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MULTIDISCIPLINARY ACADEMIC CONFERENCE ON
SUB-SAHARA AFRICAN GROWTH IN MILLENNIUM
ERA, JUNE 30, 2022



EDITORS:
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**ON DELVING INTO ISSUES AND RESOURCES
FOR SUB-SAHARA AFRICAN GROWTH IN
THE MILLENNIUM ERA.**



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Published Date: July 5, 2022

Foreword

Dear Guests,

The Interdisciplinary Academic Conference on Sub-Sahara Growth in Millennium Era is multidisciplinary activities for academicians and institutions. This conferences is now wellknown as interdisciplinary academic events and the number of paper(s) submissions and attendees at its rises. The conference promote the development and dissemination of theoretical knowledge, conceptual research, and professional knowledge through conferences activities, the conference proceedings books and abstracts books. The focus of this conference is to create and disseminate knowledge about new developments in various field. This moment, the multidisciplinary academic conference is organized by Timbou-Africa Academic Publication collaboratively in University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State. This Conference has received almost 150 applications. The Conference Academic Advisory Board has accepted approximately 35 papers to be presented in multidisciplinary academic. We would like to thank Prof. Prof. S. H. Ahmad for his supports of organizing this Conference. We would also like to thank all participants who have presented their academic works in Multidisciplinary Academic Conference 2022, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State and especially to our distinguished guests and keynote speakers for their collaboration and contribution for the success of this Interdisciplinary Academic Conference 2022. We wish you best.

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ECO-RESORT: TOWARDS PROMOTING YORUBA ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTIC IN OFFA, KWARA STATE

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Abstract

Ecotourism has become one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry, growing annually at 10-50% worldwide. Nigeria is endowed with several resources and cultural heritage of international importance which can serve for sustainable tourism development. Without cultural heritage, there would not be any eco-tourism. A survey carried out in some rural communities revealed that Yoruba architectural characteristics are deeply-rooted in historical/cultural heritage but suffers either partial or total neglect. This has affected the tourism value of the country. This paper seeks to examine Yoruba architectural characteristic with a view to promote cultural symbolism in tourism buildings in Offa, Kwara State. A descriptive survey method was adopted for the research and a structured observation schedule with selected variables focusing on Yoruba Architectural element/identities was utilized. Data obtained were documented and analysed using Microsoft excel package, 2016. Data presented for this study shows different Yoruba architectural elements adopted in various Yoruba monumental buildings examined. Findings from the study reveal that most architectural elements have significant values that can be exhibited as a tourism product but are either abandoned or acculturated due to poor values for traditional architecture. The study recommends that professionals in the built-environment from time-to-time adopt Yoruba Architectural styles, elements and characters to promote cultural values and also serves as a great source of eco-tourism product for the country.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Sustainable tourism, Cultural heritage, Symbolism, Traditional architecture

Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world (Huang *et.al*, 2018). As a vital approach for poverty mitigation, tourism provides economic benefits and job opportunities for local residents (Lee and Jan, 2019). However, due to an intensification in tourism's adverse impacts, the sustainable tourism development has been extensively discussed (Agyeiwaah *et al.*, 2017; Lee and Jan, 2019). The United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) proclaims that sustainable tourism should include socio-cultural, economic and environmental features for all forms of tourism and destinations (UNWTO, 2019). The UNWTO advocates that the development of sustainable tourism is the obligation of all policy makers and industries in the tourism sector (UNWTO, 2017). However, Ecotourism is an environmentally responsible and sustainable form of a visit to nature-based sites (Oladeji and Fatukasi, 2017). The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defined ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education (TIES, 2015). Ecotourism forms an atmosphere for an interdependent relationship between locals and visitors which offers a prospect for an exchange of idea and culture. Ecotourism can also aid a local community to revive its cultural values within an area (Reimer and Walter, 2013).

There is no doubt that Nigeria ranks among the most privileged nations of the world in terms of endowment of tourism resources (Bello *et al.*, 2017). Across the 36 states plus the federal capital territory there are over 250 ethnic groups; over 420 dialects; and over 500 tourists' attraction validating Nigeria's rich cultural diversity and tourism resources (Ogundele, 2014). It is also arguable that the measure of revenue that a society can amass through its culture can be immense if resourcefully tapped into. By this clarification, Nigeria can maximize its tourism value through a rejuvenation of its cultural heritage which is capable of contributing immensely to the modern world culture by projecting African cultures and values (Chidozie *et al.*, 2014).

