

Emblematic Interpretation of the Designs of Selected Kente Fabrics among Ashanti People of Ghana

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Abstract

Ghana is a country which is located in the West of the African continent. The Ghanaians have a rich cultural heritage that they cherish most. This cultural heritage could be seen through the way they dress during occasions such as funerals, weddings, festivals, durbars and naming ceremonies. Some of the fabrics that people wear during these occasions are Kente cloths, “*nteimu*” and “*kuntukuni*” cloths (clothes stamped with locally prepared dyes). The Kente, “*nteimu*” and “*kuntukuni*” are locally produced by the people of Bonwire, Adawonmase and Ntonso. Although these clothes have some special designs and motifs that make them unique and aesthetically pleasing, they have not been effectively and comprehensively researched. This study intends to identify and describe the various designs and motifs in these fabrics, and then give the philosophical meanings associated with the designs and the motifs in them. The descriptive research design which is under the qualitative research approach was espoused to accomplish the goal and purpose of the study. In all, 20 woven Kente fabrics were sampled for the study using a purposive sampling technique. Of these, 5 were used for festival celebrations, 5 for marriage ceremonies, 5 for funeral celebrations and 5 for durbars and parties. The primary data was collected using interviews, observations and opinionnaire. The results showed that designs and motifs which are seen in the Kente cloths have philosophical meaning that can help one to understand his or her culture. In addition, some of the motifs and designs used to produce the various fabrics exhibit the creative abilities of our forefathers and their belief system. Also, the research revealed that some of the designs and motifs are used for prestigious and aesthetic purposes.

Keywords

Kente, Design, Heritage, Fabric, Emblematic

1. Introduction

Indeed, designs and motifs in fabrics are considered essential in the textile industry globally. According to [Bawa \(2021\)](#), designs and patterns that are seen in textile fabrics in Africa are unique, distinctive and aesthetically pleasing. African fabrics are either woven or printed and the designs found in these fabrics are expressions of African culture ([Tolulope & Babutunde, 2013](#)). When it comes to Ghana, these designs and motifs are seen to be special and exclusive in various societies. Among the Akan people of Ghana, the designs and motifs in the Kente fabric that one puts on determine the person's belief, ideology and even his or her status in society. [Acquaye \(2018\)](#) puts forward that designs and motifs used in Kente fabrics have philosophical and moral tenets associated with them. Notwithstanding, the uniqueness of the designs, motifs and colours in the Kente fabrics make them exceptional and appealing. More so, the extraordinary designs and motifs which are embedded in these woven Kente fabrics are mostly based on maxims and axioms. The elements and principles of design used in the production of these fabrics showcase the rich cultural heritage ([Amissah & Letcher-Teye, 2018](#)). [Debeli, Yuan and Jiu \(2013\)](#) also indicate that designs and motifs seen in traditional textile fabrics are developed from proverbs, wise sayings and folklore which show the identity and the culture of the African people. Mostly, all the designs and motifs that are seen in the Ghanaian fabrics have design elements and principles such as dots, shapes, colour, lines, textures, balance, unity, harmony and others which make the fabrics distinctive. Also, the way the fabrics are designed brings out the aesthetic qualities. Similarly, [Akinbileje \(2014\)](#) and [Ulzen-Appiah \(2005\)](#) aver that patterns or designs in fabrics make them outstanding, beautiful and elegant. It also shows one's identity, culture and status in the society in which he or she lives.

1.1. Research Objectives

The general objective of the research was to study designs and motifs in woven Kente fabrics. Specifically, the research sought to identify, describe and give philosophical meaning to selected woven Kente fabrics.

1.2. Problem Statement

The woven Kente fabrics which are produced by some local weavers in some communities in the Ashanti Region, Northern Region and Volta Region are patronized by Ghanaians and some foreigners. These Kente fabrics are used on occasions such as marriage ceremonies, funerals, festivals, durbars, parties and others. The fabrics come with various designs and motifs which make them

unique and bring their aesthetic qualities out. In spite of the aesthetic qualities of these Kente fabrics, not much has been researched into the designs and motifs that make them beautiful and distinctive. There is therefore the need to study, document and preserve knowledge relating to the designs and motifs used in the woven Kente fabrics for posterity.

