

EXAMINATION OF THE MIX-MEDIA IN PRINT MAKING: THE PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES  
FACED BY SOME PUBLIC OFFICES IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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Abstract

*A notable advance in printing is the use of mixed-media methods, which combine digital and modern art forms with classic printmaking techniques to produce outputs that are more adaptable and dynamic. This research looks at the opportunities and difficulties of implementing mixed-media printing in Akwa Ibom State public offices, where visual communication is essential for public relations, cultural preservation, and institutional branding. The research also examines the potential of mixed-media to address administrative demands, increase public outreach, and promote creative expression through qualitative analysis and case studies of specific public offices. However, the results of the study show that public offices may benefit greatly from mixed-media printing, which provides more flexible design processes and richer visual narratives that effectively engage a wide range of audiences. Nevertheless, the research also reveals noteworthy obstacles that impede the extensive use of these methods, such as restricted financial resources, restricted technical proficiency, and insufficient availability of contemporary technology. Furthermore, mixed-media is underutilized in public institutions due to bureaucratic inefficiencies and a lack of knowledge about its possibilities. The use of mixed-media in public offices may be facilitated by increasing investment in technology, training, and regulatory reforms, as this research emphasizes. Public institutions in Akwa Ibom State can improve operations and better serve their people by tackling these issues and using the advantages of mixed-media printing. With its insights on the relationship between art, technology, and public administration, this research adds to the expanding body of knowledge on the subject.*

**Keywords:** Mix-Media, Print Making, Public Offices and Akwa Ibom State.

**Introduction**

The combination of digital and conventional procedures through the use of mixed-media techniques has resulted in a remarkable revolution in printmaking in recent years. In order to produce dynamic and inventive works, mixed-media printmaking combines a variety of artistic mediums, including painting, photography, digital media, and conventional printing processes. The implementation of these approaches has several chances for improving visual communication, cultural expression, and institutional branding in the setting of public offices, especially in Akwa Ibom State. Although even with all of its promise, there are a number of serious obstacles to overcome before mixed-media printing can be implemented in public offices.

Mixed-media printing offers public offices the potential to communicate complicated ideas through multi-layered visual narratives, improve design flexibility, and foster more creativity. As highlighted by Udo et al. (2019), mixed-media allows for the fusion of multiple forms of communication, making it a powerful tool for public information dissemination and cultural preservation. Public offices can also benefit from mixed-media's adaptability in meeting formal and creative requirements, since it allows them to customize printing outputs for a greater variety of audiences and uses.

But there are several difficulties in incorporating mixed-media into printing. Its implementation in public offices is severely hampered by technical issues, such as the dearth of cutting-edge machinery and the scarcity of qualified personnel fluent in both traditional and digital procedures. Furthermore, public institutions sometimes face financial constraints that prevent them from investing in the equipment and training needed for efficient mixed-media production. In addition to these practical challenges, there are administrative and bureaucratic hurdles, including limited support for creative initiatives in public offices and a lack of awareness of the potential benefits of mixed-media techniques (Uko & Edet, 2021).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the opportunities and difficulties public offices in Akwa Ibom State have while implementing mixed-media printing. This study also looks at the challenges these offices face and how they use mixed-media in their operations to generate useful information that may guide policy and real-world enhancements. Comprehending these processes will illuminate the present situation of mixed-media printing in public institutions and provide a way forward to address the obstacles preventing its broader implementation.

### **Concept of media**

It is preferable to define the media by the functions that they perform in society. Through press articles, features, and analyses, they enlighten, educate, and amuse readers. In addition, they create radio and television plays, documentaries, current affairs shows, PSAs, magazine shows, and other types of programming. Through the media, people may share their stories, viewpoints, and voices with the public. Paul & Rai (2021) defined media as one of the medium of communications that have brought the world into one single unit. Given that the word "media" comes from the Latin "medium," which meaning "in the middle," In addition to various technologies for mediated human speech, the term "media" refers to conventional mass communication systems along with their creators.

