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STATE OF TRADITIONAL ATTIRE USAGE AMONG THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Adire and *Aso-oke* are important dress-items in many traditional ceremonies and social events amongst the Yoruba people. There is a noticeable decline in the use of Yoruba cultural dresses such as *aran*, etc during outing. This is aside from *aso-oke* and *adire*. A lot of factors are responsible for this. This study is aimed at creating awareness on the use of the *adire* and *aso-oke* among youth. The study was carried out in both Lagos and Abeokuta. At Mainland local government area in Lagos, a total of 70 youths were randomly selected and four elderly men and women were purposely selected to know the elderly peoples view of *aso-oke* and *adire* usage in the recent times and in the past. Both interview and questionnaire methods were used to collect data: interview guide were used to collect information in order to achieve a better objective, while other means such as visuals and fabric materials are also employed to gather pieces of information on the current use of *adire* and *aso-oke* among the youths. Results indicate that the usage of *adire* and *aso-oke* among the youth is limited to ceremonial occasion only. The paper also reveals that *aso-oke* is not popularly used among the youth in both Abeokuta and Lagos, but *adire* is faintly given prominence. Both *adire* and *aso-oke* are old standing craft that have more than a century of longstanding tradition in Yorubaland. There is a probability that if both attires can be redesigned with price reduction, public enlightenment and encouragement from parents and guardians will make the youth of today would a second thought in reconsidering *adire* and *aso-oke* as their best attire for fashion

Keywords: Old standing craft, Longstanding tradition, Traditional ceremonies, Cultural attires, Social events.

INTRODUCTION

The production of traditional handcrafted textiles such as *adire* and *aso-oke* among the people of south-west of Nigeria does not have accurate dating, but it can be traced down to the early beginning of their culture. These textiles are produced from locally sourced materials ranging from cot-

ton, local silk, bark, goats wool to raffia, commonly used in weaving (Renne, 1995). While felted back-cloth acclaimed to be the oldest form of indigenous African cloth, woven cotton fabrics dating to the eight century have also been found in burials in the present day Niger (Clarke, 1998). Fragments of plain patterned strip woven clothes that

are similar to that of Yoruba, dated to the eleventh century were also discovered in Mali at the Tellem burial cave in Dogon culture. These confirm evidence of a long standing clothing tradition in Yoruba and its environs (Bolland, 1992). Although the origin of textiles productions and usage in Nigeria, most especially among the Yoruba remain unknown, the fact still remains that Yoruba textile origin might have been influenced by trans-sahara and transArabs trade in which Mali and some ancient towns of Yoruba such as Iseyin and Shaki happen to have trade ties. Also, there are evidences of Yoruba's long use of textile as apparel as reflected in ancient sculptures of Ile-Ife, dated back to the 10th and 12th century A.D. Ile-Ife sculptural pieces show that clothing is considered to be very important to man after shelter in Yoruba history. Clothes are used for different purposes – some are for casual wears, for everyday use, furnishing, for social engagements such as wedding, engagements, burial to mention a few. Usually, there are indigenous fabrics that serve more purpose other than those mentioned above in different societies. *Adire* and *Aso-oke* are not left out of these textile materials used for all traditional ceremonies, for example *adire* are usually worn in social events among Yoruba people. Both fabrics are gaining ground among young Yoruba elites and adults and to some extent among the youths and some other class circle. The traditionally woven fabric; *aso-oke*, is sewn of varied styles. It was originally produced from the local wild silk combined with cotton fibres. What makes the difference in these old time fabrics have been in the areas of colour of the yarns, dyestuff, and the movement of the integrated stripes. These fabrics were considered prestigious and were highly sought after in the past by the aristocratic class and

the elite throughout Yoruba land because they were important in the commemoration of important events.

Adire is a popular fabric, which refers to all aspects of fabric embellishment that involve craft techniques of batik, tritik, tie-dye and pangi, (Bakare, 2008). The practice of fabric dyeing is prevalent among many cultures of the world, this makes it possible to project the image of fabric crafts and also boosts its appreciation generally. Abeokuta is one of the most popular towns where the craft of *adire* fabric dyeing is practiced in the southwest, Nigeria. It is pertinent that the fabric appears not to be regularly used in recent time.

The *adire* technique involves any measure or device employed to achieve design effect on cloth by rendering a part impervious to dye-bath. Abeokuta and Oshogbo are synonymous with this locally-dyed fabrics called *adire*, yet the social engagements of these two towns reflect that the Yoruba indigenes have much reflection on the usage of the fabric for their social engagements.

