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MULTIDISCIPLINARY ACADEMIC CONFERENCE

26TH ACADEMIC CONFERENCE

NEW DIRECTION AND UNCOMMON
CHANGES SUB-SAHARA AFRICAN
NATIONS' TRANSFORMATION: A
MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH



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FOR THE

THEME

**NEW DIRECTION AND UNCOMMON CHANGES SUB-
SAHARA AFRICAN NATIONS' TRANSFORMATION:
MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH**

DATE:

30TH NOVEMBER, 2023

VENUE:

**LECTURE THEATRE HALL, FACULTY OF
EDUCATION, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ABU
ZARIA, ZARIA, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA.**

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Multidisciplinary Approach. (Vol. 29, No. 1) 30th November, 2023- Lecture Theatre Hall, Faculty of Education,
Ahmadu Bello University, ABU-Zaria, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria.*

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THEME

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SUB THEME:

- Pure and Applied Science
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(THURSDAY 30TH NOVEMBER, 2023)

LECTURE THEATRE HALL, FACULTY OF EDUCATION,
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Time	Activities
08:00 - 10:00am	Registration
10:00 - 10:30am	Arrival of Guests
10:30 - 10:45am	Introduction and Recognition of Distinguished by The Master of Ceremony.
10:45 - 11:10am	Opening Prayer
11:00 - 11:20am	National Anthem
11:21 - 11:31am	Address by Dr. M.B Nasir.
11:31 - 12:00noon	Lead Paper presentation by PROF. J. A. UDOAYANG
12:30 - 03:00pm	Plenary Session/Paper Presentation
03:00 - 03:15pm	Vote of thanks by Secretary LOC
03:15 - 03:30pm	National Anthem
03:30 - 03:45pm	Group Photograph

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PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

Days	Time	Activities
Day 1: Wednesday, August 30, 2023		Arrival/Pre-conference Meeting
Day 1: Thursday, August 31, 2023	8.00-10.00am	Registration
	10.00-1.00pm	Opening Ceremony
	1.00-2.00pm	Launch/Break
	2.00-3.00pm	Plenary Section
	3.00-5.00pm	Paper presentation
	5.00-6.00pm	Certificates Presentation
Day 3: Friday, September 01, 2023		Departure

REGISTRATION VENUE
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APPRAISAL OF OKUN TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN KABBA, KOGI STATE

OYENUHI G.E.; & EZE C.J.

Department of Architecture, School of Environmental Technology, Federal University of
Technology Minna, Nigeria

Abstract

Culture can be expressed through language, art, and architecture, which depict the culture, social status, and values of a people. Traditional building elements, such as carvings, sculptures, and paintings, are essential for preserving cultural heritage. In Okun, Nigeria, a study was conducted to evaluate the use of traditional elements in public buildings, such as event centers and hotels. The research involved 420 questionnaires administered to indigenes and residents and analysed using descriptive statistics and relative importance index revealing that the application of Okun traditional elements aids in preserving cultural identity. The majority of respondents believed that religion and civilization serve as major drawbacks in the application of cultural elements to buildings. The study concluded that the use of pictorial storytelling and object paintings should be prioritized for promoting and preserving the culture of the Okun people. The research recommends adequate sensitization and prioritization of the use of cultural elements in building design.

Keywords: Okun decorative elements, murals, cultural preservation, public buildings.

Introduction

The concept of conservation and preservation emerged during the 20th century, resulting from an initial ideology that emphasized the significance of not only documenting the historical background of a structure but also restoring it to its real fundamental nature (Umar *et al.*, 2019a). The Okun people are a group of Yoruba communities in Kogi State, Nigeria having their own unique culture, including traditional dressing, cuisine, and religious practices which entails, Christianity, Islam, and traditional African religions. The architecture of the Okun people incorporates the use of natural materials such as mud, sticks and natural colours alongside patterns occurring in nature. Wood is a major material used in Okun architecture for columns, slabs, staircases, windows and doors. However, with evolution of modernism, the use of the aforementioned elements and materials are fading away while the existing ones are deteriorating, lacking preservation. Adeyemo, (2020) emphasizes that cultural identity plays a crucial role in establishing uniqueness and local identity in the competitive global arena of contemporary architecture on the premise that culture is closely tied to the people who shaped it as such, it is a key determinant of identity. The conservation of traditional architecture holds significant importance, as it fosters a sense of identity and continuity for future generations amidst the rapid changes of the world (Umar *et al.*, 2019a). Therefore, it is important to identify and sustain the aesthetic elements in traditional architecture as this will help to establish and preserve local architectural identity of the Okun people.

