

Production of Garments Using Woven and Printed Fabric for Cultural Promotion and Income Generation in Abia State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on the production of garments using woven and printed fabrics for cultural promotion and income generation in Abia State, Nigeria. Specifically, the patterns for making garments with woven (Akwete) and printed fabrics were developed and used to produce garments which were evaluated for acceptability /suitability for garment production, cultural promotion and income generation. The study adopted an experimental research design. 20 final-year Home Economics students and 4 clothing and textiles lecturers evaluated the garments produced with the aid of an evaluator form. The result revealed that for both Male Senator Top (MST) and Blazer Suit Gown (BSG), the garments made from Akwete and Printed fabrics scored high in terms of suitability, appearance, texture, fitness, and general acceptability of the products. The highest score in all categories was given to the texture of the garments, with a mean score of 9.17 for Male Senator Top (MST) and 9.33 for Blazer Suit Gown (BSG). The general acceptability of Akwete and printed fabric garments was 77.17% for MST and 87.6% for BSG. In conclusion, the products of these two fabrics were well accepted and have the potential to thrive in the market. Due to their high acceptability, it was recommended that local garment industries and textile industries in Nigeria and internationally should actively support and promote the production of these traditional fabrics.

Keywords: Woven, Printed, Akwete fabric, Cultural, Income Generation, Garment Evaluation, Textile Industry, Abia State

INTRODUCTION

The production of garments using printed and woven fabric plays a significant role in the cultural heritage of Abia State, Nigeria. Textiles have a rich historical and cultural significance in this region, serving as a means of expressing identity, symbolism, and narratives deeply rooted in the local traditions and practices (Adibe, 2018).

Historically, textile production in Abia State has been an integral part of communal life and cultural identity (Iroegbu). Indigenous textile techniques such as Akwete weaving have been passed down through generations, showcasing intricate patterns, colour palettes, and motifs that are emblematic of the local culture (Ezeani, 2016). These textiles have not only served functional purposes but have also acted as carriers of stories, legends, and historical events (Omenka, 2021).

Woven fabric production is a cornerstone of Abia State's cultural heritage, contributing to its rich tapestry of traditions and identity. Woven fabrics are the result of an intricate interlacing of warp and

weft yarns, meticulously crafted by skilled artisans. These textiles embody the stories, customs, and beliefs of the region, making them an essential element of the state's cultural preservation and promotion efforts (Ezeani, 2016).

One of the prominent traditional weaving techniques in Abia State is Akwete weaving. The Akwete cloth is renowned for its vibrant colours, geometric patterns, and cultural significance. Skilled weavers employ a back-strap loom, an age-old tool that requires both precision and dexterity (Iroegbu, 2020). The weaving process involves the careful arrangement of warp threads on the loom, with the weaver manipulating the weft yarns to create intricate designs. The resulting fabric serves not only as clothing but also as a canvas for local stories, historical events, and community identity (Okoye, 2020).

The art of weaving is not only a creative endeavour but also a form of intergenerational knowledge transfer. Elders pass down techniques, patterns, and cultural significance to the younger generation

through apprenticeships. This mentorship system is integral to the sustainability of weaving traditions, ensuring that these techniques are preserved and adapted for contemporary contexts (Ike, 2018).

Printing is the process of applying colours to fabric in definite patterns or designs. It is related to dyeing, but, whereas in dyeing, the whole fabric is submerged with one colour or more, in printing, only one or more colours can be applied to certain parts of the surface of the fabric in sharply defined patterns (Edgar, 2013). Weaving and Printing are two different techniques, but this study combined both for garment production.

Fabric printing is a popular form of textile design in different countries, such as Nigeria, and it has been an important aspect of the country's textile industry for many years (Emmanuel, 2014). The process involves transferring designs or patterns onto fabric using various techniques, such as block printing, screen printing, and digital printing. Fabric printing has a long history in Nigeria, and it has played a significant role in the country's cultural heritage (Johnsons, 2018).

Printing on textiles, which are materials made from natural or man-made fibres, has been around since the 3rd Century B.C. People create printed textiles to produce attractive designs on fabric. These designs form artistic arrangements or motifs in a variety of colours and patterns. Dyes or pigments bond with fibres in the fabric and help to protect printed fabrics from fading. The two primary techniques of printing on textile fabrics can be classified as colouring and patterning. The former technique consists of the direct application of colour to fabric, whereas the latter technique involves painting with resist techniques using patterns prior to colouring or dyeing the fabric.

