

Indigenising the Interior of Some Selected Hotels in Enugu Metropolis through the Production of Textile, using Igbo Motifs

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Abstract

It was observed that interior of hotels in Enugu metropolis are predominantly adorned with foreign fabrics that do not reflect the culture of the host communities. The essence of actualizing and stabilizing the economy, especially the hospitality industry in Enugu metropolis implies employing all workable parameters that can restructure the cultural and economic growth of the people positively. Therefore, there is need to indigenize the interiors of hospitality industry in Enugu using Igbo traditional motifs. Selected hotels were used to mirror this attenuation by employing the Igbo unique traditional symbols and mural designs to acculturate their interior environments. Qualitative research was adopted and snowball sampling was used for the selection of hotels. As a studio area, the work employed the transfer of developed designs on fabrics with the aids of batik, tie-dye and screen printing method of fabric production. The final fabric works were produced to satisfy the various end uses relevant to hotel interiors and to provide materials for documentations as a means of projecting the esteemed culture of Enugu metropolis in particular and *Ndigbo* in general. The studio experimentation employed mixed media and construction techniques. The media used were fabrics, glue, textile ink, yarn, dye, caustic soda, hydrosulphide and wax. The research revealed high iconographic, utilitarian and aesthetic values. The study will contribute in promoting, developing and preserving the Enugu cultural heritage and *Ndigbo* in general.

Keywords: Indigenize, Interior of hotels, Igbo traditional motifs, Studio experimentation, Cultural heritage, *Ndigbo*

Introduction

The cultural values are intimately related to sense of identity, but challenges are that most cultural values are being abounded or at worst lost¹. The culture of *Ndigbo* has seemingly been misinterpreted and often termed fetish. For *Ndigbo*, their belief system and way of life have been altered, seemingly eroded and most times misrepresented in various degrees owing to a number of factors like colonization to mention but one. An *Uli* motif which symbolises beauty is on the verge of extinction due to Christianity and westernization and if not properly addressed, may endanger the cultural heritage of *Ndigbo*. In an effort to revive and promote the esteemed culture of Enugu metropolis in particular and *Ndigbo* in general, the researcher deemed it fit to use hotels in Enugu metropolis as an aspect of hospitality industry where guests often visit as a media to showcase the Igbo culture to both the indigenes and foreigners. Hence, the researcher is motivated to produce fabrics with motifs and symbols indigenous to Igbo culture as a surface embellishment for the decoration of interiors of some hotels in Enugu metropolis, south-east, Nigeria.

Nigeria Railway Caterers Ltd. and other catering guest houses established across the country in the 1950's marked the beginning of what turned out in the later years to form the genesis of formal hotel business in Nigeria². It has been identified that hospitality industry, as a dependable employer of labour, a source of financial security, has been a means of rapid economic growth to individuals as well as the nation. Hospitality industry is seen as the youngest and fastest growing industry in the recent times³. It is a friendly and generous behaviour towards visitors and guests, intended to make them feel welcomed, through food, drink, accommodation and entertainment given to such customers by a company or organization⁴. Hotel therefore, is an important aspect of hospitality industry where people from a wide variety of cultural background meet.

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The service provider on the other hand, has to cope with stressed and anxious guests and may indeed be having to cope with similar cultural difficulties himself. The hotel management therefore, should be aware that if they are attracting different markets requiring different service processes, then the service and the environment will also need to be culturally relevant.

Moreover, Nigeria has experienced a rapid increase in the number hotel industry⁵. This is as a result of the influx of tourists who visit the country because of the rich tourist attractions. This has resulted in contributing grossly to the economic growth of the nation. Consequently, culture and tourism are interdependent and are mutually beneficial and the hotels environment becomes a good platform to project and preserve Igbo cultural heritage

Ndigbo have very rich cultures and strong traditions regarding every aspect of their lives. Undoubtedly, cultural values are intimately related to the sense of identity of a people. Cultural values of *Ndigbo* held them together before the coming of the Europeans and subsequently the advent of westernization. The issue of westernization and the declining impetus of the cultural heritage of *Ndigbo* have constituted great source of problem and uncertainty to both the immediate past and present societies. These problems manifest in forms of increasing loss of sense of identity and cultural values, thereby undermining the development of the society. There is therefore need to rebuild the cultural attributes that distinguish the Igbo culture from others.

It is observed that the interior of hotels in Enugu metropolis are predominantly adorned with foreign fabrics that do not reflect the culture of the host communities. The challenge therefore lays in the creative use of *Igbo* cultural motifs and symbols to create variety of designs towards indigenizing the interior of hotels in Enugu metropolis where tourists and guests from different cultural backgrounds often visit. No doubt, culture borders on self-identity and self-understanding.

The study therefore, was designed to indigenise the interior of selected hotels in the hospitality industry in Enugu metropolis, as a means of preserving and promoting Igbo cultural heritage. The specific objectives were to: explore the motifs and designs indigenous to Igbo culture that would be appropriate to hotels interior; produce and develop adapted motif designs indigenous to Igbo culture for hotel interior and convert the designed fabrics with indigenous motifs to end uses suitable for hotel interiors.

