

Kuba Raffia Technology, A Symbol of Authenticity for the Dress Code of Ancestral Value in Congo-Kinshasa

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Abstract: This research consists of rebuilding the solid foundations of Congolese culture through the dress code, with the aim of reducing the external influence of the review of clothing models that come from foreign markets.

As the Kinshasa clothing market is saturated by ready-to-wear fashion from elsewhere, this constitutes an influence that threatens to erase from the memory of the Congolese public the local expertise in haute couture based on endogenous knowledge.

Raffia fabric offers jewellery, a purely Congolese reference that is a symbol of power, culture and civilisation for certain Congolese tribes, in this case the 'Kuba' people. Its use informs dress codes that offer authenticity to a model of dress created and Congolese, with the aim of building solid foundations to enhance the value of local haute couture innovations. This contributes effectively to boosting the Congolese economy, particularly in the creation of Small Business size and top business model.

Using an ethnosociological approach, this study provides clothing technicians with the means to reflect and enhance their culture, in this case Congolese culture, with the aim of halting the notorious influence of dress codes from other clothing markets.

Keywords: Dress Code, Raffia, Authenticity and Ancestral Value.

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I. INTRODUCTION

➤ Context of the Dress Code in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The dress code has always been a central concern for social scientists. Choosing a dress code cannot be improvised. Everyone wears clothes that match their aspirations, the image they are trying to convey in society, and the different meanings they want to convey to their observers or admirers.

The choice of dress code always takes into account respect for the rules of good conduct, good life and morals, people's culture, etc...

Clothing is a factor in the appreciation or depreciation of the individual by those around him in society. As the proverb says, 'You can tell a monk by his clothes' (Erick Maigret, 2022, p.59), each individual is socially and socially part of a community to which he or she belongs, and which

influences those involved. Dress plays an important role in the construction of an individual's image, identity and personality.

This is how a number of principles of dress were created by stylists, model-makers and cultural players. The expression adopted is the dress code, which is contextualised in every sphere of human activity. To what extent would the dress code created with raffia be an original work that would review the clothing used both internally and externally?

The development of raffia through industries specialising in haute couture offers a means of reducing the dependence on ready-to-wear clothes on the shelves of clothing boutiques in the Congolese capital.

II. DRESS CODE

Dress codes (G. LIPOVETSKY, 1991) are in fact derived from standards of appearance, standards formed from the concepts that each society develops around modesty, decency, hygiene, aesthetics and freedom.

A change in clothing practices can be seen as an indicator of social change. The author even goes so far as to say that a certain heterogeneity in dress can be a sign of deeper social change, or even anomie (A. NDIAYE, 2014).

➤ *Basics of Clothing Style*

Before the 50s, people dressed in a very classic, sober way, respecting the codes of society, and fashion was more or less unique.

It was from the 60s onwards that we saw a rise in the diversity of dress, which became more and more numerous as the decades went by, due to the evolution of social norms and codes and the development of the consumer society.

The 60s was a revolutionary period in terms of clothing style, with greater freedom in the way people dressed. The rise of ready-to-wear clothing made fashion accessible to all, and the young people of the 60s established a new culture in terms of clothing style.

The 60s saw the birth of the hippy movement, with young people who wanted peace in the world creating their own dress code: colourful, simple clothes that challenged consumer society. The 70s saw the emergence of the punk movement, the birth of a rebellious, aggressive look that once again challenged the society that was driving young people towards unemployment and poverty. At the same time, disco came on the scene, and launched a new fashion, with bell-bottoms and sequined t-shirts.

In the 90s, the famous jogging/basketball style migrated from the USA to Europe. Today there are countless styles of clothing, each more different than the next.

III. ANCESTRAL VALUE

Ancestral value varies from one civilisation to another. For the Kuba people in the Democratic Republic of Congo, there is a local industry that gives the Kuba civilisation its beauty. Kuba women have contributed to the development of this local industry, which means that raffia offers an originality associated with this people among the Congolese.

