

The Importance of Traditional Mural Explorations and the Media Involved on Ancient Architectural Structures in South-Western Parts of Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the importance of traditional murals found on ancient architectural structures in South-Western Nigeria, focusing on their historical, cultural, and artistic significance. The region, predominantly inhabited by the Yoruba and Edo peoples, is rich in cultural heritage, reflected in its architectural styles and artistic expressions. Traditional murals serve as a vital medium for understanding the socio-political dynamics, economic activities, and cultural beliefs of past societies. This research aims to explore the multifaceted roles that these murals play in preserving the region's history and identity, while also examining the media and techniques employed in their creation. Traditional murals are not merely decorative; they encapsulate a wealth of historical insights. They depict events, people, and places that are crucial for understanding the social and political structures of the time. For instance, murals may illustrate significant battles, historical figures, and rituals, thereby offering a glimpse into the values and worldviews of the societies that created them. Furthermore, these artworks serve as a connection to ancestral knowledge, fostering a sense of place and belonging among contemporary communities. The media used in traditional murals is diverse, encompassing natural pigments, binders, and various tools and techniques. The choice of materials reflects the artistic practices and resources available to ancient inhabitants, revealing their ingenuity and adaptability. Natural pigments derived from local sources not only contribute to the aesthetic quality of the murals but also carry symbolic meanings that resonate with the cultural identity of the people. The study highlights the importance of understanding these media, as they provide crucial insights into the technological and artistic advancements of the time. Despite their significance, traditional murals face numerous challenges, including environmental factors such as humidity and temperature, as well as human activities like vandalism and neglect. The deterioration of these murals poses a threat to the preservation of cultural heritage. Therefore, the study emphasizes the need for effective conservation strategies, including cleaning, restoration, and sustainable practices. Digital preservation emerges as a crucial component in safeguarding these artworks, allowing for virtual reconstructions and documentation that enhance accessibility and education. By making high-quality images and virtual representations available online, the study aims to promote global awareness and appreciation of these cultural heritage sites. This research underscores the significance of these murals in understanding the historical and cultural narratives of the past, while also advocating for ongoing conservation efforts. The findings highlight the need for further exploration in this field, encouraging collaborations and partnerships that can enhance the preservation and appreciation of traditional murals. Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader discourse on cultural heritage preservation, emphasizing the role of education in fostering awareness and appreciation of the rich artistic traditions that define South-Western Nigeria.

Keywords: Traditional Mural Explorations, Media, Ancient Architectural Structures, South-Western Nigeria.

Aims Research Journal Reference Format:

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

South-Western Nigeria, home to the Yoruba, Edo, and other indigenous groups, boasts a rich history of ancient architectural structures that reflect the region's cultural, social, and economic development. These structures, such as palaces, temples, and fortified settlements, were often constructed using local materials like mud, wood, and thatch (Afigbo, 1972; Ogunyemi, 1996; Ajayi, 1967). The Yoruba, for instance, developed intricate architectural styles, including the gelede houses, which were adorned with elaborate carvings and sculptures (Akinola, 2000). The Edo people of Benin Kingdom were renowned for their monumental bronze sculptures and their palace complex, which was a marvel of engineering and artistry (Eyo, 1973). Traditional murals, found on the walls of ancient buildings in South-Western Nigeria, provide invaluable insights into the history, culture, and beliefs of the region's inhabitants. These murals often depict scenes from daily life, religious rituals, and historical events (Nwodim, 1997; Okafor, 1988; Udechukwu, 1996).

For example, murals in Benin City often featured the Oba (king) and his court, showcasing the power and authority of the royal family. In Yoruba communities, murals depicted deities, ancestors, and mythical creatures, reflecting the importance of spirituality and tradition (Eyo, 1978). Traditional murals in South-Western Nigeria were typically created using natural pigments, such as ochres, clays, and charcoal (Oyelami, 1994; Fafunwa, 1970). These pigments were often mixed with binders like sap or eggs to create durable paints. The choice of materials and techniques reflected the artistic skills and resources available to the people of the region.