Statement of the Research Problem

The recent inclination towards foreign influences with significant modernist elements in terms of building design, aesthetics, and materials, leads to a neglect of local building concepts and materials (Daugelaite & Grazuleviciute-vileniske, 2022). This disregard can be attributed to the influence of

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colonial masters and the modern trend of imposing new models and materials on traditional African architecture (Umar *et al.*, 2019b). The undeviating shortage of heritage buildings and their fading through time also necessitates the need to preserve heritage through maintenance and rehabilitation while imbuing lost elements into the construction of new ones. This implies that, there is a need for unique public buildings of local architecture and cultural potentials that is geared towards cultural heritage preservation and conservation.

Aim

The aim of the paper is to appraise cultural elements that reflect the rich heritage and traditions of the Okun people with the view to preserve the cultural heritage of the people.

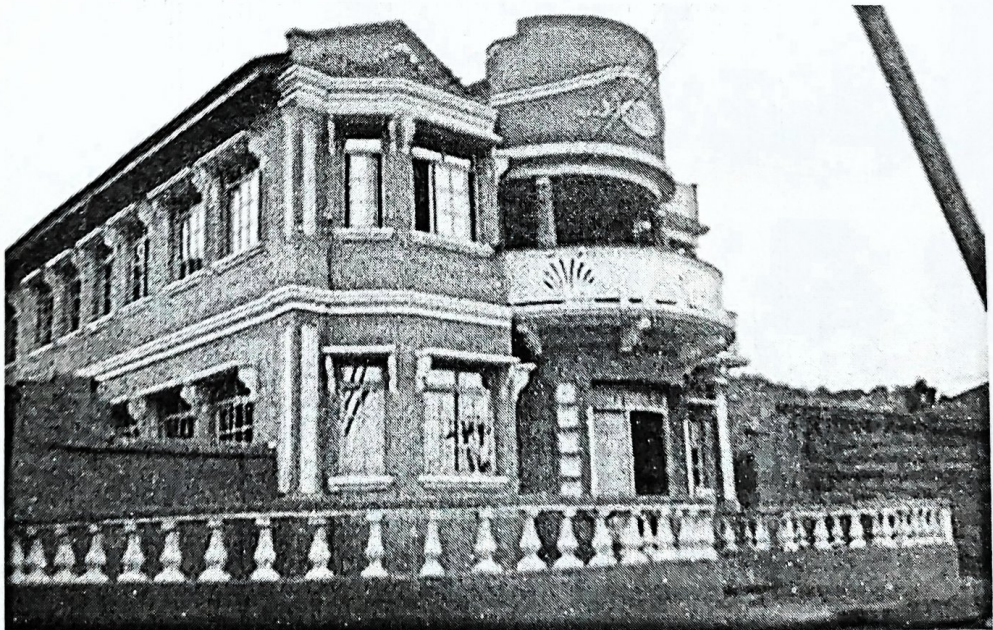
Literature Review

Architecture and Tradition

Architecture relies on the community's geography, cultures, traditions, manners, knowledge, and historical background (Koirala, 2021). According to Tubi (2020), the Okun-speaking people are believed to have migrated from Ile-Ife, and some claim their ancestral roots in old Oyo and other ancient cities. However, Nigerian architects and scholars unanimously agree that indigenous architecture thrives across the country's regions, reflecting diversity and richness (Okogwu, 2008; Lodson *et al.*, 2018). While indigenous architectural examples exist throughout Nigeria, numerous of such buildings are in disrepair and lack similar buildings succeeding it (Maina *et al.*, 2018).

