

CROSS CULTURAL WEAVES POTENTIAL FOR GHANAIAAN CULTURAL IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT: *The study focus on Asante's indigenous "Kente" weavers at Bonwire, Centre for National Culture, Kumasi, and weavers from the Northern and Volta regions are mainly because of the fact that they are the regions in Ghana that are known for creating the cloth. This concept provides an opportunity to help unite indigenous textile weaving industries in the Northern, Ashanti and Volta regions in Ghana. The study reviews existing work on traditional weaving practices leading to the production of 'fugu', 'kente' and 'kete' in the Northern, Ashanti and Volta regions respectively so as to be able to build a conceptual framework that is appropriate. The extent of this exploration is entirely a push to think about the utilisation of weaving techniques from the three regions to enhance their cultural identity. This covered the weaving centres in the whole of the chosen regions, but due to time constraints, only few centres were chosen. The approach of the study was qualitative research methods and the instrument used to collect data were mainly interviewed (one-to-one) and participant observation with players in the traditional weaving industry and then some secondary data. The respondents in this study were the indigenous weavers in the three regions selected for this study and the views of selected customers and users of the cloths from the various regions. Furthermore, in order to justify the study, questionnaires were administered to a few experts as there is no need denying the fact that this category of respondents has adequate knowledge of the materials they produce and/or patronise. It emerged from this study that the traditional weaves produced in the three regions of Ghana under study, have the capability of uniting these three regions based on the concept the study adopted.*

KEYWORDS: Cross Cultural Weaves, Kente, Fugu, Kete And Local Weaving Industry

INTRODUCTION

Traditional woven fabrics like 'Fugu', 'Kente' and 'Kete' which are linked with Royalty among Northerners; Ashantis and Ewe people are ceremonial cloths which are hand woven on a locally made loom. The fabrics woven on the Loom comes in strips and are sewn together to shape a bigger bit of material. These fabrics are visual representation of history, philosophy, ethics, oral Literature, religious convictions, political thought and aesthetic standards of the general population who made these materials. Though the techniques used in weaving these cloths are similar in nature, they differ in design from region to region in Ghana.

This study seeks to exploit the possibility of linking these indigenous hand woven cloths. A composite of woven strips and the various weaving techniques in these regions will be integrated into one composed cultural weave that will be a representation of all three regions. The three cloths basically are 'Fugu' for Northern region, 'Kente' for Ashanti region and 'Kete' for Volta region. Their unique characteristics portrayed in design elements such as colour, motifs and philosophy peculiar to each region have the potential, when harnessed effectively, to bring these regions together. The study will Identify cloth weaving techniques in the Northern, Ashanti and Volta Regions of Ghana and integrate these techniques to weave a cloth.

An analysis of the purpose of the study indicates that the following research questions were appropriate. How can the weaving techniques in the Northern, Ashanti and Volta regions of Ghana be identified and to what extent can these weaving techniques from the three regions be integrated?

The researcher observed how the various weaving techniques from the three regions chosen for the study were rendered and described in detail the processes involved in weaving; '*fugu*', '*kete*' and '*kente*' and culminated it in the weaving. Adoption of the qualitative research method also made it possible for the study to assume an interactive social role in which observations and interactions with weavers yielded great results.

The accessible population was selected from five weaving centres in Bonwire in Ashanti region, five weaving centres in *Agotime Kpetoe* in the Volta region and five weaving centres in Tamale in the Northern region. These centres still adapt the traditional way of weaving.

Data collected in the various regions under study was compared, transcribed and assembled in narrative form with pictures that describe the various processes in the final woven product. These comparisons helped in the appreciation of the differences and similarities. The main aim of this research is to identify cloth weaving techniques from the Northern, Ashanti and Volta Regions of Ghana and to integrate the weaving techniques from the three regions. An analysis of the purpose of the study indicates that the following research questions were appropriate. What are the weaving techniques in the Northern, Ashanti and Volta regions of Ghana and to what extent can these weaving techniques from the three regions be integrated?

The research provides a baseline data which sets the pace for further research. Moreover, it would serve as a reference material for researchers who will want to investigate weaving techniques in Ghana, give an opportunity to weavers from the three regions to exchange ideas on the trade, give an opportunity for the integration of woven strips from three regions in producing fabric and thus offer the research a national focus where people look at the weaving sector with an integrated approach.

Types of Loom

The loom is the most important and vital equipment used in the weaving of '*fugu*', '*Kete*' and '*Kente*'. Loom comes in sizes and forms. Hatch (1993), posits that the shuttle-less loom has no shuttle. This is replaced by a discrete length of yarn taken from an external supply package which passes through the shed at the appropriate time in the weaving cycle. This means that it is not every loom that uses shuttle. Hatch further describes other looms such as Rapier looms which use rapier, a rod or a steel tape, to carry filling yarns through the shed from a stationary yarn package at one end of the loom. This gives the width of the fabric to be woven. Another is the Air-jet loom which uses a jet of air to carry the filling through the shed (Ross & Adedze, 1998).

