

## EXTENSION OF KNOWLEDGE ON GHANAIAN ADINKRA SYMBOLS IN RELATION TO MASLOW'S THEORY

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**ABSTRACT:** *To promote the Ghanaian Adinkra symbols/cloths and to highlight their importance and meanings, it became necessary for the compilation of such symbols and aligning them to the Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. This study therefore explores the extension of knowledge on and use of the Adinkra symbols in relation to Maslow's theory to create more awareness. The Adinkra symbols are believed to have rich-cultural educative meanings and support human responsibilities known by few people in the Ghanaian society. Literature from three scholars of Adinkra symbols were collected by the researchers and categorised under the role of each symbol according to Maslow's expanded hierarchy of human needs theory. It has been identified that there is a connection between Adinkra symbols and Maslow's theory; human needs versus human responsibilities. The information collected was confirmed by the Royal family of Ashanti in Ghana, who are believed to be the original custodians of these symbols. Cultural identity was therefore clearly revealed and reinforced as members of the society learnt and used the meaning of cultural symbols in their quotidian activities. The study encourages indigenous Ghanaians and other societies to appreciate the depth in meaning of Adinkra symbols. Again, the symbols are believed to benefit people through their incorporation in textile/clothing practices. It also exposes the rich cultural heritage of the Ghanaian and places the country on high pedestrian and developing its culture and expanding the tourism market base.*

**KEYWORDS:** Adinkra Symbols, Cloths of Ghana, Ghanaian Culture, Maslow's Theory

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### INTRODUCTION

Paradoxically, the use and importance of cultural symbols in Ghana in recent years, have been on the rise. A multiple of reasons for such accelerated growth could include promotion, protection, and continuity of heritage and identity of the people. This study explores the relationship between the meanings of Adinkra symbols in everyday life of the Ghanaians (as a case in point) and the Maslow's hierarchy of human needs theory to promote these symbols. Adinkra is a collection of symbols to bid fare well message when parting with other people (Mato, 1986; Rattray, 1927). A number of scholars have written and compiled the Adinkra symbols using various approaches in an attempt to advance studies on the Adinkra symbolic cultural literature. Arthur (2001) advanced the literature by selecting some of the Adinkra symbols based on those that involve the names of God and relation with people. Danzy (2009) also studied the ideographic meaning of the Adinkra symbols and compiled the symbols alphabetically using the names. Glover (1971) documented the Adinkra symbols and meanings that seemed to be in random order. Quarcoo (1972) however, suggested a

classification of the symbols based on religion and documented 60 symbols by using religion to document the first eight and randomly arranged and discussed the meanings of the other symbols. In the present study, the focus of the researchers is to extend knowledge on the literature on Adinkra symbols by using the hierarchical needs theory of Maslow to propose a new arrangement of the Adinkra symbols with sequential structure and meanings. Also, to link human needs theory of Maslow to human responsibilities ascribed by the society and embedded in the cultural with Adinkra symbols.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs identifies physiological needs which comprise of food, water, shelter and warmth (Maslow, 1954; McLeod, 2007). Warmth in this situation can be provided by clothing; which brings all textile articles and garments for human consumption. This type of human need becomes crucial under harsh climates. Clothing is the second and artificial skin to the body and conceals the private parts. Out of the physiological needs defined by Maslow, clothing counts as the only one regulated by law. In this vein, Samuels (2008, p. 1) asserts that in the United Kingdom for example, 'a person commits an offence if: a) he intentionally exposes his genitals and b) he intends that someone will see them and be caused alarm or distress'.

Body covering such as cloth has had multiple uses for different groups of people. Cloth, a piece of fabric and textile material, comes in different construction techniques, for example, felt and weave which usually showcase social status and act as a measure of profound value. The use of yarns and filaments has provided flexible characteristic of cloth that yields into a number of applications and uses by individuals. These include the ability to drape the cloth in different ways around the body. Again, the yarns stimulate dye absorption in order to obtain arrays of colourful cloths that can be used for different occasions. Although cloth protects, beautifies, contains and covers nudity, there is a lot more to it. In Africa, specifically Ghana, cloth is used to identify the status of a person using traditional symbols such as Adinkra and the type of garment style made with the cloth. For example, the kind of cloth that a king will put on for a function will easily make him stand out amongst the people. Conversely, most Ghanaian women dress in *slit and kaba* (traditional costume in long fitted skirt and tailored blouse) ensemble made in traditional and factory manufactured cloths; the designed styles used in construction of these *slit and kaba* garment differentiate the wearers and have become a channel of expression of ideas as well as class affiliation (Dogbe, 2003; Kuma-Kpobee, Power, & Otieno, 2007).

