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Musical Instruments and Tools of EBRE Festival as Motif on Fabric for Costumes of Identity

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Abstract:

This research explores musical instruments and tools of Ebre festival as motif on fabric to be identified with the Ebre women's dance group in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria as costumes for their festival and beyond. Ebre is an Ibibio name for water yam, which the dance group is named after. Ibibio is a majority tribe in Akwa Ibom state. The Ebre dance group was formed as a result of the maltreatment meted on Ibibio women by their husbands, to teach morals and to celebrate a bountiful harvest of water yam which was cultivated traditionally by women. The Ibibio women belong to other groups that use the same acculturated textiles with similar costumes. Hence, this research was motivated by the desire for a unique textile design to distinguish the Ebre festival dance group from other groups. Four Ibibio communities within Etinan Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State were chosen for this research. Data was collected from primary sources which consist of dancers, instrumentalists and a random selection of women who were interviewed, and secondary sources which include, archival, library and internet sources. These led to the production of samples from sketches to finished fabrics and costumes. Fabric samples were 57cm by 74cm, which were titled in Ibibio language and taken to the field for critic and acceptance. This research is a documentation of the cultural heritage of Ebre festival and Ibibio on fabric to project them for tourism, industry and job creation. The study recorded success in the use of Ebre festival musical instruments to create designs for costume of identity.

Keywords: Ebre festival, music, instruments, costume, identity.

1. Introduction

Dance is an integral aspect of African traditional festivals and a medium whereby man displays his art, expresses emotions, joy and excitement. It features in religious and rituals activities as part of the cultural heritage of a people. Dance is a rhythmic body movement of man to express ideas, feeling or thought and a representation of his character and actions. It is commonly performed with music and singing. Abassah (2015), describes dance as being an interpretation of life, an impulse skillfully translated by dancers to thrill and entertain their audience. It is a form of performing art whereby assorted textiles are used flamboyantly as costumes to enhance the actors and enrich their performance, giving it aesthetic value and quality. This research is therefore concerned with designing a unique and suitable textiles of identity for the Ebre dance group of Ibibio land in Akwa Ibom state in Nigeria.

Okeke (2002), states that textiles are a principal medium through which identity is expressed and symbolized all over the world, even though it's major purpose is for beautifying the body and enhancing the dignity of persons. In like manner, Chukueggu and Cyril-Egware (2009), corroborates that textiles reflects man's environment, his society and community and stand as a means of non-verbal communication in revealing the culture and history of a people. Cyril-Egware (2013), states that, textiles and their use as dress are foremost in the expression of a people's identity. Cyril-Egware and Obunge (2016), collaborates that textile design is expressed in pattern and texture, documenting people, their culture and environment. They further stated that it is evident that indigenous fabrics produced locally can be used to exhibit the cultural heritage of a people. There should therefore be deliberate effort to promote local Nigerian fabrics through functional usage, such as use as Friday wears to the office, as being promoted by most government and parastatals currently and put to use at traditional festivals as costumes for their displays at local and international levels. This goes on to promulgate the value of indigenous local fabrics as uniform of identity, thereby promoting the culture and empowering the indigenes through industrialization of the local textiles.

Costume is the distinctive style of dress of an individual or group that reflect their class, gender, profession, ethnicity, activity, nationality or period. It is an occasional outfit, dress or uniform worn at special celebrations that can be used to identify a group. According to Barda and Woodfin (2009), costume design is the elaborate clothing worn by actors to enhance a performance. In traditional displays or dances, carefully chosen costumes help convey a sense of a character's identity, as well as set the mood and

time period of the performance. Costumes are designed in accordance with aesthetic requirements that anticipate movement of the dancer, done through a collaborative effort of the choreographer, designer, tailor and actor, to harmonize the performance and for free movement. The Ibibio women belong to other groups other than the *Ebre* dance group, using the same acculturated textiles with similar costumes. Hence, this research was motivated by the desire for a unique textile design to distinguish the *Ebre* festival dance group from other groups.

Interviews from the field showed that the *Ebre* dance group was formed as a result of maltreatment meted on women by their husbands, for decent moral education of women and thanksgiving for a bountiful year's harvest of water yam which is traditionally cultivated by the Ibibio women. Anam (2014), in a discussion with the National Museum Study Group in Port Harcourt stated that *Ebre* was usually celebrated along with *ikon* (melon), also a women's society, around August and September annually. These dance groups were virtually using the same acculturated textiles that had no bearing with their culture because they did not produce those fabrics themselves. Hence the need for a unique fabric of identity for the *Ebre* festival dance group, to distinguish them from other dance groups in Ibibio land of Akwa Ibom state in Nigeria.

Ebre festival dance style portrays a polite and decent manner of expression for the Ibibio women to find succor and get back their husband's love and affection. The Ibibio culture does not permit women to confront their husbands, as that will lead to separation and divorce. Essien (2015) states that women formed various means of airing their grievances to their husbands. Hence, the dance group was formed as a common front aimed at respectfully expressing their feeling to their husbands through music and dance. A classic example is a situation where there is no true love in the marriage and the man regularly abuse his wife physically.

The *Ebre* festival performance takes off with celebration around the village, then to the stage at the village market square, exhibiting grievances of the women through choreography. The most insulted woman leads the singing, raising songs intended to reply their husband's unruly behavior to her prior to the festival. Some musical instruments were used for interesting rhythmic flow and entertainment creating a fascinating festive atmosphere. They include big and small drums (*Eka/ Etok Ibid*), metal bells (*Nkanika*), metal gong (*Nkwoon*), woodblock (*ntakrok*) and slit drum (*obodom*). Other symbolic objects and tools in connection with their farming occupation were also used to demonstrate alongside musical instruments. They are bamboo basket (*Akpan Ebre*), machete (*Ikwa*), bowl (*Usan mbat*), pot (*Abang mmong*), hoe (*Udok*) and stones (*Itiat*). These instruments were studied and used as motif to create textile designs to be identified with the *Ebre* festival dance group.

