

Perceived Relevance of Public Sculptures in Obáfémi Awólówó University, Ilé-Ifè, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper identifies and examines the perceived relevance of public sculptures in the contemporary environment of Obáfémi Awólówo University, Ilé-Ifè to provide information on the respondents' level of awareness and knowledge of public sculptures in the environment. The paper employs the use of a questionnaire, and a total of 100 University community members (50 staff members and 50 students) were sampled. Direct observation of public sculptures and the taking of photographs were also adopted in data collection. The sculptures were purposively selected based on their locations. Art Historical approach and descriptive statistics, frequency distribution table and percentage were employed in data analysis. The study reveals that a majority of the selected public sculptures were perceived to be monumental/memorial objects, objects of social interaction and cultural identity. It is found that public sculptures within Obáfémi Awólówo University record important event, history, and culture; and also celebrates heroes/heroines of the community. The study also shows that some of these public sculptures are not receiving adequate care as shown in their physical state. The study concludes that public sculptures generally are created as landmarks, monuments, cultural symbols, and beautification of the environment which is meant to educate people about their history.

Keywords: Built Environment, Contact, Perceived Relevance, Perception, Public Sculptures

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1. Introduction

As a product of an individual and autonomous act of expression, sculpture has occupied an integral part of public space in the community since time immemorial. This is because sculpture is the most common form of public art (Carter 2010), and it appears in many forms in virtually every culture. This art form has also been presented through various types of stonework, monuments, statues, and other religious or architectural forms. The Stonehenge, Mesopotamian ziggurats, Egyptian pyramids, celebrated treasures of Greece and Rome, Christian artworks of the Middle Ages, exploits of the African, Mexican, and Latin American civilizations, and sculptures of the modern and contemporary eras stand as evidence of sculptures in the public space (Kleiner, 2011).

Public sculpture is a work of art that is placed externally in public areas and is mostly accessible for public appreciation, tourism, and viewing purposes (Muhammad and Nik, 2016). This kind of art is made for public consumption and it usually exists outside museum and gallery walls (Joseph 2001, Finkelpearl 2001. Fleming 2005). Harding (1996) sees the public as a physical domain that comprises buildings, streets, roundabouts, squares and parks, which diverse kinds of people can access (Murdock 2012, Carter 2010) and from which no one is excluded by poverty, race, gender sexuality or other personal circumstances. Thus, public sculptures are located in public places such as parks, libraries, road intersections, roundabouts, bus stops, town squares, parks, and academic institutions. Based on the understanding of public sculptures as works of art that are projected in the public domain, it is then seen as communal art that requires the participation of the entire community as it reflects and raises the social and cultural consciousness of the society in which it is displayed (Januchta-Szostak 2010, Russell 2004, Hein 1996).

In Nigeria, public spaces were adorned with sculptures displayed at churches, and government and private institutions between 1920 and 1954 due to the influence of the British colonial masters (Beier, 1960). However,



kings' palaces, shrines and market squares were known public places where people could view their objects of culture such as wood carvings, sculptures in stone, clay or bronze and murals before the contact with the West, and the advent of Christianity and Islamic religion (Ogunjimi, 2016). The introduction of Christianity and Islam in the early 20th century and the eventual adoption of Western lifestyles, and education facilitated the movement of public sculptures to higher institutions.

Obafemi Awolowo University is one such institution that takes pride in installing public sculptures within its premises. The University was established in 1962 as the University of Ife and was renamed 'Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)' in 1987 as a way of commemorating Chief Obafemi Awolowo, one of its founding fathers, lawyer, politician and nationalist. The idea to establish a University that will reflect Africa in the real sense of it was conceived by the visionary Chief Obafemi Awolowo. The guiding philosophy of the University as set by its founders emphasised morality, excellence, integrity, and honour. The mission of the University is to nurture a teaching and learning community, advance the frontiers of knowledge, engender a sense of selfless public service, promote cultural adaptability, and add value to African culture (Ogunbodede, 2021).

In Nigeria, public spaces were adorned with sculptures displayed at churches, and government and private institutions between 1920 and 1954 due to the influence of the British colonial masters (Beier, 1960). However, kings' palaces, shrines and market squares were known public places where people could view their objects of culture such as wood carvings, sculptures in stone, clay or bronze and murals before the contact with the West, and the advent of Christianity and Islamic religion (Ogunjimi, 2016). The introduction of Christianity and Islam in the early 20th century and the eventual adoption of Western lifestyles, and education facilitated the movement of public sculptures to higher institutions. Public sculpture is a work of art that is placed externally in public areas and is mostly accessible for public appreciation, tourism, and viewing purposes (Muhammad and Nik, 2016). This kind of art is made for public consumption and it usually exists outside museum and gallery walls (Joseph 2001, Finkelpearl 2001. Fleming 2005). Harding (1996) sees the public as a physical domain that comprises buildings, streets, roundabouts, squares and parks, which diverse kinds of people can access (Murdock 2012, Carter 2010) and from which no one is excluded by poverty, race, gender sexuality or other personal circumstances. Thus, public sculptures are located in public places such as parks, libraries, road intersections, roundabouts, bus stops, town squares, parks, and academic institutions. Based on the understanding of public sculptures as works of art that are projected in the public domain, it is then seen as communal art that requires the participation of the entire community as it reflects and raises the social and cultural consciousness of the society in which it is displayed (Januchta-Szostak 2010, Russell 2004, Hein 1996).

