

Reinterpreting Adire Symbols: Developing Innovative Motifs for Contemporary Ankara Textile Print

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ABSTRACT

Adire, the traditional resist-dyed textile heritage of south-western Nigeria, embodies rich symbolism and cultural identity, yet many of its motifs remain confined to craft practice and are rarely integrated into contemporary mass-produced textiles such as *Ankara* prints. This study investigates the reinterpretation of *Adire* symbols as innovative motifs for modern textile design. Adopting a studio-based mixed-methods approach, selected symbols were documented, analyzed for their formal and semiotic qualities, and digitally redesigned into repeat patterns using computer-aided design tools. The resulting motifs were applied to *Ankara* print prototypes to assess aesthetic appeal, functionality, and market relevance. Findings demonstrate that merging indigenous visual language with contemporary production technologies generates textiles that are culturally expressive, visually dynamic, and commercially viable. The study highlights traditional symbolism as a sustainable design resource and proposes a model for revitalizing African textile heritage while supporting innovation, competitiveness, and broader global appreciation of contemporary African textile design.

Keywords: *Adire*, Ankara textile prints, Contemporary textile design, Cultural heritage, Indigenous motifs

Introduction

Textiles play a pivotal role in many African societies as embodiments of cultural identity, historical memory, and aesthetic philosophy (Okoye, 2018). In Nigeria, indigenous textile traditions function as sophisticated visual languages that encode values, narratives, and worldviews. Among these, *Adire*—an indigo resist-dyed textile practice of the Yoruba people—stands out for its symbolic depth, technical complexity, and cultural endurance (Adewunmi, 2020). Beyond its ornamental appeal, *Adire* represents a semiotic system in which each motif conveys layered meanings that articulate cosmology, social roles, and communal history. Traditionally produced through hand-drawn, stitched, or stencilled resist techniques, *Adire* textiles were not only aesthetic materials but communicative artifacts. Motifs often interpret proverbs, mythic narratives,

social commentary, or ethical precepts, underscoring the imbrication of artistry and indigenous knowledge (Uchechukwu, 2019). Contemporary scholarship has emphasized the potential of such visual systems to resist cultural erasure and to offer models for sustainable design rooted in local epistemologies (Nzegwu & Okafor, 2021).

Despite its cultural significance, *Adire* faces profound challenges in the modern era. Industrialization and global market flows have increased the availability of mass-produced textiles, often at the expense of handmade fabrics. Imported prints and standardized designs dominate fashion markets due to their low cost and mass appeal (Jideani & Jideani, 2019). At the same time, younger designers increasingly adopt international aesthetics that overlook or marginalize indigenous design vocabularies. This trend not only diminishes the socio-cultural presence of *Adire* but also

weakens the intergenerational transmission of symbolic literacy embedded in its patterns. Paradoxically, technological innovation also creates new opportunities for indigenous design revitalization. Contemporary digital design tools, surface pattern technologies, and industrial printing methods have expanded possibilities for translating traditional visual languages into formats compatible with contemporary production demands (Smith & Johnson, 2022). Rather than preserving heritage in static archives or museums alone, scholars and practitioners now advocate dynamic processes of reinterpretation and recomposition that adapt indigenous motifs for current cultural and industrial contexts (Duro & Oyeniyi, 2020).

Ankara fabric—a vibrant wax-print textile ubiquitous in West African dress—provides a promising medium for such innovation. Characterized by bright palettes, repeat patterns, and broad market appeal, *Ankara* prints occupy a central position in everyday and ceremonial fashion across the region. Industrial production systems ensure scalability and cost efficiency, making *Ankara* textiles ideal vehicles for disseminating reimagined traditional motifs. By integrating *Adire*-derived symbols into *Ankara* prints, designers can preserve cultural heritage while engaging contemporary aesthetic sensibilities and consumer preferences. This alignment of tradition with innovation reflects broader discussions in design research about cultural sustainability and hybrid aesthetics (Mbatha & Ncube, 2021).

