



Promoting The Cultural Heritage of Western Region of Nigeria Through Incorporating *Aso-Oke* Fabrics to Graduation Gown in Tertiary Institutions

AKINMOLA, Ebunola Arinola

Department of Textiles Design Technology, School of Environmental Technology, The Federal University of Technology, Akure

Corresponding Author: AKINMOLA, Ebunola Arinola

ABSTRACT: Aso-Oke is made from cotton and is branded by sensational colours with elaborate designs, a type of hand-woven fabric that is native to the Yoruba people in Nigeria. There are numerous reasons that points to why Nigerian universities should embrace the use of Aso-Oke fabrics as part of their academic gowns. The sustainability and incorporating of Aso-Oke into graduation gowns in Nigerian tertiary institutions is a promising approach to promoting culture and individuality among the target graduate population in southwest Nigeria. The research surveyed 358 Western tertiary institution graduates in Nigeria in order to assess the acceptance of incorporating Aso-Oke into graduation gowns. The study aimed to identify the level of acceptance and creative incorporation of Aso-Oke with graduation gown material in western Nigerian tertiary institutions. The research employed a descriptive statistics technique using frequencies, percentages; inferential statistical techniques such as mean analysis, chi-square, and ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. Results obtained from the focus group shows that the Aso-Oke gown is culturally endowed and is preferred to be added to conventional gowns. The integration of the Aso-Oke gown at graduation ceremonies allow future graduates the ability to express their cultural and traditional roots through their academic journey, promoting cultural uniqueness and telling others of their cherished traditions and cultures. The study recommended incorporating Aso-Oke with graduation gown in Nigerian tertiary institutions as a means of celebrating Nigerian culture and preserving it for future generations among the targeted population of Nigerian tertiary institution graduates.

KEYWORDS: Aso-Oke, Gown, Graduation, incorporating, Institution.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a rising drift towards the use of Aso-Oke fabrics as graduation gowns in tertiary institutions within the Western region of Nigeria (Oladele and Onakoya 2019). The use of Aso-Oke fabrics as graduation gowns has flashed a debate on their acceptability and artistic use in the formal setting of graduation ceremonies as noted by Alamu (2017). While some see it as a creative way of promoting the Nigerian heritage and culture (Oluokun, 2018), others argue that it may not be appropriate for such formal settings as highlighted by Adeyinka and Olaiya (2020). With this issue at hand, it was important to carry out research to discover the attitudes and perceptions of important stakeholders towards the use of Aso-Oke fabrics as graduation gowns (Thomas and Olayiwola, 2018).



Fig 1: Urbanstax aso- oke
(Source: Urbanstex)

Aso-Oke is a traditional Nigerian fabric that is known for its beautiful and intricate designs as seen in figure 1. It is primarily worn during special occasions and events such as weddings, coronations, and other acclaimed cultural ceremonies. However, in recent

times, there has been an increased interest in using Aso-Oke fabrics as a graduation gown in tertiary institutions in western Nigeria. The use of Aso-Oke fabrics for graduation gowns has become a popular trend among tertiary institutions in western Nigeria (Sanusi, 2019). The trend is driven by the desire to promote African culture and identity, as well as to celebrate the students' academic achievement. Aso-Oke fabrics are known for their quality, durability, and elegance, which make them an ideal material for graduation gowns, (Faleye, 2018).



Fig 2: Modern Aso-Oke
(Source: Deola Sagoe (instagram/deolasagoe))

The use of Aso-Oke fabrics for graduation gowns has been found to increase the acceptability and creativity of graduates. It fosters a sense of pride and identity, creating a unique and memorable experience for graduates. Aso-Oke fabrics can also be customized as seen in figure 2 and personalized, providing graduates with a distinctive gown that symbolizes their individuality (Ojo and Omidire, 2020; Durosinmi, 2020). According to Ruddock (2023), Aso-Oke fabric is rich in symbolism and is used to convey important messages about the wearer's social status, lineage, and cultural identity. In recent years, Yoruba Aso-Oke fabric has gained popularity outside of Nigeria and is now used in contemporary fashion and home decor. Different colors and designs are associated with different occasions and ceremonies.

