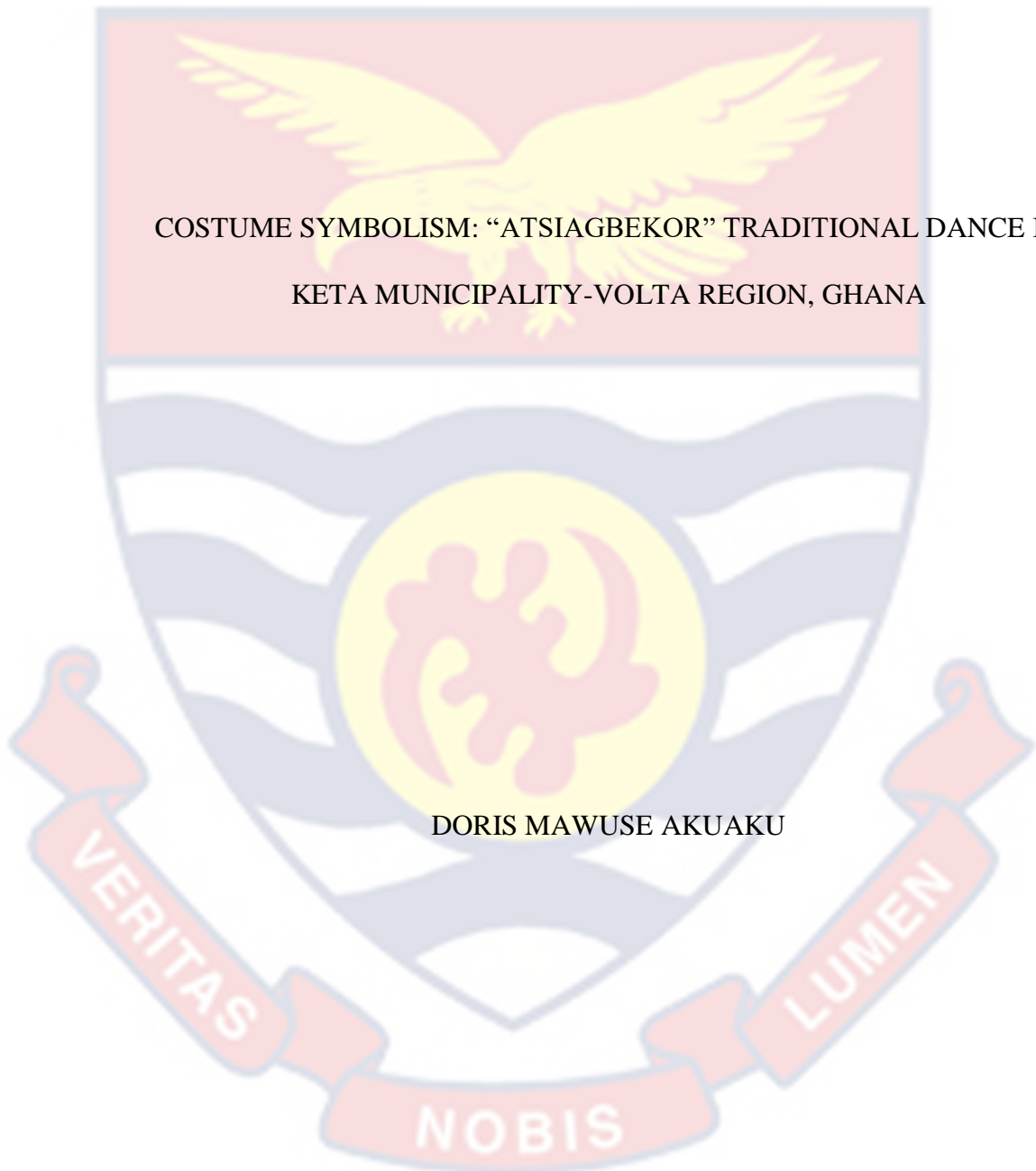


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COSTUME SYMBOLISM: “ATSIAGBEKOR” TRADITIONAL DANCE IN
KETA MUNICIPALITY-VOLTA REGION, GHANA