Overview on Yoruba Architecture

In recent years, there have been a growing interest in traditional architecture with prospect for its adoption in contemporary design. These interest on traditional architecture is based on social values and cultural relevance (Ahmed, 2003). The Yoruba people lay claim to a primordial heritage. Their art works and music are highly admired throughout the western world and the former are on display in many museums. However, their architecture has been relatively underrated.

Nonetheless, the Yoruba people have their peculiar dwellings, which they developed to suit their lifestyles. Researchers such as (Vlach, 1984) and (Osasona, 2005) have studied Yoruba architecture and identified major types such as; courtyard house, unit house, the

row house, the front-hall type, and Afro-Brazilian houses (Sonaiya, 2008), part of which are shown in figure 2.1. The method of construction of these houses are similar. Although the wattle and daub technique were originally used, hand-moulded earth courses later replaced it in traditional Yoruba houses.

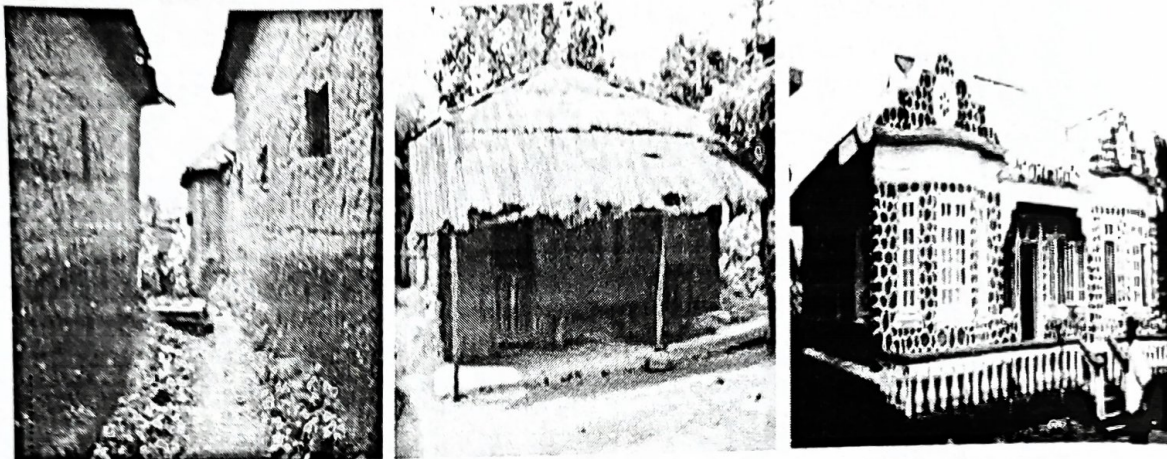


Fig 2.1: A Yoruba neighbourhood, a Row house with hall, and an Afro-Brazilian bungalow. (Source; Sonaiya and Dincyurek, 2009)

Characteristic of Yoruba architecture

Yoruba architectural features can be traced down from the worship places otherwise known as shrine. These are places such as carved areas around rocks, trees, plants, lakes, rivers, and streams which are roughly undefined (Jolaoso and bello, 2017). The earliest shrines then were erected out of natural materials rather than man-made. They were embellished with carved objects such as totem poles, caryatids, carved beams, metal works and so many more. At a particular period, shrines were made of mud like residences with the effect that ornaments became a distinguishing mark of traditional structures in Yoruba land (Osasona, 2016).

The Yoruba traditional Architecture draws its form and characteristic from styles and ornamentations engraved on shrines. Buildings were largely rectangular in form which allows for attachment of functional room spaces clustering around large courtyards and central corridors referred to as "Oodede" with single entrance, places for cooking, craft and art work, folktales to form a compound(s) settings called Agboole, for their communal, socio-cultural and religious events (Sonaiya and Dincyurek, 2009). The spatial layout to these traditional abodes is unique and divided into three regions: the entry, the heart and the back (Sonaiya, 2008) as shown in Figure 2.2.

