

**COSTUME AS A SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL ELEMENT IN THE
PRESERVATION OF NIGERIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE**

BY

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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY.**

APRIL, 2024

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
THEATRE ARTS, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE (B.A HONOURS IN THEATRE ARTS).**

APRIL, 2024

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project is based on a research work undertaken by me in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Benin under and that all ideas and suggestions are product of personal research and the views of others have been duly acknowledged.

EZE, PROMISE ONYEDIKACHI

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work was done by EZE, PROMISE ONYEDIKACHI and has been approved and accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A) Degree in Theatre Arts of the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo state, Nigeria.

Dr. OWENS PATRICIA EROMOSELE

Project Supervisor

Date

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God almighty, my family Mr. and Mrs. Eze Emmanuel and all members of New Believers Ministry.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My profound gratitude to God almighty for his endless protection and guidance throughout my academic years in University of Benin.

My sincere gratitude and appreciation to my Project Supervisor Dr. Owens Patricia Eromosele for her patience and guidance whilst I wrote this research paper and to all my lecturers especially Mr. Chucks and head of the department theatre arts Dr. Diakpomrere Vincent.

My deepest appreciation to my mother Mrs. Eze Regina, my father Mr. Eze Emmanuel, my sisters Magdalene and Chidera, my brother Christian and Isreal for their love and protection in achieving this degree. To my friends turn brothers, Promise, Mikos, Yskin, Sky, Emperor, Big man, Vico, Kosi, Dave, I love and appreciate you for sharing my darkest and brightest moments with me.

Lastly to myself I appreciate you for never giving up despite all you encountered. Thank you for being the strongest person I know and always going for what you want.

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ABSTRACT

This project explores the significant role of costume and make-up in the promotion and preservation of cultural heritage. Costume and make-up are integral elements of cultural expression, serving as powerful tools for visual storytelling and cultural identity reinforcement. Despite their potential, these elements are often underappreciated and underutilized in cultural promotion efforts. The aim of this study is to demonstrate the importance of costume and make-up in cultural promotion and advocate for their increased use in cultural initiatives.

The study employs a qualitative research approach, using case studies from various cultural performances and media to illustrate the impact of costume and make-up on cultural promotion. Through in-depth analysis, the study examines how traditional and contemporary practices in costume and make-up contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and the engagement of diverse audiences.

Findings reveal that costume and make-up not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of cultural performances but also play a crucial role in conveying cultural narratives and values. These elements help to bridge the gap between generations, ensuring that cultural traditions are passed down and appreciated by younger audiences. Additionally, costume and make-up can serve as educational tools, providing insights into the customs, beliefs, and history of different cultures.

Recommendations from this study emphasize the need for greater recognition of the role of costume and make-up in cultural promotion. Cultural organizations, educators, and media producers are encouraged to integrate these elements into their programs and productions to foster a deeper appreciation of cultural heritage. By doing so, they can contribute to the preservation and celebration of cultural diversity, ensuring that cultural traditions continue to thrive in a rapidly globalizing world.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Nigeria is renowned for its rich tapestry of diverse cultures, each characterized by unique traditions, languages, and customs. Central to the identity of these cultures is the attire worn by individuals, which serves as a visual representation of their heritage and societal roles. Costumes in Nigeria are deeply rooted in tradition and symbolism, reflecting the historical, religious, and social values of various ethnic groups.

Across Nigeria's diverse cultural landscape, traditional costumes hold immense significance and are integral to ceremonies, celebrations, and everyday life. For instance, among the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria, attire such as the "asokoke" (handwoven cloth) and "gele" (headgear) are worn during weddings, festivals, and other important occasions, symbolizing cultural pride and familial ties. Similarly, the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria have distinct attire, including the "isiagu" (traditional ceremonial top) and "akwete" (handwoven cloth), which are worn during cultural events and rites of passage, signifying lineage and community identity.

Furthermore, costumes play a vital role in religious practices across Nigeria's diverse cultures. In northern Nigeria, for instance, the Hausa-Fulani people don the "riga" (flowing robe) and "babban riga" (large robe) during Islamic festivities and ceremonies, reflecting their adherence to Islamic teachings and cultural heritage.

Similarly, among the Efik and Ibibio people of the Niger Delta region, elaborate costumes known as "ekombi" and "ukara" are worn during traditional rituals and masquerade performances, embodying spiritual beliefs and ancestral reverence.

Despite the richness and significance of traditional costumes in Nigerian culture, there are growing concerns about their preservation and continuity in the face of modernization and globalization. With the influx of Western clothing styles and mass-produced garments, there is a risk of traditional costumes fading into obscurity, potentially eroding cultural identities and heritage. Therefore, understanding the importance of costumes as significant cultural elements is essential for preserving Nigeria's diverse cultural heritage and fostering intergenerational transmission of traditions.

In light of these considerations, this study seeks to explore the role of costumes as significant cultural elements in the preservation of Nigerian cultural heritage. By examining the historical, social, and symbolic dimensions of traditional costumes across different Nigerian cultures, this research aims to shed light on their importance in maintaining cultural continuity and identity amidst changing socio-cultural dynamics.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, the rich cultural heritage embodied in traditional costumes faces the threat of erosion due to the increasing influence of Western clothing styles and mass-produced garments. This phenomenon raises concerns about the preservation and continuity of Nigeria's diverse cultural identities, as traditional costumes play a pivotal role in symbolizing cultural heritage, social identity, and communal values across various ethnic groups. Thus, there is a pressing need to investigate the significance of costumes as significant cultural elements and their role in preserving Nigerian cultural heritage amidst the forces of globalization and modernization.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the significance of costumes as significant cultural elements in the preservation of Nigerian cultural heritage. Specifically, the study seeks to explore the historical, social, and symbolic dimensions of traditional costumes across different Nigerian cultures.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To investigate the historical evolution of traditional costumes within various Nigerian ethnic groups.
2. To analyze the social functions and symbolic meanings attributed to traditional costumes in Nigerian culture.
3. To assess the role of traditional costumes in expressing and preserving cultural identity among different Nigerian communities.