The ancestral value of raffia enables Congolese women to create and produce haute couture models with the aim of preserving the customs and mores of the Congolese people. This purely ancestral aspect offers barriers to clothing magazines from other countries from supplanting the Kinshasa fashion market. This will reduce the influence of fashion magazines from other countries, notably China, Turkey, Japan, Europe and West Africa.

IV. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The city of Kinshasa is the location of our research with the aim of presenting the results related to the impact of foreign fashion magazines. This research is part of raising awareness about respect for customs and traditions to encourage the Congolese to invest in the local clothing industry. This will help reduce certain clothing used by Congolese youth to support their moral convictions in Kinshasa society.

Thus, we opted for the ethnosociological method (Lapassade Georges, 1992) and techniques such as: participant observation and questionnaire survey.

We selected a sample of 120 people, all women, in the markets of Kinshasa (DRC), in particular the central Zando market in the city centre and the Liberté market in the commune of Masina.

In this approach, two categories of people are distinguished in relation to the living environments, the upper commune and the lower commune even in terms of mentalities and standards of living. Questioned during our investigations on the domination and influence of the clothing magazine coming from abroad, the latter unanimously answered yes, certainly the dress codes elsewhere are of a considered celebrity. What is produced locally due to lack of means and serenity is only considered when it is an event that fits with our local, tribal or ethnic traditions.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study of the influence of the dress code review are presented in three axes, namely:

➤ *Clothing Style*

Style is defined as a way of acting, of speaking, but also as an appearance of an object or a person, that is to say that it can form a set of characteristics defining its identity (HEBDIGE, 1979).

In Kinshasa, 80% of our respondents think that clothing style comes from several means of influence. These include television, cinema and music. The latter are the first influencers of the Congolese regarding the clothes created and made in high-cost workshops in foreign countries.

Faced with this difficulty, 70% of our respondents think that “the Congolese live under the influence of the clothing magazine offered by the clothing market”. According to some respondents, this influence does not particularly allow local industries to flourish. According to the latter, locally until now there are no serious investors who can put the packages on the line to exploit local expertise in order to face the influence of foreign sewing workshops.

A style can also be defined as a genre used to catalog someone or something, to emphasize their belonging to a category.

According to 62% of our respondents think that apart from clothing models that come from West Africa, several brands dominate for this purpose, these are: Gucci, Yoji Yamamoto, Kassamoto, Masaki, Matsutsuma, Gianni Versace, Gorgo Armany, Jean Marco Venturi, Francisco cosimato, to name but a few.

Based on our surveys, 57% of the women interviewed think that this magazine is dominated mainly by musicians and other stars.

➤ Actor of Clothing Choice

For each human person, the clothing choice is made through the following actors: cultural, musical, film or television. The cultural actor, the media play an important role in the dissemination of a style. Music: we often distinguish a style of music that matches a style of clothing.

In Kinshasa, 61% of our respondents think that women would be influenced by the clothing of political actresses, dancers, musicians, etc.

In view of the results obtained, it turns out that the psychology of women offers a factor to be taken with awareness. The results of our investigations show that clothes are not an alibi for adhering to the depravity of morals and customs in the face of clothing deemed irresponsible, leaving the woman's body exposed. This is due to a weak dress code review proposed by the local industry. It should be noted that its production is low and is done by means of meager means accusing a certain mediocrity being the subject of an image of some clothing workshops in Kinshasa.

VI. CONCLUSION

At the end of this summary, the Kuba raffia, a symbol of authenticity for the dress code of ancestral value in Congo-Kinshasa is a theme which wanted to highlight the invention of the raffia fabric for a feared magazine of good quality for Congolese haute couture. To overcome this problem, Congolese clothing technicians can use it to mark originality, recognized worldwide and a reference on the shelves of the clothing market throughout the world.

The participation of investors looking to invest in the upcoming apparel sector is appreciated, especially in domestic and foreign markets. This will allow other countries to request models created and built in Former Zaire. This effect will create a benchmark in the local clothing industry and aim to strengthen the local economy.

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