DORIS MAWUSE AKUAKU



2023



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University of Cape Coast

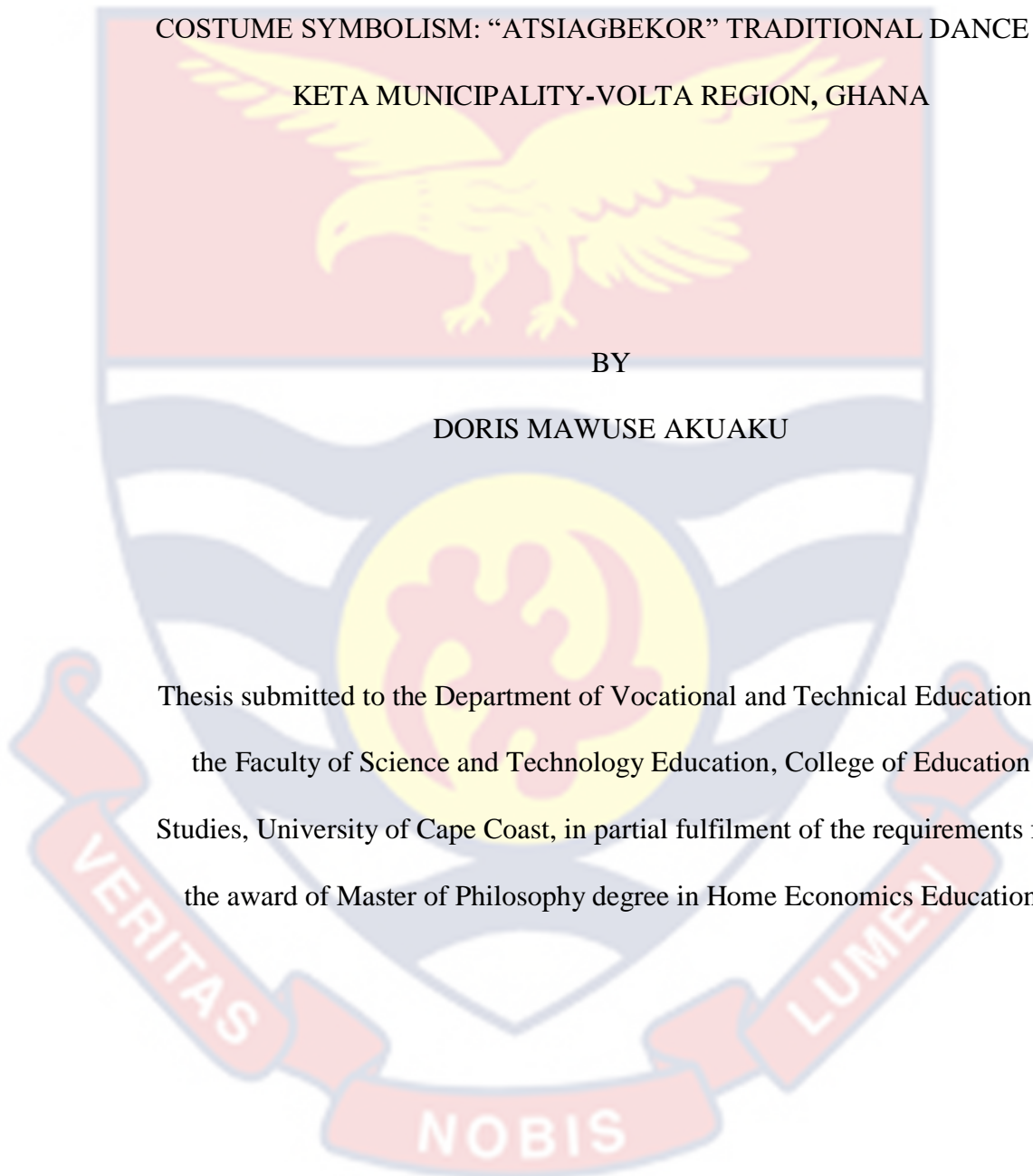
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BY

DORIS MAWUSE AKUAKU

Thesis submitted to the Department of Vocational and Technical Education of
the Faculty of Science and Technology Education, College of Education
Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the award of Master of Philosophy degree in Home Economics Education



APRIL, 2023

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: Date:

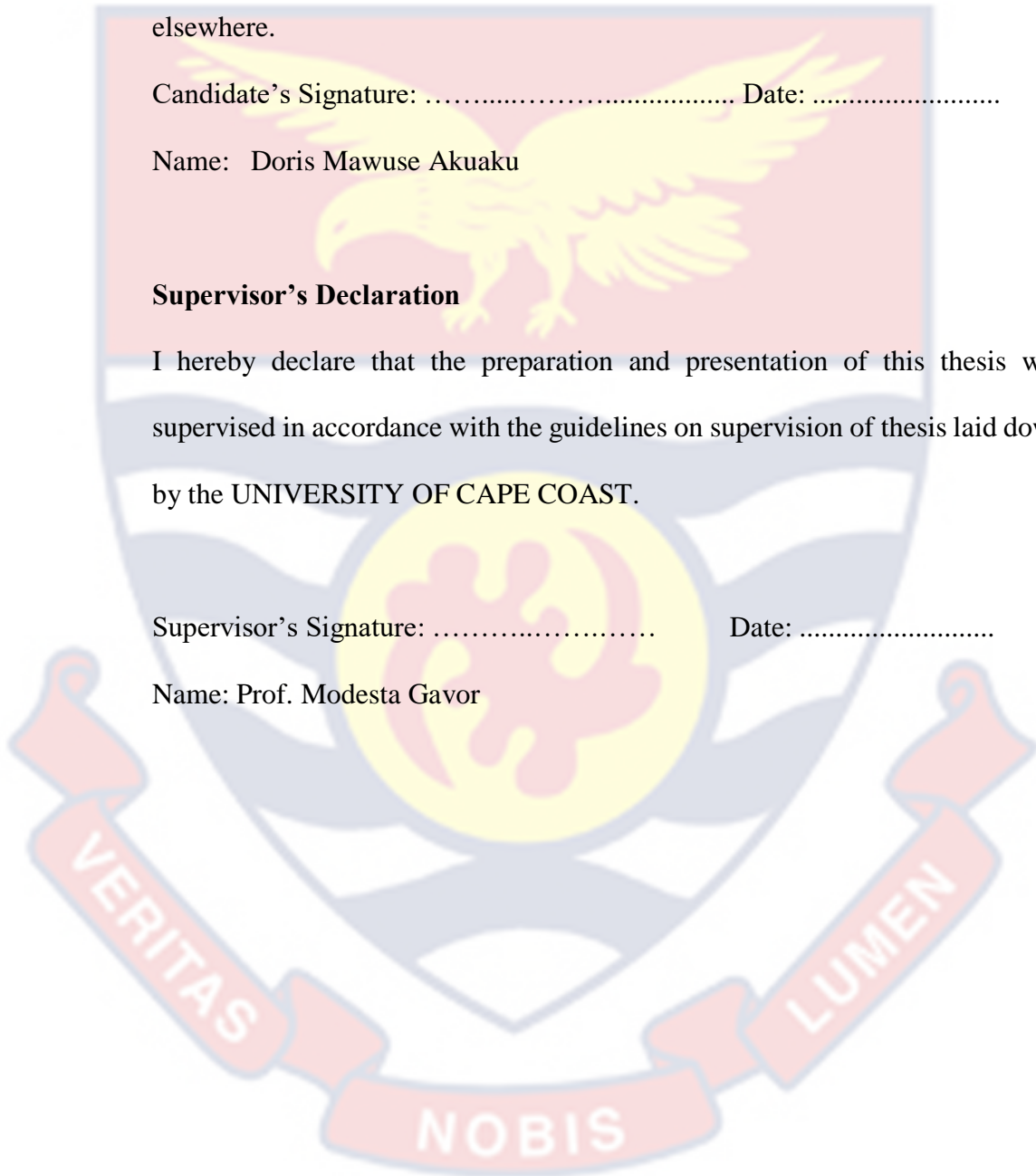
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Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST.

Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name: Prof. Modesta Gavor



ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the physical characteristics of the Atsiagbekor dance costume and its symbolic significance in the Anlo culture in the Volta Region of Ghana. The study used an ethnographic research design that was integrated into the qualitative paradigm. Out of the seven communities that were determined to be the primary locations where Atsiagbekor is customarily conducted, four were chosen. Focus group discussion and participant observation were all used as part of a multi-data gathering strategy. The results identified various physical features of Atsiagbekor dance costume which were grouped into traditional costume and contemporary costume. It was realized that each of these physical features did not just cover or adorn the body of the dancers, but represented a whole arsenal of war (with the purpose to protect, defend, and attack), story-telling elements as well as portray the cultural values and identities of the Anlo people. These features, therefore, contributed immensely to the interpretation of the dance performance. The costumes have also evolved in different ways, from the top wear, down wear, accessories to colours in order to conform to the material conditions of their time. With regard to the above, the study recommended that, Traditional leaders, retired dancers, and current dancers must continue to educate their followers about the symbolic meaning of the components of the Atsiagbekor costume and the value of maintaining the culture on occasions such as durbars, festivals, and other events. All these should be documented. This would inform the Anlos about the significance of the Atsiagbekor outfit and serve as a legacy for the next generation as well as a useful source of reference materials.

KEY WORDS

Atsiagbekor

Clothing

Costume

Traditional

Symbolism



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DEDICATION

To my husband and my children, Elorm, Seyram and Dagbe.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
KEY WORDS	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DEDICATION	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	5
Purpose of the Study	8
Research Questions	8
Significance of the Study	8
Delimitation	10
Limitations	10
Definition of Terms	11
Organization of the Study	11
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction	13
Theoretical Review	13
Symbolic interactionism	15
Cultural theory	19
Empirical Literature	20

The Concept of Dance	20
Dance costume and its physical features	26
Dance costume as a non-verbal form of communication	31
Cultural identity and meaning ascribed to costume	42
Evolution of dance costume	51
Conceptual Framework	53
Chapter Summary	54
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS	
Introduction	56
Research Design	56
Study Area	57
Rationales for Choice of Study Area	59
Population	60
Sample and Sampling Procedure	60
Data Collection Instrument	62
Reliability	64
Ethical Considerations	64
Data Collection Procedures	66
Data Analysis	68
Bracketing in Qualitative Research	69
Chapter Summary	70
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
Introduction	71
Background characteristics of participants	71

Research Question 1: What are the Costumes used in Atsiagbekor Dance?	75
The Contemporary Atsiagbekor Costume	81
Research Question 2: What do the various Atsiagbekor costumes symbolized?	86
Research Question 3: How relevant are costumes in establishing cultural identity and the meaning ascribed to these costumes?	92
Research Question 4: How the Atsiagbekor dance Costume has evolved?	94
Discussion	97
Atsiagbekor Costumes as a non-verbal form of Communication	103
Cultural Identity and the meaning ascribed to these Costumes	112
The evolution of Atsiagbekor costume	113
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
An Overview	116
Overview of the Study	116
Summary of Key Findings	117
Conclusions	119
Recommendations	120
Areas for Further Research	121
REFERENCES	122
APPENDICES	136
A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE	139
B OBSERVATION GUIDE	139

C	INTRODUCTORY LETTER	143
D	ETHICAL CLEARANCE	144



LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Communities and their Participants	62
2	Gender characteristics of the participants	72
3	Age of participants	72
4	Marital Status of participants	73
5	Religion of participants	73
6	Level of education of participants	74
7	Number of years in the dance group	74



