

**AVAILABILITY AND UTILISATION OF TRADITIONAL MATERIAL
CULTURE IN FASHION DESIGN**

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, who is a firm believer in education, and to the rest of my family, who have always believed in me.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Accessories:* Items that are used for enhancement for example, jewellery, shoes and handbag.
- Cicatrization:* A form of tattooing process practiced by some communities in traditional Kenya different from scarification (cultural markings on the body that have a symbolic meaning).
- Chignon:* A French term meaning 'a roll of hair worn at the back of the neck.
- Clitoridectomy:* Female circumcision. It is practiced in some communities in Kenya.
- Memorial Poles:* These are simple sculptures made by some communities in Kenyan to commemorate their ancestors or significant events.
- Fashion:* Style in clothing in relation to textile, ornamentation and general appearance.
- Fashion Design:* Is the application of decorative work and aesthetics to clothing and accessories.(The term has been capitalised to denote it as its own entity).

- Fashion House:* Refers to a particular designer's brand. Fashions produced by these designers are often termed Haute Couture, that is "high fashion".
- Fashion Shop:* An entity that sells fashionable products like clothing and accessories.
- High -end:* The most expensive of a range of fashion products and apparel. Also referred to as "haute couture".
- Material Culture:* Symbolic and functional objects a community uses in daily life such as bones, leather/hides, natural beads, seeds, wood, coconut shells, ostrich egg shells and feathers, guards, iron ore, pottery, animal teeth, sisal, etc. that are relevant to that particular community.
- Seclusion (initiation):* In many traditional Kenyan cultures it was a time whereby young initiates were separated from the rest of the community over period of time and were taught the importance of being responsible members of society when they became adults. It was usually followed by an initiation ceremony.
- Witchdoctor:* Is a pejorative term and was used during colonial times to mean someone who practised evil medicine.

ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	-	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AMREF	-	African Medical and Research Foundation
CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer
EPZ	-	Export Processing Zone
FAFA	-	Festival for African Fashion and Arts
UCLA	-	University of California, Los Angeles
USA	-	United States of America
USAID	-	United States Agency for International Development

ABSTRACT

The diverse cultures of many Kenyan communities may have not been explored adequately when it comes to the utilisation of traditional material culture for Fashion Design. This study sought to explore the availability and utilisation of material culture of some Kenyan communities as a source of inspiration in contemporary Fashion Design. The objectives of the study were to analyze material culture used by Fashion Designers in Nairobi, Kenya and also to identify the challenges facing the Kenyan Fashion Industry in relation to cultural significance. The study was anchored on two theories of fashion: 'The Language of Cloths' by Lurie (2000) and 'Power and Style' by Gaulme (2013). The first theory explains that clothing is a form of communication while the second explains the evolution of costume. The conceptual framework illustrates how Contemporary Fashion Design (Dependent Variable) can be inspired by Material Culture (Independent Variables) with the design being influenced by historical and contemporary influences (Intervening Variables). A descriptive research design based on an historical approach was used to provide both quantitative and qualitative data. The secondary data was sourced from The National Museums of Kenya, The National Archives and Institutional Libraries all based in Nairobi. Primary data was collected using questionnaires and face to face interviews. The secondary data gave historical information on the availability and utilisation of Kenyan material culture sourced from different Kenyan communities while primary data gave information on the utilisation of material culture on contemporary Kenyan Fashion. The target population was sourced using stratified and snowball sampling methods. The selected population consisted of College/University students, Formal and informally employed consumers and Fashion Shops/Houses that produce and sell culturally-inspired products. The primary data was analysed using descriptive statistics in three stages: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. The findings of this study indicate that material culture, as a source of inspiration, has not been adequately utilised in Kenyan Fashion Design due to a variety of reasons. Therefore the overall recommendation of this study is to sensitize both the Kenyan market and the Fashion Industry on the availability and utilisation of material culture as a source of inspiration for contemporary Kenyan Fashion Design and the Kenyan Fashion Design Industry in general.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This research sought to explore the availability and utilisation of traditional material culture on Kenyan fashion because it can benefit the country as a whole and bring its citizens together by promoting appreciation through creating awareness of cultural existence of various communities within the country. This chapter contains the following

- i) A brief background to the study.
- ii) The statement of the problem.
- iii) Objectives of the study.
- iv) Research questions.
- v) Rationale and Significance of the study

1.1 Background to the Study

Different communities in Kenya used various material cultures over the years. While some communities used them to express similar cultural ideas, some applied them differently. This research was to provide information on how various Kenyan communities utilized various aspects of their material culture and the meanings they attached to them when incorporating them in their attires and other objects.

Traditionally, many Kenyan communities incorporated material culture in their style of dressing to represent the role they played in society. They

passed these traditions down to the younger generation which contributed in the preservation of culture. Among its role was to communicate visually to the larger audience on identification and status of its society members and for recognition of one's occupation or achievements. These communities dressed in full regalia for societal occasions and functions. For instance, the Njemps youths (Rift Valley) had to wear circumcision regalia to walk around in for a month to announce their circumcision and were then considered young warriors and no longer children. They wore black dyed hide knotted over one shoulder which fell loosely to the ground. It was held in position around the waist by a string of cowries. Two ostrich feathers were fastened behind the youth's ears and a chain of crudely shaped iron rings hung from their shoulders. Each boy carried a small bow and arrow whose points were covered with balls of dried resin (Adamson, 1967).

The various aspects of material culture in Kenya could broadly express the following: -

- i. A ruler's dignity e.g the Luo community
- ii. A priest's rank e.g the Maasai community
- iii. Status of married women e.g the Turkana community
- iv. Denote the charm of a young girl e.g the Turkana and the Tigania communities
- v. Success of a hunter or warrior e.g the Marakwet and the Samburu communities

vi. Prestige e.g the Luo, the Maasai, and the Taita communities

African culture was influenced by legends, myths and proverbs of the past (Karp & Bird, 1980). The utilisation of traditional material culture by some Kenyan communities was to honour these legends and myths. This has been revealed in the Review of Related Literature of this study.

According to data gathered from a variety of related literature the following are few examples of material culture used by some Kenyan communities explaining their significance. The first example is the use of cowries by various Kenyan communities as part of their attires. Among them are, the Luo, Kikuyu, Luhya, Embu and Galla. The significance of wearing cowries was believed to bring about wealth and fertility to the wearer as shown on Plate 1 on page 90 of this study.

Another example of material culture includes the teeth, claws or horns of a strong animal. Among the Luos, incorporation of material culture whereby a witchdoctor's face like the one on page 76 in plate 3 (of this study) was under a wooden headdress in which 7 antelope horns were attached in order to signify power. More dangled from face and neck (Adamson, 1967).

Wood from a tree found in the Kaya forest where they built shrines was known to harbour powerful spirits, signified power. Plate 4 (p.77) shows a painting by Adamson of a Duruma witchdoctor with a wooden staff, the top bore carvings of a man and a woman. The woman is depicted in full detail while the man's anatomy is incomplete. According to Adamson, the witchdoctor believed that medicine was not enough therefore the patient

should keep a picture of the illness under his head while he slept to make it drive the devil out of his body. He consulted a spirit and carried the image in the form of a carved wooden doll. The geometric designs on the wooden staff were intended to represent the body's bone structure which corresponded with older memorial poles by the *Kaya Chonyi* (coastal Kenya). The wooden staffs were carved from sacred trees found in the special shrine (Kaya) where elders conducted rituals to ancestral spirits.

Brown (1971) observed that the decorative arts in Kenya were almost always geometric and may have originally been realistic representations of natural or man-made objects but resulting from increased stylization over the years, they became geometric patterns. An example is the case of the *vigango* memorial poles of the Mijikenda which were simple round poles or rectangular posts with striking impressive heads, sometimes naturalistically carved.

Agthe (1990) explains that few works of East African art exist and this may be due to the nomadic nature of the various communities found along this region. The above reason may have contributed to the few or lack of data on some Kenyan communities especially in their cultural attires. The argument presented was that, it was complex to produce many artworks while on the move since it would have been cumbersome to carry them along on their frequent movements.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the availability of traditional material culture, fashion designers have not adequately utilised them in creating their fashion designs. The purpose of this study was to reveal through research, the importance of traditional material culture in Kenyan fashion.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the availability of traditional material culture used by Fashion Designers of selected Kenyan communities.
2. Analyze traditional material culture used by Fashion Designers in Kenya. .
3. Identify the challenges facing the Kenyan fashion industry in relation to the use of material culture.
4. Suggest strategies for incorporation of traditional material culture in Fashion Design.

1.4 Research Questions

Given the above set of objectives, research questions were:

1. What are the available traditional material cultural elements that can be used in Fashion Design?

2. In what way have Kenyan Fashion Designers utilised traditional material culture?
3. What are the challenges Fashion Designers in Kenya face when incorporating traditional material culture in Fashion Design?
4. What strategies can be suggested to promote the utilisation of traditional material culture by Fashion Designers in Kenya and consumers?

Hypothesis:

The hypothesis was that traditional Kenyan material culture may have not been significantly utilised as a source of inspiration in Kenyan Fashion Design.

1.5 Rationale and Significance of the Study

Rationale:

The rationale of this study was to provide fashion designers with information on the availability of traditional material culture which can be utilised as a source of inspiration in Fashion Design. This study revealed that there is still a significant attachment to material culture in many Kenyan communities. These findings are important in encouraging the utilisation of traditional material culture in contemporary Fashion Design.

Significance of the Study:

Little research has been done on the availability and utilisation of traditional material culture in Fashion Design in Kenya. The findings of this study are important in encouraging the appreciation of, identification with, and utilisation of traditional material culture and to show aspiring fashion designers ways of using traditional material culture for contemporary fashion.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation

Scope:

The research was carried out in the city of Nairobi (Kenya) because it is a central location where different communities come together to trade in their various traditional material culture in markets like Maasai market and kariokor market (Starehe). A number of Fashion Design shops participate in fashion fairs organized within the county.

Limitations:

According to the census of 2009, Kenya has diverse cultures of up to about 69 individual languages, although these communities may have similar traditional material culture, their practices are varied. The researcher selected few communities based on the availability of credible data on utilisation of traditional material culture in fashion design.

Secondary research on traditional Kenyan material culture was carried out in the National Museums of Kenya, The National Archives resource

centre, The African Heritage and University library. These institutions contained books and articles about availability and utilisation of traditional material culture. The primary data of the study was collected from fashion shops and educational institutions.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This Chapter contains a review of related literature which provides information regarding the Kenyan fashion culture from the pre-colonial times to the modern day. It also highlights the conceptual and theoretical frameworks used in the study.

2.1 Kenyan Fashion Design in the Pre colonial Era

Initially, Kenyan communities like the Maasai, Luo, Tigania, and Mijikenda among others, were recognized by their mode of dress, language, beliefs and traditions. The cultural diversity of these Kenyan communities is what may have kept them estranged from each other initially. However, when Kenya became a British colony and various religions e.g. Islam and Christianity began to spread within the country, there came about some form of cohesion among these communities. These communities were united by studying in *madrassa* (Islamic classes) or by attending Christian schools together on common grounds in order to learn how to read and write. This made them begin speaking a common language like English or Kiswahili as opposed to their mother tongue as they interacted with each other. This cohesion was good because it brought about unity among various communities as they began to interact with one another.

Colonisation by the British meant that Kenyan communities would adopt a European way of life and therefore the communities that settled close

to the British and their church missions were taught the English language so that they could read and understand the Bible while some of the Kenyan communities that had settled close to the Arabs learned the Islam culture. Due to these influences, the Kenyan communities that neighbored the Arabs or the British began to adopt a different lifestyle from their traditional way of life in order to fit in with the new culture that was introduced to them.

The researcher attributes the above influences to what may have contributed to the hindrance in the significant use of traditional material culture. This study has attempted to discuss the above argument by describing a few examples within this chapter.

According to Routledge (1910), in describing the Akikuyu (central Kenya) clothing had significance that was influenced by the day to day life experiences of a community as a whole and this also applied to several other Kenyan communities. Clothing signified and symbolized rites of passage, status in society, wealth, leadership and various roles in society.

An observation made by the researcher while going through various related literature was that the traditional materials utilized in the production of these cultural objects were often obtained from the environment or borrowed or traded from various communities that interacted with each other. These indigenous materials usually had their own symbolic significance. Another observation made by the researcher was that the majority of traditional Kenyan material culture was produced mostly for functional purposes, which

was the primary concern in society. The secondary purpose was for beautification and in some communities for pleasure for example a snuff box.

2.1.1 Functional Purpose of Material Culture in Fashion Design

In traditional society, the main function of material culture was for identification within that particular society. They were worn daily to distinguish status in society and the different levels of rites of passage a community member had undergone. They were also used to differentiate the various occupations e.g. 'witchdoctor' (uses spirits to heal or protect), medicine man (uses herbs to heal), circumciser, rainmaker among others; they were also worn on occasions like weddings, funerals and initiation. An example is a married Turkana woman's attire from the *Ngikos Omoroko* clan as shown in Figure 9, p.79 of this study and sourced from (Barrett, 1998).

Turkana women wore a pinafore (over-garment) made from leather of a young black goat and for unmarried girls, they would attach their pinafores with *ngidany* (black metal studs). When a Turkana woman got married, their pinafores were smeared with red ochre or black soil. The skins that all married women wore came from animals with horns unless the husband died and the reason for this was that it signified bad luck if a woman wore skins from a hornless animal while the husband was still alive (Barrett, 1998).

