

A Comparative Study Of Occurrence Of Ankara, Lace And Other Fabrics In Christian Worship Centres In Osogbo

Adeola Abiodun Adeoti

Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology,
Ogbomoso, Nigeria



Abstract – Many Christians put on decent or a particular dress when attending churches especially on Sunday worship services. There had been dearth of literatures on textile art tradition especially Ankara, lace and other fabrics which this study is about to proffer solution to. Therefore the study aims at documenting the analysis of the fabrics that are predominantly used for Sunday services.. The study deals with the comparative occurrence of Ankara, lace and other fabrics in churches especially during Sunday services. The research design is exploratory and descriptive while both qualitative and quantitative research methods are used in gathering and formulating the data. The study used the first 100 attendees as samples in five different churches on Sundays for the analysis totaling 500 samples. The study classified the attendees into male and female based on the visual perception of their attires. Findings reveal that majority of the worshippers in various worship centres dress in their special clothes to the worship centres on Sundays. Dressing in lace or Ankara attire shows that the fabrics are more popular than any other materials.

Keywords – Sunday Best, Ankara, Lace, Outfit, Christian, Worship Centre.

I. INTRODUCTION

For many Yoruba Christians, Sunday service is an event in which they want to appear in their very best attires when coming to the presence of God and to meet the church family and the loved ones. In so much that the Sunday service lasts for few hours, some people believe that Sunday service is a time to display the new style in vogue while some feel comfortable to be in God's presence with the attire. The service context therefore provides opportunity for them to display various fashion and styles in vogue, especially with such fabric as Ankara, lace and few other fabric types.

Ankara and lace fabrics became popular a couple of decades ago and since then, they had become the dressing for special occasions such as wedding, birthday or funeral ceremonies, holy days like Christmas, Easter or Sunday services. Ankara fabrics that had one time been regarded as the fabric of the low class and the poor are now the attire for all and sundry.

Since the inception of civilization, characteristic of clothing maintain social hierarchy and it eventually changed when there began mass manufacturing and the development of urban society [1]. He further observed that machines-made fabrics were produced in place of handmade clothing. Fascinating and beautiful fabrics like Ankara and lace fabrics were produced for the masses. Ankara fabrics reared its head into the fashion world and simple lace textile materials that are moderately cheap were produced. Reference [2] reiterated that it does not matter whether the clothes one wears are nice or casual, Christians wear what is appropriate according to the means of what they have to wear.

Appearance of people going to worship centres for Sunday services are always special and not casual. The dressing pattern of worshippers both males and females, young and old suggest they are going to a special place. Therefore, people tend to put on their "Sunday Best", either to showcase the new attire sewn or to fellowship with other brethren and make themselves comfortable in the presence of God and among peers. The type of dresses that are predominant in these worship centres are

Ankara, lace, and other fabrics such as Guinea brocade, plain “Senator” fabric, plain “Atiku” material, or even English wears. This study is to compare the use of these fabrics regarded as ‘Sunday best. Therefore, the fabrics worn are grouped into three *viz*: Ankara, lace and other fabrics. This will help to identify the type of fabric more preferred as Sunday best for both males and females.

Reference [3] and [4] identified people’s preference of textile fabrics by consumers while Singhri and Sondhi (2006), Workman *et. al.* (2013) and Cho *et. al.* (2014) in [5] buttressed this by adding that gender has great influence on the shopping of textile fabrics. They believed that women purchase fabrics more than males because women care more about fit-ability and comfort-ability of fabrics in them. Women generally prefer to display their individuality and creativity through their clothes. This helps them to have self-esteem and self-acceptance