The Nigeria textile industry is the third largest in Africa after Egypt and South Africa and is among the largest employers of labour in the country, despite the unstable power supply. It is no news that these industries are today witnessing great depression in terms of supply and demand of their products. Also, part of the challenges facing the Nigerian textile industry have been variously linked with smuggling of imported textiles materials into the country, high cost of production, weak exchange rates, energy crises and very low patronage amongst others (Olutayo and Akanle, 2009).

Yoruba Fabrics

Adire and Aso-oke are expected to be worn by Yoruba men and women throughout southwestern Nigeria which basically include contemporary Ekiti, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Lagos states. Yoruba people in parts of Kwara, Kogi and Edo states too are not left out of this narrow striped material but adire did not gain as much ground in this part of the world. Common fashion styles often used aso-oke for buba and iro (top and wrapper), gele (head gear), agbada (large gown) and buba and sokoto top and trousers) (National Museums, Liverpool, 2008). An interview conducted with people revealed that adire and aso-oke textile materials are gradually going out of fashion, though they are still being admired and appreciated by elderly people of Yoruba culture. Studies have also shown that Nigerian youths are unaware of the different uses of aso-oke.

The production of traditional handcrafted textiles among the people of Africa is long rooted in their culture. These textiles are produced from locally sourced materials ranging from cotton, local silk, bark, goats wool to raffia, commonly used in weaving (Renne, 1995). While felted back-cloth acclaimed to be the oldest form of indigenous African cloth, woven cotton fabrics dating to the eighth century have also been found in burials in Niger (Clarke, 1998), and fragments of plain patterned strip woven cloth dated to the eleventh century were also discovered at the Tellem burial cave in the Dogon region of Mali. Thus, both provide evidence of a long standing clothing tradition in Africa (Bolland, 1992). Although the origin of textiles productions and usage in Nigeria, most especially among the Yoruba remain unknown, there are evidences of Yoruba's long use of textile as

apparel as reflected in ancient sculptures, which has been dated back to the 10th and 12th century A.D.

Fagg (1977) mentions that these sculptures depict the use of accoutrements which include loin cloth, cap, sashes, hunter uniforms and others. He, also suggests that materials used for the manufacture of these clothing are derived locally because, they are similar to that of today's traditional Yoruba hand woven strip cloth 'Aso-Oke'. While relative dating of the local production of Aso-Oke among the Yoruba remains difficult due to its ephemeral nature of documentation at these periods. Krigger (1990), in his own assessment, tries to defer from other scholars, when he claims that the earliest use of textiles made from men's loom among the Yoruba came via the introduction of Islam to Kano through Nupe, and later to Yoruba land in the 15th century.

However, the diffusion theory used by Krigger (1990) to establish the evolution of weaving among the Yoruba is tenable considering Picton's comments in Ademuleya (2002) that 'the distinctiveness of the West African narrow strip loom (Yoruba inclusive) is a pointer to an independent tradition. He thus cautions against the popular speculations that there must have been only one point of origin or source of inspiration; it could, therefore, be argued that the Yoruba production of textiles, aso-oke in particular, could have been developed by the Yoruba before contact. Furthermore, since the radio carbon dates confirm earlier existence of these sculptural pieces of between 10th and 12th century date, which was prior to the introduction of Islam or contact with the Nupe people in the 15th century, one can conclude that the Yoruba's use of textiles as apparel or as clothing is an age-long tradition, which pre-

dates contact with Islam.

Weaving Tools

Yoruba traditional weavers, according to Chief Olaseni of Aronpe's compound in Ijaiye, Abeokuta, used two types of loom for the production of their traditional hand-woven textiles Aso-Oke. First, the upright single peddle loom, also known as the broad loom (used by women) is a fixed vertical frame upon which the warp is held under tension used to weave cloth of a predetermined length with about 30 cm to 90 cm width to allow two or three pieces stitched together to make a wrap round "iro" for women. The fabric produced on this loom is what Aremu (1980) refers to as kijipa.

The second one, the double heddle loom (used by men) is a horizontal loom with the unwoven warp yarn stretched out several yards in front of the weaver with a heavy shed to maintain tension. The loom produces strips of woven fabrics, which is about 14cm – 15cm wide; the fabrics are cut and edge stitched together to make larger piece of cloth which could be used for clothing or coverings. The men's horizontal loom compared to the women vertical loom uses more accessories and provides opportunity for the use of a variety of warp threads which often determines the types of design found on Aso-Oke. Ojo (2006), identifies these accessories to include: heddles (omu aso), treadles' (itese), beater (Apasa), shuttle (oko), winding shaft, (gogowu/ikawu), shedding sticks (Oju/poporo), and pulley (Ikeke) to describe for the varieties of warp threads and the means for introducing the weft thread.