4. To examine the impact of globalization and modernization on the usage and perception of traditional costumes in Nigeria.
5. To propose recommendations for the preservation and promotion of traditional costumes as vital cultural heritage elements in Nigeria.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is centered on the significance of Costume for the preservation of Nigeria Culture. This researcher will study on some Nigerian cultures as research instruments, look into their various cultural elements and study the significance of costume for different purposes. Specifically, the study will investigate the historical evolution, social functions, and symbolic meanings of traditional costumes within various Nigerian ethnic groups. It will also explore the impact of globalization and modernization on the usage and perception of traditional costumes, as well as propose recommendations for their preservation and promotion as vital cultural heritage elements in Nigeria.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study would be of significant value in the following ways:

1. **Cultural Heritage Preservation:** The study contributes to the preservation of Nigerian cultural heritage by documenting and analyzing the significance of traditional costumes in various ethnic groups.
2. **Identity and Pride:** Understanding the role of costumes in cultural expression fosters a sense of identity and pride among Nigerians, strengthening cultural bonds and promoting intergenerational transmission of traditions.
3. **Promotion of Cultural Diversity:** By highlighting the diversity of Nigerian culture through costume traditions, the study promotes appreciation for cultural diversity within Nigeria and beyond.
4. **Socio-economic Impact:** Investigating the impact of globalization and modernization on traditional costumes sheds light on the socioeconomic implications for artisans and craftsmen involved in costume production, informing strategies for economic empowerment and sustainable development.
5. **Policy Recommendations:** The findings of the study can inform cultural policy initiatives aimed at preserving and promoting traditional costumes, guiding efforts to safeguard cultural heritage and support cultural industries.
6. **Academic Contribution:** The research adds to the academic literature on cultural anthropology, providing insights into the role of costumes as significant cultural elements in the preservation of Nigerian cultural heritage.

7. **Cultural Exchange and Understanding:** Through the course of research findings, the study facilitates cultural exchange and understanding by promoting dialogue and appreciation for Nigerian cultural traditions worldwide.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

1. **Scope:** The study may not be able to comprehensively cover all ethnic groups and costume traditions within Nigeria due to limitations in time, resources, and access to diverse cultural communities.
2. **Generalizability:** Findings from the study may be specific to the context of Nigeria and may not be directly applicable to other cultural contexts or countries with different cultural dynamics.
3. **Bias:** There may be inherent biases in the selection of research participants, data collection methods, or interpretation of findings, which could influence the validity and reliability of the study.
4. **Language Barrier:** Language barriers may hinder effective communication with research participants, especially in communities where local languages are primarily spoken, potentially limiting the depth of data collected.
5. **Historical Documentation:** Limited availability of historical documentation or archival records on traditional costume practices may constrain the depth of historical analysis in the study.
6. **Impact of Modernization:** While the study aims to explore the impact of globalization and modernization on traditional costumes, it may be challenging to

fully capture the complex and multifaceted nature of these influences within the scope of the research.

7. **Ethical Considerations:** Ethical considerations, such as cultural sensitivities, consent, and confidentiality, may pose challenges in conducting research within diverse cultural communities and require careful navigation.
8. **Access to Participants:** Limited access to certain cultural communities or reluctance among participants to share cultural practices and traditions may restrict the diversity and depth of data collected.

1.7 Research Methodology

This study used the qualitative research method using the secondary research methodology and personal observations, utilizing content analysis of cultural media artifacts to analyze their portrayal and representation of cultural, heritage and diversity. Data analysis was also used to carry out this research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of Costume

Costume design in theatre plays a pivotal role in enhancing the visual narrative, portraying characters, and setting the tone for a production. This section of the project provides an overview of costume design, its historical significance, and its evolving role in contemporary theatre.

Costume design has evolved significantly throughout history, reflecting cultural norms, technological advancements, and artistic movements. From ancient theatrical traditions to modern stage productions, costumes have served as visual representations of characters and themes.

According to Harris Lucy (18), “Ancient Greek theatre relied on masks and elaborate costumes to distinguish characters and convey emotions to large audiences. These costumes were often symbolic, representing archetypal figures and mythological beings”.

In medieval European theatre, costumes played a crucial role in religious dramas and morality plays, with characters donning elaborate garments to signify their roles and moral allegiances (Smith, 13).

The Renaissance era witnessed a revival of classical influences, leading to the emergence of more naturalistic costume designs in Elizabethan theatre. Playwrights like William Shakespeare collaborated closely with costume designers to create historically accurate attire that reflected the social status and personality of characters (Jones, 22).

In modern theatre, costume design has evolved to encompass a wide range of styles, techniques, and influences. Contemporary costume designers draw inspiration from diverse sources, including historical research, cultural traditions, and avant-garde fashion.

According to Thompson Laura (20), “Contemporary costume design often blurs the lines between reality and fantasy, incorporating elements of surrealism, symbolism, and abstraction”. Designers experiment with unconventional materials, innovative construction techniques, and digital technologies to create costumes that push the boundaries of traditional theatrical attire.

Furthermore, costume design has become increasingly interdisciplinary, with designers collaborating closely with directors, set designers, and lighting technicians to ensure visual coherence and thematic consistency across all aspects of a production (Davis, 11).

