

## 7. SYNTHESIS OF YORUBA TEXTILES AND MODERN TECHNOLOGY FOR A RESILIENT ECONOMY IN THIS TURBULENT ERA

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**Abstract:** *A resilient economy is a strong base for large volume of trade as it provides a perfect solution to poverty. Synthesis of Yoruba textiles and modern technology for resilient economy in this turbulent era is the concern of this paper. It highlights how Yoruba indigenous textiles are face lifted by modern technology to eradicate economic downturn. The paper gives insight to improvement on the production of Yoruba textiles therefore giving opportunity of job creation and self-reliance through the fusion. The huge tragedy of the Nigerian experience hinges on the downturn of economy which is at its peak of crashing. Most Nigerian are not believing that indigenous textile contents can increase drastically the income of the nation if facelifted or rebranded. The high rate at which naira is depreciating is very alarming at present (\$1USD = ₦1440) being because of fluctuation now. The paper projects a way out of economic turbulence with the synthesis of Yoruba textiles and modern technology by building a resilient economy. The paper further discusses the new orientation and training involved; raw materials used, computer knowledge, recommendations, and conclusion.*

**Key words:** *Synthesis, Yoruba textile, turbulent era, Resilient economy, Indigenous*

### 1. Introduction

Every one of us know what the economic situations are. Companies' profits fell far more sharply. Naira is depreciating every moment. The association of Bureau Des change operators of Nigeria urged the Central Bank of Nigeria to float the naira to a halt to further prevent depreciation (Gwadabe, 2022), an advice which was implemented under the new President (President Bola Ahmed Tinubu) in May 2023. The citizens want injection of dollars in market to reverse the value of naira at the parallel market. Most people can no longer make ends meal because of inflation. High cost of oil, gas, fuel and even kerosine have put fears and panic in the minds of consumers. All these had caused lamentations among the people. The problem of economy downturn or recession is really hitting all sectors in Nigeria.

Due to the crash in the local currency, for example Lagos flight ticket from Abuja to Lagos sold at the rate of seventy-five thousand naira (N75, 000) as of December 2023. This was because of high price of jet A1 used for flight at the aviation sector. Reports indicated that this fuel had risen from about eight hundred and fifty (N850) naira per litre in May 2023 to about N1, 000 per litre in august 2023 causing a significant increase in the cost of tickets.

Kerosine, one of the cheapest commodities is sold at one thousand, three hundred (N1300) per litre at present. The price is far from what it used to be in about few months ago. The price of kerosine is now higher than that of domestic gas which is nine hundred and fifty (N950) per kilogram. Common cooking oil (palm oil) is sold at the rate of four thousand eight hundred naira (4,800) for 5 litres.

Basically, it is obvious that a measure must be taken fast to prevent Nigerians from becoming increasingly poorer due to the fall in crude oil and liquefied natural

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gas. Meanwhile there should be enough to go round but not being utilized to optimize economic advancement. Looking inward to utilize the local resources cannot be farfetched. Yoruba indigenous textile art has been in existence since the creation of man, and it has been generating income in its own way if not for the neglect. The former President of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari declared in Senegal in July 2022 that Nigerians should look inward and add value to commodities produced in the country.

Okpu (2020) “Opines that Nigeria with more than 90% of her revenue coming from oil is in a very precarious situation now. She further declares that naira has suffered dramatic loss in value against major currencies of the world like US dollars, the Euro, and the British pound”. It is obvious that no one can move about without a covering. The Yoruba indigenous textiles are always there to always give solution. The textiles have been described as one of the most graceful and skillfully demonstrated expertise of mankind (Ojo, 2005).

The need for livelihood to sustain tradition among the Yoruba has led to the reviews of activities in weaving, dyeing, embroidery and printing and appliqué which are referred to as handcrafted textiles. The Yoruba textiles as the aspect of indigenous textiles practices translate basically to fabrics embellishment and decoration. The influence of modern technology on indigenous Yoruba textiles is highly obvious to the extent of giving it a facelift and making it acceptable product in Nigeria. Not only has it provided means of livelihood, but the citizens’ product has also been popularized in Nigeria and beyond, accepting international recognition in terms of costuming and body adornment.