The Turkana women also shaved the sides of their hair and twisted at the top into little strands like tassels from the crown down the neck as shown in Figure 10, p. 79 of this study. They perforated their ears all along the edge

onto which they put iron rings or oval shaped plates through the lobes. Their shoulders, neck and breasts were covered with coils of small discs chipped from ostrich eggs. They wore a narrow hide apron decorated with beads that formed a slit hide skirt at the back. The skirt was held in position by a belt of metal beads (Adamson 1967). Additionally, Turkana women used material culture like ostrich eggs, iron rings and oval shaped plates as part of their fashion and accessories. The functional significance for incorporating the above items was for the Turkana women to purposely be recognized in society as married, but the items were also considered as part of jewellery to enhance a woman's beauty.

The above examples indicate that the Turkana community had a system of identification which had significance in acknowledging ones marital status and at the same time involved the incorporation of material culture as part of fashion and accessory that also served a functional purpose. Indeed, even today, the Turkana still maintain these traditions.

Another example of the use of material culture is a Kikuyu bride's attire as shown in on Plate 9 on Page 82 of this study. The bride is adorned with various accessories made out of materials. Among her jewellery is *hang'i* - which was made of a thin ½ mm gauge iron wire with circles of thin iron wire on to which were threaded very small pink, red, dark blue black and white beads. *Hang'i* was worn by young women and initiated girls on each ear (300 to a bunch) (Routledge, 1910). Its function was not only for aesthetic

value but also served to identify a young initiated woman in the Kikuyu community.

The necklace from the Kikuyu community shown on Plate 11 on Page 93 of this study may qualify as a fashion accessory made from indigenous material as it is worn for aesthetic purposes. The argument to support the above statement is that, the piece of jewellery from a plant known as *Malilichua* (Akikuyu) was a valuable necklace made of leaves that had a pleasant scent. The plant came from Lake Naivasha and was obtained from the Maasai through trade. According to Routledge (1910:32), the Akikuyu made the necklace, each element consisting of a section of one or more leaves compressed into a solid cone. Each cone was held tightly against its neighbour by a knotted cord encircling its larger end (Routledge, 1910:32).

The necklace described above is another example of a functional fashion item that was made from indigenous material culture and used traditionally as a piece of jewellery for beauty and enhancement while at the same time signifying worth due to its pleasant scent.

The Tigania, a sub-community from Embu in Mt. Kenya region, had a fashion item known as *Gitaita* (Plate 13 on Page 84 of this study) for young women who were confined and fattened as much as possible. It comprised a fringe of tiny metal chains worn across the eyes and was worn immediately after circumcision. At initiation, the girls were secluded for two years during which time an older woman instructed them about their future duties of married life. According to Adamson (1967) the girls were to behave in a

'helpless' manner, speak in whispers and keep their eyes downcast under a fringe of metal chains and if they wanted to leave the hut they would be led by their 'mother' and would walk extremely slowly. All these indicated a symbol of rebirth and the *Gitaita* fringe represented they had not yet learned to see, and the whispers implied that they did not yet know how to speak, nor that they could walk alone. The girls also had their skin smeared with charcoal and decorated with cowries and blue seeds (Adamson, 1967).

In the book 'Africa Adorned', Fisher (1984:14) states that East African communities lived a nomadic lifestyle that required them to have a minimum of material possessions so they would pack them easily and travel light when necessary. This lifestyle contributed to some communities like the Maasai and Samburu focusing on beautifying and adorning themselves by highlighting their features with paintings, scarification and wearing less clothing. They also wore elaborate headdresses and added on jewellery to accentuate their body features. The significance of body art was that it acted as a form of sign language that communicated the wearer's age, achievements and social standing. The above statement supports this study because some traditional communities in Kenya still utilize markings and patterns applied on the body as art inspired by indigenous material culture and in their simplistic forms and patterns expressed a functional purpose of conveying a message as well as accentuating the beauty of the wearer.

The women from the Gabbra community (Northern Kenyan) wore leather pouches strung from their necklaces containing charms against evil

spirits. Their beads were carved from natural materials found locally as shown in Plate 16 on page 86 of this study and sourced from Fisher (1984). The functional purpose of the leather pouches from the above mentioned community was to store charms that they believed would protect the wearer from evil spirits. These pouches made of traditional material were attached to necklaces that had beads carved from soapstone. The above argument is another example that offers support to the functional significance of material culture in fashion and accessory.

According to Fisher (1984), in East Africa, body art had always been the main outlet for artistic expression and jewellery and colour were used to accentuate and highlight this form of art. The author further notes that all these forms conveyed information about the wearer. For instance, the Turkana (Northern Kenya) and Maasai (Rift Valley) preferred scarification using thorns to adorn their bodies. For the Turkana scarification signified initiation into adulthood and also helped to distinguish between the various sub-tribes. Warriors from Turkana would scarify their arms to signify that they had killed an enemy. Indigenous material such as ivory, giraffe hair and snake vertebrae were made into ornaments to indicate status and achievements as in Plate 18 Page 87 of this study.

2.1.2 Colour as Material Culture

In many traditional communities in Kenya, colour was considered part and parcel of material culture for instance. The Kikuyu and Maasai communities used colour-coordinated sequences in their ornaments. The Kikuyu community had an ornament worn on the neck made of strings of

beads that were a dark blue which were considered a most valued colour (Plate 20 p.88). The extremity of each length of fringe of chain was terminated by two milk- white beads tied to it. It was worn by both men and women but never by children. They also had a collaret '*Ikenia*' that was worn by adolescent girls and married women. The collaret had a pattern of milk white beads on the two outside rows , red beads on the centre row while its pendant consisted of red beads on the two outside rows and milk white beads on the centre row. It was highly values among the Kikuyu (Routledge, 1910).

The Maasai community used white markings in different patterns to identify rank in society; for example; the *Laibon* whose eyes were circled in white paint, were leaders whose authority was based on mystical powers. During the pre- colonial period, the *Laibon* sanctioned raids and provided magical protection for the warriors by performing sacred ceremonial rituals. (Routledge, 1910). The Maasai have long blue beads called '*Nborro*' which are worn only by married women. The Maasai say that blue beads are 'God' as they are the colour of the sky he inhabits and green beads are 'vegetation after rainfall', which symbolizes peace (Fisher, 1984).

Kenyan communities had leather shields that were decorated in different colours and patterns of symbolic significance. Among the Kikuyu and Maasai for instance, had their shields painted in earth colours of red, black and white to symbolise a form of heraldry to distinguish the clan from which the particular warriors were from and their level of bravery (Trowell, 1970).

2.2 Kenyan Fashion in the Colonial Era.

When Kenya became a British Colony, various communities within Kenya began to adopt the English language and style of dressing, especially by people who went to school. However, despite these influences, many Kenyan communities continued to use their traditional attire for example, in the Akikuyu community, young boys preparing for initiation traditionally wore ornaments made from small black seeds from *mukunyi* (Kikuyu) plants. The ornament was called *mathanu* (Kikuyu) and it was later combined with strings of beads gotten from foreign traders (Leakey, 1977). Additionally, in the Akikuyu community, a form of cape known as "*Nguo*" worn by men and boys for protection, was made of goatskin selected for their colour, which was either a dark chestnut or white and was ornamented with beads and raised leatherwork. Short bright lengths of chains were also attached to small rosettes of beads and dark goatskin. This garment was later made of cotton, which was sometimes preferred because it was light in weight (Routledge, 1910).

Chief Njiiri (still from the Kikuyu) would wear a hide cape and a blue monkey fur coat onto which medals were pinned. He would also carry his staff of chieftainship (Adamson, 1967).

According to Adamson (1967:43), during World War II, Nandi warriors were recruited to fight in the Burma Campaign and they came back from the war, they started incorporating the British royal army hat in their warrior headgear (Plate 26 and Plate 27 on page 91 and 92 of this study).

The Turkana community had their own policemen who wore a tight fitting short blue loincloth, edged with a bright red band similar to the British army uniform that also had a bright red band at that time. The above are a few examples of how some communities blended their style of dress and accessories using both material cultures from their communities with that of the British.

Lindblom (1920) as cited by Adamson (1967) notes that the influence of the British among the Akamba, who were closer to the town made them lose interest in their history and many young people in turn were ashamed of their culture. He also noted that Western habits were superficially copied while traditional customs were adhered to secretly but outwardly denied.

2.2.1 Influence of Religion on Fashion Design

According to Abusufian '*Islam in Kenya*' (n.d.), the Islam religion spread into the coastal regions of Kenya through trade influence with Arab Muslims who had settled within the Kenyan coast but maintained their culture and religious practices. As a result of Arab influence through trade, some Kenyan communities acquired new items, for example, the Agikuyu men wore ear ornaments which were oval discs of lead. These were worn on a dilated earlobe. The ornaments were originally beaten out of Maria Theresa dollars. Although the coins were originally of Portuguese origin, they were used as currency at the Kenyan coast by Arabs (Routledge, 1910). The above example of the Agikuyu community is an indication of them adopting those coins to be

part of their material culture and becoming part of accessories in their men's jewellery.

Arabs came to Kenya through the coastal region and they would trade in items like beads and bronze and in turn buy slaves from some coastal communities around the region. The mingling of several communities within the Kenyan coast for instance the Mijikenda, Kamba, Maasai, Arab and even Indian led to the birth of the Swahili language. Some Coastal communities adopted the style of dressing and ornamentation from the Arabs. An example is Plate 24, p.90 of this study, in which a man is dressed in a traditional dress-cloth made from cotton fabric with horizontal coloured stripes worn over fringed pantaloons which is Arab-like regalia. He is blowing a *Siwa* horn from Pate Island (Coastal Kenya) originally carved out of an elephant tusk.

Christianity came when missionaries found their way into Kenya and set up mission stations in various regions of Kenya. The spread of Christianity through the various mission groups in Kenya did not help in promoting the significance of material culture.

Some missionaries were opposed to some cultural practices such as Clitoridectomy and style of clothing. For example, among the Kuria (Western Kenya) the missionaries were against their style of dressing by implying that it was a sin to wear few clothes and therefore suggesting the Kuria women to be fully clothed (Adamson, 1967:167).

It can be postulated that the spread of various religions in Kenya during the colonial period had both positive and negative influences. However,

some communities like the pastoral Turkana, the Rendille, the Borana and the Maasai continued, and still continue, to use their traditional attire and often incorporate elements from other cultures.

2.3 Background of Kenyan Fashion after Independence

Kenya got independence in 1963 and by that time, communities had adopted a more contemporary culture as compared to their traditional ones, especially those who lived within urban centres like Nairobi and Mombasa.

2.3.1 Liberalization of Trade in Kenya

The market liberalization in the 1990s, led to the reduction of local production of textile thus leading to companies like Rivatex East Africa Limited shutting down for example. Rivatex East Africa Limited has since been revived and is currently run by Moi University (Eldoret) under the Research, Product Development, Extension and Production facility. According to Mangieri (2006), the collapse of the domestic African print-manufacturing sector is linked to market liberalization in the 1990s. Mangieri (2006) also indicates that there is an increase of second-hand clothing whose import duty was reduced in the 1990s. This has further contributed to the decline in preference to Kenyan culturally inspired fashion especially now that they are proving to be far more expensive than the second-hand clothing for the average citizen who lives under a minimum wage of 1\$ a day.

The establishment of textile industry like the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) that facilitate the export of textile garments, can be considered to be positive investment ventures in Kenya because such businesses provide

employment to the society at large. A visit by the researcher to the EPZ Company in Athi River (Kenya) revealed that the establishment is a service provider that operates on orders and specifications from America, France and Britain whereby the client dictates the design and nature of the goods (garments) and then the company produces them accordingly. There is no freedom of creativity or input by the local designers, thus there is little chance of incorporating traditional material culture inspired by Kenyan communities.

In her article '*Mitumba: 101*' Shakarian (2013) states that indigenous textile industries across African economies failed because they could not compete with used imports from the west which were cheaper compared to local productions and in Kenya the resulting competition coupled with factors like the collapse of the Kenyan cotton board and cheap imports from Asia, led to the closing of Kisumu Cotton Mills, Allied Industries Limited and Heritage Woolen Mills. Korongo's article (2012) on second hand clothing in Kenya seems to share similar views. Korongo further points out that second hand clothing known as '*mitumba*' (Swahili) in Kenya are providing a cheaper alternative to locally produced or imported new clothes. She further concludes that banned imports of used clothing were later legally allowed back into Kenya for resale and at prices far below than those of new domestically manufactured apparel.

Kenya is currently in the process of implementing the 2010 Constitution and if the proposed amendment in the Industrialization Bill should go through in parliament, the importation of second hand clothing will

be banned in the country. This Bill which has already been approved by the Kenyan Cabinet and is now before Parliament is designed to protect the local textile and leather industries. This is stated in Chapter 4 subsection 4.8 (p 27) of the Industrialization Bill in the 2010 Kenyan Constitution document. This is a good attempt by the Kenyan government in promoting the use of traditional material items like leather and cotton.

2.3.2 Fashion Enterprises that Incorporate Traditional Material Culture

2.3.2.1 Maridadi Fabrics

Maridadi Fabrics has been in existence since the 1970s and is almost synonymous with screen-printed fabrics. Maridadi Fabrics still uses patterns based on material culture on their garments but for some reason they seem not to have made their designs contemporary enough for the current market. People are also not aware it is still in business due to minimal advertising on the company's part. The examples shown in Plate 5, p.77 of this study display recent designs from Maridadi Fabrics where they have utilized material culture as a source of inspiration for their motif design and at the same time made an effort in trying to make their garments more contemporary for today's market.