Additionally, the media is essential in promoting social change and influencing the views and opinions of the general population. However, through its reporting, the media may highlight important events that have an influence on people's lives both favorably and unfavorably. It can also highlight topics that are frequently overlooked and voices that are marginalized. The agenda-setting role of the media frequently shapes societal discourse, priorities, and ways of thinking. Ohiagu & Okorie (2014) affirmed that, Communication is the bedrock of any culture. Actually, communication serves as a medium through which the language, attire, music, way of life, tastes, and other elements that make up a particular culture are expressed. As mentioned by James, et.al (2019), the television is a

communication medium that has a global impact on the economic, political, social and cultural advancement. As a result, the media has always been important in preserving a people's cultural legacy over generations and geographic boundaries, even as they have undergone several stages of growth and change.

The content, impact, and history of various media—especially the mass media—are all covered under the subject and field of study known as media. Media generally draws from the core disciplines of mass communication, communication, communication sciences, and communication studies, while it may also draw from traditions from the humanities and social sciences. Although, medias like Radios, Television and the Internet provides all information's in transient forms against what the print media of newspaper, leaflet, brochures and magazines do provide (Akpan, James & Nwokoro, 2022). Okeowo & Arisoyin (2024) holds that, media plays an important function in education and information dissemination to the society. Through knowledge exchange and promoting issues, technology, and skills to the public, the media encourages public engagement.

According to Omid, Dal Zotto & Picard (2022) Media work is a culture-making activity affecting the ways people understand the world and, therefore, workers in the media industries have a critical role in shaping collective memories, traditions, and belief systems. The media is also a tool for social progress and transformation. Despite being the most powerful tools in a community, media is mostly employed for amusement and good times. Although the media consistently presents captivating and captivating messages, people also want to learn from it.

### **Concept of Mix-Media**

The term "mixed media" describes the blending of several creative mediums, supplies, and methods into a single piece of art. As a result, artists are free to experiment, push the envelope, and produce installations that are both theoretically and aesthetically complex. By fusing many mediums and methods, mixed media artists are able to tackle intricate subjects and ideas as it permits a multifaceted approach to narrative, allowing artists to elicit different emotions and communicate levels of meaning in a single piece of art. Singh (2021) defined Mixed media art as an art form that does not place restrictions on people who do not know how to draw or do not have good fine art skills.

A piece of visual art that incorporates many mediums or materials is referred to as mixed media. Multimedia, which mixes visual and non-visual components like recorded sound, books, theatre, dance, motion graphics, music, or interaction, is different from mixed media. Moreover, a piece of visual art that combines multiple, historically distinct visual art mediums is referred to as mixed media. Nova (2024) asserted that, mixed media is great for conveying many emotions, and using various materials can add to the drama and emphasis. Recycling may also be done through mixed-media art, particularly if materials that would otherwise be thrown away can be used.

A kind of visual art known as mixed media blends several different mediums or materials together. There are several ways to do this as mixed-media artwork is frequently shown as an assemblage or collage. A new artwork that combines materials and art mediums

is fundamentally a mixed-media creation and combining many art-making processes into one piece is also referred to as mixed media. Foster (2018) explained that, mixed media is all about experimenting with the materials available to an individual and honing their artistic skills. The program teaches how to utilize a variety of materials, including paints, papers, fibers, found and reused objects, stamps, and stencils.

### **Concept of Print Making**

Print, as defined by Oxford Dictionary, is the act of pressing a mark into a surface. The impression left on paper when type is applied inked. Put otherwise, a "print" is a hollow container or mould that a liquid material is put into to solidify or cool into a particular shape. Moreover, there is an obvious connection between the print process and the usage of a matrix or mould in the casting or shaping process. In contrast, printmaking is the technique of creating artwork by printing, usually on paper. The method may create multiples of the same item, referred to as a print, with the exception of monotypes. Since each item is technically an impression rather than a copy, it is an original artwork rather than a replica of another piece of art. The medium and technique of printmaking are creative processes used by local artists to create artwork. Printmaking is one of the three primary disciplines of fine art, along with painting and sculpture. Noor and Manan (2016) cited in Abdullah et al (2022) concluded that printmaking was also linked to the historical and cultural development and it is a technique that is used by both local and international artists to present and shared their style, theme and medium. Similarly, Peterdi (2020) defined printmaking as an art form consisting of the production of images, usually on paper but occasionally on fabric, parchment, plastic, or other support, by various techniques of multiplication, under the direct supervision of or by the hand of the artist.