Research Methodology

Area of Study: The study was carried out in hotels in Enugu metropolis of Enugu State, Nigeria. Enugu is the capital of Enugu State. Created in 1991 from the old Anambra State, Enugu has been the capital as well as that of the East Central State out of which they were created ⁶. The state is located at the South Eastern geo-political zone and is also called 'Coal City State'. The city had a population of 722,664 according to the 2006 Nigerian census. According to National Population Commission⁷, the state has a projected population of 4,061,808 in 2013. Enugu city has experienced a boost in the tourism development through the rapid increase in the number of hotels in the city ⁸. Since Enugu is the oldest urbanised city in Igbo land ⁹ it is very important to showcase the rich cultural heritage to the world through indigenising the interiors of the hospitality industry.

Sample and Sampling Technique: A fraction of *Uli* motifs and symbols of *Ndigbo* were actually collected and studied. The samples were however chosen in such a way that attributes exhibited by the smaller portions collected is accepted as representative of the whole groups of Igbo motifs and symbols. This therefore necessitates the use of a sampling technique. Non-probability sampling methods were employed in this study. The chosen methods rely on the subjective judgement in selecting the units of motifs, symbols and hotels to be included in the sample for the study. The desired sample elements from the sample population were selected because of some defining characteristics that make them holders of data needed for the study. The high degree of selectivity involved is meant to guarantee that all relevant strata are represented in the samples. These samples were purposefully chosen because the sample elements were most relevant to the research based on the researcher's own judgement. Since the data required are essentially of specialized kind, there is no commitment to giving every member of the sample population equal opportunity. Snowball sampling also known as referral sampling was used for the selection of the hotels because contacts with one participant provide the name of another subject who in turn provides the name of a third and so on ¹⁰.

Analysis of Materials

The research aims at exploring the motifs and symbols indigenous to *Igbo* culture like: *Uli* motifs, *Ego ayoro* motifs and animate motifs. The use of designs derived from Igbo cultural environment is to produce fabrics suitable for hotel interiors in other to project the prestigious indigenous culture to the world. Analytical method was used to analyse the motifs and designs adapted from the pictographic images collected during the field work.

Technique of Data Analysis

The qualitative method of data analysis will be used to analyze the data collected. This will involve the use of both diachronic and synchronic approaches in an iterative (non-linear) process. It is believed that this method will be best suited for the subject under study because the concepts involved like aesthetics or beauty cannot be subjected to quantitative analysis.

Method of Studio Experimentation

As part of the creative output of the study the research incorporated various elements and principles of design in the final products and the design process included thumbnail sketches, colour roughs and actual production of design with *Uli* motifs and some Igbo symbols.

Validity and Reliability of Data

It is a rule that data used in a research must have to reach certain valid conclusions on the assumption that such data are not only reliable but also of the highest possible quality. For research data to be of the highest possible quality however, they need to meet a standard of validity and reliability.

Moreover, qualitative data does not need to meet quantitative statistical standard in order to be empirical. The validity and reliability of qualitative data can be established through the internal instrument of corroboration and triangulation¹¹. These instruments prevent the researchers from accepting too readily the validity of the first impression. Also, it was explained that the purpose of corroboration is not to confirm whether the perception of subjects reflect a situation with fidelity but rather to ensure that the findings of the research correctly reflect people's perception whatever they may be. Hence, triangulation is seen as a valid instrument of verification, corroboration and test for consistency of data generated by different sources in qualitative research since it prevents the researcher from accepting information without confirmation.

Method of Studio Experimentation

As part of the creative output of this study, the research incorporates various elements and principles of designs in the final and end-products of the work. The designs included thumb-nail sketches, colour roughs and actual production of designs with *Uli* motifs and some *Igbo* symbols. Exploration was done by drawing process, with the use of various drawing media, such as pencil, coloured pencil, ink and charcoal. This is to guide the research work in creating appropriate motifs and symbols indigenous to Igbo culture that will be suitable for hotel interior decoration. The studio works employed the transfer of developed designs on fabrics with the aid of batik, screen printing and tie and dye method of fabric productions. Mixed-media and construction technique were also employed. The main medium for the studio works are: fabrics, textile inks, dye stuff, caustic soda, hydrosulphide, wax, glue, baby wool to mention but a few.

Sketches

Exploration was done by drawing process, with the use of various drawing media, such as pencil, coloured pencil, ink and charcoal. This is a guide in creating appropriate motifs and symbols indigenous to Igbo culture that will be suitable for hotel interior decoration. These include:



Fig 1a: The first stage of the sketch of cowry shell, Artist: Adaeze Silas-Ufelle, Year: 2016



Fig 1b: Second stage of the sketch, Artist: Adaeze Silas-Ufelle, Year: 2016

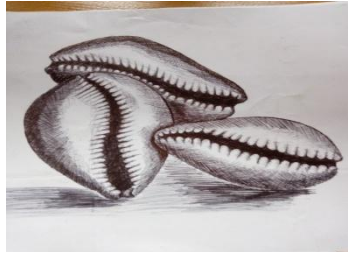


Fig 1c: Completed drawing of the Cowry shell, Medium: Pen on paper, Artist: Adaeze Silas-Ufelle, Year: 2016

