

ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ (Research Article)

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Examination of The Basic Components of African Print Fabric Designs Produced in South West Nigeria

Güney Batı Nijerya'da Üretilen Afrika Baskı Kumaş Tasarımlarının Temel Bileşenlerinin İncelenmesi

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ABSTRACT

African print fabrics are major textile products in African countries because they have high economic value. This study focused on the basic components of African print fabrics produced in Southwest Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study comprised of African print fabric designers in the two functioning African print fabric companies in Southwest Nigeria. These companies were coded as company A and company B. At the time of the study, there were ten African print fabric designers working in both companies. Census was used to determine the sample size since the number is manageable. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistical tools. The study revealed that colour, crackle effect, line effect, bold motifs and nature of fibre are major distinguishing components of African print fabrics. It was also established that although African print fabric is named after the African continent, the components are not essentially African. It was recommended that African print fabric designers should endeavour to consistently adopt Afrocentric design elements to African print fabric designs. This will encourage Africans to embrace the fabric more which will positively influence the economy.

ÖZ

Afrika baskılı kumaşlar, ekonomik değeri yüksek olduğu için Afrika ülkelerinde başlıca tekstil ürünleridir. Bu çalışma, Güneybatı Nijerya'da üretilen Afrika baskı kumaşlarının temel bileşenlerine odaklanmıştır. Çalışma, anket araştırması tasarımını benimsemiştir. Araştırmanın evrenini, Güneybatı Nijerya'da faaliyet gösteren iki ayrı Afrika baskılı kumaş şirketinde çalışan Afrikalı baskı kumaş tasarımcıları oluşturmaktadır. Bu firmalar A firması ve B firması olarak kodlanmıştır. Çalışmanın yapıldığı sırada her iki firmada da çalışan on Afrikalı kumaş baskı tasarımcısı bulunmaktadır. Sayı yönetilebilir olduğundan örneklem büyüklüğünü belirlemek için sayım kullanılmıştır. Veri toplamak için anket yapılmıştır. Toplanan veriler, tanımlayıcı istatistiksel araçlar kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Çalışma, renk, çatlama efekti, çizgi efekti, kalın motifler ve elyafın doğasının Afrika baskı kumaşlarının ana ayırt edici bileşenleri olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Afrika baskı kumaşının adını Afrika kıtasından almasına rağmen bileşenlerinin esasen Afrikalı olmadığı da tespit edilmiştir. Afrikalı baskı kumaş tasarımcılarının, Afrika merkezli tasarım öğelerini Afrika baskı kumaş tasarımlarına tutarlı bir şekilde uyarlamaya çalışması önerilmektedir. Bu, Afrikalıları ekonomiyi olumlu yönde etkileyecek olan kumaş daha fazla benimsemeye teşvik edecektir.

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Introduction

African print fabrics are essential clothing items in most African countries especially in Nigeria. African print fabric is a major component of the African clothing market. They are patronized by individuals in Africa and beyond regardless of social, economic or political status. African print fabrics have vibrant colours and attention-grabbing designs. They are usually produced in a variety of patterns and colours. According to Uqalo (2015), some of the designs represent proverbs and traditional African fables while the colours used represent social status, age, gender, tribal orientation and marital status. African print fabrics have unique characteristics that distinguish them from other traditional African fabrics such as *Adire*, *Aso-Oke* and *Kente* among others.

African print fabrics, *Adire* and *Aso-oke* are notable fabrics produced in Southwest Nigeria. *Adire* and *Aso-oke* are traditional textiles peculiar to the Yoruba people in Southwest Nigeria. Researches have revealed that these fabrics are derived from culture, physical and spiritual features that represent the Yoruba society. *Adire* means to tie and dye, they are colorful dyed clothes found throughout Africa while *Aso-oke* is a short form of *Aso Ilu Oke* meaning clothes from the hinterland. These fabrics are important items of clothing worn by the Yoruba of Southwest Nigeria. *Adire* and *Aso-oke* fabrics are produced at cottage level using locally manufactured tools and implements, this serves as a major limitation to the production and internationalization of these traditional textiles despite their cultural relevance, unlike the African print fabrics that are produced in large quantities using automated machines. African print fabrics are essential articles of clothing for a viable economy. They are patronized by individuals in Africa and beyond regardless of gender or level of influence. African print fabrics according to Uqalo (2015) portray the African rich culture and provide a sense of belongingness in the society. Chichi, Howard, and Baines (2016) identified brand loyalty, quality, symbolism, cultural significance, design ingenuity, adaptability of print designs to fashion styles and some design features, such as colour scheme, pattern size, and layout as factors influencing the marketability and acceptability of African prints locally and internationally. It is therefore important to know the basic component of this fabric and what makes it different from other types of textile prints.