This paper tries to update knowledge on the history of aso-oke and adire fabrics in terms

of production and, in particular, the state of usage in the south-western Nigeria. It reveals the social re-direction in the use of these fabrics in question. Apart from the investigations involved, the views of people towards the idea of using adire for social engagement are also considered. It reveals that more people have alternative option of fabric, materials and do not to adire. The fabric commonly used instead are industrially the printed fabrics and which are sometimes imported.

Abeokuta happens to be one of the most popular towns where fabric dyeing is practiced in Nigeria. It is unfortunate to observe that this craft appears not to be less appreciated in the south-west fashion circle in Nigeria. It is good to know that Abeokuta and Oshogbo are synonymous with locally-dyed fabric materials called "adire", but with different themes. Abeokuta tie-dye "adire" is purely embellished to meet the standard of what is acceptable in contemporary fashion, while Oshogbo's type concentrate on folk lore. Both tie-dye fabric materials do not enjoy the high patronage as other weaker and light printed imported cotton materials do in recent times. A few people now believe that the hand crafted (both tie-dye and resist fabrics), are likely to reflect a more distinct and unique beauty in the society. The people in this category prefer tie-dye/ batik to some imported cotton and brocade materials.

Aso-Oke

On socio-historical assessment, Picton (1979) defines weaving of aso-oke as a simple process of interlacing a set of thread (warp and weft) at right angles to form a web or fabric. These two sets of thread which are interlaced together on the loom create a structure that holds the cloth together. The

weaver may change this structure into a more complex design by adding supplementary wefts (threads), or by alternating the colour of the warp and weft threads. The striped patterns found in aso-oke are made by alternating the colors in the warp. The pedals that are attached to the loom lift up a set of threads so that the weft can be laid at right angle. Depending on how many of the warp threads are lifted, the fabric can be either warp or designed in weft-faced pattern (aso-oke is usually warpfaced).

Adenuleya (2002), examines specifically, styles and patterns of the old aso-oke types, their symbolic meanings and their contextual usage as well as their continuing appreciation. His work also covers production and role strip clothe, aso-oke in general terms, which include *Etu*, *Sanyan*, *Alaari*, *Petuje* and *Poku* in Ode-Onde.

Picton (1979) also reports that many factors go into the design and weaving of Aso-Oke, which depends upon three variables: the nature and colour of fibres employed, the kinds of relationship between warp and the weft, which may be affected by the loom, and the possible methods of embellishing a fabric after manufacture.

Aso-oke patterns are predetermined using a calculated process before the actual weaving wherein the weaver knows what the final creation is going to look like. Hence, the weaver must pick out all the colours of the threads and decide on the structure of the weaving pattern before beginning. Thus, aso-oke strips are usually about 14-15cm inches and are usually stitched together to make a dress, but, the number of strips needed, however, depends on the type of cloth, but about 22 strips of aso-oke are required to make a wrap around for tradi-

tional Yoruba women attire.

Aso-Oke Types

Basically, there are three major aso-oke types; *etu*, *alaari* and *sanyan* with many variations, which is achievable with the use of extra weft brocading technique which are identifiable by their patterns and colour to inform their uses at a designated traditional ceremony.

Firstly, *etu* (fowl) via blue and white stripes in the warp direction with a light blue checkerboard having pattern weave structure; a type of traditional aso-oke with blue and white stripes in the warp direction, with a light blue checkerboard pattern weave structure. The strips are woven using local wild silk fiber, thus *etu* is dyed repeatedly in traditional indigo blue dye, which is brought out at intervals for drying and stretching. In the ancient times, *etu* was used as important social dress by chiefs and elders among the Yoruba.

Secondly, we have *alaari*, crimson in colour, it is traditionally woven with locally spurned silk yarns dyed in red cam wood solution severally to achieve permanence in colour fastness. The use of *alaariis* not limited to a particular ceremony but traditionally used for all events among the Yoruba of Nigeria. Thirdly, *sanyan*, an expensive Yoruba hand-woven fabric, grayish in colour with white strip running through the middle of the cloth; traditionally produced from fibers made from the cocoons of the anaphe silk worm. Hence, the silk fibres are hand spun into silk threads, washed and soaked in cornstarch to strengthen the yarn for fabric production in the ancient times. In addition, *sanyan* is regarded as the most expensive of all Yoruba woven fabrics, thus, the Yoruba refer to it as *baba-aso*, the 'father of fabrics'.