The use of natural pigments demonstrates the deep connection between the artists and their environment. The ability to extract and process these materials required a high level of knowledge and expertise (Nwodim, 1997). Preserving and exploring traditional murals is crucial for understanding the cultural heritage of South-Western Nigeria. These murals offer a tangible connection to the past, providing insights into the lives, beliefs, and artistic practices of ancient civilizations (Ogu, 2002; Oyelami, 1997). By studying and preserving these murals, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the rich cultural diversity of the region. Additionally, exploring these murals can contribute to education, inspiring students to learn more about their history and heritage (Akinola, 2005). The preservation of traditional murals also has legal and ethical implications. Nigerian laws protect cultural heritage, and efforts are being made to conserve these valuable artifacts for future generations (Nwabueze, 1990; Eyo, 1984).

1.2 Problem Statement

The preservation of traditional murals in South-Western Nigeria is increasingly challenged by various factors, including environmental conditions, urbanization, and a lack of awareness regarding their cultural significance. Many of these murals are deteriorating or have been lost due to neglect and vandalism, leading to a disconnection between contemporary communities and their cultural heritage. This situation raises critical questions about how to effectively preserve these artifacts and ensure that the rich history and artistic traditions they represent are not forgotten. The problem is compounded by insufficient research on the techniques, materials, and cultural contexts of these murals, which limits our understanding of their significance and the potential for their preservation.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the importance of traditional murals in South-Western Nigeria, focusing on their historical, cultural, and artistic significance. The study will also examine the media and techniques used in the creation of these murals, as well as the challenges faced in their preservation.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- i. To analyze the historical and cultural significance of traditional murals in South-Western Nigeria.
- ii. To identify and describe the primary media and techniques used in the creation of traditional murals.
- iii. To assess the current state of preservation of traditional murals and the challenges they face.
- iv. To explore the role of traditional murals in shaping cultural identity and community heritage.
- v. To propose strategies for the effective preservation and promotion of traditional murals as cultural heritage.

1.5 Justification of the Study

This study is justified by the urgent need to address the challenges facing traditional murals in South-Western Nigeria. By investigating their significance and the media used in their creation, the research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on cultural heritage preservation. The findings will provide valuable insights for policymakers, cultural institutions, and local communities, highlighting the importance of preserving these artifacts for future generations. Additionally, the study will raise awareness about the rich artistic traditions of the region, fostering a sense of pride and ownership among contemporary communities.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study encompasses traditional murals found in South-Western Nigeria, with a particular focus on the Yoruba and Edo cultures. The research will examine various ancient architectural structures that house these murals, analyzing their historical contexts, artistic techniques, and cultural meanings. While the study will primarily focus on murals, it will also consider the broader implications for cultural heritage preservation and education. The research will be limited to existing literature, field studies, and interviews conducted within the region.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to enhance our understanding of traditional murals as vital components of cultural heritage in South-Western Nigeria. By documenting and analyzing these artworks, the research will contribute to the preservation of cultural identity and memory. The findings will also serve as a resource for educators, students, and cultural practitioners, promoting awareness and appreciation of the region's artistic traditions. Ultimately, this study aims to inspire further research and initiatives focused on the conservation of traditional murals, ensuring that these invaluable cultural resources are safeguarded for future generations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of South-Western Nigerian History and Culture

South-Western Nigeria was once home to several powerful kingdoms and empires, each with its unique history, culture, and artistic traditions. The Yoruba Kingdom, one of the most prominent, was centered around the city of Ife and later expanded to include Oyo and other regions (Ajayi, 1967). The Benin Kingdom, located in the southern part of the region, was renowned for its wealth, power, and artistic achievements (Olorunfemi, 1978). The history of South-Western Nigeria is shaped by both pre-colonial and colonial influences. Before the arrival of European colonizers, the region was characterized by diverse ethnic groups, each with its own language, customs, and beliefs (Afigbo, 1972). The Yoruba, for example, had a complex social and political system, with a hierarchical structure headed by the Oba (king) (Ajayi, 1967).