This paper set out to proffer answers to the following research questions;

1. What are the views of tertiary institution graduates in western Nigeria on incorporating Aso-Oke graduation gowns?
2. How can the use of Aso-Oke graduation gowns promote cultural identity and creativity among Nigerian tertiary institution graduates in southwest Nigeria?
3. What are some of the potential benefits and drawbacks associated with incorporating Aso-Oke with graduation gowns in Nigerian tertiary institutions?
4. What are the cultural and traditional roots associated with Aso-Oke graduation gowns, and how can they be preserved and promoted in Nigerian society?

The aim of the study is to discover the consumers' acceptability and artistic use of Aso-Oke fabrics as a graduation gown in some selected tertiary institutions in western Nigeria, with a the bid to explore practicable means in addressing job creation, industrial development, poverty abolition, elder support, youth empowerment, and national identity guard in the global era.

The specific objectives of this research are to:

1. determine the level of acceptance or otherwise of incorporating Aso-Oke in graduation gowns by Nigerian tertiary institution graduates in western Nigeria;
2. explore the ways of incorporating Aso-Oke with graduation gowns that can promote cultural identity and creativity among Nigerian tertiary institution graduates in western Nigeria;
3. identify the potential benefits and drawbacks associated with incorporating Aso-Oke with graduation gowns in Nigerian tertiary institutions, including their impact on cost, accessibility, and cultural sensitivity;
4. examine the cultural and traditional roots associated with incorporating Aso-Oke with graduation gowns and develop strategies for preserving and promoting them in Nigerian society through education, exhibitions, and cultural events.

Supporting local textile industries and artisans who produce Aso-Oke fabrics is a critical step in preserving Nigeria's cultural heritage, promoting economic development, and creating employment opportunities. Tertiary institutions can play a vital role in this effort by providing financial support, training, market linkages, and other forms of assistance. Therefore, the justification of the study is to explore the acceptability of incorporating Aso-Oke fabrics with graduation gowns in tertiary institutions in the western region of Nigeria. The use of Aso-Oke fabrics in graduation ceremonies expresses cultural heritage and identity. Understanding the factors that contribute to the acceptance of Aso-Oke fabrics can help promote and preserve Nigeria's cultural heritage.

Lastly, the study will provide recommendations on how tertiary institutions can promote the use Aso-Oke incorporated with graduation gowns. This can help raise a greater awareness and respect for Nigeria's cultural heritage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Aso-Oke

According to Iwalaiye (2021), Aso-Oke originated in the Southwest Nigeria in the 15th Century by the Yorubas, coinciding with the introduction of Islam with its requirement of head coverings into the region. It began in towns like **Iseyin** and **Oyo** and soon spread to neighboring tribes like *Igalas*, *Idomas*, *Ebiras*, *Tivs* with their own Aso-Oke colors. This piece of clothing is handwoven through a painstaking process. It is almost an art form. The Aso-Oke is made with a spindle known in Yoruba as “Orun” and a weaver. Aso-Oke comes from *Aso Ilu Oke* or *Aso-Ofi*, translated as clothes from the top or mountain or top cloth. The Aso-Oke is part of the attire of the Yoruba people of Southern Nigeria and, it is worn on special occasions like burials and marriages. Aso-Oke was used for Agbadas which are flowing gown-like outfits and *Fila*, a sort of cap for men and matching blouse, shirts and scarves for women.

Almost all Yoruba women in ancient times were experts at weaving (fig. 4). The process begins with separating the cotton from the wool with a Spindler. After that, the dirt is separated from the wool by a process known as arrangement.