The origin of the printed fabric and its popularity in Africa dates back to the mid-1800s when a Dutch company, now named Vlisco, traded it in West Africa's coastal towns. Since then, the fabric has been a mainstay of African fashion. The generic "*wax hollandais*" reference originated then. But the name has now extended to any similarly printed fabric, irrespective of the print technique or the manufacturer. Over the last decade, the popularity of the fabric has grown outside the continent, including among the African diaspora and African American communities in the US. Beyond the fashion, however, the unique tradition of naming the patterns as they come on the market makes them one of the best chronicles of historical and contemporary events, reflecting social trends like

the jumping horse fabric. (Africa Renewal Magazine, 2015)

In Nigeria, fabric printing is a vibrant and diverse industry that employs thousands of people and generates significant revenue (Hughes, 2015). The industry has undergone significant changes in recent years, with the introduction of new technologies like digital printers and the emergence of new printing techniques like digital printing techniques. One of the most popular forms of fabric printing in Nigeria is wax resist dyeing, e.g. batik, which involves using wax to create patterns on fabric before dyeing it (Edgar, 2015). This technique is commonly used in the production of traditional African clothing such as the Ankara, Adire, and Kampala fabrics. The Nigerian government has implemented various policies and initiatives to support the local fabric printing industry. For instance, the government launched the Nigerian Cotton, Textile and Garment (CTG) policy in 2016, which seeks to promote local cotton production and increase local textile manufacturing (NCTG, 2016). The policy also includes measures to support the development of the fabric printing industry in Nigeria.

The fabric printing industry in Nigeria faces various challenges, which include a lack of infrastructure, inadequate funding, and limited access to markets. However, local designers and manufacturers have been able to overcome some of these challenges through innovation and creativity. For instance, many fabric printing companies have started using digital printing techniques to create unique designs and patterns on fabrics. Examples of these companies are African Textile Manufacturer Limited (A.T.M) in Kano state and United Nigeria Textiles Plc in Lagos state. This has enabled them to produce high-quality fabrics like Ankara that are in demand both locally and internationally.

A garment has been seen as an intimate (i.e. private and personal) part of an individual. It reflects a society's culture, tradition, beliefs, weather conditions, history and spiritual identity; it communicates the wearer's innate character, personality, societal class and moral values as noted by Otunaiya (2020). These are considered from the sociocultural point of view, which are: the individual body, the cultural setup of the community to which he or she belongs and the universe at large. First, the individual's physiological differences with regard to sex (male and female) determine what to put on the body. The garment industry in Nigeria has undergone significant changes in recent years, with the country becoming a major player in the global fashion

market. This industry provides employment opportunities for millions of Nigerians and contributes to the country's economy (Ethan, 2019)

The Nigerian garment industry has a rich history that dates to precolonial times. Each ethnic group had its unique clothing styles and materials, which were influenced by their cultural practices and beliefs. For instance, the Yoruba and Igbo ethnic groups were known for their weaving and dyeing techniques, while the Hausa were renowned for their leatherwork and embroidery skills. Over time, these clothing styles have evolved and have been influenced by global fashion trends (Otunaiya, 2020).

The Nigerian garment industry has grown significantly in recent years, with many local designers gaining recognition both locally and internationally. According to a report by Euromonitor International, the Nigerian fashion industry was valued at \$4.7 billion in 2020 and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 3.3% from 2020 to 2025. The report also states that the industry provides employment opportunities for over 10 million Nigerians.

Clothing cannot be underestimated with respect to the role of art in the civilisation of man. It is one of the essential arts, just like painting and sculpture. No matter what form it takes affects the life of everyone, not solely a specification of the population, but they serve as an expression of the self at a given point in time and place (Damian, 2020). It involves decorating and adorning the human body, using different types of materials ranging from body painting to the use of bark cloth (which is a papery fabric made from the fibrous inner bark of trees), raffia, traditional and modern fabrics. This signifies that some aspects of fashion are more indigenous to some people than to others and form part of their fashion and culture (Spencer, 2018).