- a. Entry: front yard, veranda, entry corridor, parlour(s)
- b. Heart: courtyard, hall or day room, sleeping rooms
- c. Back: backyard, conveniences, kitchen and store

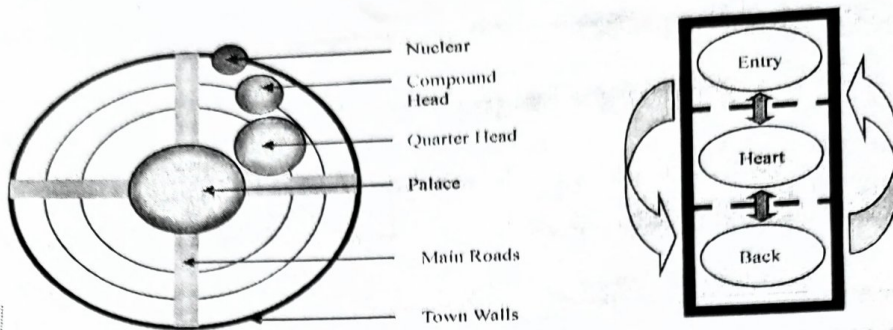


Figure 2.2: Spatial arrangement of Traditional Yoruba Town, and Traditional Yoruba House settings (Source; Sonaiya, 2008)

Yoruba architecture also integrates indigenous building materials such as like mud/earth bricks, bamboo, wood, thatch, palm fronds) for their buildings. These are ingeniously used in the construction of walls, ceiling and roofs, ornamentations and furniture.

Yoruba art and craft

Yorùbá traditional art is a product of a well-structured cultural and religious system (Abiodun,1994). It ranges from high abstraction, to symbolism and realism which is centred around “Orisa” (diety) as affirmed by Okediji (1997). According to Akande (2020), Yoruba indigenous pattern and symbols are entrenched in the ontological believe of deities. As such most sculptural images depict head of different gods which are carved and painted at shrines, palaces, communal places and at homes. An examples of Yoruba Art and Craft is illustrated in Figure 2.3 which shows a seated king and his wife. This statue is used as wooden sculptural column called the Opo, or verandah post which is illustrated in Figure 2.4. It is one of the most imposing architectural ornaments devised by Yoruba sculptors.



Figure 2.3: Sculptural image of a King, his queen and children (Source: Okediji, 1997).

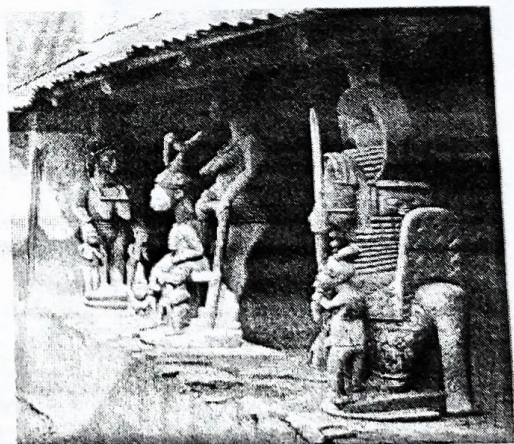


Figure 2.4: Sculptural image used as a structural column in Yoruba traditional building. (Source: Okediji, 1997).

Similarly, the art of design in Yoruba took off from craft of weaving which is believed to be one of the oldest craft developed by man (Williams, 1998). Symbols also served as most essential need along with the trait of culture and ontological beliefs of deity (Okediji, 1997). An example of this is Ogboni Chief's Textile (known as Iro Ogboni). This luxurious textile is worn by an elder of the Ogboni society during vital ceremonies, including the coronation or burial of kings. The Ogboni society is a council of community chiefs and officials that is committed to the governance of its local constituency. This textile, a handwoven wrapper adorned with embroidered designs, embodies the taste, power, and dignity that are associated with this august group. Figure 2.5 shows motif demonstrating the supportive role of Ogboni to the king. This symbol showcase Yoruba art in relation to religious ideology.