The initial propulsive force is provided by a main nozzle with the electronically controlled relay nozzles providing additional booster jets to carry the yarn farther. This is followed by a water-jet that uses a higher-pressure jet of water to carry the filling yarns through the shed. The filling yarn is drawn from a stationary package at the side of the loom, enters measuring drums and continues through a guide to a water nozzle, where a jet of water carries it through a shed after the beat-up of the filling. Filling streaks in fabrics are rare due to minimal tension on the

filling yarn during intersection. The looms described above are faster than the locally made looms which the researcher encountered.

Weaving Process

The integration of 'Fugu', 'Kente', and 'Kete' weaves is formed by the interlacement of warp (ends) and weft (picks or fillings) yarns which interlace at right angles with each other according to the type of weave required. Korankye (2010), states that all woven fabrics are made with two or more sets of yarns interlaced at right angles. The author further states that woven fabrics are widely used. To her, weaving is one of the oldest and most widely used methods for making fabric.

Korankye (2010: 302) defines weaving as "interlacing of two sets of yarns to form a fabric". The author illustrated the broadloom parts of the loom and its accessories. He describes the 'Kente' loom and showed its parts as well as the process of weaving. Considering what the author illustrated about the two looms, the researcher deduced that the broad loom produces wider cloth width than the 'kente' or narrow loom. However the three Regions chosen use the narrow loom in weaving, indicating that it is possible to integrate.

Once the filling yarns have been prepared and the warp yarns have been set in place, the loom goes through the primary principles of weaving: that was Shedding, Picking, Beating Up and Letting off (Asmah, 2014).

Shedding

The shed is formed by raising the harnesses to form an open area between the sets of warps. The formation of the shed is known as shedding.

Picking

While the shed is open, the yarn is transported across the opening to lay a filling yarn across the width of the loom. The insertion of the filling is known as picking. A single filling yarn is known as a pick. Speed of weaving machines is generally expressed as the number of picks per minute or meters of filling inserted per minute. Speed obviously is related to the width of the loom and wider looms; weaving wider fabrics, would require more time for one filling insertion.

Beating Up

Beating up is done with the reed, the comb like device that pushes the filling yarn close against the woven fabric (to the fell of the cloth) so as to make it more compact.

Letting Off

As the woven fabric is formed, it must be moved or let off from the warp beam and taken up on the cloth beam to make room for the formation of more fabric (Asmah, 2004). All these functions are harmonised so that they occur in the appropriate sequence and do not interfere with one another.

African textiles are a part of African cultural heritage. In most African countries such as Nigeria, Uganda and Ghana, the weavers are men while women spun threads (Picton & Mack,

1979). Example of African woven textiles is ‘*Asooke*’ fabric by the *Yoruba* people in Nigeria (Picton and Mack, 1979).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The procedures for weaving the proposed ‘*Kente*’ and ‘*kete*’ were Designing, Yarn preparation, Warping, Raddling, Beaming, Heddlings, Reeding, Tie-up and actual Weaving. Procedure for weaving ‘*Fugu*’ went through the same process with the exception of Raddling and Beaming.

Designing

Having gone through the various designs and their philosophical meanings ‘*Tangaran*’, a cloth named after a famous *Gonja* chief, ‘*Adwinasa*’ which comprises all the weaves at the time the kente cloth was created and ‘*wargagba*’ which symbolises high achievement were selected. These were woven with the organic dyed yarns. An integrated strip in which comprises ‘*Nwotua*’ (Snail shell), ‘*Nkofo*’, Snake, Fish, ‘*Ekye*’ (hat) and Lizard design embedded were Fig. 5 to Fig 11 indicates the designs in the integrated woven strip.

Spinning Yarn onto large Bobbin

The dyed yarns were placed on the skein winder as in (plate 1) and wound on to large bobbins to form hanks with the aid of bobbin winder (plate 2). After obtaining the required number of warp ends and total number of hanks needed for the warp, the next process was to lay the warp.



Plate 1: Skein Winder (‘Ata’)

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork



Plate 2: Bobbin Winder (‘Emor’)

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork

Warp Laying

Yarns wound on bobbins were arranged on a spool rack to help align the warp yarns in parallel formation to prevent entanglement during weaving. Pegs were nailed into the ground as a guide that held the crosses of the yarn. The yarns were then moved to and from these pegs till the total length and number of ends needed were acquired (see plate 3).



Plate 3: The Spool Rack

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork



Plate 4: Warping Process

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork

Securing the Crosses and Creating a Chain

After obtaining the total number of warp ends, the crosses were properly secured before removing the yarn from the ground. These were preserved by passing a string through the opening at one end of the crosses from the peg (plate 5). To remove the warp, pegs were first removed and the finger placed through the opening created. The yarns were then held firmly on the wrist and passed on the hand to form a loop till the whole warp was made handy (Plate 6).

Other weaving process such as raddling, Heddling and reeding were done.



Plate 5: Securing the Crosses

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 6: Yarn Roll in Chain

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork

Beaming

The long warp was stretched taut and rolled onto the warp beam on the loom. During this process the raddle together with the warp threads were tied onto the slay board of the loom. The warp ends were then stretched taut from the front of the loom where the weaver sits and rolled onto the cloth roller making sure that an even tension was maintained. This was done to prevent slackness during weaving from either the selvedge or any other part of the warp.