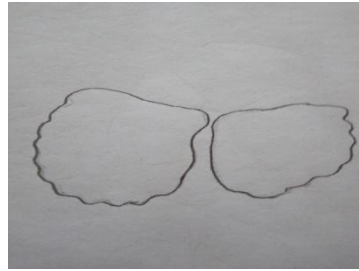


Fig 2a: The first stage of the sketch of cowry shell, Artist: Adaeze Silas-Ufelle, Year: 2016

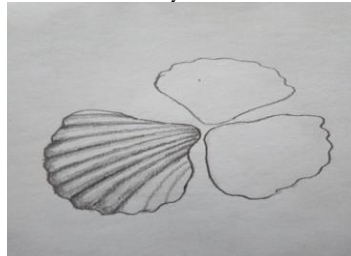


Fig 2b: Second stage of the sketch, Artist: Adaeze Silas-Ufelle, Year: 2016



Fig 2c: Completed drawing of the cowry shell, Medium: Charcoal on paper, Artist: Adaeze Silas-Ufelle, Year: 2016

Transfer of Designs

Patterns were created from the already made sketches. The selected patterns were transferred on cardboard sheets with the aid of tracing paper for uniformity, and later developed using poster colour. The coloured designs produced on paper were later transferred on the fabrics using screen printing, tie-dye, and batik method of fabric production. These coloured designs on paper acts as guide and will enable the end products to have close replica of the designs on the fabrics.

Execution

These works were carried out in the textile studio. The constructions of screen frames were executed by a sculptor in the sculpture studio of the department. The printing process was assisted by fellow textile students since printing cannot be done or handled by one person. The batik and tie-dye were handled by the researchers.

Finishing

After production of designs, the fabrics were converted to different end uses suitable for hotel interior decoration. Some were explored for production of two and three dimensional art works like, bed spread, duvet, curtain, table and stools, lamp shade, shirts (hotel attendant's uniform) table mat, to mention but a few.

Analysis

The data collected were analysed during the field work, which includes data presentation, appraisal of studio works, data analysis, and discussion of findings and summary of findings. It also explains how the motifs and designs symbols indigenous to *Igbo* culture that are appropriate to hotel interior decoration were explored. How samples adapted from these motifs were composed into designs and were transferred to white cotton materials as surface embellishment for the decoration of hotel interiors. It also elaborated on how the designed fabrics with indigenous motifs were converted to two and three dimensional end uses that are suitable for hotel interior decoration.

Data Presentation

Data from field work reveals that there are literally thousands of *Igbo* motifs and symbols existing in Enugu metropolis as well as in *Igbo* land. The qualitative research is applied and the research questions provide focus to the research. These specific questions which derive from the broad question asked in the research problem maps out the order in which the problem posed in the research will be tackled. For lack of space and time, this work explores some indigenous *Igbo* motifs and design symbols that are appropriate to be applied in interior of hotels. For easier understanding, the motifs were mainly sourced from two informants and conveniently named by them.

Motifs and Design Symbols Indigenous to *Igbo* Culture

The motifs and designs indigenous to *Igbo* culture that is appropriate to hotel interiors are *Uli* traditional motifs, *Ego ayoro* motifs and *animate* motifs. These motifs are significant due to their symbolic features to *Ndigbo*. For instance, in *Igbo* traditional setting, *Ego ayoro* signifies wealth and most times seen as an object of divinity while *Uli* motifs symbolize beauty. There are numerous *Igbo* motifs which have been explored by some textile designers but it was realized that these motifs have not been transferred on the fabric for the decoration of the interiors of hotels in Enugu metropolis.

Following the contact with the Europeans, a lot of things about *Igbo* indigenous culture and her entire world view were misrepresented and rejected. The question of cultural domination by western society through the forces of colonialism has been recognized as a serious practical and theoretical problem to indigenous cultures. The creative force that propels art and culture which was a meaningful part of life of *Igbo* people became moribund thereby undermining the invisible sacred force that plays a special role in inspiring and sustaining creativity.

As a result of man's quest to conquer the world, his propensity to advance continued to evolve in response to his environmental influences. Through diffusion, acculturation and dependent inventions, man evolved mechanisms for cultural change. The point here is that the researchers employed indigenous design motifs and symbols on fabrics to develop indigenous patterns suitable for decoration of hotel interior with special reference to hotels in Enugu metropolis.

Adaptation of Motifs and Symbols Indigenous to *Igbo* Culture

Traditionally, most of the surface mediums where the *Igbo* artists expresses themselves like walls have become shadows of themselves. Such mud houses are no longer in existence where some still standing could either have collapse roof or dilapidated walls. Most respondents report that most of the mud buildings have been destroyed.