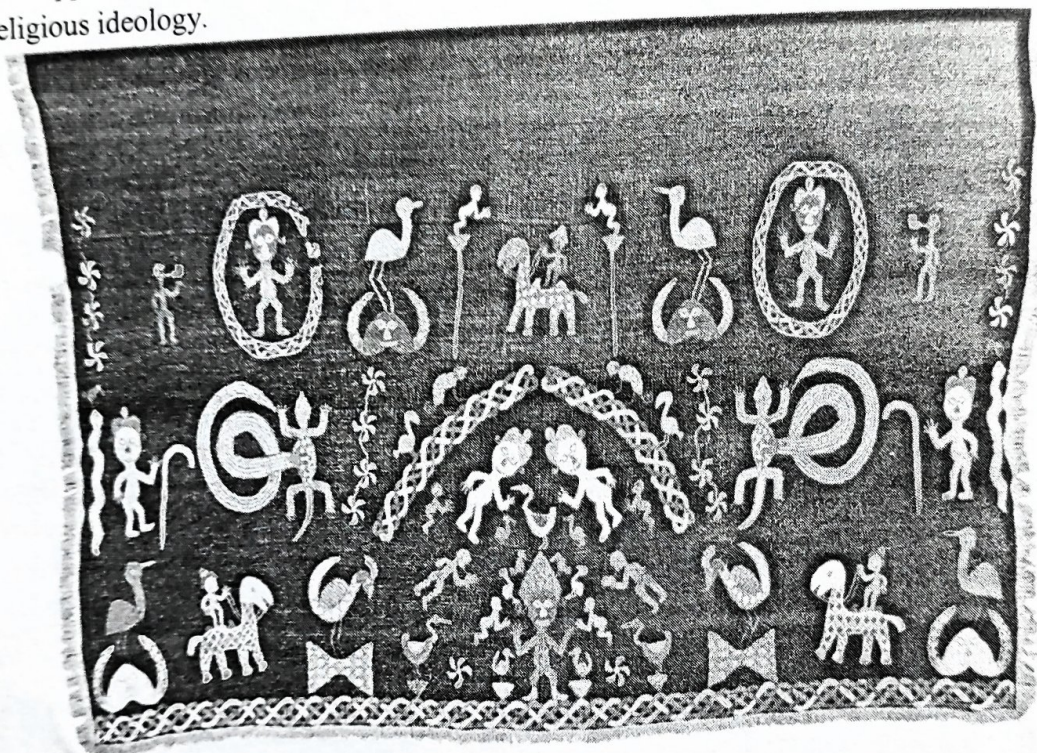


Figure 2.5: Sculptural image used as a structural column in Yoruba traditional building. (Source: Okediji, 1997).

As regards other areas of ornamentation applications by the Yoruba, this ethnic group is endowed with a whole world of talents such as weavers, potters, goldsmiths, brass casters, carpenters, and carvers (Williams, 1998). These artisans craft out patterns, symbols and artefacts that defines Yoruba art and craft. An application of this ornamentation is seen in Figure 2.6 which show sculptural ornament of the building façade. This is achieved using mud which is a traditional building material.

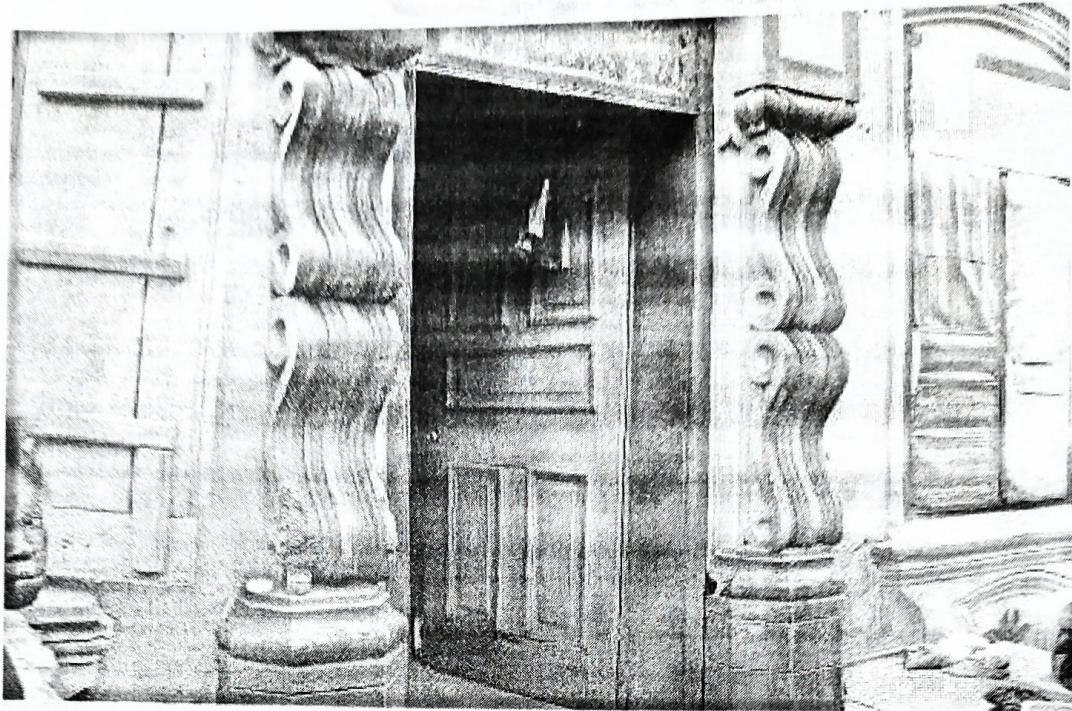


Figure 2.6: Application of ornaments on traditional Yoruba building
(Source: Jolaoso *et al.*, 2017)

Yoruba traditional art can be regarded as a mark of cultural sustainability since it maintained its values against the foreign popular common art practice. The traditional art also combines the embellishments on shrines and traditional places of worship at the time into its idea of pattern and symbols. The infusion of pattern into Yoruba art, later witnessed additions of unique symbols which elevated Yoruba cultural values (Ojo, 2004). Among the symbols adopted are animals and plant motifs which are incorporated into different visual elements. The traditional art continually inspires and sustain Yoruba culture, as well as manifesting visual creativity.

