

Promotion and Preservation of Indigenous Textiles and Culture in Ghana

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Abstract: This study investigated on promotion and preservation of indigenous textiles and culture in Ghana using qualitative approach. Tour guides, curators, historians and artisans were selected as accessible population as they possessed knowledge of the cultural significance, historical context and traditional methods of textile preservation. The study used a combination of convenience or purposive sampling with random stratified sampling to select 12 respondents (3 from each group) across different regions of Ghana, ensuring a representative sample. The study concluded that indigenous Ghanaian textiles are an essential part of the country's cultural heritage. The use of indigenous textiles in various cultural activities is crucial for preserving and promoting Ghanaian culture. These textiles are deeply intertwined with Ghanaian cultural practices and play crucial roles in transmitting customs and traditions to the outside world. Therefore, it is recommended that efforts should be made to document and preserve indigenous textiles and promote their use in various settings, including formal occasions and cultural events. This will help preserve Ghana's rich cultural heritage and promote cultural tourism in the country.

Keywords: Indigenous Textiles; Ghanaian textiles; cultural heritage; preservation.

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Introduction

Textile design has had a big impact on the social, cultural and economic health of people, communities, and countries (Osei et al., 2021).

Textiles are a type of mobile cultural heritage items that is an important part of Ghana's cultural heritage and it must be preserved, recorded and studied for future generations as well as for research and public education (Ghana Museums and

Monuments Board, 2022). Traditional textile in Ghana is defined as clothing worn by a particular group of people and it has strong historical and cultural roots. While colour, form, yarns and fibre types used over time and passed down to successive generations have undergone some modifications, the ideas, philosophies, techniques and history have remained the same (Sumberg, 2022).

According to Camilla et al., (2016), the textile cultural legacy, which is a living tradition passed down from ancestors to descendants, is endowed with rich value that is specific to a group of people. These resources provide the language and terminologies used to describe both the acts and the material outcomes, as well as the knowledge and abilities needed to manufacture traditional crafts. Bogolanfini, Adinkra cloth, Kuba, adire, kente, Akwete cloth, kete, aso-oke and other traditional African fabrics found in Ghana are just a few examples. These textiles are made of natural fibres and colours that fade over time, making them susceptible to extinction. However, researchers in Ghana think that buying this textile is a way for Ghanaians to display their African identity, preserve and promote the traditional heritage (Olshin, 2006). Traditional textile trends are thought to have been influenced by African societies' ongoing use of these fabrics as a representation of Ghanaian dignity due to the themes and ideas incorporated into their creation or manufacture, which exposed them to a wider audience (Patrick, 2005). A crucial issue that needs to be addressed is the lack of clarity surrounding what significantly affects or influences traditional textiles' economic situation, creative growth and most importantly, the preservation of traditional textiles and its cultural legacy. Neglecting cultural goods like traditional textiles is likely to result in regression and the loss of a national identity according to the idea that a nation's success is based on the right application of historical values (Kuwornu-Adjaottor et al., 2015). This background calls for research into traditional Ghanaian textiles and the role they play in preserving and conserving culture.

The 1954-founded United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) endorsed global standards for preservation of traditional knowledge in order to advance the understanding of cultural diversity and to emphasise on the significance of global cooperation and cultural heritage (Franchi, 2015). This is a strategy for promoting and protecting cultural items so that

the world can respect and appreciate the magnificence of culture (Kajiru & Nyimbi, 2020). However, due to imports and proliferation of foreign textiles, particularly those from Asian nations, the African textile industry is facing a significant challenge. Because of this challenge, it is difficult for conventional textiles to compete for market acceptance and value in a rapidly expanding world with a variety of textile alterations (Traub-Merz & Jauch, 2006). This calls for immediate action to alleviate the crisis. There is therefore a need to adopt sustainable ways of preserving and conserving indigenous Ghanaian textiles as a yardstick for ensuring continuity, relevance and sustainability of Ghana's cultural heritage.

For a long time, Ghana has had access to a wide range of materials and methods that inspire ideas which preserve the cultural heritage. Traditional weaving, coloured yarns and fabrics like Birisi, Kuntunkunu and Kobene, woven cloth like Kente, Ewe Kete, Fugu and Tapestry and printing methods like Nwomu Ntiamu and Adinkra print all form part of indigenous Ghanaian textiles and thus, necessitate its preservation and conservation for future generations (Dzramedo & Dabuo, 2015). Indigenous Ghanaian textiles possess unique techniques that are used in a variety of ways to meet characteristics, elements, principles and properties of products in other fields of textiles so as to broaden their scope of application and most importantly to preserve the distinctive craftsmanship (Sarkodie, et al., 2021). This study sought to investigate about indigenous textiles and cultural promotion and preservation in Ghana.