2.3.2.2 The African Heritage

Alan Donovan has contributed in promoting material culture. Through a series of events, Donovan found his way into Kenya in the early 1970s after graduating from UCLA and when living around Lake Rudolf (as Lake Turkana was then called) Donovan studied the designs and material culture of the Turkana community. He paid Turkana blacksmiths to make earrings and

other items by melting down cooking pots and making ornaments in clay moulds to make earrings and necklaces that could be worn by western women (Vigne & Martin, 2001).

Donovan also collected Giriama wedding necklaces made of tiny brass or aluminium beads and encouraged the Giriama community to make beads, which are now a big export item from Kenya as jewellery designers all over the world use them as spacers to this day. Donovan together with Joe Murumbi (ex- vice president of Kenya) and his wife Sheila partnered to form 'The African Heritage' and during this period Donovan was designing jewellery and doing interior design for Block Hotels at their lodges while collecting Turkana items for trade in the USA. This resulted in creating a big interest and demand for jewellery.

According to a Vigne and Martin (2001) interview with Donovan, he said to have combed the whole country for local Kenyan materials for a 'Jungle Safari Jeweler' exhibition that was started in 1979 for San Diego Zoo in America. Donovan said it was his first time to use jewellery designed from carved wooden animals, Pokot (Baringo) water reed beads, seeds, seedpods, nuts, ostrich egg shells, porcupine quills, bark cloth, fish bones, goat bones, batiked bones, fishnets and Kenyan army bullets. Mr. Donovan's fourth line of jewellery was called 'Endangered Art', which was a name selected for the Banana Republic (American Company). The inspiration behind this collection consisted of old silver and gold components from disappearing cultures and traditions, mixed with semi-precious stones. Another one of his collections

include 'Nala Jewellery' (Alan spelt backwards), it was based on Turkana and Maasai designs like Maasai brass coils called '*surutia*' worn by Maasai married women, combined with tiny glass trade beads from Czech republic.

From the interview above by Vigne & Martin (2001) one can deduce that Alan Donovan's contribution has been implementing the significance of using Kenyan material culture as a source of inspiration on fashion and accessories which was centred on producing new designs. Donovan invested a lot in product development and he had outside suppliers producing items to his designs mostly in family groups. These suppliers used to bring in their finished goods and others would come into the African Heritage gallery for a huge market. The market was later disbanded and moved out near the City Market then down near Uhuru Highway, later to Globe Cinema roundabout and currently it is at the Nairobi Law Courts parking lot and on Weekends and at the Village Market in Nairobi. Nowadays it is referred to as the '*Maasai Market*'.

Through African Heritage, Donovan has contributed in presenting and exposing African art by encouraging people to understand and appreciate the contribution Africa has made to the world of arts and crafts. He has also helped to improve the appreciation of African fashion globally through international shows by showcasing African textiles in a contemporary way that has helped in preserving and in expanding their manufacture. Initially, Donovan's designs were considered peculiar because he used such things as

bark cloth and porcupine quills but these indigenous material cultural items are now applied more and in contemporary designs (Vigne & Martin, 2001).

Donovan admits that issues of copyright is a problem in Kenya since techniques used in application of material culture are copied, for example, the batiked bone beads technique that was started in Kenya. The items used in the application of these designs are the original wooden salad spoons with dyed bone handles. India is among those producing beads and other things using these techniques and exporting them back to Africa at a cheaper price than they are produced in Kenya locally (Vigne & Martin 2001).

A recent visit to The African Heritage by the researcher revealed that the institution has maintained the same concept of working with suppliers in groups to produce fashion items and accessories inspired by indigenous material not only from Kenya but Africa as a whole. The suppliers have workstations within the venue where they produce these items. The African Heritage currently produces fashion and accessories ordered in bulk from foreign markets upon commission. The African Heritage is currently owned and managed by Ms. Makena Mwiraria.

2.3.3 Contemporary Kenyan Fashion

The search for a Kenyan National attire acted as a spring board for rejuvenation to the contemporary Fashion Design in Kenya, since then the Kenyan fashion scene has come a long way, fashion events are being held annually to show case local designs with the aim of appealing to a more

contemporary clientele including publishing of African fashion magazines for example 'Fierce' a magazine published by the Nation Marketing & Publishing Company in Nairobi (Kenya). 'Fierce' magazine focuses on educating people on social affairs and creates awareness on what is available locally in fashion that has a contemporary appeal (Plate 35, p. 96). Such efforts have contributed in promoting Kenyan-inspired designs to the local market and on a positive note, a good number of Kenyans have started to embrace these designs which shows good promise.

2.3.3.1 The National Dress

In 2002, some Kenyan fashion designers and the Ministry of Culture & Social Services came up with a national dress that was largely inspired by Kenyan cultures this was triggered by deviating from the colonial era rules stating that Members of Parliament must wear suits and ties in parliament. The dress consisted of both male and female designs that could be worn internationally and represent Kenya whenever an international occasion arose. According to a study done by BBC in 2007, the national dress did not seem to make much headway in the Kenyan market. Some of the reasons cited which also included a brief description of the dress were (i) the design did not appeal to the youth, (ii) the type of fabric used was mainly Nigerian inspired, (iii) it was too expensive and not readily available in the market and the project only included the high-end fashion designers whose final prices were above the average class citizens (Mwakugu, 2007).

It can be seen that despite the fact that there was an attempt at designing a Kenyan national dress, it was not well received by the majority of

people. The reasons indicated above reveals that even though there was incorporation of material culture it still did not determine the success of the attire which may lead one to question why this was so. Findings from this research reveal that many individuals are not responsive to the existence of traditional cultural material within Kenya and this may be due to the fact that the same people are not wary of the significant role these traditional material items played in society to influence the Fashion Design of the traditional period.

This research has looked at a few of the trends that are popular with the current crop of fashion enthusiasts who prefer an African appeal.

2:3:3:2 Ankara Style

Ankara is a fashion trend that is becoming popular among the Kenyan youth because it incorporates African designs in a contemporary way. The origin of the Ankara trend is from Nigeria. It is as a traditional Nigerian fabric with colourful prints. Currently, it has been adopted in Kenya by mixing and matching two different prints while incorporating them into modern design styles like clothing, shoes and bags (Njoki, 2013).

Ephy Saint Mururu from Nyeri (Kenya) is one of the young designers who have adopted the Ankara trend into his shoe designs. According to Ephy, his company known as KenyaNdula mainly targets Kenyans who like to wear fashion apparel that is locally inspired. He incorporates African materials and blends everything from Ankara to bold African prints (Plate 29, p. 93). Ephy acknowledges that one of his challenges is that at times he is not taken

seriously because he is self employed and young and that people do not consider what he does to be a 'real job' (Genga, 2013).

2:3:3:3 *Khanga/Leso fabric*

According to the definition from Wikipedia, the *kanga* (or *khanga*) comes from the Kiswahili language, which means *ku-kanga* to wrap or close. It may also originate from the Kiswahili name for guinea fowl whose black and white dotted feathers were considered a source of Khanga designs. It is a colourful garment worn by women and occasionally by men throughout East Africa. It is a piece of printed cotton fabric, about 1.5m by 1m, often with a border along all four sides (called *pindo* in Swahili), and a central part (*mji*), which differs in design from the borders. Khangas are usually very colourful; they contain messages, which are usually of significance to the wearer.

Peggy Wambua (Plate 36, p. 96) a Kenyan khanga designer since 2007, accords her success to the US and European markets. Her company known as 'Lesoh' uses the khanga and chiffon fabrics because they are 'wash-and-wear' which are suitable for the local warm weather and the fact that they do not need to be ironed is a plus. Wambua emphasizes that her label is intended to empower women through earning good pay and "ethical living". She also states that although her business is not dependent on Kenyan markets, she still manages to sell to a few clients in the local middle class whom she targets through fashion shows and from networking with other designers (Mbatia 2013).

Among the challenges Wambua faces in her Lesoh business are that it is difficult to keep up with current trends especially in creativity and research. Additionally most of the local textile industries do not have good quality products and another hindrance is in raising the necessary capital and dealing with tailors.

The positive aspects of Peggy Wambua's 'Lesoh' business include the fact that she can get materials from Rivatex East Africa Limited which is a facility of Moi University (Kenya). Also, Rivatex uses raw materials from the local farmers which is how 'Lesoh' further supports the 'ethical living' concept.

2:3:3:4 Yedu

Yedu is a word derived from the Taita language (Kenyan Coast), which means 'our own'. Yedu is also the name of an urban youthful female brand that aims at targeting the trendy Kenyan girl by providing a clothing alternative that they can identify with. This is also another company that uses Khanga as part of their inspirations (Njoki, 2013). On page 78 (Plate 6) of this study, displays a design from this company.

2:3:3:5 Festival for African Fashion and Arts (FAFA)

FAFA is an annual fashion event designed to profile African fashion trends. It was established in 2008 in the wake of Kenya's post-election violence, the idea at the time being to use the power of fashion to promote world peace. FAFA's aim is to eradicate ethnic violence by changing the perceptions of how different communities view each other. Ann McCreath who is the Managing Director and Head Designer at KikoRomeo and also

founder of the event acknowledges that FAFA's role is to provide a platform whereby African arts and media professionals can cooperate to promote the concept of Fashion for Peace and to also eradicate the ugliness of ethnic strife through the celebration of the beauty of Africa's heritage (540 Magazine, Feb-Apr, 2013).

In the 2013 FAFA edition, among the Kenyan designers featured were: Anna Adero, Deepa Dosaja, Embody Accessories, Kaveke, KikoRomeo, Kooroo, Monica Kanari including other designers from Ghana, Uganda, Eritrea and Nigeria. For this particular edition, many designers experimented with geometric shapes and asymmetric cuts as their design styles. There were pieces that could be worn upside down, back-to-front, wrapped, twisted and inside out. Among the fabrics used were hessian and re-cycled materials like coffee sacks, fabric, wire, metal and wood. The above example shows an effort by FAFA to promote the use of indigenous material culture on contemporary designs by holding fashion events that are focused on promoting Kenyan designers who incorporate these cultural items. One of the sources of inspiration from KikoRomeo during the FAFA festival was by the works of Lemayan who was a renowned Samburu prophetic visionary. (540 magazine, Feb-Apr 2013). Plate 12, p. 83 of this study show case a few designs from FAFA 2013 fashion festival.

Modern day Kenyan consumers are influenced by fashion from foreign markets while the fashion designers are focused on income earnings from their fashion businesses therefore little or no effort may be exerted in investing

on the significance of incorporating Kenyan traditional material culture on contemporary Fashion Design.

2.3.4 Kenyan Material Culture in International Fashion Design

Africa may have resources such as human labour and raw materials but as far as the fashion industry is concerned, creativity done through research and development is what largely contributes in competition globally and this aspect may be lacking in Africa (Nkopane, 2012). Developed countries have invested in technology to accommodate a mass market. They have an organized infrastructure and strong policies and guidelines on how to trade with other countries. They also invest in marketing and promoting their products after intensive research to ensure profits in their sales. Due to intensive research and study of the market demand, developed countries also come up with new designs that appeal to these markets (Ozay, 1999).

As recently as 2012, designers have come to Africa from developed countries like France to look for inspiration. For instance in Kenya, the Maasai culture, has contributed greatly to fashion, in which beadwork has been incorporated into contemporary designs like clothing. The Maasai community is among the communities still known to be practising their culture especially in style of dress which is influenced by their nomadic nature and the kind of environments they settle in. Kim Jones was inspired by the Maasai *shuka* and at the same time he tied his inspiration with the vision of Louis Vuitton as a brand that accommodates fashion conscious people who like to travel in style. This is a good example that can be emulated by local Kenyan

designers not to borrow the style in its exact form but to borrow the idea in terms of source of inspiration and to apply it in fashion and accessories.

Designer Louis Vuitton's outlet Spring Summer 2012 collection featured the red *shuka* (Plate 37, p. 97) worn by the Kenyan Maasai community. The fashion show was held in Paris and showcased the men's wear designs by Kim Jones, the Men's Style Director, who signed his debut collection for Louis Vuitton under the Artistic Direction of Marc Jacobs (Mwakilishi, 2011).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Since time immemorial, people have been clothing to satisfy certain needs. Those needs are; protection (a physical need), adornment and identification (psychological needs) and modesty and status (social needs) (Utah Education Curriculum, 2012). The following theories of fashion have been used to describe some factors that determine and influence the choice of fashion by consumers. The two theories are based on the above factors in the hope that fashion designers can creatively and innovatively incorporate them at the design stage of their products.

2.4.1 Book "Language of Clothes"

Author: Allison Lurie

Publisher: Henry Holt and Company

Year: 1981

The basis of this theory is that, ideally clothing is a form of communication expressed through the combination of clothes with different materials and patterns, their colours, their cut and texture. When people settle on what to wear they are subconsciously expressing their ideals (social needs). To relate it to this study, the choice of clothing in traditional Kenyan communities was based on sociological needs like proclamation of age, status, beliefs or occupation within society. However, it required the individuals from the various communities to understand the significance of the various traditional material culture utilised in order for them to know when and where to put them on and also, know who is to put them on and why. Fashion designers can apply this theory by trying to understand what their clients are trying to express through clothing and design outfits that compliments their wishes either by incorporating traditional material culture or using its significance as a source of inspiration. In supporting this study, the sociological factors mentioned above could be used to determine the kind of traditional material culture that is appropriate for the kind of client the fashion designer is targeting.