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Conceptual Framework on Atsiagbekor dance costume (self-constructed)	53
2	Map of Keta Municipality in the Volta Region of Ghana.	58
3	The raffia skirt	77
4	Cutlass	78
5	Black powder	78
6	Red piece of cloth	79
7	Cowries from the sea shore	80
8	A picture of the Tsaka (Knicker)	81
9	Red jumper	82
10	Red cloth tied on the tsaka	82
11	Wooden sword	83
12	Horse tail	83
13	Togbenya (Hat)	84
14	The contemporary Atsiagbekor costume	84
15	Another contemporary Atsiagbekor costume	85

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Atsiagbekor is a dance performed by the people of Anlo in the Volta Region of Ghana. The dance is performed at various ceremonies and has gained great popularity among Ewes but little or nothing is said about the costume used for the dance. A lot of work has been done on costume but most of these works are rather limited to costumes used in drama (theatre studies). The researcher has also realized that the costume used for Atsiagbekor in the past is different from what is being used today. This study therefore focuses on the symbolic significance of Atsiagbekor dance costume as well as how it has evolved over the years. This will be done by assessing the physical features of the past and present Atsiagbekor dance costume and the cultural identity and meaning of these costumes.

Background to the Study

Costumes are an indispensable part of every occasion. From the ceremonies that mark birth to the ceremonies that mark death and burial, costumes are selected in accordance with the nature of the event or occasion. (Davidson: 2004, Lee: 2008). One of those occasions where costumes cannot be taken for granted is during dance performance. During traditional dances, the dancers are seen wearing various forms of clothing that can rightly be referred to as dance costume. Dance costume is a set of clothing worn by a dancer when performing for an audience. This set of clothing includes garment, accessories, body painting and hair styles appropriate for a particular occasion or season.

During a dance performance, the costume, which constitutes an integral part of the performance, is always selected to portray or relate to some distinguishing elements of the performance such as type, mood, or theme of the dance. These elements are, therefore, usually taken into consideration right from the designing stage of the costume. That is why costume designing is a crucial phenomenon that cannot be taken for granted.

Generally speaking, dance is seen as an artistic movement. Due to this, most dance costumes are made to complement the dance rather than restrict the dancer's motions. According to Pavis (2003), costumes are created taking into consideration the occasion, the dancer's anticipated motions, and aesthetic standards. Elizabeth & Parliament (2011) state that a costume may be created to engage the audience, communicate the choreographer's aesthetic vision, expose or accentuate the lines generated by the dancer's body, or any combination of these. All these elements bring into focus the importance of (dance) costume designing.

It is the collaborative work of various people including choreographers, costume designers, costume makers (seamstress), and dancers (Ravelhofer: 2006), and even the audience. Considering all the factors and stakeholders that contribute in the designing of a particular costume, it is clear that dance costume, on which this research seeks to focus, goes far beyond fabric, garment, accessories, footwear and hairstyle. One of the aims of this study is to bring out the unseen dimension of a dance costume. Clothing is worn for social and psychological reasons and as Kaiser (1985) observed the role of clothing in social psychology of clothing is communication. Clothing can therefore be said to be a carrier of symbols.

A literary method known as symbolism uses signs such as words, pictures, things, people, places, marks, or abstract concepts to symbolize thoughts or concepts that go beyond their literal meaning. The idea of symbolism is not exclusive to literary analysis and artistic creations. Symbols are present in every aspect of our daily lives. A lion, for instance, represents courage and is more than just a wild animal. Red and white are used to represent danger and victory, respectively, in Ghana. Other forms of symbolism include road signs and logos; the images represent concepts, businesses, or moods.

As such, symbolism can also be seen in traditional dance costumes. According to Pangayan, Shafii & On (2018: p. 1), “Kimaragang is the typical ethnic group in Kota Marudu, Sabah. The uniqueness and identity of Kimaragang’s community can be regarded in terms of their costumes and textiles which is as an ideographic symbol of Kimaragang’s people”. Similarly, the Anlo people in the Volta Region of Ghana can, to a large extent, be identified by the uniqueness of their traditional costume including those used during various dance performance. As posited by Kaliki (2018), although the symbol is not the value itself, the symbol is necessary for the purpose of observing the values it represents. Hence, traditional dance costume, which might basically be considered as playing the role of covering the body of the dancer, becomes, more importantly, a symbol of a dance and a tool for interpreting the dance that is being performed. This means that from a dance point of view, costumes could have a specific function of describing the character or personality, the meaning and the social, cultural, political, historical and economic significance of the dance and reflecting the identity of the dancers.

Beyond the wearer's personality, outfit serves as a sign of the social cohesion of the community (Filippos, Ivonni, Christos, & Maria: 2004). According to Okpu (2015), the majority of costumes are made according to custom for religious ceremonies, weddings, social gatherings, and to display social standing. This presupposes; that in order for a piece of clothing, accessories, or hairdo to qualify as a traditional costume and have its symbolism disclosed, it must first be connected to some aspect of the history and culture of the society. It must also be different from the peoples' regular attire. Although a costume could be said to enhance or beautify its wearer, its primary function goes beyond the physical appeal.

Confirming the above assertion, Ravelhofer (2006) observes that every costume or each part of a costume communicates a piece of information which is vital to understanding the culture of a group of people which includes music and dance. Costume, in the opinion of Eze & Akas (2015) differs from regular attire. They hold that costumes can be employed as a means of symbolic self-expression and as a communicative tool to express the sociological implications. Hecht and Steele (2005) assert that the relationship between dance and dance costumes is complicated and reflects not just dance practice in a particular period but also social behaviour and cultural values. This perspective appears to summarize the arguments regarding the symbolism of dance costumes.