2. Methodology

The data presented below was gathered from some areas within the Ashanti Region of Ghana specifically Adum-Kumasi, Kejetia Market-Kumasi, Bonwire, Adawomase and Ntonso. The study made use of a qualitative research approach to gather data on the philosophical meaning of designs and motifs in selected woven fabrics. The qualitative research method largely centres on the use of words to describe and interpret the data gathered rather than using numerals to do so (Creswell, 2012; Kothari, 2004). Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) point out that in qualitative research, the researcher does a thorough investigation to find out how things occur. Qualitative researchers analyse their data inductively that is they do not formulate a hypothesis beforehand rather; they tend to “play it as it goes”. Also, the researchers spend a considerable amount of time in the data collection process through interviews and observations before they give a logical meaning. The descriptive research approach of qualitative research was used. Descriptive research is a research type that describes a phenomenon and its characteristics (Nassaji, 2015). This research type is most interested in what? rather than how? or why? Using the purposive sampling technique, 20 woven Kente fabrics were selected for the study. Research instruments such as observation, interviews and opinionnaire were used in the data collection. The primary data was collected by the researchers themselves from some Kente weavers and some women who sell Kente fabrics. Photographs were taken from the field to support the study. Data collected from both primary and secondary sources were assembled, critically analysed, and summarized and conclusions were drawn from them. The entire information was presented in descriptive form with figures.

3. Results and Discussions

The study established that all woven Kente fabrics have special designs, motifs and names. The names of these cloths are acquired from proverbs, adages, beliefs and at times situations. To authenticate the data gathered from the study, the researchers took photographs of selected woven Kente fabrics for descriptive and analysis purposes. **Figures 1-5** are woven fabrics used for festival celebrations, **Figures 6-10** are for marriage ceremonies, **Figures 11-15** are also used for funeral celebrations whereas **Figures 16-20** are woven Kente fabrics used for durbars and parties. More so the study indicated that all the selected fabrics have design elements and principles such as lines, dots, textures, colour, shapes, space, unity, variety, harmony, balance, proportion, movement, rhythm, emphasis and others. These design elements and principles play a major role in textile design and also

enhances the aesthetic quality of the textile product. The selected woven fabrics were analysed and discussed based on the designs and motifs used for the production of the various fabrics and the philosophical names associated with them.



Figure 1. *Sereɛ nkyere ɔdɔ* (Laughter does not mean love).



Figure 2. *ɔbrempon ko gye wo man* (The great one fight for your nation).



Figure 3. *Owuo atwedee* (ladder of death).



Figure 4. *Ahwene pa nkasa* (Precious beads do not make noise).

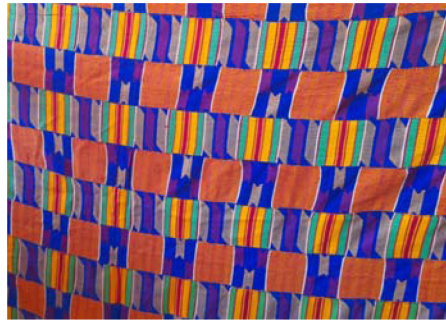


Figure 5. *edwenasa* (Designs are exhausted).



Figure 6. *Onyame akwan* (God's way).

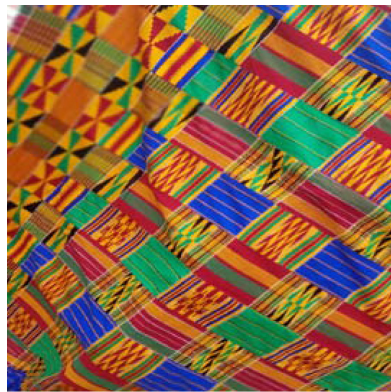


Figure 7. *opanyin wo fie a eye* (It is better to get an elderly person in the home).

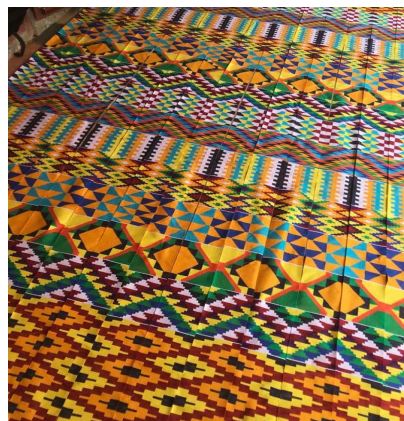


Figure 8. *edwen si dwene so* (Designs upon designs).

