

INTEGRATING INDIGENOUS HERBS AS COSMETICS IN FILMMAKING AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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Abstract

The use of indigenous components to embellish artistic works has gained much popularity among the people of Akwa Ibom State and the film industry in Nigeria. The films are entertaining and serve as lucrative medium, encompassing various units of identifiable craft that a practitioner can use to promote entrepreneurship. This has prompted the production of film cosmetics from traditional herbs for film making in the State. However, these indigenous products are yet to be fully integrated into the mainstream of the state's economy. Anchored on Joseph Schumpeter's innovation theory, this paper uses qualitative research method to discuss integrating indigenous herbs as cosmetics in filmmaking and entrepreneurship in Akwa. Findings show that Akwa Ibom people have a culture of utilizing herbs for various film cosmetics. The development of indigenous cosmetics from herbs can provide job for the youths and encourage creativity. The paper concludes that creativity with a purpose can encourage progress, and that the development of film cosmetics is an avenue for a steady return on investment for the State.

Keywords: Cosmetic, Entrepreneurship, Filmmaking, Indigenous-Herb, Makeup.

Introduction

Entertainment is explored beyond the audience-spectacle relationship to human needs for survival especially in societies that consider the benefit of nature in terms of seasons and the suitable vegetation to the health benefits of mankind. Filmmaking is a trending unit of entertainment that requires a specific dimension of embellishment to bring the spectacle alive and believable. As film making is becoming popular among nations and contributing substantially to the economy, Nigeria stands out in this regard, with Nollywood which has thrived as the evidence of Nigeria's indigenous film industry. Practically, Nollywood absorbs the Nigerian way of approaching human condition from nature in content to context of embellishment.

In Akwa Ibom State, filmmaking is specifically centered on the culture and activities that project and protect each human practice that brings the culture to its limelight. Such culture is remarkable in the use of traditional herbs to make film and stage cosmetics. This initiative strengthens the Akwa Ibom people's natural reliance on traditional medication, food, water, drink and even a way of knowing the world. Indigenous cosmetics made from indigenous plant/herbs under the full laboratory scrutiny can sooth the skin and preserve it. Applying same on the actors can create a positive impact on their skin and the essence of the application for performance highlighting a superlative advantage compared to the imported cosmetics, which some are dangerous to the skin. As Umoh acknowledges, "certain imported cosmetics are inimical and reactive to some skins, thereby causing problems such as rashes, warps, eczema, stretch-mark, sunburn and itches that may force the actor to undergo serious skin diagnosis for survival" (205). According to Umoh, "in addition to health implications of the tenacious use of foreign product for makeup in a performance, the incessant rise in foreign exchange has worsened the demand and the ability to procure foreign makeup cosmetics" (99).

However, high foreign exchange rate of dollars has affected the importation of foreign cosmetics such as Mary Kay product, Ester Lauder, Depixym cosmetics, Emulsion and even Lorac and others. This high cost coupled with the absence of safety warranty has forced film makers to source for alternative which they found in traditional herbs.

The use of herbs to manufacture makeup products in Akwa Ibom State is a creativity that deserves attention with the view to encouraging entrepreneurship among the people of the state. In order to improve this, the indigenous initiative, there is need to encourage, promote and preserve the product as an outstanding innovation to promote a return of investment in film cosmetic making within and outside Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. Against this backdrop, this paper discusses the entrepreneurial opportunities in indigenous film cosmetic production in Akwa Ibom State.

Theoretical Framework

The position of this study is based on Joseph Schumpeter's innovation theory. The theory was originally speculated in 1912 as an economic model towards encouraging feasibility and output judgment over speculation without a viable material backup in the economy. According to Rachit Poddar, Schumpeter position is that “the effective function of an entrepreneur is to start innovation in venture. This theory is also called... dynamic theory” ([linkedin.com/pulse/josephschumpeter](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/josephschumpeter)). The theory views the creative mind as the basis for economic progress in the society.

Entrepreneurship demands a quantum leap from mere managerial bustle to practical initiatives and execution of well-planned ideas. According to Akpan:

Schumpeter was not interested in describing the characteristics of the individual entrepreneur... This concern was on the role of entrepreneurship in the process of economic development. To him, entrepreneurship which he calls 'creative response'... refers to those innovative activities of mobilizing productive resources for the purpose of doing new things or doing thing that are already being done in a new way (18).