2.4.2 Book; 'Power and Style' : A World History of Politics and Dress

Author: Dominique Gaulme , Francois Gaulme

Publisher; Flammarion 1st Edition

Year: Mar 2013

The book describes humans as having the desire to dazzle and differentiate oneself using excessive adornment, or on the contrary, processing the wish to conform or express oneself through attire that says as much about an individual as about the society in which they live for example, a policeman in police uniform symbolising authority. The above psychological influences also tie in with sociological influences like the need for status recognition. For example, in the Maasai community where the Laibon had white markings round their eyes to symbolise their mystical powers. Also, a 'witch doctor' from the Luo community would incorporate antelope horns in order to signify power. When designing, fashion designers can utilize traditional material culture or their significance to express the consumers needs whether psychological or social.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The following framework demonstrates a brief structure of what factors may have led to the insufficient utility of traditional material culture on fashion in Kenya. It acted as a guideline on how the researcher went about conducting the research.

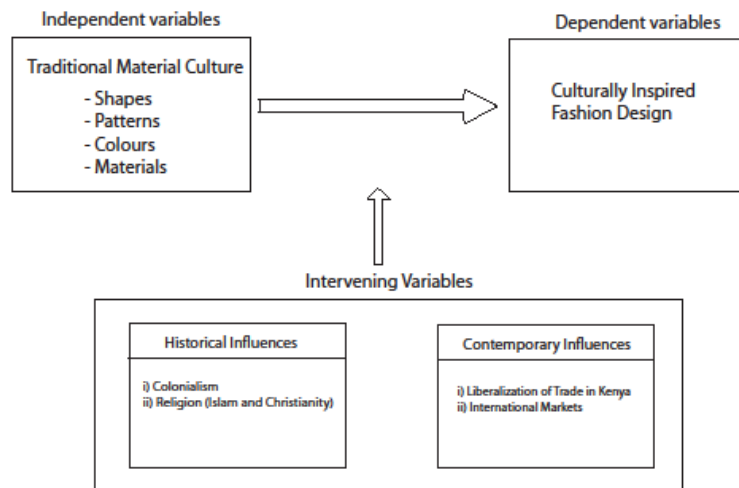


Figure 1: Structure of the conceptual framework

Guided by the above structure, the researcher sought to investigate what may have led to the inadequate utilisation of the various traditional material culture in Kenyan Fashion Design. To begin with, the researcher analysed the different kinds of traditional material culture that has been

utilized in Kenya over different periods and classified them as independent variables as shown above (Figure 1).

The researcher observed two intervening variables that affect Fashion Design in Kenya to help in testing the hypothesis of this study which is 'Traditional Kenyan material culture may have not been significantly utilised as a source of inspiration in Kenyan Fashion Design'. This was done by observing how historical and contemporary factors have impacted Kenyan Fashion Design over time.

The first intervening variable the researcher observed was from a historical perspective which entailed investigating how Islam and Christianity influenced Kenyan fashion whereby Islam favoured the incorporation of traditional material culture especially from the coastal communities while Christianity discouraged the utilization of traditional material culture especially when community members attended church services or school.

Under contemporary influences which was the second intervening variables, the researcher sought to find out how liberalization of trade policies in Kenya negatively affected local production of textiles by favouring second-hand imports which were sold cheaply and also, how international markets have impacted Kenyan markets. whereby cheap imports have flooded the Kenyan market and provides stiff competition to locally produced fashion in terms of availability and pricing. This research revealed few instances where some fashion designers attempted to utilise Kenyan traditional material culture and the impact it had on their designs.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This Chapter describes the research design, population, sampling design, and data collection method. It also mentions the research procedures and data analysis methods that were used in this study. This section also indicates the research tools that were employed to collect data and carry out the data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

A Descriptive Research design based on historical approach was used to provide both quantitative and qualitative data. This method was suitable in explaining the history and the background of the research topic, the reason being that a historical approach provided an overview of the history in utilization and significance of indigenous material culture in Kenya, how various communities used them (functional and symbolic) and what influenced the change in application of these indigenous material culture over certain periods.

3.2 Sampling Techniques

3.2.1 Stratified Sampling Method

The stratified sampling method was used when interviewing consumers as it assisted in grouping the sample population into

college/university students, white collar and blue collar. These clusters made it easier for the researcher to sort through the data at the analysis process in an organized manner. The researcher interviewed students from several colleges and universities within Nairobi. Interviews of formally and informally employed sample population were done at various fashion shops and fashion events organized within Nairobi city. The researcher selected fashion events that featured designers within Africa. These events were usually advertised on social websites and the print media. Through a pilot study, the researcher was able to list as many Fashion shops and Designers and with that information, the researcher was able to select the Fashion Shops and Fashion Houses to interview.

3.2.2 Snowball Sampling Method

The snowball sampling method helped in collecting data whereby one individual/clientele from a certain sample directed the researcher to another individual within the same sample. Snowball sampling also helped in finding other fashion shops and designers who are culturally inspired in their crafts. When the researcher was handing out questionnaires, some fashion shop owners were willing to give names and locations of their direct competitors in the market hence helping in recording more findings. Also, some clients who were approached by the researcher in the various fashion shops would willingly divulge information on how the researcher could contact the same kind of clientele via email or physical acquaintance.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample size comprised of 60 respondents from an initial population of between 100 - 150 people. When selecting the students' sample, the researcher interviewed the ones studying design in colleges and universities due to their design background, this would shed some light on their knowledge concerning creativity and inspiration. In the formally and informally employed samples, the researcher selected them as they shopped in the various Fashion Shops and Houses the researcher visited to collect data. The reason for that sample size was because it was easier to manage, during collection and analysis of data. 20 respondents in each of the above samples was manageable for the study and could be conducted within the time required to complete this study. 63% responded from all categories (college/university, formally , informally employed), while 78% of Fashion Shops and Houses responded. There was a decrease in the initial sample population due to accessibility challenges between the researcher and some of the respondents after initial contact.

Employees from the following Fashion Shops were interviewed Divinely Draped (1), MooCow (2/2), Bronx Limited (One Way) (1/2). While employees from the following Fashion Houses were interviewed Rift Valley Leather (5/9), KikoRomeo (2/3), Sanabora (3/8), Just Bags (2/3), Mohazo (1), Kipenzi Designs (1), Rialto Fashions (5/11), Sandstorm Africa Limited (2/4).

3.4 Research Instruments

The Primary data was sourced using the following Research Instruments:

3.4.1 Questionnaires:

Different questionnaires were designed to suit the various strata in the sample population. The study used questionnaires with 'open ended' and 'closed ended questions'. The questionnaires were hand delivered to the various sample populations and two were emailed upon request.

3.4.2 Interview Schedules:

Some interviews with consumers were conducted on face-to-face basis guided by an interview schedule. The interview schedule was used for consumers who did not mind donating their time to answer questions as they shopped.

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 Secondary Data

The secondary data was sourced from library books and journals, including those from the National Museum of Kenya library, the National Archives resource centre and Master theses from University Libraries. Fashion magazines, newspaper clippings and the Internet were amongst other sources of secondary data.

3.5.2 Primary Data

The primary data was mainly sourced from employees in the various Fashion Shops and Houses that were interviewed; they included Designers, shop managers and customer care staff who provided credible information. 2-5 respondents were interviewed from each Fashion Shop/Houses.

A pilot study was conducted by the researcher to check on the viability of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed among the various sample categories. At least two respondents from each category answered and returned the questionnaires. The reason for the pilot study was so that the researcher could find out how long an interview would take between the researcher and respondent, the clarity and flow of questions and whether the respondents comprehended the questions being asked. This process enabled the researcher to review the research instruments and incorporated the changes that were revealed during the pilot study.

3.6 Data Analysis

The qualitative method involved recording findings of questionnaires and interviews and interpreting them. The emphasis was on the stated experiences of the respondents and on the stated meanings they attach to themselves, to other people, and to their environment where matters on the significance of indigenous material culture are concerned. Quantitative data analysis involved interpreting all numbers and percentages at the end of the study using different levels of measurements (mean, median, mode etc) and recording the findings numerically.

3.7 Variables and Procedure of Measure

The independent variable is **traditional material culture** while dependent variable is **culturally inspired Fashion Design**. The intervening variables consisted of **historical influences** like religion (e.g. Islam, Christianity, etc) and Colonialism where some communities adopted the British lifestyle and **contemporary influences** like liberalization of trade in Kenya and the influence of international markets.

In this study, the constant is the availability and utilization of traditional material culture as part of Fashion Design and this was influenced by various factors few of which are stated above. The use of the above variables in that manner was to provide a solution to the problem statement by pointing out how utilization of Kenyan traditional material culture may have been impacted by religion, colonization and westernization in the country. This has been revealed through research from a historical perspective looking at pre colonial, colonial and post colonial eras.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

In research, it is critical that the researcher understands the basics of ethical research and how this might affect the research project, especially if the research involves interaction with businesses or members of the general community who serve as participants. There is a range of interactions in research that might occur, in the form of in-depth interviews, focus groups, surveys, or even observing people's behaviour. Though all researchers are well

intentioned, there is the possibility that interaction with participants may inadvertently harm them in some unintended way (Polosky, 2011).

The researcher took into account the ethical considerations when conducting fieldwork. This was to ensure the privacy of the respondents and also the privacy of the employees interviewed in the various fashion shops. The information provided by the respondents was not subject to any coercion but on voluntary basis after the purpose of the research had been clearly explained. Within the institutions where data was sourced, the researcher was required to apply for membership and comply with their rules and regulations in order to access information from their resource centre and libraries. The fashion designers and the various fashion shops interviewed also required the researcher to acknowledge their creativity and their design products by including their names and the names of their companies in the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

Since this research was mostly from a historical perspective, the majority of findings were dependent on secondary data; however primary data was essentially useful in finding out how extensively people are aware of the availability and utilisation of traditional material culture in contemporary fashion in Kenya.

4:1 Traditional Material Culture from Selected Communities

Table 1: Traditional Material Culture from Selected Communities in Kenya

Community	Traditional Material Culture	Description	Photo Referral	Various Design Concepts
Maasai	Cowries	Cowries were worn as jewellery and good luck charms because they symbolised wealth and fertility	Plate 18, p.70	Currently they are used as inspiration of motifs on textiles to show texture, linear patterns

Duruma (Coastal Kenya)	Wood	Wood was used to make sculptures like memorial poles	Plate 31, p.88)	The geometric shapes from the memorial poles are applied on textiles to generate enhancing patterns
Turkana	Brass, Iron, ostrich eggs, leather hides	They were used as jewellery and adornment for clothing to symbolise status	Figures 9 -10 P. 74)	The brass and iron rings are used as adornment on products like clutch bags creating interesting shapes. (page 75-76)
Kikuyu	Hang'i	Jewellery of thin metal wire and beads worn on the forehead by married women	Plate 9, p. 77)	Currently the hang'i design is used to make bangles with different coloured beads (page 77)
Luo	Ivory, bones	The ivory and bones were worn as part of traditional regalia to signify occupation	Plate 22, p. 84)	Currently bones are used to design earrings and bracelets (page 84)

4.2 Data from Kenyan Fashion Shops and Houses Sampled

In accomplishing one of this study's objectives, the researcher attempted to present and analyse data by answering the research questions in the order in which they were presented in the study. The first research question

was to find out the available traditional material cultural elements that can be used in Fashion Design. Though it was difficult to source information on design inspiration and creativity from fashion designers due to fear of their ideas being copied the following results were acquired.

4.2.1 Data from Kenyan Fashion Shops and Houses with Culturally Inspired Designs.

Employees from the following Fashion Shops and Houses were interviewed; KikoRomeo, Rift Valley Leather, Divinely Draped, Cocoa Banana, Mohazo, Just Bags, Sanabora, Bronx Limited, Sandstorm Africa Limited, Rialto, Rain Design House, Kipenzi Designs and MooCow. A total of 11 shops out of 14 responded which yielded a 78% response rate. A majority of questionnaires were hand delivered only two were emailed they include Cocoa Banana and Rain Design House.

Among the accessories listed as being used by these Fashion Shops and Houses were as follows: traditional inspired African accessories, beads, seeds, pebbles, cowries, porcupine quills, coconut shells, ivory and bottle tops. The following information gave insight on some of the employees in Fashion Shops and Houses interviewed by looking at the kind of products they sell, their target market and what inspires their creations.

4.2.1.1. Rift Valley Leather

Rift valley leather is owned by Robert Topping who designs its products while maintaining a level of quality workmanship. The company is located in Karen (Kenya). The company's aim is to be on the international stage as a genuine African design house that can equally compete with

prestigious household names. They sell quality leather products sourced from Kenya (Plate 30, p. 93).

According to the researcher's interview, Rift Valley develops and manufactures leather, suede and canvas products, including luggage, handbags and a range of accessories. Their principal cultural materials include camel and calf hide, that are sourced from within East Africa - this is so as to promote locally available materials and to cultivate the indigenous handcrafting skills of a talented labour force.