Therefore, the synthesis of Yoruba textiles and modern technology in building a resilient economy for a nation like Nigeria especially in this turbulent era of recession is necessary. Oladejo (2022) opines that the distinctiveness of the Yoruba culture of textile and fashion is historically globalized and modernized. Adegbite (2011) proposes that by the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century Aso-Oke was worn by the Yoruba only at major life-circle events such as birth of a new baby, weddings, festival, burial ceremony and so on. However, the market for indigenous textile has decreases with the introduction of European printed cloth ever since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Yoruba speaking people are in Osun, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Lagos, Ekiti and part of Edo (Akinrujomu, 2009). Oladejo (2022) is of the opinion that Yoruba culture and customs in southwest Nigeria are rich and elaborate in material practices. Adu (2018) confirms that indigenous knowledge systems have impacted other civilizations through the wildfire use of technology and that of modernity, by producing more refined and better accepted usable. This has brought indigenous knowledge of civilizations to the awareness of other civilization, although it was not well utilized by the government.

The synthesis of Yoruba textiles and modern technology for a resilient economy is necessary because of the increase in demand for Yoruba textiles among the people by the day due festivals and ceremonies prevalent in the culture Oladejo (2022) asserts that “on Sunday following a burial, the member of the family concerned and their friends and all those who can afford to buy them no matter how remote the connection, they wear *Aso-Ebi*” (commemorative cloth). The increase in

patronage of the Yoruba textile in adoption of *Aso-Ebi* for birthdays, housewarming ceremony, weddings, child-naming ceremonies, and other events serves as an avenue for building a stronger economy in the country.

The prestige is attached to Yoruba textiles in individual culture to possess brand names for the cloth, for example *Alaari, Etu, Sanyan*. The brand names vary from *Iseyin* town in Oyo State, home of traditional weaving to Ekiti, Ondo and other states in the south-west (Akinrujomu, 2009). The significance of this paper is that the synthesis of textiles and modern technology are found suitable for building a resilient economy for the nation.

## 2. Theoretical framework

Theoretical framework of this paper hinged on the theory of Kirton (2009). He proposes that adaptation-innovation theory provides an explanation to how we solve problems and our creative thinking. He opines that everyone is unique and can be scored from “highly adaptative” to highly innovative “and that individuals are creative in different ways. He further said that adaptors find themselves excelling in finding ways to complete everyday task and overcome predictable challenges, improving on the methods that have been used in the past.

In the same vein, the Yoruba indigenous textiles have been in existence long ago, adopting the modern technology to change the face of the textiles is not new to the indigenous weavers and dyers. The contemporary change is making the effective blending of indigenous Yoruba textile materials by sewing, appliqué work, stitching, dyeing, weaving, and printing to provide modern fabrics.

### Yoruba Indigenous Textiles

The productions of textiles have been practiced in Nigeria long before the era of European colonization (Ogunduyile, 2005). This means that textile production in Africa has reached appreciable level before the European civilization. This art which went through many stages and different techniques was introduced to meet the demand of individuals. Weaving of *Aso-Oke* started centuries ago amongst the Yoruba people of Oyo State, Kwara State, Ede (Osun State) Ondo State, Ekiti State, Lagos State and Okene (Kogi State). Consequently, it may be agreed that the production of hand-woven textiles in Nigeria pre-dates the era of colonialism as recorded by scholars and has contributed to decorations in no small measures from time immemorial (Ojo, 2005).

There are varieties of indigenous fabrics that are either woven or embellished in Southwestern Nigeria. The main locations for narrowband weaving are largely in the Western part of Nigeria like Akoko, Owo, Ekiti, Ondo, Osogbo, Ibadan, *Iseyin* and Oyo. Cult pile cloth called *lyegbe* is woven in Owo, Saki, pile cloth from vertical loom is also woven in Ijebu-Ode. There are three types of *Aso-oke* *Etu, Alaari and Sanyan*.