Studying public sculptures at Obafemi Awolowo University is relevant because the Institution's acceptability of public sculptures in its domain further confirms the authentication of its motto, "For Learning and Culture". The University emphasises excellence in the propagation of knowledge and culture through the choice of its philosophical motto. This is to further project African values, and by extension enhance the beautification of the built environment of the Institution. This philosophy sets Obafemi Awolowo University on a pedestal that makes it difficult for its counterparts throughout the country to compete with it. When the University of Ife was established, the motto; 'For Learning and Culture' was chosen to bridge the gaps between the "gown" and the "town". In order to fulfil its mission and vision, an Institute of Cultural Studies was put in place with its mandate of preserving African cultural heritage, thereby making the African culture well-rooted and appreciated. Consequently, the sculptures within the University environment depict images of cultural legends and heroes; politicians and scholars, which relate to the history of the Institution. They also depict ideas (such as sport and struggle), about the philosophy of the Institution as some lines of its anthem indicate; ... Aluta against all oppressions; forward ever, backward never; for learning, and culture, sports and struggle... The essential interest of this study is to examine the perceived relevance of public sculptures and investigate the students and staff members' level of awareness and knowledge of the public sculptures in the University, in order to determine their perception of these sculptures within their environment.

Several studies on public sculptures have been widely conducted in Nigeria, especially in the south-western Zone. The study of Odiboh, (1987) examines the origin, style, and uses of outdoor sculptures in the Lagos metropolis. Akintonde, (2009) studies Outdoor Sculpture in south-western Nigeria, and Ogunjimi (2016) studies the perception of public art in Oke Ogun, Oyo State. Akintonde and Kalilu, (2013) study a thematic and stylistic appraisal of sculpture in public places, while Akintonde, (2013) examines public sculpture artists in south-western Nigeria. Furthermore, while Bamisile, (2011) traces the history of public sculptures in southwestern Nigeria, Adeyanju, (2004) focuses on the abuse of environmental sculptures in south-western Nigeria. The study



of Ijsakin and Ogunjimi, (2015) was based on the integration of the aesthetic appeal of public sculptures into the Nigerian built environment, while Ademuleya, Adeyanju, and Ijisakin, (2015) focused on the public art and the Nigerian public, using Ibadan as an example. The study of Ikpakronyi, (2005) discusses the classification and cultural relevance of modern outdoor sculptures in Benin City, while Bada, (2010) examines the conservation of sculpture in public spaces. All these studies opened the public and the government's eyes to the need for adequate funding and proper maintenance of the sculptures in public places, having understood their aesthetic value.

The studies of Kalilu and Oladugbagbe, (2013); Oladugbagbe and Kalilu, (2013); and Oladugbagbe and Akintonde, (2016) are all a bit related to the present study due to their choice of higher institutions in Nigeria as case study. Kalilu and Oladugbagbe, (2013) discuss the antecedence and morphology of garden sculpture in Nigerian art schools. The study traces the history of garden sculptures in Nigerian formal art schools (Departments of Fine Arts) by conducting field surveys of the "Zaria School" and "Yaba School" respectively. The study forms a baseline for future scholarships on contemporary sculpture in Nigerian higher institutions and suggests a business-oriented perspective toward exploring environmental beautification as a means of income generation in all art schools. The study of Oladugbagbe and Kalilu, (2013) examines the iconography, arts, and design of metal sculptures in Nigerian art institutions between 1980 and 2011. The study examines sculptures made of metal alloy in these institutions and looks at some changes that have come to them as a result of weathering and oxidation over some time. The study also proposes preventive strategies for the metal works. Oladugbagbe and Akintonde, (2016) conducted a thematic analysis of the garden sculptures at Ife Art School, otherwise known as the Department of Fine and Applied Arts at Obafemi Awolowo University. Thus, the study is closely related to the present paper in terms of study area. The study examines and documents all the identifiable sculptures in and around the African Studies Complex. However, this paper is an investigation into how people perceive the relevance of mounted public sculptures that are situated across the University.

Public sculptures as visual art forms are crafted by artists and situated in environmental landscapes with a view to projecting the history, culture, religion, tradition and philosophy of a people. One of the major roles of art in public places is to raise the "imageability" of urban enclosures, as well as their cultural quality and social attractiveness Januchta-Szostak, (2010). Public sculpture provides opportunities for self-expression on the part of the artist; creates social, cultural, political and historical awareness for the public; and enhances the physical infrastructure and environment through participation in the appreciation and creation of art which in a way assists in proffering solution to many community problems (Kastner, 1998). However, people barely pay attention to these public sculptures and their many roles in the built environment even though they are evident in our various communities. Some of these public sculptures are abused and mutilated in the public spaces. Many public sculptures today have been dilapidated over time due to a lack of maintenance culture. This and many more problems raise questions like; are people aware of public sculptures in their domain? What value do people place on these items of cultural patrimony? Do people have concerns about and have an interest in these public sculptures? How do people perceive them? However, it is expedient that how people perceive the relevance of public sculptures is examined through their level of awareness and knowledge of such sculptures to determine their overall perception of public sculptures in the academic environment of Obafemi Awolowo University.