Printmaking, according to Ijisakin (2019), is an art form that produces text, pictures or illustrations on paper, fabric, parchment, metal, plastic, or any other supports, by different techniques (which include engraving, etching, woodcut, linocut, screen printing, and photo stenciling), directly by the printmaker. Ijisakin, Ademuleya & Ajiboye (2019) described printmaking as a mark made on paper, or on any other suitable surface, by pressing an object such as text and pictorial images on the surface. Printmaking is the skill of making and producing prints; nevertheless, the word "print" is typically associated with commercial items that are mass-produced using machines, such textiles, books, and newspapers.

One style of printmaking is known as relief printmaking (Goel, 2022). This technique, which dates back to Egypt, involves applying ink to the front of a printing medium to give the spots color when printed. The areas that are not covered with ink remain white. This method allows for the direct placement of a material block onto paper to create artwork. Printmaking is a visually stimulating and captivating medium that offers a plethora of image-making opportunities and ways to represent conceptual concepts. Situated between the esoteric areas of fine art and the commercial and mechanical replication world of mass media, it is uncomfortable.

## Prevalence of Mix-Media in Print Making in some Public Offices

Mixed-media in printmaking involves the combination of various artistic techniques and materials in creating prints, enhancing creativity and versatility (Smith & Jones, 2023). This approach has gained popularity in public offices in recent years for a number of reasons:

### ✓ **Enhanced Communication**

Mixed-media printing is a common tool used by public agencies to raise the standard of visual communication. Printed goods like brochures, posters, and official papers become more visually appealing and engaging when varied textures, colors, and materials are used. This is especially crucial in fields like health and social services that priorities education and public participation.

### ✓ **Cost Efficiency**

The integration of different materials through mixed-media printing may result in lower total manufacturing costs. Using materials that are both visually appealing and reasonably priced guarantees that resources be used to their fullest potential in public offices, where budgetary restrictions are a regular concern.

### ✓ **Versatility in Applications**

Public offices frequently deal with a variety of document kinds that call for different creative or communication strategies. These offices may customize printed products for internal communications, public outreach, or legal paperwork by using mixed-media printing. This adaptability is facilitated by the ability to adapt different artistic styles, including merging hand-drawn pieces with digital printing.

### ✓ **Promoting Innovation**

Mixed-media printing is a tool used by government agencies and public offices that value innovation to solve creative problems. In fields where branding and public engagement are critical, this adoption is imperative. For example, public agencies involved in tourism, education, and environmental activism employ mixed-media to produce visually striking products that better convey their messages.

### ✓ **Cultural Representation**

In certain governmental offices, mixed-media printing is used to represent and promote regional customs and values, particularly in culturally rich regions. By integrating traditional techniques with modern printing methods, public offices can preserve cultural authenticity while remaining relevant in contemporary communications (Thompson, 2021).

### ✓ **Sustainability Initiatives**

Mixed-media printing is one way that public offices may help match their activities with environmental aims. Public offices can comply with more general environmental goals while preserving the caliber of their printed outputs by utilizing environmentally friendly materials and cutting waste through mixed-media techniques.

## Components of Mix-Media in Print Making

In printing, mix-media refers to the process of creating intricate, multi-dimensional artworks by fusing traditional printmaking processes with a variety of different artistic approaches, materials, and media. Through the use of many components that enhance the final piece's texture, depth, and story, this fusion challenges the limitations of traditional printing. The essential elements that lay the groundwork for mix-media printmaking are listed below:

### ✓ Traditional Printmaking Methods

Traditional printmaking methods including etching, lithography, woodcutting, and screen printing constitute the foundation of mix-media printmaking. They provide a structured, repeatable image, onto which additional elements can be built (Hartley, 2020). These procedures set the stage for more research. One of these techniques is frequently used by artists as a foundation layer:

***Etching:*** in this process, an acid engraving of a design is made on a metal plate, and the image is then transferred to paper.

***Lithography:*** Its design is founded on the idea that oil and water don't mix, and it employs a flat stone or metal surface.