Renne (2020) posits that Yoruba word, *adire* is defined in G.P Bargery's, a Hausa-English Dictionary as a Yoruba-made black-and-white cloth. There are basically four types of *adire* according to the method of production *Eleko, Eleso, Alabere and Oniko* (Ojo, 2005) other types which were also added are *Alabela, Onididi, Onigi, Onibibo*.

The primary role of the hand-woven fabrics was for making apparel. The use

was restricted to the adult members of the society because of its traditional uses. The traditional textile was a means of assessing people's wealth in the olden days. This is because of the rigors involved in the process of production which at the end of the day adds to the cost price of the product. *Adire*, *batik* and others which needed to go through the dyeing process were also expensive and only few could afford them, because then, there were natural dyes that were in use before synthetic dyes were discovered in 1959 by William Henry Perkins (Morin, 2010).

From this level, textile production followed a chain of processing which started with growth, harvesting and collection of fibers, ginning, carding, spinning, weavings, and embellishment Makinde. Ajayi & Ajiboye (2009) posit that these textiles are produced from locally sourced materials ranging from cotton, local silk, bark, goats' hairs, wool to raffia, commonly used in weaving.

Production of indigenous dyed and printed textiles involves tie-dyeing, batik, printing, embroidery, appliqué and sewing. Uniqueness and beauty are the hallmarks of the described indigenous dyed and printed textiles. Local fabric dyeing, printing, and finishing are still practiced, Sunmonu (2008) Abeokuta is a Yoruba town which has become a prominent centre of textile *adire* cloth. Yoruba fabrics including *adire* are produced mostly in Oshogbo and Abeokuta. However, *adire* is a type of resist-dyed cloth usually made by Yoruba men and women in Nigeria. Egonwa (2012) opines that; “*adire*, an art form and the patterned resist-dye cloth of the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria is dynamic, widely practiced and ubiquitous... there is yet no in-depth study of the development of *adire*. Technological and technical changes brought about by contacts with foreign influences, competition from cheaper imported fabrics, inconsistent government policies and ephemeral nature of the material for *adire*, among other challenges threatened the continuation of the art”.

The symbols of *adire* which are created, accepted, and perfected have formed an aspect of the people's culture. History, legends, myths, and proverbs, constitute themes of designs found in Yoruba *adire* production. The skill is a continual process that radiate within Yoruba generation of craftsmen.