Furthermore, wealth is displayed in the quantity and quality of cloths that individuals possess and even the way and manner one wraps or drapes his or her cloth around the body. To buttress the above statement Aronson, (2010) discusses the chiefs and elders of Baule from the towns of Bomizombo and Tuenzuebo, situated outside Bouake in La Cote d'Ivoire of West Africa. She points out that emphasis is placed on volume and bulkiness of cloth in dressing during ceremonies to demonstrate wealth and status. Similarly, Gott (2009, p. 143) observes that 'in the Ashanti Region of Ghana over the course of the twentieth century, fashionable dress developed into a particular female mode of high-status display that provided visible proof of a woman's success in accumulating the prestigious textiles that became an increasingly important form of female wealth'.

Generally, the use of cloths also plays an important role in marriage ceremonies in Ghanaian. The amount of cloth added to the trousseau signifies the wealth and love of the groom and in turn portrays the type of respect for the bride's family members and friends. Babies and children are also carried at the back and tied up with the help of cloth. Cloth has been used

and continues to be used as precious gifts which one could bestow on someone within the Ghanaian community to illustrate profound cultural identity that can also be kept for cultural display and meaning.

The significance of this study is twofold; firstly, it can reinvigorate a symbolic culture that is facing extinction from society and to illustrate the rich heritage and educative meanings for posterity. Also, the documentation based on the hierarchy needs theory propounded by Maslow can serve as a vital source of motivation for individuals who may decide to adopt and use some of the symbols. This article is a part of a larger research project on Adinkra symbolic cloth as a technique to develop the meaning and the use of technology as a form of innovation to sustain the practice in the Ghanaian clothing industry. It is justifiable therefore that this study explores the extension of knowledge on and use of the Adinkra symbols in relation to Maslow's theory to create more awareness, innovation, creativity, education, self consciousness in the fashion and textiles industry in Ghana and beyond.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Conceptual framework**

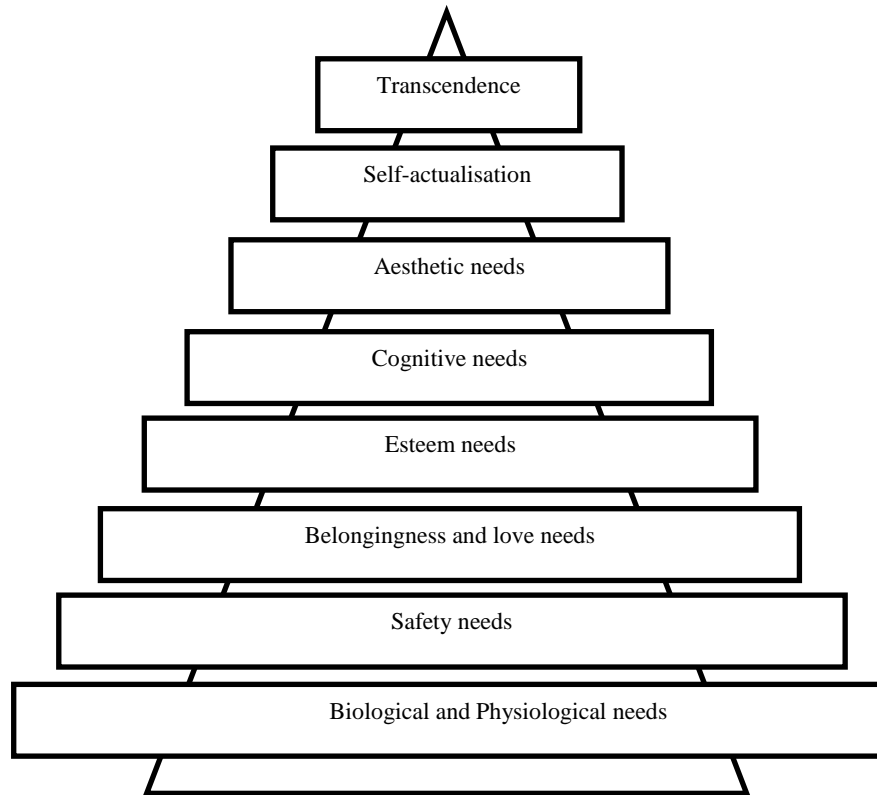
Many theorist and Psychologist like Maslow believed that most humans have inner active drive towards health, growth and human potential. This inner drive motivates human to acquire his needs. Maslow considered human needs as insatiable, always have some to fulfil. This condition led Maslow to arrange human needs into an orderly hierarchy from low to higher levels of needs (Maslow, 1968). Human needs are not automatically met or acquired for utilisation, with exception for example, air. Most human needs require efforts to confront a situation with a duty to accomplish a need. Maslow's hierarchy of human needs has been adopted for this study to re-group Adinkra symbols under each human need level. The Adinkra symbol is believed to have deeper meaning (Arthur, 1994) concerning various human responsibilities that may be observed and engaged at arriving various needs. Human needs in associate with human responsibilities may work together in acquiring productive health, growth and human potential within the cultural principles of the Ghanaians and other societies with this shared knowledge.