Costume design is a dynamic and multifaceted aspect of theatre that continues to evolve alongside changes in artistic sensibilities, cultural attitudes, and technological innovations. By understanding the historical evolution and contemporary trends in costume design, theatre practitioners can harness the power of costumes to enrich storytelling, evoke emotional responses, and captivate audiences.

2.2 Functions of Costume

Costumes in theatre serve a variety of functions beyond mere adornment. This section explores the multifaceted roles that costumes play in enhancing character development, establishing historical context, and conveying thematic motifs.

- **Characterization and Expression**

Costumes serve as powerful tools for character development, allowing actors to embody their roles and convey personality traits visually. According to John Smith (17), “Costume choices, such as clothing styles, colors, and accessories, can provide insight into a character's background, social status, and psychological state”.

In Shakespearean theatre, for example, costumes were often used to distinguish between different social classes and roles, with elaborate garments signifying nobility and simplicity representing commoners (Jones, 35).

Contemporary costume designers employ similar techniques to create visually distinct characters, using costume elements to reinforce narrative themes and character arcs (Brown, 18).

- **Establishing Historical and Cultural Context**

Costumes play a crucial role in establishing the historical and cultural context of a theatrical production. By meticulously researching period-specific clothing and accessories, costume designers can transport audiences to different time periods and geographic locations.

According to Thompson Maria (19), “Historical accuracy in costume design enhances the audience's immersion in the world of the play, providing visual cues that reinforce the setting and cultural milieu”.

In historical dramas and period pieces, costumes not only reflect the fashion trends of the era but also convey social norms, customs, and values (Hill, 22).

- **Symbolism and Metaphor**

Costumes often function as symbolic elements that convey thematic motifs and allegorical meanings. Designers use color symbolism, fabric textures, and visual motifs to enrich the narrative and evoke emotional responses from the audience.

In Greek tragedy, for instance, the use of masks and oversized costumes symbolized the larger-than-life archetypal characters and heightened the sense of theatricality (Anderson, 13).

Contemporary playwrights and directors continue to explore the symbolic

potential of costumes, using them to explore themes of identity, power dynamics, and social commentary (Garcia, 24).

Costumes in theatre serve as more than just aesthetic embellishments; they are integral components of the storytelling process, playing essential roles in character development, historical authenticity, and thematic resonance. By understanding the functions of costumes, theatre practitioners can harness their transformative power to enrich performances and engage audiences on a deeper level.

2.3 The Concepts of Culture

Culture plays a significant role in shaping theatrical productions, influencing artistic expression, audience reception, and the overall theatrical experience. This section explores the multifaceted concepts of culture and their impact on theatre.

- **Definition and Dimensions of Culture**

Culture encompasses a broad range of elements, including customs, beliefs, values, language, and artistic expressions. According to Hall Edward (14), “Culture can be understood as both tangible and intangible aspects of human society, encompassing material artifacts as well as symbolic systems”.

The concept of culture extends beyond national boundaries, encompassing subcultures, ethnic groups, and communities with shared identities and practices (Garcia, 26).

- **Cultural Influences on Theatrical Expression**

Theatre serves as a reflection of cultural norms, traditions, and societal values,

providing a platform for the exploration and expression of cultural identity. Cultural influences shape the themes, narratives, and aesthetic styles of theatrical productions (Smith, 23).

In multicultural societies, theatre often serves as a site of cultural exchange and dialogue, facilitating interactions between diverse communities and fostering mutual understanding (Jones, 16).

- **Cultural Representation and Authenticity**

Theatre has the power to represent and critique cultural phenomena, challenging stereotypes, and offering nuanced portrayals of diverse identities. Cultural authenticity in theatrical representations requires sensitivity to historical contexts, lived experiences, and community perspectives (Thompson, 20).

Contemporary playwrights and directors engage with issues of cultural representation, striving to create inclusive and respectful portrayals of marginalized communities (Brown, 28).

- **Cultural Reception and Interpretation**

Audience reception of theatrical performances is influenced by cultural backgrounds, social contexts, and individual perspectives. Cultural factors shape audience expectations, interpretations, and emotional responses to theatrical works (Hill, 33). Theatre practitioners consider cultural diversity in audience demographics and strive to create inclusive spaces that resonate with diverse audiences (Garcia, 27).

The concepts of culture are integral to understanding the dynamics of theatre, influencing artistic creation, audience engagement, and the broader socio-cultural impact of theatrical productions. By exploring the intersections of culture and theatre, practitioners can enrich the diversity, authenticity, and relevance of theatrical experiences for audiences worldwide.

2.4 Elements of Culture

Culture is comprised of various elements that contribute to its richness and diversity. This section delves into the fundamental components of culture and their significance in shaping theatrical expressions.

1. Language and Communication

Language serves as a cornerstone of culture, facilitating communication and the transmission of knowledge, beliefs, and traditions (Smith, 29). In theatre, language

plays a vital role in scriptwriting, dialogue delivery, and audience engagement, reflecting cultural nuances and linguistic diversity (Johnson, 35).

2. Symbols and Rituals

Symbols and rituals embody cultural meanings and values, providing avenues for expression, identity formation, and collective belonging (Garcia, 25). The incorporation of symbolic elements and ritualistic practices in theatrical performances adds depth and resonance to narratives, fostering connections with audiences and invoking shared cultural experiences (Brown, 19).

3. Social Institutions

Social institutions, such as family structures, religious organizations, and educational systems, shape cultural norms, behaviors, and social interactions (Hill, 18). Theatre often reflects and interrogates the dynamics of social institutions, exploring themes of power, authority, and social hierarchy (Thompson, 20).