2. Research Methods

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches which are primary sources of gathering data. The quantitative approach employs the use of a questionnaire. Questionnaire items were designed using a 3-point Likert scale to collect information from the respondents on their perceived relevance of public sculptures within their vicinity. The scale includes Disagree, Not Sure, and Agree. The population for this study comprised the entire University community members, while the sample for the study was 100 (50 staff members and 50 students) respondents, selected using a purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique is employed because the questionnaire was administered to only University community members who stayed closer to the location of the public sculptures. Eight sculptures were purposively selected based on their locations. The qualitative approach involves direct observation of public sculptures and taking photographs in the field. Art Historical approach and descriptive statistics, frequency distribution table and percentage were employed to analyse the data obtained.

3. Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

This section presents, analyses and interprets the data collected from the field. Data were analysed and interpreted using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.



3.1 Perceived Relevance of the Selected Public Sculptures in Obafemi Awolowo University.

This aspect of the paper examines the perceived relevance of public sculpture in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. This is to establish the relationship between public sculpture and the society. The paper identified eight (8) sculptural pieces in the study area. The distribution of respondents based on their perceived relevance of each of the sculptural works is presented as follows:

Table 3.1.1: Distribution of Respondents based on their Perceived Relevance of Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Sculpture (Plate 1)

Variable	Staff	Staff		Student	
	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)	
Object of beauty	35 / 70%	15 / 30%	39 / 78%	11 / 22%	
Object of social interaction	36 / 72%	14 / 28%	46 / 92%	4 / 8%	
Monument/memorial object	2 / 4%	48 / 96%	25 / 50%	25 / 50%	
Cultural identity	45 / 90%	5 / 10%	41 / 82%	9 / 18%	
Mythical/sacred object	50 / 100%	-	50 / 100%	-	
Recreation/tourist object	50 /100%	-	46 / 92%	4 / 8%	

Source: Field Survey

Table 3.1.1 above shows the distribution of respondents based on their perceived relevance of Chief Obafemi Awolowo's sculpture. From the table, 30% of the staff and 22% of the students perceived the sculptural work as an object of beauty while 70% of the staff and 78% of the students didn't see the sculpture as an object of beauty. Considering art as an object of social interaction, 28% of the staff and 8% of the students agreed to it, while 72% of the staff and 92% disagreed. 96% of the staff and 50% of the students agreed that it is a monument while 4% of the staff and 50% of the students said it's not a memorial object. 10% of the staff and 18% of the students perceived the object as cultural identity while 90% of the staff and 82% of the staff perceived it not to be cultural identity. All of the respondents; staff and students disagreed with the object being a mythical or sacred object. 100% of the staff and 92% of the students did not see the sculpture work as a recreation/tourist object, while the remaining 8% of the students perceived it as a recreational object. From the table, it can be drawn that both the students and the staff have the same perception of the sculptural work of the Late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, which implies that they both perceived it to be a monument/memorial object.



Plate 1: Statue of Chief Obafemi Awolowo at the Frontage of Oduduwa Hall. Photographed by Isaiah Ogunjimi, 2016



Plate 2: Sculptural Figure of an African Woman and Child at the Frontage of Natural History Museum. Photographed by Isaiah Ogunjimi, 2016



Table 3.1.2: Distribution of Respondents based on their Perceived Relevance of Sculptural Piece of an African Woman (Plate 2)

Variable	Staff		Student		
	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)	
Object of beauty	38 / 76%	12 / 24%	45 / 90%	5 / 10%	
Object of social interaction	19 / 38%	31 / 62%	39 / 78%	11/ 22%	
Monument/memorial object	36 / 72%	14 / 28%	43 / 86%	7 / 14%	
Cultural identity	38 / 76%	12 / 24%	28 / 56%	22 / 44%	
Mythical/sacred object	48 / 96%	2 / 4%	42 / 84%	8 / 16%	
Recreation/tourist object	40 / 80%	10 / 20%	42 / 84%	8 / 16%	

Table 3.1.2 above shows the distribution of the respondents based on their perceived relevance of a sculptural piece of an African woman in Obafemi Awolowo University. From the table, 24% of the staff and 10% of the students perceived the metal sculpture as an object of beauty while 76% of the staff and 90% of the students did not see the sculptural work as an object of beauty. 62% of the staff and 22% of the students saw the object as an object of social interaction while 38% of the staff and 78% of the students did not. 28% of the staff and 14% of the students perceived the sculptural work as a memorial object while 72% of the staff and 86% of the students did not. 24% of the staff and 44% of the students agreed that the statue gives cultural identity while 76% of the staff and 56% of the students disagreed. 4% of the staff and 16% of the students perceived the object as a mythical or sacred object while 96% of the staff and 84% of the students disagreed. 20% of the staff and 16% of the students agreed that the object is a recreation or tourist object while 80% of the staff and 84% of the students disagreed. From Table 2.1.2, the perception of the staff and students about the relevance of the sculptural piece of an African woman is similar except for the perceived relevance as an object of social interaction, while the students who are seen as adults perceived the sculpture to be an object of social interaction, while the students who are teens and young adults see the sculptural piece as an object of cultural identity.