By way of reassessing Akpan's analysis of Schumpeter's thought, there is an indication of purpose supporting creativity. As Stephen Umoh, intones, the purpose of (cosmetics) production therefore is to increase economic welfare of people, that is, raise standard of living...where one can invest”. Innovation theory suggests a feasible attempt to make something realizable for economic development (103). Therefore, “the tendency (of the theory) to date has been to priorities economic outcomes ahead of non-economic outcomes” (Haugh 532).

Innovation theory explains the splendor of intensifying innovative culture in an organization. According to Agu, Onuoha, and Sampson, “to be completely relevant and respected... entrepreneurship must remain innovative... To successfully practice marketing entrepreneurially, organization are required to imbibe the innovative culture which depends on technology” (469).

Indigenous Herbs used in the Production of Film cosmetics in Akwa Ibom State

In Akwa Ibom State, trends of innovation on the use of domestic product for health, fashion and other concerns of life has made the use of herbs for cosmetics to grow from traditional practices to its advanced utility presently. Film cosmetics in various brands have always been imported from foreign countries. This creates a bond between Nigeria and the countries who have been manufacturing these products. One of the effects is that it perpetuates colonial dominance, promoting their cultural hegemony in those activities Nigeria still depends on them to thrive. According to Ascroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, “this cultural hegemony has been maintained through canonical assumptions about literary activities... which therefore relegates them (Nigeria and other countries who are still artistically

dependent) to marginal and subordinate positions” (7). Being over dependent on the credibility of foreign products arising from the mentality of self-abnegation, a constant relegation of indigenous method for self-preservation gradually pervades Nigeria. Meanwhile, a radical challenge to the dominance of foreign ideas, products and artistic thrusts is posited by Umoh thus:

One of the negative impacts of Western on the African society is the attempt to debase, distort and destroy the entire fabric of African products in the global sphere. This unfortunate development has resulted in misunderstanding and the undermining of potentiality of native materials for make-up design. Theatre and film productions through supporting and encouraging the full utilisation of makeup to enhance visual appearance in art... When it has to do with anything that is being imported into Nigeria, preference is given to... over those from the Nigerian soil. This perception adversely affects make-up product in Nigeria (204).

In Nigeria, the challenge is obviously felt in filmmaking where virtually every product is imported. Apart from the fact that foreign technology is still engaged, the areas where Africa also has advantage, there is a dogged plunge to tone down the craze for imported aspect of the same product. Interestingly, film design products have had a remarkable presence in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria; the reality being that “designs do not reach a full state of expression until they are on stage and inhabited by actors in front of an audience” (Jacob 143). To fully implement this, traditional herbs, flowers, plants, oil, etc., which are found in Akwa Ibom are integrated into full film cosmetic production in the State.

On the other hand, Akwa Ibom State is located in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the state is situated in the rainforest bounded by Cross River, Abia, Rivers, Cameroon and Atlantic Ocean. As Jacob, further remarks, “in Akwa Ibom State, historical consciousness is extremely important because of its role of emphasis in the inseparable link between the past and the present” (8). A significant aspect of the link is the use of herbs for medication, ornament, food, costume, makeup and so on.

There are many herbs that are used for body adornment in Akwa Ibom State. Such herbs include Saint-leaf, Henna, Aloe Vera, Rose Fluid, Lavender Oil, Tumeric, Beef Root, Chamomile, Oat Meal, Hibiscus, Ginger, Lemon, Cucumber, Pear, Lime, Cassava, etc. Each of the plant is detailed to contain some natural pigment that can be used for the making of cosmetics. Umoh further acknowledges that Henna can be used for tattoo and for hair-colouring. Aloe Vera can be used for natural skin moisturising. Rose fluid can be harnessed to function as a natural astringent; chamomile can be used to obtain a natural moisturizer and also as astringent. However, many of these herbs are mixed with indigenous substance to create believable illusion of special makeup in a film. Some of the combinations include the use of cassava, bone and coconut to make rotting bruise/injuries. Oat meal from oat grass can eradicate dirt and cushion the skin before makeup. It can be used as exfoliate. Baobab oil extracted from baobab tree can be used as air conditioner. These are purely herbs mashed and missed with other substances for cosmetics in filmmaking in Akwa Ibom State (205-206).

Significantly, the use of natural plants, fruits, tree backs and roots, leaves, palm oil and palm kernel, etc. for body adornment is one of the age-long practices in Nigeria. If this culture is revived in a more refined and scientific approach. It will hold some entrepreneurial prospects in the state.

