EDUCATION FOR SAVING MATERIAL CULTURE: CHALLENGE OF PROMOTING HERITAGE EDUCATION IN A DEVELOPING ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT
The concept of acknowledging and appreciating the value in items that reflect the past and the journey towards the present times are taken as a thing of pride and almost a national and natural philosophy in many parts of the western world. However the situation in developing countries such as Nigeria is so different that the conversations on methods and technology required to preserve heritage are far in advance of the basic issues here which border on the place of heritage in the scheme of things as promoted by governments and adopted by the people. This paper aims to discuss the issues that affect the promotion of the study of heritage issues from the perspective of university students. Methodology included focused interviews and questionnaires with the results suggesting a sustainable approach to an economically beneficial development of heritage consciousness.

Keywords: heritage conservation, place of heritage, university students, value, technology.

1 INTRODUCTION
The concept of conservation of the built heritage is a common and generally accepted practice in many western countries and parts of Asia. Their people and governments view the old architecture with a sense of pride and an acknowledgement of their ongoing collective journey. The situation in Nigeria which though it has made great strides in accepting western culture, language and orientation to some degree, is very different from that model. The very notions of preservation and conservation are not a common thought or even a conscious activity where old buildings are concerned. This was identified as an issue by students of architecture during several classes of a taught graduate course. It is important to study the reasons for this situation because the viability of our built heritage is at risk if future practitioners will have to operate in an environment that has contrasting values to heritage conservation and may not see the value in preserving it for posterity.

2 HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN NIGERIA
The ICOMOS 1964 Venice Charter explains that the concept of a historic monument also refers to the setting in which the architectural piece lies as well as the specific piece. There are several government agencies vested with responsibility to preserve this heritage, the major ones are listed in Table 1.

In Nigeria there exists a situation where emphasis and acknowledgement appears to be placed on cultural heritage alone to the detriment of built heritage. Daily media reports highlight activities related to cultural aspects. Thus dancing, singing and other forms of intangible heritage are celebrated through festivals and at social gatherings. The National Commission for Museums and Monuments is responsible for creating and maintaining lists of monuments nationwide. Zubairu et al. [1] notes that most of the listed buildings are of historical significance but buildings of architectural significance are conspicuously absent. The current list reflects even buildings which have been demolished. Further, Zubairu et al. [1] notes that the NCMM does not have a distinct classification system for listed buildings.
Table 1: Agencies with responsibility for heritage preservation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Commission for Museums and Monuments</td>
<td>Federal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagos State Records and Archives Bureau</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Information and Culture</td>
<td>Federal, States</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry of Tourism</td>
<td>Federal, States</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lagos State Council for Arts and Culture</td>
<td>State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization</td>
<td>NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigerian Television Authority</td>
<td>Federal</td>
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<td>National Library of Nigeria</td>
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or structures. This would therefore pose a challenge for study and research purposes as would suggestions from the public for new listings.

In addition the educational background on which the study of architecture at university is built does not require history as a prerequisite, resulting in only a small element of the study of local history within the curriculum.

2.1 Government involvement

There is an immense lack of concern from regulatory authorities that do not prioritise heritage preservation. Two examples are the 2017 demolition of the 110-year old timber framed residence of the last deputy District Officer at Oke-Oyinbo, Epe as shown in Fig. 1 to make way for the Lagos State Government’s extension to its Jubilee Chalets resort. The timber building was demolished even though it was not within the immediate project site. The

Figure 1: Epe Deputy District Officers’ lodge, demolished by government in January 2017. (Source: University of Lagos architecture students.)
Welfare building built in 1924 within the railway compound, Lagos was demolished to pave way for an infrastructure upgrade. It is apparent that the concept of building preservation appears alien in Nigeria. This study attempts to answer the following pertinent questions: What is the place of heritage in Nigeria today and why is Nigeria’s built heritage not being saved? How can built heritage conservation be made a sustainable everyday concept?

3 TECHNOLOGY AND TRAINING FOR HERITAGE EDUCATION

It is a necessity to employ the most appropriate means to propagate the concept of heritage conservation. Education is necessary to create awareness but how best should this be carried out is still subject to divergent views. Eppich and Almagro Vidal [2] in their study of the output of training courses on technology for heritage conservation with a non-homogenous group of participants over a 10-year period justify their method stating that “technology and the knowledge of its correct use are extremely unevenly distributed across the world”.

I disagree with the use of technology in this instance. Before the use of technological means to train for conservation, there must first be the appreciation of and desire for material culture to mean something important and relevant to the people. The composition of Eppich and Almagro Vidal’s groups included Nigeria and other countries where the combination of rapid urbanization and government orientation towards development is not pro-conservation. I posit that mere application of technological methods can neither solve foundational issues borne out of a particular mindset nor catalyse the adoption of cultural orientation from other countries. Helmy [3] takes a different view and situates training for heritage within a structured academic process which, though aimed towards the study of architecture is based within an urban studies discipline framework. Using a mix of activities, skills and experiential methods to engender participation of faculty and students in heritage preservation projects which the researcher states “tends to promote inter-cultural dialogues through heritage appreciation”. The practice in my teaching aligns with Helmy [3] in terms of learning through practical exercises in adaptive reuse, field trips to survey iconic buildings together with critique of existing legislation also develops interest in the students but other lecturers are not involved.