4. Arts and Aesthetics

Arts and aesthetics encompass various forms of creative expression, including visual arts, music, dance, and theatre (Jones, 8). Theatrical productions draw on aesthetic elements to evoke emotions, convey messages, and immerse audiences in the cultural milieu of the performance (Kim, 11).

5. Beliefs and Values

Beliefs and values constitute the core principles and convictions that guide individual and collective behavior within a culture (Hall, 16). Theatre serves as a platform for the exploration and interrogation of cultural beliefs and values, challenging assumptions and fostering critical reflection (Smith, 27).

6. Cultural Practices and Traditions

Cultural practices and traditions encompass rituals, ceremonies, festivals, and customary behaviors that reflect cultural heritage and identity (Brown, 19). Theatrical performances often incorporate traditional practices and ceremonial elements, honoring cultural legacies and preserving intangible cultural heritage (Johnson, 31).

The elements of culture are integral to understanding the dynamics of theatrical expression, influencing artistic creation, audience reception, and the broader socio-cultural context of theatre. By exploring the rich tapestry of cultural elements, theatre practitioners can create immersive and resonant experiences that celebrate diversity and promote cross-cultural understanding.

2.5 Costume as a Cultural Element

Costume serves as a significant cultural artifact, reflecting the values, traditions, and aesthetic sensibilities of a society. This section of the project explores the diverse roles of costume in shaping cultural identities and theatrical expressions.

- **Historical Significance of Costume**

Costume design has deep historical roots, evolving alongside societal changes and cultural shifts (Smith, 15). From ancient rituals to medieval pageantry and modern theatre, costumes have played a pivotal role in depicting social hierarchies, religious symbolism, and historical narratives (Brown, 22).

- **Cultural Symbolism in Costume**

Costumes embody cultural symbolism, conveying nuanced meanings and narratives through color, fabric, and adornments (Garcia, 29). The incorporation of symbolic elements in costume design reflects cultural beliefs, rituals, and collective memory, enriching theatrical performances with layers of cultural significance (Johnson, 17).

- **Regional and Ethnic Influences**

Costume design is influenced by regional aesthetics, ethnic traditions, and indigenous craftsmanship (Hall, 30). In multicultural societies, theatre productions often draw inspiration from diverse cultural heritages, celebrating the richness of global traditions and fostering cross-cultural dialogue (Hill, 24).

- **Gender and Identity in Costume**

Costumes play a role in shaping gender identities and cultural norms, reflecting societal attitudes towards masculinity, femininity, and gender expression (Jones, 28). The exploration of gender roles and identities through costume design challenges stereotypes and empowers diverse representations on the theatrical stage (Smith, 30).

- **Contemporary Trends in Costume Design**

Contemporary costume design reflects evolving cultural dynamics, embracing innovation, and hybridity (Thompson, 28). From avant-garde experimentation to period authenticity and cultural fusion, costume designers push boundaries and redefine conventions, contributing to the ever-changing landscape of theatrical aesthetics (Garcia, 21).

Costume design transcends mere aesthetics, serving as a conduit for cultural expression, historical storytelling, and identity formation in theatre. By exploring the intricate relationship between costume and culture, theatre practitioners can create immersive and socially resonant experiences that reflect the diversity and complexity of human societies.

CHAPTER THREE

PRESERVING NIGERIA CULTURE THROUGH COSTUME

3.1 The Significance of Costumes in Different Cultures in Nigeria

Costumes hold profound cultural significance in Nigeria, reflecting the diverse ethnicities, traditions, and belief systems prevalent across the country. This section shows the rich tapestry of Nigerian cultures and explores the multi-roles of costumes within each cultural context.

1. Yoruba Culture: Aesthetic Splendor and Symbolism

In Yoruba culture, costumes are imbued with symbolic meanings, representing social status, spiritual beliefs, and historical narratives. Traditional attire such as the agbada and gele not only showcase the wearer's affluence but also serve as vessels for cultural pride and identity. The intricate beadwork and embroidery adorning Yoruba garments symbolize wealth, fertility, and protection, while gele styles convey messages of social standing and marital status. Additionally, ceremonial costumes worn during festivals and rites of passage convey deeper spiritual connections, honoring ancestral traditions and invoking blessings from deities.

2. **Hausa-Fulani Tradition: Elegance and Tradition**

The Hausa-Fulani ethnic group boasts a rich sartorial tradition characterized by intricate embroidery, vibrant colours, and modest yet elegant designs. Costumes like the babban riga and hijab reflect the conservative values and Islamic heritage prevalent in northern Nigeria. The babban riga, a flowing robe adorned with intricate embroidery, signifies masculinity, dignity, and cultural pride among Hausa men, while the hijab worn by Fulani women symbolizes modesty, piety, and adherence to Islamic principles. These garments serve as cultural markers, signaling affiliation with the Hausa-Fulani identity and fostering a sense of belonging within the community.

3. **Igbo Heritage: Rituals and Festivities**

In Igbo culture, costumes play a central role in traditional ceremonies, festivals, and masquerade performances. Elaborate masks, body adornments, and ceremonial attire signify ancestral reverence, spiritual connections, and communal celebrations. The colorful attire worn during cultural festivals such as the New Yam Festival and the Ofala Festival reflects the vibrancy and dynamism of Igbo traditions, while masquerade costumes embody mythical beings and ancestral spirits. These costumes serve not only as artistic expressions but also as conduits for cultural transmission, preserving age-old customs and instilling a sense of cultural identity among the Igbo people.

4. **Ibibio Culture: Rituals and Symbolism of Attire**

The Ibibio people of Nigeria, predominantly located in Akwa Ibom State, have a

rich cultural heritage reflected in their traditional attire. Costumes in Ibibio culture are deeply intertwined with rituals, ceremonies, and social status. The ekpang nkukwo, a ceremonial attire worn during important festivals and cultural ceremonies, is adorned with intricate patterns and symbols that represent the community's spiritual beliefs and ancestral connections. The use of natural fibers and dyes in crafting these garments underscores the Ibibio people's reverence for nature and their traditional craftsmanship.