Integrating Herbs in Filmmaking in Akwa Ibom State

There are numerous herbs; fruits, tree backs, leaves and other factors brought together under some thorough scientific observation to prepare cosmetic for filmmaking in Akwa Ibom State. Some of them are discussed below:



Plate 1: *Ateke* (Okra)



Plate 2: *Ateke* used for intensifying the outlook of degenerating sore (Umoh)

Ateke is a vegetable consumed as food. It is grown around the house for domestic use and in the farm for sale. The leave, stem, flower and fruit of *Ateke* are utilised for film cosmetic making such as lip gloss and for creating a degenerating sore effect in Akwa Ibom State.

***Okukin* (Hollarhenna)**



Plate 3: *Okukin*



Plate 4: *Okukin* used in making a fresh wound to glisten with redness (Umoh)

Okukin is a long existing adorning herb in Akwa Ibom State. It is found in the forest. It is one of the outstanding components for film cosmetics discovered and projected in commercial quantity in Akwa Ibom State. It can be used for lips stick; but significantly, *okukin* adds luster to the redness of a fresh wound in special effects makeup practice.

***Ikong-ekpo* (Indian Hemp)**



Plate 5: *Ikong-ekpo*



PLATE 6: *Ikong-ekpo*, used as preservative against reaction on the skin (Umoh 2023)

In Akwa Ibom State, *ikong-ekpo* can be found in the forest or cultivated for a purpose. Although it is a rare herb due to the abuse some miscreant indulge in by using it, the herb is a unique constituent to indigenous cosmetic production in Akwa Ibom State. It is usually added to some makeup substance to neutralise herbal content that may be negative to the body.



PLATE 7: Eben-Mbakara (Avocado)

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PLATE 8: Eben-Mbakara, used as special effect substance (Umoh)

Eben-Mbakara is a multipurpose plant in Akwa Ibom State, found in people's homes. The leaf is medicinal, the bark and latex are cosmetics agents, and the fruit which is edible is equally use for cosmetics. It can be used to realise a believable special effects makeup in a film.



PLATE 9: *Iwa* (Cassava)



PLATE 10: *Iwa* is utilized for special effect makeup (Umoh)

Iwa is grown mostly as a subsistent crop in Akwa Ibom State; though to meet up with economic meltdown, the crop is gradually projected to commercial scale farming. It is used for commercial purpose currently. The leave can be used as medicine; but the tuber is a significant makeup effect component for filmmaking.



PLATE 11: *Ifiaku-Eyop* (A Species of Palm Fruit)



PLATE 12: *Ifiaku-Eyop* is used to glisten the glow of dark blood in a film (Umoh)

Among the various species of palm fruit in Akwa Ibom State, *ifiaku-eyop* is outstanding for its multi-purpose deployment in health, adornment and ritual circumstances. The plant is specifically grown for its natural content used in its raw state than the oil content. *Ifiaku-eyop* has surfaced as a reliable film makeup agent for cosmetics production in Akwa Ibom State. It is used in manufacturing scar-wax for special effects makeup.



PLATE 13: *Mkpri-Osokoro* (Lime)



PLATE 14: *Mkpri-Osokoro*, used as preservative in filmmaking (Umoh)

Mkpri-osokoro is grown around people's compound as ornamental, medicinal and fruit for both domestic consumption and economic purpose. In the production of both stage and film makeups, *mkpri-osokoro* plays an indispensable role towards cosmetic effect and metabolism balance in film cosmetic making. It preserves some combinations from quick decaying.



PLATE 15: *Isip-Mbakara* (Coconut)



PLATE 16: *Isip-Mbakara* used as daily cream and makeup cosmetics (Umoh)

This plant is used for various purposes in Akwa Ibom State. It is planted in people's compound as family property. The leave is used for weaving, the trunk is unique for house building wood, the pericarp, mesocarp and seed are manufactured into a unique film effect makeup product in Akwa Ibom State. The refined oil from *isip-mbakara* is a natural lubricant that makes the skin glower. It is one of the indigenous cosmetic products that is applicable to both filmmaking and the home.

Entrepreneurship Viability of Film Cosmetic in Akwa Ibom State

Entrepreneurship is a universal word denoting many ideas which still points to self-elevation through proper thinking and manage for economic survival and a return of investment. In terms of managing theatrical/film products for this purpose, Kraus *et al* defines it as:

An organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders, and that is characterized by innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, and may be performed without resources currently controlled. (137)

The definition above, if further expatiated, clarifies the basis of encouraging the manufacturing of indigenous cosmetics for filmmaking in Akwa Ibom State as a collective effort towards redefining the economic viability among the citizens. As Ogbuji and Ateke put it, “the essence of economic life of societies is marketing... To survive the dynamic of today's business environment, a firm must create value; and the foundation of value creation is sensing, designing, developing, producing and delivering want satisfying product” (15). Film cosmetics, especially for special effect makeup is a “want” area to be satisfied. Such opening is a guarantee that film cosmetics produced from herbs in Akwa Ibom State has much entrepreneurial potentials to attract patronage globally.