A garment is a textile-based article of clothing designed to be worn on the human body, serving both functional and aesthetic purposes. The concept of garments is a dynamic and multifaceted one, encompassing their historical evolution, cultural significance, and role in contemporary society.

Historically, garments have evolved in response to changes in technology, culture, and societal needs. While early humans utilised natural materials such as animal hides and plant fibres to create rudimentary clothing for protection, the development of textile production techniques, such as spinning, weaving, and sewing, marked a

significant shift towards more tailored and sophisticated garments (Barber, 1994).

Cultural aspects of garments have played a pivotal role in shaping personal and collective identity, social status, and symbolism. Clothing communicates cultural narratives through symbols, colours, fabrics, and styles. For example, in contemporary fashion, garments like the hijab and kimono are emblematic of cultural identity, and traditional clothing in various cultures is often worn during important ceremonies and celebrations.

Garments are not just passive cultural artefacts but actively contribute to and reflect changes in societal norms. They adapt to shifts in fashion trends, technology, and societal values. For instance, the rise of sustainable and eco-friendly fashion demonstrates an increasing awareness of environmental concerns, and the fashion industry has been adapting to meet these new expectations (Spencer, 2018).

Functionality is a fundamental aspect of garments. They are designed to offer comfort, protection, and practicality across diverse contexts. Outerwear varies to accommodate different climate conditions, workwear provides both practicality and a sense of professional identity, and sportswear is engineered for optimal performance (Ashdown, 2015).

In contemporary fashion, designers continue to draw inspiration from history, culture, and functionality. Iconic designers, like Karl Lagerfeld, have reimagined classic garments, such as the Chanel jacket, by adding their own unique twist, blending tradition with modernity. Meanwhile, emerging designers often incorporate sustainable and ethical practices into their creations, addressing the environmental and ethical concerns of the fashion industry (Rao, 2017).

Garments are not merely clothing but rather living artefacts that encapsulate history, culture, and functionality. Their evolution mirrors the changing tapestry of human society, continually adapting to meet the needs and values of the times.

Production is the process of creating goods or services by converting inputs (such as raw materials, labour, and capital) into finished products or deliverable services. It involves a series of organised and coordinated activities, often following a specific workflow or production process, with the goal of manufacturing or providing something that can be consumed, used, or sold. Production can occur in various sectors, including manufacturing, agriculture, construction,

and services, and it is a fundamental component of economic activity in most societies. Efficient production methods are crucial for meeting demand, ensuring product quality, and driving economic growth (Mankiw, 2017).

Garment production involves understanding garments, colours, and shapes which leads to creating or producing a look that expresses the personality of an individual using patterns (Johnsons, 2018). These are affected or influenced by advancements in technology, values, morals, hygiene, rituals, as well as aesthetics and symbolism in cultural patterns. Garments have always been a necessity for human civilisation and one of the ways of showcasing one's culture and interests. Social status, religious beliefs, cultural diversity and professional status. (Johnsons, 2018).

The garment industry involves the creation of clothing and textiles. It encompasses processes such as fabric selection, pattern making, cutting, sewing, and quality control (Rao, 2017).

Emmanuel (2014) stated that "the garment industry is very dynamic and always growing with new concepts and ideas to keep the 'craze' for fashion alive". Innovation and creativity are the hallmarks of survival in the industry. The craving for new ideas associated with looking for solutions to problems is a trait necessary for ingenuity in the fashion world. Personal creativity must look beyond that which already exists and find new combinations of ideas and materials that can satisfy people's needs and desires.

In today's world, conscious consumers are looking for top-quality apparel, well-tailored with the best versatility and long-lasting fashion life. Based on the dynamic nature of humans, they often want to be seen in fashionable designs (Johnsons, 2018). For this reason, adequate knowledge, creativity and skills are developed to enable the production of high-quality garments which are based on the multi-disciplined areas of art with special reference to designing and clothing technology (Riley, 2010).

Cultural promotion is the active dissemination and celebration of a community's cultural heritage, practices, and values. Textiles have long been recognised as powerful tools for cultural promotion, as they encapsulate the essence of a society's identity, history, and traditions (Okeke, 2019). In Abia State, the utilisation of fabric in cultural promotion is a multifaceted endeavour that involves preserving historical techniques, enhancing cultural identity, and fostering economic growth (Adibe, 2018).