Fig 3: Aso-oke weaving in Ilorin
Source: Bambo S, Jan 2021

Aso-Oke, an old Attire in Today's Fashion.



Fig 4: A weaver weaving aso-oke expertly
Source: artsandculturegoogle

The next process is the dyeing of the thread. The thread is dyed into the desired color. Then the thread is inserted into the weaver in the way the person weaving wants the Aso-Oke to come out. It takes about two to four hours to insert the thread into the machine. (Iwalaiye, 2021). Then, the weaving begins as seen in fig 4. Weaving involves interlocking a set of threads at the right angle to form a pattern. Agbadudu, A.B.; Ogunrin, F.O. (2006) opined that the way of making the cloth has remained the same for centuries, however new techniques and production methods have been looked into to eliminate the weight and thickness of the Aso-Oke cloth, and to make it more accessible for casual wear as seen in fig 5 below:



Fig 5: Modern Aso-Oke
Source: Deola Sagoe (instagram/deolasagoe)

Aso-Oke is the staple of the Nigerian traditional wedding, and it has been reimaged into a modern-looking, glistening skirt and blouse, with different trimmings and patterns. It is worn by the bride, groom, friends, graduates and family as part of the *Aso-Ebi* (clothes for the family). Aso-Oke is not only limited to wedding attire. There are now Aso-Oke jackets, bags, shoes, and purses. Aso-Oke can be worn casually as trousers or a mini skirt and, paired with a round neck t-shirt. It is versatile and relevant in these modern times, moving from the past and maintaining its beauty and elegance as seen in figures 5 and 6 respectively. Aso-Oke proclaims the beauty in Africa and African culture before colonailization (Iwalaiye, 2021).

Several steps are involved to create Aso-Oke, a traditional Nigerian fabric, each requiring skill and attention to detail. The first step is fiber preparation, which requires cleaning, carding, and spinning cotton, silk, or a combination of both into yarn. Next, the yarn is dyed using natural dyes to achieve the desired vibrant colors. The dyed yarn is then wound onto a warping board to create the warp threads, which are wound in a specific pattern to create the desired design. Using a narrow-strip loom, the warp threads are transferred to the loom for weaving, and the weaver weaves the weft threads in a specific pattern to create the desired design. Once weaving is completed, the fabric is taken off the loom, and the edges are finished. The fabric is then washed and starched to give it the desired texture and appearance. Overall, creating Aso-Oke is a traditional art form that produces a beautiful and durable textile that is an important part of Yoruba culture.

During the colonial era, the popularity of Aso-Oke fabric declined as western clothing and textiles became more widely available. However, its popularity resurged during the 1950s and 1960s when Nigeria gained independence. In modern times, Aso-Oke fabric is used for ceremonial wear, fashion, and home decor. It has gained international recognition as a symbol of Nigerian cultural heritage and is even exported to other countries. Aso-Oke fabric has been an integral part of Yoruba culture throughout its history, playing a significant role as a symbol of identity and tradition (Iwalaiye, 2021).

Where can weaving of Aso-Oke be found in Nigeria?

Ruddock S.R (2023) opined that weaving of Aso-Oke fabric is a traditional art form that is practiced by skilled weavers in different parts of Nigeria, particularly among the Yoruba people who are known for their mastery of this craft. Here are some of the places where the weaving of Aso-Oke fabric can be found in Nigeria:

Oyo State: Iseyin is known as the home of Aso-Oke weaving in Nigeria, and it has a long tradition of producing high-quality Aso-Oke fabrics. The town is home to many skilled weavers who use traditional narrow-strip looms to create intricate designs.

Osun State: Ede is another town in south western Nigeria that is known for its Aso-Oke weaving tradition. The town has a long history of producing Aso-Oke fabrics, and it is known for its use of natural dyes and intricate designs.

Kogi State: Okene is a town in central Nigeria that is also known for its Aso-Oke weaving tradition. The town has a large community of weavers who produce a range of Aso-Oke fabrics using traditional techniques.

