

A Study of Motifs Analysis of Embroidery Arts in Southwestern Nigeria

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Abstract: *Motifs incorporation of textiles embroidery in Nigeria is dynamic with continual paradigm shifts. But despite its ephemeral nature and the lack of organized museum and gallery preservation for the forms of embroidery motifs, there has not been scholarly attentions to the arts of motifs embroidery. The study therefore, researched motifs embroidery of South-West Nigeria with the aim of producing a generic analysis of motifs embroidery. Research populations is selected from South-West Nigeria. Males and females' embroidery artists were interrogated. The study revealed that eleven forms of embroidery motifs applied to textile either with machine or handmade with distinct interpretations.*

Keywords: embroidery, handmade, motif, South-West, textile.

INTRODUCTION

Motifs formations have been of importance in textile embroidery research practice in Nigeria. This has continually opened new grounds in textile arts and decorations. Varieties of motifs have been widely adopted as embroidery designs in Nigeria and formulation of the motifs is ebbing. Attention to the documentary of the motifs embroidery are also receding in the study of textiles arts in Nigeria. This has hampered a clear understanding of the motifs designs on any embroidery works with the consequential meaning of the motifs. Considering the foregoing analysis, this study

examined varieties of motif designs on clothes. The study was embarked upon with the aim of providing a clear understanding of the meaning of motifs on embroidery designs.

Literatures on embroidery art are rich and available for consultations in various libraries. The literature materials on derivation and application of embroidery from ancient period are very available and some of them are elucidated origin and types of motifs of western words and documents on Nigeria embroidery dwell on embroidery as decorative arts. Adigun's (2000) documents portrayed the dexterity of Nigeria embroidery which had been developed centuries before the introduction of western machines for embroidery arts in 1828. Adigun emphasis that embroidery art is an ornamentation of fabric for decorative purposes and weather the arts is done on fabric or leather surface, the therapeutic satisfaction of the arts remains the name of as embroidering.

Berman (2000), opined that embroidery art was used as a medium of expression for propagation of Christianity religion in Europe in its early periods. Berman maintained that large proportion of the congregation were illiterates and therefore, the best medium to teach Biblical contents was to illustrate some terms and events in embroidery motifs manners for easy comprehension. Awogbade, and Ikechukwu, (2010) book centered on African motifs and symbols on Wewetola painting works. Awogbade dwells into origin and interpretations of motifs on Wewe painting works generally and submitted that motifs in paintings are beyond decorations of the works.

Abdul (2013), studied handmade cloth embroidery and submitted that the meanings and interpretations of motifs on embroidery arts were ebbing in Nigeria. This was a culmination of the art as a result of machine made embroidery and lack of proper documentation of the meanings of motifs. Areo and Kalilu (2013) work extensively on motifs and patterns of textiles design and submitted that motifs on textile designs were broadly group into five categorizations as follows: geometric, figural, skeuomorphic, letters and celestiomorphic. Though, the study is mainly on adire forms of patterns but a pointer to this study.

Adiji *et. al.*, (2016) considers embroidery art as a practice from earliest civilizations. The book views embroidery as the decoratively stitched borders on mediaeval churches vestments and its practice. Adiji *et. al* also asserted that the art of embroidery started from the ancient Egypt and submitted that motifs on textiles embroidery were developed in Yoruba land as a result of contact with Northern Nigerian entrepreneurs embroiderers with the Yoruba entrepreneurs embroiderers.

Danladi, (2016) worked on virtually traditional motifs for fabric and apparel embellishment of Ham tradition in Kaduna State. Danladi concluded that motifs with tradition names were adopted as pattern on textile designs apart from three dimensional arts and could be transcend into any visual arts works.

Liz (2016) stressed out the significant of motifs on textiles in general and categorized motifs and patterns into two folds: Fustat a specific pattern trade and cultural textile of Gujarat India. Liz

identified four significant of motifs as listed: Cultural influences, translation of ideas, education and changes.

Loita and Husen (2018) research work was empirical on motifs formation and analysis in Indonesia. Loita uses machine embroiderers as case study and submitted that machine embroiderers should adopt cross –stitch motifs creation to address the problems of inequality encountered by the embroiderers. The study omitted the analysis of machine embroidery arts.