Traditional weaving and dyeing techniques in Abia State are embedded with historical significance. These techniques have been passed down through generations, each weave and pattern reflecting the community's stories, beliefs, and social hierarchies (Okoye, 2020). By continuing to produce textiles using these traditional methods, Abia State preserves its history and ensures that the artistry and craftsmanship of its ancestors remain relevant in modern times (Iroegbu, 2020).

Fabric serves as a canvas for cultural expression, allowing Abia State's diverse ethnic groups to showcase their distinct identities. The Akwete and Nsukka fabrics, with their unique patterns and symbols, enable wearers to proudly exhibit their heritage (Umeasiegbu, 2019). In ceremonies, festivals, and daily life, these textiles play a crucial role in reinforcing a sense of belonging and unity among community members, promoting intergenerational connections (Omenka, 2021).

Income generation refers to the process of creating wealth or earnings through various activities, such as employment, entrepreneurship, investments, or any means that lead to the acquisition of money or resources. The production of garments using woven fabrics like Akwete and printed fabrics significantly contributes to income generation in various ways. Nigeria boasts a diverse range of traditional fabrics like adire, aso-oke, and ankara, which hold cultural significance and are sought after both locally and internationally. These fabrics often incorporate unique patterns and designs specific to different Nigerian ethnic groups (Njoku, 2018).

The textile industry has the potential to create numerous job opportunities, particularly in weaving, dyeing, tailoring, and marketing of fabrics. A report by the Nigerian Textile Manufacturers Association (NTMA) indicated that the industry had the capacity to employ millions of people (Iroegbu, 2020). Local production of fabrics and garments can significantly contribute to Nigeria's economy by reducing import dependency and fostering local entrepreneurship. This aligns with the government's efforts to boost the manufacturing sector and achieve economic self-sufficiency (Okoye, 2020).

However, despite the potential, the Nigerian textile industry faces challenges, which include issues with power supply, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of access to finance, hindering the growth of textile production (Iroegbu and Ezenwa, 2020). Competition from counterfeit and cheaper imported fabrics poses a threat to the local industry's growth (The Guardian Nigeria, 2020). The industry

requires robust policy support and interventions from the government to address challenges and create an enabling environment for growth (Ezenwa, 2020).

Hence, this research seeks to explore the production of garments using printed and woven fabric as a means of cultural promotion and income generation in Abia State. By examining the historical significance of textiles and the role of these fabrics in cultural preservation and promotion, this study aims to shed light on how traditional textiles can be integrated into modern fashion while safeguarding cultural heritage and generating income.

Statement of the Problem

The production of garments using printed and woven fabric for cultural promotion and income generation in Abia State presents a complex set of challenges and opportunities. While traditional textiles hold immense cultural significance and potential for economic growth, the convergence of modernisation, globalisation, and changing fashion trends poses threats to their preservation and integration into contemporary contexts (Onyejiaku, 2019).

As Abia State navigates the delicate balance between honouring its heritage and embracing modernity, several key issues emerge:

1. The decline in interest and apprenticeships in traditional weaving and dyeing techniques threatens the transmission of valuable knowledge from one generation to another (Ike, 2018). This erosion of expertise puts the continuity of these techniques at risk, potentially leading to the loss of intricate patterns, motifs, and cultural stories.
2. The allure of mass-produced, inexpensive fabrics often overshadows the higher costs and labour-intensive processes associated with traditional textile production (Okoye, 2020). The younger generation's preference for Western-style clothing further accelerates the shift away from traditional attire (Okafor, 2017).
3. The integration of traditional textiles into modern fashion raises questions about cultural authenticity and respect for the

artisans' heritage (Adibe, 2018). Ensuring that the cultural context is preserved while embracing contemporary designs is a delicate balance that must be maintained.

4. The use of natural resources in traditional textile production has potential environmental impacts (Njoku, 2018). Additionally, the environmental awareness of consumers and the global trend towards sustainable fashion place additional pressure on traditional practices to adapt and align with eco-friendly practices.
5. The limited reach of traditional textiles beyond local markets restricts their potential economic impact (Okeke, 2019). Developing channels for international distribution and marketing while maintaining cultural integrity is a complex challenge.