The remaining warp yarns were cut off and loosely knotted in front of the raddle. The top part of the raddle was then removed and the two flat shed sticks were pushed to the back roller to maintain the process. The warp threads were ready for heddling.



Plate 7: Stretched yarns

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork

Heddling

After beaming, the warp ends were threaded through the eyes of the heddles or healds, which were suspended by the heddle frames. (See Plate 8)



Plate 8: Heddling Process

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork

Reeding

After heddling, all the yarns were then passed through the dents of the reed. The reed was fixed to a cord and tied to a stick to make it firm in the reading process. A reed hook was the right tool for reeding, but in this case a small knife was used to push the yarn through each dent of the reed.

Tie-up

The loose ends were tied in front of the reed (see plate 9). A small rode was slipped through the knotted yarns. These were hooked with a strong cord and knot, and then stretched to hook the roller making sure the tie-up was of equal length to provide a proper opening of the shed. The treadle was hanged evenly and parallel to the same height from the ground within easy reach of the foot to create a very good shed.



Plate 9: Tie – up

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork

Weft Preparation

Weft yarns interlace the warp yarns to create the fabric. Yarns were wound onto bobbins made from bamboo sticks for weaving.

Test Weaves

After the processes, a test weave was conducted to ascertain the correct layout and weave before the actual work commenced. (Plate 10 shows test conducted on the plain weave for the chosen cloth). Having done this the main weaving process takes on.



Plate 10: Text Weaves

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork

The primary principles of weaving: that is Shedding, Picking, Beating Up and Letting off explain in theories of weaving in Literature were followed throughout the weaving of '*fugu*', '*kente*' and '*kete*'.



Plate 11: Weaving In Progress

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 12: Finished Cloth

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 13: The Weaving Process

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 14: Finished Cloth

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 16: Weaving process

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 17: The finished cloth

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork

Integrating the Three Woven Strips into a Cloth

The research was to integrate cultural weaves (*'fugu'*, *'kente'* and *'kete'*) from the three regions into a common woven cloth. Plain weave was the commonest weave that runs through the three chosen cloths (*'fugu'*, *'kente'* and *'kete'*). Plain weave involves the interlacement of thread warp and weft, passing alternately under and over consecutive threads uniformly throughout the fabric (Sackey, 1995). Every thread in warp series interlaces with the weft thread, thereby producing a comparatively firm and strong fabric. A complete unit of the plain weave occupies a warp thread and a pick of weft. This technique was adapted as it runs through the meaning of three chosen cloths.

Another technique employed was the tapestry. It was a technique used in both *'kente'* and *'kete'* weaving. This technique differs from other forms of patterned weaving in that no weft threads are made to carry the full width of the fabric, except by an occasional design that occupies the whole width of the fabric. Each unit of the pattern was woven with a weft thread of the required colour that was inserted, back and forth only over the section where that colour appears in the design. The weft threads out-numbered the warps to the extent that they conceal them completely. The warps in a finished tapestry appear as marked parallel ridges in the texture or grain of a fabric, according to their coarseness or fineness.

'Kete' has a special weaving technique that has its design and arrangement in both the warp and the weft yarns. Cloths like *'wagagba'*, double stone have their design and arrangement in the warp. In this technique, five heddles were arranged on the loom. The design, unlike tapestry that has the weft yarn cut after a line of weave, was woven alongside the plain weave. It uses two or more shuttles depending on the design and the colours of yarns needed.

The project employed plain and tapestry weave for the integrated woven cloth. As stated in the literature, *'fugu'* has stripes; *'kente'* has geometric shapes, while *'kete'* has a human figure, geometric shapes and animal motif arrangements. The same technique of *'fugu'* that has its design running through the warp laid was employed for this project.

Joining of the Woven Strips

Woven strips from Northern, Volta, Ashanti regions and the integrated strips were joined to form one cloth. This was done by overlapping each strip of about 1/8 of an inch. They were then pinned, tacked and sewn with the zigzag stitches for smoothness. Tacked stitches were then removed after sewing and the raw edges neatened by turning a hem of one inch. In plate 3.50 is the finished joined strip.



Plate 18 Joining the Woven Fabrics

Source: Researcher Fieldwork



Plate 19: The joined strips

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork

The processes involved in the creation of the fabric, indicates that unity can change the face of indigenous woven fabrics in the country. The cloth conveys harmony and unity in diversification hence the name *Unity Builds a Nation*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Some stripe pieces of '*fugu*' were identified, picked, studied, selected and adapted for this study. Among them were '*Kanyiti*' (patience is good), '*Bubruulonso*' (Don't put me to shame), '*Bore Enyinche*' (God knows), '*Tangaran*' (A name after a chief), '*Singbiuwura*' with red, (named after a chief of '*Kpemb*'), '*Aliadege*' with red (Evil Gossip), '*Atikila Firichu*' with red, (groundnut), '*Kitalampe*' (Spotted Beans), '*Kikogi*' '*N'ishi*' (Eyes of Giraffe), '*Kilangofa*' (Millet leaves), '*Katere Rule*' (Canon Paddle). All these are symbolic proverbial '*fugu*' cloths. A cloth such as '*Katere*' '*fugu*', talks about the paddle that is used by the fishermen in Daboya. The town operates a river transportation system which makes use of a canoe and its paddle is identified in the '*katere*' '*fugu*' cloth. '*Kilangofa*', was chosen for this study due in part to its dominant blue colour (a colour often portrayed in a *Gonja* '*fugu*'). Samples of the collected pieces are in plates 4.1 to 4.14.