Literature Review

This section reviews related literature on indigenous textiles and how they are preserved. It introduces readers to *Kente*, *Adinkra*, *Fugu* and *Kete*. The cultural impact of textiles is also outlined in this section.

Indigenous Ghanaian Textiles

Indigenous textiles are vital cultural artefacts that represent history, philosophies and beliefs of a given people (Ware, 2022). The rich cultural history of people is symbolised by handicrafts which must be preserved in order to uphold the feelings of self, community and belonging. The preservation of indigenous cultural artefacts served as the study's foundation as it seeks to develop indigenous textiles in an effort to secure their preservation. By

repurposing these indigenous textiles, something new is created and put to use.

Textiles have been a lucrative commodity since the eleventh century and are still a crucial form of arts today. Ghanaian cloth and textiles, like other African textiles, employ their vivacious, unusual rhythms and motifs to communicate on a variety of levels. Indigenous Ghanaian textiles can be broadly divided into the following groups:

Traditional Textiles Made by Hand (Kente)

There is no complete history of Kente since several authors have offered different accounts of the genesis of the fabric, which are partially explained by a legend and partially by a factual account. According to Asante mythology, Bonwire was first taught kente weaving by Ota Kraban and Ameyaw while living under Nana Bobie's authority. They claim to have gotten the concept from a spider's web (Asihene, 1973). This idea is supported by the fact that at this time, among other textiles, the Ota Kraban century produced lace, woven products and needlework (Ross & Adu-Agyem, 2008). They claimed that the earliest known use of handlooms for weaving thin strips was in ancient Egypt.

However, historical accounts claim that the origins of kente can be found in an ancient weaving custom in the affluent the old West African Kingdoms that existed between 300 and 1600 AD (Adom et al., 2019). Other historians contend that kente is a development of the many weaving techniques that were practised in West Africa before to the formation of the Asante Kingdom in the 17th century. He continues by stating that archaeological research has dated samples of narrow-strip cloths found in the Bandiagara cliffs in Mali to as early as the 11th century AD. These burial textiles, which were probably used during the mediaeval Ghana and Mali empires have a lot in common with many of the narrow strip cloths created by other West African ethnic groups, both technically and artistically.

While kente cloth may have been created as early as the eleventh century, weaving was first practised in the northern part of the country of Ghana (Adom et al., 2019). The local cotton farmers provided the weavers with fibre for weaving. It is reported that rough raffia was used before cotton (Ross & Adu-Agyem, 2008). Weaving was established in the seventeenth century at Bonwire in Ashanti. The emergence of weaving in West Africa and all of Africa came before the creation of yarn for weaving

(Asihene, 1973). The discovery of spindle whorls and loom weights during excavations at the historic Meroe Empire, which flourished between 500 BC and 300 AD, may lend credence to this assertion. Aside from it, pictorial and archaeological evidence showed that ancient eras had hand-made weaving industry. To select, fluff and spin the cotton, women rotated the spindle between their thumb and fingers. Men used the strands from the spindle (gyaniboo) to weave the bobbins (dedewa). Men set the warp and weft and weaved the fabric. In addition to cotton, strands of Okanantan spider silk were also employed. Later, European silk imports replaced locally produced silk (Asmah et al., 2015). Cotton and silk yarns are occasionally mixed when making kente cloth. The conventional loom used to weave kente and other textiles has four heddles (asanan). The treadles of the loom are alternately pressed and held between the toes. The shuttle, which is used to weave the weft, is made up of the bobbin or spools (dedewa), the centre pin and the casing (enkomenam).

Traditional Textiles with Handmade Prints (Adinkra)

Adinkra means saying goodbye to the dead (Asihene, 1973). It is the term used to describe Ghana's traditional funeral shawl. Legend has it that King Adinkra of Gyaman (in the Ivory Coast) was beheaded at the start of the 19th century during Nana Bonsu Panyin of Ashanti's rule for copying the Ashanti Golden Stool. After his death, King Adinkra's craftsmen were captured and they established the trade of making Adinkra cloth using the patterns on his clothing and the columns of his stool in Asante. Adinkra designs were made for the kings of Denkyira, Takyiman and Ashanti in antiquity, long before the rule of King Adinkra Asihene, 1973). It was originally known as Adwinikena and Adinkra is supposed to have corrupted it later. The more abstract symbols, according to another school of thought, were influenced by Muslims. The most noticeable celestial body is the crescent moon, which represents steadiness.

