

Identification of Symbols Used as Motifs in *Toghu* Production, a Cultural Heritage of Grassland People in Cameroon

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Abstract

The choice of symbols as a motif is very important and remains a powerful tool to convey messages behind a design. This study aims to enlighten designers, scholars in the field of fine arts, instructors of fashion clothing and textile, historians, vendors and consumers on the selection criteria of various symbols embodied as motifs on the adorn *toghu* cloth. Through audience interviews, exploration of archives, Internet sources and descriptive research methods, the authors have identified fifty symbols. The majority of the symbols used as motifs on *toghu* clothes were obtained in the national museums, while others were a collection from Ghana and Nigeria. Their significance was determined to be not limited to their aesthetics, but also served as a tool of communication of traditional wisdom, unity of purpose, feelings, distinguishing of persons, preservation of cultural values in the society and cross-cultural exchange amongst ethnic groups and across the borders. Some of the symbols from foreign cultures were found incorporated as motifs on *toghu* clothes, therefore, enhancing the apprehension of grassland cultural heritage and cultural sharing. To sum up, the findings from this research will ease the work of designers, scholars, teachers and creative industries during exchange activities at any level, including: teaching, trade fairs, open-door days, cultural festivals and other exhibitions. Also, it would assist consumers in making better choices.

Keywords

Toghu Cloth, Cultural Heritage, Symbols, Significance, Motifs

1. Introduction

Cameroon in the African continent is endowed and blessed with different traditions from various ethnic groups, amongst which fashion and clothing play a vital role in its socio-economic development. Today, the majority of Cameroonian cultural outfits are being transformed and utilized in contemporary fashion. In an attempt to capture the exhaustive nature of cultural outfits, Ngome (2016) iterated that *toghu* cloth is attributable to those from the North West and West regions; *sanja* (loin) and shirts inferable to the South West regions; *aqwada* or *gowndorra* traceable to the Hausas and Fulani groups of Northern Cameroon. The underline value of clothing entails a totality of traits and characters that are peculiar to a people to the extent that it marks them out from other peoples and distinctively from other human societies. The peculiar traits go on to include the people's social norms and values. Nonetheless, traditional clothes are at the threshold of rapid technological and communication pathways, and are trapped in a world of cultural diffusion and integration (Jong, 2014). In this way, it gives credence to an authentic identity in a society that cannot escape its cultural and physical environments during the process of social interaction. In a multi-ethnic country like Cameroon, cultural outfits are used in magnifying ethnic identities and have played out in economic, social and political arenas at different periods in the history of the country (Kah, 2014). Based on cultural considerations, *toghu* regalia has embodiments that depict priest caste, royalty, wealth, messenger caste, and nobility class systems within society (Ngome, 2016). This valuable cultural heritage multipurpose wear, produced often by hand or machine embroidery, and commercialized as well in the form of printed fabric, is known for its complexity, colourful appearance and numerous motifs.

As an important part of Cameroon art, *toghu* cultural heritage art has mostly been studied from the historical perspectives, inheritance and economic development. There is a lack of information about the demonstration on the selection of symbols used as motifs, which is a difficult process for designers and instructors of fashion clothing and textile in Cameroon. In addition, most of the designers and scholars have little or no knowledge about the significance of various symbols and motifs. Therefore, this paper sorts to enlighten designers, scholars in the field of fine arts, instructors of fashion clothing and textile, historians, vendors and consumers on the selection criteria and significance of various symbols and motifs embodied in *toghu* cloth, thereby, providing a quick reference for identification and understanding during exchange activities at any level.

2. Characteristics Analysis

The improvement of the audience's self-awareness on certain aspects concerning aesthetics, easy-to-read, diversity and other vital information, enables them to make appropriate decisions on their choices (Chen, 2022). This embraces a wide range of human phenomena and shows the dimensions of heritage passed down from one generation to another to promote a more progressive and dynamic so-

ciety. Cultural heritage of art promotes cultural dissemination and effectively alleviates the constraints of cross-language, while opening a window for foreigners to understand the culture of other countries intuitively, fast, authentically and comprehensively (Chen, 2022). The methods used for this research are explorative and descriptive type. Nonetheless, this section of the study identifies the symbols used as motifs to design the cultural heritage art *toghu*, as well as their significance. Different procedures were used for collection of vital information, which includes literature from archives, Internet, photography and interactive participation. The studies summarize them as cultural sharing of symbols and significance, motifs, aesthetics and interactive participation.