Methodology

Study area

The study area is Offa which is located in South-East of Ilorin, the capital of Kwara State of Nigeria. The town is situated on longitude 500E and latitude 800N. Offa is situated on a gentle Plateau, which is about 1429 feet (408.9m) above sea level. It is regarded geographically as a “gap town” and has always been a major Railway Deport Station. Offa, the headquarters of Offa Local Government is one of the 16 Local Government Areas in Kwara State (Rahman, 2009). The language spoken by people of Offa is Yoruba.

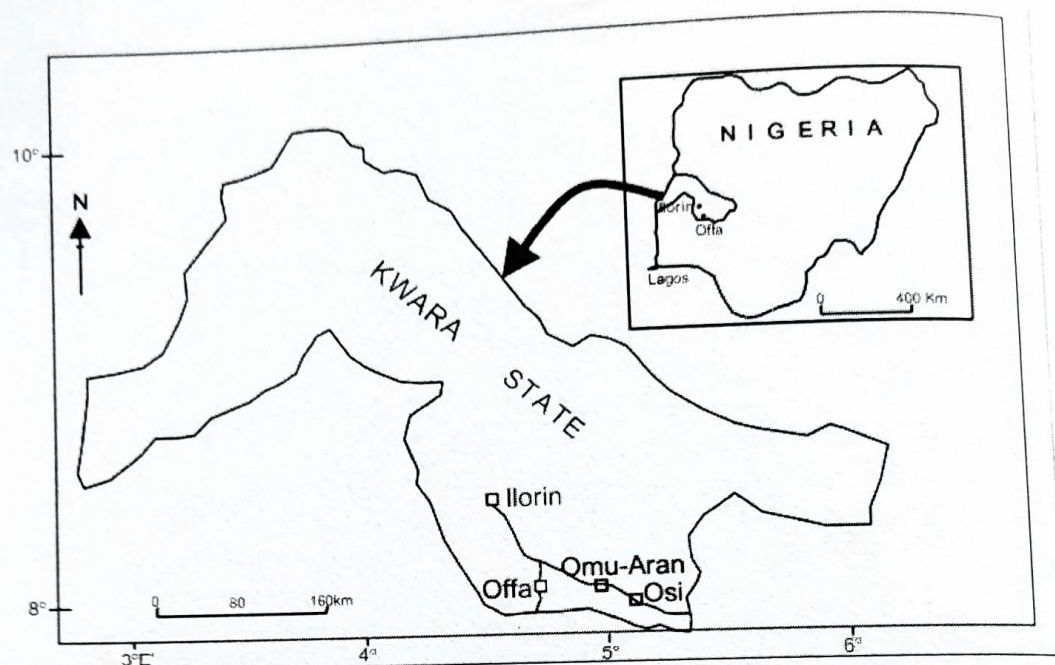


Figure 3.1; Kwara State map showing the study area (Adelana et al., 2005)

Research Methods

The study adopts a descriptive research method. A structured observation schedule was used to obtain relevant data for the study from ten (10) building which shows traditional relevance in Offa, Kwara state. The paper aimed at providing information on the level of availability of Yoruba traditional elements on buildings in Offa, with a view to promote Yoruba architectural element and cultural values. The variables adopted for the study building configuration based on courtyard, building ornamentation, and traditional building materials.

The building configuration assessed based on courtyard include; traditional square configuration with courtyard, traditional square configuration without courtyard, village/square settings with central courtyard, radial settings with central court yard. The following element were also observed under traditional building ornamentation; sculpted columns, sculptures, traditional painting, cornice around openings, patterns and symbols. Also, mud, stones, thatch, bamboo, wood and bricks were elements observed traditional natural building materials.

Discussion of Result

The study adopted variable to show Yoruba traditional elements within Offa, Kwara State. The data gathered was documented and analyzed using Microsoft Excel Package 2016 pro version VL2021plus and the result was further developed into tables before it was

graphically represented in charts as shown in the paper. A 5point Likert scale with the scale ranging from 0 - 4 were used as shown below;
 0 - Non availability; 1- Inadequate; 2 - Fair; 3 - Adequate; 4 -Very Adequate.
 The result is discussed under the three variables adopted for the study assessment.