Another source claims that the Akan term "Adinkra" translates as "farewell" or "Dieu" in English. Because it is employed at funeral rites to say to the departed souls farewell or goodbye, it is assumed that the fabric bearing its symbols also bears its name. To make adinkra cloth, the Adinkra motifs are physically stamped into a cotton fabric that is either white or coloured a rusty brown colour. The dye is produced from the bark of the kuntunkuni tree with

the scientific name *Bombax brevicuspe* (Adom et al., 2019). A fabric dyed in this rusty brown shade is known as kuntunkuni to honour the tree. Many wear it at funeral services. Other coloured textiles, such as the Kobene (Vermilion red) and Brisi (Indigo or Black) are not identified even though they are mourning clothes. Cotton fabric with a yellow ochre or white backing can be embossed with adinkra designs for occasions other than funerals. Adinkra textiles have elaborate traditional patterns that have a deep symbolic significance. They have names that have 19 different symbolic, historical or mystical implications. The meanings of several of these symbols were mentioned by Asihene (1973). Decorations in the shape of an oval, for instance, signify holiness, femininity and beauty while those in the shape of a half circle or crescent signify fertility. The cross is associated with compassion while the arrow represents a new beginning. Designs for textiles frequently combine representational natural objects with abstract concepts. A king would traditionally wear Adinkra fabric with a specific design to express his philosophy or ideas (Asihene, 1973). For example, his aya or fern-patterned clothing suggested that he had no fear of anyone.

Smock (Fugu)

The exquisite fugu cloth is a product of northern Ghana. In it, strips are weaved, then sewn together to create a finished cloth. Traditional apparel known as Batakari or Smock is made from fugu fibres and typically features stripes as a decorative pattern (Danso et al., 2019). Although Fugu is frequently referred to as Northern Kente, Batakari's weaving style and patterns are more similar. The fugu, which resembles a tunic, is part of the batakari which also contains a flowing gown and pants made of various fabrics. It is entirely a hand-woven cotton-based clothing. The smocks are thick and striped. A colour

is applied to carefully chosen cotton before it is dried. The stripes on this fabric are alternately black/blue and white. This traditional shirt-like garment is worn by the vast majority of males Ghana. However, women have started donning smocks to events in the present day. The fabric that is used to make Ghanaian smocks is also known as a dansiki, fugu, batakari or gonja. Dansika has replaced smock as a formal or functional garment. Essentially, Dansiki is sleeveless and looser, making it suitable for the dry or hot season.

Once more, the study makes reference to "royal smocks." The chiefs' attire, which consists of a cap, trousers and knee-high leather boots, is designed by smock manufacturers to distinguish between the traditional monarchy and northerners. Each of the historical Northerners wore a different variation of the three common smock styles (Adjei, 2016). The Upper West Region produces the greatest "cool hue" smocks in the country. They commonly mix various tones of blue and green, or both, in addition to other "calm hues" like yellow, white, blue and green. The Upper East Region is known for its warm colour smocks, which have different shades of red or orange dominating other fabric colours. The Northern Region is thought to be the origin of "heavy duty" smocks due to its large size and thick fabric. For a number of occasions, including festivals, rituals, funerals, marriages, child-naming ceremonies, everyday use and casual occasions, traditional smocks are currently offered in a wide range of styles. The fugu may have two or more colours. A few common colour combinations are red, blue and white, black and white, green and white, green and red, deep or light black and white, etc. The front, back and neck of the fugu are decorated with a variety of embroidery, much of it breathtakingly exquisite. Smock embroidery frequently uses the colour white.



Figure 1: Smock Featuring Trendy Necklines, Zippers, and Different Weave Structures

Northern Ghanaians continue to practise the particular art of smock weaving. These patterns as seen in figure 1 (Acquaye, 2018) are frequently produced using plain weaves that are precisely joined to make the garment fugu after being woven in strip form (Afriyie et al., 2021). These techniques were developed to update the historically significant warp-faced plain structure and garment form with fresh weave patterns and fashionable ideas. These design tactics drew inspiration from traditional African textiles and applied cutting-edge methods to produce something innovative. In order to ensure that the beliefs underlying these textiles are not forgotten, these practises attempt to preserve people's cultural heritage and expand their use of them as shown in figure 1.