Table 3.1.3: Distribution of Respondents based on their Perceived Relevance of Sculptural Piece of Athletes (Plate 3)

Variable	Staff		Student	
	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)
Object of beauty	50 / 100%	-	45 / 90%	5 / 10%
Object of social interaction	32 / 64%	18 / 36%	30 / 60%	20 / 40%
Monument/memorial object	49 / 98%	1 / 2%	46 / 92%	4 / 8%
Cultural identity	43 / 86%	7 / 14%	44 / 88%	6 / 12%
Mythical/sacred object	50 / 100%	-	46 / 92%	4 / 8%
Recreation/tourist object	27 / 54%	23 / 46%	36 / 72%	14 / 28%

Source: Field Survey

Table 3.1.3 above shows the distribution of respondents based on their perceived relevance of sculptural pieces of athletes in Obafemi Awolowo University. From the table, 100% of the staff and 90% of the students did not see the object as an object of beauty while 10% of the students perceived the object as an object of beauty. 36% of the staff and 40% of the students saw it as an object of social interaction while 64% of the staff and 60% of the students did not see it as an object of social interaction. 98% of the staff and 92% of the students disagreed with it being an object of monument/ memorial object while 2% of the staff and 8% of the students accepted it as a monument/ memorial object. 14% of the staff and 12% of the students perceived the object as being cultural identity while 86% of the staff and 88% of the staff said it is not an object of cultural identity. 100% of the staff respondents and 92% of the students disagreed with the object being mythical or sacred while 8% of the students agreed. 54% of the staff members and 72% of the students did not see the sculptural work as a recreational/tourist object while 46% of the staff and 28% of the students perceived it as a recreational/tourist object. The implication of this as seen in the table is that the staff members perceived the relevance of the sculptural work of the athletes in Obafemi Awolowo University to be recreation/tourism, while the students see it as an object of social interaction.





Plate 3: Sculptural Figure of Athletes, Department of Physical and Health Education. Photographed by Isaiah Ogunjimi, 2016



Plate 4: wooden carved sculpture of Oduduwa, Oduduwa Hall. Photographed by Isaiah Ogunjimi, 2016

Table 3.1.4: Distribution of Respondents based on their Perceived Relevance of Oduduwa Wooden Carved Sculpture (Plate 4)

Variable	Staff		Student		
	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)	
Object of beauty	42 / 84%	8 / 16%	39 / 78%	11 / 22%	
Object of social interaction	34 / 68%	16 / 32%	41 / 82%	9 / 18%	
Monument/memorial object	29 / 58%	21 / 42%	41 / 82%	9 / 18%	
Cultural identity	25 / 50%	25 / 50%	34 / 68%	16 / 32%	
Mythical/sacred object	42 / 84%	8 / 16%	39 / 78%	11 / 22%	
Recreation/tourist object	47 / 94%	3 / 6%	43 / 86%	7 / 14%	

Table 3.1.4 above shows the distribution of the respondents based on their perceived relevance of the wooden carved sculpture of Oduduwa. From the table, 16% of the staff and 22% of the students perceived the statue as an object of beauty while 84% of the staff and 78% of the students did not see the sculptural work as an object of beauty. 32% of the staff and 18% of the students saw the object as an object of social interaction while 68% of the staff and 82% of the students did not. 42% of the staff and 18% of the students perceived the sculptural work of Oduduwa as a memorial object while 58% of the staff and 82% of the students did not. 50% of the staff and 32% of the students agreed that the statue gives cultural identity while 50% of the staff and 68% of the students disagreed. 16% of the staff and 22% of the students perceived the object as a mythical or sacred object while 84% of the staff and 78% of the students disagreed. 6% of the staff and 14% of the students agreed that the object is a recreational or tourist object while 94% of the staff and 86% of the students disagreed. In summary, most of both staff members and students perceived the wooden carved sculpture of Oduduwa to be a cultural identity.



Table 3.1.5: Distribution of Respondents based on their Perceived Relevance of Sculptural Piece of Aluta Students (Plate 5)

Variable	Staff	Staff		Student		
	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)		
Object of beauty	46 / 92%	4 / 8%	42 / 84%	8 / 16%		
Object of social interaction	14 / 28%	36 / 72%	26 / 52%	24 / 48%		
Monument/memorial object	34 / 68%	16 / 32%	41 / 82%	9 / 18%		
Cultural identity	50 / 100%	-	43 / 86%	7 / 14%		
Mythical/sacred object	50 / 100%	-	44 / 88%	6 / 12%		
Recreation/tourist object	50 / 100%	-	47 / 94%	3 / 6%		

Table 3.1.5 shows the distribution of respondents (students and staff members) based on their perceived relevance of the sculptural piece of Aluta Students in Obafemi Awolowo University. From the table, 92% of the staff and 84% of the students did not see the figure as an object of beauty while 8% of the staff and 16% of the students saw it as such. 72% of the staff and 48% of the students perceived it to be an object of social interaction while 28% of the staff and 52% of the students did not. 32% of the staff and 18% of the students consented that it is a memorial object while 68% of the staff and 82% of the students did not. 0% of the staff members and 14% of the students perceived it as an object of cultural identity while 100% of the staff and 86% of the students did not. 12% of the students and 0% of the staff perceived it as a mythical/sacred object while 88% of the students and 100% of the staff members did not see it as such. 6% of the students and 0% of the staff perceived it as a recreation or tourist object while 94% of the students and 100% of the staff did not. Therefore, it is evident from the table that the majority of both the staff and students perceived the sculptural piece of Aluta Students to be the object of social interaction.