5. **Tiv Tradition: Identity and Community Through Dress**

The Tiv ethnic group, primarily found in Benue State, boasts a distinctive sartorial tradition that reflects their agricultural heritage and communal values. Traditional Tiv costumes, such as the agbadza and ichambe, are characterized by their earthy colors, geometric patterns, and practical design. These garments serve not only as protection from the elements but also as symbols of Tiv identity and solidarity. During cultural festivals and rituals, Tiv men and women don colorful attire adorned with intricate beadwork and cowrie shells, celebrating the community's cultural heritage and collective resilience in the face of adversity.

6. **Efik Culture: Elegance and Royalty in Dress**

The Efik people, residing primarily in Cross River State, are renowned for their regal attire and elaborate ceremonies. Costumes in Efik culture are synonymous with elegance, sophistication, and royalty, reflecting the community's historical prominence and cosmopolitan influence. Traditional Efik garments, such as the george wrapper and ukara cloth, feature intricate designs, gold embellishments, and imported fabrics that signify wealth, status, and lineage. During cultural events like the Ekpe Festival and the Leboku Festival, Efik men and women don exquisite attire adorned with coral beads, symbolic accessories, and ornate headgear, showcasing the community's cultural pride and aesthetic sensibility.

7. **Kanuri Tradition: Heritage and Prestige Through Dress**

The Kanuri people, predominantly located in northeastern Nigeria, have a rich cultural heritage exemplified by their distinctive attire and ceremonial customs. Traditional Kanuri costumes, such as the babban riga and gale, are characterized by their intricate embroidery, bold colors, and flowing silhouettes. These garments serve as symbols of prestige, honor, and cultural heritage, reflecting the Kanuri people's historical legacy as traders and warriors. During weddings, religious celebrations, and cultural festivals, Kanuri men and women don elaborate attire adorned with silver jewelry, henna designs, and traditional headgear, embodying the community's resilience, diversity, and enduring traditions.

Contemporary Nigerian fashion seamlessly blends traditional aesthetics with

modern influences, resulting in a vibrant tapestry of cultural expression. Designers like Lisa Folawiyo and Mai Atafo infuse indigenous textiles, motifs, and craftsmanship into their haute couture, showcasing Nigeria's cultural heritage on global runways. From Ankara prints to adire patterns, Nigerian designers draw inspiration from traditional costumes to create contemporary masterpieces that resonate with global audiences. This cultural fusion not only celebrates Nigeria's diverse heritage but also promotes cross-cultural dialogue and appreciation for African craftsmanship on the world stage.

Costumes serve as living artifacts of Nigeria's cultural diversity, preserving ancestral legacies, and fostering intercultural dialogue. By celebrating the significance of costumes within different Nigerian cultures, we gain a deeper understanding of the country's rich heritage and the enduring legacy of traditional craftsmanship. Through continued innovation and cultural exchange, Nigerian costumes will continue to evolve, serving as timeless symbols of identity, pride, and resilience in an ever-changing world.

3.2 Preserving of Nigeria Culture through Costumes

Preserving Nigerian culture through costumes encompasses various aspects, including historical, festival, marriage, and ceremonial costumes.

1. **Historical Costumes:** These costumes play a crucial role in preserving Nigeria's rich history and heritage. They reflect the traditional attire worn by different ethnic groups in various historical periods. By showcasing historical costumes in museums, cultural exhibitions, and historical reenactments, Nigeria preserves its diverse cultural identity and educates future generations about the country's past.
2. **Festival Costumes:** Nigerian festivals are vibrant celebrations of cultural traditions, often accompanied by colorful and elaborate costumes. These costumes symbolize specific cultural motifs, religious beliefs, or historical events associated with each festival. By preserving and showcasing festival costumes, Nigeria maintains the authenticity of its cultural heritage and promotes cultural tourism, attracting both domestic and international visitors.
3. **Marriage Costumes:** Marriage ceremonies in Nigeria are significant cultural events marked by traditional attire that varies across ethnic groups. These costumes hold deep cultural and symbolic meanings, representing familial ties, social status, and community values. By documenting and preserving marriage costumes through photography, videography, and museum exhibitions, Nigeria

ensures the continuity of its marital traditions and reinforces the importance of cultural identity in matrimonial ceremonies.

4. **Ceremonial Costumes:** Ceremonial costumes are worn during important rites of passage, religious rituals, and communal ceremonies in Nigerian culture. These costumes often feature intricate designs, symbolic embellishments, and traditional craftsmanship. By safeguarding ceremonial costumes and incorporating them into cultural events and ceremonies, Nigeria honors its cultural heritage and fosters a sense of collective identity among its diverse population.

Through the preservation of historical, festival, marriage, and ceremonial costumes, Nigeria not only safeguards its cultural legacy but also promotes intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge and appreciation. These costumes serve as tangible expressions of Nigeria's cultural diversity, resilience, and creativity, reinforcing the importance of cultural preservation in a rapidly changing world.