Building configuration based on courtyard

Courtyard is a familiar concept with traditional architecture and can determine building configuration or layout. 50% building selected for observation adopt traditional square (compound) settings central with courtyard, 30% uses square settings with courtyard 20% utilize square settings without courtyard. While none uses circular or radial building layout. The result is show in figure 4.1 below;

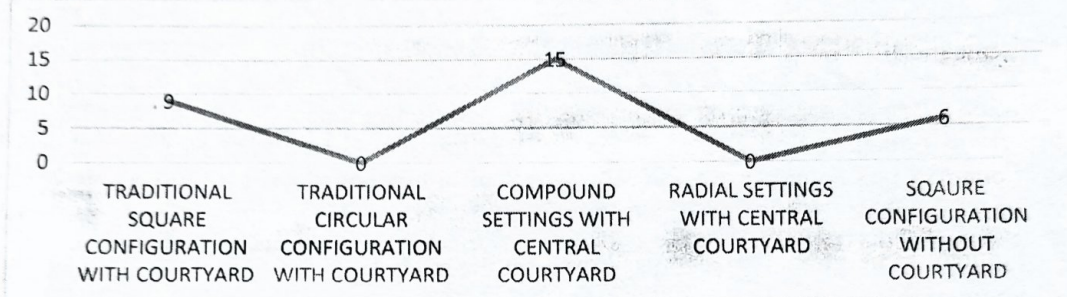


Figure 4.1: Building configuration based on courtyard

Plate I show a traditional compound setting adopted at Olofa’s palace. This allows for communal meetings within the palace. Plate II also shows the front courtyard arrangement at the first palace in Offa which is a heritage site. Each plate shows the essence of courtyard in eco-tourism site/destination.

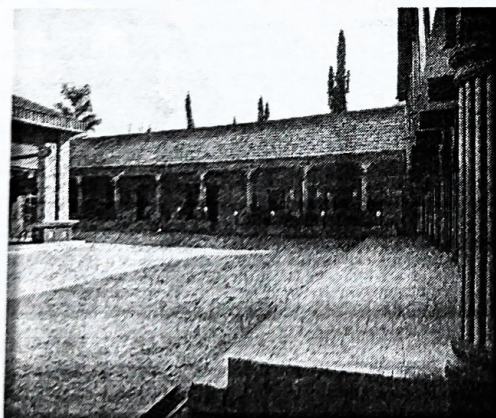


Plate I: Traditional square (compound) settings central with courtyard

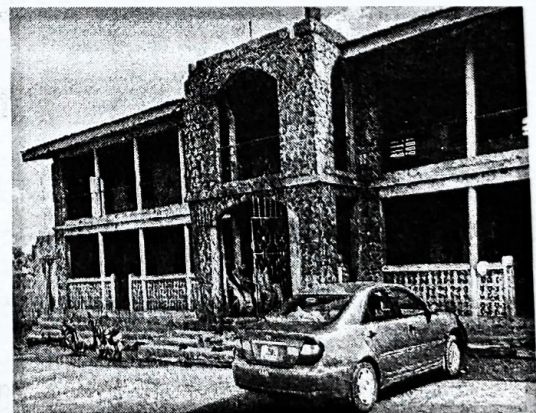


Plate II: showing traditional square (compound) settings central with courtyard

Traditional building ornamentation

Traditional building ornamentation has been one of the ways Yorubas beautify their buildings. They use elements such as; sculpted columns, sculptures, traditional painting, cornice around openings, patterns and symbols. The research conducted shows 16% of the buildings assessed utilises sculpted columns, 5% added sculptures to their buildings, 34% still adopts traditional paintings, 36% beautify their buildings with cornice around building openings, while 9% adopts patterns and symbols as shown in figure 4.2 below;