This study is to solve the problem of dearth of literatures in this area of textile history that had been long neglected. The early textile scholars focused on hand woven fabrics, though, later there were scholars that worked on Ankara and lace fabrics, but there had been no attention on comparing the occurrence of these two important fabrics being used on Sunday services for Christians in Yorubaland, hence this study is expedient to be studied at this time the fabric is extensively being used. In the light of this, this study focuses on the occurrence of these two fabrics – Ankara and lace, and other fabrics that are been used as Sunday best for worshippers to their various worship centres with the aim of documenting the analysis of the fabrics that are predominantly used for Sunday services. The objectives are to highlight the types of dresses that are commonly used by Christians and to know the reasons for their choice of each dress being worn on Sundays to churches. The study intends to answer some agitating questions so as to formulate the data; such as, which type of dress does each worshipper like to wear for any occasion?. Which one does he/she prefers to wear while coming to the church on Sundays especially and why the choice of that particular dress? How many of such dresses are in his wardrobe? Does he/she purchased it as *aso-ebi*?, etc.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study adopted exploratory and descriptive research design for gathering the necessary information using both qualitative and quantitative methods to formulate the data collected. The study attempted to discover which of these fabrics is more favoured by either men or women attending the worship centres especially during Sunday services. The study area is Osogbo metropolitan city, the state capital of Osun State, where five different mega worship centres were randomly selected as case study. The churches are big enough to occupy over 2000 worshippers at any Sunday service and at the same time situated in different locations of the city. The churches are:

1. Union Baptist Church, Odi-Olowo, Osogbo
2. Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Zion Mega Province 6, Osogbo
3. Jesus Life Christian Assembly Blessed Chapel, Asubiaro, Osogbo
4. Methodist Church, Isale-Aro, Osogbo
5. Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C.) Miracle Centre Alekuwodo, Osogbo

The first 100 attendees in the church on Sundays was used as samples making 500 respondents for the total analysis. The first table shows the total number of people in Ankara, lace and other fabrics grouped together as the third fabric. The second table shows the number of males and females, wearing Ankara, lace, and other fabrics grouped together as the third fabric. Each selected church was visited early on Sunday morning before the worshippers get to the church. The aim is to do the physical counting of how many worshippers are in either Ankara, lace or other fabrics and separate males from females with the attires. The research based its analysis on the group that has the highest number of fabric as the attire that is more favoured in the worship centres during Sunday services.

III. DISCUSSION

3.1 Ankara and Lace Fabrics

Ankara and Lace outfits are considered comfortable as dress wears to worship centres on Sundays. Majority feel free to put on Ankara or lace attire because it is easy to wear. Apart from this, the fabric allows worshippers feel prepared to worship and to participate actively in the church with the outfit worn, which is usually unique and beautifully designed because of the

creativity of styles involved. Dressing on most occasions makes people look good and happy. It boosts the wearer's self-esteem and self-respect (Fig. 1).

3.1.1 *Ankara fabrics description and usages:*

Ankara fabric, known as African Wax Print is not of African origin, it is neither an African textile nor a Nigerian textile. It came from Dutch hence the name Dutch Wax. The word 'Ankara', according to [6], derives its name from *Adinkara*, which is the name given to cotton print in Ghana. Ankara, therefore, in Nigeria, it is an appellation given to 'The Real Dutch Wax' imitation. Ankara fabrics are of two types: these are resist (wax) and roller prints (fancy). Originally, the fabric is an imitation of Indonesian batik in Holland by the Dutch textile manufacturers [7]. The machine produces the fabric in larger quantities thereby allowing the fabric to have stylized realistic images, portraits and at times inclusion of texts. This allows the fabric to be moderately cheaper than hand woven materials. Ankara is 100% cotton and it comes with vibrant designs. The fabric is usually a colourful cloth and principally connected with Africa because of its tribal-like patterns and designs.

Reference [8] reiterated that Ankara has good strength; it is firm and smooth to touch and allows body heat to pass through. Reference [9] noted that Ankara attracts moisture quickly and dries faster. It has an ability to give it a cooling effect and makes it ideal for African weather. Ankara has vibrant colours and interesting graphic patterns, which helps the fashion designers to combine and match with other existing fabrics such as lace, aso-oke, guinea brocade, chiffon, satin, plain cotton and the likes to produce lovely outfits that go beyond the designers' originality.

In the light of this, people coming to the worship centres with fascinating attires are more comfortable because they feel satisfied to belong to at least the middle class if not the high class among peers. In time past, Ankara fabric was known as the attire of the poor who cannot afford the western form of clothing that was common in Nigeria at that time, but today, the fashion designers have boosted the values of the fabric, thereby making it to be a choice of the middle or high class [10]. The highest patrons of Ankara in worship centres are the women with various fashion attires. Hence, one cannot really say the fabric belongs to any of the lower class again. People also use Ankara in creating beautiful accessories such as shoes, bags, earrings, phone pouch, ties, etc to match the dress worn on most occasions. Therefore, when people come to church on Sundays, they have the intention of either displaying new design of their attire or comfortably worshipping God among peers. Many people consider Ankara to be a fabric worn either on regular occasions or on special occasions like Sunday worship services.