Therefore, this research situates itself at the intersection of cultural preservation, design innovation, and market relevance. It investigates how traditional *Adire* symbols can be systematically studied, digitally redesigned, and integrated into contemporary *Ankara* textile prints, thereby bridging heritage knowledge with modern fashion practice and global design discourse. Although *Adire* continues to be recognized as a cultural emblem of the Yoruba people, its visual vocabulary remains underrepresented in contemporary textile design and industrial production. Many commercial *Ankara* prints favour generic motifs that draw on universal geometric shapes or global aesthetic trends, resulting in a visual landscape that lacks

localized cultural articulation (Oladipo, 2021). This disconnect between heritage motifs and modern textile representation contributes to cultural dilution and a loss of narrative depth in contemporary fashion. Moreover, the labour-intensive processes associated with classical *Adire* resist printing limit its competitiveness in industrial markets that prioritize speed, scalability, and repeatability. Without structured processes for adapting indigenous symbols to digital design and industrial printing systems, traditional motifs risk relegation to niche artisan contexts or folkloric exhibitions. This gap underscores the need for design-centric research that supports the translation of heritage motifs into contemporary textile frameworks (Adeola & Eze, 2022).

This study addresses this challenge by proposing a methodical approach to reinterpreting *Adire* symbols, redesigning those using digital tools, and applying them to *Ankara* textile prints. By doing so, the research seeks to demonstrate that indigenous cultural resources can fuel creative innovation and market viability without sacrificing symbolic richness. The aim of this study is to reinterpret traditional *Adire* symbols and develop innovative, culturally meaningful motifs for application in contemporary *Ankara* textile prints. To achieve this aim, the study will: Identify and document selected traditional *Adire* symbols and their cultural meanings, analyze the formal, structural, and semiotic characteristics of the symbols, redesign the symbols using digital textile design software, apply the redesigned motifs to *Ankara* textile print prototypes, and evaluate the aesthetic quality, cultural relevance, and market potential of the new design.

This study makes multiple contributions to scholarship, cultural sustainability, creative practice, and economic development. Firstly, it supports cultural preservation by repositioning *Adire* symbolism within contemporary design processes rather than confining it to historical archives. By bridging generational divides, the research promotes the continuity of indigenous knowledge systems in a rapidly changing cultural landscape (Onyeka & Adebayo, 2018). Secondly, academically, the study enriches discourse in design anthropology, textile innovation, and cultural heritage studies. It

demonstrates how design research can integrate semiotic analysis, ethnographic documentation, and digital technologies to produce culturally grounded yet contemporary artifacts (Kassam & Hammad, 2019). Thirdly, for creative industries, the project creates a repository of culturally authentic visual resources that can be adapted for diverse markets. Textiles that convey narrative depth resonate with consumers seeking identity-rich and culturally meaningful products (Balogun & Yusuf, 2020). Economically, integrating indigenous motifs into commercially viable *Ankara* prints may stimulate local production, strengthen creative industries, and generate new employment opportunities.

For an international audience, the study contributes perspective on how African textile traditions can inform global design practices, offering models for culturally responsive innovation that resist homogenizing global trends. This research focuses on the reinterpretation of selected *Adire* symbols from south-western Nigeria and their digital transformation for *Ankara* textile prints. The study emphasizes motif development, digital redesign, and aesthetic evaluation rather than detailed industrial production analyses or extended ethnographic histories. The outcomes are intended to inform both academic discourse and practical design applications within national and international fashion contexts. By reimagining *Adire* symbols through contemporary design technologies and integrating them into *Ankara* textile prints, this study affirms that traditional heritage can serve as an engine of creative innovation rather than a static relic. It articulates a vision in which cultural authenticity and modern design coalesce, contributing to both the sustainability of indigenous knowledge and the evolution of global fashion aesthetics.

Literature Review

The Literature Review would be discussed under the following sub-headings:

Theoretical Framework: Cultural Reinterpretation and Fashion Innovation

The intersection of culture and innovation has become a central discourse in contemporary design studies, particularly within fashion and textile practices in postcolonial societies. Cultural reinterpretation refers to the strategic reconceptualization of traditional forms, symbols, and techniques to generate new meanings and functions suitable for present-day realities (Okonkwo, 2017). Rather than treating tradition as a static or nostalgic reference, reinterpretation positions heritage as an evolving resource that can inspire creative transformation. This perspective challenges binary oppositions between the “traditional” and the “modern,” emphasizing continuity through adaptation.

