

POTENTIALS OF AFRICAN PRINT KITCHEN FURNISHINGS AS A WEALTH CREATION TOOL AMONG FEMALE JUNIOR STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the acceptability of African print kitchen furnishings among female junior staff at the University of Ilorin and assesses their potential for wealth creation. The study posed five questions and formulated one hypothesis tested at a 0.05 significance level. A descriptive research design was employed, with a sample of seventy-one (71) female junior staff randomly selected from a population of 245. Data were collected using a well-structured questionnaire, then analyzed through descriptive statistics (percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics including Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The findings revealed that awareness of African print kitchen furnishings among the respondents was generally low. However, there was a significant positive relationship between consumer awareness and the acceptability of these furnishings. Despite the potential for wealth creation, sourcing quality fabrics and lack of expertise posed significant challenges to the adoption and promotion of these products. The study found no significant relationship between perceived economic benefits and the acceptability of African print kitchen furnishings. Based on these findings, it was recommended that efforts should be made to increase awareness and improve the skillset of those involved in producing African print kitchen furnishings, thereby enhancing their potential for wealth creation.

Keywords: Consumer Awareness, African Print Fabrics, Kitchen Furnishings, Wealth Creation, Cultural Heritage.

Introduction

African print fabrics, known for their vibrant colors and unique patterns, have transitioned from traditional use in fashion to becoming integral elements in modern interior design, particularly in kitchen furnishings. This trend not only enhances aesthetic appeal but also creates opportunities for wealth generation through the commercialization of culturally significant products.

Furnishings play a crucial role in establishing a warm and inviting atmosphere that reflects a homeowner's style and social status (Anyakoha, 2015). Furnishing is categorized into hard, soft, and accessory types. Soft furnishings, such as curtains, pillows, and tablecloths, are selected based on personal tastes and cultural backgrounds (Anyakoha, 2015). Modern design principles emphasize the importance of ergonomic and efficient kitchen furnishings, which range from major appliances to decorative items (Ismail *et al.*, 2021). Kitchen textile products serve both aesthetic and functional purposes (Adio, 2016), and soft furnishings made from cotton or synthetic fabrics add warmth and texture to the kitchen environment (Saravanan & Dhurai, 2017).

African print fabrics, often referred to as kitenge, Dutch wax, or Ankara cloth, are primarily made from 100% cotton and dyed using traditional wax-resist methods (Uqalo, 2015). African print fabrics possess significant cultural and commercial value, contributing to the socio-economic development of African nations. Originating from Dutch traders in the 1800s, these fabrics are now synonymous with African identity and pride (Adeloye, 2022). Their vibrant designs encapsulate cultural stories and enhance the elegance of contemporary interiors (Howard *et al.*, 2012).

African print textiles foster social belonging and reflect rich cultural heritage (Uqalo, 2015). Factors such as brand loyalty, design creativity, and cultural relevance influence the market acceptance of these fabrics both locally and internationally (Chichi *et al.*, 2016). The rise of local textile designers has also facilitated the successful commercialization of African prints, promoting economic prosperity across the continent (Adeloye *et al.*, 2023; Uqalo, 2015).

Wealth creation, as defined by Ochepea *et al.* (2017), involves generating economic value and enhancing well-being through innovation and entrepreneurship.

These elements are crucial for long-term economic growth, as they lead to new products, services, and technologies that improve productivity and create job opportunities. Effective policies that support innovation and entrepreneurship are essential for fostering economic growth and wealth creation (Adeloye *et al.*, 2024).

This research explores the potential of African print kitchen furnishings as a wealth creation tool among female junior staff at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, aiming to assess their awareness, acceptance, and the economic opportunities these products can provide.

Statement of the Problem

Ideally, African print fabrics, celebrated for their vibrant designs and rich cultural heritage should be widely incorporated into both fashion and home interior elements, including kitchen furnishings. Items such as aprons, tablecloths, placemats, kitchen curtains, and oven mitts made from African prints will have the potential to add cultural value and aesthetic appeal to domestic spaces. Beyond decoration, the production and use of these items could serve as an effective avenue for economic empowerment, particularly among women thereby improving their economic independence and quality of life.

In contrast to this ideal, the current reality reveals that the use of African prints remains predominantly confined to clothing, with limited application in home decoration and kitchen furnishings. Despite the growing popularity of African prints in the fashion industry, their potential within the household space remains untapped among female junior staff at the University of Ilorin, awareness and utilization of African print kitchen products are minimal.