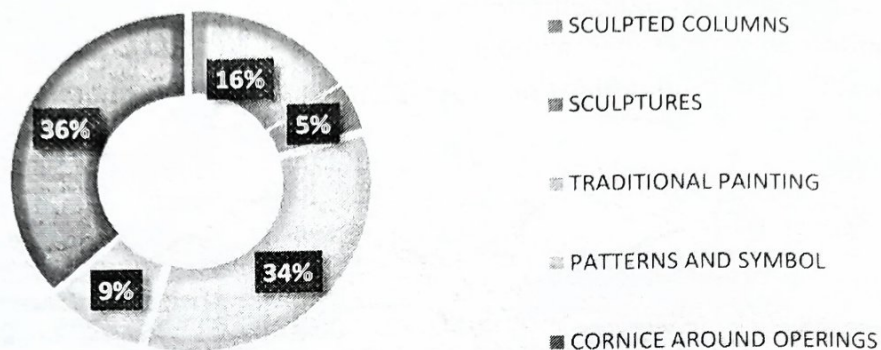


Figure 4.2: traditional ornaments adopted at the study area

Some of the ornaments highlighted above were adopted as shown in the following plates. Plate III shows a sculpted column which utilized at one of Offa chief residence; Shaawo compound. Plate IV showing ornamented doors with wooden design at the great Oba Keji Olu-Gbense palace (Olofa's first palace). The carved wood design displays the name of Oba Olu-Gbense which is well engraved with symbolic patterns. Plate V displays the statue of Okin at the entrance of Olofa palace which symbolize the heritage of Offa people as they are known as 'Iyeru-okin'. And plate VI shows ornamental cornice design around doors and window openings at Oloya's compound, Offa.

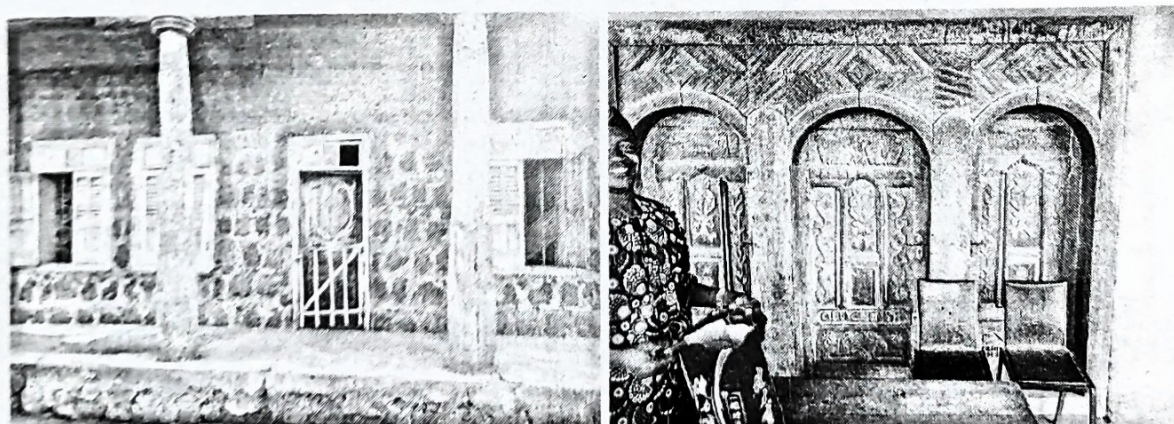


Plate III: showing the use of sculpted column Plate IV: showing patterns on doors



Plate V: Sculpted Dkin in front of Olofa's palace

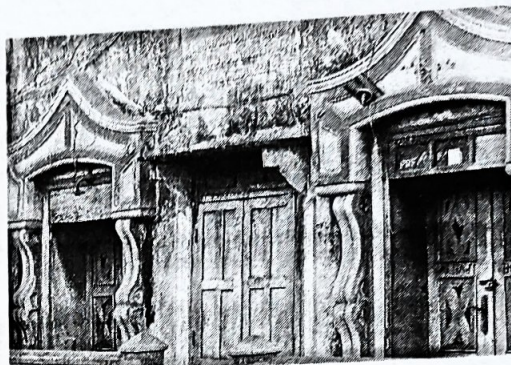


Plate VI: Cornice design around doors and windows openings.

Natural building materials

Traditional architecture utilises natural building materials for its construction and finishes. As such it utilises building materials such as; bricks, wood, thatch, bamboo, stone and mud. The research conducted on buildings with heritage values shows 2% of the buildings uses bricks, 38% uses wood, 35% utilizes mud for walls and ornamentation, courtyard, 25% uses stones for walls and beautification, while none uses thatch and bamboo. The result is show in figure 4.3 below;