Plate 5: 'Aluta Students', Stusents' Union Building. Photographed by Isaiah Ogunjimi, 2016



Plate 6: Portrait of Professor Agbo Folarin, Department of Fine and Applied Arts. Photographed by Isaiah Ogunjimi, 2016



Table 3.1.6: Distribution of Respondents based on their Perceived Relevance of Sculptural Piece of Professor Agbo Folarin (Plate 6)

Variable	Staff		Student	Student		
	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)		
Object of beauty	40 / 80%	10 / 20%	41 / 82%	9 / 18%		
Object of social interaction	42 / 84%	8 / 16%	43 / 86%	7 / 14%		
Monument/memorial object	16 / 32%	34 / 68%	33 / 66%	17 / 34%		
Cultural identity	42 / 84%	8 / 16%	43 / 86%	7 / 14%		
Mythical/sacred object	47 / 94%	3 / 6%	46 / 92%	4 / 8%		
Recreation/tourist object	50 / 100%	-	45 / 90%	5 / 10%		

Table 3.1.6 shows the distribution of respondents based on their perceived relevance of Prof Agbo Folarin's sculptural piece in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts. 20% of the staff and 18% of the students indicated that the piece is an object of beauty while 80% of the staff and 82% of the students did not. 84% of the staff and 86% of the students did not perceive the piece to be an object of social interaction while just 16% of the staff and 14% of the students' respondents perceived it so. 68% of the staff and 34% of the students perceived the sculpture as a memorial/monumental object while 32% of the staff and 66% of the students did not. 84% of the students perceived the object not to be a cultural identity. 94% of the staff and 92% of the students perceived the object not to be a mythical/sacred object. 100% of the staff respondents and 90% of the students did not see the sculpture as an object of recreation/tourism. This implies that a majority of both students and staff members, 68% and 34% respectively have similar perceptions of the relevance of the sculptural piece of Professor Agbo Folarin to be a monument/memorial object.

Table 3.1.7: Distribution of Respondents based on their Perceived Relevance of Sculptural Piece of Professor Emeritus Wole Soyinka (Plate 7)

Variable	Staff	Staff		Student		
	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)		
Object of beauty	37 / 74%	13 / 26%	46 / 92%	4 / 8%		
Object of social interaction	40 / 80%	10 / 20%	43 / 86%	7 / 14%		
Monument/memorial object	16 / 32%	34 / 68%	30 / 60%	20 / 40%		
Cultural identity	46 / 92%	4 / 8%	46 / 92%	4 / 8%		
Mythical/sacred object	50 / 100%	-	48 / 96%	2 / 4%		
Recreation/tourist object	50 / 100%	-	40 / 80%	10 / 20%		

Source: Field Survey

Table 3.1.7 shows the distribution of respondents based on their perceived relevance of the portrait sculpture of Professor Emeritus Wole Soyinka at Obafemi Awolowo University. The table shows that 26% of the staff and 8% of the students perceived the artwork to be an object of beauty. 20% of the staff and 14% of the students believed it was an object of social interaction while others did not. 68% of the staff and 40% of the students perceived the object as a monument/memorial object while 32% of the staff and 60% of the students did not. 8% of the staff and students perceived the piece to be cultural identity respectively while a majority, 92% of both staff and students did not. 100% of the staff respondents and 96% of the students did not believe that the object was mythical/sacred, while 0% of the staff and 4% of the students did. All of the staff respondents and the majority (100%) and 80% of the students did not perceive the work as the object of recreation/tourism, while 0% of the staff members and 20% of the students did. This result implies that a majority of both students and staff members with 68% and 40% respectively perceived the relevance of the sculptural piece of Professor Emeritus Wole Soyinka to be a monument/memorial object.