Within fashion systems, innovation increasingly depends on culturally embedded design strategies that distinguish local products within global markets. Adeyemi (2018) argues that fashion innovation in Nigeria thrives when designers draw from indigenous aesthetics while applying contemporary technologies and market-driven approaches. Cultural specificity not only enhances authenticity but also strengthens brand identity and competitiveness. Consequently, reinterpretation functions both as a creative and economic strategy, enabling heritage textiles to transcend ethnographic limitations and enter mainstream fashion consumption.

Applying this theoretical lens to *Adire* symbolism suggests that the transformation of traditional resist-dye motifs into contemporary *Ankara* prints represents not cultural dilution but cultural evolution. The framework thus supports the conceptual premise of this study: that innovation can emerge through systematic translation of indigenous visual languages into modern textile production systems.

Adire: Traditional Significance and Contemporary Relevance

Adire remains one of the most significant indigenous textile traditions of the Yoruba people of south-western Nigeria. Historically produced through tie-dye (*adire oniko*), stitch-resist (*adire alabere*), and starch-resist (*adire eleko*) techniques, the fabric serves communicative, social, and aesthetic purposes.

Akinwumi (2016) observes that *Adire* textiles operate as visual texts through which wearers express identity, spirituality, gender roles, and socio-economic status. Motifs often encode proverbs, myths, and communal memory, transforming cloth into a cultural archive. Beyond aesthetic appeal, *Adire* production embodies indigenous knowledge systems that integrate craftsmanship, symbolism, and communal learning. Such practices foster intergenerational continuity and contribute to cultural resilience. However, despite this heritage value, *Adire* faces structural challenges in the contemporary fashion environment. Fashakin (2020) notes that artisanal limitations, slow production processes, and competition from mass-produced imported fabrics restrict scalability and profitability. As a result, traditional *Adire* risks marginalization within Nigeria's rapidly modernizing textile industry.

Recent scholarship emphasizes that preservation alone is insufficient for sustainability. Instead, adaptive modernization-through improved design development, technological integration, and expanded applications-is necessary to maintain relevance. Reinterpreting *Adire* motifs for modern printing methods offers a pathway to bridge tradition and contemporary demand. Such integration preserves symbolic integrity while enhancing usability, affordability, and market reach.

Symbolism and Semiotics of *Adire* Motifs

Central to *Adire's* enduring relevance is its symbolic depth. Textile motifs are not arbitrary decorations but encoded signs that convey layered meanings. Semiotic theory provides a useful analytical framework for understanding how visual forms operate as communicative devices within cultural contexts. Through shapes, repetition, rhythm, and spatial organization, *Adire* patterns articulate philosophical ideas and collective experiences. Adeyemi (2018) explains that symbolic literacy enables designers to decode these meanings and adapt them responsibly. For instance, motifs associated with water deities, fertility, or protection can be stylized or recomposed while maintaining their conceptual essence. This

approach ensures that adaptation does not result in superficial appropriation or cultural erasure.

By recognizing *Adire* symbols as communicative signs, contemporary designers can create Ankara prints that convey narratives and identities rather than mere ornamentation. Such narrative-rich textiles enhance emotional connection between product and consumer, increasing cultural value and market desirability. Therefore, semiotic analysis becomes an essential methodological tool in motif development.

Ankara Textile Prints: Evolution And Design Trends

Ankara prints, commonly described as African wax prints, have become a dominant medium in contemporary Nigerian fashion due to their affordability, durability, and adaptability. Although historically introduced through European industrial wax-resist technologies, *Ankara* fabrics were quickly indigenized, acquiring distinct cultural meanings and stylistic variations across West Africa (Ogundele, 2019). Today, they function as everyday fashion staples as well as ceremonial garments.