With the conceptual framework therefore, the categorisation of the Adinkra symbols does not appear in alphabetical order, in accordance with flora, fauna, geometric, nature of God and others, as grouped under the role of each symbol in the eight-tier level in Maslow's expanded hierarchy of human needs theory. There is however a connection between Adinkra symbols, which highlight on human responsibilities and Maslow's theory of human needs. Thus, human needs versus human responsibilities on how to use the Adinkra symbols to direct inner nature in the mist of suppressing conditions and environments are paramount. The Adinkra symbols were carefully selected depending on their meanings and arranged them under appropriate human needs level, here on eight-tier levels with the help of Maslow's expanded hierarchy of human needs.

The researchers were also interested in the original Adinkra symbols as documented by

Rattray, Willis, (1927; 1998) and other authors, which the Ghana Tourism (2008) estimated between sixty and seventy in number. The purpose of cataloguing Adinkra symbols is for further research work and also for easy access to the general public. The categorisation has

been designed in a hierarchy form, starting with the symbol, name of symbol in Akan language, literal meaning and role of symbol. The individual symbols used in this study were designed using Adobe Illustrator and design software. All the original Adinkra symbols made on block stamps used by the artisans in the production of Adinkra textile prints were collected and drawn into soft copies with a final outlook as in Tables 1-8.



**Figure 1:** Authors' hierarchy of Needs, a typology of eight levels from Maslow

### Ghanaian Adinkra symbols and cloths

The Ashanti region of Ghana used to be the geographical home of Adinkra symbols and cloth makers. A group of cultural symbols that is timeless and embedded with educative meanings is dubbed as Adinkra symbols. The textile craftsmen created the Adinkra symbols on wooden stamps and printed onto mourning cloth for funeral ceremonies of the departed (Cole & Ross, 1977; Quarcoo, 1972). In this regard, the selected symbols for use in a particular cloth were to depict the attributes of the dead person (Agbo, 2011). Each of the Adinkra symbol has been connected to a proverb (Mato, 1986; Quarcoo, 1972) that facilitates the understanding of the meaning.

There are two prestigious locally made textiles in the Ashanti region, hand woven Kente and Adinkra printed cloths (Mato, 1986). Willis also mentions Kumasi (capital of Ashanti) as the roots of Adinkra symbols (Willis, 1998). This society builds powerful identity through their skilful visual art works. In this regard, (Arthur, 2001, p. 10) states that 'the Akans of Ghana and La Cote d'Ivoire incorporated the ideographic and pictographic writing systems in their arts in such media as textiles, metal casting, woodcarving and architecture'. Akan language is characterised by wise sayings - proverbs and idioms. This aspect of Akan language and

culture shows a high level of wisdom possessed by their forefathers that exhibits in most of their material culture such as Adinkra cloth. This was identified among others by the researches of (Cole & Ross, 1977) who argue that although West African peoples are associated with proverbs, the Akan people from Ghana appear to use them more. This explains why many Akan visual arts have proverbial meanings. The researchers agree with Cole and Ross; these ideographic Adinkra symbols have special proverbial meaning for each symbol. There is no Adinkra symbol with more than one meaning as happens in other cultural symbols, for example Australian aboriginal symbols (Aboriginal Art Online, 2000).