Sketches were made (figure 1A to K) which were further studied and adopted for compositions with titles in Ibibio language (figure 4A, B, C & D). These were in turn reproduced as paper design in colour (figure 5A, B, C & D) and screen printing technique was used for fabric production in various colours. Iron-on stones were fixed at designated areas to embellish the surface, giving it a shiny reflecting finish. Samples were produced on fabrics measuring 60cm by 75cm, (figure 5A, B, C & D). These were taken to the field for critic and acceptance. The most accepted design (*Mkpombre Ebre*) was then reproduced on five meters (5meters) of fabrics in two colours (figure 8 A & B) and used for two costumes for the *Ebre* festival dance group, (figure 9 A, B & C). Findings from the field showed success in the use of the instruments and tools for unique costumes, documenting the *Ebre* festival dance and the Ibibio cultural heritage on textiles for further research, tourism, industry and for posterity.

2. Culture and Music of the Ibibio People

The Ibibio people are seen as a major ethnic nationality in the southern part of Nigeria. They are located at the south-south region, east of the River Niger in Akwa-Ibom State. Historically, they are said to have migrated from Ibom, a location near Arochuku in Abia state, although the exact origin of migration is unknown. The Ibibio people are characterized as very intelligent and industrious. They are known for sumptuous delicacies like *Edikang ikong*, *Afang*, *Ekpang Nkukuwo* to mention but a few. These dishes are usually displayed during their traditional festivals. Their rich cultural heritage can be seen in their dress style, traditional activities, music, dance, recreational activities, their environment, and their cultural performances as stated by Essien (2015). There are various musical performances done by women and men. Among the men are the *Ekpe*, *Akata*, and the *Ekpo* societies who help in the maintenance of law and order in the community, while their female counter part is the *Ebre* and *Ibon Isong* groups. Through this traditional judicial system norms and values of the people were upheld for centuries before the advent of colonization.

Recreational performances in Ibibio culture is usually for entertainment during funerals, coronations, and festivals. Their type of music is intended to acclimatize to the event hosted and songs may include those of neighboring villages just for the purpose of entertainment. Traditional music is based on oral tradition passed on from one generation to another, through stories and observation. Music is important to communal life through leisure, shared ethnic, and political institutes that have promoted all sectors, thoughts and wisdom. The content of their songs are generated by creative members of the performing group who possess song writing skills or acculturate from other ethnic groups. This study identified the Ibibio communities as being held by a musical bond which reflects man's life cycle, from birth through courtship, marriage and eventually death. It is exhibited in this study that the culture and tribe of a people can be revealed through traditional music.

In traditional Ibibio culture, music is seen as a source of traditional belief and an avenue to reach out and establish an uninterrupted link with the supernatural. Songs composed are usually expressions of their attitude to life, hopes, fears, and views, making it a powerful tool in the daily affairs of the people. Their music reflects an unwavering devotion to a supreme being as well as a high regard for every aspect of life and family. Their choice of performance is dependent on a collective decision of an individual in the group, usually the leader of the group, or by the association. The Ibibio culture integrates musical performances that portray the lifestyle of the people, reflecting their occupational, social beliefs and displaying what the society values most. The men also belong to the *Ekpe*, *Akata*, and the *Ekpo* societies which help in the maintenance of law and order in the community, while their female counter

part is the *Ebre* and *Ibon Isong* groups. Through this traditional judicial system norms and values of the people were upheld for centuries before the advent of colonization.

The Ibibio culture exhibits various maiden dances that are entertaining and relaxing. Amongst these performances are the *Abinsi* dance, *Ubom Isang* (land canoe) and *Iban of isong* dance. During the *Abinsi* dance, the men engage in a traditional wooing dance where young energetic men pick female dancers of their choice which they intend to marry. The men come along with lit lanterns as emblems of clear vision to choose the right spouse. Songs rendered are centered around the social activities in the community. Each occasion has a means of dissemination a message through the content of the songs. During their performance the drumming intensifies, raising the tempo of dancers as they engage in mock battles and display of strength.

Ubom Isang (land canoe), dance performance by young girls, reflect the occupation of the Ibibio people of Akwa Ibom state. It is performed alongside miniature display of fishing nets and seafood. Each dancer wears a hoop around her waist, looped together to form a boat singing and engaged in mock paddling.

Iban of isong dance is a performance group for women responsible for contending with male chauvinism (*Ndok ufok ebe*). Through their performance, they reproof members of the public against disrespecting women. Since they do not encourage and tolerate the blackmail of women by men, they ensure that defaulters are given a fair trial by the clan's council and penalized if found guilty. During their performance they paint their faces and bodies with black, holding objects made in the shape of a woman's uterus. The wives of the king in the palace also perform some entertaining activities for recreational purposes. During these performances, praise songs are rendered to their husband amidst drumming and dancing. At these events, the royal family comprising the children and relations entertain the king.

3. Ebre Festival Musical Instruments and Tools

The music and dance traditions of the Ibibio women during the *Ebre* festival reveals their cultural heritage. This particular festival references women who play significant roles in crop cultivation and serve as an essential part of the sacrificial rites performed by both men and women. The musical instruments and tools are symbols of identity for the *Ebre* festival dance group. Some of such instruments and tools are:

Big Drum (*Eka Ibid*): This a cone shaped wooded instrument with stretched animal skin, fixed over the wider side of the drum which is the top. It is one of the most widespread musical instrument in Ibibio land, commonly call *eka ibid*. The drums are usually played with hands or slim sticks. Sometimes in large assemblies, both techniques may be found. The single-head *Eka-Ibid* is played with sticks. The master-drum the *nogho* (means stooping down), is placed on the floor between the player's leg and beaten (Figure 1A). As the name suggests, the player stoops down to play with both hands, on her right lies *ntok ibid* (small drum) serving as the supporting drum to the *Eka ibid*, on the extreme right is the *obodom*, usually an open cylindrical hollowed wooden piece played with two short heavy sticks.