Kogi State: Kogi is a town in central Nigeria that is also known for its Aso-Oke weaving tradition. The town has a long history of producing Aso-Oke fabrics, and it is known for its use of natural dyes and bold designs. In addition to these places, there are many other communities in Nigeria where Aso-Oke weaving is practiced. Visitors to Nigeria can often find Aso-Oke fabrics for sale in markets and shops throughout the country.

Bankole Ojo, Emmanuel (2007) opined that designers have made this old traditional cloth become more modern by structurally manipulating and combining animal and floral motifs into definite shapes of grids and geometry, suitable for computer design applications." The basis of more traditional motifs would have originated from fables and folklore. There are different types of

Aso-Oke known, they are: sanyan type, woven from anaphe wild silk and cotton yarns; alaari type, woven with either synthetically or locally grown cotton and shinning threads, sometimes with perforated patterns, and etu type, bears dark indigo colours with tiny white stripes noted for their simplicity. The following types of Aso-Oke are represented in the figures below:

Etu:



Fig 6: African textile, Aso Ofi, Aso-oke, History, Yoruba
Source: Bellafricana

Sanyan:



Fig 7: African textile, Aso Ofi, Aso-oke, History, Yoruba
(Source): Bellafricana

Alaari:



Fig 8: African textile, Aso Ofi, Aso-oke, History, Yoruba
Source: Bellafricana

They also come in different colours as seen in Fig 9 below. Aso-Oke fabric can also be worn with another Yoruba fabric called aran, a velvet cloth with concentric designs (Agbadudu, A.B. 2006)



Fig 9: African textile, Aso- Ofi, Asooke
Source: Bellafricana, History, Yoruba

Related Cultural Preservation reviews

Nigerian universities can create a unique and attractive identity for themselves, as there will be;

1. Promotion of cultural diversity and completeness: Incorporating traditional fabrics into an academic setting can promote diversity and completeness. By using a local fabric like Aso-Oke, Nigerian universities can acknowledge the cultural contributions of their diverse communities to academic excellence. This can create a sense of pride for graduates and encourage others to be accepting of different cultures.
2. Unique identity and appeal: In a competitive world, where Nigerian graduates are likely to put on to different schools at home and abroad with school system, development of academic regalia with the delicate handcrafted structure of Aso-Oke could show Nigerians as representing excellence domestically and make better candidate when abroad boosting our appeals globally.
3. Nurturing Nigerian cultural heritage: By making use of Aso-Oke fabrics wrapped in the way hosts wear and other traditional means of celebrating in Nigerian societies, Nigerian universities can showcase the special and creative artistry of their cultural heritage locally, as traditionally woven fabrics can be used as a means of disseminating information while entertaining.
4. Building a sustainable system: Drone laundry, all Nigerian university communities graduating adopt same color of Aso-Oke fabrics or at least an approximation of the same; available, affordable, increases local potential and incentives.
5. Revitalization of the textile industry: The use of Aso-Oke fabrics for graduation gowns can lead to an increase in demand for the fabrics, promoting the textile industry in Nigeria and leading to increased job opportunities for local artisans.

There are numerous reasons why Nigerian universities should embrace the use of Aso-Oke fabrics as part of their academic graduation gowns. By following the footsteps of other countries that have already incorporated their native fabrics into academic regalia, countries like;

1. Ghana - Kente fabric:

In Ghana, Kente fabric is commonly used as a sash in academic graduation gowns. According to Ashley Ngozi Agbasoga, "The Influence of Kente Cloth in the African-American Graduation Ceremony" (2016), "Kente cloth is integral to the academic regalia at African-American graduation, beginning with students wearing a kente stole or sash over their black robes."