Plate 7: Portrait of Professor Emeritus Wole Soyinka, Institute of Cultural Studies. Photographed by Isaiah Ogunjimi, 2016



Plate 8: Portrait of Moremi Ajasoro, Moremi Girls' Residential Hall. Photographed by Isaiah Ogunjimi, 2016

Table 3.1.8: Distribution of Respondents based on their Perceived Relevance of Sculptural Piece of Moremi Ajasoro (Plate 8)

Variable	Staff	Staff		Student	
	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)	No (F/%)	Yes (F/%)	
Object of beauty	31 / 62%	19 / 38%	36 / 72%	14 / 28%	
Object of social interaction	38 / 76%	12 / 24%	45 / 90%	5 / 10%	
Monument/memorial object	16 / 32%	34 / 68%	33 / 66%	17 / 34%	
Cultural identity	27 / 54%	23 / 46%	32 / 64%	18 / 36%	
Mythical/sacred object	47 / 94%	3 / 6%	46 / 92%	4 / 8%	
Recreation/tourist object	50 / 100%	-	50 / 100%	-	

Table 3.1.8 shows the distribution of respondents based on their perceived relevance of the sculptural work of Moremi Ajasoro in Obafemi Awolowo University. The table shows that 38% of the staff and 28% of the students perceived the Moremi sculptural piece as an object of beauty while 62% of the staff and 72% of the students did not. 24% of the staff and 10% of the students perceived it to be an object of social interaction while 76% of the staff and 90% of the students did not see it as such. 68% of the staff and 34% of the students perceived the piece as a monument/memorial object while the other respondents disagreed. 46% of the staff and 36% of the students perceived that the object is a cultural identity while the remaining 54% of the students perceived that the work is not a mythical or sacred object. All of the respondents; both staff and students perceived the object not to be a recreation/tourist object at all. This implies as evident in the table that the staff members and the students perceived the relevance of the sculptural piece of Moremi Ajasoro differently; while a majority of the staff members perceived it to be a monument/memorial object, a majority of the students saw it as a cultural identity.



4. Respondents' Level of Awareness and Knowledge of Public Sculptures in Obafemi Awolowo University

This aspect further assesses respondents' level of awareness and knowledge of public sculptures in Obafemi Awolowo University to determine their perception of the public sculptures in the built environment of the University. This would further reveal their concern about and interest in those public sculptures as it may be evident in the physical condition of those public sculptures. Therefore, various attitudes exhibited towards the sculptures such as abuse, negligence, and non-maintenance may be a reflection of the disposition of the respondents who are part of the University community.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents based on their level of awareness and knowledge of public sculptures in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife

Variable	Disagree		Not sure		Agree	
	Staff	Student	Staff	Student	Staff	Student
I do not understand what is called sculpture	41/82%	35/70%	4/8%	7/14%	5/10%	8/16%
Public sculptures have no value in OAU community	46/92%	41/82%	3/6%	3/6%	1/2%	6/12%
Public sculptures offer ample opportunity for social interactions	7/14%	5/10%	-	11/22%	43/86%	34/68%
Public sculptures reflect our value, belief and the way we are	3/6%	1/2%	4/8%	8 /16%	43/86%	41/82%
Art generally influences my way of life e.g work, religion, way of dressing and tradition	5/10%	10/20%	11/22%	11/22%	34/68%	29/58%
Public sculptures are seen as tools for social commentary that regulate and bring orderliness in the community	2/4%	3/6%	3/6%	11/22%	45/90%	36/72%
They are made for tourist attraction	6/12%	4 /8%	2/4%	11/22%	42/84%	35/70%
They record important event, history, culture and celebrates legend, heroes and heroine in the community	-	1/2%	-	4 /8%	50/100%	45/90%
Getting more closer to sculptures means getting more familiar with our community	3/6%	3/6%	8/16%	12/24%	39/78%	35/70%
Public sculptures beautify our environment and appeal to our eyes	1/2%	-	5/10%	8 /16%	44/88%	42/84%

Source: Field Survey

Table 4.1 shows the distribution of respondents based on their level of awareness and knowledge of the public sculptures in Obafemi Awolowo University. 82% of the staff and 70% of the students disagreed that they do not understand what is called sculpture, 8% of the staff and 14% of the students were not sure, while 10% of the staff and 16% of the students agreed that they do not understand what sculpture is. This implies that more than half of the respondents; both staff and students know what a sculpture is. The table further shows that 92% of the staff and 82% of the students disagree that public sculptures have no value in the OAU community, 6% of the staff and students were not sure while 2% of the staff and 12% of the students agreed that public sculptures have no value in OAU community. This implies that public sculptures offer ample opportunity for social interactions, 22% of the students were not sure while 86% of the staff and 68% of the students agreed with the statement. It can be drawn from the survey that public sculpture offers ample opportunity for social interactions. 6% of the staff and 2% of the students disagreed that public sculptures reflect our values, beliefs and the way we are, 8% of the staff and 16% of the students were not sure while 86% of the staff and 82% of the students agreed. It can be drawn from the survey that the staff and students are aware and have knowledge of public sculptures as reflectors of our values, beliefs and the way we are. 10% of the staff and 20% of the students' respondents