Statement of the Problem

African print fabric is a major item in the African textile market especially in Nigeria. According to Uqalo (2015), Nigeria is the major consumer market for African print fabrics, accounting for thirty-eight percent (38%) of total demand. This fabric has generated a lot of controversies in terms of nomenclature and elements of design. Textile researchers such Akinwumi (2008) and Essel (2017) argued extensively about the validation of the nomenclature of African print fabrics considering its origin and the design content. The researcher is of the opinion that there is a need to study the basic

components of African print fabrics and be able to clearly distinguish it from other textile prints such as Tiole prints, liberty prints, geometric prints, botanical prints, dot prints, floral prints and scenic prints among others.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine the basic components of African print fabrics produced in Southwest Nigeria.

Literature Review

African Print Fabrics

African print fabric is a terminology used to describe printed fabrics with vibrant colours commonly used by Africans. They are made using the wax-resist dyeing method using machines. These fabrics are usually characterized by African signs, symbols, and motifs used as a means of silent communication. African print fabrics are usually 100% cotton fabrics with attractive patterns, usually very colourful fabrics and primarily associated with Africa because of its tribal-like patterns, motifs and massive acceptance by Africans. This fabric is generally accepted by women, men, children and people of all social statuses. African print fabrics are used as casual wears and uniform (*aso-ebi*) for different occasions (Uqalo, 2015).

African print fabrics are major materials for contemporary fashion in Africa and also in the international fashion world (Amankwah & Howard, 2013; Uqalo, 2015). Researchers such as Ogunduyile (2001) and Onwuakpa (2016) studied African print designs from the cultural perspective and described it as an essential part of the culture, necessary for the growth and development of the economy any nation, especially African countries. Akinwumi (2008) defined African print fabric as a term used by European textile firms to describe machine-printed fabrics using wax resins and dyes to achieve batik wavy line effects on cloths while Uqalo (2015) defined African print fabrics as the vibrant, attention-grabbing fabrics used across countries in Africa and beyond with varying patterns and colours. These patterns are sometimes derived from poems, proverbs and traditional fables and tales while the colours used for the designs symbolize age, marital status, social status and tribe.

The term 'African print fabric' is also used to describe imitations of resist fabrics which have a resemblance of the waxed type effects but were printed without wax resins (Akinwumi, 2008). However, Essel (2017) raised a terminological argument about the term African print fabric stating that most of these fabrics are manufactured in European and Asian countries. However, the term African print fabric is generally accepted because though the fabrics are not of African Origin, they represent an integral part of African culture and are generally accepted by Africans (Uqalo, 2015). Akinwumi (2008) and Uqalo (2015) observed that the designs in African print fabrics are linked to African

culture by adopting names and motifs from Africa. This extends the function of African print fabric beyond its use for only fashion but also as a powerful medium of communication.

African print fabric designs were mostly imposed on African consumers in the past before the establishment of textile printing mills in African countries. Today, indigenous textile designers and textile merchandizers play major roles in the design and promotion of African print fabrics. Increase in the rate of globalization has drastically reduced the differences in African lifestyles and preferences in choice of designs are becoming less obvious. As a result of the aforementioned, the same African print fabric designs now sell successfully across many African countries once the designs are aesthetically acceptable (Uqalo, 2015; Wilson, 2001).

African print fabrics today also increasingly incorporate Western objects and symbols such as umbrellas, phones, electric fans, cameras and radios are often overlaid onto backgrounds with lines and other geometric shapes (Amankwah & Howard, 2013; Chichi et al., 2016). Uqalo (2015) noted that African prints are used by people across all social strata including entertainers, religious leaders, politicians and peasants in Africa and the diaspora. Figure 1 and Figure 2 are examples of African print fabrics.