The increased pressures from Christians lead to the abandoning of some *Igbo* rich cultural heritage. In so doing, they have not only misrepresented everything traditional to *Ndigbo* but have almost successfully engineered a cultural shift that is leading to the death of indigenous art and culture of *Ndigbo*. Considering the importance and meaning attached to *Uli* motifs, the researcher developed a single unit of motif and named it *IgodoUli* (Key to *Uli*). When a people have been unjustly denied their right through dominance which in turn leads to cultural shift always in the long run leads to cultural death. This negative impact leads *Ndigbo* to abandon their culture without care. *Uli* motifs have been internationally identified in such a way that it could be seen in all kinds of art production based on the producer's perspective especially in the area of textile design¹².

The final designs were guided by the philosophy of life of *Igbo* people; the infusion of *Uli* into textile both in two and three dimension opened a lee way for a new experimentation and exploration in textile experience¹³. *Uli* design pattern could be adapted to other forms of arts mainly to fashion wears¹⁴. Rita Doris Uba of University of Nigeria Nsukka, has also carved a niche for herself by engaging *Uli* motifs in full textile fabric composition that reflects the dynamic of design, by draping a car with fabric designed with *Uli* motifs, in her latest exhibition¹⁵.

The adaptive motifs which include *Uli* traditional motifs, *Ego ayoro* motifs and animate motifs were developed through drawing with different media and produced using resist method of fabric production (tie dye, batik and screen printing). Previous researchers have also experimented with this method, but have not applied it to the interior decoration particularly to hotel interiors.

Fabric Design with Indigenous Motif

Every society in the world has distinct cultural attributes that distinguish them from other society. These attributes of design motifs as used in this research work are built over time from the history of *Igbo* people and thus representing veritable elements in their existence. *Ndigbo* undoubtedly, see themselves as part of nature rather than superior to it or outside it. This is why most of *Igbo* motifs and symbols are products that visualized and objectified aspect of *Igbo* culture thus suggesting that no one image in human art is ever entirely explicable in terms of representations and meaning. These symbols from *Uli* motifs originated in the process of *Ndigbo* attempt to live and survive in their environment. We are aware that culture and symbols are inseparable elements of traditional society especially in *Igbo* world view.

How can the designed fabrics with indigenous motifs be converted to suit hotel interiors? This is much more than a decorative design, it is interpretative of the *Igbo* culture with the creative ability of the researcher, the motifs and symbols were used to produce interiors of merit in selected hotels in Enugu metropolis. With this process, the researcher worked with the narrative of the existing rooms, chose to emphasize particular aspects of the rooms by providing sketches drawn by hand and computer thus creating pattern designs. The act of creating new uses for existing pattern provokes the researcher into accepting and editing previous pattern of *Uli* motifs, *Ego ayoro* motifs and animate motifs.

Appraisal of Studio Works

The data used in this research were 3 in number. The researcher was inspired by the uniqueness of the features possessed by these traditional motifs, symbols, and patterns that are indigenous to *Igbo* culture. These motifs are: *Uli* traditional motifs, *Ego ayoro* (cowry shell) motifs, animate motifs.

Uli Traditional Motifs

Uli is a traditional design being practiced by *Igbo* people of the south-eastern region of Nigeria. It came into fashion out of women quest for beauty. The designs which are commonly drawn by the women are not only limited on the body but also on the walls or fences of the compound. These designs could come inform of household items or abstract. *Uli* designs are unique and have a way of enhancing a woman's prestige and social life. The designs are symbolic and have a high valued decorative aspect which makes it very significant in many social situations like, marriages, harvest rites, rituals and title taking, burials to mention but a few.

Hence, *Uli* designs have been identified internationally. It has been used in various kinds of art productions especially in the areas of textile and fashion designs. But it has not been explored as a motif source for the manufacture of indigenous designs that can be used to acculturate the interiors of hotels. From the *Uli* motifs sourced from two informants, some samples of pencil work designs were developed to suit the decoration of interiors of hotels for the promotion and projection of *Igbo* culture. These designs were coloured on paper bearing in mind the appropriate colours for the interiors. The fabrics produced were later converted to end uses suitable for hotel interior decorations. Below are the designs, ranging from the pencil work to coloured designs and lastly, the end uses created from the developed designs that will be suitable for the decoration of the hotel interior environments.



Fig. 3: *Uli* developed design, Medium: Pen on paper



Plate 1: *Ije agwo*, Coloured Design, Medium: paper, coloured pencil, Size: 20cmx30cm



Plate 2: *Ije agwo*, Batik Design on fabric, Medium: Fabric, dye, caustic soda, hydrosulphide and wax, 5 yards

In the design titled *Ije agwo*, the fabric produced was used for throw pillow and head rest. Throw pillow is a decorative soft furnishing item commonly used in the interior that serve both functional and aesthetic purpose. From the functional angle, it provides head; neck and back support and come in handy when it's time for a nap. These end products are unique and very classic and are suitable for chairs in the reception hall and rooms of hotel. However, apart from the already mentioned end uses, it can equally be used for other items like: curtains, lampshades, chair cover and so on, in the hotel interior. It will also go for numerous end uses outside the hotel.