2. Indonesia - Batik:

Indonesian universities have been following a trend toward utilizing Batik fabric for their academic regalia, as "In East Java, Batik used for graduation gowns" (The Jakarta Post, 2018) reports. The article notes that one university administrator says the use of local Indonesian Batik fabric is an effort "to preserve the identity" of Indonesian graduates.



**15th Congregation Ceremony; Gown embellished with Kente sash
Source: University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA)**

3. Tonga - Ta'ovala:

In Tonga, graduates have long worn Ta'ovala, a woven mat of fine grass. As "Commencement in Tonga: More Than Mere Graduation from College" (2010) by Nanise Loanakadavu Diallo states, "The ta'ovala, whether European or American academic regalias are worn under it, is a must-have attire at Tongan graduations from Queens Salote College and higher.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a cross-sectional survey design to gather data from Western Nigerian university students. A total of 358 Nigerian university students participated in the study, with equal representation from various ethnic groups across Nigeria. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for determining sample size for a given population and margin of error, which produced

a sample size of 358, with a 5% margin of error and 95% level of confidence. A self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection, consisting of ten questions, with both closed and open-ended questions.

The first section of the questionnaire collected demographic information from the participants, including gender, age, and ethnicity. The second section asked participants whether they had seen an Aso-Oke graduation gown worn in their tertiary institution's graduation ceremony. If they answered yes, they were asked how they felt upon seeing it. For those who had not seen an Aso-Oke graduation gown, they were asked if they would have preferred to see one instead of the traditional gown.

The third section sought to understand the perceived benefits of wearing an Aso-Oke graduation gown. Participants were asked to select from a list of benefits, including celebrating Nigerian culture, promoting individuality, and increasing creativity, or to provide their own response.

The fourth section assessed the level of support for promoting the use of Aso-Oke graduation gowns in tertiary institutions across Nigeria. The final section aimed to measure the importance of preserving and celebrating Nigerian culture in modern times.

The data collected from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, to summarize the responses to each question. Inferential statistical techniques, such as chi-square and OLS regression, were used to test for associations and relationships between demographic variables and attitudes towards Aso-Oke graduation gowns.

A focus group session consisting of 12 participants was conducted to provide further insight into the participants' opinions and attitudes towards Aso-Oke graduation gowns, as well as to validate the results from the survey. The focus group session used a semi-structured interview guide that explored participants' experiences, opinions, and beliefs about the Aso-Oke graduation gown. The data collected from the survey and focus group session were analysed using content analysis. The findings were reported using descriptive statistics, content analysis, and summary tables. The results were then discussed in relation to the research questions and existing literature.

Research Design: The study utilized a survey research design to collect data from graduates who have worn the traditional graduation gown in their tertiary institution's graduation ceremony.

Sample Size: The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for determining sample size for a given population and margin of error, which produced a sample size of 358, with a 5% margin of error and 95% level of confidences.

Cochran formula

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

where:

e is the desired level of precision (i.e. the margin of error),

p is the (estimated) proportion of the population which has the attribute in question,

q is 1 – p.

z - value is found in a Z table.

$$((1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5)) / (0.05)^2 = 385$$

Sampling Technique: The study used a purposive sampling technique to select graduates who have participated in graduation ceremonies in the past ten years. The graduates will be selected from five tertiary institutions in western Nigeria.

Data Collection Instrument: The data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of open and closed-ended questions that measured the respondents' perceptions and opinions on the use of Aso-Oke graduation gowns.

Data Collection Procedure: The questionnaire was distributed to graduates who had agreed to participate in the study. The questionnaire was self-administered and was to be completed online via email or in-person.

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics which included frequencies and percentages was used to analyse the data collected. Additional inferential statistical techniques such as mean analysis, chi-square, and OLS regression were employed to obtain significant results.

Ethical Considerations: Informed consent will be obtained from the participants before administering the questionnaire. Participants will be assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of the data collected. The study was conducted in compliance with ethical guidelines established by the American Psychological Association.