3.1.2 *Lace fabric and description of usage:*

Lace is an easily broken open work fabric consisting of arrangements of yarns or holes formed into web-like and complex designs. Reference [11] buttressed this that lace is a decorative fabric consisting of decorative openwork of threads that have been twisted, looped and intertwined to form patterns. Therefore, lace can be described as an open work that is patterned decoratively and textured with holes.

Lace is a kind of fabric preferred by most women because of its popularity and durability. It could maintain its texture and colour for quite a very long time, which makes it to be different from other fabrics like Guinea brocade and Ankara. Some lace fabrics have smooth texture while some have rough and hard textures. Reference [12] reiterated that the easy quality of lace fabric makes it the most preferred choice for occasions like Sunday service or other social events.

There are different types of lace fabrics worn to churches on Sundays. Especially women complying with latest fashion trends in Nigeria sew these materials into beautiful and fascinating outfits. Some of the women combine the lace fabrics with other contemporary fabrics like satin, chiffon plain cotton materials, etc. Some of the combinations are light and calm, while some add a touch of elegance to the outfit, which gives attractive look on the wearer. Mostly, out of the ones examined, French lace and cord lace are very predominant combined with other fabrics making the fabrics look fascinating on the wearers no matter the figure (Fig. 2).



Fig 1: A man wearing Ankara fabric
Photograph by Adeoti, A.A. (2021)



Figure 2: A woman wearing gorgeously sewn Lace fabric
Photograph by Adeoti, A.A. (2021)



Figure 3: A woman wearing a dress with combination of lace and Ankara fabric

Photograph by Adeoti, A.A. (2021)

IV. FINDINGS

Five churches were selected in Osogbo metropolitan city for this study. These churches are:

1. Union Baptist Church, Odi-Olowo, Osogbo
2. Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Zion Mega Province 6, Osogbo
3. Jesus Life Christian Assembly Blessed Chapel, Asubiaro, Osogbo
4. Methodist Church, Isale-Aro, Osogbo
5. Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C.) Miracle Centre, Alekuwodo, Osogbo

Each of the churches was visited on different Sunday services. The first 100 attendees in the church both males and females were examined and the findings revealed that:

TABLE 1

DRESS WEAR AS 'SUNDAY BEST' TO THE CHURCH ON SUNDAYS				
S/N	CHURCH	ANKARA	LACE	OTHERS
1.	Union Baptist Church, Odi-Olowo, Osogbo	33	38	29
2.	R.C.C.G., Zion Mega Province 6, Osogbo	28	50	22
3.	Jesus Life Christian Assembly, The Blessed Chapel, Asubiaro, Osogbo	35	35	30
4.	Methodist Church, Isale-Aro, Osogbo	36	41	23
5.	C.A.C. Miracle Centre, Alekuwodo, Osogbo	48	31	21
	TOTAL	180	195	125

The above table shows that out of the first 100 worshippers that came for service at Union Baptist Church, Odi-Olowo, Osogbo on the said Sunday, 33 people put on Ankara outfit, 38 people put on lace attire while 29 of them were in other materials like Guinea, Senator or English wears. At R.C.C.G, Zion Mega Province 6, 28 people were in Ankara outfit, 50 people were in lace outfit while 22 were in other materials. At Jesus Life Christian Assembly, 35 people put of Ankara attire, 35 of them were in lace outfit while the rest 30 people were in other materials. At Methodist Church Isale-Aro, out of the first 100 worshippers, 36 were in Ankara outfit, 41 were in lace attire while 23 put on other materials. Also at C.A.C., Miracle Centre, 48 people were in Ankara outfit, 31 were in lace attire while 21 of them were in other materials.

Therefore, out of the 500 worshippers selected for this study using 100 people in each of the 5 selected churches, 180 worshippers were in Ankara outfit, 195 put on lace fabrics while 125 were in other contemporary fabrics. This shows that lace fabric is favoured most by people during Sunday worship services, followed by Ankara. Other contemporary fabrics are not as popular in the church on Sundays as Ankara and lace fabrics.