Okun Traditional Architecture

Traditional architecture encompasses the culturally and historically contextualized design and construction of buildings, reflecting the social, economic, and cultural conditions of their era. It holds significance by fostering continuity, preserving heritage, fostering identity, and promoting a sense of belonging within the community (Nilson & Thorell, 2014). This involves understanding materials and their interactions, construction techniques, skilled artisans, available resources, and maintaining a sustainable approach that aligns with the region's identity. Plate I reveals the Oke-Mapo Villa in Kabba Kogi State which incorporates traditional elements such as patterns, lines and sculpted columns. It is also one of the oldest storey building in existence in the Study area.



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Plate I: Oke-Mapo Villa, Kabba Kogi State
Source: Author Fieldwork (2023)

According to Adeyemo (2020), traditional communities have coexisted harmoniously with nature for centuries, relying on locally available resources to cultivate their food and adapt their lifestyle; constructing buildings using materials found in their surroundings, employing techniques that aligned with the characteristics of these materials. Furthermore, Ejiga *et al.* (2012), asserted that, "the predominant materials used in African traditional building are; earth, stone, and straw which have independently and jointly been used, then, also skilfully applied." Each society possesses its distinctive architectural style, passed down through generations, aimed at addressing immediate housing needs (Umoru-Oke, 2010). As such, architectural decorative elements are integral to both the interior and exterior of traditional structures. They hold great significance, visually and technically, and occupy a prominent position. When restoring these traditional structures, it is crucial to select high-quality materials and stay informed about global trends to ensure superior results while adhering to rigorous standards, traditional arches, porches, blacksmithing, woodwork, ceiling and floors.



Plate II: A sculpted column used in Twins Hotel Kabba
Source: Author's fieldwork (2023)

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Incorporating decorative elements in modern construction will aid in preserving Okun important historical and architectural heritage as observed in Plate II above. Various building elements such as arches, columns porches, flooring, and ceiling can be employed to exhibit the cultural characteristic features of the Okun people through the use of decorative elements such as motifs (patterns and paintings), stone works, woodwork (carvings), and sculpture as revealed in Plate III. In addition, employing traditional building materials like bricks, and stones can establish a link to the past, while also promoting energy efficiency and sustainability because of its availability and friendliness with the environment (Onyegiri & Ugochukwu, 2016).

Traditional buildings were constructed using locally available resources, including stone, mud, and palm fronds. The Okun people also creatively used materials like mud ('amo') and thatch in their architecture, resulting in aesthetically pleasing structures that reflect the architectural merits of the region. Although few examples of earth/mud/brick architecture have survived over time, some monuments, shrines, and family houses still stand.