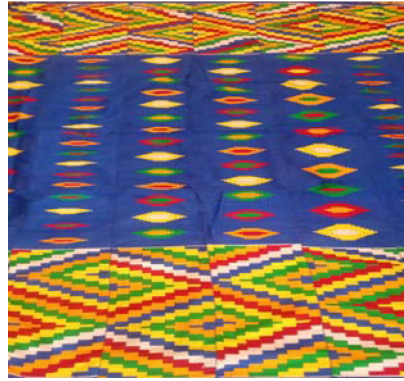


Figure 9. *ɔdɔ yɛ fɛ* (love is beautiful).



Figure 10. *Fathia fata Nkrumah* (Fathia befits Nkrumah).



Figure 11. *Odupon atutu* (a great tree has fallen).



Figure 12. “*kɔbene*” (one is in serious pain).

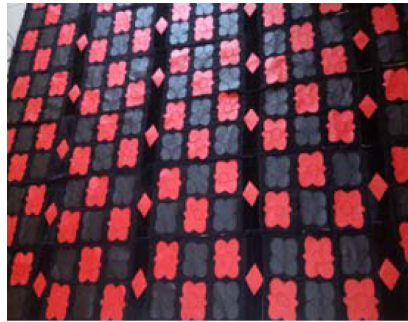


Figure 13. *owuo tirimu ye den* (death is cruel).



Figure 14. “*m' adepa bi a hwere me*” (I have lost something precious).



Figure 15. “*owuo de dom be ko*” (Death will take everyone away).

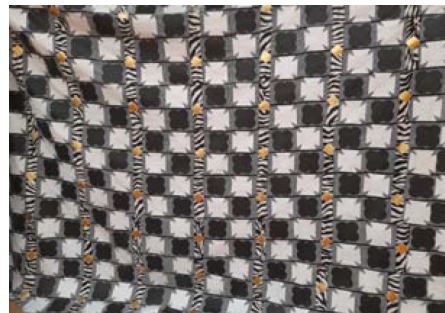


Figure 16. “*wo sene wo yonko a ctane wo*” (if you are better than your friend he hates you).



Figure 17. “*mmako nyniaa emere pe*” (all pepper does not ripe at the same time).



Figure 18. “*dehye nsu*” a royal does not weep or cry.



Figure 19. “*boa bi be ka wo a na efiri wo ntoma mu*” “the insect that will bite *you* will be within your own cloth”.



Figure 20. “*nyame ne ma anidaso*” “God is my hope”.

3.1. Woven Kente Fabrics

3.1.1. Festivals

The woven Kente fabric in **Figure 1** is called “*Seree nkyere ɔɔ*” in Akan language which literary means “Laughter does not mean love”. The study indicated that those who weave the fabric normally give names to a particular fabric depending upon the situation or circumstances in which they find themselves. The name of this fabric suggests that people may be laughing with you but may not love you. So the name is creating an awareness that human beings need to be careful with their fellow human beings. According to respondents, this kind of Kente fabric can be worn at any time and for several occasions but it is mostly worn during festivals and marriage ceremonies. The reason is that the colours are bright and they suggest joyous moments that is why most people wear it during such occasions. It was further discovered that this Kente fabric is woven with cotton and rayon yarns. The study again showed that the weaver of this cloth used five different colours of yarns and so it is called “*ahoma num*” in the Akan language meaning “five threads”. The findings established that this Kente fabric is worn by prominent people and is very expensive. Colours such as green, red, gold, cream and white which were used to design the fabric represent richness, royalty, joy and peace. The geometric shapes such as triangles, parallelogram and lines used in the design also make the fabric stands out and striking.