Metal gongs (*Nkwoon*), is a metallic instrument in form of a long cone which produces sound by the vibration of air in its columns. This instrument is widely used among most cultural groups within and around Ibibio communities. Thegong (*Nkwoon*) is one of the *Ebre* festival dance instrument made by joining two flat, light metal sheets that are curved and joined together from a narrow top to a wide lower part. It is of different sizes and the sound depends on the size of the gong (*Nkwoon*) used. The small size produces an augmented soprano like tune while the bigger one produces the louder sound. Information from the field shows that it is believed that insect bite affects the sound of the gong (*Nkwoon*) hence it is always placed on a pedestal. Thieves are forbidden from hearing the sound of the gong (*Nkwoon*) and are expected to keep away from the surrounding area whenever is being played.

Metal bell (*Nkanika*): The bell is a conical percussion instrument which come in many shapes, mostly metal cast. It has a hollow cup shape and its sides resonate when rang. It vibrates in a single tone when struck. The strike which produces the sound is made by a dangling metal ball suspended by a small loose sphere inside the bell. Historically in Ibibio culture, bells are associated with religious rituals, and used to call communities together for both religious and secular events. Bells are also used to commemorate important events or people and have been associated with concepts of peace and freedom.

Wood block (*ntakrok*): This is a small wooden block split in the middle from a single piece of wood, used as a percussion instrument. It is a rectangular or cylindrical block of wood with two longitudinal cavities. It is of the Ibibio people made from cam wood and other hard wood Two small sticks are used to play it. As the name implies it is a deep rooted block in nature, carved from a peculiar red wood *ukpa (iroko)* to give it a high sound quality.

Split wooden drum (*Obodom*) is a talking drum with an open cylindrical hollowed piece of wood placed in a horizontal position, played with two heavy sticks. *Obodom* is an audio directional instrument it has a carved deepen hollow two slit opening it co-ordinates the movement in the dancer or the performers. The *Obodom* is a major audio instruments which coordinates the dance steps and style during the festival performance. The *Obodom* is placed on a soft insulating surface like the plantain stem to retain and control the sound.

Rattle: A rattle is an instrument that produces sound when shaken. There are different types of rattles, some are calabashes filled with stones or hard seeds. Others have colourful beads arranged around them, made in different sizes depending on the required tune. In Ibibio culture, rattles are considered to be sacred and used during religious rituals and the *Ebre* dancers often times link the sound of the rattle to supernatural powers. The women hold it and beat against the opposite palm to create the required sound.

Basket (*Akpan ebre*) it is one of the tools used by the *Ebre* women. It is made by basket makers with wooden armatures and is used for carrying farm implements and also tubers of water yam when harvested from the farm. The name of the dance group is derived from *Ebre* (water yam). The *Akpan ebre* (basket) is usually painted with the same colour of the dance group to add aesthetic value.

Clay pot (*Abang mmong*) is a big locally fired clay pot. A soft tissue (padded foam) is used as beaters on the hollow ream of the pot. It produces a baritone sound when beater. For more aesthetic value the pot is decorated with the colour chosen by the performing group.