The arrival of European traders and colonizers in the 15th and 16th centuries had a profound impact on the region. The slave trade, in particular, caused significant disruption and suffering, leading to the decline of many kingdoms and empires (Ekundare, 1973). Despite these challenges, the people of South-Western Nigeria maintained many of their cultural traditions and practices. South-Western Nigeria has a rich artistic heritage, with a wide range of traditional crafts and practices. Sculpture, particularly in bronze and terracotta, was a prominent art form in the region, with the Benin Kingdom producing some of the most famous examples (Eyo, 1973). Other artistic traditions included weaving, pottery, and beadwork, which were often used to create items for ceremonial and everyday use (Nwodim, 1997; Okafor, 1988; Udechukwu, 1996).

The artistic traditions of South-Western Nigeria were influenced by both indigenous and external factors. Pre-colonial artists drew inspiration from mythology, religion, and social customs (Fafunwa, 1970). The arrival of European colonizers introduced new materials, techniques, and styles, leading to a fusion of traditional and Western artistic influences (Oyelami, 1994). The history and culture of South-Western Nigeria are marked by a rich tapestry of kingdoms, empires, and artistic traditions. The region's pre-colonial history was characterized by diverse ethnic groups and complex social structures. The arrival of European colonizers had a significant impact on the region, leading to both challenges and opportunities. Despite these changes, the people of South-Western Nigeria maintained many of their cultural traditions and practices, which continue to shape the region's identity today.

2.2 Existing Research on Traditional Murals

Several studies have focused on specific sites or regions in South-Western Nigeria, examining the traditional murals found there. For example, Akinola (2000) explored the architectural and artistic features of traditional buildings in the Yoruba region, including the use of murals as decorative elements. Eyo (1973) conducted extensive research on the bronze sculptures and murals found in the Benin Kingdom, highlighting their significance as cultural artifacts. Researchers have also analyzed the techniques and materials used in creating traditional murals. Nwodim (1997) examined the various pigments, binders, and tools employed by artists, providing insights into the craftsmanship involved. Okafor (1988) compared the mural styles and techniques of different ethnic groups in West Africa, identifying both similarities and differences.

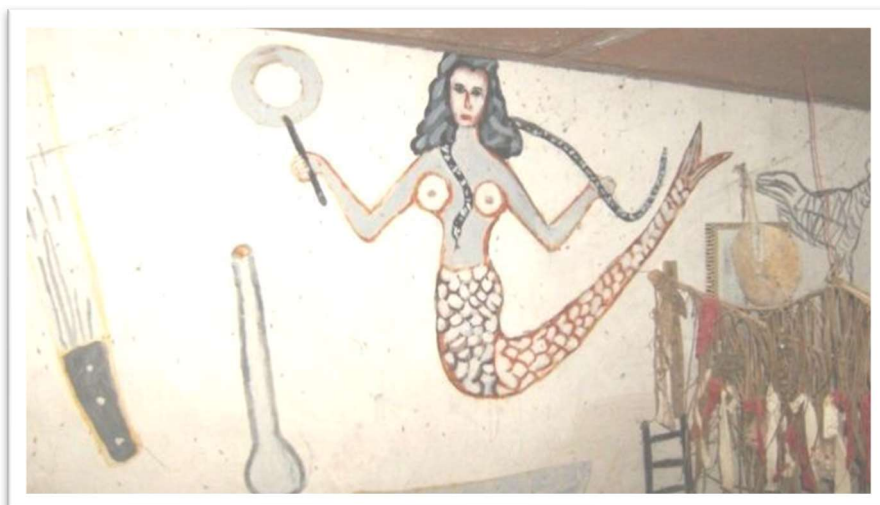


Plate 2.1: A symbol of Olokun, " Mami-water " wall Mural. In Omorodion " s Ogun Shrine. Location: Mr. Joseph Omorodion " s Shrine at Omorodion Street, Evbotubu Quarters, Benin City.

Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/A-symbol-of-Olokun-Mami-water-wall-Mural-In-Omorodion-s-Ogun-Shrine-Location_fig8_301822714



Plate 2.2: *Uli* painting on the walls of 'Odelegu', Nibo, present-day Anambra State, Nigeria.
 Source: <https://re-entanglements.net/tag/murals/> (Photographed by Northcote W. Thomas in 1911)

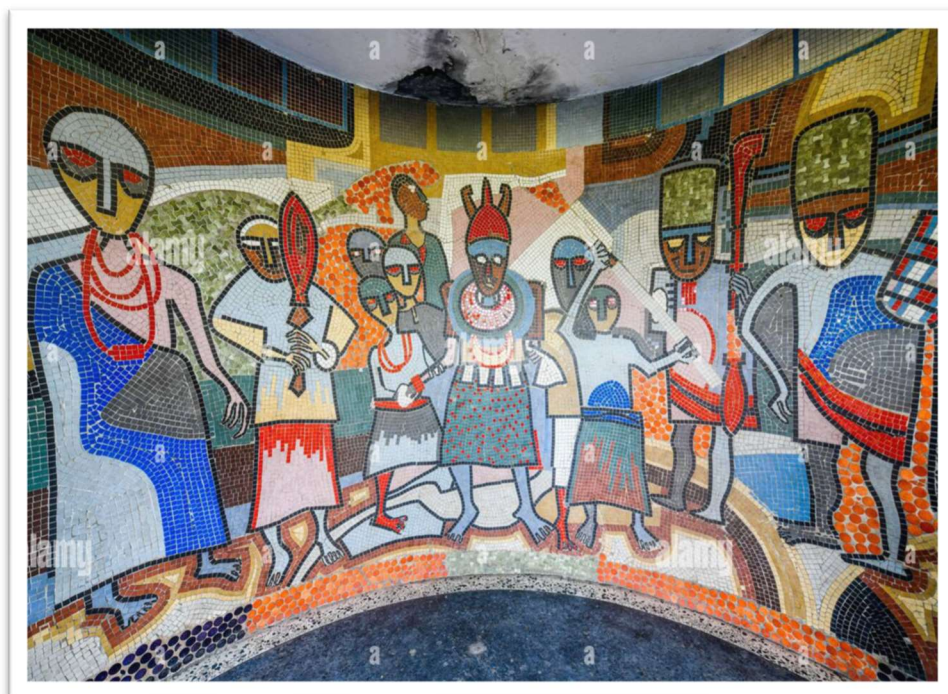


Plate 2.3: *Uli* painting on the walls of 'Odelegu', Nibo, present-day Anambra State, Nigeria.
 Photo credit: online (alamy)
 Source: <https://www.alamy.com/wall-mural-in-the-benin-national-museum-in-the-royal-gardens-benin-city-nigeria-image434811262>. / image BROKER / Micheal Runkle

2.3 The Impact of Media on Art and Culture

The evolution of media has significantly influenced the ways in which art and culture are created, experienced, and preserved. In Nigeria, traditional forms of media, such as oral storytelling, music, and dance, played a central role in shaping cultural identity and preserving history (Afigbo, 1972; Ogunyemi, 1996). The introduction of Western media technologies, such as photography, film, and radio, in the 20th century had a profound impact on the Nigerian art scene. These technologies provided new ways for artists to express themselves and for audiences to engage with cultural products (Oyelami, 1994; Fafunwa, 1970).