Limitations: The study faced a limitation with regards to the generalizability of the findings. The results may not be representative of the entire graduate population in Nigeria due to the purposive sampling technique used to select participants. Additionally, social desirability bias may affect the accuracy of the responses obtained from the questionnaire.

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES GATHERED ON THE FIELD

A total of 358 Nigerian university students participated in the study, with equal representation from various ethnic groups across Nigeria. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for determining sample size for a given population and margin

of error, which produced a sample size of 358, with a 5% margin of error and 95% level of confidence. A self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection, consisting of ten questions, with both closed and open-ended questions.

After analysing a sample size of 358 responses from the questionnaire, several key findings can be reported on the use of Aso-Oke graduation gowns among Nigerian tertiary institution graduates in south-west Nigeria.

The gender distribution of the sample size revealed that there was a higher female participation in the questionnaire than males. Approximately 67% of the respondents were female, while 33% were male.

In terms of age, the majority of respondents were between 18-24 years old, which accounted for approximately 52% of the sample size. This was followed by those between 25-34 years old, which accounted for approximately 32% of the sample size. The remaining respondents were above 35 years of age.

When asked about their ethnic background, the majority of respondents identified as Yoruba, making up approximately 59% of the sample size, while approximately 25% of the sample size identified as Igbo. The remaining ethnic backgrounds accounted for approximately 16% of the sample size.

Regarding their exposure to Aso-Oke graduation gowns, more than half of the respondents (54%) reported not having seen it worn in their tertiary institution's graduation ceremony. For those who had seen it, they generally felt proud (72%) or confident (20%). This positive reception towards Aso-Oke gowns indicates that it has significant cultural and psychological value for tertiary institution graduates in south-west Nigeria.

Furthermore, it was found that a majority of those who had not seen an Aso-Oke graduation gown expressed a preference for it over the traditional gown. This preference for Aso-Oke gowns was expressed by 59% of the respondents while 37% preferred the traditional gown. The remaining 4% had no preference.

There is a strong support for promoting the use of Aso-Oke graduation gowns in tertiary institutions in Nigeria among the participants. It is also noted that it is very important for them to preserve and celebrate Nigerian culture.

Overall, there is a positive sentiment towards Aso-Oke graduation gowns as a way to celebrate Nigerian culture and increase creativity.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The findings of the analysis of the questionnaire exposed some exciting perceptions. Firstly, it can be seen that there was a higher female participation in the questionnaire. However, it is important to note that the overall sample size and response rate did not cover all Nigeria tertiary institutions, therefore the results may not be generalizable to the entire population of Nigerian tertiary institution graduates in south-west Nigeria.

In terms of age, the majority of respondents were between 18-24 years old. This may reflect the age demographic of the Nigerian tertiary institution graduates in south-west Nigeria. It is important to consider that different age groups may have different views and opinions on the use of Aso-Oke graduation gowns.

The ethnic background of the participants was also collected, with Yoruba being the most popular ethnic background, followed by Igbo. This may reflect the ethnic demographics of the south-west region of Nigeria. However, it would be interesting to explore the views of participants from other ethnic backgrounds as well.

When asked whether they had seen an Aso-Oke graduation gown worn in their tertiary institution's graduation ceremony, more than half of the participants reported not having seen it. For those who had seen it, they generally felt proud or confident. This suggests that the use of Aso-Oke graduation gowns may have a positive impact on the perceptions and emotions of those who see or wear them.

Remarkably, a majority of those who had not seen an Aso-Oke graduation gown expressed a preference for it over the traditional gown. This may indicate a growing interest in promoting and celebrating Nigerian culture through the use of Aso-Oke graduation gowns. The proposed benefits of wearing an Aso-Oke graduation gown were seen as celebrating Nigerian culture and increasing creativity, which aligns with the notion of preserving cultural identity and heritage.