4. Drawing from Instruments and Symbols of the *Ebre* Women

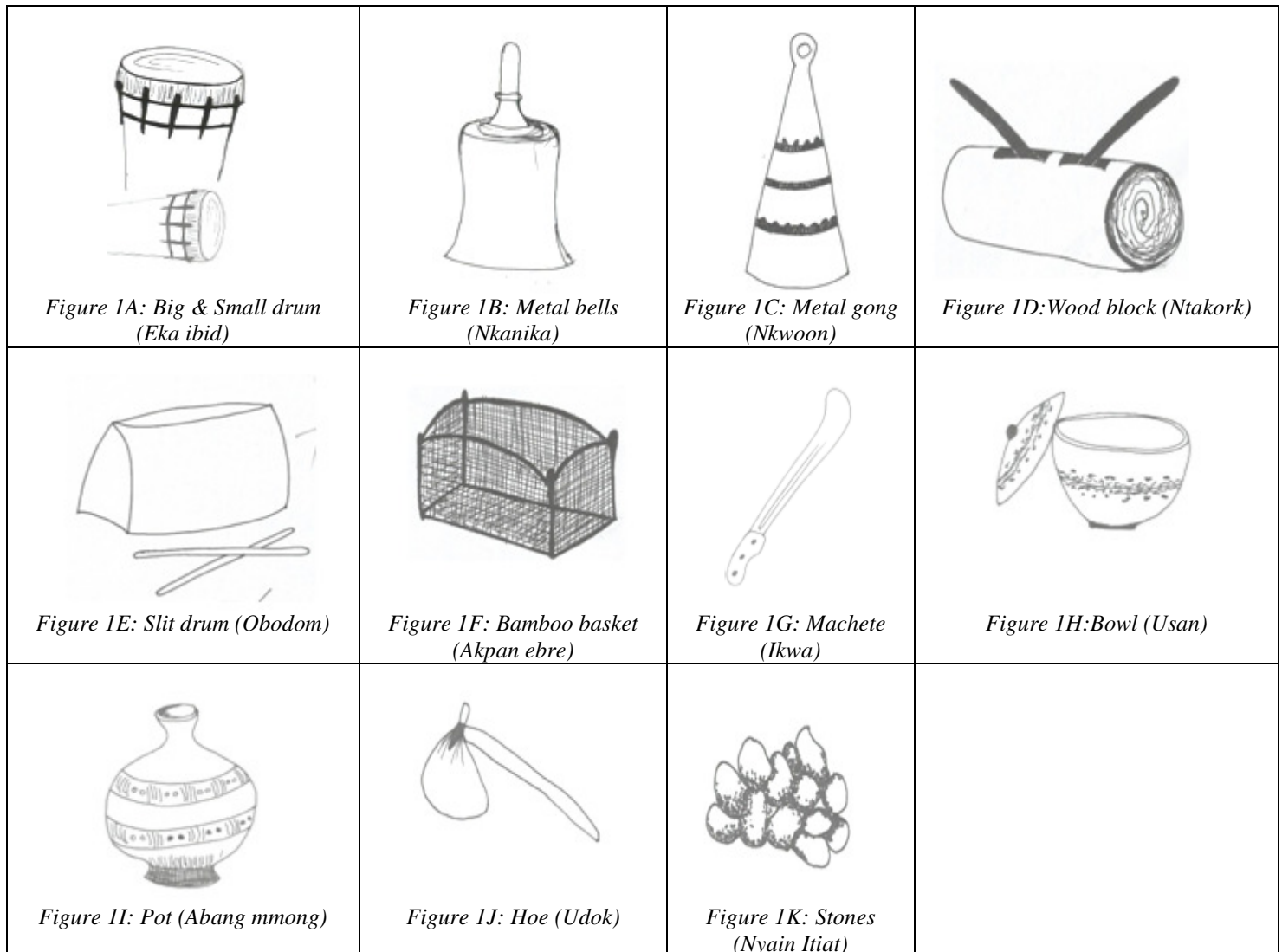


Figure 1

5. *EBRE* Cultural Society in Ibibio Land

Ebre simply means water yam in Ibibio language. In Ibibio culture *Ebre* (water yam) is cultivated by women so it refers to women who play significant roles in crop production and serve as an essential part of the sacrificial rites performed by both men and women. These sacrifices are offered to the fertility deity as an offering for the planting season in order to yield a bountiful harvest and thanksgiving. However, currently, the ritual emphasizes an avenue for promoting the significance of women to the family and the society. The *Ebre* society serves as a mechanism for maintaining the code of conduct for the people in the community through entertaining and informative performances to the public making membership into the group assessable for all women, especially the married ones. It is believed that the virtues learnt from the *Ebre* society help in fostering integrity, oneness, individual development, self-development and a way to carry out developmental projects. Married and elderly women in Ibibio land display quality attributes of women as being decent, upright, and diligent during the *Ebre* dance performances. A lady is qualified to be a member of the group only after passing through *Mbopo* (fattening room). As part of the celebrations, men present an *Inam* (a sharp pointed stick) to their wives to harvest their water yam on an agreed market day. After the harvest the women are presented with gifts from their husbands and well-wishers based on their harvest, while some part of the water yam is cooked to entertain the family and guests. It is also for communal and sacred functions. *Ebre* can be staged on any arena, because its dance steps require free movement of the body and hips. They normally danced around the neighboring villages and market places to create awareness before finally returning to their village market square in the evening to perform (Anam, 2014).

During the *Ebre* dance performance, the women sing about the behavior of their folks in the society, even mentioning names of those involved. Some of their songs reflect the ill treatment meted on them by their husbands and in response they reply with offensive words contained in their lyrics such as, *ndok ufok ebe* (disgrace form husband), *Ebe ake nno mbiara ikot* (my husband gave me unfertile farm land), *kporobo keidogo ino* (if you claimed that you are not a thief, prove your innocence), *nyin ino uka idiege afo edi*, and so on. These performances were exhibited with demonstration.

Amongst the numerous functions of the association, the most distinct as stated by Anam (2014) is that, it promotes the integrity and dignity of women within and around the society. If any member is found to be thief or adulterer, they were expelled from the group and women whose daughters become pregnant before fattening and eventual marriage. A child of a known thief can also be beaten even to death if he or she stands or passes by at the time the *Ebre* play is being performed. The association also serves as a co-operative society, the encourage and enhance women in their businesses for economic stability.

Before the advent of western civilization, the fellowships shared amongst members were so strong that they exchanged their wares freely. During this period woman from the *Ebre* group assisted in educating and sensitizing younger women on how to carry out domestic chores, welfare of the fattening girls (*mbopo*) and mid wife. Their responsibility also included welfare of nursing mothers and body massage. They also help to checkmate the activities of women around the community and encourage members towards being dedicated to their families and marital vows. Prior to the establishment of modern judicial systems, the Ibibio people maintained successful conflict resolution groups

However, despite the increase in information technology and growing extinction of most cultures, the *Ebre* society still remains an active and vocal group amongst the women of Ibibio communities. Their significant contribution to the socio cultural development, makes them viable in a constantly changing society.

Amongst the major tribes in the nation, the Ibibio's rank fourth with over 5million speaking indigenes inhabiting the geographical location in the South of Nigeria. It is believed that the *Ebre* dance group was formed following exploitations from their partners whom they described as having caustic tongues. As a means of finding succor, they decided in taunting their unruly husbands through dance performances. Being that it was improper for women to confront their husbands, they were seen as tiny gods of some sorts who ought not to be spoken to while speaking. Hence, the women came together and the *Ebre* dance group was formed, as an avenue to confront their partners through singing and dancing over a period, younger women were also organized called *Asian Uboikpa*.

The cultural dance is performed at the village market square for the entire community to view. The women through sequential step of some sorts and the woman who's most insulted becomes the lead singer, raising songs that will be sang by all replying all the husbands may have said to her prior to the performance leading to the dance called payback day. Before the dance, the women make up their faces with native chinks, decorate their costumes with cowries and tiny bells; they also carry basket of flowers, palm oil and other food ingredients, including their local drums and tambourines and it is off to the market square. As identified by Anam (2014) and Essien (2014), the *Ebre* dance is accompanied by a full orchestra of drums (*ibit*) rattles (*nsak*), wooden drum (*akpan ibit*) woodblock (*ntakrok*) and symbolical three large gongs (*obodom*), all played by women. No *Ebre* music is complete without the use of these songs, one of which is played by the leader of the orchestra.