Fig. 4 *Uli* developed design, Medium: Pen on paper



Plate 3: *New moon*, Coloured Design, Medium: Paper and coloured pencil, Size: 20cmx25cm



Plate 4: *New moon*, Print on fabric, Medium: Fabric, printing ink, mesh, photo emulsion, sensitizer and squeegee, dye stuff, caustic soda and hydrosulphide, 5 yards

The design titled *New moon* was used to produce window blind that is suitable for the dining or restaurant of a hotel; this is because it is warm colour dominant which makes it easier to stimulate appetite. It was also used to beautify a flower vase of crocheted roses with metal frame. This is also suitable for the decoration of the reception hall. Apart from the above mentioned end uses, this design can also be applied to tissue pack, refuse bin, lamp shade and so on, in the hotel interior. It can also be suitable for other items that are not related to hotel interior decoration.

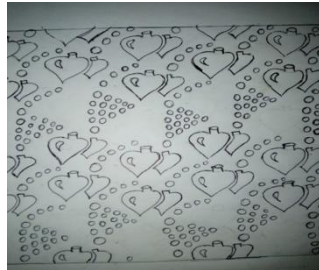


Fig: 5: *Uli* developed design, Medium: Pen on paper



Plate 5: *Udala* (Apple), Coloured Design, Medium: Paper and coloured, Size: 20cm x25cm



Plate 6: *Udala* (Apple), Print on fabric, Medium: Fabric, printing ink, mesh, photo emulsion, sensitizer and squeegee, 5 yards.

The end use of *Udala* as presented is a sample of hotel receptionist shirt (uniform) and a lamp shade. This uniform is classic and smart enough for the comfort of a hotelier. Due to the white background of this design, it appeared clearer when illuminated with light. However, outside the above samples of end use, it can also be used for bed cover, head rest and throw pillows in the hotel interiors. This design can be used for other end uses apart from hotel interior decorations.

Uli design is so unique that it can equally be achieved not only through painting but through other means like carving, moulding, mixed media to mention a few. In other words, *uli* designs are generally used by visual artists. Previously, the traditional artist and builders inculcated it in their works and this could be observed in the traditional ancient Igbo doors as well as on the walls of traditional huts and fences below, thus:



Plate 7: Ancient traditional Igbo door (pinterest.com)



Plate 8: Igbo traditional wall design (pinterest.com)

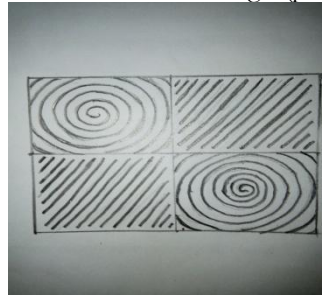


Fig 6: Combination of spiral and diagonal lines, Developed from plates 8 and 9, Medium: Pencil on paper

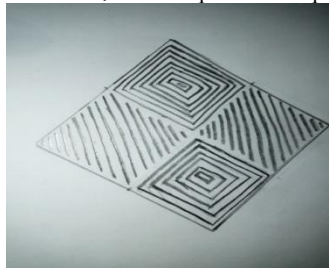


Fig 7: Combination of vertical line and diamond shape, Developed from plates 8 and 9

Medium: Pencil on paper

From the above pencil designs, thumb nail paper design was developed. This is to enable the designer see the outcome of the coloured design, make amendments where necessary and choose the appropriate colour that will suit the design created. The end use and its appropriate position in the hotel interior decoration is also considered while creating the designs.

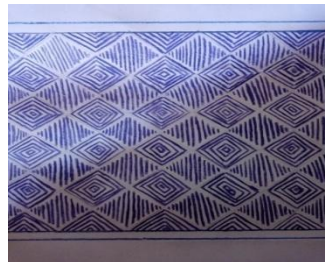


Plate 9: *Eziokwu bu ndu*, Developed from fig 11 above Coloured Design
Medium: paper and coloured pencil, Size: 20cmx25cm

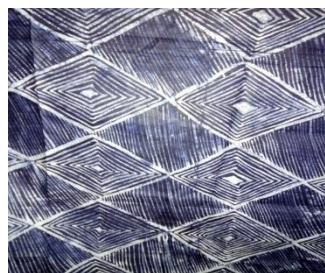


Plate 10: *Eziokwu bu ndu*, Developed from plate 10, Batik on fabric, Medium: fabric, dye, caustic soda, hydrosulphide and wax, 5 yards

The design layout is incorporation of plate 9 *Eziokwu bu ndu* fabric. The fabric is wrapped around the metal frame in which the clock is inserted for wall hanging. This end use is classic and can stand the taste of time. It is also unique because the idea is not common. Hence, it will be suitable for the decoration of the reception hall of a hotel. The design will also be good for the production of table mat, duvet, and numerous items that will suit the decoration of hotel interiors. In as much as this design was created for hotel interior decorations, it can also be useful in other areas.

***Ego ayoro* (cowry shell)**

Ego ayoro (cowry shell) is a home to a cowrie snail, and it is an aquatic habitat mostly found in the oceans. In the ancient period, it was used as money exchange; for instance, in Igbo traditional setting, it was used as money exchange for business transactions. Presently, cowrie shell has become an instrument of beauty used by contemporary artists and designers. It has also been used in various kinds of art productions particularly in fashion designs. But it has not been explored as a motif source for the manufacture of indigenous designs that can be used to indigenize the interiors of hotels.