Design trends within the *Ankara* market reveal increasing experimentation with large-scale motifs, digital coloration, abstract geometry, and cross-cultural references. However, Adejumo (2020) argues that many contemporary designs prioritize commercial aesthetics over cultural depth, often replicating generic florals or foreign-inspired patterns that lack contextual specificity. This trend risks homogenizing African textile identity and weakening connections to indigenous heritage. Integrating authentic local motifs has been proposed as a strategy to counteract this loss of identity. *Adire*-derived patterns offer a reservoir of culturally grounded imagery capable of enriching Ankara aesthetics. Through such integration, *Ankara* fabrics can serve not only as fashion materials but also as carriers of historical and symbolic narratives. Thus, *Ankara* provides an effective industrial platform for disseminating reinterpreted traditional motifs to broader local and international markets.

Indigenous Motif Adaptation and Contemporary Design Methodologies

Scholars of design practice increasingly advocate systematic methodologies for adapting indigenous motifs into contemporary products. Rather than direct copying, processes such as stylization, abstraction, simplification, and digital reconstruction are recommended to facilitate innovation while maintaining authenticity. Ogundele (2019) emphasizes that motif development should involve research into meaning, user perception, and production feasibility. Design thinking approaches—characterized by experimentation, prototyping, and iterative testing—have proven effective in translating handcrafted patterns into repeatable industrial prints. This methodology supports scalability without sacrificing visual integrity. Similarly, Fashakin (2020) highlights diversification of applications, suggesting that traditional motifs can extend beyond apparel into interior textiles, accessories, and lifestyle products.

For *Adire*, converting resist-dye patterns into vectorized or digitally repeatable formats enables compatibility with contemporary *Ankara* printing technologies. This methodological shift ensures consistency, reduces cost, and broadens consumer reach, demonstrating how innovation can coexist with cultural preservation.

Sustainability, Cultural Identity, and The Creative Economy

Beyond aesthetics, reinterpretation of indigenous textiles contributes to broader discussions on sustainability and creative economy development. Locally inspired design reduces dependence on imported patterns and fosters indigenous intellectual property. It also supports local artisans, designers, and small-scale industries, thereby strengthening economic resilience.

Cultural sustainability entails maintaining practices that preserve identity while adapting to change. By embedding *Adire* symbolism within mass-produced *Ankara* fabrics, designers create opportunities for wider cultural transmission and appreciation. This approach aligns with

contemporary calls for ethical and place-based design that respects heritage knowledge systems. Moreover, heritage-driven innovation positions Nigerian textiles competitively within global markets increasingly interested in authenticity and storytelling. Textiles that communicate cultural narratives offer differentiated value compared to generic industrial prints. Therefore, reinterpretation not only conserves tradition but also stimulates economic growth and creative entrepreneurship.

Research Gap and Conceptual Synthesis

While substantial literature documents the cultural importance of *Adire* and the commercial evolution of *Ankara* separately, limited research explicitly investigates their integration through systematic motif reinterpretation. Existing studies focus either on preservation of traditional techniques or on contemporary fashion trends without establishing methodological connections between the two domains. Consequently, the potential synergy between *Adire* symbolism and *Ankara* industrial production remains underexplored.

This study addresses this gap by synthesizing theories of cultural reinterpretation, semiotics, and design innovation to develop new *Ankara* motifs derived from *Adire* symbols. By doing so, it contributes to scholarship on sustainable textile modernization and demonstrates how indigenous heritage can inform contemporary design solutions. The resulting framework promotes both cultural continuity and creative advancement within Nigerian fashion and textile practice.

Methodology

This section introduces the research design adopted for the study.

Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, integrating qualitative cultural inquiry with quantitative design evaluation to enable both interpretive depth and empirical validation. Mixed methods are particularly suitable for practice-based textile and design research

because they combine cultural meaning-making with measurable user responses, thereby strengthening both creative exploration and market relevance. As noted by Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, mixed approaches allow researchers to triangulate findings, reduce bias, and develop more comprehensive insights when addressing design innovation problems.