Kete

Ghana and other countries in West Africa are known for their love of kete fabric. These days, the term is used to characterise hand-woven rayon fabrics with dazzling colour contrasts consisting of small strips sewed edge to edge (Frimpong et al., 2020). The authors further ote out that the manufacture of kete is currently centred in several villages close to the Agotime Kpetoe area in the Volta Region of Ghana, in addition to coastal settlements along the Keta Lagoon and other Ewe-speaking regions in Ghana, Togo and Benin. Additionally, there are numerous weaving studios in Accra and Lome and due to the long history of emigration of the Ewe people, Ewe weavers have established themselves in other significant West African towns like Lagos. Wealthy people in the Eweland go in for adanudo ("skilled/wise cloths") to portray their class in the society. These garments are decorated with figurative symbols of people, animals, plants and things. These are compatible with geometric

patterns and vibrant weft blocks and are tied to proverbs and symbols from the Ewe culture. Some prestige symbols and eloquent wealth are part of ewe kete (Wemegah et al., 2021). Together with the wrapper's enticing overall balance, these pulsating visual beats in the design create a work of art. African textile collectors from all over the world admire ewe kete cloths for their quality of craftsmanship and variety of patterns. To make a patchwork known as "sasa" or "sasavor," women in Ghanaian Ewe villages used to set aside a small portion of each piece of cloth they purchased in the past. For individuals who had preserved a lot of cloth in creative ways, this acted as a wealth show in front of the public. Native textiles continue to play a significant role in the cultural history of the people. Due to the numerous symbolic elements ingrained during the production process as well as the finished product and its use, practical techniques have been developed by manufacturers and artists to innovate these traditional African textiles.

Frey (2008) asserted that such an innovation process employs modern approaches or strategies that offer something novel in order to produce new value. These methods are intended to conserve the traditional values of indigenous textiles, which are in danger of vanishing in the future.

The Akwete community's residents kept making the traditional fabric known as Akwete cloth (Hudson, 2014). These garments contain culturally significant symbols that express how the wearers view their way of life. With a practical mindset, Chudi-Duru adapted these motifs or symbols for textile designs to prevent the decline of the Igbo weaving tradition, specifically the Akwete fabric (Chudi-Duru, 2017).

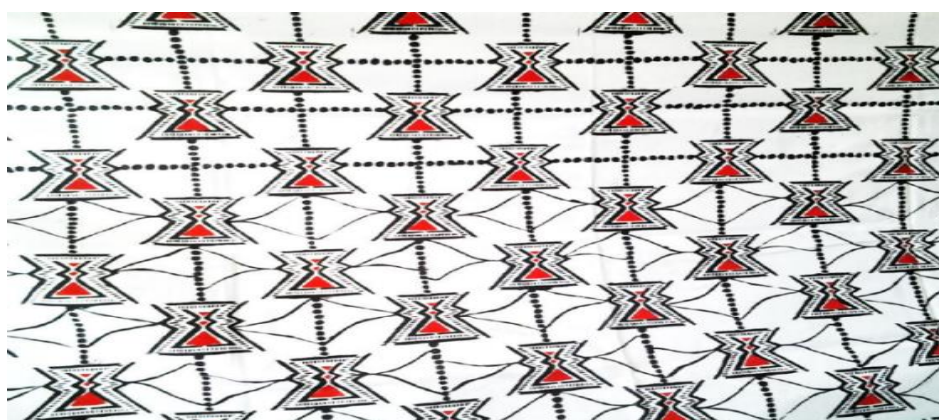


Figure 2: Prints from the motifs of Akwete Cloth

In reality, methods like screen printing, stencilling and batiking were used to create printed textiles as seen in Figure 2 (Chudi-Duru, 2017). Similarly to this, prints in Figure 3 (Tonianni, 2015) were produced based on patterns or symbols seen on Akwete cloth (Tonianni, 2015). To ensure successful preservation and transmission in the present environment, these motifs, which have particular symbolic values, are

incorporated in the design process (Nabbosa, 2017). The fashion house Louis Vuitton produced their men's collection in Figure 4 (Nabbosa, 2017) which was inspired by Kenyan Maasai Shuka and displayed it in Shanghai at Victoria's Secret fashion show. This is a significant illustration of the sheer volume of international fashion brands that have produced clothing that is inspired by African cultures.