Currently, Adinkra symbols seemed to have been adopted as Ghanaian national cultural symbols. The following researches serve as justification for the above statement. The state sword or ceremonial sword of Ghanaian society symbolises authority of a ruler. During presidential swearing in ceremony, the double-bladed state sword; Akofena – ‘sword of war’, an Adinkra symbol, is held in taking oath of office (Essel & Opoku-Mensah, 2014; Obeng, 1998). Also, Quarcoo (1972, p. 8) discussed that, ‘whatever might be the exact history and association of the Adinkra art does not subtract from the fact that the cloth is now truly national in the Ghanaian context’. Moreover, Essel and Opoku-Mensah (2014, p. 38) described Memorial Park of the first president of Ghana, Dr Kwame Nkrumah and made comparison that, ‘pyramids are historically Egyptian relics whereas adinkralization of art could be associated with Ghana’. This adoption process of Adinkra symbols in Ghana might have been possible due to the timeless and educative meanings of the symbols and this can be applied to other places in the world if the symbols are widely known and understood.

### Some uses of Adinkra symbol

The word Adinkra has been known because of its socio-cultural significance and extensive usage in Ghanaian community and specifically the Akan ethnic group. It can be seen all over the country in many products like building blocks, plastic chairs, carvings, furniture, pottery, souvenirs as well as clothes. An examination of some Ghanaian postal stamps: two of which had Adinkra symbols. The first one had a blue background with traditional kente cloth dividing the stamp into four sections by forming a plus sign at the middle. This was dated the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 1959 with three Adinkra symbols: these are *fofoo* (envy), *mmomodwan* (unity), and *duafoe* (female beauty). The other stamp had a green background with Kente cloth bordering the four edges with *Gye Nyame* (God’s Omnipotence) in the middle section and was dated the 29<sup>th</sup> April 1961 (Wilburn, 2012). Again, previous Ghanaian ten thousand (10,000) cedi currency notes dated 4<sup>th</sup> August 2006 also contained three of these symbols (Figure 2)



**Figure 2** A picture of a Ghanaian cedi note bearing Adinkra

**Figure 2:** A picture of Ghanaian currency note bearing Adinkra symbols



The old Ghanaian ten thousand (10,000) cedis currency note features three Adinkra symbols; *Kronti Ne Akwamu*, *Nkonsonkonson* and *Akoma Ntoaso*. From the picture in Figure 2, the symbol labelled 'A' is called *Kronti Ne Akwamu* in literal translation 'elders of the state or council of state'. This symbol is a rectangular shape which has been divided into four equal parts. The top left and bottom right sections are sub-divided into forty-eight smaller rectangles for each. This symbol means two or more heads are better than one. The second symbol is *Nkonsonkonson* labelled as 'B' in the picture, in literal translation 'chain link'. This symbol has two oval shapes joined together vertically with an image like two halves of figure '8' in the middle. This symbol means it is suitable to have a collective contribution. The last symbol labelled as 'C' is *Akoma Ntoaso* in literal translation 'linked or united hearts'. This is a symbol of four hearts joined to a circle at the middle, which means understanding and agreement. All these discussions provide valuable evidence which establishes the fact that Adinkra symbols are not only used and valued by the Akan people from the Ashanti region of Ghana but by all the Ghanaian citizens. A conclusion was made to the above statement that 'our focus on Akan arts is also at least partially justified by their diffusion into non-Akan areas. Certain Akan objects themselves have been carried north as well as into Ewe and Ga-Adangbe areas in the south. Akan and particularly Asante's culture traits were either imposed upon non-Akan people or were willingly adopted by them' (Cole & Ross, 1977, p. 8). Among the number of products that are designed from Adinkra symbols, Adinkra cloth is the most popular because cloth has enormous usage and value in the Ghanaian society.