3. Interactive Participation

Participation, experience and interaction are the leads of art intangible cultural heritage compared to other art categories. The inheritors of the intangible cultural heritage of art may display their skills at the event site. The audiences through close contact and face-to-face communication with the inheritors could have a more intuitive understanding of the creation process of artworks, and rich tactile experience (Wang, 2012). Following the face-face interaction with a notable, who is a cultural consultant in the Mankon Fondom, the “ukara” fabric used today for *toghu* production, originated from Northern Nigeria. This cloth had traditional motifs, from which were extracted some symbolic icons by the grasslands people and used for *toghu* production. On the embellished cultural outfit are found motifs such as rectangular boxes, fish, scorpions, crocodiles, hands in friendship, war, work, masks, moons, and stars (Aborogong, 2015). These underscore the iconic value of the “ukara” cloth, which is used presently in decorating the seating backgrounds of all the Fons (chiefs) in the North West region of Cameroon. Besides, the “ukara” cloth, there are different types of garments designed and worn by the North-Westerners. Among the different types of garments, we have the gorgeous wear (Figure 1) and sang (Figure 2). The gorgeous wear is used in any ceremony and could be worn by anyone in the society. Sang has the full moon symbol embedded on “ukara” fabric or on velvet; and is worn by classes of Fons (chiefs) and other title holders, conferred by the powerful traditional rulers, in the North West region (Aborogong, 2015). These traditional rulers, who are also members of other secret societies, are the law makers in the palace and play a vital role in enthronement of the new Fon, when the old gets missing. Also, they are delegated to accompany the Fon in any occasion. Nowadays, the fabrication of *toghu* cloth using hand and machine embroidery is not limited to “ukara” fabric, but also involves the use of velvet, pigger, organza and cotton as well as commercialized printed fabrics (Figures 1-6).

4. Cultural Sharing of Symbols and Significance

Symbols are elements in the iconography of a particular subject or type of subject that is seen in other works, or may form the main subject of the piece of art

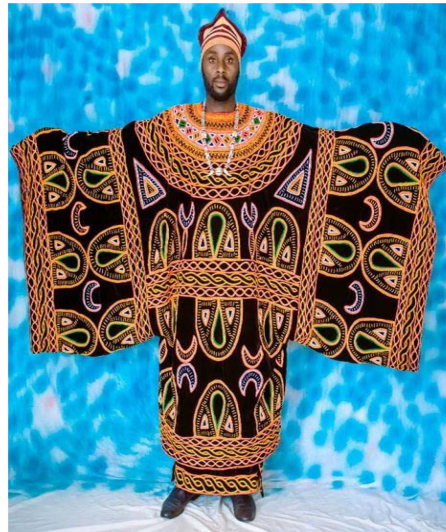


Figure 1. Gorgeous wear worn by a model, marked on velvet using hand embroidery.



Figure 2. Sang, comprising *ukara* cloth mixed with velvet and marked using hand embroidery.



Figure 3. Commercialized printed *toghu* fabric.



Figure 4. Machine embroidery *toghu* design. Source: Clikulture.com, 2021.



Figure 5. *Ukara* cloth. Source: Posh Magazine, 2019.



Figure 6. Hand embroidery *toghu* clothes, carrying different motifs, design on cotton, velvet and modified with organza.

work (Alain & Jemes, 2004). The study of a symbol cannot be carried out independent of its social context, because it represents the vent aesthetical value in the work of art and the sense of beauty that is epitomized on the design. In the North West region of Cameroon, symbols play an essential role in distinguishing rulers from their subjects. The cultural heritage incorporates the collective wisdom of the working people and the art forms are collectively created, developed, shared and inherited by the general public (Chen, 2022). These art forms involve painting, drawing, photography, music, poetry, fine art, decorative arts and fashion. They, actually aid in the preservation of cultural values at different era. In this section, we present a collection of symbols in fashion, embodied as motifs on *toghu* cloth. Some of these symbols originate from the nation museums and others are from different countries (Tables 1-7). Amongst the numerous symbols, are designs of the calabash representing rural and home utensils; fish for knowledge, transformation, creativity, eternity and femininity; full moon stands for wonder, shadow, renewal, and mystery; while the spider denotes creativity, and is the weaver of the fabric for life (Table 1). The Fish bone or spine design is commonly associated with water element and represents stability, balance, acceptance and tranquillity; snakes for healing and re-birth; lizards for conservation and self-protection, spiritual growth, opportunity for new beginning and the shedding of old habits or behaviours that no longer served you.