During the performance, dancers bend down, stand straight, shake their bodies and sway their waist left and right. The climax center of the dance is when two dancers move towards the drum amidst cheers showing that they all enjoyed the dance. The dance comprises of canoe (*ubom*) dance, white handkerchief (*unek emem*) dance, *Ebre* symbol bearer (*abiom iso Ebre*) dance and mothers (*Eka-Eyen*) dance. Performing the canoe dance, the dance steps flowlike a floating canoe on water. The women file out with paddles and compose themselves into an imaginary canoe in water. Their hands gesticulate in a wave-like motion to signify that the imaginary canoe is being paddled on an imaginary water.



Figure 2A &B: Uduak Abassah (co author & researcher) in a peace dance with *Ebre* dancers and instrumentalists, organized to demonstrate for the researchers at Eket. They are dressed in the short skirt (Napkin) fashion, a double folded wrapper over white blouse with a simple head tie. Figure 2B shows the instrumentalists demonstrating with the different instruments

6. History of Textiles of the Akwa-Ibom People

Textile design is a branch of the applied arts that deals with creating and decorating fabrics. The influence of this field covers a large variety of our daily lives, from clothing's to drapes and interior designs. As a result, textile design has the ability to stir new fashion trends and styles, making it one of the most successful art industry.

According to Kukoyi (2013) textile is an aspect of Art that employ designs patterns and construct fibers for the production of fabrics of all sorts either for body adornment and home application. Textile Design on the other hand she says is the process of creating designs, patterns and structures for knitted, woven, non-woven, or embellishment of fabrics. Cyril-Egware (2013) sees fabric design as an ordered arrangement and rhythmic repetition of motifs, colors and texture on fabric to add value and beauty. However, technological advancement has enabled professional textile designers to utilize computer-aided software to create excellent design concepts that are translated unto fabrics at greater speed and accuracy. Often these computer aided textile machines print use heat transfer. The motifs on fabric are usually in repeat patterns either as straight, diamond, ogee, scale, half drop or mirror patterns, intended to create visual balance on the fabric as well as provoke an aesthetic appeal.

A study of the dress fashion of a group of people can help identify their cultural heritage. Therefore, the culture of a people can be transmitted in their dressing and uphold the history of that tribe. Previously, Akwa-Ibom women wore traditional short skirts, called *mkpin* while the men wore *usobo*. Children were dressed in smaller version of what their parents wore. These early designs have had great influence on modern designs. Dress styles have changed greatly over the years, largely influenced by changes from other cultures. Each century and era has its peculiar dress culture. The innovation of synthetic materials in the mid-twentieth century has made available an increase in a range of inexpensive, yet fashionable dresses, which have contributed to the Akwa-Ibom dress culture. Some of the *Ebre* dancers who are also fashion designers from Akwa Ibom State, confirmed most dress makers have currently been making use of synthetic fabrics to trim, combine and accessorize other fabrics to produce beautiful fashionable designs thereby sampling personality, signature and state identity on their designs. Even raffia and *ekpang* fabrics have not been left out of this evolution. Raffia thread known as *Ndam* consist of the outer skin, peeled from young palm fronds of the raffia palm. Fresh raffia threads are lemon in colour but turn to beige colour when dried. Vegetable dyes were used before the advent of modern dyes which comes from various hues. They have added beauty to woven raffia and *ekpang* fabric, the raffia sheets are produced with traditional loom. The raffia products have seriously influenced the culture. Their first garments *Ikpiya* and *Ekpang* were made from raffia and natural fibers respectively. Some cultures got their inspiration from Akwa Ibom traditional wardrobe namely;

Mkpin Traditional (Short Skirt): *Mkpin* is a casual traditional garment worn by maidens. *Mkpin* has basically two styles which is a two-step seamless gathered skirt, topped with a free sized blouse with brocade-like neckline. The other style is a straight beamless single skirt wrapped around the waist and rolled down to form a beautiful rich fold, is worn with a tube blouse to match. (Figure 2A & B)

Ndot iba traditional double wrapper: *Ndot iba* is an incorporation of two wrappers, one tied from the waist to the ankle the other over a blouse with anexotic head tieand beads around the neck and wrist with raffia shoes and raffia clutch bag to match.

Afong ukod anwan/ tradition: *Afong ukod anwan* is a traditional short wrapper tied around the waist to the knee with an opening on the left side. Usually worn with a short blouse and beads crossing the blouse.



Figure 3: *Ndot iba* traditional (two wrapper)

7. Statement of the Problem

Apart from *Ebre* festival dance group, the women also belong to other associations such as *Ikon* festival dance group. They have almost the same objectives and usually celebrate around the sometime, between August and September. Both societies have no difference in the textiles they use and so there is the need for the *Ebre* festival dance group to have a unique costume distinguishing them from other dance groups in Ibibio culture. The women adorn themselves with acculturated wrappers and apply colored native chalk on their faces, adorn themselves with cowries, bells on their legs, palm oil and other food ingredients and create music with local drums and tambourines and move to the market square. Like every cultural group the *Ebre* musical association utilize gongs and other instruments. Festival dance costumes and instruments are either destroyed or abandoned due to neglect or misplaced cultural interest. What is fundamental is that the symbols and instrument for *Ebre* dance need to be well preserved for tourism, research and

for posterity. There has been no analysis and documentation of these artifacts. Therefore, a suitable fabric design will serve as a good source of material culture for preservation and identity of the cultural heritage of the Ibibio women of Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria. Hence the need to create a unique fabric design for their costumes using *Ebre* dance instruments as motif.