4.2.1.2 KikoRomeo

The owner Ann McCreath has a design background from Barcelona. She started the company in 1996 with a desire to help create jobs in rural areas and make unique designs using high quality products for retail. Ann McCreath's designs are geared towards contemporary African inspirations. In her opinion, "the Kenyan locals can take pride in these designs and promote the Kenyan economy through buying locally made fashion". Her products consist of inputs from community artisans and women's groups that she sells in her own shop. KikoRomeo designs are designed to suit international fashion trends using African made fabrics often with handcrafted details (Plate 32, p. 94).

In an interview, Ann McCreath acknowledged that she launched her many collections by promoting Kenyan designers, namely the Spring/Summer Samburu Star Captain Collection (2013), Railway Museum Collection, Kenya

Rugby Team Collection and The 2010 II Moran Couture at Notte in Fiore, Italy.

4.2.1.3 Sanabora

The word 'sana bora' is literal translation of the Swahili words 'very good'. Sanabora's mission is to enable business in Kenya to produce competitive products for the local and international markets. The company has also encouraged the use of vast talents and resources available within Kenya. They offer product design and development skills as part of their training in the handcraft sector. The kinds of products that Sanabora sells include, handbags, jewellery, textile bags, clothing, phone bags and laptop bags (Plate 7, p. 80).

4.2.1.4. Just Bags

This company specializes in leather and canvas bags for the contemporary woman. Their products include handbags, wallets and purses and they are created and designed in Kenya. The company prides itself in sourcing for materials and accessories made by local (Kenyan) talent which are sold online (Plate 33, p. 95).

4.2.1.5 Mohazo

Zohra Baraka founded Mohazo, whose motto is 'ethnic spirit.' Mohazo was started 20 years ago and it was formerly known as 'Wema Arts and Crafts'. Through a phone interview with the researcher, Baraka described Mohazo as having an African inspired brand of home ware products and

personal accessories. Her desire is to capture an African ethnic appeal .

Products from Mohazo include handbags and purses (Plate 28, p. 92).

4.2.1.6 Divinely Draped

Located in Hurlingham (Nairobi), Divinely Draped is purely an accessory products company run by Anne Kabue. When the researcher was interviewing her employee, it came across that the company imports material culture for their accessories like bangles, necklaces and earrings from India, China and West Africa (Plate 10, p. 82).

4.2.1.7 MooCow

Located at Silver Springs Hotel in Hurlingham (Nairobi), this company is a fashion brand that promotes designs from various talented fashion designers in Kenya. Owned by Wambui Njogu, the store has a range of products from linens, khanga, batik and leather designed fashion and accessories with African inspired material culture (Plate 25, p. 91).

4.2.1.8 Kipenzi Designs

Kipenzi designs jewellery, bags and sandals. Their Contemporary African products are influenced by ethnic motifs. Linda Odhiambo, the owner, affirms that Kipenzi offers the market a collection of fashion accessories, which is mostly jewellery (Plate 23, p. 90). They encourage the pursuit of traditional crafts skills and use of locally available material to produce good quality products. The craftsmanship is done by local women who are also taught life skills to enable continuous income generation.

4.2.1.9 Rialto Fashion

Lucy Rao prides herself in concepts that can be done in a western and African manner. She combines African prints with Asian embroidery and a western outlook. She incorporates beading that is locally found within Africa on her custom made designs. Some of her designs also incorporate the bark cloth fabric (Plate 8, p. 81). Rialto fashion is located within the central business district in Nairobi (Kenya).

4.2.2 The Type of Products the Sampled Fashion Shops and Houses Sell:

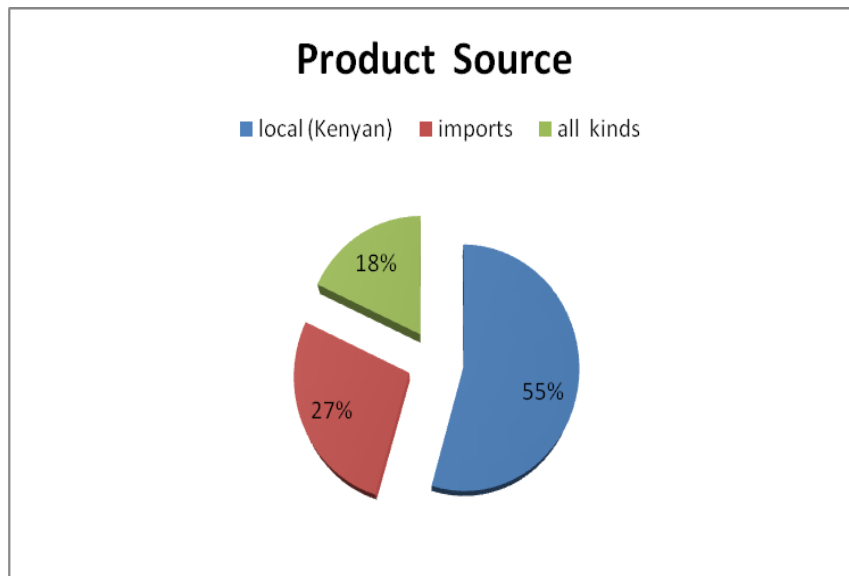


Figure 2: Type of products sold by Fashion Shops and Houses sampled.

The pie chart in Figure 2 indicates where these Fashion Shops and Houses source their material culture. The majority source their material culture within Kenya. They include leather, cotton and beads found locally. 27% prefer imports from selected countries within Africa while 18% source their products from any country without preferences. The questionnaire used for the above outcome is in Appendix III.

4.2.3 Design Inspirations of the Fashion Designers Interviewed from the Sampled Fashion Shops and Houses.

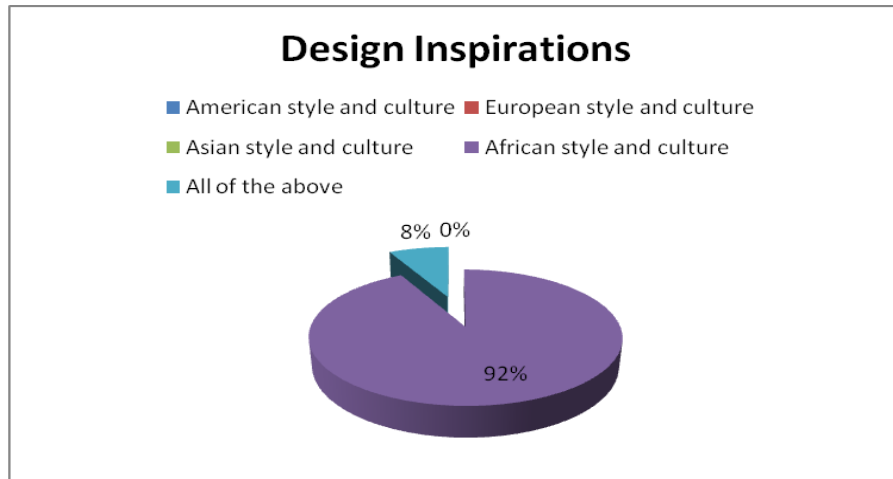


Figure 3: Design Inspirations

The pie chart in Figure 3 shows where the Fashion Design Shops and Houses that were interviewed source their inspirations. None of the Fashion Shops and Houses source their inspirations specifically from one location but 8% indicated they source their design inspirations from America, Europe and Asia. 92% source specifically from Africa. The questionnaire in Appendix III was used to source the above findings.

Among the Fashion Shops and Houses interviewed, the ones that incorporate African style and culture are as follows: Rift Valley Leather, Bronx Ltd (One Way), Shem's tailoring business, Rialto Fashions, KikoRomeo, Edwin's tailoring business, Kipenzi Designs, Rain Design House, SanaBora Design House, Sandstorm Africa Ltd and MooCow.

4.2.4 Fashion Shops and Houses whose Products have Traditional Material Culture

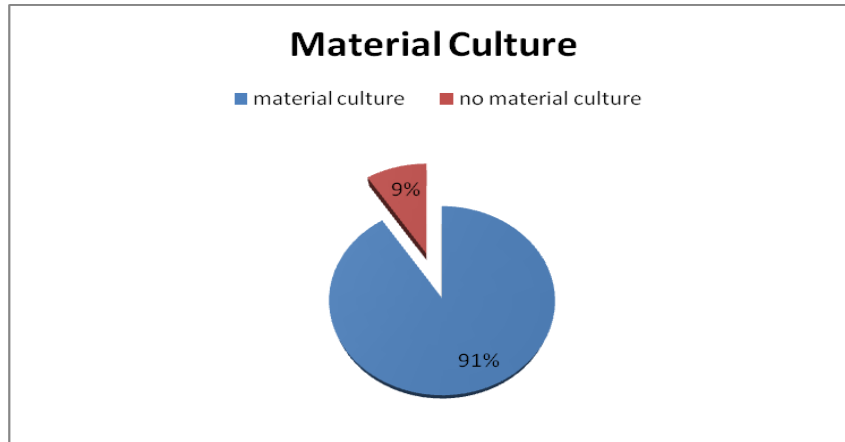


Figure 4: Fashion Shops and Houses that incorporate material culture on their products.

The pie chart in Figure 4 above shows that 91% of the Fashion Shops and Houses interviewed accessorise with material culture while 9% do not. This outcome was sourced using the questionnaire in Appendix IV. The Fashion Shops and Houses that listed to have been using material culture to accessorise their products are as follows; Rain Design House, SanaBora Design House, KikoRomeo, Sandstorm Africa, Rialto Fashions, MooCow, Kipenzi Designs, Shem tailoring business Bronx (One Way) and Edwin tailoring business which is 78% of the shops interviewed. Rift Valley Leather does not accessorize their products citing extra cost and time involved.

The kind of material culture these shops mentioned as part of their accessories included: leather, seeds, beads, cowries, coconut shells, porcupine quills, ivory, iron rings, brass discs and bottle tops which are not linked to any particular Kenyan community. As revealed earlier in the review of literature, many of these Kenyan communities used similar cultural elements for beauty and functional value.

4.2.5 Sources of Traditional Material Culture for the Fashion Designers in the Fashion Shops and Houses Interviewed

Table 1 provides findings indicating where various Fashion Shops and Houses source their material culture. Of the Fashion Designers interviewed from the Fashion Shops and Houses selected, there was an 85% response rate. Only two Fashion Shops did not respond because the shop owners were out of the country during the period of conducting of this research. Only 14% source their material culture within Kenya while 21% source worldwide and the majority source within Africa from countries like Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia and Mali.

Table 2: Sources of Traditional Material Culture of the Fashion Designers from the Fashion Shops and Houses Interviewed.

Name of Fashion Shop/House	Within Kenya only	Within Africa only	Africa, America, Asia and Europe
Divinely Draped	X	X	Yes
Sanabora Design House	Yes	X	X
Kiko Romeo	X	Yes	X
Sandstorm Africa	X	Yes	X
Rialto Fashions	X	Yes	X
Moo Cow	X	Yes	X
Kipenzi Designs	X	Yes	X
Shem tailoring business	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bronx (One Way)	X	Yes	X
Edwin tailoring business	X	X	Yes
Mohazo	X	Yes	X
Rift Valley Leather	Yes	X	X

The findings from the Fashion Shops and Houses selected above reveal that Kenyan traditional material culture is yet to be significantly used to inspire local designs.

4.3 The Challenges Faced by Kenyan Fashion Designers who attempt to Utilize Traditional Material Culture in their Fashion Design

In addressing the challenges Kenyan Fashion Designers face when incorporating traditional material culture on their designs, the researcher received the following responses using the questionnaire in Appendix IV

- i. There is a low market demand for Kenyan culturally inspired clothing. Though there is a market that appreciates the products, this market is unwilling to spend money on them hence they appeal only to high end consumers. The following statement reveals that the few Fashion Shops and Houses that do sell Kenyan culturally inspired clothing prefer targeting 'high end' clientele because they are able to afford the products from those Fashion Shops/Houses. Rialto Fashions and Bronx Ltd. implied that they only use quality materials for their products and they are quite expensive thus leading to high pricing.

4.3.1 The Data shown below Reveals the kind of Clientele the Fashion Shops/Houses Target.

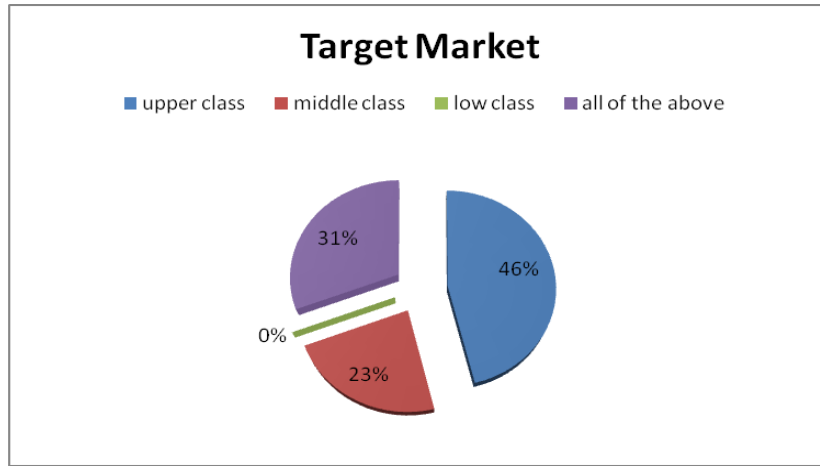


Figure 5: Target Market of Fashion Shops/Houses sampled.