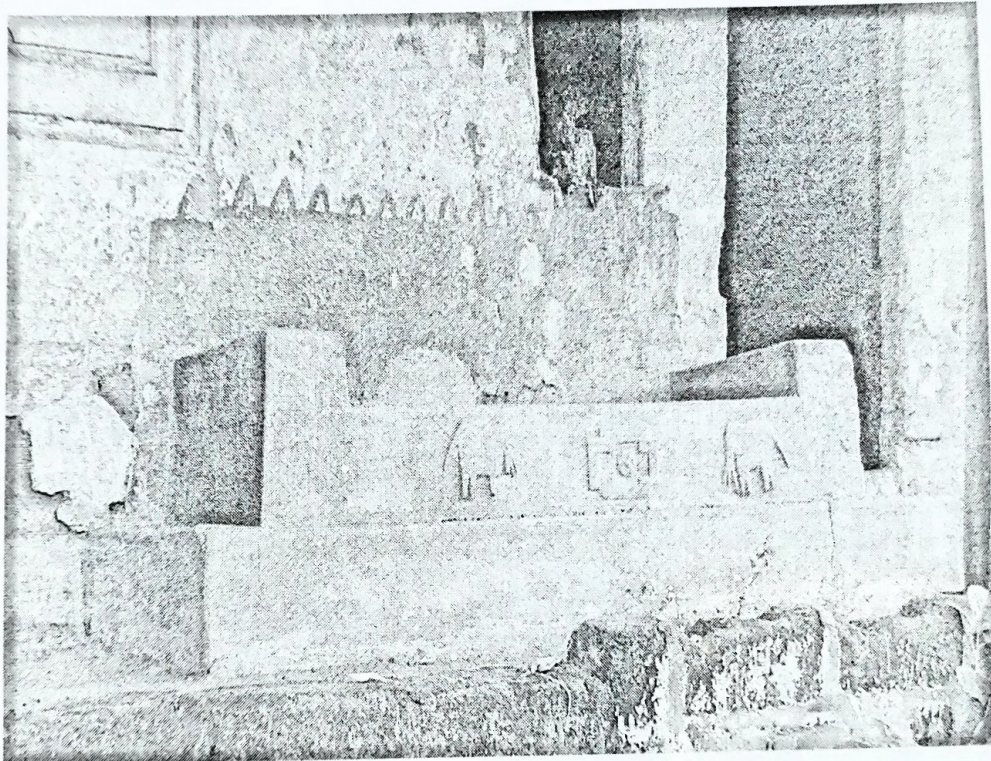


Plate III: Relief sculpture on a Chief's seat at Okedose
Source: Author Fieldwork (2023)

Okun Traditional Elements

The Okun architecture integrates traditional patterns and designs into contemporary settings showcasing highly aesthetics carved motifs on doors and roof supports as shown in Plate IV and Plate V. Merging of traditional arches and columns with modern architecture fosters a sense of historical coherence and heritage, while offering a distinct and lively aesthetic. The Okun architecture also employs the use of potteries for ornamentations because of its availability. The potsherds have inclusions of mica and are dark-brownish in colour, also of the same texture and colouration. They are all handmade wares both burnished and unburnished (Tubi, 2020).

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Plate IV: Sculpture and Carvings on entrance Door
Source: Author's fieldwork (2023)

Cloth costumes and other human-made and natural objects such as carved headpieces, bird feathers, palm fronds or sago-palm fibres, and iron gongs are also employed as decorative elements as shown in object paintings on a Shrine in Plate V. The harmonics effects generated by the ground colour, walls, and captivating brownish thatched roof contribute to the beauty of these decorative elements.

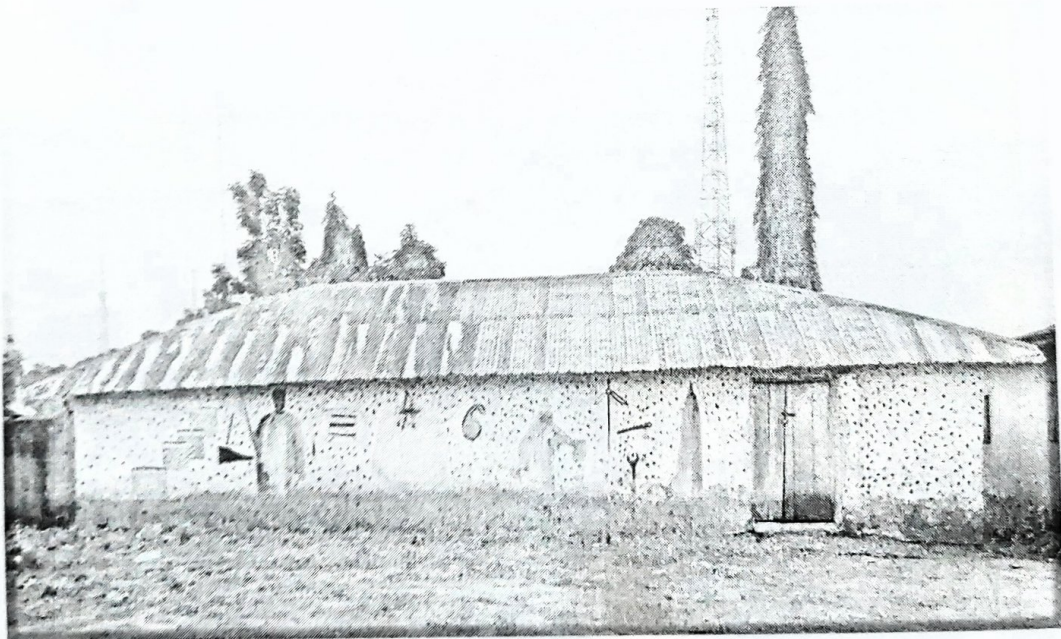


Plate V: Paintings on a Shrine
Source: Author's fieldwork (2023)

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The Okun people also use storytelling as a means of conveying their rich cultural heritage.