Media has played a crucial role in shaping artistic expression in Nigeria. Traditional media, such as music and dance, were often used to convey stories, myths, and cultural values (Nwodim, 1997; Okafor, 1988). The advent of modern media technologies, such as photography and film, allowed artists to experiment with new forms of expression and to reach wider audiences (Udechukwu, 1996; Eyo, 1978). Media has also influenced the ways in which art is consumed and appreciated. The development of mass media, such as television and radio, has made it easier for people to access and engage with cultural products (Fafunwa, 1970). However, this has also led to concerns about the commercialization of art and the erosion of traditional cultural practices. Media has played a significant role in shaping cultural identity in Nigeria. By providing platforms for the dissemination of cultural products, media has helped to preserve traditional practices and promote cultural diversity (Ogu, 2002; Oyelami, 1997).

However, media can also have negative consequences for cultural identity. The dominance of Western media can lead to the erosion of local cultures and traditions (Akinola, 2005). Additionally, the commercialization of culture can result in the exploitation of traditional practices for profit (Nwabueze, 1990). The relationship between media and art and culture is complex and multifaceted. While media has played a crucial role in promoting cultural diversity and preserving traditional practices, it has also raised concerns about commercialization and the erosion of cultural identity. Understanding the impact of media on art and culture is essential for developing effective strategies for cultural preservation and promotion in Nigeria.

2.4 Identification of Significant Ancient Architectural Structures in South-Western Nigeria

Criteria for Selection

When identifying significant ancient architectural structures in South-Western Nigeria, several criteria should be considered:

- i. **Historical Importance:** Structures that played a crucial role in the history of the region, such as palaces, temples, or fortified settlements, should be prioritized (Afigbo, 1972; Ogunyemi, 1996; Ajayi, 1967).
- ii. **Preservation State:** Structures that are well-preserved or have undergone restoration efforts are more likely to provide valuable insights into the past (Ogu, 2002; Oyelami, 1997).
- iii. **Diversity of Mural Styles:** Structures with a variety of mural styles and techniques can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the region's artistic heritage (Nwodim, 1997; Okafor, 1988; Udechukwu, 1996).

Significant Architectural Structures

Based on these criteria, several ancient architectural structures in South-Western Nigeria can be identified as significant:

- i. The Benin Kingdom Palace Complex: This complex, located in Benin City, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is renowned for its intricate architecture, sculptures, and murals (Eyo, 1973; Olorunfemi, 1978).
- ii. Ife Royal Court: Located in Ife, this site is associated with the founding of the Yoruba Kingdom and features a number of important structures, including the Oba's palace and the Oduduwa Grove (Ajayi, 1967; Eyo, 1965).
- iii. Oyo Mesi Palace: This palace, located in Oyo, was the seat of power for the Oyo Empire and is known for its large courtyard and elaborate carvings (Akinola, 2000).
- iv. Ile-Ife Terracotta Sculptures: These sculptures, found in various locations throughout Ife, are some of the earliest examples of figurative art in West Africa and provide important insights into Yoruba culture and beliefs (Eyo, 1965).

The identification of significant ancient architectural structures in South-Western Nigeria is essential for preserving the region's cultural heritage. By considering factors such as historical importance, preservation state, and diversity of mural styles, researchers can identify structures that offer valuable insights into the past and contribute to our understanding of the region's rich cultural heritage.

2.5 The Significance of Traditional Murals

Traditional murals offer a rich tapestry of historical information, providing insights into the lives, events, and places of past societies (Afigbo, 1972; Ogunyemi, 1996; Ajayi, 1967). Depictions of historical figures, battles, and significant events can shed light on the political and social structures of the time (Olorunfemi, 1978; Ekundare, 1973). For example, murals in Benin City often featured the Oba (king) and his court, showcasing the power and authority of the royal family. In Yoruba communities, murals depicted deities, ancestors, and mythical creatures, reflecting the importance of spirituality and tradition (Eyo, 1973; Nwodim, 1997). Murals are also powerful expressions of cultural values, beliefs, and worldviews. They can provide insights into the religious practices, social customs, and artistic traditions of a people (Oyelami, 1994; Fafunwa, 1970; Akinola, 2000).