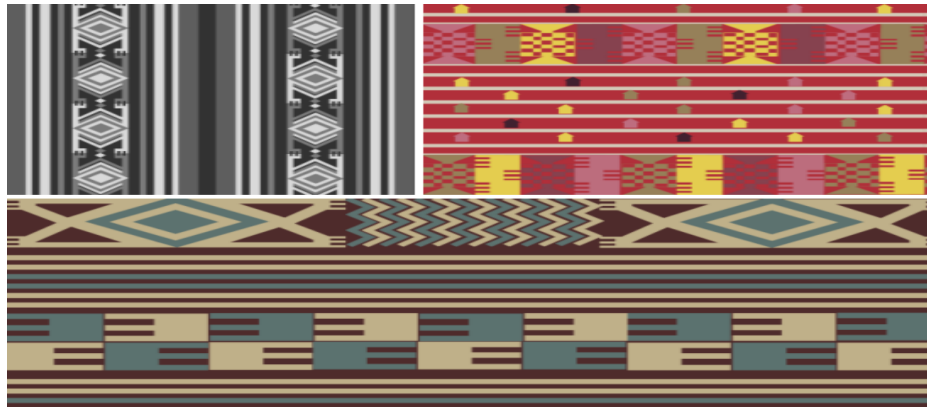


Figure 3: Prints from Akwete cloth's motifs



Figure 4: Men's Collection Inspired by Kenyan Maasai Shuka



Figure 5: Interior Design Pieces from the motifs of Adire, Adinkra and Bogolanfini cloth

Elements were developed in adire, adinkra and bogolanfini, three traditional West African fabrics, into interior design items as part of a design experiment (Acquaye, 2018). This method, as shown in Figure 5 (Acquaye, 2018) strives to broaden its specific applicability to a range of interior designs produced with the aid of contemporary design tools like CAD and digital printing.

In conclusion, it can be inferred from the material cited above that indigenous textiles continue to play a vital role in people's cultural legacy. Manufacturers and artists have taken practical steps to innovate these original African textiles due to the major symbolic connotations weaved into them during manufacturing. By increasing their usage, these customs seek to protect the community's cultural legacy and make sure that the guiding principles behind these fabrics are not lost.

Preservation of Textiles

Wool, cotton, linen or silk are among natural fibres that are most commonly used to make traditional textiles. Traditional textiles constructed of synthetic fibres could provide unique difficulties which demand an expert's advice on an appropriate preservation method. Textile degradation is caused by a number of factors including poor environmental conditions, contamination, intrinsic instability, careless handling, incorrect storage, exhibition and cleaning. Inappropriate conditions include, but are not limited to, storage or exhibition in areas with pests, excessive and/or fluctuating temperatures and high levels of light (Fahey, 2022).

It is vital to take into account the preservation of other characteristics of textiles such as its concept, philosophy, techniques and history in addition to physical preservation of textiles over time to protect them from physical deterioration. Rich traditional handicrafts such as textiles should be preserved because they can be categorised as vanishing arts. The proper documentation of rare textiles will allow long-term easy access to data and serve as a helpful guide as textiles age and degrade. This is due to the fact that not all things can be displayed at museums. Modern museums and other relevant organisations are strongly encouraged to experiment with newly developed hardware and software for accessing, documenting and studying items due to the usage of digital technology. A thorough comprehension of this will make it easier to choose the best technology and make the most of it. As a result, it will facilitate the longer-term preservation of special textile samples (Sharan et al., 2015).

Additionally, main objectives of textile preservation are to preserve piece and improve artefact's condition by preventing further damage while preserving as much of the original mat as possible and treat surface deformities brought on by deterioration and/or damage (Karen Kappe Design, 2019). Therefore, it can be inferred that textile preservation is the practise of taking good care of textiles and keeping them in good condition in order to prevent potential degradation. It is an action and measure designed to protect the tangible cultural heritage while ensuring that it is accessible to both the present and the next generation through technical evaluation principles and techniques.

Cultural Impacts on Indigenous Textiles

As international trade in raw textile materials and finished textile products becomes more commercialised, cultural sector is a crucial component of the global economy (Michigan State University, 2022). Through items like textiles, which reflect the innermost self and foster people's creativity and imagination, culture and artwork are connected. Culture aims to bring people together as members of the human race rather than divide them. It has an impact on the expansion of our economy (Timelinefy, 2020; Axelsson, 2021). A culture's goals, principles and customs are manifested in the essence of its members through their artwork such as traditional textiles (Bowen, 2013). Although it speaks to people on a fundamental emotional level, it can aid in understanding a group of people's way of life who would otherwise be challenging to relate to.