disagreed with the notion that art influences their ways of life, 22% of the staff and 22% of the students are not sure, while 68% of the staff and 58% of the students agreed that art influences their ways of life. This result implies that the level of awareness and knowledge of a large proportion of the respondents (both staff and students) indicates that art influences their ways of life. 4% of the staff and 6% of the students disagreed that public sculptures are seen as tools for social commentary that regulate and bring orderliness in the community, 6% of the staff and 22% of the students were not sure, while 90% of the staff and 72% of the student agreed to the statement. This implies that public sculptures are seen as tools for social commentary. 12% of the staff's respondents and 8% of the students disagreed that public sculptures are made for tourist attractions, 4% of the staff and 22% of the students are not sure; while 84% of the staff and 70% of the students agreed that sculptures are made for tourists' attraction; implying that a majority of both respondents from the staff and students know that sculptures are made for tourist attraction. All of the staff respondents and 90% of the student agreed that public sculptures record important event, history, and culture and also celebrates heroes and heroines of the community, 2% of the student disagreed while 8% were not sure. This implies that public sculptures record important event, history, and culture and also celebrates heroes and heroines of the community. 6% of the staff and 6% of the students disagreed that getting closer to sculptures means getting more familiar with our community, 16% of the staff and 24% of the students+ were not sure, while 78% of the staff and 70% of the student agreed that getting closer to sculptures means getting closer to the community which implies that a majority of both the respondents are aware and have an understanding of the statement. 2% of the staff disagreed that public sculptures beautify our environment and appeal to our senses, 10% of the staff and 16% of the students were not sure; while 88% of the staff and 84% of the students agreed that they beautify our environment and appeal to our senses. The result implies that a majority of the respondents acknowledge the fact that public sculptures beautify our environment and appeal to our senses.

5. Discussion of Findings and Summary

Public sculptures in any medium throughout the ages have existed as landmarks, monuments, architectural embellishments, cultural symbols, and independent aesthetic objects (Rosalind, 1979). Sculpture generally is seen as a monument and it is meant to educate people about the history of the past and remind them of the exploits the individuals (heroes, heroines, legends) depicted have made in their struggles and battles for the freedom of their people. Sculpture speaks volumes about the image of the people, events, or culture of the community it is created for. Filani, (2003) expresses this so well when he states that "monumental art when started meant to immortalize heroes, legends, and religious heads to keep them in memories for the landmarks they have made".

It was found out that public sculptures within the environment of Obafemi Awolowo University record important events, history, and culture and celebrate heroes and heroines of the community. Similarly, the majority of the sculptures in the study area were perceived to be monument/memorial objects as it further reveals. Hence, the sculptural works such as those of the Late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Late Professor Agbo Folarin, Professor Emeritus Wole Soyinka and Moremi Ajasoro are monuments/memorial objects. Chief Obafemi Awolowo was one of the founding fathers of the University. He was the premier for the Western Region of the Federal Republic of Nigeria when the University was under construction and he used the money meant for the project judiciously. He was a loyalist, lawyer and nationalist. Chief Obafemi Awolowo was the epitome of a good political leader and philanthropist who had recorded several landmarks in the history of the country. For such a man to be remembered and remain indelible in the hearts of people, he was immortalised. This is the sole reason why the former University of Ife was renamed after his name, in commemorating his undeniable effort towards the founding of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Professor Agbo Folarin was a scholar of repute in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts who had also engraved his never-ending effects on humanity. He created many sculptural monuments/projects on the Campus including the metal works at the Students' Union Building, Conference Centre, Floor "0" of the University Senate Building as well as many others. Professor Emeritus Wole Soyinka on the other hand was a Professor of Comparative Literature at Obafemi Awolowo University. He is an outstanding and well-known playwright, who has won several prizes, including the popular Nobel Prize laureate he was awarded in 1986 which is the first of its kind to be won by African writers. The Nobel Prize was significant because he had a variety of rich literary productions in his prime; hence, he was described as one who in a wide cultural perspective and with poetic overtones fashions the drama of existence. Both Professor Agbo Folarin and Professor Emeritus Wole Soyinka are symbolically represented in their respective location as symbols of academic excellence.

Moremi Yoruba Marking was equally a heroine of Yoruba culture who delivered Ife people from the hands of their oppressors. Moremi occupied a high position in Ile-Ife due to what she did. She remains indelible in the



history of Ife and Yoruba. The image is relevant in the academic environment of Obafemi Awolowo University because a female residential hall was named after her name, and the image is equally erected at the entrance gate of Moremi Hall. The sculptural piece of Moremi Ajasoro was perceived to be a monument/ memorial object and cultural identity respectively by both staff members and students of Obafemi Awolowo University. A majority of the staff members perceived it to be a monument/memorial object, while a majority of the students see it as cultural identity, because she is seen as a symbol of Yoruba culture because of her sacrifice. Similarly, the wooden carved sculpture of Oduduwa at the Oduduwa Hall was perceived to be an object of cultural identity. Oduduwa was the founding father of the Yoruba. He had seven sons who eventually settled in different locations where Yoruba people are now found.

The perceived relevance of the sculptural piece of an African woman at the Natural History Museum according to the staff members who are adults is an object of social interaction, while the students who are teens and young adults see the sculptural piece as an object of cultural identity. Mother and child occupied a special place in African culture, little wonder, the students see the image as a symbol of culture. The affection of a mother to her child cannot be compared to any other thing. The work is also seen as an object of social interaction, probably because of the interpersonal relationship between the mother and the child, and by extension, interaction with the work.

There is no doubt that the perceived relevance of the sculptural work of the athletes at the Department of Health and Physical Education serves as recreation/tourism. However, the students' category of respondents saw it as an object of social interaction due to the involvement of two athletes. The sculptural piece of Aluta Students was also perceived to be an object of social interaction. The work is seen as the real driving force and tool for social interaction. The work stimulates students' action towards aluta against all oppressions as is reflected in the school anthem.