Table 1. Symbols, significance and origin.

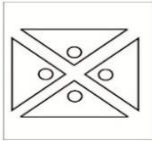

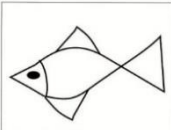


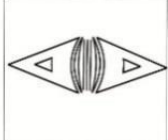
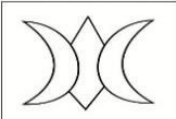

Names and Symbols	Significance	Origin of Symbols
 Alternate rectangles and dots design.	Represent wealth and power to the people in the grasslands.	<i>Ukara</i> cloth from Nigeria.
 Tiger teeth design.	Indicates power, good luck, patience, wisdom and longevity.	From land wild animals' element. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Fish design.	Illustrates knowledge, transformation, creativity, eternity and feminist.	From water animals' element, (Banbanlaga). Source: North West Royal Museum, 12 th March 2017.
 Full moon design.	Expression of wonder, shadow, renewal, and mystery. That is why they call it the "sang" and it is designed for notables only. The moon in due sense can also be seen as time, cycle, balance, passivity, influence transition and emotion of the people.	From the earth element. Source: North West Royal Museum, 12 th March 2017.
 Calabash design.	Symbol of rural and home utensils.	Element from plan. Source: North West Royal Museum, 12 th March 2017.
 Siekles design.	Symbol of agriculture (worker-peasant, alliance and labour).	Source: North West Royal Museum, 12 th March 2017.
 The half-moon and lozenge design.	Symbolizes maximum strength, good luck, fortune, good health, success in the imperial examination, business, or a wish to avert misfortune from evil ghosts and spirits.	Element from the earth. Source: North West Royal Museum, 12 th March 2017.
 Sheaves design.	Symbol of storage or display of objects.	From craft objects. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.

Table 2. Continuation of symbols, significance and origin.

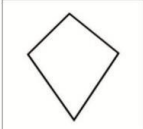
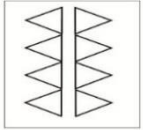


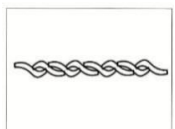
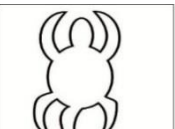

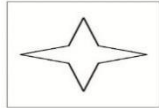

Names and Symbols	Significance	Origin of Symbols
 Lozenge design.	Lozenge symbolizes bounty and its shape mimics that of a field sown with crops.	Source: North West tradition fabric.
 Fish bone or spine design.	Are commonly associated with water element and represents stability, balance, acceptance and tranquillity.	<i>Ukara</i> cloth from Nigeria.
 Spider design.	The spider symbolizes creativity and is the weaver of the fabric for life.	From home creature. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Door way design.	Symbol of entrance representing space in a wall through which you enter or leave a room or building.	From home creature. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Snake design.	Snake symbolizes healing and rebirth in the North West region of Cameroon.	From land animal element. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Lizard design.	Lizard design stands for conservation and self-protection to the people in the grasslands of Cameroon. It also represents spiritual growth, opportunity for new beginning and the shedding of old habits or behaviours that no longer served you.	From land animal element. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Cup design.	Represents spiritual truth, unity among families and all villages in the grasslands.	From both religion, Hausa cattle men and Christine's in the grass land. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Star design.	Symbol of knowledge, goodness and truth.	From the earth element. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Half-moon design.	Illustrates the crescent moons, birth cycles and fertility in womanhood, female power, transition, creativity and growth, waning and waxing.	From the earth element. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.

Table 3. Continuation of symbols, significance and origin.