Plate 20: 'Kakubu'

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 21: 'Kanyiti' (patience is good)

Source: Researcher/s Fieldwork



Plate 22: 'Bubruulonso'

(Don't put me to shame)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 23: Bore 'Enyinche'

(God knows)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 24: Angelina

(Named after GTP cloth)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 25: 'Tangaran'

(Named after a chief)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 26: 'Badari' (With Red)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 27: 'Singbiuwura' (With Red)

Named after a chief of *Kpembi*

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 28: 'Aliadege' (With Red)

(Evil Gossip)

Source: Researcher/s Fieldwork



Plate 29: 'Atikila Firichu' (With Red)

Groundnut (with red)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 30 'Kitalampe'

(Spotted Beans)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 31: 'Kikogi Nishi'

(Eyes of Giraffe)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork



Plate 32 ‘Kilangofa’

(Millet leaves)

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork



Plate 33: ‘Katere Ruale’

(Canoon Paddle)

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork

Names of ‘Kente’ Design

‘Kente’ is a traditional woven cloth from the Ashanti Region, designed with coloured yarns such as yellow, red, green, blue, black and white, all woven in different designed patterns. It creates its geometric designed patterns by the application of different weft coloured yarns. Traditional ‘Kente’ cloth expresses different proverbs or ideas through different designs. More than three hundred different ‘Kente’ designs have been recorded, and each one has its own particular message and motifs. Some of the motifs are;

Name of motif: ‘Nkyimkyim’

This literally means zigzag. Life is not always as smooth as a straight line. Prudent living is a balance between a zig and a zag hence the symbol of a zigzag in ‘Kente’.

Name of motif: ‘Sekan’

This is inspired by the practical utility of knives. Symbolising; practicality, efficiency, productivity and craftsmanship. This also symbolises the sharpness of the mind.

Name of motif: ‘Fahia kotwere’ Agyeman

Literally means lean on *Agyeman* when in financial need. This Symbolises hope, faith, sharing and benevolence.

Name of motif: ‘Sika Mpaboa’

The motif is derived from the top of the native sandals normally worn by royals and chiefs of Ashanti hence the name.

Name of motif: ‘Ekye’

This literally means a hat and inspired by the social uses of hats. There is a saying that the ‘knee never takes the hat when the head is present’. Symbolises; status and responsibility.

Name of motif: ‘Anintonwi’

This means eyebrows enhance facial appearance and gives a unique personality to an individual and thus symbolises beauty, enhancement, elegance and uniqueness.

Name of motif: ‘Gye Nyame’

This means except God. It expresses the belief in one Supreme Being and that one should fear nothing except God. Symbolises attributes of God as Omnipotent, omniscience and omnipresent. It is one of the significant symbols among the 'Adinkra' symbols and it is normally used to produce flying ties.

Name of motif: 'Abusuakro ye'

This literally means family unity; it portrays the stylised image of the family, which consists of different individuals who are all bound together in unity. It thus symbolises love, unity and peace.

Name of motif: 'Nwotua'

This literally means snail shells. This was inspired by the texture of the snail shell which is made up of black, brown and yellow short vertical strips in a horizontal row. The name symbolises endurance and self-containment.

Names of 'Kete' Design

'Kete' is a traditional woven cloth from the Volta Region, which has colours such as muted yellow, red, green, blue, black and white, all woven in different designs and combinations. It creates a tweed effect by the application of different coloured yarns in the warp and weft. 'Kete' has features and forms such as human beings, animals, shells, cowries and household objects like combs, chairs and tables. Traditional cloths from this region come with its own motifs. Some of the motif names are;

'Babadu'

This literally means, 'Termites eaten'. The appearance of this particular cloth shows the way termites devour items into smallest particles. This means death is inevitable.

'Ehianege'

This literally means, 'calls for money'. According to Dennis (2004), this comes from the proverb, 'wealth promotes manliness' which makes reference to wisdom, creativity, and action orientation and power that man possesses.

'Kpevi'

Literally means 'small stone'. This is woven by using two different warps at the same time on the same loom with the warp threads stretched for a distance and tied to two stones which acts as warp beams. The designs created by these two stones are what the cloth has derived its name from. The name of this cloth also represents the systems of authority which ensures cohesion and balance of power.

'Suklikpe'

Literally means, 'cube of sugar'. It symbolises mutual love, sincerity, appreciation and acknowledgement. There is a saying that ungratefulness is a great sin of humanity. This has a different colour background like red, blue, green, white and yellow.