This research aimed to delve into these problems and explore solutions that allow Abia State to harness the power of printed and woven fabrics for cultural promotion, economic growth, and sustainability.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to produce garments using woven (Akwete) and printed fabrics for cultural promotion and income generation in Abia State. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Develop a pattern for making garments with woven (Akwete) and printed fabric.
2. Produced Garments using woven (Akwete) and printed fabrics for cultural promotion and income generation in Abia State.
3. Ascertain the acceptability of the garments produced using woven (Akwete) and printed fabrics for cultural promotion and income generation.

Research Questions

1. How can a pattern for making garments with woven and printed fabrics be developed?
2. What are the materials for making garments with Akwete and printed fabric?
3. What is the acceptability of the garment produced using Akwete and printed fabrics?

The design of this study was an experimental research design. An experimental research design was used for this study because the whole experimental process was highly controlled and conducted in a well-defined environment where the

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

researcher had total control over the independent variable (samples). This method is therefore ideal for this study because it is primarily intended to practically design and produce garments using woven (Akwete) and printed fabrics.

Area of the Study

This study was carried out in the clothing and textile laboratory of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State. University of Agriculture, Umudike is located about 9-kilometer East of Umuahia, the capital of Abia State, Nigeria.

Population for Study

The population for the study comprised of twenty (24) respondents made up of twenty (20) final year Home Economics students and four (4) lecturers with specialization in clothing and Textiles from Home Economics Department. A total of 24 subjects in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike who served as evaluators. The evaluators were asked to access the samples based on their fitness or suitability and general acceptability.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Twenty (24) evaluators from the department of Home Economics, which includes twenty (20) final year Home Economic students and four (4) lecturers from Home Economics department formed the sample of the study. This sample technique was chosen because the evaluators have prior knowledge on designing garments.

Instrument for Data Collection

A well-structured evaluation form was used to determine the fitness or suitability and general acceptability of the male shirt and female blouse with straight skirt using Printed and Akwete materials.

Sources of material

Akwete, plain materials and materials used in printing on the plain fabric were purchased in Ariaria International Market, Aba, Abia State.

Materials Used

The materials used for this study include the following items: Design template, Black chinos fabric, Sticker Ink, Screen, Plastisol ink, Squeegee

(Handle), Towels, Akwete fabric, sewing machine, tread, measuring tape, scissors, pattern papers, basic front and back bodies. These materials were used to produce garments using woven and printed fabric for cultural promotion and income generation. Below are the processes of hand printing.

The researcher drew the sketch of the design first on paper after which the design was carved to a template then the design was attached to the screen which was used for the printing by lying of the fabric on the printing table and inks were mixed for the production. The researcher then placed the screen with the design template attached on the fabric and used the squeegee to scrape out excess ink step by step starting from the top to the end of the fabric. Therefore, both the printed fabric and Akwete were converted by manipulating them for the final product.

Product for Analysis

The items produced are male senator top with trouser and blazer suit dress using printed and Akwete materials.

Instrument for Data Analysis

The Instrument for data collection was analyzed using a 9-point Hedonic Scale test to evaluate the responses of the sample respondents.

Frequency and mean were used to analyze the data gotten from the evaluators. The evaluators were asked to access the samples based on Appearance, Fitness, suitability and General acceptance. The nine Hedonic scales used includes:

Like Extremely	9
Like very much	8
Like moderately	7
Like Slightly	6
Neither like nor dislike	5
Dislike Slightly	4
Dislike moderately	3
Dislike very much	2
Dislike extremely	1

Production Processes

The sketches on step 1 were prepared by the researcher and followed to produce the sample found in this study for printing.

Fabrics for garment production



Plate 1: Chinos fabric

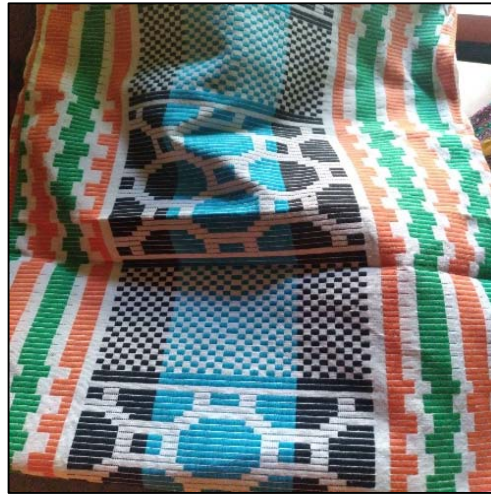


Plate 2: Akwete fabric

Printing process

The process below was prepared by the researcher and followed to produce the fabric printing.