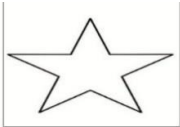
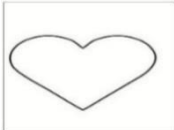
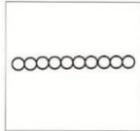




Names and Symbols	Significance	Origin of Symbols
 Keli-eye design.	Indicates the mask, which is used for rituals in the North West region of Cameroon.	From the craft work. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Five-pointed star.	Symbol of serer religion and the universe.	From the Earth element. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Heart design.	Represents love, charity, joy compassion, unity, cohesion, sensuality, femininity attraction and mentoring/reflection. It is used in rituals, with the goal to strengthen relationships and human feelings. It is being recognized across other cultures and different countries as a symbol for love, charity and joy.	Source: North West Royal Museum, 12 th March 2017.
 Chain design.	Symbol of unity and prosperity.	Element from the earth. Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Double moon with dots.	Stands for maturity, aesthetic sensibility, direction, and achievements.	Element from the earth. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Peace plant.	Indicates peace between families and neighbouring villages.	From plant element on earth. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 God is in the heavens.	Symbol of hope and reminder that God's dwelling place is in heaven, and he can listen to all our prayers and problems.	Adopted traditional symbols from the <i>Adinkra</i> cloth from Ghana. Source: http://www.adinkrasymboles.org/ .
 Fence.	Illustrates love, security and safety to the grasslands peoples of Cameroon. Also a special place of rest and peace and an ideal residence.	Adopted traditional symbols from the <i>Adinkra</i> cloth From Ghana. Source: http://www.adinkrasymboles.org/ .

Table 4. Continuation of symbols, significance and origin.

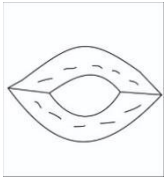

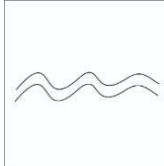
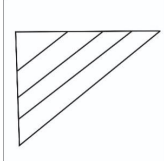

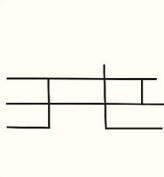
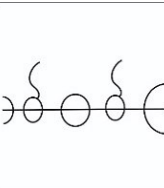
Names and Symbols	Significance	Origin of Symbols
 Kola nuts.	Kola is common and widely recognized cultural symbol in Africa. It is a fruit of the kola tree. It means earth, peace and togetherness in North West region of Cameroon as well as in other African cultures.	From the earth. Is the fruit of life to human. Source: Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Double gong.	Denotes palace authorities transmitting information to the public.	From North West traditional musical instrument. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Royal-sacred room.	Symbolizes power and sacred information handled by the fons and nobles in the North West region of Cameroon.	From crafted element. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 House and palaces of the nobles.	Symbol of class, authority and power. The house and palaces of the nobles is a sitting room where nobles in the North West region sit and take decision on matters happening in their communities.	From crafted element. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Red feather.	Symbol of statue and greatness in the North West region of Cameroon.	From domestic births animals. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Royal field.	Indicates joy during cultural activities in the communities.	From <i>ukara</i> cloth. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 Witchcraft.	Symbol of witchcraft practices in the grasslands of Cameroon.	From <i>ukara</i> cloth. Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.

Table 5. Continuation of symbols, significance and origin.

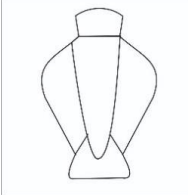
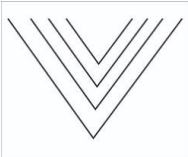
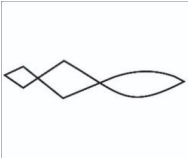
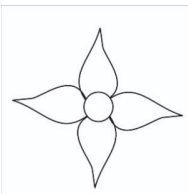