Figure 1. African print fabric 1
Source: Photographed by Researcher, 2020



Figure 2. African print fabric 2
Source: Photographed by Researcher, 2020

Types of African Print Fabric Designs

African print fabrics are known and called several names across Africa, including Nichemwax, Abada, Excellence, Superwax, Superprint, Veritable Java Print, Woodin, Hollandais, Uniwax and Vlisco among others. Some of these are names of specific brands and other names of manufacturers. African print falls into two broad categories: Real Wax and Imi Wax (Uqalo, 2015). Isaac (2013) and Uqalo (2015) agreed that African print designs have changed over time. They described the first set of prints

introduced to Africa as Real wax fabrics, this set of African prints dominated the African textile market until the 21st century when fancy print designs were introduced to the African market.

Real Wax

This is the first set of African prints introduced to Africa. It is the machine produced version of Indonesian batik cloth. It involved the application of wax resins and dyes to achieve the batik effect on both sides of the printed fabric with equal colour intensity on both sides. This type of printing is referred to as duplex printing (Hagen-jurkowitsch & Alexander, 2016; Uqalo, 2015). Real wax fabric is characterized by the “crackle effect” mechanically applied through the manufacturing process. The result is that, no two pieces of fabric are alike and as such, it increases the market value of the fabric for African consumers (Hagen-jurkowitsch & Alexander, 2016). Real Wax is the most expensive type of African print. Real Wax is produced in Nigeria, Holland, China, Ghana and Ivory Coast with China dominating the market by producing 90% of all Real Wax (Uqalo, 2015).

Imi Wax

This type of African print design is also referred to as fancy prints. It is a non-wax printed fabric. Unlike real wax fabrics, designs are printed on only one side of the fabric in a continuous process through rotary screen printing technique which does not require the use of wax resin (Hagen-jurkowitsch & Alexander, 2016; Uqalo, 2015). Fancy print designs gained dominance in the 21st century; some of these designs are not in conformity with the initial wax print designs which carried proverbial concepts of Africanism (Akinwumi, 2008).

Origin of African Print Fabrics

According to Akinwumi (2008) and Uqalo (2015), African print originated from the resist printing process which has an Indian origin. The resist printing method (batik), diffused from India to Indonesian islands and Japan while its subsequent perfection was made possible by the Javanese before the thirteenth century. Lindholm (1979) opined that batik has a Hindu origin and it is sacred. Its sacred importance was associated with child's birth, initiation and death. Newman (2007) noted that batik particularly served as a medium for depicting symbols that represent Javanese women's fertility, crowned snake motifs, while some tribes such as the Sawu in Sunda island of Indonesia used the cloth as a means of clan identification. The Javanese mastered the art of batik and they produced a lot of symbolic and non-symbolic designs before they were colonized (Akinwumi, 2008).

Irwin and Brett (1970) noted that in the nineteenth century, styles derived from preserved European peasant batik designs and preserved served as sources of inspiration

for designing African print fabrics. African print fabric motifs were universal to all cultures, such as natural and stylized forms that are relevant to the Europeans, Africans and other cultures (Akinwumi, 2008). Some of the motifs derived from natural forms were reminiscent of the seventeenth century Western embroidery and silk styles (Irwin and Brett, 1970).

Essel (2017) opined that symbols, motifs and colours used in African print fabrics often convey meanings and serve as a medium of communication that have been used for over a period of time with specific meaning and interpretation among the people. For instance, the use of beads in African print design connotes 'precious beads do not make noise' meaning that a good person does not have to praise himself. Some of the motifs used in African prints include geometric shapes, Arabic symbols, lines, Roman numerals, animal shapes, flowers, leaves, seeds, musical objects, contemporary objects such as cars, bicycles and television among others. According to Akinwumi (2009), design concepts often used can be grouped into four:

1. Women's life (family, love, housework),
2. Town life and what it brings, (alphabet, television, money, power),
3. Nature (animals, flowers, seeds, leaves) and
4. Rhythms (music, drums)