There are lots of traditional dances in Africa. For example, indlamu in South Africa, moribayasa in Guinea, eskista in Ethiopia, aduma in Kenya, pat pat in Senegal, san dance in Batswana and ewegh in Niger. Ghana has many forms of traditional dances which hold enormous amount of history about the

past and ancestry of the various traditional areas. There are some notable war dances in Ghana. Beside Atsiagbekor war dance by the Anlo people of the Volta region, one can also mention others such as the Dia war dance performed by the Frafra people of Upper East of Ghana, the Fontomfrom dance, performed by the Akan people, the Kinatsu dance of the Kokomba people of Northern Ghana (Azaguno, 2016). These war dances are performed with various moves that used to be performed during wars and hunting. These dances are performed with elaborate costumes pregnant with values that need to be uncovered. The focus of this study will be on the Atsiagbekor dance.

According to a study by Whitehead (2010), Atsiagbekor is a modernized version of the Ewe war dance Atamga (Great Oath), which alludes to the pledges that soldiers recite before going into combat. He continues that, the movements of this modern iteration are mostly made in platoon formation and serve as a means of energizing and inspiring the soldiers as well as demonstrating battle tactics. The movements, drumming, and song of Atsiagbekor must coordinate and interact with one another, as may be the case with all other dances. The dance has evolved with time, and today, with wars almost becoming a thing of the past, Atsiagbekor seems to be performed only for entertainment and information purposes at social gatherings and at cultural presentations.

Statement of the Problem

One of the earliest dances performed by the Ewe-speaking people of Southern Ghana, Togo, and Benin is called Atsiagbekor. Originally a war dance performed by warriors returning to hamlet after a battle, it is now performed at

many social gatherings. This dance has been performed for centuries but knowledge of the dance is limited to oral traditions with little documentation on the costume and its symbolism.

During the performance of traditional dances in Ghana, as it is in the case of all dances the world over, many items of clothing are worn by the dancers. Filippou, Ivonni, Christos, & Maria (2004) believed that each of these clothing items carry a symbolic meaning which is worth investigating. They added that dance anthropologists and sociologists hold the belief that traditional dance is a component of human behaviour and a form of nonverbal communication that reflects society as a whole. Dance also includes its surroundings, such as the space where it takes place and grows, the interactions between the dancers and the audience, the props used during the performance, and the clothes worn by the dancers.

How the costume contributes to the analysis of the aesthetic features of dance performance seems to be a major gap in the development of this complex phenomenon, despite the fact that scholars have discussed the various ways in which dance becomes an important tool for communication in Africa. Dance costumes seem to have received little or no attention at all whenever these traditional dances are recorded and interpreted.

During dance performances, the costume worn by dancers could raise, in the minds of spectators, a number of questions such as: what informs the choice of a particular costume for a particular dance, how does a particular costume impact the dance performance, how does it help in the interpretation of the dance and what does the costume symbolize? This means that dance can be interpreted widely, but to do an in-depth or a comprehensive interpretation of a

dance form, there is the need to proceed through description and meaning of the dance costume.

There is a sizable amount of writing on costume within the field of theatre and drama, but not much in music and dance. The few studies on dance costumes conducted, however only looked at the design, fabric, and colours, ignoring the symbolic meaning attached to the costume. The limited amount of costume literature that exist was primarily created for the popular press and appears to fall into three broad groups.

The first is a coffee table book with photos of costumes by a specific designer, Owen (2005), followed by a presentation of Broadway designer Willa Kim's (costume illustrations) plays by Taymor (1998), a history of The Lion King, or a survey of opera costumes by Van Witsen (1994).

The second kind of costume book is a textbook or instructional guide for amateurs, students, and inexperienced designers. These texts provide directive advice. The processes of the design process are laid out in sections devoted to script analysis, colour selection, silhouettes, sketching, patternmaking, and construction.

The third group includes stage design history, such as those of De Marly (1982). The majority of academic articles on costume design have been written in this style. The authors of these articles frequently focus on designers from the 19th century, maybe because that is when the distinct discipline of theatrical costume design first emerged (e.g., Reinhardt, 1968). Additionally, there are books and articles that discuss Shakespeare's plays' costumes in relation to their original Elizabethan staging. Newton (1975) or contemporary revivals, such as Barton (1967). There are "few works that interact with costume at a critical

level," according to costume scholars (Monks, 2010, p. 8). Even in theatrical scholarship, "costume is routinely looked through, around, or over in one way or another" (Monks, 2010, pp. 8–9).

It is therefore the aim of this research to look into the role of the costume used for the Atsiagbekor dance and how it has evolved. This means that the study will assess the features of costumes for Atsiagbekor traditional dance and verify the symbolism of the costume use during the dance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to assess the features of dance costumes used in Atsiagbekor and uncover their symbolism in Anlo/Ewe culture.

Research Questions

The broad and overarching research question that will guide the study is "what is the symbolic meaning of the costumes worn by performers of the Atsiagbekor dance in the Keta Municipality-Volta Region of Ghana?"

