

Environmental Variables and the Development of Traditional Entrepreneurial Crafts in Nigeria

Akpan, Roseline Williams

Department of Fine and Industrial Arts
University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Abstract

This paper examines the environmental technological influences affecting the environment with much reference on textiles. This paper reveals the different environmental oppositions affecting and dealing with people of the country Nigeria. Economic influence, social status influence. Educational influence, religious. Emotional influence, cultural influence. Cross cultural influence and the update of the original entrepreneurship traditional crafts in the country. It is also discovered that Nigerian indigenous crafts technology has upper hand over western designs in the country.

Keywords: Crafts, Environmental, Development, Traditional Entrepreneurial

Introduction

Nigeria a vast country is richly blessed, endowed with good ecological and cultural resources. This country, aptly described as the “Giant of African” is filled with warm sunny climate, fascinating beaches, evergreen vegetation in the South, while in the North, savannah grassland is over shadowed by alluring landforms. Other Natural interesting features such as form of hills, waterfalls, springs, pockets on mountainous areas with temperate climate and a range of unique and common species of topical wildlife.

Jones (2008) asserted that besides these natural features, the cultural assets of the nation are of universal recognition. The richness and diversity of the Nigerian culture is a manifestation of the socio-cultural differences of over 250 ethnic groups of inhabitants of the land. These coupled with the hospitality of over 140 million people, make Nigeria one of the richly endowed potential tourist destinations in the globe. Udoh (2015) opined that Nigeria is blessed with all available natural resources, they inhabitant are fashionate to adapt and accept whatever each environment. Tribe has for the indigenous occupant.

Etang (2014) is of the view that Nigeria, the Giant of Africa is blessed with abundant materials and human, resources but the exploitation of these rich natural resources is yet to be effective in the country. Bob (2011) pointed out that though the natural resources yet to be fully exploited. Nigerian have insisted on getting to the fullest, whereby local indigenous fibers fabric, commodities, farm products, and total well being of individual will be maintained. God created the whole world for his glory, pleasure and man must not only live but to exercise God’s greatness. Every environment consist of wonders creation of God’s hand, like in the out skirts of Abuja, there is Zuma Rock. This rock has a face of a man crying, a plateau Mbabara rock looks mostly like well arranged chairs. Cameroon mountain smokes continuously in the raining season. Man seeing these creation decided to copy their maker (God). Bob (2011) asserted that created sculptural pieces does not only make one a pirate copy but proves to us that the Creator has deposited rear gift in man. Ekwere (2014) posited that man had remained deeply embedded in his natural environment during the first three thousand years of recorded history, man and nature, human and cosmic events were merged into one. There was no immediate demarcation between them. Man’s experience was immediate and personal. Here, symbolic significance of

events and phenomena was equally blessed and sustained. In other words, trees, water air, forest, and other factors make sense because of interactivity with man. Ekong (2010) opined that environment is not a property of a thing but can be seen as a concept based on human perception. Alex (2011) asserted that environment which consist of the natural phenomenon cannot be mention without what I gotten out from it art works created basically from animals or plant origin. According to Ekpe (2012) there are two types of fibers; natural and synthetic fibers. Natural fibers are derived either from plant or animals. The fiber derived from plan source is called cellulose fiber and the one derived from animals is protein fiber, for instance. Animals like Angora, and Mohair. Adele (2001) maintained that environments are of two views: (1) Environment is seen as condition or circumstances affecting a person's life. (2) It is seen as natural conditions which may include land, air, forest and water. It is therefore pertinent to stress that man does not exist in isolation.

Bob (2011) explained that man exists within a setting constitutes man's environment. Environment, however, is logically argued 5that it may not exist without man. The presence of environment is therefore determined by man.

Environmental as Source of Fashion Raw Materials

Fashion is regarded as the activity or business that involves styles of clothes and people's appearance (Williams 2015). Adele (2001) maintained that fashion of the people manifests itself in technology, literacy, social, political, economics, religious and artistic expressions within a given society. Fashion is also explained by Jeff (2010) as the total self expressions of a people though which the people reflect on their destiny as a people and become conscious of themselves.

Multivarious factors influence the trend of fashion in Nigeria. These factors include economic, social status, educational, psychological, emotional, personality, environmental, religious, festivals, customs, foreign and cross cultural influences.