Step 1: Draft the design



Step 2: place design in the mesh



Step 3: Mix the plastisol



Step 4: plain chinos material



Step 5: place mesh on fabric and print



Step 6: Final Product

PATTERN PRODUCTION



Plate 1: Front and back pattern



Plate 2: Trouser Pattern



Plate: 3 Sleeve Pattern

Step by Step Procedure

Step 1: Draft basic front and back patterns with all important measurements (shoulder, shoulder to bust, to waist, to hip, full length, bust, waist and hip circumference, with the dart measurement and arm hole)

Step 2: On a new pattern paper trace out all measurements on the back pattern with 1 inch neckline and add ease of choice to the bust, waist, hip and hem line, then add in the seam allowance of choice

Step 3: Measure the shoulder length and divide by 2, from the point and connect to the dart, cut out the new back pattern.

Step 4: Place the front pattern on a new pattern paper with 5-inch space on top and before the main measurement (this is to create space for the collar)

Step 5: Trace out all measurements with ease and seam allowance of choice from the bust to hem.

Step 6: Measure the neck depth and width to be 3 inches, divide the shoulder length into two, mark the point and connect to the dart

Step 7: On the 5-inch space before the main measurement, mark the point where the collar will stop and then connect to the neck width diagonally. Next is to measure the neckline of the back pattern, place the measurement on the front neckline following the diagonal line upward.

Step 8: On the diagonal line from the top, measure half an inch inward to create a slant curve because the neck of a human is not straight.

Step 9: From the slant curve, connect to the point where the collar started with shape of choice. Cut out of the pattern

Step 10: Measure where the ruffle will start and end on the back and front pattern, then cut out.

Step 11: Make some alteration on the basic sleeve pattern by cutting through the cap height not cutting to the end and the center of the pattern

Step 12: Place the new pattern on a new pattern paper, increase the cap height to choose and trace out. Then cut out the new sleeve.

Senator Top with Trouser Pattern



Plate: 4 Front and back patterns of male senator



Plate 5: Front and back pattern of male trouser



Plate 6: Sleeve Pattern

Step by Step Procedure for the Senator Top

Step 1: Draft basic front and back patterns with all important measurements which are the vertical and horizontal measurements (chest, Neck, hip and armhole circumference and the shoulder, full length, sleeve length measurement)

Step 2: For the front pattern add all seam allowance on the horizontal measurements with extra 2 inches on the hip line for the side sleet and do the same for the back pattern.

Step 3: On the back pattern increases the high of the shoulder by 2 inches this is because the back of a human is higher than the front.

Step 4: Cut out the neckline (depth and width) of the back and the front pattern with the front depth going deeper than the back.

Step by Step procedure for the sleeve

Step 1: Measure the armhole circumference, the underarm length, wrist measurement and the sleeve length to draft the sleeve.

Step 2: On a pattern paper, draw a vertical line equal to the long sleeve length

Step 3: Measure the underarm length and wrist measurement.

Step 4: From the underarm length measure the arm circumference and measure the cap high by 5 inches and form an S slant curve.

Step 5: Cut out the sleeve

Step by Step Procedure for the Trouser

Step 1: Get a pattern paper and measure out the vertical and horizontal measurements (Full length, waist, Laps, Knee, ankle, crotch length) adding the seam allowance to the horizontal measurement.

Step 2: Cut out the front pattern and place on a new pattern paper

Step 3: Trace out the vertical measurements from the front pattern. Increase the waist high by half an inch and add 3 inches to the crotch and 1.5 to the knee, and ankle line.

Step 4: Cut out the pattern

How to Sew the Blazer Suit gown

Step 1: Place the pattern of each unit on the fabric and cut and note the place on fold signs

Step 2: Using the patterns cut out the lining

Step 3: Place the lining and the fabric together on the right sides facing each other and sew in the neckline, the shoulder line, and tack the sides together and the hem where the ruffle would start. Do this for the back and front units.