Plate VI: Pictorial Storytelling sketch on Kabba Development Union building
Source: Author's fieldwork (2023)

Research Methodology

The quantitative method uses a structured survey aligned with the study's aim via questionnaires which consists of 5-point likert scale questions. This is used to measure the opinions of respondents on how much they prefer and prioritise the various Okun traditional elements on buildings. The questionnaire was administered to indigenes, residents and professional in the arts, culture, history and building industry majorly of Okun descent. The questionnaires were hand-delivered to respondents within the study area. Also, electronic administration was utilized with the aid of Google forms through Whatsapp platforms in order to reach key stakeholders that were not around because of career and schooling.

Purposive Sampling was employed in the sample selection because it enables respondents that are likely to provide rich and detailed information to make their best contribution in answering the research questions. The sample size for the study was largely dependent on the population of Okun ethnic group which was projected to be 933,800 as such, the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size and qualtrics online calculator for sample size was employed using a confidence level of 95% and margin error of 5%. As a result, the minimum number of questionnaires needed to be sent out is 384 with an acceptable survey response rate of 30%. This implies that, an average of 30% valid and completely filled questionnaires responses must be returned for analysis. Hence, a minimum of 115 valid responses is needed for this survey, however, a valid response of 214 was analysed for this study.

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Relative importance refers to the proportionate contribution that each predictor makes to R², taking into account both its individual impact and its incremental effect when combined with other predictors (Johnson & LeBreton, 2004; Wood *et al.*, 2019). These methods are important in statistical analysis, as they allow researchers to determine the relative contribution of each predictor to the overall variance in the model. This information can be used to identify the most important predictors and to refine the model by removing less important predictors. As such, the Relative Importance Index (RII) method was used to determine the most important and preferred decorative elements for Okun public buildings. The RII method is a statistical tool used to determine the relative importance of different factors in a given study based on respondents' perceptions. In this case, the RII method was used to rank the design elements based on their importance and preference whilst also helping to verify the extent to which the measured variable can be integrated into Okun public buildings. Subsequently, descriptive analysis was done using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, and the findings depicted in tables and charts.

$$RII = \frac{\sum W}{A \times N} \quad (0 \leq RII \leq 1)$$

Where;

RII = Sum of weights (W₁ + W₂ + W₃ + W₄..... + W_n) / A x N

W = weights given to each attribute (that is, 1 to 5 where '1' is very low and '5' is very high).

A = highest weight (that is, 5 in this case)

N = total number of respondents

Results and Discussion of Findings

Respondent's response rate

Table 1 shows the figure of questionnaires administered and the response rate of the respondents. 120 printed questionnaires were distributed, out of which only 114 were completed and received back. Meanwhile, the same questionnaire was converted to Google form and the link sent to 300 individuals via Whatsapp to Okun indigenes who were not available physically due to schooling and relocation, out of which only 100 were filled completely and submitted. According to Mosa and Kalton (1971), the result of a survey could be considered as biased and of little value if the response was lower than 30-40%. However, a 51% total response rate was gotten and considered unbiased and adequate for the analysis carried out.

Table 1: Respondents' response rate

Location	Distribution (No) X	Returned (No) Y	% of response rate (Y/X*100)
Kabba	420	214	51%

Source: Author (2023)

Demography Information of Respondents

Table 2 shows the demography information of the respondents in the study. As revealed, there are 133 male respondents (62.1%) and 81 female respondents (37.9%). While 49.5% are within the age range of 15-29 years, 32.2% within 30-44years, 15.4% within 45-59years and the remaining 2.8% are 60years and above. As well, 7% were architects, 5.1% builders, 3.7% urban planners, 15.9% are in the engineering field, 26.2% falls within the art and craft industry while 42.1% belongs to other professions like teaching, public administration and banking. 16.8% of the respondents have been in practice for less than a year, 39.7% for at least 1 to 5 years, 19.2% for 6-10 years, 13.1% for 11-15 years and 11.2% have been in practice for over 16years. The implication of the above for

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the study is that, they can provide accurate and valid information as regards the research objectives in relation to their age, profession and wealth of experience.