***Screen Printing:*** This creates strong, vivid prints by applying stenciled images using mesh to facilitate ink transfer.

### ✓ Collage

Collage adds tangible layers to the print surface by using outside elements like paper, cloth, or miscellaneous items. These layers heighten the visual appeal of the piece. Artists add a tactile feel and intricacy to the tale by affixing various objects. Collage also allows for the reuse of existing materials, adding a dimension of recycling and recontextualization to the work (Montgomery & Keller, 2020).

### ✓ Texture and Materiality

Using non-traditional materials like sand, fibers, or plaster is typical in mix-media printing. These materials produce a tactile surface that gives the piece depth and encourages spectators to interact both viscerally and tactilely. The physical characteristics of the print are altered by the artists using a variety of materials to enhance the sensory experience. An interpretation of the picture that is more dynamic and textured is produced by the use of materials like cloth or natural substances.

### ✓ Digital and Technological Integration

Printmaking is becoming more and more connected with digital technology. Artists use digital tools to generate pictures that are then printed on surfaces through digital collage, inkjet printing, or laser engraving. The hybrid use of digital and analog methods allows artists to experiment with new forms and effects, as digital manipulation can provide sharp details and precise adjustments that are difficult to achieve by hand (Young, 2021). The possibilities for printing are increased by the use of digital techniques, which allow for intricate layering and the smooth blending of various mediums.

### ✓ Photographic Transfers

Incorporating photographic pictures into prints is known as photographic transfer, and it provides a blend of creative abstraction and photographic realism. This process is frequently used with more conventional techniques like screen printing or etching. Photographic pictures can have their transparency, size, or hue changed by artists so that they blend in perfectly with their creations. The ultimate product combines more abstract, expressive shapes with parts that are personal or factual.

### ✓ Assemblage

Using three-dimensional elements stacked over a print is called assembly. It turns the print into a sculpture instead of a two-dimensional piece of art. To increase the print's three-dimensionality, artists might use wood, metal, plastic, or other materials, stretching the bounds of what is deemed acceptable printing. This method frequently results in intricate multi-surface artwork by reflecting an extended idea of what a print may be.

### ✓ Hand Painting and Drawing

A print can have a personal touch when it has hand-drawn or painted features, as opposed to typical printmaking's mechanical replication. Paint, ink, and graphite are frequently used by artists to alter or improve certain elements of their prints, giving the final product a spontaneous and flowing quality. This technique bridges the precision of printmaking with the expressiveness of freehand mark-making, resulting in a dynamic combination of controlled and uncontrolled elements (Davies & Michaels, 2020).

### ✓ Color and Ink Variations

In mixed-media printing, the selection and mixing of inks is an important component. In order to get different textures and opacities, artists can mix acrylic, water-based, and oil-based inks. One may also enhance brightness and vitality by using metallic or iridescent inks. Artists may create a print with visual depth and richness by layering multiple colors and ink kinds. Furthermore, the ability to work with a variety of ink mediums gives printmakers more creative freedom to experiment with color interactions (Williams, 2020).

## The Challenges Faced in Operation of Mix-media in Print Making

While mixed-media printing gives artists a lot of creative options, it also comes with a number of difficulties that might affect the work's ultimate product and technical execution. The following are the main difficulties encountered while using mixed media in printmaking:

**Material Compatibility:** Making sure that various materials and media blend well together is a major problem in mixed media printing. According to Langford (2020), combining materials like oil-based inks with water-based paints can lead to issues such as adhesion problems or chemical reactions that can affect the final outcome. Thorough testing of material compatibility is necessary to prevent negative responses and guarantee the smooth integration of various media.

**Technical Complexity:** Printmaking using mixed media frequently combines modern and old methods, which can be technically challenging. Smith (2017) emphasizes that mastering multiple printmaking techniques requires a thorough understanding of each process. Due to this intricacy, artists may have a hard time gaining the necessary skills to produce the required outcomes.

**Preservation and Longevity:** The varied rates at which different materials age can affect how long mixed media prints last. According to Getty (2017), mixed media works can face challenges such as differential fading or deterioration. Artists must utilize conservation procedures and archival-quality materials to prolong the life of their prints in order to assure the preservation of their work.