8. Aim and Objectives of Study

This research is aimed at studying *Ebre* festival musical instruments, and using them as pictorial representation on fabric for costumes to give the *Ebre* women society a unique identity during their festival. Specifically, the research seeks to:

- Identify *Ebre* festival dance instruments and symbolic items,
- Preserve the *Ebre* festival dance instrument on textiles as a material culture,
- Use the sourced motifs for suitable prints on fabric for *Ebre* festival dance and
- Explore *Ebre* festival musical instruments as symbols to create new designs on textile.

9. Significance of the Study

This study will be of immense benefit to government, researchers and tourist, textile designers and the industry, artists and the Ibibio people of Akwa Ibom state. Government will apply useful mechanism that will highlight and promote *Ebre* festival dance for tourism and development to create jobs and generate fund for economic growth and sustainability. The study will give researchers and tourists direction for further studies on Ibibio traditional festivals and culture. It will form a strong foundation for new designs in the textiles and fashion industry and for textile artists to strengthen their creative abilities and also advance further on this area of research for documentation. The designers will be enlightened on strategies that can encourage effective ratify fashion trend traditionally, using *Ebre* festival musical instruments and symbols as motif for fabric design. It will preserve the fading traditional artifacts and create a re-awakening of the *Ebre* festival dance group nationally and internationally.

10. Scope of the Study

This study covered *Ebre* festival dance instruments as pictorial representation on fabrics for costumes of Ibibio clan comprising Etinan, Eket, Uyo and Nsit Ubium. Manual screen printing technique was used for the production of fabric design.

11. Conceptual Framework

According to Chukuweggu, (1998) music is an aspect of a performance situation which also significantly features costumes and props. These are often presented in dance movement within complex settings. Invariably, props and costumes also help to articulate dance movement. Walking-steps, shuffle steps, running steps, and slipping steps, full turns, quarter turns, and half turns, spins, leaps and circular movements are organized into figures and progressive dances (Ekpa, 2013). The music and dance traditions of Ibibio's reveal ingenious techniques for the exploitation of vast resources including not only a wide repertoire of devices, but also a wide variety of musical instruments.

11.1. Population of the Study

The population of study consists of twenty (20) *Ebre* festival dancers and instrumentalist drawn from Ikot-Akpanya, Nsit-Ibom, Ikot-Akpabio, Mboito in Etinan L.G.A, Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria where oral interviews were conducted. Aged *Ebre* festival dancers from various communities between the ages of 60-73 years were interviewed.

This research consists of data collated from primary and secondary sources. Analysis of data collected was presented descriptive and analytical method after production of fabric for costume.

11.2. Compositions Derived from Drawings on Figure 1a – K.



Figure 4A

Title: Mkpombre Ebre (Ebre dance instruments)
Composition derived from Fig., sketch A, D, F,
and H.
Size: 14cm by 15cm.



Figure 4B

Title: Ndoko Ebre
Composition derived from Fig., sketch A, D, F,
and H.
Size: 14cm by 15cm



Figure 4C

Title: Iso Ebre
Composition derived from Fig., sketch A, D, F,
and H.
Size: 14cm by 15cm.