According to Ademiluyi (2016) textiles could be made from many raw materials. These materials come from four main source: animals (wool, silk) plants (cotton, flox, jute). Minerals (asbestors, glass fibers) and synthetic (rylon, polyester, acrylic). Ekanem (2014) opined that in the past, all textiles were made from natural fibers, including plants, animal and mineral sources. Akpan (2013) ascertained that textile is a woven or knitted cloth, the art of industry and making cloth. Mbelu (2005) asserted that textile is any filament, fiber or yarn that can be fabric or cloth and the resulting material itself.

Ekanem (2014) observed that a material is made mainly of natural or synthetic fibers. Modern textile products may be produced from a number of combinations of fibers, yarns, films, sheets, foams, furs, or leather. They are found in apparel, household, commercial furnishings, vehicles and industrial products.

Fashion and Textiles

Nigerian can be classified among appreciators of fashion, especially apparels. A good demonstration of this could be seen in festivals of arts and culture and carnivals where Nigerians try to showcase their rich cultural heritage. (Etang 2015). Also, people wear expensive clothes to occasions, such as weddings, naming ceremony, burials and churches to showcase richness and class.

Eshiet (2000) opined that fashion designers commonly rely on textile designs to set their fashion collections apart from others. The prominent fashion designers, among the others are Marisol Deluma, Nicole Miller, Lilly Puliser, the late Giami Versace and Emilio Pucci, who can be easily recognized by their signature print-driven designs.

Obot (2008) pointed out that fashion industries are dominated to people of versatility, initiative and discretion to cope with everyday changing world. Kenneth (2009) also observed that the importation of second-hand fabrics perpetuate laziness, lack of creativity and resourcefulness in sourcing for indigenous fabrics for some patronage

Concept of Fashion

Fashion is the style that is popular at the present time. A fashion usually last more than one season. Comments such as “this is the current fashion” That jacket is a fad” and “that style is really in this season” are common. Eshiet (2000) queried, but what do this terms really mean?

Fashion Cycles and Scio-Cultural Influence

Fashion changes because culture changes. There is a pattern to the changes in fashion; it is called the fashion cycles. A cycle is a predictable pattern of events, the fashion cycles have three stages and they are:

1. A new style introduced.
2. The style is accepted and worn by many people.
3. The style is replaced by a newer style.

Adam (2000) asserted that to state a new style takes courage. Someone must be secure, brace enough to wear what no one else is wearing. Those who are the first to wear a new style are called fashion leaders, other people watch the leaders, only to copy from them the appearance of the fashion invoke. Once a style is widely accepted, it stops being new and unusual. The fashion leaders begin to look for a different style and the fashion style thus begin again.

Geographical Influence

People living in the North, dresses to suit their religion, and weather condition in which they see themselves. Some cover up from hair to legs only leaving a little portion, of their faces so that they can see (Adamu, 2004).

Economic Influence

Economic power of the individual, group of people determines to a great extent the types of fashion he or she is apt to. Williams (2015) asserted that the coming in of democracy in Nigeria with improved economic status resulted in more people going for high class fashion. However with the fall in financial state of the nation with accompanying hardship, locally made fabric begins to reign as more persons now go for traditional designs.

Locally Made Material

Materials locally made are tie-dye, batik, printed now assumes a place of prominence in the fashion world. Various style and designs are worn in a very competitive manner. In essence, fashion trend is dictated and influenced by economic factors.

Social Status Influence

Nigeria, the great country, try to outdo other countries in whatsoever they do. People dress to reflect the social status to which they belong. It is a common place to see politicians wear costly and big agbada to show their class. More so, women in this class display expensive make ups, jewelries and attire in social outings. Costly designs are worn by rich and influential persons while the poor class or low class embraces low quality products with cheap unattractive designs. They could also go for second hand clothes to reflect their social status. However, the

poor involved in selling of petty things, locally made products like palm kernel, oil to prove their worth and to show to the people that they are loved by God as well (Adamu 20).

Educational Influence

Education is distinguishing factor in any society. People that engage in school look different and distinguish from those that do not. Ekong (2011) opined that educational institution is a forum used to display fashion. Moreover, to measure the form of behavioural changes in an individual, corresponding fashion designs are used. Educators now get involves in entrepreneur works not minding their level of education and these educated individual because of education which has discipline them make them to value, achieve their goal without shame or disgrace. Education plays a very important role in the changing trend of fashion and ability to set hands on trade, to make it in life.