### Materials and activities in Tye Dye



Hydrosulphite chemical



Dyes stuff for coloring fabrics



*Raffia palm for tying adire fabrics*



*Materials for tye dye*



*Tyed fabric*



*Tyed fabric*



*Dye solution*



Washing of dyed fabric



Removal of rope from fabric

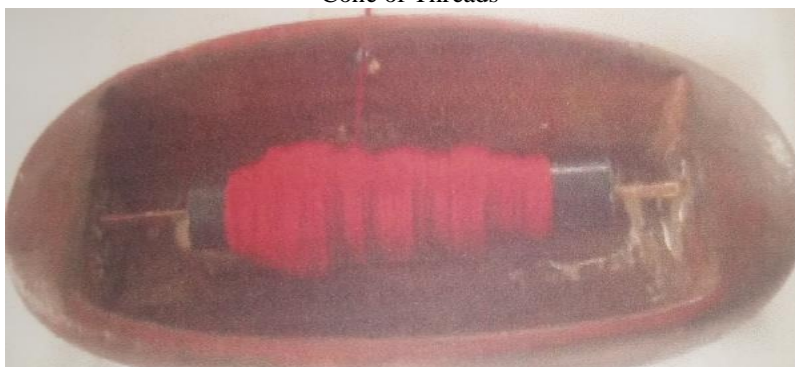


Spreading of dyed fabric

### **Materials and Activities in Weaving**



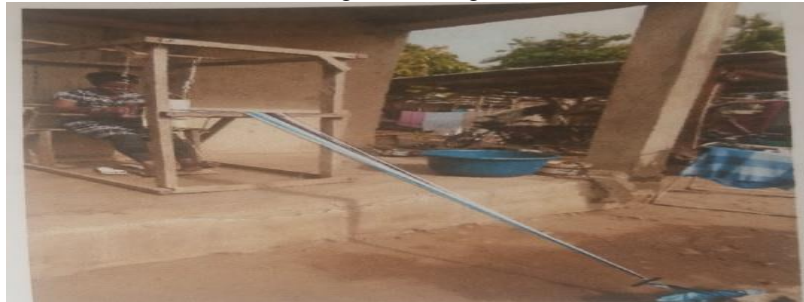
Cone of Threads



Shuttle for weaving aso-oke



Working on bobbing winder



Weaving on horizontal loom



Weaving of Aso-Oke on horizontal loom

### **Synthesis of Yoruba Textile and Modern Technology**

The modern or foreign technology is not a replacement of Yoruba traditional technology but serves as an upliftment and enhancement to the locally produced textiles. History reveals that during the pre-historic times hair of animals and tree barks textiles were woven for home insulation and protection. Some fibres from various plants and leaves were used for bedding, blankets, clothing's, wall hangings, door, and window blinds.

Improved techniques used in the production of textiles in the industry enhances the cotton production. It also gives room for mass production of cotton. Imported mordants improves the quality of textiles when mixed with natural dyes. Natural and synthetic dyes can be mixed to produce *adire* cloth. The harvesting of cotton the ginning carding, spinning and weaving processes are easily done nowadays using appropriate machineries production of yarn for woven fabrics.

The process of continuity is paramount in any transfer of technology that may seem to exist within any given culture. Therefore, recent developments that are noticeable in the production of Yoruba modern textiles arise because of possible divergent approaches to accommodate modern technology in Nigerian contemporary art practices (Akinrujumu, 2009).

She further declares that the increase in sea and air travels prompted trade of all sorts, so do internet and satellite facilities show new developments which are

adapted in Yoruba textile production. Traveling they say is part of experience. Movement of people around the globe promotes economy growth. Knowledge is shared through discussions and exchange of ideas.

### **3. The application of modern technology on Yoruba textile can be categorized as follows**

#### **Orientation**

It is a necessity to perfect a craft to enable the apprentice to excel. Apprentices are to be committed to duties. They are the youths and citizens in society, trained in various skill acquisition to enable them to become employers of labour and self-reliant. The training allows them to mix chemicals for dyed fabric and to understand the nitty-gritty of tying and dyeing for embellishment of fabrics. Akinmoye (2020) proposes that indigo dyeing and traditional textile weaving can serve as empowerment strategy, capable of alleviating poverty and provide means of livelihood. Aso-Oke fabrics can compete favorably well with their counterpart elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the new orientation received by the apprentice has complemented the former traditional training.

#### **Raw materials**

Advent of modern technology provides variety of raw materials. Cotton is produced locally among the weavers in the southwest in Nigeria by strictly following the process of production. Cultivation of cotton resulted into the use of manufactured imported cotton and thousand rolls of silk in variety of colours. Production of bails of fabric with the use of imported machines also accelerated output and increase sales in local and international market. It also improves skills of local and industrial weavers. Importation of synthetic and chemical such as hydrosulphite solvent and sodium hydroxide (caustic soda) and other fabric solvent have widened the knowledge of materials among the producers of textile fabrics (Okpu, 2020).

#### **Modern Machines**

In the latest developments, weaving machines have focused on automation, innovative and digital upgrades of weavers. A more elaborate stripe of cloth can be woven on the loom to replace the traditional horizontal and vertical loom done by human muscle power weavers in some parts in Yoruba land. Ondo, Owo, Iseyin etcetera have made use of floor loom to suit the purpose of cloth manufacturing. The ITEMATHEC A95002 and STAUBLI Jacquard machine N44 provide accuracy and high speeds for production.