Figure 4

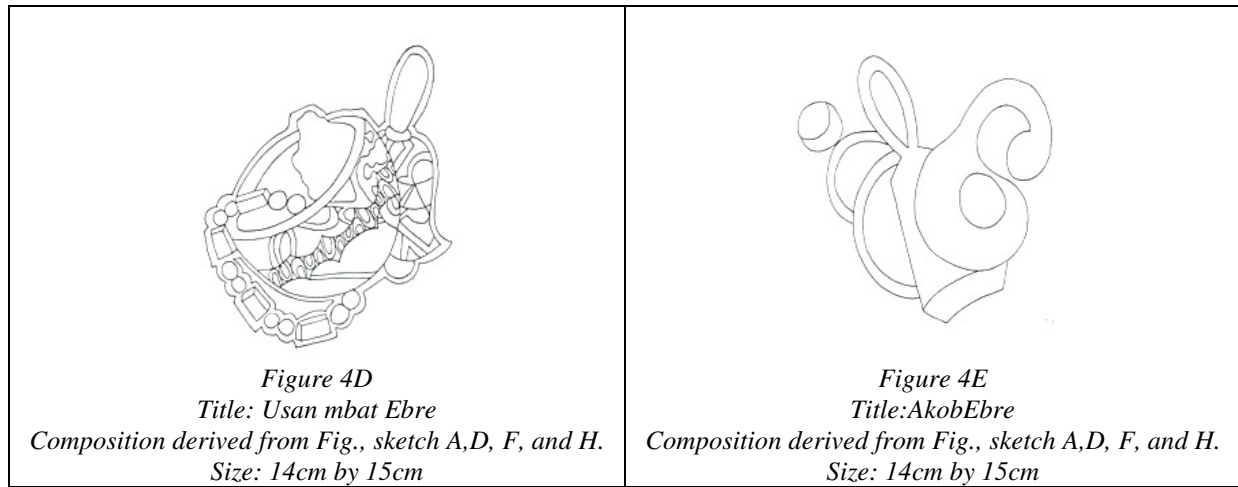


Figure 4

11.3. Paper Design in Colour

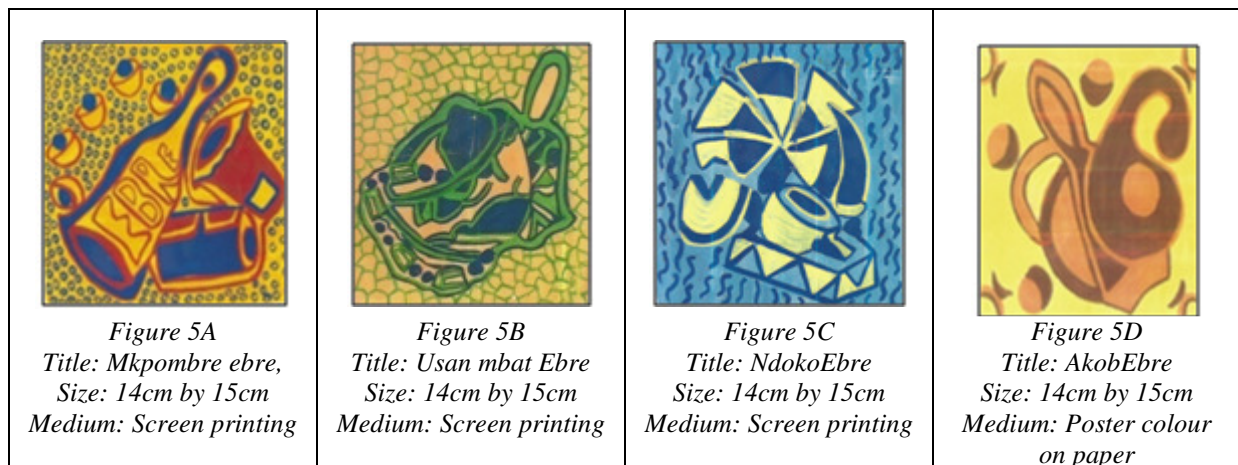


Figure 5

11.4. Screen Printing

Screen-printing is a printing technique widely used to design fabrics. In this production, a mesh was wrapped on a rectangular wooden frame which was used to transfer ink unto the fabric. This was stretched then exposed on mesh for printing which was in turn used for sample costumes. The mesh was carefully cleaned and stretched on a wooden frame. The frame was rectangular, measuring 48 inches by 38 inches. Emulsion and sensitise was used to expose the design on the mesh in a dark room and brought out to the sun for airing and washing. The mesh was covered with emulsion and allowed to dry before transfer unto fabric can be successful. The most accepted design by the *Ebre* women's group during the exhibition of various samples turned out to be *Mkpombre Ebre* (*Ebre* dance instruments) Figure 7A&B. After printing, iron on stones were used for surface embellishment to enhance the quality of the design.



Figure 6 A & B: Prepared meshtwo colour printing

11.5. Samples of Printed Fabric Derived from Coloured Paper Works



Figure 7A & B

Title: Mkpombre Ebrein two colours

Medium: Screen printing with surface embellishment

Size: 74cm by 57cm.

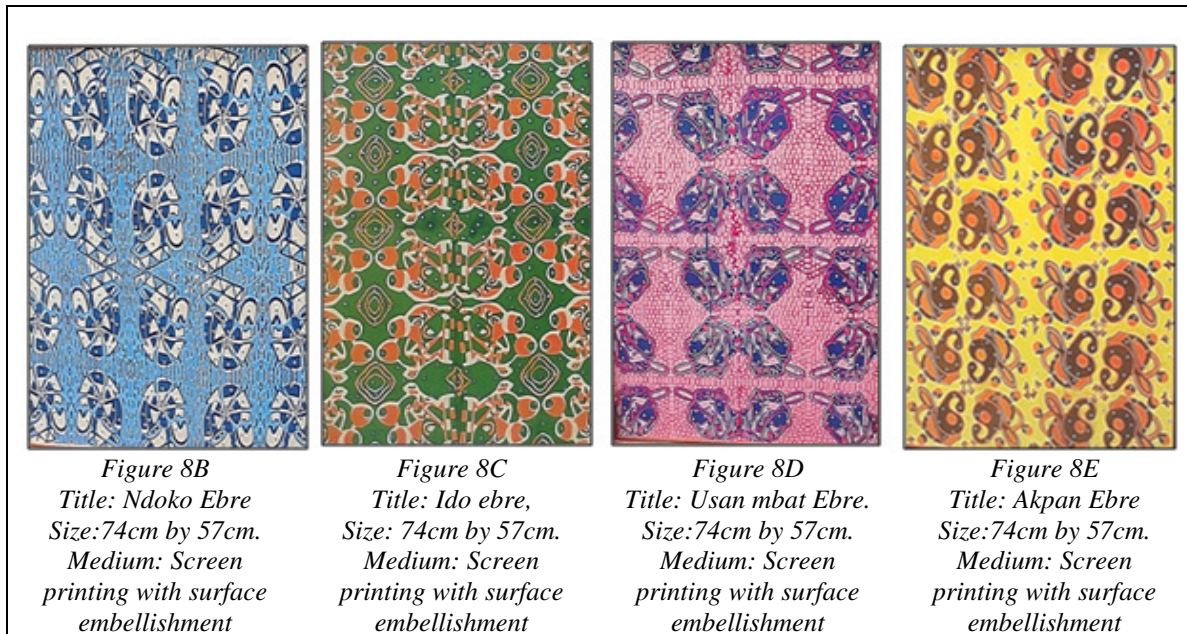


Figure 8

11.6. Printing Process on 5 Yards of Cloth



Figure 9A: First colour printed on 5meters of cloth



Figure 9B: Second colour printed on 5meters of cloth

Mkpombre Ebre Finished as Costumes



Figure 10A: Mkpoin Traditional (Short Skirt) designed with Mkpombre ebre, with a short blouse, waist beads made from the material and raffia rattles around her ankle



Figure 10B: Ndot iba traditional (double wrapper) designed with Mkpombre Ebre, a white blouse, yellow head tie to match and beads around her neck and wrist, produced with the printed material

Figure 10

12. Discussion of Findings

Ebre festival dance instruments were studied and sketches drawn with motifs derived from the sketches with titles on paper. Samples produced were taken to the field for critic and acceptance. The group organized a special session for the researchers as seen in Figure 1A & B. During the interaction with members of the *Ebre* women's dance group, the samples were exhibited and the most accepted design was chosen. Their analysis came to a conclusive agreement for the chosen design (*Mkpombre Ebre*) figure 7A & B, because the design has the instruments and tools represented in unity with each other and the texture in circles stand for unity and love which is being propagated by the society. Even though colour was not a major aspect of this research, the yellow design seemed to have interested the members more. This was in turn fashioned into their usual costumes in figure 10A & B. However, other works were discussed according to their use either as daily items or as used during the festival. They include:

The Akpan Ebre (traditional basket of the *Ebre* women) figure 1 F & 4E, which was carried by the woman who was third in command during the dance contained all the associations farming implements like hoes and food stuff such as wateryam (*Ebre*). The *Akpan Ebres*, as stated by the members of *Ebre* society, is an emblem of womanhood, symbolizing the daily household, market and farming activities of Ibibio women. During the dance its contents were displayed with corresponding chants.