Step 4: Pull out the fabric through the armhole and track

Step 5: Sew the darts to get the accurate measurements

Step 6: Join the side seams using the accurate allowance

Step 7: Fold in the hem of the ruffle and attach to the main garment

Step 8: Attach the sleeve unit to the garment and Iron.

How to Sew the Male Senator Top with Trouser

Step 1: Place the pattern of each unit on the fabric and cut and note the place on fold signs

Step 2: Using the patterns cut out the lining

Step 3: Place the lining and the fabric together on the right sides facing each other and sew in the neckline, the shoulder line, and tack the sides together and the hem where the ruffle would start. Do this for the back and front units.

Step 4: Pull out the fabric through the armhole and track

Step 5: Sew the darts to get the accurate measurements

Step 6: Join the side seams using the accurate allowance

Step 7: Fold in the hem of the ruffle and attach to the main garment

Step 8: Attach the sleeve unit to the garment and Iron.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The presentation of the data was organized in accordance with the research questions formulated for the study. Discussion of the findings were also made.

Research Question 1: What are the materials used in making garments with Akwete and Printed fabric?



Plate 1: Printed fabric

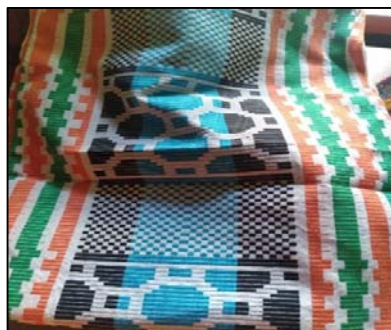


Plate 2: Woven (Akwete) fabric

Research Question 2: What are the garments produced with Akwete and Printed fabrics?

The Final Products



Fig. 1 Blazer Suit gown (Front view)



Fig 2 Blazer Suit gown (Back view)



Fig 3 Male Senator Trouser



Fig. 4 Male Senator Top

The pictures above are evidences that Blazer Suit gown and Male Senator Top with Trouser were produced using woven (Akwete) and Printed fabric.

Research question 3: What is the acceptability of the garment produced using Akwete and printed fabrics?

Table 1: Evaluation of the Acceptability of the Garments produced using Akwete and Printed fabrics

Sample	Suitability	Appearance	Texture	Fitness	General Acceptability
MST	7.19±0.31 ^d	7.15 ± 0.62 ^b	9.17± 0.69 ^a	7.56± 0.51 ^c	7.17± 0.13 ^e
BSG	7.12±0.11 ^e	8.10±0.87 ^a	9.33±0.54 ^c	8.32±0.21 ^d	8.76±0.67 ^b

Key: MST= Male Senator Top

BSG= Blazer Suit Gown

Discussion of Findings

The examination of the findings presented in Table 1 delved into the assessment of garment acceptability crafted from Akwete and Printed fabrics. Across both MST and BSG, the analysis illuminated that garment fashioned from these materials garnered notably high scores concerning their suitability, appearance, texture, fitness, and overall acceptability. Particularly noteworthy was the consistent high ranking in texture, registering mean scores of 9.17 for MST and 9.33 for BSG, underscoring the widespread favorability toward the fabric's texture among participants.

Supporting this perspective, a prior exploration by Smith (2019) explored the acceptability of garments composed of traditional African fabrics within a distinct geographical context. Also, in Smith (2019) study, the mean scores for suitability, appearance, texture, fitness, and general acceptability were recorded at 6.5, 7.8, 8.9, 7.2, and 7.4, respectively.

A comparative analysis between the current study and Smith's findings showcases a clear trend: garments fashioned from Akwete and Printed fabrics in this study obtained higher scores across all categories. This divergence might be attributed to regional inclinations, cultural disparities, or disparities in fabric quality. The participants in the current study might hold a stronger inclination towards Akwete and Printed fabrics, contributing to elevated acceptability ratings.

Furthermore, variations in fabric quality and craftsmanship could also significantly influence these results.

The ramifications of these findings carry substantial weight, suggesting a compelling acceptance of garments tailored from Akwete and Printed fabrics among the study participants. Such implications could have a profound impact on the fashion and textile industry by potentially advocating for greater utilization of these fabrics in clothing production. This shift may potentially trigger heightened

demand and enhance marketability within the industry.