The questionnaire used to provide the results in Figure 5 above is found in Appendix III. 46% of the Fashion Designers interviewed in the various Fashion Shops/Houses selected indicate that they prefer the upper class, while the middle class is targeted by 23% and 31% of them indicated that they target all kinds of clientele who can afford their products.

- ii. Four designers interviewed from four Fashion Shops/Houses sampled that is Rialto Fashions, SanaBora Design Limited, Rift Valley Leather and Sandstorm Africa indicated that their designs are often imitated using lower quality material and sold at lower prices.
- iii. The Fashion Shops/Houses that prefer material culture from sources outside Kenya (as indicated in Table 1) stated that their clientele are not open to utilization of traditional material culture in their designs as they view them as not contemporary (fashionable).

- iv. Poor advertising and marketing was another challenge. Five of the Designers interviewed out of the 14 Fashion Shops/Houses selected stated that they get to advertise & market themselves during fashion events, the few like KikoRomeo and MooCow who do other forms of advertising like magazine advertising, do so to target specific clients who read those publications hence leaving out a larger population who may also be interested in their products but cannot access these magazines. Some Fashion Shops/Houses also stated that media advertising is quite expensive for their businesses hence mostly rely on word of mouth referrals from their clientele.
- v. Rift Valley Leather admitted that in some instances there is an inconsistent supply of locally available material (traditional material culture) that is of good quality.
- vi. Two out of the 14 shops that handle traditional material culture admitted that there is a limited labour force that is skilled in maintenance of this traditional material culture to quality level.
- vii. There is a lack of enough outlets to further reach a wider market for some of the Fashion Shops/Houses. MooCow is the only Fashion Shop the researcher studied which helps in marketing and selling of the different fashion brands under its name.
- viii. High business costs of operating when handling traditional material culture because most of these materials are not easily available

especially for a mass market and are quite expensive due to their level of quality as stated above

- ix. The sentiments from four Fashion Shops/Houses from the above selection (Table 2) was that Kenyans should invest more in Kenya by buying locally made products.
- x. Some of the policies the Kenyan government have put in place like the banning of wildlife hunting have made the availability of certain materials they used very scarce like porcupine quills, monkey hide and ivory.

The Designers who use traditional material culture for inspiration in their fashion design the following reasons as their challenges.

- i. Two Fashion Shops/Houses stated that they run out of raw material and they also face a limit in colour and a compromise in quality.
- ii. Minimal advertising of their products or lack thereof.
- iii. Some of the clients refusing to embrace their designs and prefer imports in the form of second-hand clothing.
- iv. Three out of 14 (21%) Fashion Designers admitted of cases where clients come up with designs that do not suit them (client) and are not easy to produce.

- v. Two Fashion Shops/Houses stated that there is lack of enough reference/consultations e.g. books or qualified and experienced people in the fashion field.
- vi. Another challenge was in attempting to make Kenyans understand the benefits and value in buying locally designed products rather than importing from other countries.
- vii. Another challenge was in attempting to make Kenyans understand the benefits and value in buying locally designed products rather than importing from other countries.

4.4 Data from Consumers/Cientele

In addressing the third objective discussed above, the researcher retrieved its findings using the questionnaires on Appendices III and IV. Those findings looked at the perception of Kenyans concerning the use of traditional material culture from within Kenyan communities on Fashion Design. The researcher grouped the respondents into three categories and the reason for this has been explained in chapter 3 under section 3.3 (Sample Size). The three categories include college/university students, formally employed and informally employed.

4.4.1 Interviewing of College/University students

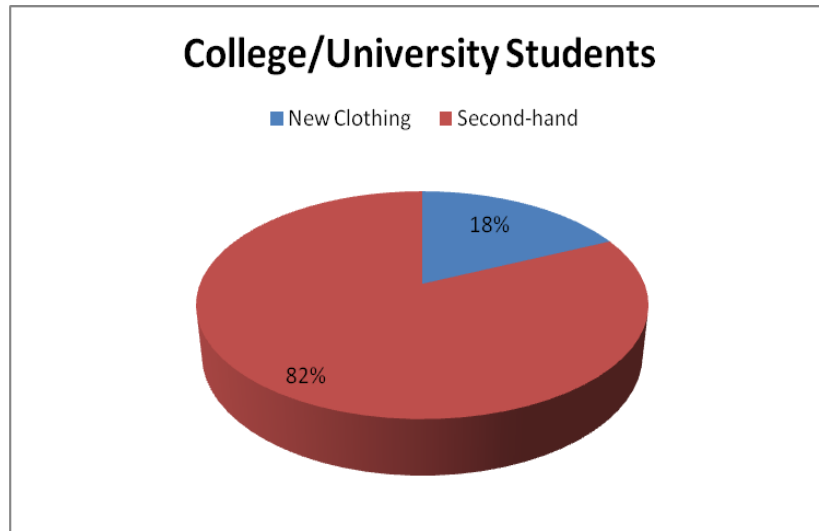


Figure 6: College/ University students.

In this particular sample (college/university students) there was a response rate of 86% where 13 students responded out of 15. The students interviewed were among the following Colleges and Universities; Technical University of Kenya, Kenyatta University, Nairobi University, Buruburu Institute of Fine Arts and Unity School of Hair Dressing. Figure 6 above shows that majority of the students prefer second-hand clothing over new clothing because second-hand clothing is more affordable therefore they can buy in large quantities. Another reason why students prefer second-hand clothing is because they have different designs and colours therefore there is a reduced chance of many people having the same exact design of clothing.

The few students who admitted to owning new clothing said they bought them so as to attend a special occasion/function. When conducting this research, the researcher found out that, one of the things that influences the College/University students in their consumption pattern is in the functional

purpose of the clothing for example, some of these students activities involve social networking outside school and they put some emphasis on their appearance in fashion when they attend these social functions. Some students admitted that they like to shop for second-hand clothing because they can be worn regularly on other occasions even after the function that it was specifically bought for has long passed and also, the outfit can be paired easily to match with other clothing and accessories.

From the researcher's observation while interviewing the College/University sample, some students did wear jewellery that is culturally inspired but were not aware of the symbolic value or origin of those pieces. They admitted that they bought them because the patterns, shapes and colours of the jewellery pieces were appealing to their tastes.

4.4.2 Data from the Informally Employed Sample

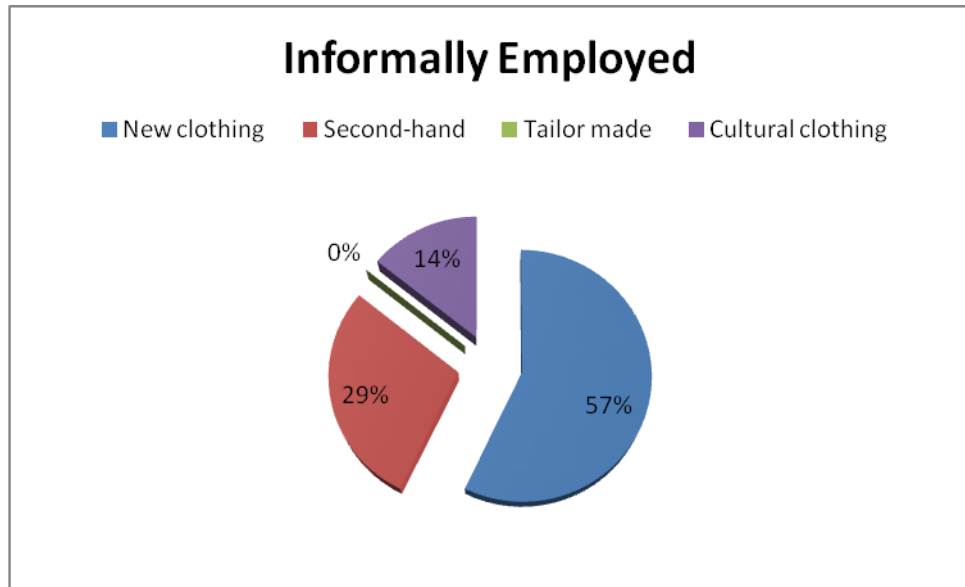


Figure 7: Informally employed.

There was a 70% response rate while interviewing the Informally Employed sample whereby there were 7 respondents out of the 10 questionnaires that were distributed. Figure 7 shows that majority of the Informally Employed prefer new clothing in the form of protective gear like overalls and lab coats in the workplace. Their reason for this is because culturally inspired attire will interfere with the production level in their line of work. They also cited safety reasons especially those individuals who deal with mechanical equipment. Few respondents in this category admitted they put on second-hand clothing when they're not working with one or two admitting they occasionally put on culturally inspired clothing when attending church on Sundays or having occasions like weddings.

4.4.3 Data from the Formally Employed Sample

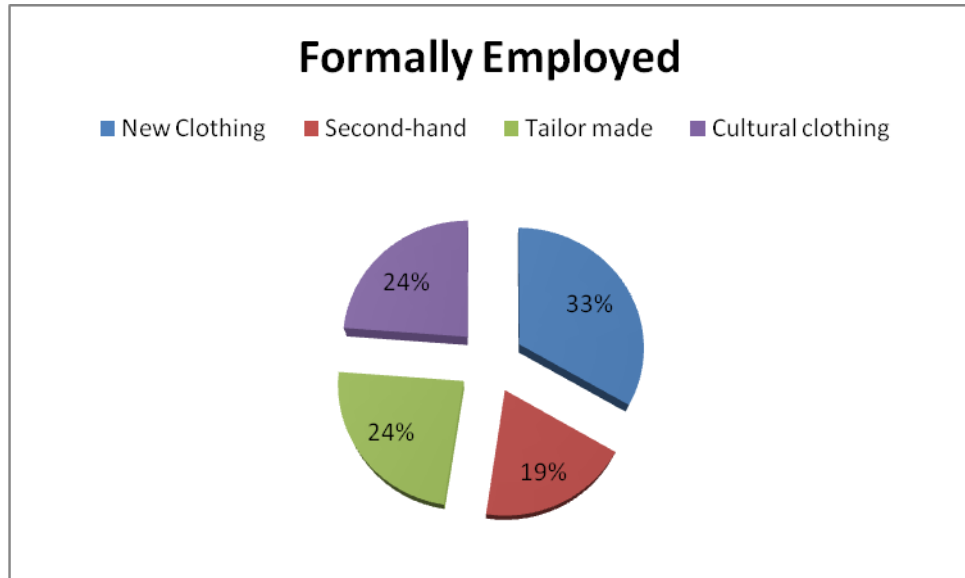


Figure 8: Formally Employed.

Figure 8 above shows the Formally Employed sample was distributed across all categories. The majority prefers new clothing while tailor made and fashion that is culturally inspired is evenly distributed, leaving the second-hand clothing as the least preferred. The total response rate of the Formally Employed sample was 90% whereby there were 18 responses out of 20 questionnaires distributed.

The Formally Employed sample admitted that during working hours they preferred new clothing that gives a formal appearance, some of the respondents in this category also admitted that their companies have a dress code policy where the company's management requires them to wear formal type of clothing but on Friday's they can be allowed to pair up a formal outfit with a casual one for instance like a formal shirt with khaki trousers. The

Formally Employed sample also admitted that they put on cultural clothing or tailor made clothing during social functions like weddings and parties organized by their companies or other social functions they are invited to and prefer second-hand clothing as casual wear during weekends.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This Chapter presents the summary of the findings of the study, and also gives conclusions and recommendations based on the objectives of the study, which sought to explore the availability and utilization of traditional material culture on modern fashion.

5.1 Summary of Findings

On a positive note, The Kenyan Fashion Industry is still growing and more Kenyans seem to embrace African-inspired attire especially for occasions like weddings and funerals. It is important to note that most of the traditional material culture previously under discussion had individual meanings, at the same time, they were in accordance with daily functional life and were also worn during ceremonial activities such as the rites of passage among various communities. Understanding of this detail is important in this study because the researcher's intention was to encourage the idea that the traditional Kenyan material culture can be incorporated in Kenyan Fashion Design to be worn on day to day activities just as it happened traditionally. However, the Fashion Design that contains these traditional material culture from Kenya can have a contemporary look for today's market.

This research has revealed that colour was traditionally used as an aspect of material culture through the symbolic representation of some hues. Currently, colour is significant in fashion because colour schemes play an

important role in influencing fashion trends in developed countries. These influences cut across the Fashion Industry from the manufacturer to the end user in that these fashion products are only available in specific colours in a particular season and the clients respond accordingly (Brannon, 2005).

This study has also revealed some similarities and differences between applications of traditional Kenyan material culture both customarily and contemporarily. Even though some of this material culture used traditionally is being applied in a contemporary way the symbolic meaning of why the material culture was used and its functional aspect for which occasion it was used for is still the same. For example, the design of the traditional Turkana dress for women in which the pinafore (apron) design made out of goat skin was worn has been incorporated in modern trends and even though goat skin is not used as it was traditionally, a piece of fabric cut out in the shape of the traditional Turkana pinafore is adorned with beads, cowries or tiny brass plates. This modern outfit is now worn by women from various Kenyan communities at social functions as shown in Plate 8, p. 81 of this study.

The research hypothesis of this study has been proven to be true that traditional Kenyan material culture is not adequately utilized as a source of inspiration in Kenyan Fashion. This has been revealed in chapter 4 in the presentation and analysis of data whereby there are low records on the application of Kenyan traditional material culture by Kenyan Fashion Designers and also, low records of consumers who wear Fashion Designs inspired by traditional Kenyan material culture. There are also records of the

challenges these Fashion Designers face in attempts at utilisation of traditional Kenyan material culture.