Such motifs if carefully and properly arranged can be used to create attractive designs and artefacts that will be suitable for furnishing the hotel interiors. Some motifs were sourced from the internet and samples of pencil work designs were developed from the sourced motifs to suit the decoration of interiors of hotels for the promotion and projection of Igbo culture. These designs were coloured on paper bearing in mind the appropriate colours for the interiors. The fabrics produced were later converted to end uses suitable for hotel interior decorations. Below are the designs, ranging from the pencil work to coloured designs and lastly the end uses that would be suitable for the furnishing of the hotel interior environments.



Plate 11 Source: *Ego ayoro* (Cowrie shell) design ¹⁶



Plate: 12 Source: *Ego ayoro* (Cowry shell) designs¹⁶

From the above source motifs, some drawings of *Ego ayoro* (cowry shells) were developed using different mediums, (see fig. 1a to 2c)



Fig 8: *Ego ayoro* (Cowry shells), Developed design from fig 1c, Medium: Pen on paper



Plate 13: *Mirror*, Developed from fig 11, Colour design, Medium: Paper and poster colour



Plate 14: *Mirror*, Developed from plate 13, Print on fabric, Medium: Fabric, printing ink, mesh, Photo emulsion, sensitizer and squeegee, Size: 5 yards

In this design titled *Mirror*, the developed fabric was used to produce centre table and side stools that can be used in the hotel rooms and also in the reception hall. Apart from these samples above, this design can be used for other items in the interiors of hotel like window blind (curtain), refuse bag, tissue pack to mention a few. This design can be used for numerous end uses apart from hotel designs.



Fig 9: *Ego ayoro* (Cowry shells), developed from fig 1c, Medium: Pencil on paper



Plate 15: *Affluence*, Developed from fig 8, Coloured design, Medium: paper and poster colour



Plate 16: *Affluence*, Developed from plate 9, Print on fabric, Medium: Fabric, printing ink, mesh, photo emulsion, sensitizer and squeegee, Size: 5 yards

The developed design of Affluence was used to produce cushion pillows and table mats. These cushion pillows will be suitable for furnishing the reception hall and the executive rooms of a hotel. The table mats were meant to be used in the dining or restaurant of the hotel. Apart from the above mentioned samples of end users, it can as well be used to produce refuse bags, tissue packs, hotelier uniforms and so on. The design can be used for other end uses apart from hotel interiors.

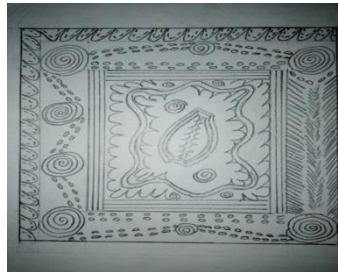


Fig 10: *Ego ayoro* (Cowry shells), developed from fig 1c, Medium: Pen on paper



Plate 17: *Bride price*, developed from fig 10, Colour Design, Medium: Coloured pencil on paper
Size: 30cm x 35cm



Plate 18: *Bride price*, developed from plate 11, Batik on fabric, Medium: Fabric, dye, caustic soda, hydrosulphide, and wax, Size: 5 yards

The developed design of *Bride price* was used to produce bed cover and pillow cases. This bed cover is suitable for furnishing the hotel room. However, this design will be good for table cover, food shawl, table mat and so on. Apart from hotel interior, the developed design can be used for other end uses.

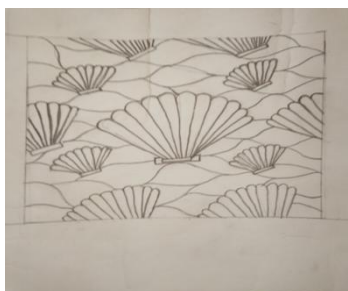


Fig 11: *Ego ayoro* (Cowry shells), developed from fig 2c, Medium: pencil on paper



Plate 19: *Kpakpando*, developed from fig 11, Coloured Design, Medium: Coloured pencil on paper, Size: 35cmx30cm



Plate 20: *Kpakpando*, developed from plate 19, Print on fabric, Medium: Fabric, mesh, photo emulsion, sensitizer printing ink and squeegee, dye stuff, caustic soda, and hydrosulphide. Size: 5 yards.

The developed design was used to produce duvet and pillow cases. The duvet and pillow cases are suitable for decorating the hotel room. However, outside the above sample of end users, it can as well be used for cushion cover, curtain and tissue cover. Due to the uniqueness of this design, it can be used for other end uses apart from hotel interior.

Techniques of Production

In this research, different techniques were experimented on to arrive at the final work. A critical study of *uli* designs collected from two informants and several sources from internet led to the work from paper to fabrics as materials for interior decoration. Batik which is locally known as *Adire* was adopted. Batik is a resist method of fabric production by which some parts of a fabric are blocked with hot wax as an effort to create an interesting design, which when dyed and dewaxed with hot water, forms an interesting pattern. The researcher adopted this technique in the production of *Ije agwo* (plates 2), *Ezjoknu bu ndu* (plate 10) and *Bride price* (plate 18).

