

## A Study on the Impact of Northern Nigeria Batik in the Context of Sociocultural Identification

<sup>1</sup>Adinoyi Baba James, <sup>1</sup>Chomo Josephine Dung, <sup>1</sup>Christopher Friday Ibrahim, <sup>2</sup>Shaibu Nana and <sup>3</sup>Omaku Peter Enesi

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Art and Industrial Design, Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa, Nigeria*

<sup>2</sup>*Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, National Secretariat, Plot A4, ARO Plaza, 2015 Herbert Macaulay Way, Wuse Zone 6, Abuja, Nigeria*

<sup>3</sup>*Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa, Nigeria*

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### Corresponding Author:

Adinoyi Baba James

*Department of Art and Industrial Design, Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa, Nigeria*

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**Abstract:** In this study, the researchers used resist dyeing technique to create Northern Nigeria symbol as motif on cotton fabrics and the fabrics were then cut and sown into man and woman garments. Data were collected by wearing man and woman dummies with the garments while presenting them to the respondents. Also, in the perspective of this study, efforts were raised to synchronize thoughts from some selected students in different geopolitical regions in Northern Nigeria about batik design with cultural symbol of the people. The results indicated that the creation of batik, the designed with cultural symbols can be used as medium of cultural identification, promoting unity amongst people of the same cultural background. As a result, it can also be view from a wider perspective that the production of the batik can boost the economy of Nigeria based on the demonstration of local interest thereby creating employment and subsequent generation of wealth.

## INTRODUCTION

The emergence of textile technology has played a tremendous role in the cultural aspect of human life and societal transformation. On the other hands, many products have been generated for our homes and industries using textile technologies of different sorts for socioeconomic applications. Lots of people worldwide have secured jobs either directly or indirect through the emergence of technologies. The development of textile industries in different parts of the world have been used to foster cultural identification of ethnic groups, since, ancient times. Like in Indonesia, the involvement of different cities in the local craft of textile technology is well known across the world due to her productivity. On

a global scale, the development of the local textile craft has been promoted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) through its quest to support peace and security by supporting cooperation between countries through education, science and culture. In 2009, UNESCO established through its world cultural heritage batik as part of its cultural identification programme. Nigeria is one of the countries in the world with highly diverse ethnic background and as a result almost all the ethnic group have passionately dwell in craft of textile making for centuries. Most prominently in the country is the Yoruba ethnic stock in the Southwestern part of the country who have practiced the skill of textile production for eras using different locally made technologies to create different patterns on

fabrics. In that part of the country, the people have created their local economic strength through their creativity in the locally made fabrics known as “adire” but commonly referred to as batik. Report has revealed that this adire (batik) textile skill is practiced worldwide especially in China, India, Indonesia, Europe, Malaysia, Singapore, Ghana and among other countries (Noel, 2003). According to Saheed (2013), the adire textile production is an integral part of the cultural life of the people of Egba kingdom in the Southwest Nigeria.

In the study, he added that local women within the Egba Kingdom are entrepreneurially productive in the making of the adire and they are fond of using a variety of resist dyeing techniques to produce. In many other well-known Yoruba land, design and production of varieties of artistic adire is the foremost local craft of the women. Though the knowledge of the exact historical point of origin of resist technique of creating patterns on fabrics is not really known but researchers like Eloise (2001) and Noel (2003) presented that evidences are found across Asian countries. However, the Indonesians, have took the resist craft technique as their brainchild and named it batik. The word batik is said to be derived from the word ‘ambatik’ meaning ‘a cloth with some sort of little dots’ (Steelyana, 2012). Batik is an ancient method of decorating textile that has been practiced in many places all over Indonesia (Haake, 1989). In 2009, batik has been accepted by UNESCO as world heritage and this global acknowledgement was trailed by a rapid progression of batik industry (Steelyana, 2012; Wulandari, 2011). The production of batik fabrication involves the process of creating some sort of aesthetic design, waxing, dyeing, scraping and boiling which are done cautiously and repeated for every color integrated in the design or pattern. The present day technological revolutions have spring up a great deal of interest thereby leading to intensive study on the cultural influence and market potential of the batik printed cloth in different parts of the world. Globally, local batik has influence the cultural heritage of the people in one way or the other and it is usually adopted by the succeeding generations of the people. Aluko (2003) stated that culture is the collective encoding of the mind and conceptual aggregation of attitudes, values, norms as well as life style of a group of people such that it differentiates them from other members in another society. Thus, this study is conducted based on the following objectives:

- To determine the influence of Northern batik on the cultural identification of the young people of Northern Nigeria
- To fine out the potential influence of batik on the economy of the local traders
- To identify the contribution of the batik designed with cultural symbol in the influence of the cultural heritage of the young people of Northern Nigeria

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Structured questionnaire:** In Nigeria geographical context, the geographical coverage of the country is divided into six different zones as shown in Fig. 1. Northeast, Northwest, North central, Southeast, Southwest and South-South. The bearing of this research focus specifically on the three geopolitical zones in the Northern part of the country. However, Table 1 shows the states in the geopolitical zones of interest considered in this work. In the context of the framework of the research question, the respondents are selected from three different universities from each geopolitical zone. The institutions are Bayero University Kano (BUK) from the northwestern geopolitical zone, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU) Bauchi from the northeastern geopolitical zone and Nasarawa State University (NSUK) Keffi from the Northcentral geopolitical zone. The targeted respondents are indigenous students from the administrative local government areas where the selected institutions are located. This research explores quantitative approach in comparative perspective based on the sociocultural interest of students to the well-known symbol of Northern Nigeria. The questions investigated in the framework of the questionnaire are:

- Q1: Are you familiar with the sociocultural symbol of the people of Northern Nigeria?
- Q2: As a Northern Nigeria student, does the symbol embedded in the design of the batik represents a sign of cultural identity to you?
- Q3: Do you have interest in wearing batik designed with the symbol of Northern Nigeria both in and outside the campus?
- Q4: Do you wish to adopt the batik designed with the Northern Nigeria symbol for the celebration of the Northern student sociocultural day?

**Design of cultural symbol:** The study is based on a critical cultural perspective in which cultural symbol is analyzed as a response to social inclination. In addition, image making representative based on paper design as shown in Fig. 2 is also used in the research study. Northern Nigerian symbol was created on cardboard papers using simple repeat pattern to arrange the motifs on the cardboard paper. Supporting

Table 1: States in the Northern Nigeria geopolitical zones

| Northeast | Northwest | Northcentral |
|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Adamawa   | Jigawa    | Benue        |
| Bauchi    | Kaduna    | Plateau      |
| Borno     | Kano      | Kwara        |
| Gombe     | Katsina   | Kogi         |
| Taraba    | Kebbi     | Niger        |
| Yobe      | Sokoto    | Nasarawa     |
| -         | Zamfara   | Abuja        |