In contrast to this is the position promoted by Chiu et al. [4] where peer-learning and self-learning activities contributed to the development of interest and knowledge in cultural heritage conservation amongst students with no prior knowledge of the subject or need for it academically/in their courses of study. Immersion (albeit using 2D and 3D technology) therefore seems to be a common strategy that gives sustainable results. The capacity of the field trip component to develop knowledge of and sensitivity to cultural heritage was the outcome of research by Ocal [5] who recorded a significant difference of 4.2 in knowledge from post-field trip test scores compared to pre-field scores amongst teacher candidates. A strategy adopted by Mortara et al. [6] critiques the use of applications to learn heritage due to their inability to motivate users into an active state of learning to create their own knowledge. However the use of technology in the form of serious interactive audio–visual games is supported, as these games engage the user for long periods which will enhance learning.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Various methods were employed to gather data on reasons for the state of heritage conservation. Focused interviews were conducted with an initial set of graduate students of architecture who were taking a course on building restoration at the time. The students generated opinions and split into groups to develop these arguments. An online survey was
Figure 2: Ilukwe House, Railway Compound. (a) Approach; and (b) Schematic restoration. (Source: University of Lagos architecture students.)
conducted with another set of respondents seven years later, who were either current or past students of the same building restoration course. The paperless online survey was selected for reasons of convenience and simplicity for the students so that it could be answered at their convenience. It was distributed using a social media sharing platform. The disadvantage of this was that it was difficult to ensure timely and full participation unlike if a paper survey had been manually distributed. This was a major upset and leads to questions on alternative methods to prevent this situation in the future.

5 RESULTS AND FINDINGS
The initial set of 48 graduate students generated six factors which in their opinion affect heritage conservation in Nigeria today (Fig. 3).

Equal importance of 17% was attributed to local inheritance practices and polygamy; isolation of the extended family and the nouveau-riche culture of separation from ones cultural background; and the absence of internal cultural tourism. Our value system and its relationship with the necessity for restoration is of slightly more importance to 19% of the class, while 16% felt that the availability of buildings and the cost-benefit of restoration were of prime importance leaving 14% of the students ascribing lack of communication of the importance of heritage issues to their generation as the crucial factor. To fully understand the import of these self-determined factors, understanding of the particular cultural circumstances is essential. As regards local inheritance traditions, many cultures and ethnic groups maintain customs that relegate women of their rights and privileges (Fasoranti and Aruna [7]). The Igbo tribes of South-Eastern Nigeria in particular perpetrate inheritance norms where the property of a dead man is inherited by his siblings (Fasoranti and Aruna [7]) with the wife and children often disregarded or ejected from the premises. Women as a whole

![Figure 3: Factors affecting built heritage conservation in Nigeria.](image)
do not generally have the same rights of property acquisition as men in a society of male domination, as customary practices appear to take precedence over what is equitable. Polygamy is practised as polygyny – one man and many wives – and the distrust which is usually bred in the fathers’ lifetime between resulting siblings who are often a generation apart precludes unity on decisions of what to do with property left behind. This is further compounded by a society where the culture of Wills and estate planning is not widely adopted – mere mention of such is taken by many (even educated) people as taboo and an urgent desire for death of the individual. Heritage conservation is not taken as important to the generation of students for whom only all that is shiny, steel and new is valued. The reasons foraccording value to conservation is not communicated to them in a manner that resonates with them.

The survey was responded to by 51 out of 182 students or 28.02%. Responses indicated that modern architecture 98% was studied more than any other subject area in history (Fig. 4).

Directly related to the type of history studied and therefore the influencer of their subsequent design orientation is the comment by 54% of students that features with contemporary features will attract a higher score than ones with features from traditional architecture. While acknowledging the importance of culture to the study of architecture, the results indicate differing opinions on factors that affect heritage preservation from the earlier group.

Major contributors with the capacity to influence the direction of heritage preservation are ranked in Fig. 5. Results show that if it views conservation as important, the government intervention alone could change orientation and practice in a sustainable manner (Fig. 6).

![Figure 4: Architectural history areas studied by respondents.](image-url)
Figure 5: Comparative chart of factors which affect adoption of heritage conservation.

Figure 6: Who is to blame for the heritage conservation situation in Nigeria? Involved parties are ranked according to their level of influence on the current attitude and practice of heritage conservation.
The ranks ascribed to the government and its agencies should be expected. In an environment where there are divergent responses to situations, the results are likely to be negative. In recent times iconic buildings have been lost (or will be) due to a combination of non-compensation and lack of maintenance for listed buildings as in the case of the Olaiya house, ignorance about the significance of the building which affected the Epe Deputy District Officers’ residence, unclear bureaucracy that permitted the decrepit state of the Ilukwe house, to name a few.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

One objective of the study was to find out how heritage conservation can be made a sustainable concept, adoptable by all citizens who would see economic value and fulfilment in the process. The following are some recommendations to advance the historic building conservation and preservation around the country, using the energy of an informed youth and support from government in all its forms.

1. Introduction of local history of people and places into educational curricula is essential. Many students are unaware that peoples of Nigeria had thriving kingdoms, economic and trade ties with many other nations. The study of history helps engender self-pride and appreciation for things made through artistry. Addressing the cultural peculiarities that debar conservation is best done through awareness campaigns that are sensitive to these cultures.

2. Engaging communities and presenting the economic benefits derivable from built heritage conservation will also make a difference. People want to be recognised as having ownership of their culture. Direct acquisition by government fiat without dialogue with the traditional owners or custodians will not make for a sustainable relationship.

3. Over the years, the most engaging feedback has been the result of field trips where experiential learning made a great impression. To create and sustain interest, projects that could be “live” are assigned as design briefs. Field trips encourage understanding of materials and appreciation of craftsmanship. Adaptive reuse briefs encourage the fusion of contemporary with iconic and are warmly welcomed by young minds that often feel retaining an old building on a site instantly limits design creativity due to the difference in style.

All participants must be fully involved to bring about the desired result of sustained heritage conservation awareness and practice in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