The developed paper designs were transferred on the fabrics using pencil shaped foam which was deepened in a hot melted wax to create designs on the fabrics. These fabrics were later dyed separately according to their colours and the designs on paper. Vat dye stuff were mixed in hot water of about 20L with caustic soda and hydrosulphide in the ratio of 2: 1: 2, that is, two spoon-full of dye stuff: one spoon-full of caustic soda: two spoon-full of hydrosulphide. These fabrics were immersed in the dye liquor for about 15 to 20 minutes before they were rinsed and dewaxed in hot water. Some were dyed in one colour, (see *Ije agwo* in plate 3 and *Ezjoknu bu ndu* in plate 10) while others were dyed in two or more colours. The designs on *New moon* (plates 4), *Udala* (plate 6), *Mirror* (plate 14), *Affluence* (plate 16), *Kpakpando* (plate 20) were achieved through screen printing. Screen printing which is also known as serigraphy, is a resist method of fabric production by which ink is applied directly to the surface to be printed; after the design is photographically transferred on a mesh which was coated with a mixture of photo emulsion and sensitizer. The researcher coated the already framed meshes (screen) with the mixture of sensitizer and photo emulsion (impermeable substance).

The colour separation was achieved with the aid of computer and each colour was separated on different sheets of papers for easy exposure. These sheets of papers were coated with kerosene, placed on the dried coated meshes and exposed under the sun for about 3 minutes (photographically transferred). The meshes were washed under running water. Some of the fabrics were dyed before printing on them, (see plates 5 and 19). While some maintained their original background colour, (see plates 7, 15, 17 and 20). Each of the fabrics was stretched on the printing bed for easy penetration of ink. The fabrics were printed on with the aid of squeegee, using the coloured paper designs as guide.

Design Presentation

The developed designs in this research work were used to produce unique, classic and useful items that can be used to indigenize the interiors of hotels in Enugu metropolis. The motifs explored and the colours used, suits the items and the proposed position in the hotels. For instance, in the *Uli* category, *Ije agwo* was used to produce throw pillows and headrests that are good for the decoration of the reception hall and the bed rooms. The end uses of the *New moon* are window blind which is suitable for the restaurant or dining and a flower vase for the beautification of the reception hall. Other items produced from this category are the receptionist's shirt (uniform) and lamp shade that is suitable for the bedrooms. *Eziokwu bu ndu* was used to produce a wall clock for the decoration of the reception hall.

Furthermore, in the second category *Ego ayoro* (cowrie shell), the motifs explored and the items produced are unique in terms of indigenizing the interiors of hotels in Enugu metropolis. For instance, the design *Mirror* was used to produce centre table and side stools which are suitable for the decoration of the reception hall of the hotels. The design *Affluence* was used to produce cushion pillows for the decoration of the reception hall, and table mats for the restaurant or dining of the hotels. The end uses of the *Bride price* design are bed spread and pillow cases for the bed rooms. The developed design of *Kpakpando* was used to produce duvet and pillow cases also for the bed rooms.

Moreover, animate motifs category also produced useful items for the indigenization of the hotel interiors. The end use of the design *Confidence* is window blind which is good for the bed room. The developed design of *Ngozi* was used to produce the receptionist's shirt (uniform) and serviette towel for the restaurant or dining of the hotel. Hence, from the above mentioned end products, one can adduce that the end uses are unique, classic, of high quality and has utilitarian values. This is the best media to project and promote the cultural heritage of Enugu and *Ndigbo* to the world.

DISCUSSION

Igbo art are known for their quality, diversity and quantity. *Ndigbo* expressed themselves in different media such as bronze, brass, wood, fibre, beads mud/clay among others. However, the medium that was the focus of this work was the use of textiles. *Uli* motifs, *Ego ayoro* motifs and *Animate* motifs were the key motifs. It is not out of place to affirm that *Ndigbo* in the past and present have applied *Uli* motifs on different surfaces as a means of showing the aesthetic level of *Igbo* art work.

By the designs used in giving cultural values to the interior of hotels in Enugu metropolis, the research brought in the creative individualism as a hallmark of training and presented a viable alternative interpretative approach to indigenizing the interior of hotels. New media were introduced, new techniques were advanced and sophisticated compositions were attempted. This shows a fresh burst of creative energy injected into the designs for the decorations of interior of hotels. The design motifs communicate their meanings through a complex interaction with the environment of the host culture. More specifically the designs and symbols showcase the *Igbo* unique heritage. The new designs and development of identity of the brand is an important consideration in the use of *Uli* motifs and *Igbo* indigenous symbols. The manner in which the designs were displayed in the interior of the hotels is a matter of serious importance. In the past the environment of the interiors of the hotels in Enugu metropolis are plague with misunderstanding, misassumptions, conjecture and supposition in relation to the designs of the rooms. One possible reason for this is that it is hard to identify the exact cultural perimeters of the decorations.