#### **Imported Modern Machines**







These two packages are examined in this paper

### **Function of packages**

**Ms Paint:** - used for drawing lines in form of shapes such as curves, rectangle, triangle, ellipse etc.

**Corel Draw:** - is a professional vector graphic design application used to create different kinds of design such as illustrations, adverts, logos, engravings, paintings etc.

### **Design method and computer knowledge**

Computer is an electronic device that accepts data or information. It processes the information and gives output to whoever manipulates it. Computer also stores vital information for human consumptions. It allows user to perform task such as motif formation for designs. Visual artists have got the opportunity of making use of some packages such as Auto CAD, CorelDraw, Photoshop, page maker, Paint artist, Ms Paint, Computer Aided Design and Drafting (CADD) and Adobe Illustrator.

These packages are computer applications that can be used to create and perform basic operations on shapes and images. Bear it in mind that forming shaped and mingles are very important in artists' application of packages for creation of designs.

Agomuo (2022) discusses the features of two popularly used computer graphic packages as analyzed.

Microsoft paint represents a painting application that comes with all versions of the windows operating system. It can be used to scan images, create objects, and modify objects to understand the fact that it is possible to do freehand drawing with the pencil tool.

### **Procedure**

- Select the pencil tool.
- Click the size tool from the dropdown list, select a line width of your choice.
- Select the colour tool.
- On the colour palette, select a colour of your choice.
- Use your free hand to click and drag on the workspace to draw a free form line.
- Select a line from the shapes tool.
- Click and drag on the workspace to draw a straight line.

CorelDraw graphics is a professional vector graphic design application for creating different kinds of designs including illustration advert logo, engraving, printing, and publishing. Davemenc (2012) explains CorelDraw procedures as put below:

### **Procedure**

- When you first open CorelDraw there may be one or more dialog boxes which you probably want to close, click ok to close them.
- there is a rectangle on the screen with a drop shadow behind it. This is the document.
- at the upper left side there is a drop down that might say “letter” “or” “broadsheet”, or “customs” Pull it down and select “custom.”
- next to that pull-down there are 2 boxes with horizontal and vertical dimensions of the page. If you are using a Lazer etcher you should set these to 24”x18”
- zero your rulers by clicking on the corner where the 2 rulers meet and dragging it to the corner of the page.
- keep in mind that the horizontal ruler increases to the right, but the vertical ruler increases in the up direction. This means that all the locations on the page have a negative Y value.
- to save a document you can use file-save as, once you have specified the file name you can use ctrl-s or  
Click on the disk icon at the top page or use file-
- Always save all documents.

### **Recommendations**

- Genuine grassroots empowerment and the participation of non-governmental agencies in skill acquisition sponsorship of Youth and citizens whos’ interests are in skill acquisition for self-reliance are needed.
- Campaign and awareness of the need to patronize home-made textile products e.g. as a column in newspapers is necessary.
- Investment or governments, groups, and individuals in skill acquisition centres for orientation and training of interested individuals and youths become exigent.
- National Directorate for Employment (NDE) should promote small and medium enterprises SMEs by giving loans.
- Indigenous policy and other key programs of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) should adopt local content formula to the fullest.
- Legislations for the establishment of local craft centers in all the states of the federation should be passed and implemented as done in China and Japan.
- NEPAD and NEEDS proposals designed for the country are not fully implemented. This is because implementation machineries are not put in motion due to policy failure.
- The Funds for Small Scale Industries (FUSSI) should give loans for the promotion of small-scale cottage industries to thrive.

## **4. Conclusions**

The synthesis of Yoruba textiles and modern technology no doubt aided enhancement of Yoruba textiles to build a resilient economy most especially at this period of economic turbulence and downturn. There is a steady progress in the skill

acquisition and production capacity. The application of modern technology with the use of solvents and chemicals to furnish fabrics and application of computer knowledge for improvements on design formation have been seen to be adequate and suitable to local and international marketing.

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