## METHODOLOGY

This study commenced with search for the knowledge and understanding of the names and meanings of Adinkra symbols that appear limited in use. Literature from three scholars of Adinkra symbols stimulated the study; namely Vernon Blake, Alfred Kofi Quarcoo and Daniel Mato. Blake, stated, 'educated Africans will realize that their race possesses certain artistic gifts [Adinkra symbols] of which they may be justly proud; that it would be a calamity not to foster this talent...' (cited in Rattray 1927, P viii). Quarcoo (1972, 5) stated that, 'since more is being investigated about the symbols [Adinkra], it is hoped that more elucidation may be forthcoming in future'. Mato (1986, 68) acknowledged that, 'it is again the act of balancing the verbal and visual to characterise complex thoughts through simple forms in that adinkra pattern, though simply stated carry complex and deep meanings'. In such a search to foster that stated talent, to gain more elucidation on the complex and deep meanings of the Adinkra symbols revealed the extended meaning and new categorisation of the symbols. Initially, it was not clear on what to look for after studying and understanding names and meanings of the symbols. All the original Adinkra symbols were selected for the study because they are timeless and have educative meanings that can be applicable to all manner of people. Mato (1986) recognised that, new created Adinkra symbols were used to produce fancy cloths and their names and meanings may not be significant among the people.

All the sixty original Adinkra symbols documented by Quarcoo were printed on A '4' sheet of paper with each symbol and its meaning. All the symbols were laid on a flat surface, studied and pondered over them for over four months. After careful collection of information available in the literature on the Adinkra symbols, the researchers identified the central cultural home of Adinkra symbols in Ashanti. Three indigenous villages namely; Ntonsu, Adawomase and Ahodwo were visited and elders consulted by way of focus group

discussion. There, the elders confirmed the importance, uses and meanings of the symbols as appeared in literature.






It was identified that the overall summary of the meanings of all the symbols was based on responsibilities that society has ascribed to human life. The symbols were later grouped according to similarities in meanings. These groups were later arranged under the Maslow expanded hierarchy of human needs theory (eight levels) and discussed in conjunction with human responsibilities in order to gain clear meanings and understanding of the symbols, extend knowledge and promote their usage.

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF ADINKRA SYMBOLS

All original Adinkra symbols as documented by Quarcoo (1972) were laid on a flat surface to allow further reflection over four months period. The overall summary of meanings of all the symbols was based on responsibilities that society has ascribed to human life. The symbols as appeared in the Table 1-8 were later grouped according to similarities in meanings. These groups were further arranged under the Maslow expanded hierarchy of human needs theory (eight levels) and discussed in relations to human responsibilities, to gain clear meanings and understanding of the symbols, acquisition of knowledge and promote their use in day to day life as a whole.

Table 1 clearly depicts biological and physiological needs of a person which include; air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep etc

**Table 1. Biological and physiological needs**

SYMBOLS	NAMES OF SYMBOLS	LITERAL MEANINGS	ROLES
	<i>Gye nyame</i>	“Only God”	Symbol of the omnipotence and immortality of God
	<i>Asase ye duru</i>	“Earth has weight”	Symbol of divinity of the earth
	<i>Biribi wo soro</i>	“There is something in the heavens”	Symbol of hope and reliance on God
	<i>Nyame ye ohene</i>	“God is King”	Symbol of majesty and supremacy of God
	<i>Onyankopon adom nti biribiara beye yie</i>	“By God's grace, all will be well”	Symbol of hope, providence and faith

In Akan language, God is referred to as *Nyame*, *Onyankopon*, *Oboadie* and *Twerediampon*; who provides physiological needs. Human beings, artefacts, plants and other objects are also named after God. This shows that Akan knew and worshiped God in their own ways long before the arrival of the missionaries who introduced Christianity. They have a belief that God is the creator, the Supreme Being, omnipotent and omnipresent. Life is a gift bestowed upon the human by God (Arthur, 2001). This means that their very existence depends on God and in actual sense they believe that without God they are nothing. The implication too is that

acceptance of God goes with responsibility to serve him, God and he will in turn provide their basic and other needs as "physiological", as appeared in Maslows theory.

In Table 2, which is safety needs, depicts protection from elements as; security, order, law, limit, stability, etc.