Introduction of African Print Fabrics to Africa

Uqalo (2015) noted that African print fabrics first came to Africa in the form of wax fabric (batik) which originated in Indonesia (formerly, Dutch East Indies). Indonesians, for centuries produced batik designs through the application of wax to fabric and dyeing the waxed fabric to create the desired pattern. The Dutch later developed a mechanical method of replicating wax designs by applying resins to both sides of cotton fabric. This imitated version of the fabric had the "crackle" effect as a result of the resin cracking and dyes penetrating into the cracks. These cracks reflect on the fabric as venial lines and dots after removing the resin. The mechanically simulated wax print fabrics enjoyed poor patronage in Indonesia and Europe because they were regarded as imperfect. Unlike Indonesians and Europeans, West Africans embraced the machine-made wax prints. They saw the crackle effects as unique and special design elements rather than deficiencies. The West African's love for the crackle effect is so pronounced that African print fabric manufacturers now deliberately include cracks in African print fabric designs. However, Tolulope and Babatunde (2013) believed that the prints were embraced by Africans because of its affordability and suitability for African climate.

Uqalo (2015) recorded that early African print manufacturers focused more on fabric colour than design because African people have different colour preferences. Deep blue prints were preferred in Nigeria while Ivory Coast preferred shades of brown, yellow, red and green and Ghanaians favoured orange and black. Hagen-jurkowitsch and

Alexander (2016) and Uqalo (2015) noted that the focus has now moved from colour preference to the quality of design. Plant and animal motifs were the predominant motifs for the earliest print designs while patterns and portrait motifs were later incorporated in the early 1900s to cater for local tastes. Today motifs commonly used are alphabets, geometric shapes, representations of human beings, plants, animals and political or social symbols (Tolulope & Babatunde, 2013; Uqalo, 2015).

According to Akinwumi (2008), before nineteenth century, few quantities of African printfabrics gained access into Africa through the following channels:

1. Christian missionaries who used the fabrics as gifts for new converts;
2. European producers who printed the fabrics solely for the African market;
3. West African soldiers who brought back African print fabrics for their wives after serving between 1810 and 1862 in Indonesia.

However, during the late 19th century, the Dutch directed their textile mills in Haalem, Leyden and those in other countries to produce African print fabrics specifically for the West African markets. Thus, the early decades of the 20th century witnessed a rapid increase in the export of African print fabrics to Africa, and in the late 20th century, cheaper bales of African print fabrics were supplied from Japan and local factories to West African countries. These fabrics were given indigenous African names in order to appeal to African customers, though these names had no connection with the designs (Domowitz, 1992).

Characteristics of African Prints

African print design are characterized by blends of Javanese, Indian, Chinese, Arab and European artistic culture (Akinwumi, 2008). Isaac (2013) however opined that the major characteristic of African print fabric is the creative combination of unique patterns and colours which are displayed in an orderly repetition of motifs which are interrupted by a shift in texture, scale and direction. Uqalo (2015) highlighted the relevance of patterns and colours used in African print designs, noting that the patterns most times represent proverbs, poems and fables while the colours represent social standing, age, tribal orientation and marital status.

Akinwumi (2008) however noted that there are some features that are peculiar to African prints such as crackle effect, overlapping background colours, bold motifs and venial line effect among others. Essel (2017) corroborated this by stating that African prints are characterised by waxy venial effect and patchy designs derived from the varying manner of wax applications such as cracking and splattering of the wax in the process of printing the fabrics. Some of these features are shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4.



Figure 3. Splattering Wax Effect

Source: Photographed by Researcher, 2019



Figure 4. Overlapping Colours Effect

Source: Photographed by researcher, 20

Uses of African Print Fabrics

Africans are very creative and fashionable people, they use African print fabrics to tell stories, poems and traditional African tales. African print fabrics are given specific names depending on the type of design. For instance, designs are given names such as star, net, shell and so on. All these names have their specific meanings. African print fabrics have exceptional significance as a means of communication and mutual association between individuals and within communities (Akinwumi, 2008). The motifs and figural compositions used are directly related to historical proverbs and events. They represent a form of storytelling often taking the place of the written word and convey messages of importance for an individual, family, or larger social unit.