The fabric in **Figure 2** is known as “*ɔbrempon ko gye wo man*” which means “the great one fight for your nation”. It is designed with red, yellow, royal blue, green, violet, gold, grey and cream colours. The cloth is woven with purely cotton yarns to show how expensive it is. Elements and principles of design employed in the production of the fabric are lines, colours, unity, balance and rhythm. The study showed that this type of Kente fabric is worn by only chiefs to show their status in society. Besides, it was found that this Kente fabric is among the ones which were woven in the 1970s by weavers in Bonwire and Adawomase. The arrangement of the colours and variation of the designs make the cloth looks ostentatious. The findings further indicated that the several colours used stand for wealth, wisdom and independents. More so, this cloth can be worn during the marriage ceremony of a chief, but it was purposely designed for festivals. The blend and variation of colours used harmonize with the design of the cloth. It was established that formally when a chief of a town was going to settle a dispute between his town and another town, he puts on this type of cloth to signify that he has come in peace and to fight for his people. Again the geometric shapes such as squares and rectangles depict perfection.

The Kente fabric in **Figure 3** is called “*Owuo atwedee*” in Akan parlance meaning the “ladder of death” which was woven with cotton and silk yarns. The colours used for the fabric were white, purple and wine. Besides, the zigzag pattern was used to form a design which created the shape of a ladder. The curvy lines in the fabric created harmony, rhythm and repetition in it. In addition, the design which is like the shape of a kite at the border of the fabric makes it look

superb. The weaving technique for that portion is a twill weave. The systematic arrangement of the design makes the fabric artistically pleasing. The study showed that this kind of Kente fabric is used for all occasions especially festivals but people prefer using it for dead bodies that is when they are laid in state. The philosophy behind it is that death is inevitable, that is no matter someone's wealth, beauty, knowledge and age he will definitely die one day. This draws humankind's attention to the fact that death is like a ladder and at all costs one will climb it and so one needs to be at peace with his fellow human being. Again, the findings indicated that human beings are nothing on this earth and so we should be humble.

"*Ahwene pa nkasa*" is an Akan phrase that literally means "precious beads do not make noise". It is a fabric designed with shapes such as a square and an eye. The motifs are arranged in a chronological manner to bring out the beauty of the fabric. The full drop method of motif arrangement was employed to design the fabric. The principles and elements of design such as unity, balance, proportion, rhythm harmony, line, shape and colour were used in the production of the fabric. The wine, blue, lemon green, white and gold colours are used to make the fabric appear catchy and distinctive. The study pointed out that this Kente fabric acquired its name through the designs. It further brought to bear that this fabric is one of the contemporary Kente fabrics woven in recent times. Again, the respondents aver that the name of the fabric suggests that wealthy people in the society do not show off their wealth. In addition, they do not boast or talk too much and it is even difficult to recognize such people when you meet them. The moral lesson that can be picked from the name of fabric according to the study is that human beings should not be boastful. Regardless of one's status in society, wealth and knowledge one should be modest and meek.

"*edwenasa*" literally means "designs are exhausted". The study indicated that this Kente fabric is among the ones which were woven around the 1940s and it has unique designs. According to some respondents, this fabric was woven with expensive yarns and for that matter, its price is very exorbitant. More so, it was ascertained that the weavers who wove this Kente fabric claim that several designs were woven before this particular one. In view of that the weavers started saying that *edwenasa* meaning all the designs that they have been exhausted. It is important to note that this fabric was woven with six warp yarns and six weft yarns. The designs used in the fabric were alternated in a special manner and this makes it appear stunning. The full drop method of motif arrangement was used in weaving the fabric. Besides, the use of colours such as royal blue, green, red, golden yellow, white and mauve makes the fabric look outstanding. Additionally, the systematic arrangement of the design and the rhythm in it makes the fabric appear beautiful. The results of the study further bore witness to the fact that this Kente fabric was formally used on occasions such as marriage ceremonies, festivals and durbars. But of late, people use it for all other occasions and it is not regarded as cloth for only the rich any more.

3.1.2. Marriage Ceremonies

The fabric in **Figure 6** is one of the contemporary Kente fabrics which were woven at Bonwire in the Ashanti region of Ghana. The name of this fabric is “*Onyame akwan*” in the Akan dialect which means “God’s way”. The study unearths that this particular fabric was designed by a young man who got a serious accident and nearly died when he was preparing the hanks of yarn for weaving. The respondents indicated that when he escapes death, he gave the name “*Onyame akwan*” to the fabric meaning God’s way. This simply shows that had it not been God, he would have died. In supporting this, **Lunde (2018)** posits that names of some indigenous and contemporary designs come about as a result of the designer’s emotions, culture, some traditional practices or even the situation that the designer finds himself in the course of producing the fabric. The research points out that the colours used indicate that the designer was in a joyous mood. Golden yellow, green, red, violet and the strips of white signify happiness. The use of elements and principles of design such as colour, line, shape, rhythm, proportion, harmony, balance makes the fabric appears nice and elegance. The moral lesson that can be deduced from the name of the fabric is in whatever situation a person finds himself, God can deliver him or her and so people should have patience.