Religious Influence

Nigerians are people that are deeply involved in religious activities. Religious affiliation has tremendous influence on the individual. Certain religious organization prescribed the made of dressing their members should do within and without their places of worship. It is must uncommon to find a Moslem with attire having cross or bible, also, with Christians, they will never put on Moslem designs with the half moon and star. However, trousers and flowing gowns are most acceptable fashion among Moslem communities in the North while it is not welcome in the south. Most Nigerians have high esteemed picture of themselves and that not only influence the mode of their dressing but drives them into using hands to create or sale in order to survive. Prostitution, laziness is now giving way to hardworking. Governor Udom (2016) spells out “dakkada” syndrome meaning everybody should stand up to work and not be lazy.

Health/Educational Influence

Holt (2000) observed that clothes are chosen to suit the occasion and purpose for which they are meant to serve. Nigerian mostly are very emotional about the type, style, colour and the fabric their clothes are made of. However, specific types of clothes with specific designs, stuff, are worn at beauty contest, marriage ceremonies, weddings, parties, churches, state occasions and social get-together. People get emotional attached to the grade, quality, class and above all the high level of the products needed. Colours seem to be another situation bothering some people. Health, also, plays a vital problem, if an individual is not feeling fine; the ability to dress well will not be there, even if she does, the clothes will not fit. So Nigerian now engaged in eating quality, balance diet to keep them going without much health problem.

Cultural Influence

People dress to reflect the culture, and customs of the place. It is not difficult to distinguish between a Hausas, Yoruba, Igbo and the Ibibio person when they appear in their various traditional attire. Some of the Hausas are involves in selling – beans, rice, onions, soya meat and large number of them get involved in cattle rearing all over the country and also shoe markers. They Hausa know the worth of entrepreneurship, they got into the different area of it with all seriousness to make it in life (Thompson, 1999).

Cross Cultural Influence

Culture is dynamic all over this country Nigeria. However, there is a constant cross fertilization of ideas, among the people of various cultures of the world. Williams (2015) observed that there is constant international cross cultural influence that greatly influences

fashion, the making of clothes, tie dye, and so on. Moreso, each states seem to have their different pattern and styles. Nigerian fashion design is simple a mixture adulteration, a combination of foreign and indigenious designs. The Igbos' (Abia State) weave Akwette, which is used for all manner of occasions; such as weddings, churches, naming ceremonies, burials and Government functions. In Akwa Ibom State, Ekpo masquerade festival is done yearly, the custom is prepared using plantain fiber, for the children's own while the mature ones used raffia, palm front leaves and a wooden sculptural carve design mainly for the face. These however, shows the level of creativity gotten by putting different unique fibers together to achieved their dreams.

Nigerian Entrepreneurial Crafts

Craft are symbols of Nigeria's material and spiritual heritage. Crafts are well integrated into the living patterns of Nigerians and inseparable from their spiritual philosophies. These objects produced are prized objects for the promoting and preservation of tourism, (Jones, 2008).

Essentially, Nigerian crafts are grouped into textiles, pottery, ceramics, fiber crafts bronze. Brass and iron works, calabash decorations leather work, ivory work and jewelry.

Textiles: Nigeria is renowned for the rich variety of designs, colours, and material production techniques of its textile craftsmen. The traditional embroidery, weaving, tie dye, resist technique method and modern work in silk-screen prioting are well known for years. Ceramic – Abuja has been the most well-known influence in modern Nigeria pottery. The potteries are to be found in Iishaiagu, Afikpo, Okigwe and Bone areas (Eastern Nigeria) Naraguka, Zaria, Oakakari and Yola areas (Northern States), the Akoko Abobi as well as Ife and Abeokuta (the Western States).

Carvings: The figure carving and low relief decorations on panel in traditional style represent one of the most important forms of art in Nigeria. Often, works are in whit wood, iroko as well as Ebony. The leading wood carvers are in Benin, Igbomina, Ekiti, Ife, Oyo Awka, Afikpo, Ikot-Ekpene, Nupeland, Igbira, Chamba and Mana.

Calabashes: Oyo the ancient political centre of Yoruba people is most noted for calabash carving in Nigeria. Other towns particularly Plateau, Bauchi, Borno, Sokoto, produce richly decorative and beautiful burnt-on or engraved geometric designed calabashes which are widely used for everyday need as contained on wall decoration.