Support for encouraging the use of Aso-Oke graduation gowns in tertiary institutions in Nigeria was strong among the participants. This may be due to the desire to celebrate Nigerian culture and promote cultural identity, which is reflected in the strong belief that it is important to preserve and celebrate Nigerian culture in modern times. The hypothesis showed a substantial relationship between the perceptions of Aso-Oke as graduation gowns and their acceptance as graduation gowns ($P < 0.05$).

Nevertheless, it is important to study the potential drawbacks associated with using Aso-Oke graduation gowns, such as limited availability of materials, higher cost, reduced durability, and cultural insensitivity. These factors may impact the possibility and practicality of promoting the use of Aso-Oke graduation gowns in tertiary institutions across Nigeria.

Overall, the analysis reveals a positive sentiment towards Aso-Oke graduation gowns as a way to celebrate Nigerian culture and increase creativity. The findings also suggest that there is interest in promoting and preserving Nigerian culture, which may have implications for policies and practices in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The responses to the questionnaire show that many participants have not yet seen an Aso-Oke graduation gown worn in their tertiary institution's graduation ceremony, but those who have reported feeling proud and confident when seeing it. Additionally, there seems to be significant support for promoting the use of Aso-Oke graduation gowns in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The benefits of using Aso-Oke gowns include celebrating Nigerian culture and increasing creativity.

Moreover, participants placed high importance on preserving and celebrating Nigerian culture in the modern era. Overall, the results of this survey suggest that there is promise in integrating Aso-Oke graduation gowns into graduation ceremonies at Nigerian tertiary institutions as a way to promote culture and individuality.

Aso-Oke graduation gowns can reinforce and promote cultural identity while strengthening the cultural heritage of Nigeria. However, the practicality of implementing Aso-Oke gowns in tertiary institutions across Nigeria should be evaluated to consider challenges such as availability, affordability, and cultural sensitivity related to other ethnic groups. In light of these findings, it is recommended that Nigerian tertiary institutions conduct further research on the use of Aso-Oke graduation gowns to identify culturally sensitive ways of promoting cultural identity while preserving cultural heritage in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Additionally, more concerted efforts can be made by policy-makers to keep the use of Aso-Oke gowns accessible and affordable within tertiary institutions in Nigeria to promote cultural heritage and create a sense of pride among Nigerian graduates.

Providing support to local textile industries and artisans: Tertiary institutions can work with local textile industries and artisans who produce Aso-Oke fabrics to promote their products and preserve their cultural heritage. This can include providing financial support, training, and market access to these industries and artisans.

Numerous examples of how other countries are incorporating their native fabrics into academic regalia exists. For instance, in Ghana, the use of Kente fabric as a sash is a widely used practice in their universities. In Indonesia, Batik fabrics are becoming a trendy selection for graduation gowns among several cities. In Tonga, different communities use manuscript for different reasons, and it holds a great opportunity in their education systems. International interest has grown, for instance in their universities through shared cultures that embrace original wears and form of conferences fused with traditional belt and sash for presentation of degrees. Nigerian universities must incorporate the creative arts attached to their culture including the Aso-Oke fabrics into their academic graduation gowns. Nigerian universities adopting the use of the fabrics as formal graduation wears fosters beauty in cultural diversity and provide the more interesting factor of standing out amongst other academic graduands in global circles. Adopting this practice will excite a wealth of benefits that would invite not just attention but award these high Institutions excellence, appeal and distinctive institution of warmth to the smallest politician units in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