The qualitative component focuses on documenting and interpreting the historical, symbolic, and socio-cultural meanings embedded in traditional *Adire* motifs. This ensures that reinterpretation maintains cultural authenticity rather than superficial stylistic borrowing. The quantitative component measures aesthetic acceptance, usability, and purchase intention among designers and consumers, thus aligning traditional symbolism with contemporary market demands. The research follows a design-based research (DBR) framework, which emphasizes iterative prototyping, testing, and refinement—an approach increasingly recommended for creative and textile design studies (Henriksen et al., 2017; Gray & Malins, 2016).

Data Collection

***Adire* Symbol Documentation and Collection**

Primary visual data were obtained through systematic documentation of traditional *Adire* motifs. Ten widely recognized symbols were purposively selected based on cultural relevance, frequency of use, and clarity of symbolic meaning. Sources included museum collections, textile archives, scholarly publications, and authenticated digital repositories. Where possible, physical samples were photographed and digitally scanned at high resolution to preserve line quality and pattern structure.

Purposive sampling ensured that the selected symbols represented a diversity of semantic categories such as protection, fertility, status, and community identity. This method aligns with heritage textile research practices that emphasize contextual significance over random selection (Akinwumi, 2016; Picton & Mack, 2019). Metadata for each symbol—including

name, origin, production technique, and meaning—were recorded to guide later reinterpretation.

Expert Interviews

To deepen cultural understanding, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten specialists: five textile designers and five fashion scholars/industry professionals with experience in indigenous Nigerian textiles. Participants were selected through criterion sampling, requiring at least five years of professional or academic involvement with *Adire* or *Ankara* production. Interview questions explored were: Symbolic meanings and narratives of *Adire* motifs, contemporary challenges in adapting indigenous designs, strategies for modernization without cultural loss, and consumer perceptions of heritage-based prints. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. Semi-structured formats allowed both comparability across participants and flexibility for emergent insights (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018).

Design and Development Process

Digital Translation and Motif Reinterpretation

Collected symbols were digitized and vectorized using Adobe Illustrator to enable scalable manipulation without loss of detail. Digital tools are increasingly recognized as effective for transforming heritage crafts into contemporary design systems while preserving formal integrity (Ogundele, 2019; Ræbild & Hasling, 2021). The reinterpretation process followed four stages: Extraction – isolating core structural elements (lines, shapes, repeats), reducing complexity for clarity and reproducibility in Ankara screen printing, Transformation – experimenting with symmetry, rotation, layering, and scaling, and Integration – combining traditional forms with contemporary geometric and abstract trends.

Motif Development

Through iterative sketching and prototyping, eight (8) new motifs were produced as shown in fig 1-8. Each design maintained identifiable *Adire* characteristics while incorporating modern aesthetics suitable for *Ankara* mass production.

Colour palettes were selected based on current fashion trend reports and consumer preferences within Nigerian urban markets.

Design iterations were reviewed in cycles, consistent with design-thinking models that advocate prototype–test–refine loops (Liedtka, 2018). Feedback from preliminary reviewers informed adjustments to balance symbolism, visual clarity, and production feasibility.

Evaluation

Expert Design Evaluation

A panel of twenty professional fashion designers evaluated the developed motifs. Using a structured rating instrument, they assessed: Cultural authenticity, aesthetic appeal, adaptability for Ankara printing, and commercial potential. Ratings were measured on a five-point Likert scale. Expert evaluation is commonly used in textile design studies to establish professional validity before consumer testing (Adejumo, 2020; Ræbild & Hasling, 2021).

Consumer Survey

A survey involving one hundred respondents (fashion consumers, students, and retailers) assessed broader acceptance. Respondents evaluated digital mock-ups of the motifs applied to garments and furnishing textiles. The questionnaire measured: Visual attractiveness, perceived cultural value, purchase intention, and price willingness.

This quantitative stage ensured that the designs resonated beyond specialist audiences and addressed real market behaviour, which is essential for contemporary textile commercialization (Niinimäki et al., 2020).

Data Analysis

Qualitative Analysis

Interview transcripts and field notes were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase procedure of coding, categorization, and theme development (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This method enabled identification of recurring ideas such as symbolism preservation,

modernization strategies, and ethical design adaptation.

Quantitative Analysis

Survey and evaluation data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage) and inferential statistics (ANOVA and correlation tests) to determine preference patterns and relationships between aesthetic appeal and purchase intention. Statistical analysis strengthened the reliability and generalizability of findings.