Table 2: Demography Information of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	133	62.1
Female	81	37.9
Age		
15-29	106	49.5
30-44	69	32.2
45-59	33	15.4
60years above	6	2.8
Profession		
Architects	15	7.0
Builders	11	5.1
Urban Planners	8	3.7
Engineers	34	15.9
Music/Art/Historian/Craft/Culture	56	26.2
Other	90	42.1
Length of service in Profession		
<1year	36	16.8
1-5years	85	39.7
6-10years	41	19.2
11-15years	28	13.1
16years above	24	11.2

Source: Author (2023)

Analysis of Okun Traditional Elements to be displayed on Public Buildings

Relative Importance Index (RII) was used to rate the traditional element prioritised for Okun public buildings so as to be able to determine which is most important and preferred. In addition, it also helps in verifying the extent to which the measured variable can be integrated in Okun public buildings. As observed in Table 3, trees and flowers were ranked first, while murals was second followed by stone mosaic decorations. Relief sculptures were ranked least. This implies that, trees and flowers were the most important and preferred traditional elements, while relief sculptures were ranked least important and preferred. This gives insight into the most important and preferred traditional elements for Okun public buildings ensuring that the most important and preferred traditional elements are incorporated.

Table 3: Relative Importance Index (RII) of Okun Traditional Elements to be displayed on Public Buildings

Variable	VL (1)	L (2)	M (3)	H (4)	VH (5)	ΣW	RII	Rank
Trees and Flowers decoration	6	13	66	59	70	816	0.762617	1
Murals on walls	5	15	110	42	42	743	0.694393	2
Stone Mosaic Decorations	8	22	84	62	38	742	0.693458	3

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Use of Traditional Materials	8	19	100	58	29	723	0.675701	4
Sculptures/Sculpted	4	29	92	61	28	722	0.674766	5
Columns	6	19	109	57	23	714	0.667290	6
Courtyard in buildings	5	26	110	44	29	708	0.661682	7
Relief Sculptures								

Note: VL=Very low, L= Low, M= Moderate, H= High and VH= Very high
Source: Author's Fieldwork (2023)

How Okun Cultural Heritage can be integrated in Public Buildings

Using RII to determine how Okun cultural heritage can be integrated in public buildings, it is revealed in Table 4 that, pictorial storytelling ranked first and object paintings ranked second while, abstracts designs and patterned murals ranked third and fourth respectively. Consequently, Okun people do not only want their cultural history and heritage to be pass down orally but also in pictures. This implies that the use of pictorial storytelling is a highly effective method of conveying cultural experiences and values. This method is particularly effective because it encompasses all aspects of oral folklore, which is a key aspect of many cultures. On the other hand, patterned murals, abstract designs, and object paintings were ranked as moderate, which suggests that they may not be as effective in conveying cultural experiences and values. This can help to create a design that is more meaningful and relevant to the local community, and can help to strengthen the identity of the community.

Table 4: Relative Importance Index (RII) of How Okun Cultural Heritage can be integrated in Public Buildings

Variable	VL (1)	L (2)	M (3)	H (4)	VH (5)	ΣW	RII	Rank
Pictorial Storytelling	4	19	76	67	48	778	0.727103	1
Object Paintings	5	26	84	66	33	738	0.689720	2
Abstracts Designs	8	21	102	56	27	715	0.668224	3
Patterned Murals	7	23	114	51	19	694	0.648598	4

Note: VL=Very low, L= Low, M= Moderate, H= High and VH= Very high
Source: Author (2023)

The Relative Importance Index (RII) for the inclusion of traditional building materials on public buildings as presented in Table 5 reveals that bricks and stone mosaic design ranked first and second respectively while thatch was ranked least. As a result bricks have the highest preference to be included as traditional building materials on public buildings while stone, wood and stone mosaic designs were considered moderate. Low preference was given to bamboo and thatch. This implies that, the use of bamboo and thatch is not preferred while stone, wood, and stone mosaic designs are considered moderate in preference. The use of bricks as the primary building material for the public buildings might be considered, while also incorporating stone, wood, and stone mosaic designs in a moderate manner. The use of bamboo and thatch can be avoided or minimized.