Eman, *et.al* (2019) investigated nickel yarn reaction on embroidery arts and sciences with Zigzag stitches and cross hatches formation of embroidery motifs. Eman experimented the formation of motifs on T-shirt to be a connector between the temperature sensor and screen, this is likened to Talpa 2023 submission on science and embroidery arts.

Mabrouk (2020), research works centered on embroidery motifs documentation in archaeological form to store motifs forms and types. Mabrouk submitted that multi-disciplinary and humanistic with visual documentation of embroidery motifs would assist a lot in motifs documentation. The document canvasses for more researches on motifs documentary and this is aptly justification for this study. Victor. (2020) examined the meanings and symbols in the decorative motifs and patterns of Sinudot and Lapoi Kimaragang costumes. Victor submitted that motifs has two forms- males and female, male is referred to as sinudot while the lapoi is for female.

Akinrujomu, (2020), opines embroidery arts as decorative arts on textiles and leathers, The materials adopted for the embroidery arts are needles, finger protector rings, and threads of different colours to create motifs of different sizes and patterns. Akinrujomu concluded that embroidery arts could be exercised in odd times and the arts could be influenced to other decorative items depending on creativity of the embroiderers.

Sunanda, and Dong (2021) manuscript centres on women embroiderers and feminist expression in visual arts especially in embroidery arts. Sunanda discussed the chronological development of embroidery and textiles in the context of women’s arts practices. The manuscript submitted that women embroiders express in feminist way in their embroidery motifs arts formations.

Antonela, *et.al* (2021) document is on vital of digital technologies as possibility ways of preserving the ancestral motifs and symbols for futuristic purposes. Antonela study is in line with the goal of this study in Southwest Nigeria embroidery motifs.

Legallois and Koch (2021) opines motifs as a recurrent element in a given traditions or arts of a community and it may have diverse interpretations .Legallois proofed further that combination of several motifs would resulted to patterns. Consequently, in a wide scope motifs could be applied to any field of professions.

Sandhu (2022) and Jian (2014) documents traces the evolutionary of paisley form of motifs to effect of First World War (WW1) 1914. Paisley motifs was formed by the artists to document and reflect on the struggles of cultural exchange between colonials and colonized. Thus, motifs arts are such of diary arts and expressions of ideas with interpretations.

Mohammed and Salawu (2023).works on motif analysis of textile wall hanging arts of Southwest Nigeria and submitted that most of the motifs on wall hanging arts were formulated from philosophical ideas of the artists and naturalism motifs were prominent in eight segmented motifs analysis of wall hanging of Southwest Nigeria. Other motif on the wall hanging arts are expressed by Mohammed are: Bull eyes, dots, zoomorphic, floras, abstracts, traditional and geometric. The work also serve as a guide to this study in analyzing motifs of embroidery arts.

Yingoing and Junmin (2023) manuscript is on Suzhou embroidery motifs arts of China. The study explores predicament encounter by Suxiu embroiderers in the storage of motifs and patterns of their works. Yingoing rested on the idea of storage of motifs at ICH-National Intangible Cultural Heritage of China. Yingoing submission is in line with Mabrouk 2020.

Ikpide, (2023) study was on analysis of motifs in the works of three visual artists viz-a-viz: Johnson Uwadinma, Tantua Diseye, and Oglafa Penrin.Ikpide affirmed that motifs exhibited in their works shown the elements of their immediate environment in their works such as: cultural symbols, religious motifs, and philosophical expression of the artists. Ikpide point of views are in accordance with Mohammed (2023) analysis of wall hanging motif in Nigeria and Sandhu 2022. Talpha *et.al* (2023) study provides information on the embroidery arts and sciences. Alpha experimented with smart textiles in science of implant medical textiles for the treatment of injuries and submitted that embroidery art is germane in the critical situation of implant sciences. Rashi (2024), examine Delhi textiles embroidery motifs within the broader of folklores and traditions. Rashi succumbed six prominent motifs were frequently used by Delhi embroiderers. The motifs are: trees, paisley figures, parrot birds, peacocks, elephants and lotus figures. Rashi document is a pointer to this study of motifs in Southwest Nigeria.Jiajun and Yazhang (2024), opined embroidery as arts of cultural heritages and fruits for human civilization. Jiajun submitted that United State of America and United Kingdom are leading documenters' on embroidery motifs arts documentary and therefore, demand for wide documentaries and analyses on embroidery arts. This submission is partly justification for this study in Southwest Nigeria.