Investigations have shown that traditionally Kenyan communities' possessed a wealth of culture but due to factors like Westernization and religion which have had a drastic effect on them, the carrying on of these values may have declined due to lack of interest in culture (as discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis). These factors may have made communities abandon their cultures and in some cases to completely adopt new lifestyles that totally discourage these traditions.

5.2 Challenges Faced by the Researcher

One of the challenges faced during conducting this research was in gathering of secondary data. There is difficulty in accessing documented material on Kenyan traditional culture because the institutions which possess these documents treasure them and therefore require one to follow a lengthy procedure to access them. Resource centres like The National Museums of Kenya's Library and The National Archives Resource room only had one copy each of the few published books on Kenyan cultural material therefore they set a time limit in which one can access these books that required the researcher to book an appointment by filling in a form well in advance before the books were made available. In another case the researcher was required to apply to be a member of the resource centre by making a monthly contribution to maintain the facilities in order to be allowed access into the library.

The other challenge was on the gathering of primary data whereby some respondents did not reply the questionnaires handed out to them citing having busy schedules. Another challenge the researcher faced was in difficulty in gaining trust from the Fashion Shop/House employees to disclose the nature of their business or giving the researcher access into their business premise and workshops as they feared some of their designs being copied.

5.3 Conclusion

This study sensitizes on the importance of conducting research on the availability and utilisation of traditional material culture from various Kenyan communities and further promoting the research material published. Creating of awareness on the utilisation of Kenyan traditional material culture may further enlighten Fashion Designers on how best they can utilise this material culture on their Fashion Design by taking into account the purpose of the fashion item, the wearer's ideals or preferences and the cost of production. If the Kenyan market can consider the local material culture just as valuable as the imported ones, then this may help market Kenyan Fashion Design not only locally but also on an international level because it will have created a competitive edge globally.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4 Suggest Strategies for Incorporation of traditional material culture in Fashion Design

In addressing objective 4, the researcher came up with few suggestions based on this study that may help the Kenyan Fashion Industry in trying to adequately utilise traditional material culture in Fashion Design.

First and foremost, the study recommends that more research needs to be carried out on the utilization of material culture in other parts of Kenya in order to get a broader spectrum. The study also recommends that further studies especially under creativity and innovation using Kenyan traditional material culture as a source of inspiration in Fashion to be carried out.

More documentation is required to sensitize Kenyans and anyone else on the (non) availability of the utilisation of traditional material culture in Kenyan communities. The Kenyan Ministry of Culture and Social Services needs to do more in promoting the use of Kenyan traditional material culture and the arts. The same Ministry of Culture and Social Services also needs to put in place a cultural policy in the importance of Kenyan arts and fashion to minimise the influx of second-hand goods such as *mitumba*.

Kenyan educational institutions at all levels should be exposed more to the value of material culture and the arts to help in boosting the tourism industry and also to aid in avoiding the kind of monotony that is currently

experienced in the crafts industry 'tourist art' that Maina (2011) mentions in his article on tourism products.

Kenyan Fashion Designers may look into creative ways of utilising traditional material culture on Kenyan Fashion Design by deriving inspirations from simple elements of designs to achieve textures, shapes, colour and different tones in designing, keeping in mind the cost of mass production and fashion preferences for the Kenyan market. This can be achieved by organizing workshops for Kenyan Fashion Designers and skilled craftsmen who handle traditional material culture. The Fashion Designers can learn basic skills like maintenance of these cultural material or they can source the skills of the various craftsmen to help them utilise the material culture in their Fashion Designs. With the help of social networks and interactive media, these workshops can be held online as opposed to attending the workshop at a physical location that is quite far and may incur expenses for accommodation and transport.

The researcher suggests that with the help of social media, Kenyan Fashion Designers or anyone involved in the Fashion Industry should go the extra mile to publicize and advertise their businesses on their own as opposed to waiting for an opportunity with the local media stations who publicize an event after it has happened. These fashion businesses can also make the effort of making their products easily available and accessible to the public this will help in creating awareness of the various works being done by local Kenyan Designers especially to the Kenyan market.

There are opportunities for Fashion Designers to design Kenyan inspired attire for the larger international market as well, as shown earlier in Louis Vuitton collections (Plate 37, p.97). This can be achieved by infusing traditional Kenyan material culture with western designs and documenting them on websites and publications and then making this information available to Kenyans in general through rigorous marketing and promotion of Kenyan cultures.

Alan Donovan in an interview with Vigne & Martin (2001) had recommended that the Kenya Tourism Board should spearhead a national marketing organization for Kenyan art and crafts whereby visitors to Kenya can get the best the country has to offer which the board can support. Kenyan Designers can open Fashion Shops/Houses in other countries like Europe. Another of his recommendations included publishing more books on African culture with a focus on Fashion Design themes and their inspirations, making movies based on African culture where the fashion wardrobes of the actors or actresses can be provided by Kenyan Fashion Designers and organizing African themed gala events where attendants are asked to put on culturally inspired Fashion Design.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Examples of Kenyan Traditional Material Culture and how they have been Significantly Utilized.



Plate 1: A Maasai girl wearing a headband made of cowries.

Photo: Courtesy of Fisher (1984)

Plate 1 shows an example of cowries being used as traditional material culture. Traditionally, in the Maasai community their girls wore the above headband after circumcision. The cowries symbolized wealth and fertility.



Plate 2: Bag made of Khanga fabric. **Photo:** Courtesy of www.maridadicrafts.blogspot.com

The horizontal pattern motif at the centre of the Khanga bag in Plate 2 resembles a stylized shape of cowries that was commonly used in many Kenyan communities to represent wealth and fertility like the one in Plate 1.



Plate 3: Luo witchdoctor. **Photo:** Courtesy of The National Archives

Plate 3 showcases a wooden headdress; to these were attached 7 antelope horns and more dangled from the face and neck. The materials used to make the headdress above are examples of material culture.



Plate 4: Duruma witchdoctor. **Photo:** Courtesy of The National Archives

The image in Plate 4 shows a Duruma witchdoctor (traditional healer) holding a wooden staff carved from sacred trees. The geometric designs on the staff were intended to represent the body's bone structure.



Plate 5: Maridadi fabric khangas designs. **Photo:** Courtesy of www.sparkleshock.wordpress.com

The images in Plate 5 show modern Maridadi fabric khangas designs. Their motifs include patterns of geometric shapes similar to the ones found on carvings from the coastal communities like in Plate 4 above that had geometric patterns.

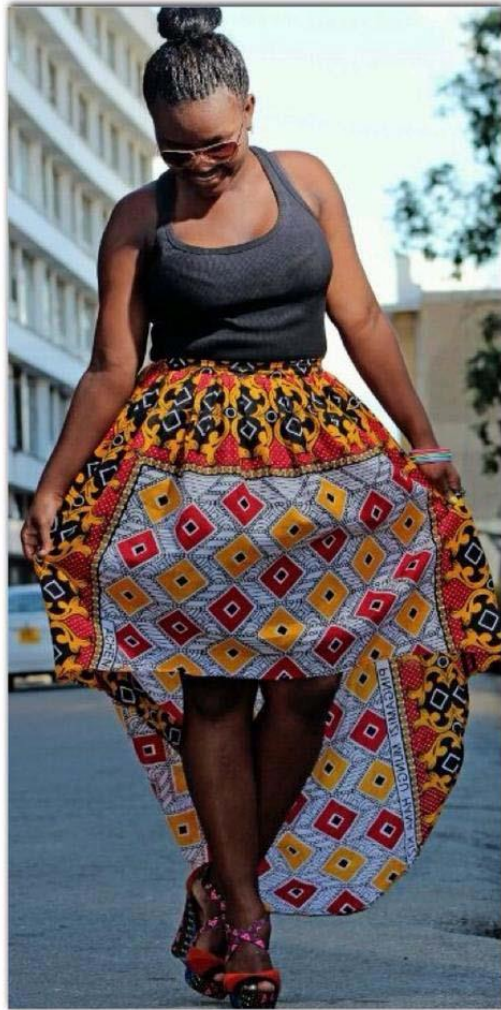


Plate 6: Yedu Collection. **Photo:** Pulse Magazine

The khanga designs in Plate 6 are synonymous with the coastal region of Kenya made of cotton fabric that is an example of material culture with geometric colourful motif which are similar to the geometric shapes on the wooden staff in plate 4 and the memorial pole on Plate 31.

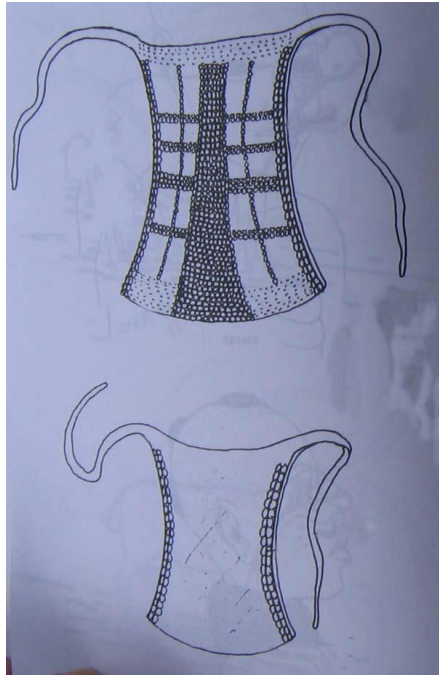


Figure 9: Pinafores from Turkana Community. **Photo:** Courtesy of Barret (1998)

The top pinafore in Figure 9 above was for a married Turkana woman. It was smeared with red ochre or black soil and the bottom pinafore was for a young unmarried Turkana girl and is decorated with black metal studs along the edges.

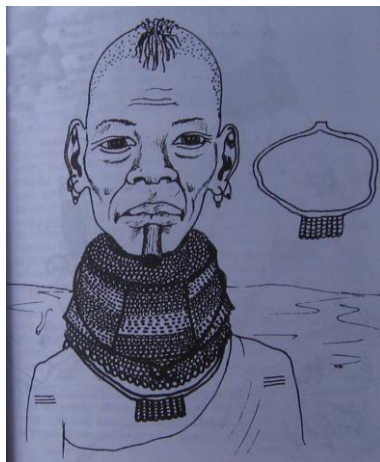


Figure 10: Turkana woman. **Photo:** Courtesy of Barret (1998)

The Figure 10 is an image of a Turkana married woman adorned in jewellery made from traditional material culture signifying her social status. Examples of indigenous material culture used in the Turkana community included iron rings, plates, small discs chipped from ostrich eggs worn on their shoulders, neck and breasts and a narrow hide apron decorated with beads.



Plate 7: Clutch bags. **Photo:** Courtesy of Sanabora Design House

The clutch bags in Plate 7 are made from leather and are accessorized with iron rings and metal discs similar to the ones found from Turkana community as earlier shown in Figure 10.



Plate 8: Fashion attire. **Photo:** Courtesy of Rialto Fashion.

The design in plate 8 has been accessorized with bark cloth imported from Uganda resembling the shape of the pinafores from Turkana women as in Figure 9 and metal disks at the centre which was also part of the material that was used by Turkana women to make their jewellery as in illustration 10.

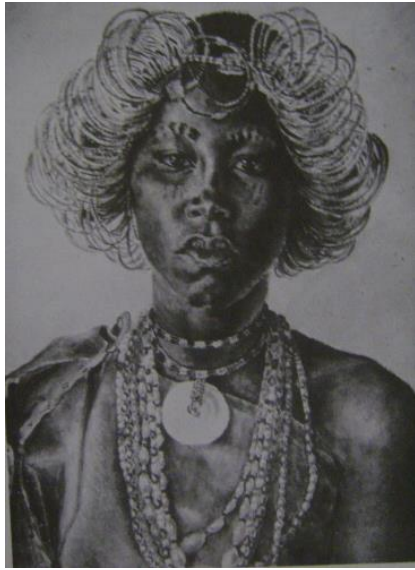


Plate 9: Kikuyu bride. **Photo:** Courtesy of The National Archives.

The image in Plate 9 shows *Hang'i* jewellery traditionally worn by a Kikuyu woman. It was made of a thin gauge with circles of thin iron wire on to which were threaded very small pink, red, dark blue black and white beads. The cowries on the bride's neck were to signify fertility. The thin iron wire and cowries are examples of material culture.



Plate 10: Jewellery. **Photo:** Courtesy of Divinely Draped Company

The picture in Plate 10 shows a bangle that resembles the *Hang'i* (Plate 9) traditionally worn by Kikuyu women on their wedding day. It has a thin iron wire threaded with very small pink and white beads.

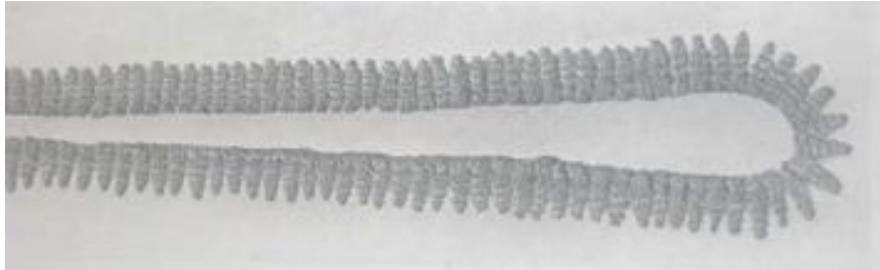


Plate 11: Malilichua. Photo: Courtesy of The National Museum.