‘Sasa’

This is a cloth made of strips of many different designs sewn together and symbolises acceptance of unity among a clan or group of people. This has the same meaning as ‘*Agurinuuse*’ motif. It literally means Holding of Hands and symbolises unity.

Similarities and Differences in ‘*fugu*’, ‘*kente*’ and ‘*kete*’

‘*Fugu*’, ‘*Kente*’ and ‘*Kete*’ have techniques that identify them. These cloths have some similarities and differences that make them unique.

Differences in ‘*fugu*’, ‘*kente*’ and ‘*kete*’**Table 4.5 Differences in ‘*fugu*’, ‘*kente*’ and ‘*kete*’**

‘<i>Fugu</i>’	‘<i>Kente</i>’	‘<i>Kete</i>’
Traditional looms	Traditional and improved looms	Traditional looms
Designs are laid in the warp.	Designs are created in the weft.	Designs are created in the warp and weft.
‘ <i>Fugu</i> ’ designs are lineal in shape.	‘ <i>Kente</i> ’ has abstract shapes	‘ <i>Kete</i> ’ has natural shapes and forms of animals, household articles and human beings.
Red, Yellow, Green, Blue, cream and White	Red, Yellow, Green, Blue, Black and White	Red, Golden Yellow, Green, Blue, brown, black and White
Plain	Plain, Twill and Tapestry	Plain, Twill and Tapestry

Similarities in ‘*fugu*’, ‘*kente*’ and ‘*kete*’

The indigenous yarn dyeing and weaving products such as ‘*kete*’, ‘*Kente*’ and ‘*fugu*’ were observed during the research. ‘*Fugu*’, ‘*kente*’ or ‘*kete*’ weaving were done with the traditional looms, however; the loom structure differs from one cultural centre to another.

Designing for the weaves within the local weaving industry is conceived and planned by the traditional weavers from memory and cut out pieces kept in polythene bags. In finding out the reasons behind these practices, the weavers said their design concepts are developed based on their weaving experiences on the loom over a long period of time. It was noticed, that there were no formal designs that can be followed to weave a fabric, but only through the informal way of education where fathers and older members of the community transfer their knowledge in design to the younger generations.

The high price of traditional textiles is as a result of the high cost of production relative to high prices of yarns, dyes and duration of production of these fabrics. The results of the research revealed, that there are no recognised open markets for indigenous textiles except for the *Agbozume* ‘*Kete*’ Market in the Volta Region and the *smock*/‘*fugu*’ market in Daboya. It was also found that the existence of the *Agbozume* ‘*Kete*’ Market gained recognition for ‘*kete*’ business. Apart from the earlier mentioned markets for traditional woven textiles, the bulk of marketing is done by the individual technically known as trekking.

The Concept behind the Integrated designs

The idea of cloth wearing has existed among different ethnic groups in Ghana. Regarding Indigenous cloth, the entire country depends on the weaves that comes from specifically Northern, Ashanti and Volta region for their supply until recently where they switched for foreign fabric because of it relatively low price. The hand woven '*fugu*' is attributed to the people in the north, the '*Kente*' cloth to the *Akan* fraternity or the Asante's and '*Kete*' to the *Ewes* all of Ghana signifying an aspect of fashion that reflect their arts and culture. This variety of '*Fugu*', '*Kente*' and '*Kete*' patterns have been invented by the custodians of these sets of weavers over the years. Each of the weave designs has traditional concept associated with them.

The selected designs from the three chosen regions connote abstract and symbolic representations. The framework of their composite art included layout, pattern, motif, sketch, draft, form and arrangement of line(s) which are all synonymous to each other. These foundations serve a functional purpose of providing aesthetic pleasure to the user of these weaves. '*Fugu*', '*kente*' and '*kete*' designs selected for this study were chosen because of the philosophical underpinnings of the motifs that constitute the designs concepts which are in effect common to all three communities who weave these cloths. '*Nwotua*' (snail shell), '*Nkofo*', '*Ekye*' (hat), fish, snake, crocodile and cowries were the designs used in the integrated cloth.

'Nwotua' (snail shell)

'*Nwotua*' is a '*kente*' design that has no variation in its visual pattern arrangement either in the number and type of colours or in the arrangement of these colours. The particular weave design adapted the designed pattern on the back of the snail. It is also an all shuttle weave. The traditional colours normally used are red and yellow, which interchange in a very attractive manner as a result of the following weaving technique described by Asmah (2014). Firstly, the treadle of the first heddle is pressed down and the shuttle loaded with the red weft is thrown, then the second treadle of the second heddle is pressed down and a second shuttle loaded with a yellow weft thrown. By repeating this arrangement, the yellow runs alternatively side by side. By a simple interchanging of the shuttle arrangement of the two, colour changes from red and yellow to yellow and red.

Snails are able to adapt to a variety of living conditions and do not require large amounts of food to live. They have soft un-segmented body covered with shell with different shapes and sizes. Most snails have spiralled shells whilst others have coiled cones or are macaroni shaped which they crawl into and close off when in danger of heat, cold or from an enemy. With all the dangers surrounding the snail, it crawls around homes and farms which make it appear to be very brave.