Usage of Aso-Oke

Yoruba men and women generally use aso-oke in a number of ways which can be casual or ceremonial. Aremu, (182) and Oyelola (2004) mentioned that aso-oke is reserved for special occasions where formal and dignified dressing is required. Yoruba women use aso-oke as *gardle* (*oja*); to strap babies wrapper (*iro*) bead-tie (*gele*) *buba* (blouse) and (*Ipele*) or shawl *iborun* which is usually hung on the shoulder of the user. Yoruba men use aso-oke for social, religious and traditional ceremonies. They wear a complete dress consisting of *sokoto* (trousers), *buba* (top) *agbada* (large embroidered flowing gown) and *fila* (cap). aso-oke is highly valued as special gift for dignified people. Clapperton (1826) reported that he collected a gift of aso-oke from *Alaafin Abiodun* in old Oyo in 1920, while Amubode (2001) confirmed the importance of aso-oke as wedding gift for the bride's family in Yorubaland in addition to being used to placate the witches.

Aso-oke is also used as *aso-ebi* (commemorative cloth) among the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria. *Aso-ebi* connotes the wearing of a chosen or commissioned cloth as a uniform dress to commemorate or celebrate an event or occasion. Judith (1999) and Aremu (2006) explained that *aso-ebi* is seen as strong expression of communal, solidarity and love.

Aso-oke is also used for religious purposes as *egungun* costume. *Egungun* is an ancestral worship among the Yoruba which refers to 'masked men' who represent the spirits of the living dead (Idowu, 1962). *Egungun* costumes vary among communities. Some communities such as in Oyo use aso-oke in elaborate costumes that have a

long trail behind them. A new strip of aso-oke is added to the *egungun* costume to add up to its beauty every year which implies that the age of an *egungun* can be calculated from the strips. Aso-oke is also used as a sacred clot by the *Ogboni* Society among the *Egba* and *Ijebu-Yoruba*. It is referred to as *itagbe*, an insignia of the cult or *Ogboni* people. It is used to cover some religious objects such as, *ere-ibeji*, *osanyin*, *edan* and used as shrine decorations.

Aso-oke is also used for the making of hunter's shirt and knickers (*igberi ode*) to which is attached with many charms and amulets. Chief Odetola mention that a type of aso-oke was used as spirit protected covering among the Yoruba. Charms in form of wristlets are also made from aso-oke when combined with the skin of the alligator, and supported with some rituals and incantations, which the Yoruba people refer to as "ifunpa" (armlet) or "ounde" (waist band). In an attempt to protect 'abiku' (believed to be a "spirit-child" with the ability to die severally and be born again by the same mother) ashes of aso-oke combined with other magical substances is used in making protective charm to break this cycle of death and re-birth. He concluded that for couples to remain happy in their marriage, the ifa priest prescribes for this couple the use of aso-oke dress for use in the traditional ceremony.

Production

In general, conservation of both *adire* and aso-oke has received a commendable attention in recent times as other aspects of their production, marketing and utilization. According to Adepeko (2008), the finishing of traditional attires such as *Adire* and *Aso-Oke* helps to improve and develop the appearance/desire behaviour characteristics of these fabrics. She stresses further that fin-

ishing frequently determines the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction that consumers experience with specific fabrics. In his study, Ademuleya, 2002, wrote that the Yoruba claim that the old aso-oke is traditionally appreciated by some towns such as Ondo in Yoruba, this is because of their conservative and curious attachment to the old aso-oke (Alaari).

However, foreign influences on Yoruba society and in Nigeria as well as can not be ruled out. Rodney (1972) observes that colonial masters systematically tapped the resources of the African colonies including Nigeria. Ojo (2006) also identifies three main problems in the use of aso-oke, which include; exorbitant price of raw materials, limitation in traditional and contemporary uses and modernization. The limitation in fashion used is probably due to the hard, stiff and heavy nature of the fabric compared to the factory printed 'ankara' fabrics.

The introduction of Islam and Christian religions to Yoruba land brought along with them a new dress tradition that was readily accepted by their converts.

However, these changes that occurred to the Yoruba culture were however, not totally negative on the use of this aso-oke.