According to Debeli (2013), culture is occasionally used as an inspiration for textile design. Designers include cultural elements into their works in order to convey feelings and trends. A culture's customs of moods and styles are then artistically expressed on patterns for textile decorating. The ways that cultural values bring things together, such as the use of colours, patterns, clothing trends, and other related activities that draw on culture as a reference, are distinctive. The idea behind a particular textile design is always connected to a particular source, like a religion, a garment or historical ruling dynasties. This idea of culture as an alternative source for textile design has lately been shown to include significant information about a group's history and heritage (Perivoliotis, 2005).

Despite the controversy surrounding the influence of cultural values on the growth of craft or

traditional textiles in Ghana, the importance of indigenous art companies to job creation, income generation and national development can never be overemphasised. Cultural norms are beliefs, behaviours, interpretations and conventions that define societies and/or other social institutions. These beliefs and values are non-genetically passed down from one generation to the next as well as within a group of people. This demonstrates how crucial culture's enabling and inspiring roles are for sustainable growth. In Ghana's Ashanti Region's Kwabre East District, the rich traditional community of Adanwomase resides. It is a group of kente weavers who employ conventional designs and symbols to convey political, religious and social values of the Asante people. The kente fabric gives its owners a sense of pride since depending on the style worn it communicates a person's status, position and reputation in society. Weavers in Ghana teach philosophy, ethics, history, literary works, moral standards, directions for behaviour and religious beliefs through ceremonial weaving of distinctive patterns and colours known as "kente."

Consequently, it can be inferred from the aforementioned literature that culture and artwork are related through artefacts like textiles which reflect their concepts and perspectives through the materials and techniques used. These norms, values, interpretations and behavioural patterns describe societies and/or other social entities and communicate the identities of particular groups of people.

Methodology

This section presents the procedures and methods applied in conducting the study. It covers the research design, population and sampling, Instruments/tools for data, validity and reliability, statistical treatment of data and ethical considerations.

Research Design

The study used a qualitative study approach, combining literature review, narrative inquiry and controlled observation to gather descriptive data and provide in-depth explanations of the phenomenon under study. Qualitative research was chosen because it allows close interactions with respondents and subsequent interpretation of findings.

Population and Sampling

Tour guides, curators, historians and artisans were selected as accessible population due to their specialized knowledge and expertise. The selection of this population was justified as they possessed knowledge of the cultural significance, historical context and traditional methods of textile preservation. The study used a combination of convenience or purposive sampling with random stratified sampling to select 12 respondents (3 from each group) across different regions of Ghana, ensuring a representative sample.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity, recorded interviews were played back, listened to, transcribed and compared with written notes taken during the interviews. Digital photos were downloaded onto computers from the research locations and the most pertinent ones were chosen, modified and used to support facts gathered. In order to reach conclusions and make appropriate recommendations, both primary and secondary data were assembled, synthesised, analysed and interpreted for easy grasp by the readers.

Ethical Considerations

Suggested plans for ethical consideration were accepted by the Research Ethics Council of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The researchers were given conditions to uphold the study objective which included conveying the truth, correctness and avoiding errors. Everyone participant was encouraged to uphold principles of accountability, trust, respect and fairness.

Results and Discussion

This section presents findings of the study which are discussed and implications are given.

Research Question 1: How are indigenous Ghanaian textiles identified and conserved?

Personal communication with a Tour Guide I at the Accra Art Centre within the Coastal Belts of Ghana revealed the existence of indigenous Ghanaian textiles which could serve as a tangible resource for cultural conservation. The Tour Guide with over 15 years of experience mentioned Kete, Fugu, Tie-dye and Batik as some of noticeable indigenous textiles of Ghana as they possesses a number of social significance that could help in the conservation of Ghana's cultural heritage. The person further

revealed that such indigenous textiles portray a sense of belongingness and contain unique colours that are associated with most traditional groups in Ghana. Hence, most traditional groups and individuals wear such indigenous textiles during special occasions such as festivals to show their sense of belonging and connectedness. Furthermore, an Artisan I at the Art Centre affirmed the kete as an indigenous Ghanaian textile and explained that kete is a unique textile that helps to identify the clothing of people from the Middle and Coastal Belts (i.e., Ashanti and Volta regions) and from other regions in the country.

A 10-year experienced Tour Guide II at the Ntonso Adinkra Village within the Middle Belts of Ghana mentioned the Adinkra clothe, Obama (embroidery clothe), Kente, Nwomu, Kobine, Brisi, Kuntunkuni and Tapestry as some of indigenous Ghanaian textiles that could serve as a resource for effectual cultural conservation. The person indicated that most traditional groups have unique colours that identify them during festive occasions and in most times the colours are used in designing traditional textiles for specific gatherings. An Artisan II further avowed that chiefs and elders are usually identified in a gathering based on the use of specific indigenous textile. For example, the type of fabrics, colours, umbrella and palanquin a chief uses may allude to his ancestry and culture. Such indigenous textiles may be handed over to chiefs by their predecessors or ancestors to show a sign of their status, power and ancestral roots.