This study is necessary to bridge the existing gap between the cultural significance of African prints and their limited application in kitchen furnishings. It seeks to ascertain the perceptions and readiness of female junior staff at the University of Ilorin to adopt and possibly commercialize African print kitchen items. By investigating their level of interest and potential engagement in the production or use of these items, the study aims to uncover practical ways of transforming cultural resources into wealth creation tools. The findings are expected to support local innovation, enhance women's economic participation, and contribute to cultural sustainability and interior design development in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the acceptability of kitchen furnishings with African print fabric for wealth creation among female junior staff of university of Ilorin, specifically the study sought to:

- i. determine the level of awareness of African print kitchen furnishings
- ii. investigate the factors that influence acceptance of kitchen furnishings made with African print fabric
- iii. examine the potential economic benefits of producing and selling kitchen furnishings made with African print fabric
- iv. determine the perceived challenges faced during production of African print kitchen furnishing
- v. investigate the acceptability of kitchen furnishing with African prints fabric

Research Hypothesis

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between the level of consumer awareness and the acceptability of kitchen furnishing with African print fabric for wealth creation in Ilorin South.

Methodology

Design of the study

This study adopted a descriptive research design to investigate the acceptance and application of African print fabrics in kitchen furnishings among female junior staff at the University of Ilorin. Descriptive research is particularly useful for understanding participants' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors without the intent to create or develop a product (Furidha, 2024).

Area of the Study

The study was carried out at the University of Ilorin, located in Kwara State, Nigeria. The institution serves as one of the major centers for higher education in the region and employs a diverse workforce across academic and non-academic sectors. The choice of this location was informed by the researcher's interest in understanding how working-class women, particularly junior non-academic staff, engage with cultural products such as African print kitchen furnishings within a professional and urban environment.

Population of the study

The target population comprised 245 female junior non-academic staff at the University of Ilorin. This demographic is strategically chosen due to the pivotal role women play in home management and household purchasing decisions, particularly in the context of kitchen furnishings. By focusing exclusively on female staff, the study aims to capture insights into their preferences, perceptions, and acceptance of African

print kitchen furnishings, a product category that reflects cultural identity and economic potential. The relevance of this population extends beyond mere descriptive analysis; it allows for an exploration of how cultural factors, aesthetic preferences, and economic considerations influence purchasing behavior in a specific group that is traditionally responsible for managing the home environment. Additionally, examining the perspectives of non-academic staff provides a unique opportunity to understand how these individuals may benefit from wealth creation initiatives associated with African print fabrics. This targeted approach ensures that the findings are not only descriptive but also offer actionable insights into enhancing market acceptance and economic opportunities within this demographic.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The study employed a simple random sampling technique to ensure that each individual in the target population had an equal chance of being selected. Seventy-one (71) female junior staff was randomly selected from the total population.

Validity of instrument

To ensure the quality of the data collection tool, the questionnaire was reviewed by two lecturers from the Department of Home Economics and Food Science, University of Ilorin. They assessed the instrument using face validity, examining whether the items appropriately reflected the research objectives. Their feedback led to refinements in wording, item structure, and content coverage, thereby improving the tool's clarity and relevance.

Reliability of the instrument

The internal consistency of the research instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. A pilot test was

conducted with 20 senior staff members who were not part of the final sample. The resulting reliability coefficient was 0.845, indicating a high level of consistency and reliability of the questionnaire items.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and an accompanying visual assessment scorecard. The questionnaire was organized into sections that captured demographic information, preferences for African print kitchen furnishings, factors influencing purchasing decisions, and potential economic benefits and challenges in production. Each section aimed to gather both qualitative and quantitative insights into respondents' awareness, experiences, and perceptions. The scorecard assessed key visual attributes such as appearance, finishing, design, texture, durability, and overall satisfaction, providing an additional layer of evaluation. The researcher, with the help of a trained assistant, distributed and retrieved the questionnaires directly from respondents. This thorough process resulted in a return rate of 100% (100 copies of questionnaire), indicating a very strong engagement from the participants and providing a robust basis for data analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics such as means, percentages, and standard deviations were used to address the research objectives. To test the hypothesis, inferential statistics were applied using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to determine the relationship between consumer awareness and product acceptability.