The piece of jewellery in Plate 11 is made from a plant known as *Malilichua*. It was a necklace made of leaves from a certain plant that had a pleasant scent. The plant is an example of traditional material culture that is also eco friendly.



Plate 12: Eco friendly outfits showcased at the FAFA festival 2013. **Photo:** Courtesy of 540 Magazine (Feb- April 2013)

Just as the necklace in Plate 11, the outfits in Plate 12 above are also made from eco-friendly material like cotton and hessian which are gotten from the cotton plant and sisal plant respectively. Both plants are grown in Kenya.



Plate 13: Tigania girl attire during seclusion. **Photo:** Courtesy of The National Archives.

The image in Plate 13 shows *Gitaita* which was a piece of jewellery that comprised of a fringe of tiny metal chains worn across the eyes. The girl also wore jewellery decorated with cowries and blue seeds on her arms and waist. Her hands had a piece of string with many knots. All the pieces mentioned above are examples of material culture.



Plate 14: Jewellery. **Photo:** Courtesy of Divinely Draped Company

The picture in Plate 14 showcases an ornament similar to the one worn traditionally by Tigania girls (*Gitaita*) just before circumcision (Plate 13).



Plate 15: Fashionable sandals. **Photo:** Courtesy of Moo Cow Company

The image in Plate 15 shows sandals that have been accessorized using beads in patterns also similar to the *Gitaita* piece of jewellery in Plate 13.

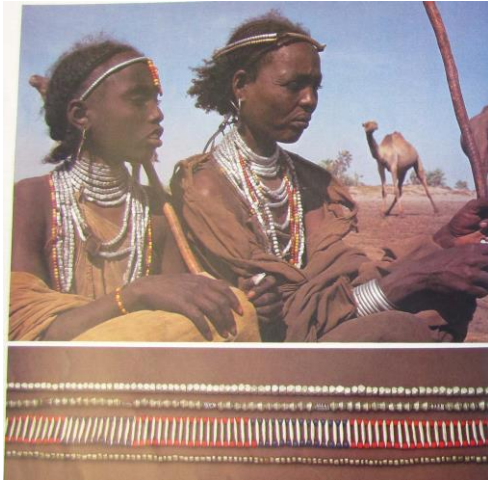


Plate 16: Married Gabbra women. **Photo:** Courtesy of Fisher (1984)

Plate 16 above shows two married Gabbra women distinguished by their twisted headbands. Among the material culture used to adorn their jewellery include soapstone and iron beads for their necklaces. The belts shown on the bottom part of the same Plate 16 were made of tiny antelope bones.



Plate 17: Bridal attire. **Photo:** Courtesy of Rialto Fashion.

The images in Plate 17 show contemporary bridal attire accessorized with bark cloth imported from Uganda and beads made from animal bone, the

same material culture used on the belts shown in Plate 16. The headpieces have been made using bark cloth with inspiration from leaf and flower designs.



Plate 18: Lion's mane headdress. **Photo:** Courtesy of Fisher (1984)

Plate 18 above shows a lion's mane headdress obtained as hunting trophies. The significance of the above headdress was to show that the warrior had killed a lion.



Plate 19: Leather bags. **Photo:** Courtesy of Rift Valley Leather Company.

The bags in Plate 19 are made using pony skin leather as material culture. Just as in Plate 18, Plate 19 shows an example of how animal skin has been incorporated as material culture in modern fashion trends.



Plate 20: Kikuyu necklace. **Photo:** Courtesy of The National Museum.

The image in Plate 20 shows an ornament worn on the neck made of material comprising of strings of beads that were a dark blue. The extremity of each length of fringe of chain is terminated by two milk- white beads tied to it.



Plate 21: Neckpiece with matching earrings. **Photo:** Courtesy of Divinely Draped

The picture in Plate 21 shows a modern neckpiece with matching earrings. The neckpiece has a unique pattern achieved by spacing beads from different hues similarly described in Plate 20. The beading at the front of the neckpiece is different from the round ones on the rest of the neckpiece.



Plate 22: Royalty attire for a Luo funeral. **Photo:** Courtesy of The National Archives

The image in Plate 22 is of Luo royalty. The regal wig was carved in an ivory frame, the regal beard was a solid ivory tusk, he also had on golden chains, strings of python vertebrae and adorned brass earrings which are made from traditional material culture.



Plate 23: Jewellery. **Photo:** Courtesy of Kipenzi Designs

Plate 23 showcases some of the products made by Kipenzi designs among them are ear pieces and necklaces made from brass and ivory pieces . The same traditional material was used to make the jewellery pieces in Plate 22 worn by Luo royalty at a funeral.



Plate 24: Swahili man blowing Siwa horn. **Photo:** Courtesy of www.aluka.org

The image in Plate 24 shows a traditional dress-cloth with horizontal collared stripes worn over fringed pantaloons (Arab-like regalia). The horizontally coloured shapes are geometric patterns synonymous with coastal designs from memorial poles as in Plate 31.



Plate 25: Fashionable Clothing. **Photo:** Courtesy of Moo Cow Company

Plate 25 shows a blouse with a scarf similar to the horizontal patterns found in the Arab-like regalia that the Swahili men used to wear traditionally as in Plate 24.

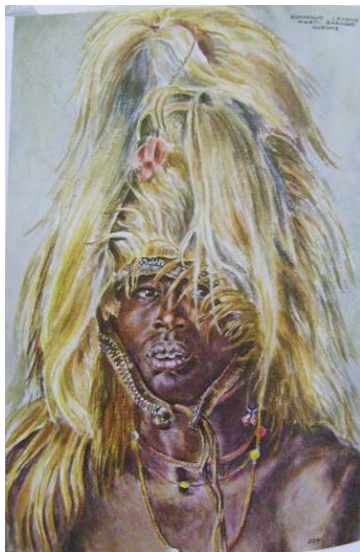


Plate 26: Wide brimmed hat (Nandi). **Photo:** Courtesy of The National Archives



Plate 27: British royal army hat. **Photo:** Courtesy of Pitarakis, 2008.

Plate 26 shows a traditional wide brimmed hat made of animal fur and has leather thongs adorned with ivory beading from the Nandi community. Due to British influence, the Nandi borrowed the design from the British royal army hats as showcased in Plate 27.

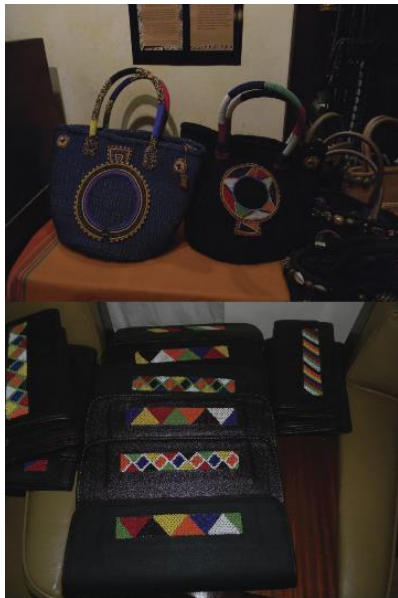


Plate 28: Bags and purses. **Photo:** Courtesy of Mohazo Company

The Handbags and purses in Plate 28 above are made from dyed sisal material and accessorized with beadings and patterns similar to the patterns from the Maasai community.



Plate 29: Ankara shoes, KenyaNdula. **Photo:** Courtesy of KenyaNdula

Plate 29 shows shoes with the Ankara colourful patterns of geometric shapes that are also similar to the geometric shapes found in Maasai colourful patterns on their *shukas*.



Plate 30: Leather Bag. **Photo:** Courtesy of Rift Valley Leather Company.

The bag in Plate 30 is a product of Rift valley leather. Its source of inspiration is geometric patterns and colours inspired by the Maasai shuka.



Plate 31: Memorial Pole. **Photo:** Courtesy of The National Archives

Plate 31 above is an example of a memorial pole from the Mijikenda community in Kenya. The geometric patterns on the poles were said to represent the human body parts.



Plate 32: KikoRomeo outfit. **Photo:** Courtesy of KikoRomeo

Plate 32 shows an outfit from KikoRomeo accessorized with small pieces of African fabric arranged in geometric patterns similar to the Mijikenda memorial poles as Plate 31.



Plate 33: Handbag. **Photo:** Courtesy of Just bags Company

The motifs on the bag in Plate 33 are also inspired by geometric shapes similar to the ones found in memorial poles found in the Mijikenda community as in Plate 31.



Plate 34: Some of the products inspired by traditional material culture at the Maasai Market. **Photo:** Courtesy of Maasai Market.

Plate 34 shows some of the fashion apparel sold at the Maasai market inspired by material culture especially from the Maasai community. The major issue with this market is that most of its products are monotonous between different traders therefore posing a challenge in finding variety of different design items.



Plate 35: 'Fierce' Magazine. **Photo:** Courtesy of Sunday Nation

Plate 35 above shows a magazine that has been published in Kenya recently focusing on its local fashion scene.



Plate 36: Lesoh Company. **Photo:** Courtesy of Nation Newspaper

Plate 36 above showcases few designs that have been influenced by the Khanga fabric with motifs inspired by cultural material and geometric shapes found in various communities along the Kenyan coast.



Plate 37: Louis Vuitton Spring Summer collection inspired by Maasai Shukas.

Photo: Courtesy of Mwakilishi, 2011.

The pictures in Plate 37 showcase designs by a popular international design company who incorporated the Maasai shuka in their recent collections.



Plate 38: Alan Donovan's first group of Kenyan models showcasing his designs in New York. **Photo:** Courtesy of David Beatty

Plate 38 showcase some of Alan Donovan's designs inspired by African fabric and material culture from various communities for example, bronze, mud cloth, sisal and feathers.

APPENDIX II:

Consumer Questionnaire

THE AVAILABILITY AND UTILISATION OF TRADITIONAL MATERIAL CULTURE IN KENYAN FASHION

The questionnaire aims to determine the shopping habits of people in the following categories with regard to cultural design elements in Kenya.

Please complete the questionnaire by ticking or selecting the appropriate option.

A) Sample Questionnaire for Consumers

1. Sex M/F
2. Category
 - a) College/University student
 - b) Working class (white collar)
 - c) Working class (blue collar)
3. Location of residence in Nairobi (Estate).....
4. What kind of fashion do you shop for in the category below
 - a) Imported from developed countries?
 - b) Imported within Africa?
 - c) Local Kenyan?
 - d) Other?
 - e) All of the above?
5. What do you look for when shopping when it comes to fashion and apparel?
 - a) Designer clothing (state whether imported or Kenyan)
 - b) Colour
 - c) Price
 - d) Materials used to make the product
 - e) Size
 - f) All of the above

g) Other

6. Would you shop for clothing that has been inspired by indigenous material culture? If Yes/No Why?.....

APPENDIX III:

Fashion Shops/Houses Employees Questionnaire

THE AVAILABILITY AND UTILISATION OF TRADITIONAL MATERIAL CULTURE IN KENYAN FASHION

The questionnaire aims to determine the sales (profit/loss) made by Fashion Shops/Houses in regard to cultural design elements in Kenya.

Please complete the questionnaire by ticking or selecting the appropriate option.

(B) Sample Questionnaire for Employees in Fashion Shops.

- 1) Name of Business
- 2) Location of Business.....
- 3) What type of fashion products does your company sell?
 - (a) Imported from Africa, America, Europe, Asia?
 - (b) Locally from Kenya?
 - (c) All of the above?
 - (d) Other?
- 4) What kind of clients does the company target?
 - (a) Upper class
 - (b) Middle Class
 - (c) Low Class
 - (d) Other
 - (e) All of the above
- 5) Does the company face any challenges?.....

APPENDIX IV:

Fashion Designer Questionnaire

THE AVAILABILITY AND UTILISATION OF TRADITIONAL MATERIAL CULTURE IN KENYAN FASHION

The questionnaire aims to investigate the inspiration and design trends of Kenyan fashion designers in regard to cultural design elements in Kenya.

Please complete the questionnaire by ticking or selecting the appropriate option.

(C)Sample Questionnaire for Fashion Designers

1. What style and culture inspires you?
 - a) America
 - b) Europe
 - c) Asian
 - d) African
 - e) All of the above?
 - f) Other?

2. What social class do you target as your market?
 - a) Upper
 - b) Middle
 - c) Lower
 - d) All of the above?
 - e) Other?

3. Do you use accessories in your designs?
 - a) If yes, what kind?
 - b) If no, why?

4. What category does your business target and why?
 - a) College/ University students.

b) Working Class (white collar)

c) Working Class (blue collar)

5. Does your business make profits?

6. What are some of the challenges you face as a designer?

.....

APPENDIX V:

Interview schedule

THE AVAILABILITY AND UTILISATION OF TRADITIONAL MATERIAL CULTURE IN KENYAN FASHION

This interview schedule aims to investigate the incorporation of Kenyan cultural elements on fashion trends in regard to cultural design elements in Kenya. All information obtained through this process will be used for research purposes only and handled in strict confidence.

Kindly therefore answer all questions as candidly as possible.

1. What are your names? 1st Name.....
Surname.....
2. What is your profession?
3. From which cultural community do you belong?
4. Do any of your fashion apparel and accessories contain indigenous material culture?

(If YES, which ones (a) beadwork, (b) jewellery, (c) fabric/motifs, (d) other)

(If NO, why?)
5. Do you think it is ideal to have culturally inspired designs?