Validity and Reliability

Triangulation across archival data, expert interviews, design experiments, and surveys enhanced credibility. Pilot testing of instruments ensured clarity, while inter-coder agreement improved reliability in qualitative coding.

Results and Discussion

The study set out to reinterpret traditional *Adire* symbols into innovative motifs suitable for contemporary *Ankara* textile prints through a practice-led design process supported by user evaluation and expert review. Results from studio experimentation, motif development, and survey feedback demonstrate that the integration of indigenous visual language with modern digital textile production techniques yields designs that are aesthetically compelling, culturally grounded, and commercially viable.

Design Appeal and Aesthetic Innovation

Results from the quantitative survey indicated that 85% of respondents rated the newly developed motifs as visually appealing as shown in fig 1()-8(B). Participants particularly noted the harmonious blend of geometric abstraction, symbolic storytelling, and contemporary colour harmonization. This suggests that the reinterpretation strategy successfully bridged the gap between heritage aesthetics and modern fashion expectations.

The success of these motifs can be attributed to three design interventions: Simplification of complex resist patterns into modular units, digital repetition and scaling for Ankara-style

repeats, and colour experimentation beyond the traditional indigo palette.

MOTIFS DRAWN WITH CAD

DESIGN FROM THE MOTIF DRAWN WITH CAD



A



B

Fig 1: this is as ample of figure (A), this is sample of figure (B) Ona Merin (Four pathways).



A



B

Fig 2: this is as ample of figure (A), this is sample of figure (B) opo Ile Mapo (Mapo Hall).



A



B

Fig 3: this is as ample of figure (A), this is sample of figure (B) Irawo Ododo (Star-flower).



A



B

Fig 4: this is as ample of figure (A), this is sample of figure (B) Olokun (Lord of the Deep).



A



B

Fig 5: this is as ample of figure (A), this is sample of figure (B) Alangba (Lizard).



A



B

Fig 6: this is as ample of figure (A), this is sample of figure (B) Oga (Chameleon).



A



B

Fig 7: this is as ample of figure (A), this is sample of figure (B) Arewa (Star of the North).



A



B

Fig 8: this is as ample of figure (A), this is sample of figure (B) Erin (Elephant).

These strategies enhanced clarity, versatility, and adaptability for mass textile production. Similar outcomes have been reported in contemporary African textile studies where digital reinterpretation of indigenous motifs increases consumer acceptance and design flexibility (Adejumo, 2020; Akinbode & Fajuyigbe, 2021). The findings align with arguments that heritage textiles gain renewed relevance when designers recontextualize them through modern technologies rather than replicate them literally.

Furthermore, studio observation revealed that participants were drawn to motifs that preserved symbolic storytelling while offering a minimalist aesthetic compatible with current fashion trends. This reflects global shifts toward culturally inspired yet modernized surface design (Tulloch, 2018). The implication is that reinterpretation, rather than reproduction, fosters stronger aesthetic resonance with younger consumers.

Cultural Relevance and Symbolic Continuity

Beyond aesthetics, maintaining cultural integrity was central to this research. Expert evaluators—including textile historians and practicing designers—confirmed that the motifs retained the conceptual essence of *Adire* symbolism such as protection, prosperity, fertility, and community identity. Approximately 80% of experts agreed that the adapted motifs demonstrated authenticity despite stylistic transformation.

The retention of symbolic meaning supports scholarship that views textile design as a vehicle for cultural memory and identity preservation (Akinwumi, 2019). By embedding recognizable *Adire* iconography within *Ankara* print structures, the designs continued to communicate indigenous narratives while functioning within a contemporary fashion system.

This finding is particularly significant within the broader discourse on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, a priority emphasized by organizations such as UNESCO, which advocate adaptive reuse of traditional knowledge systems rather than static preservation. The reinterpretation approach used in this study

therefore contributes to cultural sustainability by ensuring that *Adire* symbolism remains visible, usable, and economically relevant.