The Kente fabric “*opanyin wo fie a eye*” is one of the oldest clothes woven by Kente weavers. It is typically woven for chiefs and queen mothers. The research established that “*opanyin wo fie a eye*” which is the name of this Kente fabric is an Akan dialect and it means “it is better to get an elderly person in the home”. According to respondents, it is believed that elderly people have a lot of wisdom and for that matter every household needs to get one so that he or she can advise the younger generation. The design of this fabric is very intricate, beautiful and complex. It was found that only knowledgeable and creative weavers are able to produce this kind of fabric. The strips and zigzag designs make the cloth ostentatious and outstanding. The elements of art employed in the design include lines, shapes, colour and texture. More so, the variation of designs and the use of complementary colours in the production of the fabric brings out its aesthetic quality. Also, the study indicated that the designs and arrangement of colours in the fabric exhibit the beliefs and traditions of the Akan people in Ghana. The reason is that the study showed that red, wine, gold, green, royal blue, black and white colours used to stand for wisdom, wealth and prosperity. The findings from the study show that elderly people in our families and societies are very important and so we should accord them the necessary respect for they are the epitaph of knowledge.

The woven Kente fabric in **Figure 8** is known as “*edwen si dwene so*” which literary means “designs upon designs”. Actually, the finding of the research indicates that this fabric is basically used by females. Additionally, it has several designs and can be worn on all occasions. The intricate nature of the fabric makes it appears dazzling. The diagonal and zigzag lines used for the designing

of the fabric exhibit the artistic quality. Principles of design such as harmony, variety, rhythm, proportion and balance were also present in the designing. The study indicated that this Kente fabric is one of the old types which was woven around the 1950's. According to respondents the cool colours used for the production of the fabric indicates the places or occasions where it can be taken to. More so, the study pointed out that although the fabric was purposely designed for marriage ceremonies, women who have given birth also use it when they are going for thanks giving service. Furthermore, the findings of the research showed that the colours; sea blue, light yellow, green, white, golden yellow and bluish-purple used for the designing of the fabric stands for victory and happiness in the Akan society that is why it is frequently used by nursing mothers.

“*ɔɔ yɛ fɛ*” which literary means “love is beautiful” is one of the contemporary Kente fabric designs for both males and females. According to respondents, this kind of Kente can be used for all occasions but it is often used by couples for marriage ceremonies. The motifs in the fabric are like a diamond shape with different colours and it makes the fabric looks striking. Besides, the selvedge of the fabric has also been designed like a kite and it has brought the beauty of the fabric out. The study established that this fabric is among the modern ones which were woven in the late 1990s. The design and the colours used for the fabric make it look superb. Respondents affirm that the colours used for the fabric indicate that it is used for joyous occasions. The research further posits that the royal blue, gold, olive green, red, yellow and white colours used for the designing of the Kente fabric signify victory and happiness. The full drop pattern system of arrangement used in the fabric is marvellous giving it a wonderful look. Also, the designer made use of design principles such as rhythm, balance, unity, harmony and proportion to make the fabric artistically pretty. The data gathered indicated the name of the fabric portrays that love is beautiful and so couples, families and friends should live in peace and with one accord to help various societies grow.