Through entrepreneurship, the cleft in the world's economic system is abridged and filled from the perspective of human management. In the various human activities where individuals create ideas, it is the product people actually need that they demand and pay for. Currently, filmmaking is a lucrative venture in the world, and nations have found more reasons to go into the business of filmmaking. One of the components of filmmaking is the character makeup to look real. Looking real on the side of the makeup artist is actually “when the makeup artist can make a twenty-year old look like eighty, can make up a plain face look like fire victim, can make a man up to look like a tiger, or make a face look bizarre” (Atakpo 18).

Entrepreneurship in makeup, then, will surface when a makeup artist can satisfy what Atakpo mentions. Thus, the demand for the material that can fully establish these creative changes is imperative. Put differently, Uwemedimo Atakpo elaborates the fissure that actually calls for opportunity thus:

Makeup has come to stay and is flourishing worldwide... But there is a marked difference between the roadside makeup artist and the one that has basic training in the area. Straight and beautifying makeups are everywhere, but trained makeup artist has a right of place far ahead of others... A makeup artist who has straddled the world of makeup... with distinct style is in very high demand. (18)

Considering the need for believability, in film makeup, especially the special effect aspect, the film makeup cosmetic initiative in Akwa Ibom has the potential to absorb many inclined theatre artists and beauty enthusiast. This is a cleft in the world economy for actual entrepreneurship from the Akwa Ibom State film cosmetics made from indigenous herbs.

Self-determination to revive and promote the culture of indigenous cosmetic production is an outlet of entrepreneurship. As Nnanake Ekeke observes, for any emerging filmmaking product, “the utilisation of various models, approaches and concepts to inform, educate and sensitise communities has caused increasing concern at a global level” (89). This implies that bringing film cosmetic practices into the realm of education to impart the practical knowledge of the herbs, chemical contents, functionality on the body and suitability as a substance to apply on the body for filmmaking is necessary. Umoh further posits thus:

Entrepreneurship related subjects are central to learning... Since it mainly concerns human survival... Every discovery remains vital and consistent in use when it has the capacity for solving a particular problem or give an aid to need. Discovering have the tendency of opening ways and laying productive platforms for other discoveries. When knowledge acquisition of programmes of our university are drafted towards productivity and entrepreneurship, it will

serve a dual purpose for making available what the unemployed or the lower class can afford; generating income and employment possibilities for others. (106).

Drawing from the positions of these writers, projecting Akwa Ibom culture of utilizing makeup production from indigenous herbs as academic knowledge will equip the learners with the insight to make a tryout on herbs, tree latexes, fruit, tree barks, roots, leaves and other socially achieved components that are beneficial to the skin, health and for economic conception. This will engender the desire for the mass production of indigenous cosmetics from the state for global patronage and consumption.

Cosmetic products that can appeal to other people than Akwa Ibom people needs to possess some universal substance and stimulate global appeal. "This act alone gives much information about the characters and the reason each behaves as he does... from the environment" (Udofia 49). This may be the reason Umoh *et al* writes that "there is a need to turn to the energies of literariness to environment factors from nature" (100). For entrepreneurial relevance, Akpan and Udofia observe that "the creative person is wakeful to virtually every situation of concern around him at all times" (238). In Akwa Ibom State, the use of traditional herb to manufacture a safe, durable and healthy cosmetics for filmmaking is trending, hence an opportunity for effective management towards massive employment opportunity.

Conclusion

The use of the available but viable materials to create in the media world can revive imagination in the creator's mind, creating a link between him and the economic world. The use of herbs to manufacture cosmetics for makeup in filmmaking has begun to hold sway in Akwa Ibom State. If this trending practice is given a wider application and promotion, it may become the orbit of entrepreneurship for the citizens of Akwa Ibom State and Nigeria.

The use of herbs along with other traditional substance has resulted in numerous categories of makeup products in the state. Any art enthusiast can key into the practice, promotion and production of indigenous cosmetics or aesthetic and economic purposes. Entrepreneurship is the application of the mind in a viable venture for a return on investment. When creativity and purpose are merged entrepreneurship is inevitable.

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