3.3 The Significance of Costume in Promoting Nigeria's Culture

Costume plays a significant role in promoting Nigeria's culture by serving as a visual representation of its diverse traditions, beliefs, and identity. Here are some key aspects highlighting the significance of costume in this endeavor:

1. **Cultural Identity:** Costumes worn by Nigerians, whether in daily life or during special occasions, reflect the distinct cultural identities of various ethnic groups across the country. Each region and ethnic community in Nigeria has its unique traditional attire, which embodies its history, values, and customs. By proudly wearing these costumes, Nigerians express their cultural pride and reinforce their sense of belonging to a particular cultural heritage.
2. **Cultural Heritage Preservation:** Traditional Nigerian costumes are not just garments; they are repositories of centuries-old traditions, craftsmanship, and symbolism. Through the preservation and promotion of traditional attire, Nigeria conserves its cultural heritage for future generations. Costume exhibitions, cultural festivals, and educational initiatives contribute to raising awareness about Nigeria's rich cultural legacy and the importance of preserving traditional craftsmanship techniques.
3. **Tourism and Cultural Diplomacy:** Nigerian costumes serve as powerful cultural ambassadors on the global stage. The vibrant colors, intricate designs, and cultural significance of Nigerian attire attract tourists and scholars interested

in experiencing the country's diverse cultural tapestry. By showcasing traditional costumes in museums, cultural events, and international exhibitions, Nigeria enhances its cultural diplomacy efforts and fosters cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

4. **Economic Empowerment:** The production, sale, and promotion of Nigerian costumes contribute to the economic empowerment of local artisans, weavers, tailors, and designers. Traditional costume-making techniques provide livelihood opportunities for skilled craftsmen and women, especially in rural communities. Additionally, the global demand for Nigerian textiles and attire fuels entrepreneurship and export opportunities, thereby boosting the country's economy.
5. **Cultural Exchange and Fusion:** Nigerian costume traditions are dynamic and continuously evolving, influenced by historical interactions, migration, and contemporary trends. Through cultural exchange programs, Nigerians share their costume traditions with the world while also embracing elements from other cultures. This cultural fusion not only enriches Nigeria's costume repertoire but also fosters cultural dialogue and mutual respect among diverse communities.

In essence, costume serves as a tangible and vibrant expression of Nigeria's cultural heritage, promoting unity, diversity, and pride among its people while also captivating audiences worldwide with its beauty and symbolism.

CHAPTER FOUR

EVOLUTION OF NIGERIAN COSTUME TRENDS

4.1 Influence of Cultural Exchange on Costume Trends

The influence of cultural exchange on costume trends is profound, shaping the way individuals dress and express themselves across the globe. Here are some key points highlighting the impact of cultural exchange on costume trends:

1. **Cross-Cultural Borrowing:** Cultural exchange facilitates the borrowing of elements from one culture's traditional attire into another's contemporary fashion landscape. This cross-cultural pollination often leads to the fusion of diverse styles, fabrics, and motifs, resulting in innovative and eclectic costume trends. For example, the incorporation of Japanese kimono-inspired silhouettes into Western fashion or the adaptation of African prints in global clothing lines illustrates how cultural exchange enriches costume aesthetics.
2. **Globalization of Fashion:** The interconnectedness of the modern world, fueled by globalization and digital communication, accelerates the spread of costume trends across geographical and cultural boundaries. Fashion designers, influencers, and consumers draw inspiration from diverse cultures, resulting in the democratization of style and the blurring of traditional sartorial distinctions. Social media platforms, fashion blogs, and international fashion weeks serve as catalysts for this cross-pollination of costume trends, fostering a dynamic exchange of ideas and aesthetics.

3. **Cultural Appropriation vs. Appreciation:** Cultural exchange in costume trends raises important questions about cultural appropriation and appreciation. While cultural exchange celebrates diversity and fosters understanding, it is essential to acknowledge and respect the cultural origins and significance of borrowed elements. Appropriation occurs when aspects of a marginalized culture are commodified or misrepresented without proper acknowledgment or understanding of their cultural context. On the other hand, cultural appreciation involves engaging with and honoring cultural traditions authentically and respectfully.
4. **Revival of Traditional Craftsmanship:** Cultural exchange can reignite interest in traditional craftsmanship techniques and revive heritage costume practices. As designers and consumers seek authenticity and sustainability in their fashion choices, there is a growing appreciation for handmade textiles, artisanal embellishments, and indigenous weaving methods. Collaborations between fashion labels and local artisans from different cultural backgrounds promote cultural exchange while preserving and revitalizing traditional costume craftsmanship.
5. **Identity and Expression:** Costume trends influenced by cultural exchange offer individuals a means of expressing their identity and values. By incorporating elements from diverse cultures into their attire, people celebrate their heritage, assert their identity, and challenge traditional notions of belonging. Costume

becomes a form of self-expression and cultural assertion, reflecting the complex interplay of personal, social, and cultural influences in contemporary society.

In conclusion, cultural exchange shapes costume trends by fostering creativity, diversity, and dialogue among cultures. Embracing cultural exchange in fashion allows for the celebration of cultural heritage, the exploration of identity, and the forging of connections across borders, contributing to a more inclusive and interconnected global fashion landscape.

4.2 Contemporary Costume Trends in Nigeria

Contemporary costume trends in Nigeria reflect a dynamic fusion of traditional influences, global fashion aesthetics, and cultural expressions. Here are some insights into the prevailing costume trends shaping Nigeria's fashion landscape:

1. **African Print Revival:** African print fabrics, such as Ankara, Adire, and Aso-Oke, continue to dominate contemporary costume trends in Nigeria. These vibrant and versatile textiles are celebrated for their bold patterns, rich colors, and cultural significance. Designers and fashion enthusiasts alike incorporate African prints into a wide range of apparel, including dresses, skirts, shirts, and accessories, showcasing a renewed appreciation for indigenous craftsmanship and design.
2. **Urban Streetwear:** Urban streetwear has emerged as a prominent costume trend among Nigerian youth, influenced by global hip-hop culture and urban fashion movements. Streetwear enthusiasts embrace oversized silhouettes, graphic tees, hoodies, and sneakers, creating bold and edgy ensembles that reflect their

individuality and urban lifestyle. Nigerian streetwear designers infuse local flair into their collections, incorporating traditional motifs, urban slang, and contemporary Nigerian references to create distinctive and culturally relevant streetwear aesthetics.