**Cost and Resource Management:** The supplies and equipment needed for mixed-media printing can be quite expensive. To balance creativity with budgetary limits, effective resource management is essential.

**Creative Consistency:** It may be difficult for artists to maintain a cohesive creative vision when working with a variety of media since they have to have a clear conceptual strategy and make sure that each media harmoniously adds to the composition as a whole.

## Strategic Step to Overcome the Challenges of Mix-Media in Print Making

A distinctive and dynamic piece of art may be produced through the creative union of different materials and methods in mixed media printmaking. But this strategy comes with unique problems that need for calculated answers. In order to effectively handle these issues, printmakers need to use a methodical and deliberate approach.

**Understanding Material Interactions:** When working with mixed media, comprehension of material interaction is essential. Inks, paints, and adhesives are examples of materials that interact in intricate ways that might have an impact on the final product. Printmakers should carry out preliminary testing to see how these materials interact in order to remedy this. To track responses, drying durations, and adhesion, tiny samples must be made. Additionally, researching the properties of each medium can provide valuable insights into their



compatibility (Sandler & Sandler 2015). Understanding excellent practices and averting typical blunders can be further aided by speaking with professionals or seasoned artists.

***Managing Layering Techniques:*** Another significant obstacle in mixed-media printing is this. If layers of various materials are not carefully regulated, they might result in problems like smearing or uneven surfaces. It is crucial to carefully organize the layering procedure in order to minimize these issues. Establish the application sequence and the ways in which one layer affects the others. It is possible to avoid undesirable interactions between layers by applying protective coatings such as varnishes or fixatives. It is also essential to let each layer dry fully before applying the next in order to prevent smearing and guarantee clear results.

***Ensuring Compatibility:*** Making sure that different mediums work together is essential to a successful print. Certain materials could not always stick to one another well, which could result in problems like peeling or separation. In order to overcome this difficulty, printers should test the adherence of sample pieces and use medium that are renowned for their compatibility. Using appropriate primers or gesso can improve adhesion and prevent materials from coming off as this approach helps in achieving a cohesive and durable artwork (Young, 2023).

***Controlling Surface Texture:*** This is crucial for mixed-media printing since the surface textures produced by various materials may be quite unexpected. It's critical to properly prepare surfaces by sanding or priming as necessary in order to remedy this. Accepting the textures produced by combining different medium may also be creatively beneficial; nevertheless, if a consistent texture is required, methods such as embossing or smoothing can be used. A coherent texture is maintained throughout the print by using the same tools and techniques in various mediums.

***Addressing Print Quality:*** The issue of dealing with print quality comes from the variety of mixed media components. Printmakers should use premium inks and materials made especially for mixed media to guarantee excellent prints. It's also essential to modify printing methods to take into account the special characteristics of mixed media. This might entail adjusting printing speed, ink density, or pressure. Achieving the intended result can be aided by keeping an eye on the print quality throughout the procedure and making modifications as necessary.

## Conclusion

The examination of mixed-media in printmaking within public offices in Akwa Ibom State reveals both significant prospects and formidable challenges. Mixed-media techniques offer public institutions enhanced creative flexibility, improved visual communication, and the ability to engage diverse audiences more effectively. However, these opportunities are tempered by barriers such as limited access to modern equipment, insufficient technical expertise, and financial constraints. Addressing these challenges requires strategic investments in technology and training, as well as policy reforms aimed at fostering a supportive environment for the adoption of mixed-media printmaking. By overcoming these

hurdles, public offices in Akwa Ibom State can fully harness the potential of mixed-media to elevate their administrative and cultural functions.

### **Recommendations**

1. Public offices should prioritize the acquisition of advanced mixed-media printmaking tools to enhance creative output and operational efficiency.
2. Regular workshops and training programs should be implemented to equip staff with the technical skills required for effective mixed-media printmaking.
3. Public offices should collaborate with art schools and creative professionals to bring fresh expertise and innovative ideas into their printmaking practices.
4. Governments and public institutions should allocate more funds specifically for the development and implementation of mixed-media techniques in their communication strategies.

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