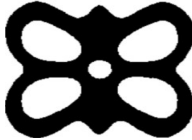

Names and Symbols	Significance	Origin of Symbols
 <p data-bbox="316 504 424 526">Royal bird.</p>	Symbol of royal bird.	Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 <p data-bbox="268 720 469 741">House of the weaver.</p>	Symbol of craft work	Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 <p data-bbox="336 935 408 957">Twins.</p>	Another form of lizard representing twins in the ancestral society.	Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 <p data-bbox="316 1194 424 1215">Sun flower.</p>	Symbol of light.	Source: Bafut Royal Museum, 15 th March 2017.
 <p data-bbox="284 1431 456 1453">“Wooden comb”.</p>	Illustration of beauty and cleanliness which is mostly desirable as feminine qualities. In Adinkra, it represents abstract qualities of feminine goodness, love and care.	Adopted traditional symbols from the Adinkra cloth from Ghana. Source: http://www.adinkrasymboles.org/ .
 <p data-bbox="213 1647 520 1668">“That which remove bad luck”.</p>	Symbol of good fortune and sanctity.	Adopted traditional symbols from the Adinkra cloth from Ghana. Source: http://www.adinkrasymboles.org/ .
 <p data-bbox="252 1884 485 1905">Love never loses it way.</p>	Symbol of power and love.	Adopted traditional symbols from the Adinkra cloth From Ghana, source: http://www.adinkrasymboles.org/ .

Table 6. Continuation of symbols, significance and origin.

Names and Symbols	Significance	Origin of Symbols
 “The moon and the star”.	Expression of love, faithfulness and harmony between a man and woman.	Adopted traditional symbols from the Adinkra cloth from Ghana. Source: http://www.adinkrasymboles.org/ .
 Spider web.	Symbolizes wisdom, creativity and the complexities of life. The spider is a well-known character in African folktales.	Adopted traditional symbols from the Adinkra cloth from Ghana. Source: http://www.adinkrasymboles.org/ .
 Pepper.	Symbol of inequality and uneven development.	Adopted traditional symbols from the Adinkra cloth from Ghana. Source: http://www.adinkrasymboles.org/ .
 Palm tree.	Illustration of wealth, self-sufficiency and resourcefulness because many diverse products such as wine, oil, brooms and so on emanates from it.	Adopted traditional symbols from the Adinkra cloth from Ghana. Source: http://www.adinkrasymboles.org/ .
 Diamond.	Symbolizes reflection, strength, fortitude and courage.	Adopted traditional symbols from the Adinka cloth from Ghana. Source: http://www.adinkrasymboles.org/ .
 Oars.	Expression of lever, which is capable of turning about one point or axis.	Adopted traditional symbols from the Adinkra cloth from Ghana. Source: http://www.adinkrasymboles.org/ .

The other form of lizard represents twins in the ancestral society (**Table 5**). The bad luck removal symbolizes good fortune and sanctity (**Table 5** and **Figure 12**); and cup for spiritual truth, unity among families and all villages in the grasslands (**Table 2**). The peace plant indicates peace between families and neighbouring villages; chain for unity and prosperity; Keli-eye for the mask, which is used for rituals; and the heart design is recognized across other cultures and different countries as a symbol for love, charity and joy. Also, it stands for compassion, unity, cohesion, sensuality, femininity attraction and mentoring/reflection. It is used in rituals, with the goal to strengthen relationships and human feelings (**Table 3**).

Table 7. Continuation of symbols, significance and origin.

Names and Symbols	Significance	Origin of Symbols
 Crocodile.	Denotes adaptability any circumstance in the North West region of Cameroon.	From the Adinkra cloth from Ghana. Source: www.adinkrasymboles.org
 Linked hearts.	Stands for understanding and agreement in most African cultures.	From the Adinkra cloth from Ghana. Source: http://www.adinkrasymboles.org/ .
 By God grace.	Expression of faith and trust in God.	From the Adinkra cloth from Ghana. Source: http://www.adinkrasymboles.org/ .
 Woman embraces the mother.	Symbol of compassion.	From the Adinkra cloth from Ghana. Source: http://www.adinkrasymboles.org/ .
 The sun.	Illustration of worshiped as deity, as well as power, knowledge, life and emotion.	Source: North West Royal Museum, 12 th March 2017 and Nazmiyal Collection.