For instance, murals in the Yoruba region often depicted scenes from mythology and folklore, conveying the importance of oral traditions and storytelling. In Benin City, murals were used to celebrate the achievements of the Oba and his kingdom, reflecting the pride and identity of the Edo people (Eyo, 1973; Nwodim, 1997). Traditional murals play a crucial role in shaping cultural identity and preserving heritage. They provide a tangible connection to the past, allowing people to understand their ancestors and the traditions they passed down (Ogu, 2002; Oyelami, 1997). Murals can also foster a sense of place and belonging, reminding people of their roots and the cultural heritage they share with others. By preserving traditional murals, communities can maintain a connection to their past and ensure that their cultural heritage is passed on to future generations (Akinola, 2005; Nwabueze, 1990).

Traditional murals offer a wealth of information about the history, culture, and identity of a people. By studying these artifacts, we can gain a deeper understanding of the past and appreciate the rich cultural heritage of our ancestors. Preserving traditional murals is essential for ensuring that these valuable cultural resources are passed on to future generations.

2.6 Media Used in Traditional Murals

Natural Pigments

Traditional murals in South-Western Nigeria were often created using natural pigments, which were derived from plants, minerals, and animals (Nwodim, 1997; Okafor, 1988; Udechukwu, 1996). Common pigments included ochres, clays, charcoal, and indigo. These pigments were often mixed with water or other binders to create durable paints. The choice of pigments influenced the color palette and symbolism of the murals. For example, red ochre was often used to represent blood and fertility, while white clay was associated with purity and innocence. The use of natural pigments demonstrates the deep connection between the artists and their environment, as well as their knowledge of local resources (Eyo, 1973; Fafunwa, 1970).

Binders and Additives

To create durable surfaces for murals, artists used various binders and additives. Common binders included sap, eggs, and honey, which helped to adhere the pigments to the wall surface. Additives, such as beeswax or resin, were sometimes added to improve the durability and water resistance of the paint (Oyelami, 1994; Fafunwa, 1970). The choice of binders and additives influenced the longevity of the murals. Some binders, such as sap, were more susceptible to deterioration over time, while others, such as beeswax, were more durable. The use of binders and additives demonstrates the technical skill and knowledge of the artists who created these murals (Nwodim, 1997; Okafor, 1988).

Tools and Techniques

Artists used a variety of tools and techniques to create traditional murals. Brushes made from animal hair or plant fibers were commonly used to apply paints to the wall surface. Stencils were sometimes used to create repetitive patterns or designs. In some cases, artists used their fingers or hands to apply pigments directly to the wall (Oyelami, 1994; Fafunwa, 1970). The choice of tools and techniques influenced the style and appearance of the murals. For example, the use of brushes allowed artists to create detailed and intricate designs, while the use of stencils produced more repetitive patterns. The techniques used by artists reflect their cultural traditions and artistic skills (Nwodim, 1997; Okafor, 1988).

Conclusion

The media used in traditional murals in South-Western Nigeria reflect the artistic practices and resources of the time. Natural pigments, binders, and additives were carefully selected to create durable and visually appealing works of art. The tools and techniques used by artists demonstrated their skill and knowledge of traditional crafts. By understanding the media used in these murals, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the artistry and craftsmanship of the people who created them.