Akinwumi (2008) stated that the cotton fabric used for African print fabrics is cool and durable and can be worn in various styles. African print fabrics are commonly used as family cloth (*aso-ebi*) for parties such as weddings, naming, burial ceremonies and other similar African occasions. The custom in Nigeria and some African countries was for people from the same family to wear the same cloth to show you belong to a certain family. It can be used as a uniform for group of friends in a party especially in African Weddings. The blend of colours in these events adds colour to the ceremony and makes it more fun and celebratory (Akinwumi, 2008).

African textiles are often used for social and political purposes, for commemorative purposes marking special occasions like political or tribal events, weddings, funerals, burials, naming ceremonies. Historically, the usage of Africa print fabrics was controlled by chiefs and regional leaders/elders and they were distributed with favouritism (Akinwumi, 2008). As personal adornment, African print fabrics were wrapped as skirts

around the waists and hips and sometimes thrown over the shoulder or made into robes. African print fabrics are not always worn as garments but sometimes used as backdrops for decorative purposes.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for this research. The population of the study included all African print designers in functioning textile mills producing African print fabrics in Southwest Nigeria. At the time of the study, there were ten (10) African print fabric designers working in the two (2) textile mills producing African print fabrics in Southwest Nigeria. Census was used to determine the sample size since the number is manageable. Therefore, all the African print fabric designers in the functioning textile mills in Southwest Nigeria were sampled.

Quantitative data was collected using both open-ended and closed-ended Questionnaires for data collection. The quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistical tools.

Results and Discussion

Open ended questionnaire was used to elicit responses from African print designers about the unique features that distinguish African print fabrics from other textile prints.

Table 1. Distinguishing features of African print fabrics listed by African print designers

S/N	Features	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Choice and use of colours	8	25.81
2.	Wax effect	7	22.58
3.	Wavy line effect	6	19.35
4.	Bold motifs	5	16.13
5.	100% cotton	5	16.13
		31	100.00

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019

Table 1 shows the basic features listed by African print designers in Southwest Nigeria. The table shows that a total of thirty-one (31) responses were collected from ten (10) respondents. This is because the respondents were allowed to give more than one response. Table 1 shows that choice and use of colours is a major factor that distinguishes African print fabrics from other printed textiles. This is followed closely by wax effects in form of crackle designs on the fabrics. The data also shows that wavy line effect is also a major component of African print fabrics, this can be in form of background designs or motif elements. Bold motifs and nature of fibres (100% cotton) were also identified as major components of African print fabrics. Chart 1 shows the components of African print fabrics in order of priority.