The foregoing's indicate that scholarship has seriously concentrated on historiographies and significance of embroidery. Motifs analysis of embroidery arts in the Southwestern part of Nigeria has however not been examined and therefore, this study is both timely and significant because, in part dearth of scholarly works on this aspect of motifs on textiles ,but also because of dynamic fluxes that affect the rich culture of Southwest Nigeria and adoption of western culture. Furthermore, to exhibit that embroidery arts is beyond the formation of motif on clothes and the arts could be cast-off beyond embroidery of textiles. Embroidery artists are also find it difficult to maintain their standard due to their ephemeral nature of the arts and also as a result of competition

from other decorative textile arts materials such as ribbons, readymade floral motifs and stone made textiles which are easy to cut into sizeable form of patterns. These challenges have the potential to negatively impact the study of motif embroidery if they are not researched now.

The study analyses motifs and formation of it on textiles in Southwest Nigeria. It covers all forms of textiles of significant usually embellish with *Jakan* in Yoruba language. Geographically in scope, the study covers clothes and embroidery arts in Southwest Nigeria. Nearly all the tribes in Nigeria were the habitants of the Southwest, such as: Hausa, Fulani, Tiv, Igbo, Igala, Ibibio, Tapa. Other ethnic in the region are: Ijaw, Ogoni, Itshekiri, Efik, Urohobo, amongst others. The study aims to give details account of textile embroidery arts with a view to categorize embroidery motifs arts in Southwest Nigeria.

The study has been based on samples of textiles motifs embroidery designs collected from major cities in Southwest Nigeria: Ogun, Oyo, and Osun states. These cities were selected on the basis of findings and sub division of Southwest Nigeria. The cities were also selected because they were influential commercial hubs of embroidery arts. The prevalence of the embroidery textile arts in selected cities is therefore representational of Southwest Nigeria, and arguably, Nigeria as a whole. A total 160 samples covering three states were used. Also, interrogations were conducted with structured and non-structured questions. Photographs of samples works were taken for data analysis.

Table 1: Sampling Frame for the study

S/N	Locations	Embroiderers types			
		Handmade		Machine Made	
		Females	Males	Females	Males
1.	Ogbomoso (Oyo state)	03	17	10	70
2.	Inisa (Osun state)	02	08	10	50
3.	Ijebu ode (Ogun state)	10	20	10	40
	Total	15	45	30	160

Source: Diary of members of Association of embroiderers in selected cities (2023)

Forms of Embroidery Motifs in Southwest Nigeria. Basically, there are three forms of embroidery arts that create motifs on textiles in Southwestern Nigeria as follows:

- 1) Handmade embroidery motifs
- 2) Canvas embroidery motifs
- 3) Machine made embroidery motifs



Figure 1.

Embroider at work

with Motifs

Photograph by: Mohammed,I.A. 2023



Figure 2.

Finished Embroidery Arts on Canvas

Photograph by: Mohammed,I.A. 2023

Handmade Embroidery Motifs; Handmade embroidery motifs involves stitching techniques by hand into textiles with the use of hand needles and twines of various colours. At times, it involves stencils to trace the desire motifs onto the area intend to design (figures 1, 6 and 10). The stencil motifs is always done with hardboards usually cut into shapes and pencils are adopted to trace it on the cloths figure 10. The motifs is done on *Agbada*, *Esiki*, *Buba*, and canvas portraits and trousers edges in some cases figures 4,6,7,10 and 9. For the handmade motifs, the embroiderers usually designed according to the desired of the costumers. The handmade embroiderers also, engage in cap and hat designs.

Machine Embroidery Motif: is done on fabric with the use of embroidery machine. Pilot study revealed that there are four types of embroidery machine in Southwest of Nigeria to create motifs on textiles. These are 20 U-embroidery machine (figure 7), *Tinko* embroidery machine, coil embroidery machine and 32 lion embroidery machine. The invention of machines for embroidery with various motifs and designs made the handmade embroidery to be retreating. In recent years, embroiderers have started some experiments with traditional motifs, religious (Muslims and Christians) motifs using machine embroidery to make motifs on wrapper (*Iro*) gown, female and male caps.