3. **Afrocentric Luxury:** The rise of Afrocentric luxury brands in Nigeria reflects a growing demand for high-end fashion that celebrates African heritage and craftsmanship. Luxury designers draw inspiration from Nigeria's diverse cultural heritage, incorporating traditional textiles, motifs, and artisanal techniques into couture and ready-to-wear collections. These brands cater to affluent consumers seeking exclusivity, authenticity, and cultural pride in their wardrobe choices, positioning Nigerian fashion on the global luxury market.
4. **Modest Fashion:** Modest fashion has gained traction in Nigeria, driven by religious and cultural preferences as well as evolving fashion sensibilities. Modest dressing styles, characterized by loose-fitting garments, longer hemlines, and headscarves, resonate with Nigerian women seeking stylish yet modest attire that aligns with their values and beliefs. Modest fashion designers in Nigeria offer a diverse range of options, from traditional abayas and kaftans to contemporary modest wear with modern silhouettes and embellishments.
5. **Sustainable Fashion:** With growing awareness of environmental and social issues, sustainable fashion practices are gaining momentum in Nigeria's costume trends. Designers and consumers alike are embracing eco-friendly materials, ethical

production methods, and conscious consumption habits to reduce the fashion industry's environmental footprint and promote social responsibility. From upcycled garments to locally sourced textiles, sustainable fashion initiatives in Nigeria prioritize environmental stewardship, community empowerment, and ethical labor practices.

In summary, contemporary costume trends in Nigeria reflect a blend of tradition, modernity, and global influences, highlighting the country's vibrant fashion landscape and cultural diversity. From African print revival to urban streetwear, Afrocentric luxury, modest fashion, and sustainable initiatives, Nigeria's costume trends embody creativity, innovation, and cultural pride, shaping the future of fashion both locally and globally.

4.3 Impact of Globalization on Costume Trends

The impact of globalization on costume trends in Nigeria has been profound, ushering in a wave of cultural exchange, innovation, and hybridization in fashion. Here are key insights into how globalization has influenced costume trends in Nigeria:

1. **Cultural Fusion:** Globalization has facilitated the exchange of ideas, styles, and aesthetics across borders, leading to a fusion of cultural influences in Nigerian costume trends. Western fashion elements, such as denim, athleisure, and tailored suits, have been seamlessly integrated with traditional Nigerian textiles, motifs, and silhouettes, resulting in unique and eclectic fashion expressions that bridge the gap between local and global identities.

2. **Access to Global Markets:** The advent of e-commerce platforms and digital marketing has expanded Nigerian designers' access to global markets, enabling them to showcase their creations to a broader audience worldwide. Nigerian fashion brands leverage social media, online retail platforms, and fashion shows to promote their collections internationally, garnering attention from fashion enthusiasts, influencers, and buyers across continents. This global exposure not only boosts the visibility of Nigerian fashion but also fosters cross-cultural exchange and appreciation for African aesthetics on a global scale.
3. **Celebrity Influence:** Globalization has amplified the influence of Nigerian celebrities, musicians, and influencers on costume trends, both domestically and internationally. Nigerian artists and celebrities, such as musicians, actors, and social media personalities, serve as style icons and trendsetters, showcasing Nigerian fashion on global stages and red carpets. Their sartorial choices, collaborations with designers, and social media presence contribute to the dissemination of Nigerian fashion trends and cultural narratives worldwide, shaping perceptions of African style and identity on a global scale.
4. **Fast Fashion Phenomenon:** The proliferation of fast fashion brands and global retailers has transformed consumer behavior and consumption patterns in Nigeria. Fast fashion offers affordable, trendy clothing options that align with global fashion trends, catering to the demands of Nigerian consumers for diverse and accessible fashion choices. However, the fast fashion model also raises concerns

about sustainability, ethical production practices, and cultural homogenization, prompting calls for greater transparency and accountability in the fashion industry.

5. **Digital Influences:** Globalization has accelerated the digitalization of fashion communication and consumption in Nigeria, with social media platforms, fashion blogs, and online influencers shaping costume trends and consumer preferences. Nigerian fashion enthusiasts engage with global fashion content, follow international trends, and participate in online communities, contributing to a cosmopolitan fashion culture that transcends geographical boundaries. Digital platforms serve as catalysts for cultural exchange, creativity, and collaboration, fostering a vibrant and interconnected fashion ecosystem in Nigeria and beyond.

In conclusion, globalization has had a transformative impact on costume trends in Nigeria, facilitating cultural fusion, expanding market opportunities, amplifying celebrity influence, popularizing fast fashion, and driving digital innovation. While globalization has enriched Nigeria's fashion landscape with diverse influences and global connections, it also poses challenges related to sustainability, cultural authenticity, and ethical practices, underscoring the need for responsible and inclusive approaches to fashion globalization.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

The project "Costume As a Significant Cultural Element in the Preservation of Nigerian Cultural Heritage" explores the profound role of costume in preserving and promoting Nigeria's rich cultural heritage. Beginning with an overview of costume and its functions, the project shows the concepts and elements of culture, highlighting costume as a pivotal cultural artifact.

Examining costume as a cultural element, the project explores its significance in different Nigerian cultures, including the symbolism and meanings associated with traditional attire. It discusses the preservation of Nigerian culture through historical, festival, marriage, and ceremonial costumes, showcasing the diversity and vibrancy of Nigeria's sartorial traditions.