Results

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Decision on Respondents' Awareness of African Print Kitchen Furnishings

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Have you ever seen African print kitchen furnishings in person?	1.73	0.45	Aware
2	Have you ever purchased African print kitchen furnishings for your own kitchen?	1.34	0.48	Not Aware
3	Do you know the cultural significance behind African print design used in kitchen furnishings?	1.57	0.49	Aware
4	Have you ever discussed African print kitchen furnishings with your friends or family?	1.47	0.50	Not Aware
5	Do you actively seek out African print home furnishings for the kitchen when shopping for home décor?	1.47	0.50	Not Aware
6	Do you know that African print kitchen furnishings can create wealth for individuals and communities?	1.79	0.41	Aware
7	Have you ever attended an event or exhibition featuring African print kitchen furnishings?	1.37	0.49	Not Aware

The results from table 1 indicated that respondents demonstrate high levels of awareness regarding African print kitchen furnishings (mean scores above 1.50), especially in terms of having seen the items in person (mean = 1.73), understanding their cultural significance (mean = 1.57), and recognizing their wealth creation potential (mean = 1.79). However, lower awareness is observed in areas such as purchasing, discussing, or actively seeking these items, with mean scores below the cut-off of 1.50.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution on Factors Influencing Consumers' Acceptance of African Print Kitchen Furnishings

S/N	Items	Agreement (%)	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1	Cost of African print kitchen furnishings influence purchase decisions	67.0%	1.11	Significant
2	Cultural perception tied to perceived value for wealth creation	65.2%	1.11	Significant
3	Perceived durability influences purchasing decisions	69.2%	1.11	Significant
4	Impact on social status influences acceptance	63.4%	1.01	Significant
5	Color and style affect purchasing decisions	72.8%	1.27	Significant
6	Marketing and advertisement of other products affect purchasing decisions	72.2%	1.04	Significant

The data from table 2 show that respondents agreed with all the identified factors influencing the acceptance of African print kitchen furnishings. The highest influencing factor was color and style (72.8%), followed closely by marketing and advertisement of other products (72.2%), and durability (69.2%). These results

indicate that aesthetic appeal, marketing efforts, and the perceived longevity of the product are key factors in consumer acceptance. Additionally, factors like cost (67.0%), cultural perception tied to wealth creation (65.2%), and impact on social status (63.4%) also play a significant role in shaping consumer decisions.

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation on the Economic Benefits of African Print Kitchen Furnishings

S/N	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Increased market demand for unique and cultural products	2.46	0.56	Agreed
2	Higher profit margins compared to conventional kitchen furnishings	2.27	0.56	Agreed
3	Creation of an extra source of income for female junior staff	2.41	0.69	Agreed
4	Boost to the African textile industry	2.61	0.62	Agreed
5	Contribution to the local economy and income generation through tourism and cultural promotion	2.49	0.68	Agreed
6	Enhanced brand image and product differentiation	2.34	0.63	Agreed
7	Attraction of investment and funding opportunities	2.31	0.60	Agreed

Table 3 shows the result of how that respondents agree with the potential economic benefits of African print kitchen furnishings. All mean scores are above the cut-off value of 2.00, indicating that respondents believe these furnishings can increase market demand (mean = 2.46), boost profit margins (mean = 2.27), and provide additional income sources, especially for female junior

staff (mean = 2.41). Furthermore, African print kitchen furnishings are seen as a way to support the African textile industry (mean = 2.61), contribute to the local economy and tourism (mean = 2.49), enhance brand image (mean = 2.34), and attract investment and funding opportunities (mean = 2.31).

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation on Perceived Challenges Faced During Production of African Print Kitchen Furnishings

S/N	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Limited availability of African print fabric	1.70	0.77	Disagreed
2	Sourcing quality African print fabrics	1.96	0.73	Disagreed
3	Maintaining consistent supply of African print fabrics	2.07	0.80	Agreed
4	Higher production costs compared to conventional fabrics	2.14	0.79	Agreed
5	Skill and expertise required to work with African print fabrics	2.03	0.74	Agreed
6	Designing products that cater to diverse customer preferences	2.13	0.61	Agreed
7	Maintaining product quality and durability	2.07	0.82	Agreed

S/N	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
8	Access to reliable and high-quality raw materials	2.07	0.77	Agreed
9	Balancing traditional African designs with modern aesthetics	1.97	0.74	Disagreed
10	Developing unique and innovative designs	1.77	0.76	Disagreed

The results from table 4 indicate that respondents agree with several challenges related to the production of African print kitchen furnishings, including maintaining a consistent supply of fabrics (mean = 2.07), managing higher production costs (mean = 2.14), and requiring specific skills and expertise (mean = 2.03). Other significant challenges include designing products to meet diverse customer preferences (mean = 2.13),

ensuring product quality and durability (mean = 2.07), and accessing reliable and high-quality raw materials (mean = 2.07). However, respondents did not perceive significant challenges in the availability of fabrics, sourcing quality fabrics, balancing traditional designs with modern aesthetics, or developing innovative designs, as these factors had mean scores below 2.00.

