreciation.

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