Snails are eaten in the Volta and Ashanti regions of Ghana while in Northern Region they are used for protection and as an omen. Due to the delicate and slow nature of the Snail, it is believed to convey steady progress of life-path. Just as the elderly grow in age, wisdom and experience over the years, their strength is not as the youth, but their knowledge and wisdom cannot be measured to that of the youth. This is depicted in colour as the snail and such wisdom is what the youth of today needs in terms of progress. The challenges and troubles that confront people in life calls for the support of the elderly, with much experience in life to solve these challenges people faced in life. Just as the elder is revered and preserve His community with his/her wisdom, the snail, though not eaten by the people of the Northern Region, it is highly

revered and used as an omen to protect and drive away evil spirits and thieves. This brings to the fore the fact that the snail is accepted and utilized by all hence the use of the design 'Nwotua' which symbolises power, wealth, protection and bravery.

'Ekye' (hat)

A hat is a head covering worn for protection, ceremonies and other religious activities. It is also used as a fashion accessory. They indicate the wearer's social status and responsibility even among militia. The hat referred to as 'Zikligo' in Dagomba Language, 'Ekye' in Ashanti and *kuku* in Volta explains the status of the wearer from the way it is worn. When hats are worn over the ears, it symbolises that the wearer is in the silent mood. Its a way of wearing can send messages or identify the wearer social status (Kquofi, Amate & Tabi-Agyei, 2013). The type of hat worn depends on its usage. Hats currently are worn for fashion by all Ghanaians whether young or old. The concept of using hats on the head is a mark of dignity and prestige to the wearer and is the same from all the three selected Regions. To this end, the design of this study, 'Ekye', was chosen. The design, 'Ekye' used in this project makes the integrated woven cloth more of a social cloth that conveys one's status.

Cowrie ('Hotsui'-Volta Region, 'Cedie'-Ashanti and 'lag-kpara'- Northern Region)

Cowries in the olden days signify money. It is a small shell used as pendant, earring, and buttons or as trimmings by some designers in the country. Traditionally, they are used in Northern, Ashanti and Volta Regions by fortune tellers to predict happenings in the lives of people in the hope to redeem them with the exception of death. Wealthy or rich people in every society are much cherished and respected. The reason, being that, their wealth, whether genuinely or dubiously acquired, is capable of solving problems that come their way with the exception of death, which cannot be bribed or purchased by wealth (Dzokoto, Mensah, & Opare-Henaku, 2010).

This buttresses the fact that, wealth or riches is not everything and so nobody should boast of his/her riches because despite ones earthly vanities, everybody will eventually die leaving all this property behind. A cloth from Volta Region that has cowry as a motif is known as 'wagagba'. This literally means 'though man does not live by bread alone, man's desire always is to be in abundance of food (plenty of corn powder) in the house (in a pan)'. This yearning for the wearer to remain wealthy throughout his/her life shows the equivalent value Ewes plays on wealth (or the abundance of corn) and that of cowry hence the justification to use this symbol.

The philosophical interpretation of the wearer of this propose integrated woven cloth with the cowries turns to admonish that money is not the ultimate hence, counselling people to have respect for each other to make the world a better place to live.

'Nkofe'

The means of communication in Ghana in the olden days were the use of the 'gongon' (drumming beats) or horn blowing. This when blown, was to gather people for a piece of information from the chief. There are different instruments used in the Ashanti Region. One of them is the 'Nkofe'. It is a long-trumpet ensemble in Kumasi that shares its range in part with 'ntahera', 'kwakwrannya', and 'nkontwema'. Its name derives from 'kofe', from Ga language. 'Kon' in the Ga language means "horn," and 'fe', means "to blow". This is a horn blowing

instrument. It is one of the seven ivory trumpet ensembles. The '*nkofo*' which leads Asante hene's to Durbar grounds is believed to be used to announce his arrival.

The '*Nkofo*' was created by the fourth Asanti hene, Osei Kwadwo for his son to play with but now it serves important royal duties. It has a chief called '*nkofo hene*' who makes sure the '*Nkofo*' is protected and ready at every Durbar. '*Nkofo*' now means service and loyalty to the people. Unlike '*nkofo*' there is another musical instrument like '*dono*' that announces the presence of chiefs to Durbar grounds. They can be found in the Volta and Northern Regions. Its philosophy is to praise the chief. These philosophical connotations make the integrated fabric one which can be won by dignified and loyal people who are ready to serve their communities and nations.

'Fahia kotwere' Agyeman

The knowledge about Ghanaian names gives insight into its culture, philosophy, thought, environment, religion, language and culture. *Agyeman* is an *Akan* personal name given to a fourteenth male born. Personal names can be analysed by a combination of both philosophical and anthropological notions. Agyekum, (2006) reiterate that some Ghanaians attach much importance to names. He explains further that the symbolic nature of these names and their interpretation depicts their religious beliefs and their interaction with foreign cultures.