Leathers: The decoration of hides and leather by appliqué techniques, printing of design and patterns on them is a craft for which the Northern States in Nigeria are well known.

Raffia and Cross Weaving: The craftsmen and women of Ikot-Ekpene, Warri, Maiduguri are involved in the production of brass, brackets, cane works, mats and screens.

Glasswork: Glass beads are used mainly for ornamental purposes such as masks. Bida is famous for the beads made from recycle grass.

Ivory Carvings: Benin craftsmen have excelled hand there, the craftsmen and the ancient carvers are among the most beautiful works of Nigeria art.

Metal Works: Decorative metal works produced either by beating or crushing the metal to produce unique patterns. Edo, Mumuye are mains producers here for instance brass trays of BIDA. The women make the decorative combs and hairpins used by the Efik women in Cross River State (Akpabio 1999).

Conclusion

Nigeria indigenous textile/craft technology incorporated with design has tremendous influences on environmental development as witness in aesthetic and decorative environmental designs. The indigenous technology and design presently have domineering influence over exotic design and is dynamic in nature. The environmental influences have dramatically change the extent of crating new, and complicated works in the country.

Recommendations

This paper has examined the influence of indigenous technology and design on environmental development. It was discovered that the traditional outfits and design/different craftworks have dramatically change in structure and style hereby creating a new world order of stronger aesthetic and decorative environment. In line with the points highlighted in this paper the following recommendations are envisaged and make accordingly.

1. Nigerian indigenous craft technology and design should be adapted and improved in schools to impact positively in our environment.
2. A multi-technology and design approach should be encouraged traditional craftsmen where indigenous and foreign (Exotic) technology are blended together for better result.
3. The inter and intra-craft technology and designs should be adapted by artists to further improve our environment.
4. Regular exhibitions should be mounted by creator and individual artist to showcase the various indigenous technologies and design that abound in Nigeria.

References

- Adamu, M. H. (2004). Influence of Religion on Dressing Styles of Northern Nigerians. Islamic Principles and Practice. Kano Zoma Publishers.
- Adele T. I. (2001). Beauty Aspect .Ibadan: Stone Publisher Ltd. p. 85.
- Akpabio, U. D. (1999). Pulp and Paper Making Raw Materials in Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State. *Raw Materials Research and Development Journal*, 1-35.
- Akpan, R. (2013). Fashion and Clothing Styles. Enugu: Rockwood Publisher Ltd. pp. 41-50.
- Bob, B. (2011). Synthetic and National Fibers. Home Management Practical Workbook. Kaduna: UPE Publishers Ltd.
- Ekanem, J. (2014). Ndidi, Weaving in Akwa Ibom State. In *Uso: Nigerian Journal of Art*. Vol. 3, No. 1& 2.
- Ekong. O. T. (2011). Changes in Societal Norms and Values in Nigeria. Ibadan: University Press Ltd.
- Eshiet, O. (1999). "The Nigerian Culture" Calabar: Fourth Dimension Publisher Ltd.

- Etang, R. (2015). Studio Exploration of Potentials of Musa Species “Fibers in Comparative Analysis to Regular Textile Fibers. Unpublished Dissertation of University of Uyo, Uyo, pp. 1, 28.
- Holt, O. (2000). Art Design and the Environment. United Kingdom: Mills Soul Production. Pp. 28-34.
- Jeff U. (2010). Justifiable Design in the Design Today. England Food Publishing Coy. P. 49.
- Jones, E. V. (2008). Tourism a Catalyst for Peace in Nigeria West Coast. Yellow Publishers pp. 7.
- Kenneth, T. (2009).). Justifiable Design in the Designer Today. England: Oxford Publishing Company.
- Mbelu, M. (2005). Introduction to Fine and Applied Arts. Enugu: Met May Publishers.
- Obot, A. (2008). Social Techniques and Secret to Service Lagos: University Press Ltd. p. 412.
- Thompson, V. S. (1999). Society Customs and Culture: Prehistoric, Historic and Present Perspectives. Lagos: Longman Publisher Ltd.
- Udoh, E. (2012). “Traditional Designs and its Role in National Development” Nigerian Indigenous Styles. Zaria. Journal of Industrial Art Students Association, Vol. 1.
- Williams, P. S. (2015). A Handbook of Textile, Fibers, Fabric and quality Control System. United Kingdom: Mills Soul Production, p. 170.