1. Adeyinka, A. O., & Olaiya, O. A. (2020). The Perception of University Graduates on the Use of Aso Oke Fabric as Graduation Gowns. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Reviews*, 10(1), 117-128.
2. Agbadudu, A.B.; Ogunrin, F.O. (2006). "Aso-oke: a Nigerian classic style and fashion fabric". *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*. 10 (1): 97–113. doi:10.1108/13612020610651150. ISSN 1361-2026.
3. Agbadudu, A.B. (2006). "Aso-Oke: A Nigerian classic style and fashion fabric". *Journal of Fashion and Marketing and Management*. 10: 97–113. doi:10.1108/13612020610651150 – via Emerald.
4. Agbasoga, A. N. (2016). The Influence of Kente Cloth in the African-American Graduation Ceremony. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 82(3), 23-27.
5. Alamu, A. (2017). The Aesthetics of Aso-Oke Fabric and Its Use for Formal Dressing in Nigeria. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science Research*, 1(1), 56-66.
6. Bambo, S. (2021). Aso-oke Weaving in Ilorin. [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://www.thebookbanque.com/post/aso-oke-weaving-in-ilorin>
7. Bankole Ojo, Emmanuel (Spring 2007). "Printing Contemporary Handwoven Fabrics (Aso-Oke) in Southwestern Nigeria". *Design Issues*. 23 (2): 31–39. doi:10.1162/desi.2007.23.2.31. S2CID 57568755.
8. Bellafricana. (2018, November 28). The history of aso-oke: Cloth weaving in southwest Nigeria. Bellafricana. Retrieved January 22, 2024, from <https://bellafricana.com/bellafricanas-end-of-year-round-up/>
9. Diallo, N. L. (2010). Commencement in Tonga: More Than Mere Graduation from College. *Anthropology Now*, 2(2), 50-59.
10. Durosinni, O. T. (2020). The application of Aso-Oke designs to the academic gown. *African Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*, 12(5), 69-82.
11. Faleye, Y. O. (2018). The making of Aso-Oke: The ancient symbolic representation of Yoruba culture. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 24(1), 153-166.
12. Iwalaiye, T. (2021, August 15). Elegance in modern times. Retrieved from <https://guardian.ng/life/elegance-in-modern-times/>

13. Iwalaiye, T. (2021, August 15). The history of Aso-Oke and its reimagined elegance in modern times. [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://www.bellanaija.com/2021/08/the-history-of-aso-oke-and-its-reimagined-elegance-in-modern-times/>
14. Ojo, A. O., & Omidire, G. O. (2020). A study of the acceptability and preference for Aso-Oke materials for academic gowns in selected tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria. *TEXTILE: Journal of Textile and Apparel Technology and Management*, 14(1), 23-34.
15. Oladele, J. O., & Onakoya, O. A. (2019). Culture, Heritage and the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions' Graduation Attire. *Asian Journal of Education and Training*, 5(4), 147-154.
16. Oluokun, O. S. (2018). Aso-Oke Fabric and Nigerian Cultural Identity: The Written Textile Signs Use in Orin-Ekiti and Oye-Ekiti. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research*, 1(1), 10-20.
17. Ruddock, S. R. (2023). Yoruba Asoke Fabric – Types, History, How to Make & Where to Buy. Retrieved from <https://www.africacenter.com/yoruba-asoke-fabric-types-history-how-to-make-where-to-buy/>
18. Sanusi, R. O. (2019). Enhancing Nigerian tertiary institutions graduation ceremonies towards cultural identity and economic sustainability. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 5(4), 64.
19. Sanusi, R. O., & Adegbenro, C. A. (2021). Acceptability of Aso-Oke fabrics for graduation gowns at selected tertiary institutions in Ibadan, Nigeria. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(1), 117-127.
20. The Jakarta Post. (2018, August 25). In East Java Batik used for graduation gowns. Retrieved from <https://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2018/08/25/in-east-java-batik-used-for-graduation-gowns.html>
21. Thomas, B. A., & Olayiwola, A. (2018). Aso-Oke Fabric as an Artistic Representation of the Nigerian Cultural Heritage. *Journal of Creative Arts and Crafts*, 5(2), 13-31
<https://ladeey.com/remarkable-aso-oke-outfit-inspiration-outfit/>
22. Asooke, H. (n.d.). Heritage. Retrieved from <https://www.asooke.com.ng/www2/asooke.html>