Qualitative feedback also suggested that consumers perceived the fabrics as “authentic,” “proudly Nigerian,” and “culturally expressive.” Such responses demonstrate that symbolic continuity strengthens emotional attachment and identity-based consumption. This supports earlier findings that culturally embedded fashion products foster higher perceived value and brand differentiation (Ogundele, 2019; Adeola & Oladipo, 2022).

Market Potential and Consumer Acceptance

Market viability emerged as another critical outcome. Survey data revealed that 75% of respondents expressed willingness to purchase garments made with the reinterpreted designs. Purchase intention was highest among young adults and creative professionals who favoured culturally distinctive products over generic prints. Three major factors influenced buying intention: Perceived uniqueness of motifs, cultural authenticity, and compatibility with modern garment styles. These results indicate that consumers increasingly value hybrid products that combine heritage and modernity. Contemporary African fashion markets demonstrate similar tendencies, where localized narratives differentiate brands within globalized textile economies (Adebayo & Afolabi, 2021).

Additionally, interviews with designers and retailers suggested that the motifs possess strong commercialization prospects due to their adaptability for multiple product categories including apparel, home décor, and accessories. The scalability of digitally produced *Ankara* prints further enhances cost-effectiveness and mass production potential. Consequently, the findings confirm that culturally informed innovation is not merely symbolic but economically strategic. The reinterpretation of *Adire* thus functions as both cultural revitalization and entrepreneurial opportunity.

Effectiveness of the Reinterpretation Process

Practice-led experimentation revealed that the most successful designs emerged when traditional *Adire* production logic-freehand drawing, stencil placement, and resist layering—was first explored manually before digital transformation. This sequential process preserved the spontaneity and organic character of hand-crafted marks, which participants perceived as more authentic than purely computer-generated graphics. Designers emphasized the importance of authenticity, contextual knowledge, and cultural sensitivity when adapting traditional symbols. Superficial borrowing or excessive stylization tended to weaken meaning and reduce credibility. This observation echoes research suggesting that meaningful innovation requires cultural literacy and collaborative engagement with heritage practices (Tulloch, 2018; Adeola & Oladipo, 2022).

The study therefore demonstrates that reinterpretation is most effective when it follows a cyclical model:

Traditional knowledge → studio experimentation → digital adaptation → consumer testing → refinement.

Such an approach balances respect for tradition with technological advancement, resulting in designs that are both rooted and forward-looking.

Implications for Textile Design Practice

Collectively, the findings indicate that integrating *Adire* symbols into Ankara prints can: Revitalize endangered textile knowledge systems, enhance product differentiation within competitive markets, strengthen cultural identity in contemporary fashion, and create new economic opportunities for designers and artisans.

These outcomes reinforce the argument that indigenous design resources constitute valuable innovation assets rather than relics of the past. The study contributes to contemporary textile design pedagogy and practice by demonstrating

how cultural reinterpretation can serve as a sustainable design strategy.

Summary of Key Findings

In summary: High aesthetic acceptance (85%) confirms design appeal, expert evaluation verifies cultural authenticity, strong purchase intention (75%) demonstrates market viability, and Practice-led reinterpretation effectively bridges tradition and modern production. Thus, the incorporation of traditional *Adire* elements into Ankara textiles does not dilute heritage; instead, it revitalizes it, ensuring continuity within modern fashion systems.

Conclusion

The study confirms that *Adire* symbolism remains a valuable source of innovation for contemporary textile design. Through careful reinterpretation and digital adaptation, traditional motifs can achieve renewed aesthetic relevance while retaining cultural authenticity. The resulting designs demonstrated strong consumer acceptance and promising market viability, indicating that heritage-informed products can compete effectively within modern fashion systems.

Rather than viewing tradition as obsolete, this research positions it as a dynamic foundation for creativity and economic development. By bridging indigenous knowledge with contemporary production, the reinterpretation of *Adire* provides a sustainable pathway for preserving cultural identity while meeting present-day design demands. Consequently, the future of Nigerian textile innovation lies not in abandoning traditional practices but in continuously transforming them to serve new contexts and audiences.

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Data Availability Statement

All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in this article. Data is available upon request while respecting participants' privacy.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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