The following specific research questions will be deduced from the broad research question to guide the study.

1. What are the costumes used in Atsiagbekor dance?
2. What do the various Atsiagbekor costumes symbolized?
3. How relevant are the costumes in establishing the cultural identity and the meaning ascribed to these costumes of the Ewe/Anlos?
4. How has the Atsiagbekor dance costume evolved?

Significance of the Study

In the Volta Region, various traditional dances such as Agbadza, Adzobo, Borborbor, Adevu, Zigi, Kenka as well as Atsiagbekor are performed on different occasions and for different purpose. Atsiagbekor, the dance in

which the study is based is a war dance that is performed to demonstrate actions taken during wars and to honour warriors. Atsiagbekor has been a unique one performed with a specific costume. The type of costume used signifies the purpose for which the dance is performed. It constitutes a unique aspect of the cultural practices of the Anlo people in the Volta Region of Ghana. In contemporary times, the costume used for Atsiagbekor has been transformed, both in design and the fabrics. Factors that account for the variation and transformation in the costume are not known. The study will therefore unfold the circumstances that led to the change and choice of design.

The significance of the study is three-fold. First, the findings of the study will establish the physical features of the costumes used in Atsiagbekor dance and indicate a comprehensive understanding of the cultural meanings ascribed to the costume, its relevance to the dance and its evolution. Even though a lot of works have been done on dance costume design, fabrics and colours, one can hardly find any work on the symbolic meaning and the history of the costumes worn by performers of the Atsiagbekor dance in the Volta Region of Ghana. This will therefore be a contribution to knowledge, especially the existing literature on the symbolism of costume used in traditional dances in Ghana.

Secondly, recommendations that will be made from the study will supplement the efforts made so far to bridge the gap in knowledge in the study area of the original fabric used in designing the costumes for Atsiagbekor dance.

Third, findings from the study would also serve as a guide for future researchers, traditional leaders, costume designers, the general public and scholars who are interested in this particular field of study.

Delimitation

The study was delimited to the features and symbolism of costume worn during Atsiagbekor traditional dance in the Volta Region of Ghana. The researcher also looked into the design and fabrics used in the costume. Also accessories and body painting which equally form part of the costume was considered for the research.

Limitations

The difficulty in recruiting participants (the dance group) and scheduling time with them for the focus group discussion in order to collect data for the study was one of the study's key limitations. It took several rescheduled meetings to finally get one. The fact that the focus group discussion was held in the native tongue (Ewe) posed another significant constraint to the study. The information was directly translated into English. There might be some accidental distortion of the participants' viewpoints as a result of the translation process. Even with the use of member checking, the process of translating written English to spoken Ewe could still have led to some distortions, even though I was able to hire a professional Ewe to English translator to assist with the translation and re-translations.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms/concepts are used as defined below.

Atsiagbekor: classified among the oldest traditional war dance-drumming type of the Ewe/Anlo speaking people of Southern Ghana;

Clothing: it is anything that is worn or carried on the body for personal appearance and for various reasons.

Costume: a symbolic and communicative set of clothes worn by a particular group of people during an occasion.

Traditional: it is the transmission of customs, norms or beliefs from one ancestral generation to the other.

Symbolism: a literary device that uses symbols, it can be words, people, marks, locations, or abstract ideas to represent something beyond the literal meaning.

Organization of the Study

There are five chapters throughout the entire text. The general background information, problem statement, purpose of the study, research question, significance of the study, delimitation, limitations, and definition of terminology were covered in Chapter one to provide a general overview of the study.