Tour Guide III at the Tamale Centre for National Culture in the Northern Belts of Ghana mentioned that some noticeable indigenous textile in Ghana are the Fugu (Smock) and Kete. In the views of the 22-year experienced Tour Guide, such textiles as Fugu or smock helps to identify the culture or clothing of people from Northern regions of Ghana. The fugu or smock could be termed as a native clothe for the people of Northern Ghana and are employed during any special occasion to show a sense of belonging in such society. The Artisan III further recounted the fact that both the fugu and kete are indigenous Ghanaian textiles that could be employed to portray one's status in the society. For instance, the chiefs or opinion leaders mostly used the larger smock as compared to the others to show their status in the traditional society.

Evidence from the above confirm the existence of indigenous Ghanaian textiles across the Coastal,

Middle and Northern Belts of Ghana. Inferences from the field interactions with respondents reported Kete, Fugu, Tie-dye, Batik, Nwomu, Kobine, Brisi, Kuntunkuni, Adinkra Cloth, Obama (embroidery cloth) and Tapestry as noticeable indigenous Ghanaian textiles. Some other studies further made similar observations of the kete traditional cloth as indigenous Ghanaian textile (Ross & Adu-Agyem, 2008; Adom et al., 2019; Frimpong et al., 2020). These findings go in line with a study that affirms the existence of indigenous Ghanaian textiles across regions of Ghana (Ware, 2022). Such indigenous textiles form a vital part of people as it exhibits some form of connectedness and belongingness among people who use such textiles.

Based on the information provided, it is clear that indigenous Ghanaian textiles such as Kete, Fugu, Tie-dye, Batik, Nwomu, Kobine, Brisi, Kuntunkuni, Adinkra Cloth, Obama (embroidery cloth) and Tapestry are an essential part of the country's cultural heritage. These textiles possess social significance that helps in the conservation of Ghana's cultural heritage. They portray a sense of belongingness and contain unique colors that are associated with most traditional groups in Ghana. Most traditional groups and individuals wear such indigenous textiles during special occasions such as festivals to show their sense of belonging and connectedness. The use of specific indigenous textiles by chiefs and elders also signifies their status, power and ancestral roots. Therefore, preserving and promoting these textiles are critical for conserving Ghana's cultural heritage.

Research Question 2: What role does indigenous textiles play in cultural preservation?

This research question sought to establish the role the indigenous Ghanaian textiles plays in cultural preservation.

The use of indigenous textiles such as kente, smock, brisi or adinkra in cultural activities is a significant way of preserving culture in Ghana. Historians and other experts in the Ghana textiles industry emphasize that traditional textiles are intertwined with cultural practices and ideals of the people. For example, festivals, durbar, dancing, music and marriage ceremonies employ the use of indigenous textiles to transmit customs and traditions of traditional societies to the outside world. The design of textile, including motives and symbols, can also portray one's status, especially among chiefs and

elders. In addition, the use of indigenous textiles is not limited to specific cultural activities but extends to all rites of passage, from childbearing to death and burial. Therefore, the use of traditional textiles in cultural activities is an effective way of preserving the culture of Ghana.

Indigenous textiles, such as kente, smock, brisi, adinkra, and kete, are deeply intertwined with Ghanaian cultural practices and play a crucial role in preserving them. These textiles are used in various cultural activities, including festivals, durbar, dancing, music and marriage, to transmit the ideals and customs of traditional societies to the outside world. Indigenous textiles also convey one's status, especially with motives and/or symbols used in designing the product and are used in all rites of passage from childbearing to death and burial. Moreover, historians at various centers for national culture in different regions of Ghana revealed that festivals and events have been instituted to celebrate the founders of these textiles. For instance, Adanwomase town is the hub of kete in the Ashanti Region and festivals have been instituted to celebrate the founders of kete. During such occasions, younger generations, tourists and people from diaspora are exposed to cultural precepts, philosophies and symbolisms behind the unique indigenous kete cloth. Similarly, in the Northern belts of Ghana, all cultural activities are done by the use of smock or fugu and the cloth made by people in the region is celebrated annually. These events draw many people from all walks of life to come and learn more about cultural precepts of the people within the region.