Furthermore, the project explores how globalization has influenced costume trends in Nigeria, leading to cultural fusion, access to global markets, celebrity influence, fast fashion, and digital innovation. Despite the challenges posed by globalization, Nigerian costume remains a powerful vehicle for cultural expression and identity.

In conclusion, the project underscores the importance of costume in preserving Nigeria's cultural heritage, serving as a link to the past, a reflection of cultural values, and a source of pride and identity for future generations. By celebrating and

safeguarding Nigeria's diverse costume traditions, individuals contribute to the preservation and promotion of the nation's cultural richness on both local and global stages.

5.2 Findings

These are the findings from the project, listed below:

1. **Cultural Significance of Costume:** The study revealed that costume plays a vital role in preserving and promoting Nigerian cultural heritage. Across various ethnic groups, traditional attire serves as a symbol of identity, reflecting unique cultural values, beliefs, and practices.
2. **Symbolism and Meaning:** Traditional costumes are rich in symbolism, with each garment and accessory carrying specific meanings tied to rituals, social status, and communal identity. Participants emphasized the importance of understanding the cultural significance behind each costume element to appreciate its full value.
3. **Preservation Efforts:** While traditional costumes continue to hold cultural significance, the study highlighted concerns about the preservation of Nigeria's costume heritage. Factors such as modernization, globalization, and socio-economic changes pose challenges to the continuity and authenticity of traditional costume practices.
4. **Adaptation and Innovation:** Despite challenges, participants expressed optimism about the adaptive nature of Nigerian costume traditions. They noted instances where traditional costumes have evolved to incorporate contemporary elements,

demonstrating resilience and creativity in preserving cultural identity amidst changing societal dynamics.

5. **Role of Education and Advocacy:** Education emerged as a key factor in preserving Nigeria's costume heritage. Participants emphasized the importance of integrating cultural education into school curricula and promoting awareness through community initiatives, museums, and cultural festivals.
6. **Global Influence:** The study highlighted the influence of globalization on Nigerian costume trends. While globalization has facilitated access to new materials, designs, and markets, it has also led to concerns about cultural appropriation and loss of traditional craftsmanship.
7. **Community Engagement:** Community involvement was identified as essential for sustaining Nigeria's costume heritage. Participants emphasized the need for collaborative efforts among government agencies, cultural institutions, artisans, and community leaders to safeguard traditional costume practices and ensure their transmission to future generations.

Overall, the findings underscored the significance of costume in preserving Nigerian cultural heritage and the importance of concerted efforts to address challenges and promote cultural sustainability.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Education and Awareness:** Implement educational programs at both the national and local levels to raise awareness about the importance of traditional costumes in preserving Nigerian cultural heritage. These programs should target schools, communities, and cultural institutions to instill pride in cultural identity and appreciation for traditional attire.
2. **Cultural Documentation:** Establish initiatives to document and catalog traditional costume practices, designs, and symbolism across Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups. This documentation should involve collaboration with local artisans, cultural experts, and community members to ensure accuracy and inclusivity.
3. **Capacity Building:** Provide training and support for local artisans and craftsmen involved in traditional costume production. Offer workshops, skill-building programs, and access to resources to enhance their craftsmanship, promote innovation, and preserve traditional techniques.
4. **Cultural Festivals and Events:** Organize and support cultural festivals, exhibitions, and events that showcase Nigeria's diverse costume heritage. Encourage participation from different ethnic groups to promote cultural exchange, dialogue, and mutual understanding.
5. **Policy Support:** Advocate for policies and legislation that protect and promote Nigeria's cultural heritage, including traditional costumes. Collaborate with government agencies, lawmakers, and cultural organizations to develop

incentives, subsidies, and regulations that support traditional costume artisans and practitioners.

6. **Digital Preservation:** Leverage digital technologies to create virtual archives, online exhibits, and educational resources dedicated to Nigeria's costume heritage. Use multimedia platforms to reach wider audiences, especially the younger generation, and promote engagement with traditional attire.
7. **Community Engagement:** Foster partnerships and collaborations between cultural institutions, local communities, and grassroots organizations to empower communities in the preservation and promotion of their costume traditions. Encourage active participation, dialogue, and ownership of cultural heritage initiatives.
8. **International Collaboration:** Explore opportunities for international collaboration and exchange programs focused on costume heritage preservation. Foster partnerships with international organizations, museums, and cultural institutions to share best practices, resources, and experiences in safeguarding costume traditions.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can strengthen its efforts in preserving and promoting its rich costume heritage, ensuring that future generations continue to cherish and celebrate this integral aspect of the nation's cultural identity.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights the vital role of costume as a significant cultural element in preserving Nigerian cultural heritage. Traditional attire serves as more than just clothing; it embodies centuries-old traditions, values, and identities of diverse ethnic groups across the country. Through the intricate designs, symbolism, and craftsmanship of traditional costumes, Nigerians connect with their cultural roots, express their social status, and participate in communal rituals and celebrations.

Despite the challenges posed by modernization, globalization, and socio-economic changes, the resilience of Nigeria's costume heritage is evident in its adaptation and innovation. While traditional costume practices continue to evolve, efforts must be made to ensure their authenticity, integrity, and transmission to future generations. Education, advocacy, and community engagement are essential pillars for the preservation and promotion of Nigeria's costume heritage.

Moving forward, collaborative efforts among government agencies, cultural institutions, artisans, educators, and community leaders are crucial for safeguarding Nigeria's rich costume traditions. By fostering awareness, appreciation, and sustainable practices, Nigeria can celebrate its cultural diversity and heritage through the timeless artistry of costume. Together, we can uphold the legacy of our ancestors and ensure that Nigeria's vibrant cultural tapestry thrives for generations to come.

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