**Table 2. Safety needs**















SYMBOLS	NAMES OF SYMBOLS	LITERAL MEANINGS	ROLES
	<i>Akoben</i>	"War Horn"	Symbol of readiness and preparedness
	<i>Akofena</i>	"Ceremonial/ royal Sword"	Symbol of Bravery and heroism
	<i>Eban</i>	"Fence"	Symbol of protection, security and safety
	<i>Epa</i>	"Handcuff"	Symbol of slavery, captivity, law and justice
	<i>Fihankra</i>	"House"	Symbol of security and safety
	<i>Funtunfunefu denkyemfunefu</i>	"Siamese crocodiles"	Symbol of democracy and oneness
	<i>Kwatakye atiko</i>	"Hair style of an Asante war captain-Kwatakye"	Symbol of bravery and valour
	<i>Mframadan</i>	"Wind-resistant house"	Symbol of fortitude
	<i>Mmusuyidee</i>	"That which removes ill luck or evil"	Symbol of good fortune, spiritual and sanctity
	<i>Nyame dua</i>	"Altar of God/tree of God"	Symbol of God's presence and protection
	<i>Nyame nnwu na mawu</i>	"God never dies, therefore I shall not die"	Symbol of life after death
	<i>Nyame nti</i>	"By God's grace"	Symbol of faith and trust in God
	<i>Okodee mmowere</i>	"The eagle's talons"	Symbol of strength and unity
	<i>Owuo atwedee</i>	"The ladder of death"	Symbol of mortality
	<i>Pempamsie</i>	"Readiness"	Symbol of readiness and preparedness



Individuals have to protect themselves by being watchful, courageous, farsighted, and religious and so forth. The Akans perceive the earth as divine with laws, rules and regulations which individuals are responsible for observing. When laws are broken punishment is applied. They believe that to be safe in this world one has to lead an upright life and maintain it. In a speech made by Mr James Swanzy in 1816, he stated that, ‘it is a singular thing that these people – the Ashantees – who had never seen a white man nor the sea, were the most civil and well-bred I have ever seen in Africa. It is astonishing to see men with such few opportunities so well behaved’ (Rattray, 1927, p. vi). This may be attributed to be the knowledge and use of Adinkra symbols in those days. The implication for man here is that when people use a cloth designed with some of these symbols and ponder over their meanings, psychologically they believe they have full protection.

Table 3 emphasises on social needs, which encompasses belongingness and love, work group, family, affection, relationships etc.

**Table 3. Social needs**









SYMBOLS	NAMES OF SYMBOLS	LITERAL MEANINGS	ROLES
	<i>Akoko nan</i>	“The hen’s feet”	Symbol of parental care
	<i>Akoma</i>	“The heart”	Symbol of patience and endurance
	<i>Akoma ntoaso</i>	"Extension of the hearts"	Symbol of understanding and agreement
	<i>Bese saka</i>	“Sack of cola nuts”	Symbol of abundance, affluence, power, togetherness and unity
	<i>Bi nka bi</i>	"Bite not one another"	Symbol of peace and harmony
	<i>Eban</i>	“Fence”	Symbol of protection, security and safety
	<i>Ese ne tekrema</i>	“The teeth and the tongue”	Symbol of friendship and interdependence
	<i>Me ware wo</i>	“I shall marry you”	Symbol of commitment
	<i>Mpatapo</i>	“Reconciliation Knot”	Symbol of reconciliation and peace-making
	<i>Nkonsonkonson</i>	“Chain link”	Symbol of unity and human relations
	<i>Nsoromma</i>	“The star”	Symbol of reflection of God, guardianship
	<i>Odo nnyew fie kwan</i>	“Love never loses its way home”	Symbol of power of love
	<i>Osram ne nsoromma</i>	"The Moon and the Star"	Symbol of love and faithfulness
	<i>Woforo dua pa a</i>	"When you climb a good tree"	Symbol of support, cooperation and encouragement

The Akans have a belief that nothing good comes by chance, whatever you want it to happen, you must work for. How much one works depends on understanding of one’s need. The

thoughts of an individual are apprehended by the inner nature that is, individual perception influences his or her belief. Some Adinkra symbols explain that one has to work so that if an individual use these symbols they may reflect in their working life experience. Furthermore, they believe that by doing this, parents need to observe rules and regulations on parenting while still showing love and affection for their children (Willis, 1998). To make something work the way one wants; one needs commitment, patience, love, perseverance, understanding and hard work. The implication here is that the indigenous Akan will obviously work hard to obtain his social needs knowing that they do not come by chance; thus, there is virtue in working to obtain individual needs in life.