Findings presented in the text are supported by literature that highlights the significance of indigenous textiles in Ghanaian culture. Bowen (2013) argued that a culture's principles and customs are reflected in the artwork created by its members, including traditional textiles. Debeli (2013) further asserted that indigenous textiles

serve as a means of conveying cultural elements, feelings and trends. The text provides examples of how specific textiles, such as kete and fugu, are used in specific cultural practices. The use of certain motifs and design patterns in these textiles is also noted as a means of conveying specific feelings and ideas. Overall, the text highlights the interconnectedness between indigenous textiles and cultural practices in Ghana.

Research Question 3: How can Ghanaian culture be conserved through indigenous textiles preservation?

This research question sought to establish how Ghanaian culture can be conserved.

Preserving indigenous Ghanaian textiles is crucial for cultural conservation as these textiles hold philosophical underpinnings based on their mode of utilization and cultural functions. Unfortunately, most traditional people fold and keep such textiles in trunks or hang them in inappropriate conditions that lead to the degradation of the material. Curators in various centers for national culture have observed poor storage conditions, leading to torn and deteriorated textiles. Therefore, to preserve cultural connotations and philosophies backed by these textiles, appropriate preservation methods, such as hanging in a cool, dry place free of insects, rolling on sticks and pipes and storing in graybaft, can be adopted. Proper storage of indigenous textiles allows tourists and viewers to identify the names of respective textiles, preserving the ideals, traditional precepts and cultural philosophies underlying them. Observations were made on poor preservation/storage of indigenous Ghanaian textiles during a visit to the Accra Art Centre located in the Coastal Belts of Ghana's Greater Accra region as seen in figure 7 and 8. A visit was made to some museums in the Ashanti Region of Ghana (Middle Belts) and the following observations were made on how indigenous Ghanaian textiles are preserved/stored as reflected in table 9 to 14.



Figure 7: Indigenous Ghanaian Textiles Preserved on Shelves at Accra Art Centre



Figure 8: Effects of Poor Storage of Indigenous Ghanaian Textile at Accra Art Centre



Figure 9: Indigenous Ghanaian Textiles Preserved at Bonwire Weaving Tourist Centre



Figure 10: Indigenous Ghanaian Textiles Preserved at Prempeh Jubilee Museum



Figure 11: Indigenous Ghanaian Textiles Preserved at Adanwomase in Ashanti Region



Figure 12: Effects of Poor Storage of Indigenous Ghanaian Textile in Ashanti Region



Figure 13: Effects of Poor Storage of Indigenous Ghanaian Textile in Ashanti Region



Figure 14: Proper Preservation of Indigenous Ghanaian Textile in Ashanti Region



Figure 15: Indigenous Ghanaian Textiles Preserved at the Northern Belts of Ghana



Figure 16: Effects of Poor Preservation of Indigenous Ghanaian Textile in the Northern Belts

A visit was made to some parts of Northern belts of Ghana and the following observations were made on how indigenous Ghanaian textiles are preserved/stored as reflected in table 15 and 16.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

It is concluded that indigenous Ghanaian textiles such as Kete, Fugu, Tie-dye, Batik, Nwomu, Kobine, Brisi, Kuntunkuni, Adinkra Cloth, Obama (embroidery cloth) and Tapestry are an essential part of the country's cultural heritage. These textiles possess a social significance that helps in the conservation of the Ghana's cultural heritage. They portray a sense of belongingness and contain unique colors that are associated with most traditional groups in Ghana. Most traditional groups and individuals wear such indigenous textiles during special occasions such as festivals to show their sense of belonging and connectedness.

The use of indigenous textiles, such as kente, smock, brisi, adinkra and kete, in various cultural activities is crucial for preserving and promoting Ghanaian culture. These textiles are deeply intertwined with Ghanaian cultural practices and play crucial roles in transmitting customs and traditions to the outside world. The motifs and symbols used in designing the textiles can also convey one's status, especially among chiefs and elders. In addition, festivals and events have been instituted to celebrate the founders of these textiles, providing opportunities for younger generations, tourists, and people from the diaspora to learn more about the cultural precepts, philosophies and symbolisms behind these unique textiles.

Recommendations

Efforts should be made to document and preserve indigenous textiles and promote their use in various settings, including formal occasions and cultural events. This will help preserve Ghana's rich cultural heritage and promote cultural tourism in the country. Stakeholders, including traditional people, curators, policymakers and the general public are recommended to work together in implementing proper storage methods to preserve indigenous Ghanaian textiles. Efforts should be made to educate the public on cultural significance of the textiles and the need for their conservation.

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