Table 5: RII for preference of inclusion of traditional building materials on public buildings

Variable	VL (1)	L (2)	M (3)	H (4)	VH (5)	ΣW	RII	Rank
Bricks	3	15	89	72	35	763	0.713084	1
Stone Mosaic design	9	24	80	71	30	731	0.683178	2

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Stone	5	29	102	54	24	705	0.658879	3
Wood	10	32	105	50	17	674	0.629907	4
Bamboo	13	55	88	47	11	630	0.588785	5
Thatch	10	64	101	29	10	607	0.56729	6

Note: VL=Very low, L= Low, M= Moderate, H= High and VH= Very high
Source: Author (2023)

Factors preventing people from adding cultural elements to their building

Table 6 shows that, majority of the respondents (43%) agrees that religion is a major factor preventing people from adding cultural elements to their buildings followed by civilization (36.9%), lack of adequate local skills for cultural element usage (8.4), ignorance (6.5%), and globalization (4.2%).

Table 6: Factors preventing people from adding cultural elements to their building

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Religion	94	43.9
Globalization	9	4.2
Civilization	79	36.9
Ignorance	14	6.5
Lack of adequate local skills for cultural element usage	18	8.4
Total	214	100.0

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2023)

Impact of Inclusion of Cultural elements on public buildings

The five-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree) was used to calculate the mean score (MS) for each Impact of Inclusion of Cultural elements on public buildings which was then used to determine its relative ranking in ascending order of agreement. Table 7 shows that, promotion of culture (MS = 4.30) ranked highest as agreed upon by the respondents.

Table 7: Impact of Inclusion of Cultural elements on public buildings

Variable	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)	Mean Score (MS)	Decision
Development of Unique architecture language	9(4%)	11(5%)	34(16%)	119(56%)	41(19%)	3.81	Agree
Development of architecture responsive to its location	3(1%)	13(6%)	33(15%)	115(54%)	50(23%)	3.92	Agree
Further acceptance of Afrocentric Architecture	3(1%)	9(4%)	52(24%)	117(55%)	33(15%)	3.79	Agree

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Preservation of Cultural craft and Heritage	6(3%)	12(6%)	31(14%)	75(35%)	90(42%)	4.08	Strongly Agree
Promotion of Culture	3(1%)	7(3%)	13(6%)	90(42%)	101(47%)	4.30	Strongly Agree

Mean score range: Strongly disagree (0.01 to 1.00); disagree (1.01 to 2.00); Neutral (2.01 to 3.00); Agree (3.01 to 4.00) and Strongly agree (4.01 to 5.00)

Source: Author (2023)

RII was employed to measure the impact of including Okun cultural elements in public building designs as perceived by the respondents. Promotion of culture and preservation of cultural craft and heritage was rated first and second respectively by the respondents while further acceptance of the afro centric architecture was ranked least as observed from Table 8 below.

Table 8: RII for Impact of Inclusion of Cultural elements on public buildings

Variable	ΣW	RII	Rank
Promotion of Culture	921	0.860748	1
Preservation of Cultural craft and Heritage	873	0.815888	2
Development of architecture responsive to its location	838	0.783178	3
Development of Unique architecture language	814	0.760748	4
Further acceptance of Afrocentric Architecture	810	0.757009	5

Source: Author (2023)

Conclusion

The study on the appraisal of Okun traditional elements in Public Buildings in Kabba, Kogi State is significant in preserving the cultural heritage of the Okun people. The study reveals the traditional and decorative elements used on buildings in Okun land, consequently depicting the Okun architecture. Incorporating culturally significant elements such as bricks, stones and pictorial story telling that reflect the local identity promotes community engagement and preserves the cultural heritage of the Okun people.

Recommendation

Architects and urban planners should consider the cultural heritage of the people when designing public buildings and the use of traditional building elements should be encouraged to preserve the cultural heritage of the people.

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