The Kente fabric “*Fathia fata Nkrumah*” is one of the oldest Kente fabrics which were designed in Ghana by the Asante people of Bonwire. “*Fathia fata Nkrumah*” simply means “Fathia befits Nkrumah”. According to the study, this Kente fabric was woven in the 1950s for the first president of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's wife Fathia who was an Egyptian. The research further revealed that when Dr. Kwame Nkrumah became president of Ghana, he asked all his ministers, appointees and people around him to be in traditional Kente fabric to all state functions. In view of that Nkrumah asked a prominent Kente weaver at Bonwire to weave a nice Kente fabric for his wife. The Kente fabric in **Figure 10** was then woven for Fathia Nkrumah's wife. It came to light that this fabric was purposely designed for Fathia because of her position as the president's wife. The motifs in this fabric were proportionately arranged in chronological order to make the fabric exclusive. The designer made use of diamond shapes and zigzag lines to design the fabric. Colours such as royal blue, gold, green, red and white used make the fabric pleasing to the eye. According to the

respondents, since then this Kente fabric has been in the Ghanaian market and it is mostly used by women on occasions such as weddings, parties, durbars and even for church services. It was also found that the colours in the fabric portray Ghana's rich cultural heritage.

3.1.3. Funerals and Enstoolment

“*Odupon atutu*” is one of the Kente fabrics produced for funeral celebrations. *Odupon atutu* is an Akan expression which means “a great tree has fallen”. This kind of Kente fabric is worn when a chief “*ohene*”, head of the family “*abusua-pin*” or a prominent person dies. The fabric is woven in red and black colours and it has two distinctive motifs. The motifs used are “*akofena*” the sword and “*gye nyame*” except God which are adinkra symbols. More so, some part of the fabric has the design of leopard skin. Furthermore, the study specified that this Kente fabric is mostly worn by men during funerals. It was found that the motifs were embroidered in the fabric making it lovely and appealing. Respondents indicated that the name of the fabric suggests that a great person has passed away. Again, the colours and the motifs used for the production of the fabric shows a sign of grief, sorrow and distress. Also, the designer made use of design principles such as harmony, rhythm, balance, repetition and proportion. Additionally, the study established the leopard skin fabric which has been added to the red and black woven Kente indicating that the wearer is in difficult situation. The study revealed that the colours and arrangement of the motifs in the fabric indicate the mood of the person who wears it.

The fabric in **Figure 12** is known as “*kɔbene*” in Akan dialect which means “one is in serious pain”. It is woven in only red colour. According to respondents, in the Akan society, when one loses his mother, father, husband or wife this is the kind of fabric the person puts on. It was also discovered that formally when one loses his grandparents, he is forced to put on this fabric. Again, the study established that when the one who is bereaved wears this fabric, it means he is in deep pain and has lost someone who is close to his heart. The research brought to the fore that the *kɔbene* is one of the fabrics that the Akans do not joke with at all because it of its relevance during funeral celebration. Also it is one of the oldest fabric which came into existence in the early 1970s. It was ascertained that the fabric is woven with purely cotton yarns. The reason behind it is that since it is always worn in the afternoon, if the weavers use yarns like silk, rayon, nylon and other, the people who will wear it will suffer with heat. Respondents indicated that the plain nature of this fabric shows that the wearer has nothing left in this world. The study emphasized that in the Akan society, if someone's mother or father dies, it means he has lost everything on this earth that is why the *kɔbene* is worn. Additionally, the study found that both males and females use the fabric, which is mostly worn after the funeral ceremony. It is particularly worn in the afternoon, from 12 noon till 6 pm. More so, it was found that the symbolism of the red colour is danger and so whenever you see someone in red colour, it means the person is bereaved or mourning.

The fabric in **Figure 13** is called “*owuo tirimu ye den*” which simply means “death is cruel” in the Akan language. It is woven in two colours thus red and black. There are two motifs used for the weaving of the fabric. One is like a diamond shape whereas the other is like a flower of a petal plant. The study revealed that the motifs were meticulously woven onto the fabric, and if one is not careful, it may appear as though they have been applied to it. Again, the motifs were sequentially arranged to depict the message that it carries. The full drop system of motif arrangement was also used for the production of the fabric. Also, the principle of design such as harmony, rhythm and balance were present in the fabric. Furthermore, it was established that the name of the fabric actually means that no matter how good, wealthy or noble one is he or she will surely die one day and so people should respect their fellow human beings. Besides, the red and black colours stand for sorrow, grief and pain which are inevitable.