TABLE 2

DRESS-WEARS AS 'SUNDAY BEST' ON GENDER BASIS						
S/N	CHURCH	ANKARA		LACE		OTH ERS
		Mal e	Fema le	Male	Fema le	
1.	Union Baptist Church, Odi-Olowo, Osogbo	8	25	8	30	29
2.	R.C.C.G., Zion Mega Province 6, Osogbo	11	17	7	43	22
3.	Jesus Life Christian Assembly, The Blessed Chapel Asubiaro, Osogbo	12	23	5	30	30
4.	Methodist Church, Isale-Aro, Osogbo	16	20	11	30	23
5.	C.A.C.,Miracle CentreAlekuwodo, Osogbo	13	35	6	25	21
	TOTAL	60	120	37	158	125
	PERCENTAGE	12 %	24%	7.4%	31.6 %	25%

Table 2 reveals that both male and female worshippers put on Ankara or lace fabrics when coming to the church; some are also in other contemporary materials. At Union Baptist Church, Odi-Olowo, it shows that out of the 33 people that put on Ankara outfit, 8 were males while 25 of them were females, and out of the 38 people that put on lace fabrics, 8 of them were males while 30 worshippers were females. At R.C.C.G., Zion Mega, out of the 28 people that appeared in Ankara dress, 11 of them were males, while 17 of them were females, and out of the 50 worshippers that put on lace dress, only 7 of them were males while the rest 43 worshippers were females. At Jesus Life Christian Assembly, out of 35 people that appeared in Ankara outfit, 12 of them were males while 23 of them were females, and among the 35 that put on lace attire, only 5 of the were males while 30 were females. At Methodist Church, Isale Aro, out of 36 people that put on Ankara outfit, 16 of them were males while 20 of them were females and among the 41 that put on lace fabrics, 11 of them were males while 30 of them were females. Also at C.A.C. Miracle Centre, out of 48 Ankara wearers, 13 were males while 35 were females. Out of 31 worshippers that are in lace attires, only 6 of them were males while 25 of them were females.

From this table, it can be deduced that women use Ankara fabric more than men. It shows that out of the 500 samples from 5 selected churches, only 60 men were in Ankara making 12% of the total number while the number of the women in Ankara was 120 making 24% of the total number. In the case of lace wearers, the total number of men was 37 making 7.4% of the total number, 158 (31.6%) women put on lace fabric/ while 125 appeared in other contemporary fabrics making 25% of the total sample.

From the table above, Finding shows that women are the highest users of Ankara and lace fabrics in worship centres on Sundays. Women wear Ankara and lace more than men do. However, men wear Ankara and lace fabrics but majority of them prefer to wear other contemporary fabrics to the church on Sunday.

From the table also, out of Ankara and lace fabrics, men still prefer Ankara fabric to lace fabric because of its lightweight texture. Finding shows that the number of men wearing lace to the worship centre on Sunday services is very few. Men usually put on Plain “Atiku” fabric, (Figure 4), Plain “Senator” fabric (Figure 5), Guinea brocade or English wear, while considerable numbers of women appear in gorgeous lace attire or beautifully and creatively sewn Ankara fabrics when coming to the church on Sundays (Figures 6,7,8).



Figure 4: A man wearing Plain “Atiku” fabric

Photograph by Adeoti, A.A. (2021)



Figure 5: A man wearing Plain “Senator” fabric

Photograph by Adeoti, A.A. (2021)



Fig. 6: A woman wearing lace fabric combined with satin fabric to make an attire.

Photograph by Adeoti, A. A. (2021)



Fig.7: A lady wearing Ankara fabric combined with plain material to make an attire

Photograph by Adeoti, A. A. (2021)



Fig.8: A woman wearing commemorative Ankara fabric with text only

Photograph by Adeoti, A.A. (2021)

The findings therefore revealed that majority of the people coming to worship centres especially during Sunday services dress in lace or Ankara fabric or even the mixture of the two fabrics

V. CONCLUSION

In time past, lace fabric was known to be the fabric of the high class and so it was highly expensive while Ankara was regarded as fabric of the poor and those who could not afford the imported fabric at that time. Today, both high and low classes of people patronize the fabrics. The two fabrics are well favoured as well as other fabrics in worship centres. In addition, people are comfortable in the presence of God because they prefer to be in their ‘Sunday Best’ while coming to the church. However, people patronize Ankara and lace fabrics more than the other contemporary fabrics on Sundays. The fabric worn to the church on Sundays is always very special to the wearer and thereby making him or her good looking among his / her peers in the church.

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