Figure 3.

Machine embroidery clothes with motifs
Motifs

Photograph by: Olaniyi, D. B. 2023



Figure 4.

Handmade Embroidery Clothes with motifs

Photograph by: Olaniyi, D. B. 2023

Canvas Embroidery: Canvas embroidery is a new form of embroidery in Southwest of Nigeria. The design usually done on a stretch cloths called canvas and usually on frame which later reframe after the designs have been made on it with designed and patterned frame. The canvas embroiderers have innovated into the portrait embroidery, religious embroidery and other designs (figures 5, 8, 11 and 12). In the canvas embroidery arts work, motifs of various classes' zoomorphic, abstracts, and geometrics were introduced into the body of portrait embroidery for the embellishment (figures 4, 5, 8,11 and 12).

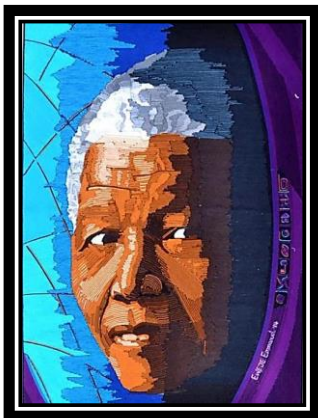


Figure 5. Handmade portraits with motifs,
Photograph by:
Mohammed I. A, 2023



Figure 6. Handmade embroiderer at work,
Photograph by: Olaniyi,
D. B, 2023



Figure 7. Machine made embroiderer at work,
Photograph by:
Mohammed I. A, 2023

Embroidery Equipment: from fabrics of various production that embroiderers were used to design, there are other materials adopted by the embroiderers such as: Twine, needles, frames, scissors, pins, and stencils and stencils.



Figure 8. Handmade portraits embroidery in processing, Photographed by: Mohammed I. A, 2023



Figure 9. Machine made embroidery in processing, Photographed by: Mohammed I. A, 2023

Classifications of

Embroiderers:

The study reveals that there are three classes of embroiderers based on the method adopted. The machine embroiderers constituted the majority 61.54% in Ogbomoso, Oyo state, 42.11% of machine embroiderer artists in Osun state and 37.33% of machine embroiderers in Abeokuta Ogun state. For Ogun state hand embroiderers ratio is 36.00%, Osun state has 42.11% and oyo state hand embroiderers percentage of this study is 23.08%. Canvas embroiderers in Oyo state is 15.38%, Osun state is with 15.79% and Abeokuta Ogun state has 26.67% of canvas embroiderers. The results indicate that the machine embroiderers outnumbered the handmade and canvas embroiderers and they were all used to formulate motifs in their works.



Figure 10. Stencils for motifs preparation, Photographed by: Mohammed I. A, 2023

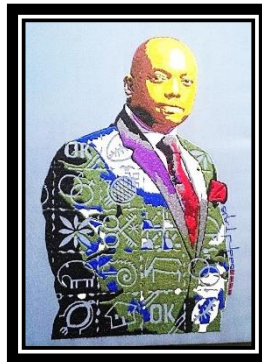


Figure 11. Finished Handmade embroidery portrait with motifs, Photographed by: Mohammed I. A, 2023

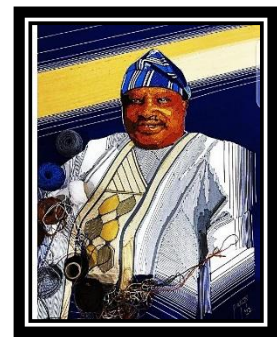


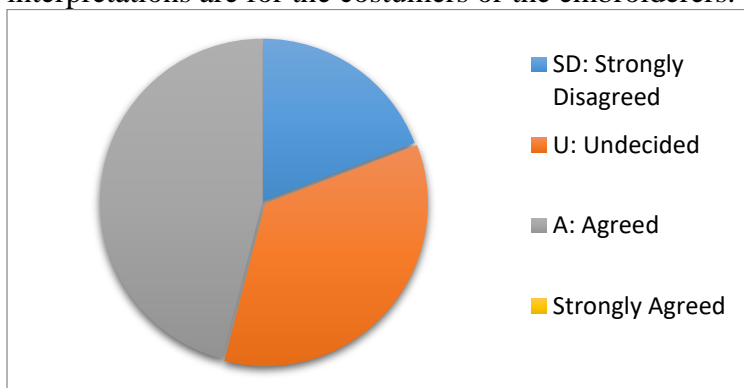
Figure 12. Finished Handmade embroidery portrait in Yoruba Attire, Photographed by: Olaniyi, D. B. 2023

Table 2. Classes of Embroiderers.