2.7 The Role of Media in Mural Preservation

Traditional murals in South-Western Nigeria face numerous challenges that can lead to deterioration. Environmental factors, such as humidity, temperature fluctuations, and exposure to sunlight, can cause the pigments to fade, crack, or peel (Oyelami, 1997; Akinola, 2000). Human activities, such as vandalism, neglect, and inappropriate restoration techniques, can also contribute to the decline of murals (Ogu, 2002; Nwabueze, 1990). To address the challenges of mural deterioration, various conservation efforts have been implemented. Cleaning techniques, such as the use of gentle solvents and brushes, can help to remove dirt and grime from the surface of murals (Oyelami, 1997). Restoration techniques, such as infilling cracks or repainting damaged areas, can help to repair the physical integrity of murals (Akinola, 2000).

Sustainable preservation practices are essential for ensuring the long-term survival of murals. This includes monitoring the environmental conditions of the site, implementing preventive measures to protect against damage, and providing adequate funding for conservation efforts (Ogu, 2002; Nwabueze, 1990). In addition to physical conservation efforts, digital preservation plays a crucial role in safeguarding murals. Virtual reconstructions and documentation can provide detailed records of the murals, even if they are damaged or destroyed (Eyo, 1984; Akinola, 2005).

Digital preservation can also enhance access to murals. By making high-quality images and virtual reconstructions available online, people from around the world can learn about and appreciate these cultural heritage sites (Ogu, 2002; Oyelami, 1997). The preservation of traditional murals in South-Western Nigeria is essential for preserving the region's cultural heritage. By addressing the challenges of deterioration and implementing effective conservation strategies, we can ensure that these valuable artifacts are protected for future generations. Digital preservation can also play a crucial role in safeguarding murals and making them accessible to a wider audience.

3. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The exploration of traditional murals in South-Western Nigeria reveals not only their artistic and cultural significance but also the pressing need for their preservation. As this study highlights, these murals serve as vital links to the region's history, beliefs, and artistic practices. However, the challenges they face necessitate a multifaceted approach to ensure their survival and continued relevance. Below are recommendations for future research, potential collaborations, and the importance of preservation and education.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Areas for Further Exploration:

- i. Comparative Studies: Future research could benefit from comparative studies of traditional murals across different regions in Nigeria and West Africa. This would help to identify common themes, techniques, and cultural influences, enriching our understanding of the broader context of mural art in the region.
- ii. Technological Advancements in Preservation: Investigating the use of modern technology, such as 3D scanning and digital archiving, could provide innovative solutions for the documentation and preservation of murals. Research could focus on how these technologies can be integrated into conservation practices.
- iii. Community Engagement and Oral Histories: Further studies should explore the role of local communities in the preservation of traditional murals. Documenting oral histories and community narratives can provide deeper insights into the cultural significance of these artworks and foster a sense of ownership among local populations.
- iv. Impact of Urbanization: Research should examine the impact of urbanization and modernization on traditional mural sites. Understanding how these factors influence the preservation and perception of murals can inform more effective conservation strategies.
- v. Artistic Techniques and Material Studies: Detailed studies on the materials and techniques used in creating traditional murals can enhance our knowledge of the artistic practices of ancient civilizations. This could include chemical analyses of pigments and binders to understand their durability and historical sourcing.

2. Potential Collaborations and Partnerships:

- i. Collaboration with Local Universities: Partnerships with local academic institutions can facilitate research initiatives focused on traditional murals. Collaborative projects can involve students and faculty in field studies, documentation, and preservation efforts.
- ii. Engagement with Cultural Institutions: Collaborating with museums, galleries, and cultural heritage organizations can enhance the visibility of traditional murals. These institutions can play a crucial role in hosting exhibitions, workshops, and educational programs that promote awareness and appreciation of mural art.
- iii. International Partnerships: Establishing partnerships with international organizations focused on cultural heritage preservation can provide access to resources, expertise, and funding. Such collaborations can enhance the capacity for conservation efforts and promote cross-cultural exchanges.
- iv. Involvement of Local Artisans: Engaging local artisans and craftsmen in preservation efforts can ensure that traditional techniques are passed down through generations. Workshops and training programs can empower communities to take an active role in conserving their cultural heritage.