The fabric in **Figure 14** is known as “*m’adepa bi a hwere me*” in the Akan language which literary means “I have lost something precious” The fabric is woven in red and black colours as the one discussed earlier on. The study showed that the designer used the twill weave method to weave it. Some portions of the fabric h designs which look like hexagons whereas the other part is plain with broken lines in it. The portion which looks like a hexagon has been arranged in a logical manner and the design makes the fabric looks superb. According to respondents, this fabric is mostly worn by both men and women for funeral celebrations and it can be worn at any time of the day. The study established that this fabric is normally used by the rich people in the society and they use it when a dearly loved one dies. The findings indicated that this fabric is among the contemporary ones used for funeral celebrations. It was found that it was produced in the late 1990s and it is very expensive. The fabric is drawing people’s attention to the fact that we should cherish whatever we have. The study revealed that there are some people who do not value their parents, husbands or wives but when they die, then they begin to see the relevance they were alive. In view of this, the name of the fabric is drawing the attention of people that we should cherish and respect people on this earth.

This fabric is called “*owuo de dom be ko*” in the Akan phrase which literary means “death will take a lot of people along” and it is a type of “*kuntukuni*”. According to respondents the “*Kuntukuni*” is a type of fabric which is black in colour and purposely used for funeral celebrations. The study avers that it has several names depending on its design and it is woven with purely cotton yarns. The data gathered revealed that the fabric is solely used for funerals because of its name, colour and the belief associated with it. It is used when a loved one or close relative like a mother, father, husband or wife dies. The study brought to bear that formally the “*kuntukuni*” fabrics were used by most of the Akan communities in Ghana but because of their heaviness and bulky nature, some people have resorted to the use of printed fabrics. Besides, it was discovered that the fabric is also worn during the enstoolment of chiefs and queen mothers. More so, the study indicated that the moral lesson associated with the name of this woven

fabric is that everyone on this earth will surely die one day. For this reason, people should love their neighbours and live peacefully with them. The fabric has been designed in such a way that it makes it look unique. Again, the designs in the fabric were done in the form of raised embroidery and made the fabric aesthetically pleasing.

3.1.4. Durbars and Parties

The fabric in **Figure 16** is one of the contemporary Kente fabrics woven in the early 2000s and it is called “*wo sene wo yɔnko a ɔtane wo*” in Akan parlance which means “if you are better than your friend he hates you”. The study further revealed that this particular fabric is mostly worn during durbars and parties. Again, it was ascertained that this fabric was initially designed for elderly men and women in society but of late, young men and women also wear it for fashion purposes without knowing the philosophical meaning associated with the fabric. According to respondents the moral lesson associated with the name of the fabric is that people should be careful with their close allies because they can be hated due to their success in life. The fabric is woven in four colours which are white, black, gold and ash. Elements and principles of design such as line, shape, texture, rhythm, balance, unity and proportion were used in the production of the fabric. The designer also used the full drop system of motif arrangement in weaving the fabric and this makes the fabrics looks splendid.

The fabric in **Figure 17** is known as “*mmako nyniaa emere pe*”. It is a proverb in the Akan language translated as “all pepper does not ripe at the same time” and the name is proverbial. The fabric is designed with triangular shapes and some patterns like a butterfly. Black and white colours were used for the production of the fabric. Straight and zigzag lines were used in designing the fabric whereas principles of design like rhythm, unity, variety, harmony and proportion were also integrated in the production of the fabric. The designer used the meandering pattern design at the selvedge of the fabric to enhance its aesthetic qualities. The elements and the principles used to make the fabric looks unique and nice. Respondents indicated that although this fabric designed is for durbars, it can also be used for church services and marriage ceremonies because of its colour. They further posit that the real meaning of the name of this fabric is that in life, two people born on the same day cannot get equal opportunities at the same time. Thus one may get his even two or three years before the other. The main idea behind the name of the fabric is that even if one starts life with a friend or colleague at the same time, it does not mean that they will attain the same goal. In other words, people should be patient in life and wait till the appropriate time.