Classes	Ogbomoso Oyo State		Inisa Osun State		Abeokuta Ogun State		Cum %	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		Total
Canvas	10	15.38	15	15.79	20	26.67	45	19.28
Handmade	15	23.08	40	42.11	27	36.00	82	33.73
Machine made	40	61.54	40	42.11	28	37.33	108	46.99
Total	65	100.00	95	100.00	75	100.00	235	100.00

Source: Author field Research 2023.

Motifs: Motifs were basic consideration for embroiderers in designing in both machine, canvas and handmade embroidery arts. Costumers sometimes provides samples of motifs they love for the embroiderers. For the embroidery motifs, the traditional motifs like: cowries, combs (of various sizes) lines, dots, shapes, alphabets, animal figures 4 and 11 were adorned with numbers of motifs. Arabic letters were much surface on the embroidery motifs figure 2 as an examples. Other motifs done either by machine or hand were formation of objects like umbrella, broom, floral cups, and pen. These are peculiar with the politicians as they combined alphabetical motifs. 3.2% of the respondents strongly disagreed that motifs made the embroidery attractive and has no specific meaning and (1.4%) remained neutral and undecided, while the majority believe that motifs have meanings (73.3%) the remaining (22.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed that motifs interpretations are for the costumers or the embroiderers.



Graph illustration and interpretation of Motifs

Table 3: Summary of Embroidery Motifs in Southwest Nigeria

No	Motifs	Meanings
1.	Floral	Affectionate
2.	Cowries	Wealthy
3.	Line	Growth/Movement
4.	Alphabets	Education
5.	Broom	Cleanliness/Unity/ Political
6.	Pen	Power
7.	Combs	Unity and divisibility
8.	Hand	Oneness
9.	Wave Bond	Peace And Unity
10.	Birds	Heights
11.	Ostriches Peacocks	Heights

Sources: Authors Field Research 2023.

Table 4: Assessment of the Durability of Motifs on Fabrics.

NO	Motifs	Below 50		50-59		60-69		70-79		80-100	
		A		B		C		D		E	
		F	%	Frq.	%	Frq.	%	Frq.	%	Frq.	%
1.	Floral	0	0.0	0	0.0	15	12.5	20	25	85	70
2.	Shapes	0	0.0	5	4.1	15	12.5	30	25	70	58.3
3.	Still Life Images	0	0.0	5	4.1	10	8.3	25	20.8	80	66.6
4.	Alphabets	0	0.0	10	8.3	15	12.5	35	29.1	60	50
5.	Zoomorphic	0	0.0	15	12.5	15	12.5	30	25	65	54.1
6.	Line	0	0.0	5	4.1	10	8.3	20	25	85	70
7.	Abstract	0	0.0	5	4.1	10	8.3	25	20.8	80	66.6

Source: Authors Field Research 2023.

From the results on the above table (4), it is obvious that the respondents rated the durability of line motifs high; with the parameter of these scores therefore, it can be concluded that the respondents accept the lines motif.

CONCLUSION

From the investigation carried out on the study on motifs of the embroidery in selected cities of Southwest Nigeria, most of the motifs used by the embroiderers were lines motif and shapes. Most of them were semi educated and some are graduates especially the canvas embroiderers. Findings also revealed that most embroiderers and customers pay little or no attention to the interpretations of motif except the graduates' embroiderers from art schools. It was also discovered that handmade embroiderers and machine made embroiderers could metamorphose into canvas embroidery. Motifs also enclose political meanings, social cultural economic and aesthetical values. The embroidery arts sector needs to be given attention to reduce unemployment rates in Nigeria.

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