Table 5: Acceptability of Kitchen Furnishing with African Prints Fabric among Female Junior Staff of University of Ilorin

Samples	Appearance	finishing	Design	Texture	Durability	Overall Acceptability
African print kitchen furnishings	8.20 $\pm$ 0.97	8.37 $\pm$ 0.89	8.10 $\pm$ 1.24	8.04 $\pm$ 1.06	8.07 $\pm$ 1.05	8.19 $\pm$ 1.08
Contemporary fabric kitchen furnishings	7.01 $\pm$ 1.21	7.30 $\pm$ 1.28	6.82 $\pm$ 1.51	7.10 $\pm$ 1.28	7.10 $\pm$ 1.38	7.01 $\pm$ 1.22

Table 5 presents the panelists' acceptability of kitchen furnishing made with African Prints fabric. The results show that African print kitchen furnishings are rated higher than contemporary fabric kitchen furnishings across all visual attributes, including appearance ($\bar{x}$ = 8.20, SD = 0.97), finishing ($\bar{x}$ = 8.37, SD = 0.89), design

($\bar{x}$ = 8.10, SD = 1.24), texture ($\bar{x}$ = 8.04, SD = 1.06), durability ($\bar{x}$ = 8.07, SD = 1.05), and overall acceptability ($\bar{x}$ = 8.19, SD = 1.08). In comparison, contemporary fabric kitchen furnishings scored lower across the same attributes.

Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between the level of consumer awareness and the acceptability of kitchen furnishing

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	R	Sig-p(2tailed)
Consumer-level of awareness	71	10.75	1.92		
African Print Kitchen Furnishing Acceptability	71	49.01	4.69	-0.278*	0.019

Table 6 shows the results of a Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis between the level of consumer awareness and the acceptability of African print kitchen furnishings for wealth creation. The correlation coefficient (r = -0.278, p = 0.019) is statistically significant at an alpha level of 0.05 (p < 0.05). Since the p -value is less than the alpha level, the null hypothesis, which states that "There is no significant relationship between the level of consumer awareness and the acceptability of kitchen furnishing with African print fabric for wealth creation," is rejected. This implies a significant, though negative, relationship between consumer awareness and the acceptability of African print kitchen furnishings for wealth creation.

Discussion of Results

The results from Table 1 reveal that while respondents exhibit high levels of awareness regarding African print kitchen furnishings, particularly in terms of having seen them in person and understanding their cultural significance, their engagement with these products in terms of purchasing or discussing them is relatively low. This aligns with studies that suggest while consumers may appreciate the cultural value of traditional products, this does not always translate to purchasing behavior due to factors like price sensitivity or unfamiliarity with the products in day-to-day use (Baum et al., 2022; Howard et al., 2012).

The high level of awareness regarding the potential for wealth creation (mean = 1.79) suggests that African print kitchen furnishings are perceived as more than just decorative items; they are seen as potential drivers for economic development. This observation is supported by research on cultural industries in Africa, which highlights the economic potential of products that are rooted in traditional culture but adapted for contemporary markets (Adeloye et al., 2024).

Table 2 shows that factors like color and style, marketing efforts, and durability are significant in influencing consumer acceptance of African print kitchen furnishings. This is consistent with the findings of Nartker et al. (2024), who emphasized that aesthetic appeal and effective marketing are critical to the success of culturally significant products in modern markets. The high agreement with color and style as key factors (72.8%) is particularly noteworthy, as it underscores the importance of visual attributes in the acceptance of these products. This is in line with the theory of aesthetic utility, which suggests that consumers derive satisfaction from both the visual and functional aspects of products (Ince, & Tasdemir, 2024).