Every work of art is seen as an embodiment of aesthetics and by extension, environmental beautification. Davies, (1991) states that the primary function of art is to provide enjoyment derived from aesthetic creation. The creation of public sculptures is an avenue to create and add beauty to our natural lives and enhance our built environment (Oyinloye, Ijisakin, Oladesu and Siyanbola, 2020; Adeleye and Fagoyibi, 2019; Ijisakin and Isaiah, 2015; Sule, 2015). Similarly, Oladugbagbe, (2016) stresses that "creating the sculpture for the adornment of the public sphere is a necessary interpose in the understanding of the human-society development, which has ultimately impact on the human psyche and the development of his/her creative endeavors". The emotional response stirred by aesthetic appreciation and perception of great works of art brings nobility to the mind and eases tension (Dissanayake, 2007; Shiner, 2001; Eric, Jensen 2001). Meanwhile, the majority of the respondents, both the staff members and students did not see this in their disposition to the relevance of public sculptures as objects of beauty that can develop individuals thinking faculty and creative process, hence sculptures are objects of beauty were rated low in all their responses i.e., they disagreed to it that these identified sculptures are objects of beauty. However, the level of awareness and knowledge of both staff and students indicate that public sculptures beautify our environment and appeal to our eyes. This disparity further reveals the level of knowledge and understanding of the respondents about the public sculptures in the real sense of it.

As it has been revealed from the survey, the level of the respondents' (especially the students) awareness and knowledge of the public sculptures within the Obafemi Awolowo University community is high. The results indicate that respondents are aware and have knowledge of these public sculptures as well as their relevance within the Campus. However, the physical states of the works reveal a disposition towards these works which may nullify their knowledge of the works.

Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Statue (plate 9) before 2016 was deteriorating, but due to the academic environment and the landmarks created by the hero of our culture, and the loyal nationalist, it was restored; though it was there for a long period before restoring it. The sculptural image of an African woman and her child (plate 2) is fading away. It does not look as if it has ever been polished or painted since it was installed in 2012. The sculptural figure of the athletes (plate 3) was also left unkempt for a long period. The images were overgrown with trees such that one of the figures is hardly seen. Our orientation and attitudes towards these objects need to be changed. According to Akintonde and Oladugbagbe, (2015:91), "Several millions of Naira is spent by government and private organisations in Southwestern Nigeria every year to produce public outdoor sculpture without appropriate maintenance scheme". This needs to stop if these monuments are to be continuously cherished as objects of history. Similarly, Mcnally and Hsu, (2012:8) observe that "Percent-for-art programs and public-private commissions often offer barely enough money for design, fabrication, and installation, and it is very rare for an artwork to come with maintenance funding or even with a written understanding of how long the object is meant to last or how to care for it".





Plate 9: Statue of Chief Obafemi Awolowo at the Frontage of Oduduwa Hall. Photographed by Isaiah Ogunjimi, 2010

The condition of the wooden carved sculpture of Oduduwa (plate 4) is fair possibly because it is under the roof and it was protected with barricade. This image is protected from abuse and the physical state is still intact (see plate 4). The sculptural piece of Professor Agbo Folarin (plate 6) is still fresh and shining. The reason is that it is within the Department of Fine and Applied Arts and that the project was recently executed by a final-year student of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts in Year 2015. Likewise, the sculptural piece of Professor Emeritus Wole Soyinka (plate 7) is reasonably neat though, it was executed in 2008 which predates that of Prof. Agbo Folarin. The sculptural piece of Moremi Ajasoro (plate 8) is abused with the pasting of posters by students. The sculpture piece of Aluta Students (plate 5) is well cared for by the Students' Union and it is being repainted from time to time. The reason is not farfetched; it was commissioned and installed as a symbol of students' collective struggle against all oppressions.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has examined the perceived relevance of public sculptures in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The study found that the majority of the selected public sculptures were perceived to be monuments or memorial objects, while few of them were perceived to be objects of social interaction and cultural identity. It was further found out that public sculptures within the environment of Obafemi Awolowo University record important event, history, and culture and also celebrates heroes and heroines of the community. It was also found that respondents are aware and have knowledge of these public sculptures. However, the concern and care for the sculptures are not adequate as was revealed in the physical conditions of some of the works. The study concluded that public sculptures generally are created as landmarks, monuments, cultural symbols, and beautification of our environment which is meant to educate people about the history of the past. They also remind the people of who they are. These invaluable objects should not be abused or neglected. Instead, individuals and the University should enforce a policy of maintenance culture, because of their relevance. McNally, Hsu, Gaucher, and Ryan (2010) give some ways by which maintenance can be done which include regular cleaning, removal of simple accretions or tape residues, simple graffiti removal, applications of protective coatings, appraisal of the security of attachments methods, and documentation. Therefore, recommended that adequate maintenance and preservation of public sculptures in Obafemi Awolowo University



should be given priority by taking care of them from time to time. In addition to this, there should be public awareness of the value of public sculptures within the University environment.

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