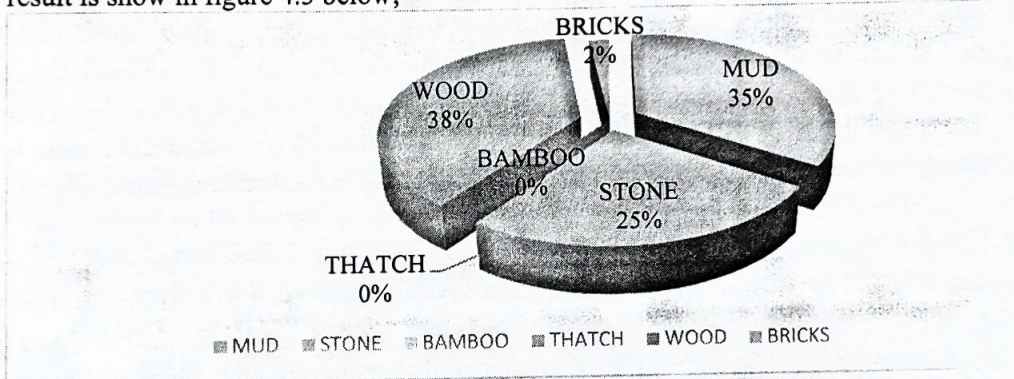


Figure 4.3: Natural building materials adopted at the selected buildings.

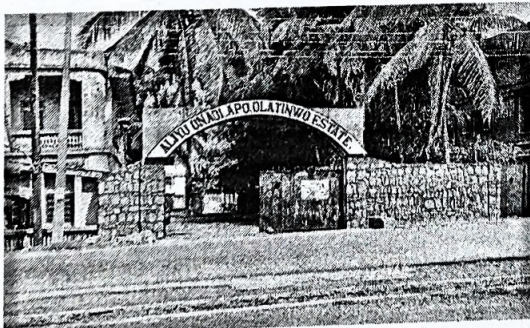


Plate VII: Estate gate design with stone walls.

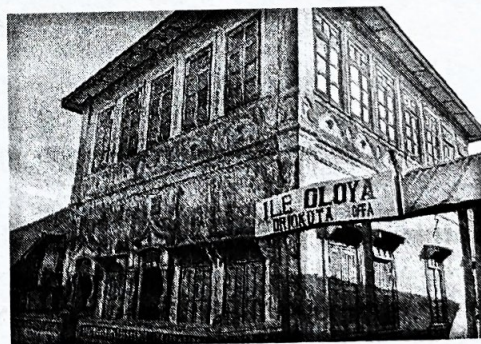


Plate VIII: storey building built with mud

Yoruba traditional buildings have utilised eco-friendly building materials which are locally sourced. Plate VII shows an ancient Olatinwo's estate in Offa with its entrance gate built with mud blocks and finished with stones. Also, plate VIII shows Baale Oloya's compound house at Bulala's junction Offa, built with mud and well furnished with traditional ornaments that can promote Yoruba architectural character.

Discussion of Findings

Yoruba Architectural elements when properly utilized has great eco-tourism potentials that will promote cultural values of the Yoruba people. Findings from the study shows that most of the buildings adopt a traditional compound setting with central courtyard which is a very sustainable approach as it ensures appropriate circulation and cross ventilation of the functional space within the building. Courtyard design which is one of the Yoruba architectural elements can be adopted in eco-tourism sites and well furnished with Yoruba architectural ornaments.

Ornaments peculiar to Yoruba architecture which are well utilized according to this study includes; cornice around openings, sculpted columns and traditional paintings. Other ornamental elements which are not well utilized but have eco-tourism values includes; sculptures, patterns and symbols. Also, wood and mud are the major natural building materials utilized according to the study. This is due to their availability and can be locally sourced cheaply. Other materials used based on the study are; stone, bamboo, and thatch. These building materials are eco-friendly and can be refined, processed and treated to be utilized at tourist destinations to promote Yoruba local and eco building materials.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the research findings of the study, it was concluded that Yoruba architecture has great cultural tourism potentials and building elements that can be adopted or fused into contemporary building forms. These architectural elements are aesthetical pleasing when properly utilized and will help maintain the cultural values of an area. This will help motivate cultural artist, craftsmen, weavers and others to creatively make genuine Yoruba art and craft elements that can be showcase for eco-tourism.

The study recommends that professionals in the built-environment from time-to-time adopt Yoruba Architectural styles, elements and characters in eco-resort design/buildings to promote cultural elements. Courtyard configuration forms should be utilized in design of tourist site to showcase attributes of Yoruba traditional architecture. Moreso, ornamentation peculiar to Yoruba architecture such as; sculpted columns, sculptures, traditional painting, cornice around openings, patterns and symbols should be re-introduced to contemporary eco-tourism buildings. And likewise; the use of locally sourced natural building materials on eco-tourism sites. These will not only boost Yoruba

cultural values/heritage and but will also serves as a great source of eco-tourism product for the country at large.

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