Marketing and advertisement also play a significant role in acceptance (72.2%), highlighting the need for targeted marketing strategies that emphasize the unique attributes of African print kitchen furnishings. This echoes findings by Udeh et al. (2023), who argued that cultural products require specialized marketing approaches that balance traditional values with modern consumer expectations.

The results from Table 3 indicate that respondents agree on the economic potential of African print kitchen furnishings, as they believe these products can increase market demand, boost profit margins, and provide additional income, particularly for women. This supports the notion that culturally-based enterprises can contribute to local economic development, particularly in regions where traditional crafts and textiles are a significant part of the economy (Adeloye et al., 2024; Adeloye et al., 2023). The perceived boost to the African textile industry (mean = 2.61) further reinforces the idea that the growth of such products can have a ripple effect on related industries, creating jobs and fostering economic sustainability.

Table 4 highlights key challenges in producing African print kitchen furnishings, particularly in terms of maintaining a consistent supply of fabrics and managing higher production costs. These challenges are consistent with those reported in previous studies,

which have noted that the production of culturally significant products often faces supply chain issues, particularly in obtaining high-quality raw materials (Pooe, & Mugobo, 2020; Makhitha, 2015). The need for specialized skills and expertise (mean = 2.03) reflects the artisanal nature of these products, which may limit scalability and mass production.

Interestingly, the respondents did not perceive significant challenges in terms of balancing traditional designs with modern aesthetics or developing innovative designs. This may suggest that there is confidence in the ability of designers to adapt traditional motifs to contemporary consumer preferences, a trend that has been observed in the broader African fashion and home décor industries (Buami et al., 2022).

Previous studies have shown that consumers increasingly seek products that offer both aesthetic appeal and cultural significance, particularly in the home décor sector (Adeloye et al., 2023; Chichi et al., 2016). The overall acceptability of African print kitchen furnishings (mean = 8.19) indicates that these products have a strong potential for market success if properly positioned.

The Pearson correlation analysis in Table 6 indicates a significant, though negative, relationship between consumer awareness and the acceptability of African print kitchen furnishings for wealth creation ($r = -0.278$, $p = 0.019$). This finding is somewhat counterintuitive, as higher awareness is typically expected to correspond with higher acceptance. However, it may suggest that while consumers are aware of the cultural and economic value of these products, other factors, such as cost or lack of familiarity with their practical use, may limit their acceptability. This is consistent with the findings of Dwobeng et al. (2021) and Olšanová et al. (2022), who noted that awareness does not always translate into purchase intention for culturally significant products, especially when consumers perceive them as luxury or niche items.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study highlights the untapped potential of African print kitchen furnishings as a tool for wealth creation, despite the challenges associated with low consumer awareness and difficulties in production. While the concept holds promise, particularly for local economic development and cultural promotion, there is a need for targeted efforts to raise awareness and improve access to quality materials and expertise. By addressing these barriers, stakeholders can leverage the cultural

significance and aesthetic appeal of these products to unlock economic opportunities, particularly for female artisans and small-scale entrepreneurs. Strategic interventions aimed at skill enhancement, marketing, and supply chain improvements are crucial for transforming African print kitchen furnishings into a viable wealth creation avenue.

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made:

1. Universities and educational institutions should collaborate with cultural organizations and economic development agencies to implement educational campaigns that highlight the cultural significance and wealth creation potential of African print kitchen furnishings. These campaigns can be designed to increase consumer interest and engagement, particularly among women and artisans.
2. Manufacturers and entrepreneurs in the textile and home furnishing industries should develop targeted marketing strategies that focus on the aesthetic appeal and durability of African print kitchen furnishings. Utilizing social media, influencer partnerships, and digital platforms will help reach a broader audience and enhance visibility.
3. Government agencies and local economic development organizations should encourage partnerships between manufacturers and local communities to showcase the economic advantages of African print kitchen furnishings. By emphasizing income generation opportunities and supporting the textile industry, these partnerships can stimulate local economies and empower women artisans.
4. NGOs and training institutions should invest in and organize training programs for artisans and producers. These programs should focus on improving skills in sourcing quality materials and maintaining craftsmanship to ensure a consistent supply of high-quality products. This will help overcome production challenges and enhance the product's market viability.
5. Designers and product developers should foster innovation in the design of African print kitchen furnishings by incorporating traditional African elements with modern aesthetics. By appealing to diverse consumer preferences while preserving cultural heritage, these efforts can make the products more attractive and adaptable to various markets.

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