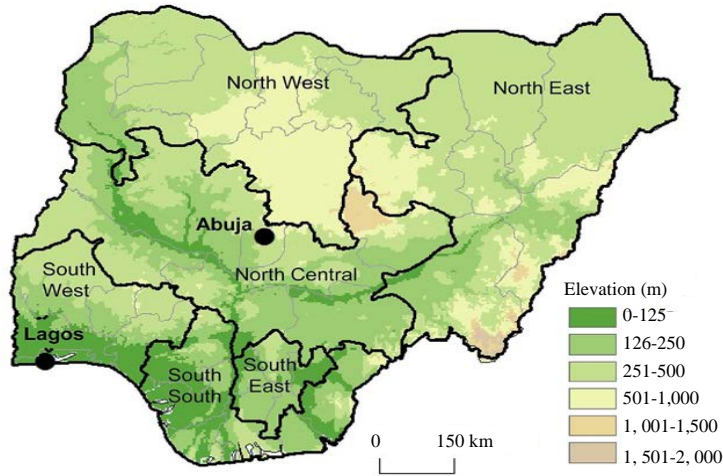


Fig. 1: Map of Nigeria showing the six geopolitical zones

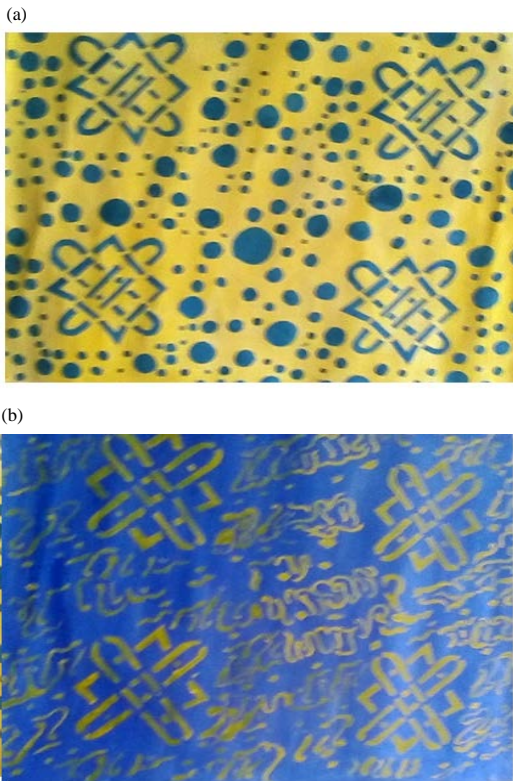


Fig. 2(a, b): Paper design using Northern Nigerian symbol as a main motif Authors work

motifs were also incorporated to enhance the design. The two paper designs produced are shown in Fig. 2.

**Pre-treatment, dyeing and garment making:** The cotton fabric used is pre-treated by soaking in hot water as a



Fig. 3: Batic fabrics worn on women and man dummies

means of removing the industrial finishing chemical before used. This is also to ensure good working condition with the material. The material is pure cotton of ten yard length. Subsequently, the material was dyed with dye colorant for a period of 30 min under stirring using a solution of vat dye (1 table spoon per yard), sodium hydroxide (1 table spoon per yard) and sodium hydrosulphite (2 table spoons per yard). The resist coated fabric material is then subjected to the second dye bath of different colorant. However, the garment making aspect of the study, the batik fabrics were sent to fashion designer studio where they were cut into patterns and sewn into man and woman garments. The garments were worn on male and female sculptural images (dummies) as shown in Fig. 3 for data collection based on the structured questionnaires.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The sociocultural aspect of a society can be linked to many concepts in the life of the people. The concept of sociocultural activities is better understood in multicultural societies. Sociocultural activities can be established through the use of motif batik designed with cultural symbols. This claim has been demonstrated in several studies presented by different researchers. The use of sociocultural symbols is quite a common sociocultural phenomenon. In a multicultural society with different tribes, each tribe has a peculiar culture with its specific local wisdom based on the cultural interpretation of the people. The inclination of cultural interpretation especially as it concerns certain aspect of the life of people is vehemently passed from generation to generation in a society based on customs and beliefs. However, cultural identity is a total reflection of the characteristic of a group of people that differentiate them from others either living within or outside their settlements. The sociocultural identity of a group of people can be cultured or acquired identity depending on its origin. This study investigates sociocultural perspectives of young university undergraduate’s student of Northern Nigeria origin towards the batik designed with sociocultural symbol of Northern Nigeria.

The results obtained from the sociocultural perspective explored in the various aspect of the questionnaire are presented in Fig. 4-7. Going by the result presented in Fig. 4, the question investigated is based on familiarity of the respondents with the sociocultural symbol of the people of Northern Nigeria. In all the three institution, majority of the respondents are well acquainted with the symbol. In ATBU, 43 out of the 55 respondents collected from 60 questionnaires distributed indicated that they are familiar with it. In BUK and NSUK, 47 and 39 respondents out of 53 and 57, respectively recovered also demonstrated their acquaintances with the symbol. In the second question investigated, the respondents were given the opportunity to state whether symbol embedded in the design of the batik represents a sign of cultural identity to them. Results indicated that 41, 49 and 47 respondents from ATBU, BUK and NSUK, respectively. In ATBU and NSUK, 10 and 7 respondents among the students selected disagree that the design of the batik represents a sign of cultural identity while the lowest number of disagree respondents is presented by the BUK. In Fig. 6, the interest of the respondents towards wearing the batik designed with the symbol of Northern Nigeria both in and outside the campus was investigated. In ATBU and NSUK recorded above 40 respondents while BUK produces as much as 51 respondents out of the total of 53 who agreed to wear the batik designed with the symbol of Northern Nigeria both in and outside the campus. In Fig. 7, the result presented