In every culture, names have cultural and social contexts that identify the bearer. The *Akans* therefore have the saying that '*nsemmne ntinayekyee din*' 'it is because of criminal acts that names were shared'. This is to say that every person in this world has a name that solely identifies and marks him/her from all other peoples in the world (Agyekum 2006). The term '*Agye*' means (saved) and *man* means (nation). *Agyeman* therefore means saviour of the nation. The '*kente*' design '*Fahia kotwere*' *Agyeman* literally means lean on *Agyeman* when in financial need and this can also be interpreted to mean that lean on the saviour of the nation when in need. Names in Northern and Volta Regions are also important. There are names when mention can tell where a person is coming from. '*Abudu*' or '*Andani*' are *Dagombers* names that identify with royalty. '*Agyekum*' or '*Asare*' is Ashanti family names while '*Afeke*', '*Agbesi*' or '*Agbenyo*', are family names from Volta Region. The design Symbolises hope, faith, sharing and benevolence. The researcher therefore believes that this project will metaphysically convey the attributes of '*Agyeman*'.

Snake

The snake is a wise and calm animal. The snake (known as '*waho*' in Northern Region) is a mythological and totemic figure believed to protect families who pay homage to it. Traditionally, a totem is a representation of a clan or family. The lifestyle and character of the snake reflects on the life of the people. The sacred totemic pythons are believed to reveal themselves to those who are believed to be pure in heart. Snakes are symbolic of health and healing. They are considered protectors of babies, and are often believed to offer guardianship over families especially in the northern region. The snake also serves as a god in the Northern, Volta and Ashanti Region. It is called '*Efa*' in Volta Region, '*Wahnahili*' in Northern Region and '*Asonowo*' (from '*Asona*' Tribe) in Ashanti Region. The symbolic snake means Rebirth, Wisdom and Healing (Attuquayefio, 2006).

There is a proverb in the Volta Region that says '*Da kuɛdzi, me tsiadzi o*'; meaning a snake that dies up never remains there. The proverb admonishes all evil doers to desist from their

wicked ways, for their evil ways will always come to light or have negative effects on them. The integrated woven cloth will in the same vein will command respect and morally reproach people of their evil ways.

Fish and Crocodile

The selected Regions are surrounded by rivers which produce different types of fishes. These fishes serve as food and give life to mankind when cooked, smoked or dried. Contextually the fish makes an appearance in certain seasons and brings happiness and fulfilment to humanity. Through observation, people have come to believe that fishes often display enormous attributes of adaptability and determination (Kyerematen, 1995). This signifies therapeutic and energetic experiences fishes give. Just as men depend on fishes for survival, so do crocodiles, a great harvester of fishes which lives both on land and in water. The adage that if a crocodile comes from the water and gives you a message one does not argue with it buttress the dependence of man on these creatures. The crocodile is known as '*Amebgor*' in the Volta region, '*denkyem*' in the Ashanti Region and '*nyebga*' in the Northern Region. Each Crocodile is believed to be a representation of a person in the village of *Paga*. There is a saying that if a crocodile dies, a person dies at *Paga* in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Diamond referred to in Ashanti region as '*denkyemboɔ*' literary meaning 'crocodile stone' in Ashanti Region derived its name from the crocodile. The crocodile is cherished like the Diamond and is reflected in the '*Adinkra*' proverbial symbols like '*Funtumfunefu- Denkyemfunefu*'

The fish and the crocodile symbolise reliability, adaptability, determination and interdependence. Symbols are powerful and often trigger unconscious stimuli of behaviours or emotional states. The potency of symbols evoked reflect almost the same meanings to people in all the cultures of Ghana and project the similar emotional feelings, hence the reason for their selection for the project.

' Kilangofa' leaf design

A cloth from Northern Region made of blue and white is known as '*Kilangofa*'. This literally means Millet leaf. It represents the traditional meal from the Northern Region. '*Kilangofa*' unlike '*wagagba*' represents man's desire for food. Traditionally Ghanaians are accommodative providing for all whether known or un-known. This reflects in the Northern, Ashanti and Volta Regions where water and food is offered to visitors. This design reminds the wearer to always reserve food (or millet) for unannounced visitors hence the justification to use this design.

The philosophical interpretation of the wearer of this proposed integrated woven cloth turns to admonish that it is important to reserve food as one does not know who will visit and when a visitor calls.

The Concept behind the Colours used in the Integrated Cloth

The power of colours is intense because colour influences mood, feeling, harmony and ambience. Though there are many colours in the world and different colours communicate different meanings to various people, the research used white, yellow, blue, and orange.

Traditional colours that reflect in the Ghanaian National flag are Red, Gold (Yellow), Green and Black with White been the spiritual colour of the fetish. Other colours such as, Blue, Orange, Violet, and Purple are solemnly used.

White – ‘Fitaa’ or ‘Fufuo’ (Ashanti), ‘Amadedexe’ (Volta) and ‘Zehpeli’ (Northern)

The colour white chosen represents the spiritual motivation, the ability to be open and receptive to the divine, or the spiritual world, that is unconcerned with worldly matters or ambition but reflects an inner illumination.