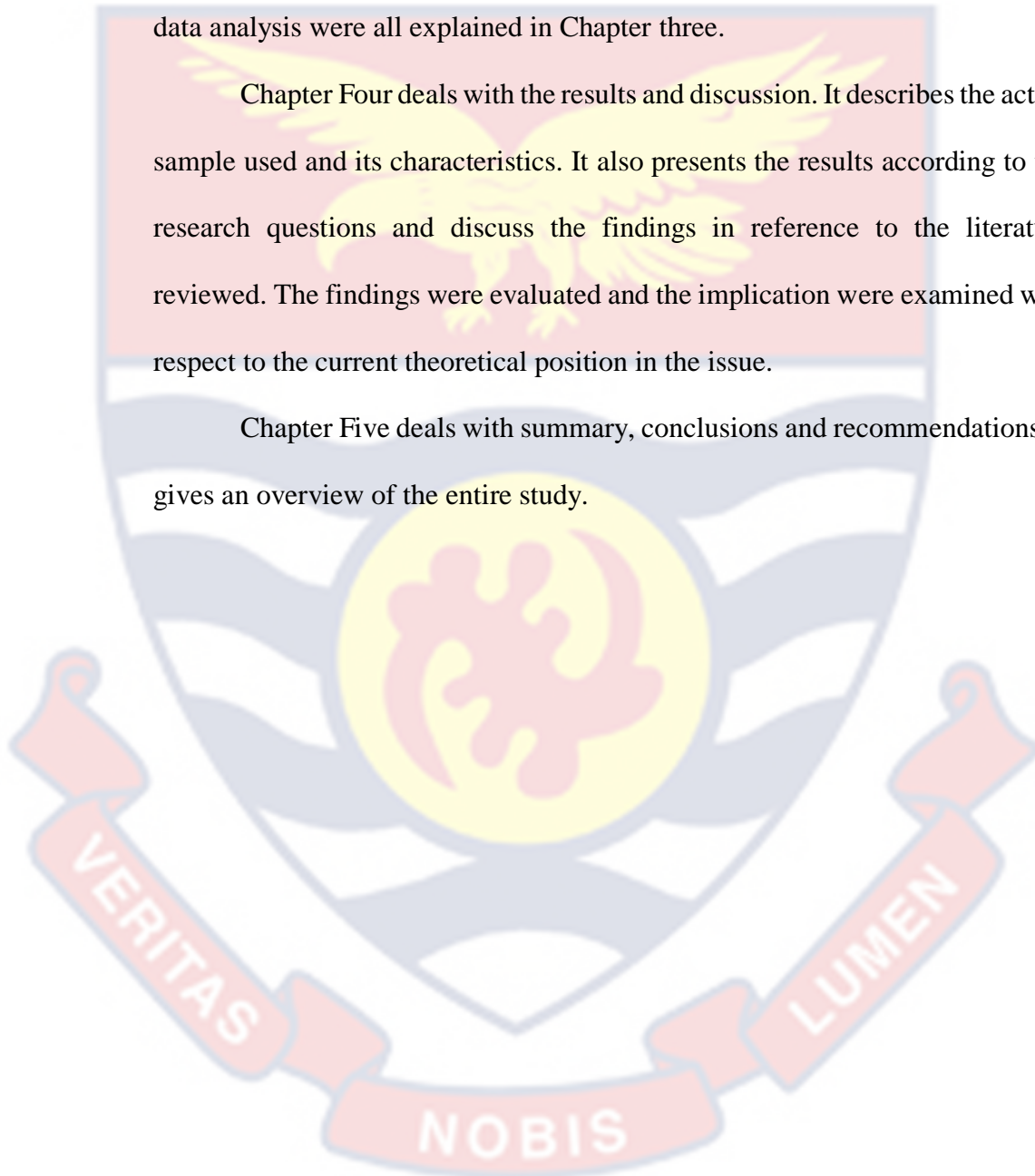
In Chapter two, literature from both theoretical and empirical sources that was deemed relevant to the current investigation was reviewed. The theoretical review focused on semiotic, symbolic interactionism and cultural theory. The empirical literature review covered topics such as the concept of dance, dance costume and its physical features, dance costume as a non-verbal

form of communication, cultural identity and meaning ascribed to costume, and evolution of dance costume. Conceptual framework was self constructed.

The research design, study region, population, sampling method, sample size, data collection instrument, data collection method, data management, and data analysis were all explained in Chapter three.

Chapter Four deals with the results and discussion. It describes the actual sample used and its characteristics. It also presents the results according to the research questions and discuss the findings in reference to the literature reviewed. The findings were evaluated and the implication were examined with respect to the current theoretical position in the issue.

Chapter Five deals with summary, conclusions and recommendations. It gives an overview of the entire study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This research aims at assessing the physical features of Atsiagbekor dance costume and its symbolism in the Anlo culture. The theoretical review focused on semiotic, symbolic interactionism and cultural theory. The empirical literature review covered topics such as the concept of dance, dance costume and its physical features, dance costume as a non-verbal form of communication, cultural identity and meaning ascribed to costume and then evolution of dance costume. Conceptual framework was self-constructed.

Theoretical Review

This aspect of the chapter provides an explanation to the theoretical lens from which the entire study can be viewed and how these theories illuminate the study. They are semiotic, symbolic interactionism and cultural theory. A theory is considered to be a set of generalizations purportedly referring to unobservable entities, such as genes, quarks, unconscious wishes (Daney, Sosa & Steup 2010). Kerlinger cited in Creswell (2014) explains theory as “a set of interrelated constructs (variables), definitions and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variable with the purpose of explaining natural phenomena” (p. 54).

In qualitative research, a theory can be used to broadly explain behaviour and attitudes or used as an overall orienting lens to study issues related to gender, class or with the issues of marginalized groups (Cresswell, 2014). This lens, in the view of Creswell (2014), “becomes a transformative

perspective that shapes the type of questions asked, informs how data is collected and analysed” (p. 64).

The field of dance costume design is based not only on the necessity of literally clothing the bodies of dancers but also on the understanding that clothing can communicate. Communication in this sense is defined, by Kaiser (1997), as “the meaningful exchange of information through visual personal cues” (p. 211)

Costume designers depend on the communicative properties of appearance, but the underlying assumption that this process exists has not been examined in the costume literature. However, within the fashion and apparel field, several theories are utilized to support the conclusion that a garment can be the medium by which a message is sent from one person to others. Semiotics and symbolic interactionism can serve as foundations for the conclusion that appearance “supplies numerous cues that can be used by others as a basis for forming inferences and making judgments” (Lennon et al. 2014, p.171).