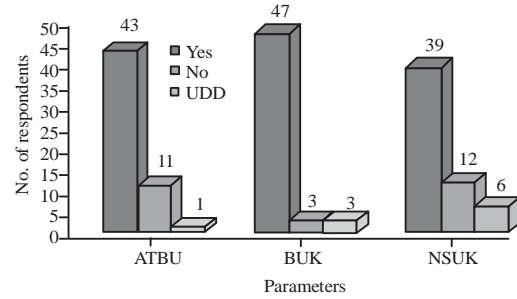


Fig. 4: Result of the familiarity of the respondents with the sociocultural symbol of the Northern Nigeria

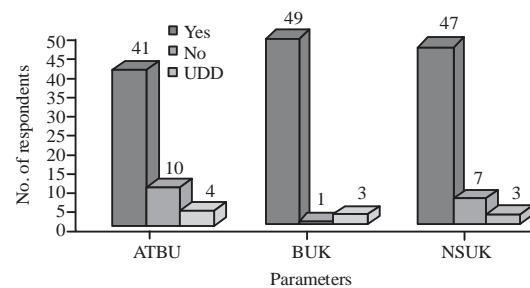


Fig. 5: Result of the symbol embedded in the design of the batik on the cultural identity of the respondents

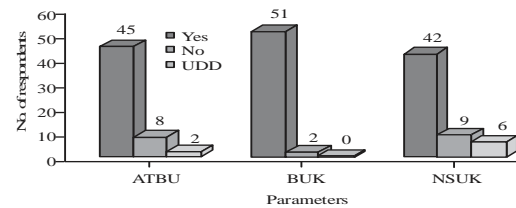


Fig. 6: Result of the interest of respondents towards wearing batik designed with symbol of Northern Nigeria both in outside the campus

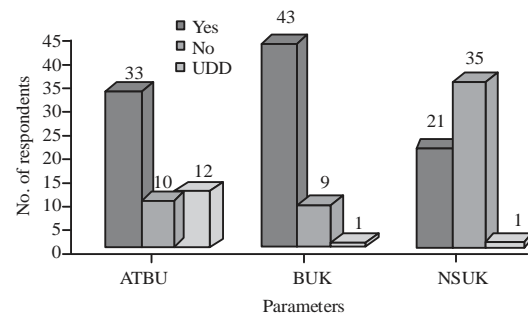


Fig. 7: Result of the adoption of the batik designed with the Northern Nigeria symbol for the celebration of the Northern student sociocultural day

shows the result of willingness of some respondents to adopt the batik designed with the Northern Nigeria symbol for the celebration of the Northern student sociocultural day like Gamji memorial day. Base on the figures obtained, 43 respondents from the BUK agreed to adopt the batik designed with the symbol while 21 respondents from NSUK representing just approximately 39% agree to the adoption. In the case of ATBU, 33 respondents representing 60% agreed while 10 respondents disagree. A total 12 respondents which is the highest among the three selected institution were left in undecided situation. Surprisingly, in NSUK as much as 35 respondents disagree to the adoption of the batik designed with the Northern Nigeria symbol for the celebration of the Northern student sociocultural day. This seriously presented a divergent view compare to ATBU and BUK which are considered institutions located in core part of the Northern Nigeria.

### **CONCLUSION**

There are many factors that determines sociocultural influences. Based on the sociocultural elements investigated in this study and the thematic findings, it is obvious that culture determines to a conspicuous extent what people prefer to wear. In this study, it was observed that the design concept of cultural symbols has much influence to play in the lifestyle of people. It can also be said that batik craft design is one of the sociocultural inducement on what people prefer to wear, especially as they are related to their cultural way of life. Therefore, it can be concluded that the design of a batik with cultural symbol represents a charming sociocultural heritage that preserve the people.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Subsequently, the following recommendations are therefore made: The government of Northern Nigeria

should support the production of the batik for the economic development of the region. The traditional institutions should promote the adoption of the batik for enhancing the sociocultural awareness of the people in the region, especially, for boosting the cultural identity of the people. The batik should be used by the people of Northern Nigeria to transmit cultural identification and documentation from generation to generation.

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