In Northern, Ashanti and Volta Regions, it symbolises contact with ancestral spirits, deities and other unknown spiritual entities such as ghosts. It is also used for spiritual purification, healing, sanctification rites and festive occasions. White colour is associated with innocence, cleanliness and purity, which creates a peaceful and relaxing interior. It is believed that a child is born ‘pure’, without sin therefore a white cloth is worn to adore a new born baby. Also, when a person dies, he/she returns to a ‘pure’ state again, therefore the dead is clothed with white which signifies the beginning and end of life. The choice of white in the integrated cloth is to signify the purity and newness of the wearers.

Blue – ‘Bibri’ or ‘Bibri’ (Ashanti), ‘Amadidi’ or ‘Blɔ’, (Volta) and ‘Vakahali’ (Northern)

Blue colour can be seen in all traditional hand woven cloths in Ghana. It reminds people of the sky and the ocean, which have a calming effect on people (Enninful, 2012). The blue colours are “soft and introspective” and help to stand out at the right moment. Most royal apparels like ‘fugu’, ‘kente’ and ‘kete’ have traces of blue in them. This symbolises infinity, calm, relaxation, coolness, tranquillity, good fortune, peacefulness, harmony and love related ideas. Blue is a cold colour and appears to recede from the eyes. This brings to light the importance of the use of blue in the integrated cloths that portray peacefulness, harmony and love.

Yellow – ‘Akoko Sraɛɛ’ (Ashanti), ‘Amakpadidi’ (Volta) and ‘Duzem’ (Northern)

The choice of the colour yellow for the integration was influenced by the rich minerals in the land. Yellow is associated with the sun, sunflower, gold, and egg yolk. “It relates to hot climates and lifts spirits. According to Enninful (2012), yellow is a luminous and vivid colour which conveys the idea of purity and symbolises sanctity, preciousness, royalty, wealth, spirituality, vitality, heat, happiness and fertility. Ghanaians adore the colour yellow as it symbolises the richness of the land. A woman dresses in gold during the marriage or after marriage for at least one week to show that she is newly married.

Orange – ‘Akutu’ (Ashanti), ‘Akutudidi’ (Volta) and ‘Dagn-kom’ (Northern)

Orange is the colour of ripped mango. It is between red and yellow on the spectrum of light on the traditional colour wheel. Its name is derived from the fruit. Orange colour has some characteristics of red and yellow such as brilliant and cheerful colour which gives the impression of warmth and appears to advance towards the observer. Therapeutically, it increases heart rate and circulation (Meyer, 1999).

Brown – ‘Ahabandada’ (Ashanti), ‘Amakpafufu’ (Volta) and ‘Zag-Tankpawu’ (Northern)

This is associated with the colour of Mother Earth. In most Ghanaian traditional homes clay pots brown in colour are used as water storage and for boiling medicine and for cooking. Brown is usually obtained from clay and dried leaves and is therefore associated with healing and the power to repel wicked spirits (Lystad, 1960).

Collectively as a Nation our existence or survival is controlled by the heavens and the earth. Our substance and survival are identified with the fruits of the earth and the freshness and refreshing reign of heaven and these two elements represents the brown and the blue colours in the integrated cloth.

The yellow and the orange reflect the wealth and the treasures that the Almighty God (*Twediapong Nyame*) offers to the nation. Such philosophy justifies the use of these colours.

The cloth conveys harmony and unity in diversification hence the name, 'unity is strength', 'dekawɔwɔme nuse le' (Volta Region), 'Nkabom ma ahooden' (Ashanti Region) and 'Nangban-yini n'nye yaa' (Northern Region)

CONCLUSION

The study identified weaving techniques, fabric designs and their meaning, cultural similarities and differences among the Northern, Ashanti and Volta Regions of Ghana. These were studied and analysed was for the integration of the three distinct weaves, namely '*Fugu*', '*Kente*', and '*Kete*' into one common fabric.

The study ought to serve as a plinth for weavers to collaborate with one another in the industries and assist students with broad ideas in weaving. The uniqueness is based on the product which, when widely used would foster unity among the chosen regions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having critically studied weaving techniques in Northern, Ashanti and Volta regions of Ghana the following recommendations have been made for implementation as an added advantage to weavers in Ghana:

1. Indigenous weavers must be encouraged on the importance of togetherness to integrate the regional woven strips. This will help weavers transform their product into more marketable apparel.
2. There must be collaboration between academia, indigenous weavers and government in order to assist in the integration. These may be through government-financed and academic supported researches to sustain local industries.
3. Considerable research effort should be directed to improving Ghanaian fabric, rather than constrain. This will improve weaver's ability to produce more fabric at less cost than is the situation at present. This is a potentially fertile area for further research into the extent to which indigenous hand woven fabrics can be cheaply produced in Ghana.
4. Similarly, a rich potential seam of research could break silence and taboos of a society and their function, and also for a much more dynamic study of why some women are not interested in the weaving villages, especially in the three study regions and the implications of this scenario for the labour market as far as the weaving industry is concerned.

It is hoped that it will contribute positively to influence the life experiences of Ghanaians by improving understanding of the need for an integration of traditional wear in Ghana.

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