The Importance of Preservation and Education

1. The Need for Ongoing Conservation Efforts:

- i. Sustainable Conservation Practices: It is essential to develop and implement sustainable conservation practices that consider the environmental and social contexts of traditional murals. This includes using eco-friendly materials and techniques that align with the cultural values of the communities involved.
- ii. Funding and Resource Allocation: Securing funding for conservation projects is critical. Government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private donors should be encouraged to invest in the preservation of cultural heritage sites, recognizing their value to national identity and tourism.
- iii. Monitoring and Maintenance Programs: Establishing regular monitoring and maintenance programs for mural sites can help to address deterioration before it becomes irreversible. These programs should involve local communities to ensure their active participation and investment in preservation efforts.

2. The Role of Education in Promoting Awareness and Appreciation of Cultural Heritage:

- i. Curriculum Development: Educational institutions should incorporate the study of traditional murals into their curricula, emphasizing their historical and cultural significance. This can foster a sense of pride and identity among students and encourage them to engage with their heritage.
- ii. Public Awareness Campaigns: Initiatives aimed at raising public awareness about the importance of traditional murals can help to cultivate appreciation and respect for cultural heritage. Campaigns can include workshops, exhibitions, and community events that highlight the stories and meanings behind the murals.
- iii. Training Programs for Educators: Providing training for educators on the significance of traditional murals and effective teaching methods can enhance their ability to convey this knowledge to students. This can create a ripple effect, as informed educators inspire future generations to value and protect their cultural heritage.
- iv. Community-Based Education Initiatives: Engaging local communities in educational programs can empower them to take ownership of their cultural heritage. Programs that involve storytelling, art workshops, and mural restoration projects can foster intergenerational knowledge transfer and strengthen community bonds.

In conclusion, the preservation of traditional murals in South-Western Nigeria is a multifaceted endeavor that requires ongoing research, collaboration, and education. By addressing the challenges these murals face and promoting their significance, we can ensure that they continue to serve as vital expressions of cultural identity and heritage for future generations.

4. CONCLUSION

In summary, this research has illuminated the profound significance of traditional murals in South-Western Nigeria, revealing their multifaceted roles as historical documents, cultural expressions, and artistic achievements. The key insights from the study underscore the following points:

1. **Historical Insights:** Traditional murals serve as invaluable records of the region's history, depicting significant events, social structures, and economic activities. They provide a visual narrative that captures the essence of past societies, offering insights into the lives of their inhabitants and the cultural dynamics that shaped their communities.
2. **Cultural Expressions:** The murals reflect the beliefs, values, and worldviews of the people, showcasing their rituals, ceremonies, and artistic traditions. They are not merely decorative elements but are imbued with meaning, representing the spiritual and cultural identity of the communities that created them.
3. **Artistic Techniques and Materials:** The research highlights the sophisticated techniques and natural materials used in the creation of these murals. The use of local pigments and binders demonstrates the deep connection between the artists and their environment, as well as the knowledge and expertise required to produce durable and meaningful artworks.
4. **Identity and Heritage:** Traditional murals play a crucial role in preserving cultural memory and fostering a sense of place and belonging among communities. They connect contemporary populations to their ancestral knowledge, reinforcing cultural identity and continuity in a rapidly changing world.
5. **Challenges and Preservation Needs:** The study also identifies the challenges faced in preserving these murals, including environmental factors and human activities that threaten their integrity. The need for ongoing conservation efforts and community engagement is paramount to ensure that these cultural treasures are safeguarded for future generations.

Traditional murals in South-Western Nigeria are significant not only for their artistic value but also for their capacity to convey the rich history and cultural heritage of the region. They serve as a testament to the creativity and resilience of the communities that produced them. As such, the preservation and exploration of these murals are essential for understanding and appreciating the diverse cultural landscape of South-Western Nigeria, making it imperative for stakeholders to prioritize their conservation and promote awareness of their import.

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