Esteem needs as in Table 4, explains the achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, managerial responsibility, etc of the people.









**Table 4. Esteem needs**

SYMBOLS	NAMES OF SYMBOLS	LITERAL MEANINGS	ROLES
	<i>Adinkrahene</i>	"Chief of Adinkra symbols"	Symbol of greatness and royalty
	<i>Dwennimmen</i>	"Ram's horn"	Symbol of concealment, humility and strength
	<i>Fawohodie</i>	"Independence"	Symbol of freedom, emancipation and liberty
	<i>Fofo</i>	"Yellow flowered plant"	Symbol of jealousy and envy
	<i>Kintinkantan</i>	"Do not boast"	Symbol of arrogance
	<i>Mpuannum</i>	"Five tufts of hair"	Symbol of priestly office, loyalty and adroitness
	<i>Owo foro adobe</i>	"Snake climbing the raffia tree"	Symbol of performing the impossible, steadfastness and excellence
	<i>Wawa aba</i>	"Seed of the wawa tree"	Symbol of hardiness, toughness and perseverance

The Akan society accords great respect to its members who have worked for what they possess. The individuals in any kind of managerial positions continue to hold their prestige if they are humble and understanding to other people's needs in the society. At times people become happy within themselves when they do well to others. For others to appreciate and honour their deeds bring satisfaction to their self-esteem needs. Wealthy people do not manage only their homes, but also assist in the homes of others who cannot make ends meet. This implies that to gain honour and respect in a society where individual life is monitored by others, one has to be mindful of services and participatory work, humility, understanding, commitment, leadership to serve others. They hold a belief of receiving more when you give out things to others.

The Table 5 shows cognitive needs of people which include; knowledge, meaning, etc.

**Table 5. Cognitive needs**

SYMBOLS	NAMES OF SYMBOLS	LITERAL MEANINGS	ROLES
	<i>Akoma ntoaso</i>	“Extension of the hearts”	Symbol of understanding and agreement
	<i>Dame-dame</i>	“A board game”	Symbol of intelligence and ingenuity
	<i>Hwe mu dua</i>	“Measuring stick”	Symbol of quality control and excellence
	<i>Mate masie</i>	“I have heard and kept it”	Symbol of knowledge and wisdom
	<i>Nea onnim no sua a, ohu</i>	“He who does not know can know from learning”	Symbol of knowledge, life-long education and continued quest for knowledge
	<i>Nkyimu</i>	“The divisions made on Adinkra cloth before stamping”	Symbol of skilfulness and precision
	<i>Nyansapo</i>	"Wisdom knot"	Symbol of wisdom, ingenuity and patience
	<i>Sankofa</i>	"Return and get it"	Symbol of learning from the past

Akan society believes and expects the knowledgeable ones amongst them to make their impact felt to change the societal ways of perceiving issues. They believe that culture is dynamic and therefore continuously evolving. Adoption of new ideas is highly encouraged.

**Table 6 Aesthetic needs**












SYMBOL	NAMES OF SYMBOL	LITERAL MEANING	ROLE
	<i>Duafe</i>	“Wooden comb”	Symbol of beauty, cleanliness and feminine qualities

Table 6 shows aesthetic needs which means appreciation and search for beauty, balance, form, etc.

Akan culture is full of creative arts which beautify their surroundings. What is one's contribution to the beautification of the environment? The people do not look at beauty in terms of the physical aspect alone but also as a spiritual facet and one's mode of behaviour. The Akans have an old adage that goes ‘good name is better than riches’. This also implies that reputation has credit in that society; also infers that beauty is gained by acquiring a good name and one feels honoured and satisfied for that attribute too.

Table 7 shows self-actualisation needs– realising personal potential, self-fulfilment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences.