The study of interiors is a cross disciplinary activity that shares common ground with many other creative practices. This can be viewed as an invigorating endeavour because interior design is often described as a hybrid discipline overlapping with other spatial or objects related practices¹⁷. More so, the interiors of hotels have emerged as areas of interest in its own right. It is a common knowledge that the external and internal environment of the hotels can influence directly or indirectly the tourism industry in Nigeria. There is no doubt that exploring the environment of the hotels in Enugu was a value-based platform for promoting an interactive environment for a more understanding of *Igbo* cultural motifs and symbols as exposed in this study. Moreover, environmental programmes are now an integral part of many developmental strategies in hospitality industry worldwide. It is therefore important to note that the use of indigenous design will have significant impact by creating cultural congenial environment of hotels in Enugu metropolis. This is in an effort made by the researchers in bringing the *Igbo* identity to the notice of the new generation and the world at large.

Based on findings of the results so far, it was discovered that most of the traditional motifs of *Ndigbo*, if properly explored and organized, will be a better way of showcasing the Igbo unique heritage to the world. It was realized also that these indigenous motifs and symbols were the best when explored for hotel interior decoration towards exposing *Igbo* culture and enhancing tourism in Enugu metropolis and beyond.

For instance, in this contest, the following traditional motifs were discovered: *Uli* motifs, *Ego ayoro* motifs and *Animate motifs*. It was also discovered that the adaptive motifs and symbols indigenous to Igbo culture were successfully transferred onto fabrics for the purpose of decorating the interiors of hotels (see *Ije agwo* in plates 2, *New moon* in plate 4, *Udala* in plate 6, *Eziokwu bu ndu* in plate 10, *Mirror* in plate 14, *Affluence* in plate 16, *Bride price* in plate 18 and *Kpakepando* in plate 20..

The derived motifs from indigenous elements which was developed and transferred on the fabrics were means through which the Igbo unique culture will be projected to the world. For instance, *Uli* motifs were organized to produce *Ije agwo* (see plate 3) which the end uses were throw pillows and headrests, and are suitable for chairs in the reception hall and the rooms of hotels. *New moon* is also of *Uli* category with curtain and flower vase as end products which can be used to beautify the restaurant and the reception hall. Other *Uli* motifs adapted designs were *Udala* (see plate 6) and *Eziokwu bundu* (see plate 9) used for various end uses suitable for hotel interior decorations. Furthermore, *Ego ayoro* motifs were organized to form *Mirror* (see plate 13) which was used to produce centre table and side stools, that are classic and suitable for the reception hall and hotel rooms. *Affluence* (see plate 15) is also of *Ego ayoro* motifs category. It was used to produce cushion pillow for the hotel reception hall and table mat for the restaurant or dining of a hotel. *Bride price* (see plate 17) and *Kpakepando* (see plate 19) are of the *Ego ayoro* motifs with bed spread and duvet as the end uses suitable for hotel bed rooms. Based on the above instances, one can adduce that all these motifs and designs indigenous to Igbo culture, when properly arranged, produced unique items that are suitable for hotel interior decoration.

However, most of the works create visual pattern by introducing sense of movement in the space. This sense of movement was created through repetition either by colours, patterns, textures and lines. The gradual reduction of size of motif or reduction of colour in order to create different shades of the same hue entails the use of two opposite elements to one another. The opposite principles can be colour; example white and black thrown pillows on a chair or circles and squares used together.

The environment in which these Igbo designs are placed must communicate many things because any guest seeing the designs not just a simple product but as a cultural product projecting Igbo life style. These indigenous designs encapsulate the identity and meaning of *Ndigbo*. The cultural importance of the findings cannot be over emphasized and is discussed under aesthetics, iconography and utilitarian.

Conclusion:

In an effort to indigenize the interior of hotels in Enugu metropolis, exploration was done through drawing with different medium. It was realized that motifs and designs indigenous to *Igbo* culture were well explored. The adaptive motifs and designs indigenous to Igbo culture such as *Uli* traditional motifs, *Ego ayoro* (cowry shell) motifs and animate motifs were successfully composed into designs and transferred onto fabrics using resist method of fabric production. The unique outcomes of the product designs with indigenous motifs were converted to some end uses relevant in the hotel interiors. Emphasis was laid on the bedrooms, dining halls and reception halls of the hotels. Most of the hoteliers welcomed the concept and proposed to apply it in their interiors as a means of showcasing the cultural heritage of Enugu metropolis and *Ndigbo* in general. The study showed that the new interior has responded to the qualities of the design thus embracing and accentuating *Igbo* culture in its environment.

Recommendations:

Further exploration of more indigenous motifs and symbols by students and scholars, that will be suitable for hotel interiors decoration is recommended; Ministry of Education should include these indigenous motifs and symbols of *Ndigbo* in the creative arts curriculum as an effort to preserve the rich cultural heritage which is fast declining; in order to improve guests' perception in hotels, the hotel management should realize the needs for local art in their design scheme by requesting for fabrics with indigenous designs from the interior designers responsible for furnishing hotels.

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