Clarke (1966) confirms that aso-oke weavers readily accepted the new fibres and industrial dyes introduced by the British trading firms. The introduction of these imported yarns brought a change in aso-oke structure; visual and textural qualities. From 1960 onward, aso-oke became softer with lustrous look, which was actually missing in the traditional ones. The importation of foreign textiles into Nigeria during the colonial era, injected into aso-oke new de-

signs, which encouraged weavers to imitate them creating lace designs by creating holes and weft flow on woven fabrics as demanded by their new patrons. These new aso-oke types are what Aremu (2006) refers to as 'Eleya' which Oyelola (2007) refers to as "open work". They resemble the modern day Spanish lace, which is now in vogue among the elites. The importation of European textiles to Nigeria influenced the structural nature of aso-oke and redefined its surface and textural quality. It also generates new knowledge and production skills among the weavers. In addition foreign motifs such as ball, diamond, computer, star and other fabricated objects now appear on aso-oke, which gives it a global representation. Small stripes of imported lurex fibre was added to cotton warps to create a new look in aso-oke, which gradually became the characteristics of the contemporary aso-oke making it more shiny in outlook from where they derive their names "shine-shine".

The use of aso-oke declined following the acceptance of ankara as aso-ebi (commemorative fabrics) in place of aso-oke which was traditionally used among the Yoruba people of South-western Nigeria. The new ankara (African wax prints) technically differs from aso-oke due to the following; it is mass produced; it can accommodate portraits and graphics as motif in the surface design, and in addition it is also cheaper than the locally produced aso-oke.

With the importation of primary textile materials, which runs into several millions of naira into Nigeria yearly, the European countries were able to engage fully their citizens in the production of these primary textile materials at the expense of Nigeria citizens. Finally, the importation of manufactured and finished textiles from Europe for the interi-

ors as window or door blinds and furniture is another factor that adversely affected the traditional handcrafted textile (aso-oke) productions. Today, due to urban influence and some agents of civilization, most Yoruba people in the villages now use machine-produced fabrics for their interiors and furniture items in place of aso-oke; the traditional handcrafted textiles of the Yoruba as a mark of civilization.

Electrically powered roller printing machine used by these textile industries enables them to cope with the demands in volumes without any fear of disappointment. Since aso-oke weavers cannot guarantee prompt mass production for larger consumption, uniformity in design, quality and promptness in

production delivery, patrons now shift attention to the factory where such is guaranteed. The tradition of using foreign factory printed textiles mostly 'ankara' and 'lace' in place of aso-oke at traditional ceremonies as 'aso ebi', contributed mainly to the growth of these modern industries. More importantly, the use of aso-ebi due to bulk purchase by the people allows for instant discount and reasonable profit. The use of these factory printed fabrics in place of aso-oke is now popular and acceptable among the people. With this, traditional aso-oke weavers are without any hope for bulk sales to realize meaningful gains that will encourage sustainability of aso-oke production.

KNOWLEDGE AND

Table 1: Demographic characteristic of the people in study area

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	%
AGE (years)		
18-24	4	5
25-31	27	39
32-40	39	56
SEX		
Male	27	39
Female	43	61
MARITAL STATUS		
Single	7	10
Married	63	90
ETHNIC GROUP		
Yoruba	66	94
Igbo	4	6

Results and Discussion of Findings: Data Presentation

Seventy out of 100 questionnaires administered to respondents were returned valid. 5% of the respondent falls within the age of 18-24 years, 39% falls between 25-31 years

while 56% falls between 32-40 years. 39% of the respondents were male while 61% were female. 90% of the respondents were single while 10% were married, 94% are Yoruba while 6% were Igbo. This is shown in Table 1.

PERCEPTION OF ADIRE AND ASO-OKE

All the respondents have the knowledge of the local fabric (Aso-Oke). Most of the respondents believe that adire and aso-oke are local fabrics that are basically worn as traditional and casual/social outfit during occasion such as wedding, naming, coronation, burial, cultural dance, etc. Only 3 respondents stipulated that aso-oke is used for interior decoration, foot wears, hand bags and furniture.

Forty-seven of the respondents suggested

that aso-oke is out of fashion while 23 suggested it is still in vogue.

Most of the respondents opined that aso-oke was competitively utilized as casual and occasional wears among the young and old in the past. It was however stipulated that its usage is descending day by day; the youths do not have a penchant for the local fabric but it was agreed that only the old still make use of the local fabric.