Usan Mbat Ebre (*Ebre* bowl), figure 6 B & 8 D is a universal utensil used to serve food during festivals, which corresponds with the *Ebre* harvest season. The bowl, is used to serve roasted or boiled *Ebre* with palm oil. *Nyin itiat* (*Ebre* stone) figure 1 k, makes up the contents of the *Ebre* basket, used by women to crack palm kernel, a purely women's activity and a major source of income which is a tasking demands considerable endurance and patience. The stone in *Ebre* dance symbolizes the courage strength and perseverance needed by womanhood for coping with the arduous tasks associated with marriage and motherhood. Every stone has a unique shape. *Ikwa-Ebre* (*Ebre* knife) figure 1G, is used in the festival during invocation when it is raised as an emblem of justice and then pinning to the ground to clamp down symbolically on any woman who disgraces the association by stealing or through marital infidelity.

Through participatory observation, the researchers observed that the dress culture of a people is one basic resource from which the history and culture of the Ibibio women can best be told. Dressing and fashion trends have largely been influenced by changes in the world around us, and *Ebre* dance instruments and symbols can be adapted for creating new designs to build the people's life style. These innovation has contributed to the Akwa Ibom dress culture and creates a unique design for the *Ebre* festival dance. *Ebre* festival dancers within the age range of 60-73 years who were orally interviewed admitted that the musical instruments, tools and performances were a suitable means of self-expression which serve as reflectors of the life and thoughts of Ibibio women over

decades. All the women admitted that festival dance costumes and instruments are either destroyed or abandoned because of neglect or misplaced cultural interest. They also wished that the items and instruments were preserved and documented for future use.

13. Conclusion

In conclusion, it was observed that there was no costume specifically to identify or differentiate *Ebre* festival dance association from other dance associations among the Ibibio speaking communities in Akwa Ibom state of Nigeria. The artifacts used for *Ebre* festival dance are neither preserved nor documented. This is in agreement with Pamela Cyril-Egware (2012) who noted that festival dance costumes and instruments are either abandoned or destroyed as a result of neglect or misplaced cultural interest.

Through oral interview with some *Ebre* dancers, instrumentalists and some elderly women, it was discovered that *Ebre* dance has been abandoned for western culture which is now a challenge for the younger generation. This has affected the preservation of the instruments, tools and the culture of the Ibibio women and the Ebre society, hence the need for this documentation on textiles as material culture. The study aimed at using *Ebre* festival dance instruments as motif on fabric for costumes to be identified with the *Ebre* women of Ibibio land in Akwa Ibom state in Nigeria. Screen printing technique was used to produce samples of the motifs which were studied, drawn and embellished with iron on stones. These were then taken to the field and the most preferred design (*Mkpombre Ebre*), was further used to produce costumes for the *Ebre* festival dance group. Their response and acceptance of the design was impressive and encouraging as they look forward to adopting it as their fabric of identity.

This research has documented a potential aspect of the culture of the Ibibio women of Akwa Ibom state in Nigeria especially the *Ebre* festival dance alongside the musical instruments and farming tools used by Ibibio women on textiles as material culture for identity, further research, tourism and industry for sustainable development. During this research, information on *Ebre* festival dance and musical instruments were collected through oral interviews and literary sources. The research adopted a descriptive and analytical method of data presentation, as represented by screen printing and surface embellishment on fabric for the costumes of the *Ebre* dance group. Titles were also analyzed as in relation to their uses and shapes.

14. Recommendation

As an outcome of modernity, whereby western culture has eroded African culture so much and very fast in all ramifications it became necessary in this research to work towards the promotion and sustenance of the cultural heritage and identity of the Ibibio women, particularly the Ebre women's dance society of Akwa Ibom state in Nigeria, nationally and internationally. This paper therefore recommends that;

- The society should reckon with the values of *Ebre* cultural dance and its aesthetics as commendable assets for posterity and industrialization,
- while the *Ebre* people may not completely close their cultural doors to external forces, it has become important to accommodate and embrace new techniques and approaches in the ongoing current technological advancement in textile design world wide,
- There should be some form of modification in terms of scheduled days for performance and publicity of this event through the mass media and internet to gain the necessary publicity nationally and internationally. This must help to reawaken the fast fading culture and status of *Ebre* dance festival as well as boast Akwa Ibom State for tourism industry and job creation.

14.1. Contribution to Knowledge

- 1) It will serve as a platform in documenting the rich cultural heritage of the Akwa Ibom people for future researchers, industry and tourism for sustainable economic empowerment.
- 2) This study will break new grounds in modern Nigerian textile Design.
- 3) The study provides a platform for more expository research which will encourage other research artist as vestiges of cultural festivals as part of creative masterpieces.

15. Guide Research Questions

The following research question were raised to enable a successful field study;

- How can the *Ebre* festival dance celebrants be identified?
- To what extent are the symbols and instruments used for *Ebre* dance preserved?
- Are there documentations of *Ebre* dance symbols and instruments on Textiles as their identity?
- How can *Ebre* dance instruments, symbols be utilized for creating new designs for textile manufacture?
- Is it conceivable for the Ibibio people to receive the unique design for the *Ebre* festival dance for their identity?
- Is it possible to attract recognition nationally and internationally with the new fabric of identity if used by the *Ebre* women's dance group during festivals?

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