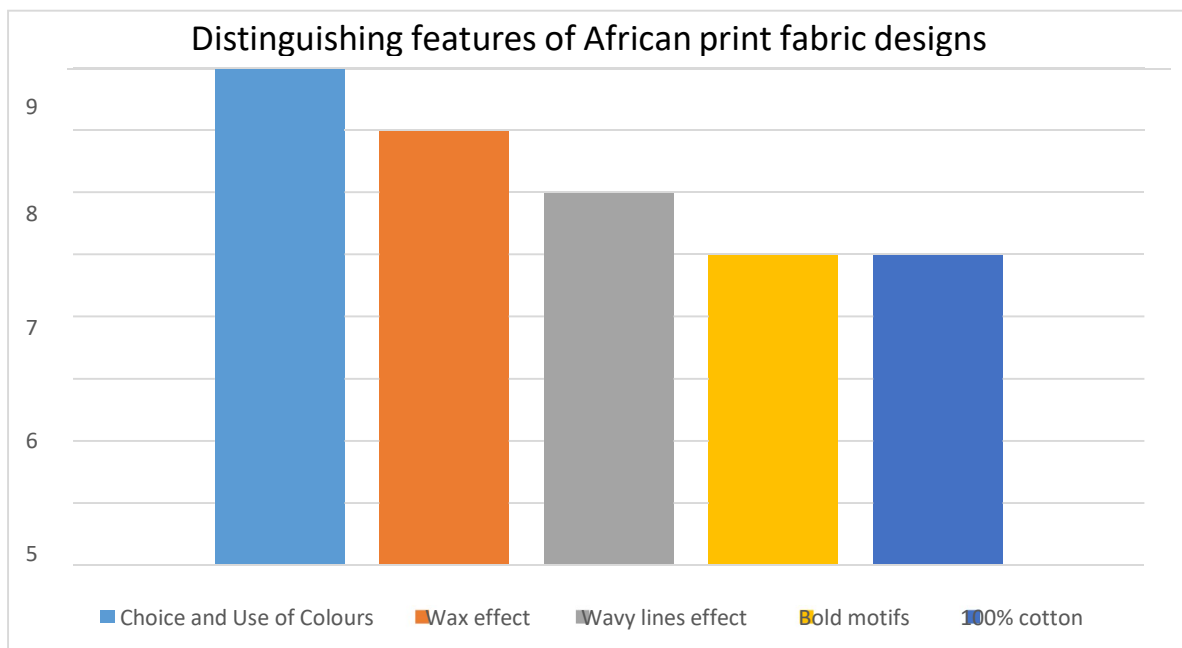


Chart 1. Distinguishing features of African print fabrics.

Source: Researcher’s fieldwork, 2019

Further investigation was carried out using closed ended questionnaire to collect data reflecting different takes of African print designers about some African print fabric features using the 5-point Likert scale.

Table 2. Components of African Print Designs in Southwest Nigeria

S/N	Variables	Company A		Company B		Cumulative	
		Mean Score	Remark	Mean Score	Remark	Mean Score	Remark
1	African prints must reflect African culture	3.0	N	3.0	N	3.0	N
2	Symbols peculiar to certain cultures are usually used as Motifs for African print designs	3.5	A	3.7	A	3.6	A
3	African print designs must have sprinkled wax effect	3.0	N	3.7	A	3.4	N
4	Crackle effect is a major component of African print designs	2.8	N	3.7	A	3.1	N
5	African print designs must have bold motifs	2.8	N	3.8	A	3.4	N
6	Continuous repeat is a major factor to consider in African print production	5.0	SA	4.5	SA	4.7	SA
7	African print designs must have a dominating dark colour	4	A	2.8	N	3.3	N
8	Company’s logo must be on the fabric’s selvedge	3.3	N	4.1	A	3.8	A
9	Identification number must be on the fabric’s selvedge	4.8	SA	4.8	SA	4.8	SA

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork, 2019

KEYS: SD= Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D= Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree Mean score rating Key: 1.00 – 1.80 (SD); 1.81 - 2.60 (D); 2.61 - 3.40 (N); 3.41 – 4.20 (A); 4.21 – 5.00 (SA)

The first variable in Table 2 addressed the use of cultural contents for African print fabric designs in Southwest Nigeria and the result shows that African print designers from both companies were neutral with a mean score of 3.0 ($\bar{X} = 3.0$) about how compulsory it is for their designs to reflect African culture. This suggests that in Southwest Nigeria, the use of design elements reflecting African culture for African print fabric design is absolutely optional. However, the data collected for the second variable revealed that although it is not compulsory that African print fabrics produced in Southwest must reflect African culture, company A and company B agreed that symbols peculiar to African culture are sometimes used for their designs with a mean score of 3.5 and 3.7 ($\bar{X} = 3.5$, $\bar{X} = 3.7$) respectively. It could be deduced from the individual analysis of companies A and B and also the cumulative analysis that the use of African symbols as an African print fabric motif is optional but some of the motifs used for African print designs in these companies can be traced to certain African cultures.

The third variable in Table 2 addressed the use of sprinkled wax effect in African print designs. The data shows that in company A, the designers are neutral about producing African print designs with sprinkled wax effect with a mean score of 3.0 ($\bar{X} = 3.0$). This suggests that wax effect is not a major feature of African print design in company A. However, in company B, the mean score is 3.7 ($\bar{X} = 3.7$). This suggests that the wax effect is a major feature of African print designs produced in company B. The cumulative mean score for this variable is 3.4 ($\bar{X} = 3.4$). This analysis shows that sprinkled wax effect is a component of African print designs produced in Southwest Nigeria but more prominent in designs produced in company B than those produced in company A. This suggests that the component of African print fabric is also dependent on the company of production.

The fourth variable in Table 2 addressed the use of crackle effect in African print fabric designs in Southwest Nigeria. In company A, the respondents were neutral about this with a mean score of 2.8 ($\bar{X} = 2.8$). This shows that in company A, crackle effect is not a major component of designs produced in the company. However, in company B, the mean score is 3.7 ($\bar{X} = 3.7$).