Kola is common and widely recognized cultural symbol in Africa. It is a fruit of the kola tree. It means earth, peace and togetherness in North West region of Cameroon as well as in other African cultures. The double gong denotes palace authorities transmitting information to the public; house and palaces of the nobles expresses the class, authority and power. Also, it is a sitting room where nobles in the North West region sit and take decision on matters happening in their communities (Table 4). Diamond stands for reflection, strength, fortitude and courage; palm tree for wealth, self-sufficiency and resourcefulness. Many diverse products such as wine, oil, brooms and so on emanates from the palm tree (Table 6). The likened heart illustrates understanding and agreement in most African cultures (Table 7). More information on the symbols and their significance considered in this studies could be seen in Tables 1-7.

5. Motifs

A motif is an idea used many times in a piece of writing. The concept of African motifs on textiles “in a society is use to convey spiritual values and beliefs from their ancestors which is not only to please the eyes and views, but is used as a medium” of communication (Dereje et al., 2013). What is evident here, are the resilient artefacts in the continent, that carry the history and memories of ethnic groups, nations and individuals; subsequently, these motifs communicate the thoughts, beliefs and values of the peoples’ culture, thus, revealing the peculiarities and diversity of the rich African tradition. African symbols specifically from West Africa called “Adinkra are motifs that conveys traditional wisdom, and aspects of the environment” (Mawuna, 2013). As concerns *toghu*, the lizard (Figures 7-9), represents twins in the ancestral society. It is found on Ndop wear, and is used at the entrances of the houses and places of the main wives of the king and nobles (Njumah, 2017). This explains the social traits, by which premises of the aforementioned are identified and is regarded as a core of knowledge and reality, together with the information it conveys. The full moon design signifies wonder, shadow, renewal, and mystery; while half-moon stands for birth cycles and fertility in womanhood, female power, transition, creativity and growth, waning and waxing (Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 10). The heart depicts love and unity, while snake denotes healing and re-birth (Figures 1-4 and Figure 7); and stars stands for good knowledge and truth (Figure 6). The sun is one of the oldest motifs used by man for decoration. Humans believe in the mysterious power of the sun and use it as sources of light, and energy. Sun is also associated with fire, which is related to light source, when enshrined on the *toghu* regalia (Figure 10). The elephant design depicts the God of worries. It also stands for royalty, proving an inner strength and wealth. In India, it is seen as the mount devastator weapon of war (Figure 11). The lozenge symbolizes bounty and its shape mimics that of a field sown with crops (Figure 6 and Figure 12). The linked heart motif represents understanding and agreement, in most cultures in Africa (Figure 4). However, the motifs on *toghu* clothes, are a collection of well-crafted symbols, that play key role in passing traditional knowledge about the grassland cultural heritage of art from one generation to another.



Figure 7. Printed *toghu* fabric containing motifs such as fish, lizard, fishbone, bunch of plantain, door, snake, tiger, grandaunt, word, speech, meeting, sweet berry, divorce and crocodiles, mostly won by the Bamum, Nso and the Bafia people.



Figure 8. Printed *toghu* fabric with motifs such as double gong, lizard, lozgenge, heart, motifs of knowledge, fish-bone, and chain.



Figure 9. *Toghu* printed fabric with motifs of knowledge.

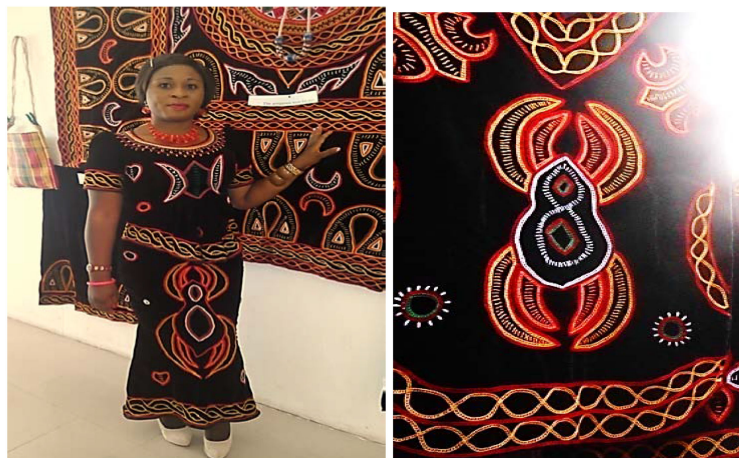


Figure 10. Hand embroidery *toghu* with motifs of the love, spider, half-moon, snake and sun.