According to the respondents, the woven fabric in **Figure 18** is called “*ɔdehye nsu*” in the Akan language which literary means “a royal does not weep or cry”. The “*ɔdehye nsu*” fabric has been woven in colours such as green, golden yellow, royal blue, red and yellow. The motifs in the fabric are the “*akofena*” “sword of war”, “*gye nyame*” “except God”, “*mate masie*” “what I hear, I keep” and

“*mmere dane*” “time changes” which are all *adinkra* symbols. These motifs have been arranged in a sequential manner to make the fabric appear exclusive. The elements and principles of design such as colour, shape, space, dot, variety, proportion, harmony and repetition have been blended to make the fabric look outstanding. It was found that royals are special people and so they do not have to do things that will tarnish their image. The study further indicated that the Akans believe that crying or weeping is meant for the poor and destitute and so royals should not exhibit bad behaviour which will end them in disgrace or shame for them to cry. Besides, the study brought to the fore that the motifs used in the fabric stand for supremacy and strength, courage, wisdom and change which are also some traits of royals. The respondents expounded that this particular fabric is among old fabrics which were woven around 1960s and it was designed exclusively for durbars. Furthermore, it was found that only royals and rich people in the society wear this fabric for the purpose for which it was designed but because of modernization, people nowadays wear it to occasions such as weddings, festivals and naming ceremonies and others. The research specified that because the people who wear this kind of fabric are always in a happy mood, the fabric was named “*ɔdehye nsu*” which means “royals do not weep”. A section of the respondents also articulated that this fabric sends a signal to whoever wears it that he or she must put on good behaviour in order to enjoy the peace and happiness that he or she has. Also, one should not be distressed in life but rather be happy always no matter the situation or the circumstance that the person finds himself.

The fabric in **Figure 19** is known as “*aboa bi be ka wo a na efiri wo ntoma mu*” which means “the insect that will bite you will be within your own cloth” and it is a proverb in the Akan dialect. It is a woven fabric which is designed with zigzag lines, straight lines and oval shapes. The findings indicated that some of the weavers name the fabrics that they weave according to the conditions or circumstances in which they find themselves. The colours which were used for the weaving of the fabric are white, gold, yellow, wine, violet and army green and it was woven with only cotton yarns. The designs in the fabric are systematically arranged to bring their beauty and aesthetic qualities out. The various lines used make the fabric look fantastic. Also, the arrangement of the colours in the fabric was used proportionately. Respondents indicated that some of the fabrics at times acquire their names based on the designs while others are based on either emotions or circumstances that the weaver finds himself. According to some weavers at Bonwire and Adawonmase, some of the designs that they use for the woven fabric are acquired from the immediate environment while some are from traditional symbols. The study indicated that this fabric is for women and it is used by both old and middle-aged women on several occasions. More so, it is among the modern Kente fabric woven in recent times. The study revealed that the moral lesson behind the name of this fabric is that people should be careful with human beings. In other words, it is sounding cautious to people for them to beware of the kind of people they associate with. It further explained

that the name suggests that people should be very vigilant with their close allies because they are the very people who can harm them. Again, it means human beings are dangerous and so one has to tread cautiously whenever he or she is dealing with a brother or friend.

The last woven fabric which was selected for the study is called “*nyame ne ma anidaso*” which literary means “God is my hope” According to respondents the fabric is woven for young women and it has been designed in bright colours that fascinate young people. The colours which were used for the fabric are light purple, golden yellow, white and wine. The designer used a shape like a kite as a motif to weave the fabric and employed elements and principles of design such as lines, colours, texture, unity, balance, proportion, rhythm and repetition. The design is arranged in sequential order to make the fabric appear nice and lovely. It is woven with cotton and rayon yarns and the border of the fabric have been designed in M-shape making the fabric splendid and fashionable. The study discovered that the fabric is among the recent ones which came into the system around the early 2000s. The study discovered that the name of this fabric came about when the person who designed it had a challenge with the design during weaving. In view of that, his other weavers around started mocking him and he said God is my hope. Since then, the fabric that the person wove is called “*nyame ne ma anidaso*”. The lesson learnt from the name of the fabric is that as human beings, we should persevere in whatever we do in life so that we can succeed one day.

4. Conclusion

The study uncovered a wide variety of woven Ghanaian fabrics with unique motifs and designs that have philosophical meanings related to Ghanaian culture. The research findings demonstrated that each fabric selected for the study has a special name based on proverbs and specific situations. Moreover, the study revealed that while people choose fabrics based on their quality, they also take into consideration the artistic design, ethical meaning associated with it, and the specific occasion for which it will be used. Additionally, the artistic designs of woven fabrics could be taught to students studying textiles at both the senior high school and tertiary levels, as well as to tourists, researchers, and those in the textile production industry, for a fee.

Conflicts of Interest

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

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