**Table 7 Self-Actualisation needs**

SYMBOLS	NAMES OF SYMBOLS	LITERAL MEANINGS	ROLES
	<i>Ananse ntontan</i>	“Spider's web”	Symbol of wisdom and creativity
	<i>Aya</i>	“Fern”	Symbol of endurance and resourcefulness
	<i>Dame-dame</i>	“A board game”	Symbol of intelligence and ingenuity
	<i>Hye wonnhye</i>	“That which cannot be burnt”	Symbol of imperishability and endlessness
	<i>Mmere dane</i>	“Time changes”	Symbol of dynamics in life
	<i>Mmusuyidee</i>	“That which removes ill luck or evil”	Symbol of good fortune, spiritual and sanctity
	<i>Nkyinkyim</i>	“Twisting”	Symbol of dynamism, versatility and resoluteness
	<i>Odenkyem</i>	“Crocodile”	Symbol of prudence and adaptability
	<i>Sesa wo suban</i>	“Change your life”	Symbol of life transformation
	<i>Tamfo bebre</i>	“The enemy shall suffer”	Symbol of jealousy

Self-appraisal in life is one of the essential marking tools in the Akan culture. Members are taught and initiated from one stage of life to the other. This calls for the new responsibilities and challenges one has to pass through in life (Sarpong, 1974). Akans believe and attribute the self-actualisation stage to someone who possesses a mixture of skills that have transformed him to his present position. Examples of these skills are endurance, resourcefulness, adaptability, ingenuity and others. This means that the final stage of self-actualization is reflected by the “being” needs, indicated by the needs for creative self-development in terms of one’s potential toward a goal and a sense of meaning in life. Hence if one is wearing a garment with some of those symbols and reflecting upon the meanings, it could enhance their ego to strive ahead in life.

Table 8 shows transcendence needs, which means helping others to achieve self-actualisation.

**Table 8. Transcendence needs**

SYMBOLS	NAMES OF SYMBOLS	LITERAL MEANINGS	ROLES
	<i>Nea ope se obedi hene</i>	“He who wants to be king”	Symbol of leadership
	<i>Nsaa</i>	“Type of hand-woven cloth”	Symbol of excellence, authenticity and genuineness

Most unrest or conflict in the world of late has its source from unfair treatment that some people feel they have experienced. Akans believe that the more you give, the more you receive and service to mankind is service to God. Again the rich should render service and help the poor ones in the society for them to experience peace and happiness. This also implies that the rich can teach society to know about their challenges, shortcomings and the proper direction in which to develop one's life.

## CONCLUSION

Adinkra symbols/cloths are visual metaphors that have names and meanings for expressive communication in the Akan language. Symbols are socially created and must have collective understanding, agreement and acceptance among the users. Symbols also have the power to motivate people to think and ponder deeply as well as influencing them into acquisition of knowledge for appropriate human behaviour. The meanings of the symbols in this study, have been given a fresh look, by analysing them using Maslow Expanded Hierarchy of human needs theory. The categorisation of Adinkra symbols has been made in a table form to explain the Akan culture and knowledge. The Adinkra symbols/cloths are believed to have strong ties with Akan culture by having their names and meanings created from Akans' daily life activities. Cloth is not only used as body covering in Akan society, but as a medium to send a message as well as a repository to unveil history. If a person uses Adinkra symbols and understands the meanings, then pondering over them may help to develop the inner nature which Maslow termed to be 'good or neutral'. Therefore, Adinkra symbols can be studied in depth to help people arrive at set of values that is acceptable to the Akan culture and personal life expectations. If the meaning and role of Adinkra symbols is learnt and used, social interaction may improve and subsequently harmony may prevail in the relevant societies. Besides the wider use and publication of the Symbols, the more the more the country is marketed, hence with potential to widen the tourism potentials for the Ghanaian economy. Another important finding is that the publication of this study will create awareness and education of the Adinkra symbols and cloth of Ghana. This study has huge research implications as in depth knowledge on Adinkra symbols have been made available and known, hence adding information to the bank of literature available in the fashion and textile industry. It is the hope of the researchers that readers will appreciate the value of the Adinkra symbols and consequently use technology to improve its education, understanding and marketability.



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