Table 2: Findings on Possession and usage of Aso-Oke

CRITERIA	YES	INDIFFERENT	NO
Do you have aso-oke	51	3	16
Do you wear aso-oke	46	11	13
Usage of aso-oke is popular among the elderly	68	-	2

CRITERIA	YES	INDIFFERENT	NO
Do you have adire	52	2	16
Do you wear adire to social gatherings	49	9	12
Usage of adire is popular among the elderly	70	-	0

POSSESSION AND USAGE OF ASO-OKE

Table 2(1) shows data obtained from the possession and usage among elderly people, 68 of the respondents possess aso-oke as part of their wears, while 2 claimed they do not have the fabric. Forty-six wear it to social occasion, 11 are indifferent while 13 said no. The variation of usage among the young and old, 68 respondents believe the old people utilize it more than the young while 2 claimed no.

POSSESSION AND USAGE OF ADIRE

Table 2(2) shows data obtained from possession and usage among the people, 52 of the respondents possess adire as part of their wears, while 16 claimed they do not have the fabric. Forty-nine wear it to social occasion, 9 are indifferent while 12 said no. The variation of usage among the young and old, 68 respondents believe the old people utilize it more than the young while 2 claimed no.

Table 3: Perception of adults on the usage of aso-oke or adire in recent time.

Respondents	Sex	Transcript of Interview
A	F	Respondents believe aso-oke was considered prestigious and highly sought after in the past, it is also used as aso-ebi among the Yoruba people as uniform dress to commemorate an event or occasion while adire is mainly used on social occasion and, bother fabrics are used for religious purposes such as egungun costumes.
B	M	Respondents feel indifferent the usage of aso-oke, They said it was basically worn to social gatherings.
C	F	Respondents believe the western culture has influenced the use of aso-oke negatively. That in the past women use it as girdle (oja) to wrap baby, wrapper, head-tie, blouse etc. Also said that it was worn casually as home wears and to occasions.
D	F	Respondents are of the opinion that adire is still very much in vogue in the recent time. That in the past, it was used as social dress as sokoto and buba/small cap without agbada and fila, that it was highly valued as special gift among elites, also as well as decoration in their homes.

Table 4: Factors affecting the use of Adire and Aso-oke among the youth

CRITERIA	AGREE	%	DISAGREE	%
Comforability	69	1	1	99
Fitness	66	6	4	9
Heaviness/Lightness	68	97	2	3
Expensiveness	49	70	21	30
Colour Vastness	27	39	43	61
Obslescence	69	99	1	1
Trendiness	14	20	56	80

Table 4 shows the data obtained from the factors affecting the use of adire and aso-oke. 99% of the respondents claimed that aso-oke is comfortable while only 1% agreed that aso-oke is not comfortable, 94% stated that aso-oke and adire have fitness depending on how these are sewn, while 4% stated otherwise, under heaviness criterion, 3% stated that aso-oke is not heavy while 97% accepted that aso-oke is a heavy

fabric, 61% claimed that aso-oke is not in a vast range of colours while 39% claimed otherwise, 99% stated that aso-oke is still a fashion while 1% stated otherwise, 80% stated that aso-oke is not trendy while 20% think otherwise. This implies that adire and aso-oke are still considered to be one of the best suitable attires used for social and traditional engagements in Yoruba culture.

SUMMARY

In summary, aso-oke and Adire are traditional attire in Yoruba culture. aso-oke was the clothes of the high and middle class in old Oyo empire in the early stages (17th century) of the empire and is still occasionally in vogue. But Adire is generally accepted and worn by anyone or people that prefer to look simple as Yoruba fashion changes. As these attires become more elaborate, aso-oke seems to have experienced lower patronage because of high cost mystical associations sacred connotations. Each of the dress items thus has its own function and symbolic messages. Aso-oke remains an important dress- factor in many traditional ceremonies while adire takes charge of casual and social events. The appliqué work and embroidery as an art is used in decorating handcrafted cloths (aso-oke).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study has given fresh insights into the state of Adire and Aso-Oke among the people in southwestern Nigeria. The focus has been to scientifically capture the totality of respondents' disposition. The findings have shown that Aso-Oke and is gradually gaining ground among the people of Abeokuta but Adire (batik and tie-dye) is given prominence.

RECOMMENDATION

Aso-oke should be redesigned, for an increase in its use. The price should also be reduced. The government should however, provide subsidies for production using machinery which could reduce the cost and heaviness of aso-oke.

Also, parents should encourage their wards to wear traditional clothes like Aso-Oke to social gathering.

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