Figure 11. Printed *toghu* with elephant, dots, drummer, royal soul pendant and post sherds designs.



Figure 12. Printed *toghu* with lozenge, diamond and symbol that removes bad luck.

6. Aesthetics

Aesthetic is the art of appreciation of beauty (Levy & Czepiel, 1974). Aesthetic in clothing is a visual signifier which has a high communicative power. Its communicative power underlines value and judgement. The core of aesthetic design lies in the principle that defines a designs pleasing qualities. As such, the use of symbols in fashion and its embodiment as motifs on *toghu*, allows an exchange of aesthetic values of the people in the grasslands region and around the world. The cultural heritage works include visual art and aesthetic elements such as pattern, shape, colour, tone, line and so on. Therefore, it may also incorporate symbols and motifs; which also have the beauty of harmony and unity, symmetry and balance, and shade and contrast of light (Chen, 2022). Aesthetic is deeply rooted on fundamental traditional belief systems and art is concerned with the production of aesthetic objects. It therefore entails, art is usually seen as human enterprise. The artist in the course of production of aesthetic objects could be influenced by societal norms in the environment in which he leaves. Such value is what informs a people's arts and crafts as it affects their sense of what is beautiful. Concurrently, Chen (2022) while viewing artworks, affirms, the audience may

not only obtain information, but, also bring aesthetically pleasing experiences and feelings, therefore, helping the audience to complete the dissemination of information in a relaxed and pleasant state. As concerns the present studies, the beauty of *toghu* regalia is not limited to the colours with shiny appearance but also involves the designs of the symbols embodied as motifs and the information it conveys to the general public. The beauty of the designed motifs enhances traditional wisdom, amongst internal and external audiences. Other attributes linked to the aesthetics of this artwork include: unity of purpose, which goes along with the grassland peoples' identity; feelings of positivism on the creative designs and the emotion it sets; distinguishing of persons such as royalties and nobles; preservation of cultural values, that is being handed from one generation to next and preserved as well in the nations museums; and cross-cultural exchange, following the learning impact it sets in the society, amongst ethnic groups and across the borders. However, certain perceptions of aesthetics from different regions or countries would always influence designers of *toghu* clothes, to adopt unconventional values, leading to more creative and innovative designs to meet the societal demands.

7. Conclusion

The embodiment of symbols as motifs on *toghu* cloth has a long history. The symbols used as motifs are not limited to the beautification of the traditional attire, but also help to disseminate vital information such as distinguishing royalties, nobles, and persons in position of power. The continuous development of *toghu* cloth throughout the nation's territory has proven to be a powerful cross-cultural exchange tool, since it defines a people's identity and differentiates them from other people. Identification of some of the symbols embodied as motifs on *toghu*, in the national museums, supports its preservation as valuable assets for promoting and sharing the different ethnic cultures. Amongst the fifty identified symbols, twenty-five were from the Bafut Royal Museum, eight were from the North West Royal Museum, fifteen were from Adinkra Ghana and two were from Nigeria. Nevertheless, some of the motifs integrated into the embellished *toghu* cloth, had symbols originating from Ghana and Nigeria. These symbols have different meanings, thus serving as an important cross-border exchange of cultures. The identified symbols used as motifs on *toghu*, should exemplify the selection criteria and significance of designers' decisions in the fabrication processes. The designers, scholars and instructors of fashion clothing and textile as well as fine arts in Cameroon should use this artwork to alleviate the constraints of symbol usage as a motif without understanding their significance. This artwork with varying symbols used as motifs, would effectively promote cultural communication at any level, including: teaching, trade fairs, open-door days, cultural festivals and other exhibitions. It will ease the interpretation of the enshrined motifs on *toghu* attire, while facilitating foreigners' understanding as well on the cultural heritage art. To sum up, the findings from this research will ease the work of de-

signers, scholars, teachers and creative industries. Also, it would assist consumers in making better choices. However, further investigation should be carried out on other symbols designed as motifs on *toghu* clothes in the grassland region. In addition, findings should be done on the colours, tools used for production; accessories, different types of *toghu* and their use in contemporary fashion.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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