This suggests that in company B crackle effect is a major feature of African print designs produced in the company. The combined mean score from both companies is 3.1 ($\bar{X} = 3.1$). It could be deduced from this analysis that the crackle effect is not a common feature in all African print designs in Southwest Nigeria but specific to a particular company.

The fifth variable in Table 2 addressed the use of bold motifs for African print fabric designs. Designers in company A were neutral about this with a mean score of 2.8 ($\bar{X} = 2.8$) while designers in company B are positively disposed to the use of bold motifs with a mean score of 3.8 ($\bar{X} = 3.8$). The cumulative mean score for both companies is

3.4 ($\bar{X} = 3.4$). This analysis shows that the production of African print designs with bold motifs in Southwest Nigeria is not

The sixth variable in Table 2 examined perfect continuous repeat as a major factor in African print fabric designs. The mean score for this variable in company A is 5.0 ($\bar{X} = 5.0$), 4.5 ($\bar{X} = 4.5$) for company B and a cumulative mean score of 4.7 ($\bar{X} = 4.7$). This analysis shows that continuous perfect repeat is a major factor considered in the designing of African print fabric in Southwest Nigeria.

The seventh variable addressed the use of dominating dark colours in the production of African print fabric designs. The result shows that company A strongly agreed that African print fabrics must have a dominating dark colour with a mean score of 4.0 ($\bar{X} = 4.0$) while company B is neutral about this with a mean score of 2.8 ($\bar{X} = 2.8$). The combined mean score is 3.3 ($\bar{X} = 2.8$). This shows that African print designs in Southwest Nigeria usually have dominating dark colours especially in company A and seldom in company B. This also reveals that the choice of colours used for African print fabrics in Southwest is dependent on the company of production.

The eighth variable addressed the printing of the company's logo on the selvedge of African print fabrics in Southwest Nigeria. Designers in company A agreed that the company logo is usually printed on the selvedge of African print fabrics with a mean score of 3.3 ($\bar{X} = 3.3$).

Designers in company B also agreed to this with a mean score of 4.1 ($\bar{X} = 4.1$). The cumulative mean score is 3.8 ($\bar{X} = 3.8$). This suggests that most African print designs produced in Southwest Nigeria have companies' logos printed on the selvedge. This submission was crosschecked qualitatively through interviews and it was confirmed that companies' logos are printed on original designs produced in both companies A and B but not on imitated designs.

The ninth variable in Table 2 addressed the printing of identification number on the selvedge of African prints. Designers in both company A and company B strongly agreed that the identification number is a major component of African print fabrics with a mean score of 4.8 ($\bar{X} = 4.8$) from both companies. This result shows that all the African prints produced in Southwest Nigeria have identification numbers printed on their selvedge. The identification enhances adequate record keeping and helps to monitor the demand and sales of specific designs.

Summary and Conclusion

African print fabric is named after the African continent but the reflection of African cultural values and symbols is not a major consideration in the composition of design elements for the fabric. This affirms the claim of Essel (2017) that African print fabrics do not possess enough design and historical attributes to be named after the African continent. The study revealed that choice and use of colours is a major factor that distinguishes African print fabrics from other printed textiles. It also revealed that wax effects in from of crackle designs, wavy line effect, bold motifs and nature of fibre (100% cotton) are distinguishing components of African print fabrics

The study also revealed that the components of African print fabrics produced in Southwest Nigeria are relative to the companies of production. Some components of African print fabrics such as cultural motifs, wax and crackle effects, bold motifs and dominating dark colours are peculiar to a particular company while all African print fabrics produced in Southwest Nigeria have perfect continuous repeat and identification numbers on the selvedge. It was however discovered that only African prints with original designs have the companies' logo on the selvedge of the fabrics.

The researcher is of the opinion that African print fabric designers and companies should be flexible about choice of motifs, colours and other design elements used for African print fabrics. These decisions should be made based on demand and consumers' choice not a rigid customary practice. Companies' logos should be a major component of African print fabrics. This will encourage companies to produce original designs.

It is recommended that African print fabric designers in Southwest Nigeria and Africa at large should endeavour to consistently adopt Afrocentric design elements to African print fabric designs. This will probably encourage Africans to embrace the fabric more which will positively influence the economy of the nation and continent at large.

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