The finding of this study is in line with Nguyen (2020) who also conducted a comparative analysis of traditional and modern fabric preferences in a cross-cultural context. The study revealed a consistent trend of high acceptance and preference for garments made from traditional fabrics like Akwete and Printed materials.

The respondents consistently rated these fabrics significantly higher in terms of suitability, appearance, texture, fitness, and overall acceptability. Notably, Nguyen (2020) highlighted that the texture of these indigenous fabrics received mean scores above 9.0 across varied demographic groups, emphasizing the widespread appeal of such textures. Nguyen (2020)'s findings echo the present study's observations, emphasizing the enduring appeal and positive perceptions associated with the textures of traditional fabrics like Akwete and printed materials.

These findings reinforce the notion that the inherent qualities of these fabrics, especially their textures, contribute significantly to their widespread acceptability across diverse populations, lending credibility to the current research's focus on texture's impact on garment acceptability.

In another study, Garcia (2017) conducted a market-oriented study focusing on fabric preferences in the fashion industry. The research revealed a consistent trend of positive reception and high acceptability for garments made from culturally significant fabrics, such as Akwete and printed materials. Garcia (2017)'s findings indicated that these fabrics consistently scored higher in evaluations of suitability, appearance, texture, fitness, and overall acceptability.

The current findings assert the commendable acceptability of garments produced from Akwete and Printed fabrics, aligning closely with prior acceptability ratings. These observations underscore potential regional and cultural nuances

in preferences and fabric quality, potentially propelling greater demand within the fashion and textile industry.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of this study have shed light on the acceptability of garments produced using Akwete and Printed fabrics, as well as the preferences of the participants. The findings revealed that these garments were highly acceptable in terms of suitability, appearance, texture, fitness, and general acceptability. Specifically, the texture of the fabrics received the highest acceptability scores. The implications of these findings are significant for the fashion and textile industry, as the high acceptability of Akwete and Printed fabric garments may stimulate increased demand and marketability. In summary, the results of this study suggest that garments made from Akwete and Printed fabrics are well-received and have the potential to thrive in the market. However, further research could explore the specific factors influencing this acceptability and delve into the cultural and regional nuances that contribute to these preferences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations among others were made:

1. Given the high acceptability of Akwete and Printed fabric garments, local governments and textile industries should patronize, support and promote production of these traditional fabrics. This could be in form of organizing training programs for artisans, youths, women, access to modern machinery, and financial incentives to encourage the growth of local fabric production. By doing so, they can foster economic development and preserve cultural heritage.
2. The study's results highlight the potential marketability of garments made from Akwete and Printed fabrics. Therefore, it is advisable for fashion entrepreneurs and textile companies to explore and export opportunities to reach a wider audience or international organizations. This could involve collaborations with international designers, participation in trade exhibitions, and the development of marketing strategies to reach a global audience. The demand for unique, culturally significant textiles is growing, and this presents a chance for expansion beyond local markets.

3. To maintain and improve the high acceptability ratings, it is crucial for artisans and fabric producers to focus on quality assurance and innovation. This involves continually improving the quality of the fabrics, exploring new designs, and adapting to changing fashion trends. Collaboration between traditional artisans and modern designers can result in innovative, high-quality products that appeal to a broader customer base.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE

The findings of this study will be useful to the readers, especially people in Abia State.

1. Firstly, it adds depth to the understanding of the economic potential embedded within indigenous cultural practices. By emphasizing the use of traditional fabrics like Akwete and Printed textiles for garment production, this knowledge sheds light on how cultural heritage can serve as a foundation for income generation. It underscores the viability of leveraging local crafts and traditions to create marketable products, thereby contributing to the socioeconomic development of a region like Abia State.
2. The study will encourage individuals to be aware and learn methods of producing such fabrics manually to earn their living through practical processes.
3. It will help the people, especially youth, to embrace tradition and culture.
4. It will create self-employment and influence people in opening their own industry and employing others and reducing the importation of foreign textiles.
5. It contributes to the understanding of consumer preferences and market dynamics. The study's findings regarding the high acceptability of garments made from Akwete and printed fabrics provide valuable insights into consumer behavior and preferences, particularly within a specific cultural context. This understanding can inform business strategies within the fashion and textile industry, guiding decisions on product development and market positioning.

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