Semiotics

Semiotics is a theory exploring signs and how they are used to communicate, and it is often cited when ascribing meaning to clothing and other appearance indicators. The theory is based on the work of Saussure and Peirce who separately asserted that humans interpret signs by connecting physical forms and mental concepts (Chandler, 2007). In his essay on costumes, the theorist Barthes (trans. 1972) explicitly linked semiotics and costume design, stating that “the intellectual or cognitive cell of the costume, its basic element, is the sign” (p. 46; Emphasis in the original source). According to semiotics, like Jakobson’s (1960) explanation of communication, signs are interpreted

using shared codes, a culturally defined “framework within which signs make sense” (Chandler, 2007, p. 147). Clothing can be interpreted due to its interconnection “with the other social codes of a society through which social variables such as attitudes, gender, age, class status, and political beliefs can be encoded” (Danesi, 2007, p. 142), a viewpoint embraced by costume designers (see Cunningham, 1989; Gillette, 1992). Due to the nonverbal nature of the messages being transmitted by costumes, accurate interpretation is not guaranteed, but according to semioticians, neither is it required. Viewers of costumes may decipher a range of meanings, but “those different readings will not be seen as evidence of communicative failure; they are only to be expected in the semiotic model” (Barnard, 2002, p. 32).

Symbolic interactionism

Another theory that supports the contention that appearance can serve as a medium of communication is symbolic interactionism, based on the works of social psychologist (Mead, 1934). Symbolic interactionism maintains that people interact with each other using symbols that can be manifested in objects like garments, the meanings of which are continuously established and refined through the experiences of current and remembrances of previous interactions (Lennon et al., 2014). In order to anticipate responses, individuals view themselves from the outlook of others, an exercise called role-taking (Mead, 1934). Although rarely applied to costume design, both semiotics and symbolic interactionism offer a valuable theoretical foundation with which to understand this little studied creative process.

Symbolic interactionism is a theory which underscores the associations within persons of a community. Communication, which involves transfer of

understanding using language and sign is understood to reflect individual's sense-making of the world around them. Through their theory, Herman and Reynolds (1994) observed that this viewpoint considers persons as dynamic participants in being influential to the communal world instead of just being acted upon. George Herbert Mead is regarded as the originator of symbolic interactionism although his study was not published. Mead's student, Herbert Blumer founded the concept "symbolic interactionism" and touched on the following fundamental scopes: people associate with things given the interpretations attributed to such things; they assign interpretations of things that result from their associations with other elements within the community; the interpretation of things held by an individual while associating with things in defined conditions (Blumer, 2004).

According to Carter & Fuller (2016), the central idea to symbolic interactionist thought is that people use language and substantial symbols in their communication with others. Instead of addressing how popular social structures describe and influence people, symbolic interactionists drift their focus to the explanation of individual viewpoints and how people make sense of their community from their peculiar standpoint. Symbolic interactionists are usually less associated with objective feature than with subjective interpretations, how repeated, meaningful associations among people come to describe the makeup of 'society.

The fundamental principles of symbolic interactionism note that: people act depending on the interpretation's objects have for them, and this can be the basis of traditional dance costume. Mead saw human being as an organism having a self. The self in this concept can be the Atsiagbekor dance costume

which is the actor for transferring its cultural components to the world through the dancers. This is manifested at occasions during which the atsiagbekor dancers use their costume to portray the culture to the unknown. Anyone seeing the costume will know that it is associated with the Anlos where the dance originates and therefore try to find more about the costume from the dancers.

A strategy of communication attempts to reveal the principal components of any system or procedure of social activities of people and the associations within these components, including any movement or connection that occurs. The foremost advantages include to mobilise contrasting components and annotations and to apportion an abridged view of the underpinning factors. The objective of the components is basically heuristic—a support to the explanation and deductions made from the communication.

Mcquail (2008) identifies four dimensions of communication:

1. Communication as a means transmitting message;
2. Communication as a means of expression, assigning explanations, and participating in community activities;
3. Communication as a means of creating responsiveness and openness;
4. Communication as a means of reception which needs the encrypting and unpacking of explanations.

Fuchs (2020) demonstrates that the structures of transmitting messages are the popular approaches in the media and lessons in communication. Communication is a concurrent transmission of messages with figurative associations. Which at the same time an innermost and an exterior procedure, where individuals concede on the description of conditions and each theme is envisioned. Tijana, Tomaž, & Čuden (2014) are also of the view that, costumes

could be construed to mean transferring message from performer to perceiver using emblematic codes in the broad or localised context of donning tradition. Within such broad conversation, an individual generates a unique trait using the presentation. Descriptions and other details concerning the individual are physically transmitted and perceived. Dressing for figurative interpretation in the field of art around such classification aside formal, private, and daily use likewise conform to classification on garments. Clothing in a modern world is key in the sustenance of customary connotations and characterisation of garments, state regalia, and dresses for special occasions together with its features, physical signals and characters, and by using strategy, there is application daily dressing, conceptual fashion, haute couture, with photography reflecting the features of gratitude among communal formations and orientations.

Person perception communication model by Stanley (1986) as cited in Marshall (2000) identifies four features: the sender, environment, social context, and the receiver. The environment represents the technological, physical, cultural, and aesthetic dimensions that affect a person. In this context the cultural domain is the Atsiagbekor dance. The senders are the people who develop the message that is the Atsiagbekor dancers. The receivers are the people who read and interprets the message. The receivers can be referred to the people in the communities where Atsiagbekor is performed or those who watch the Atsiagbekor dancers during their performance. Stanley further explains that each individual participating in the communication has three features of the part that determines how records are transmitted and decoded. These include;

intrapersonal circumstances, interpersonal circumstances and socialization structures.

The foremost dimension which readily attracts my consideration is the socialization component. These are the demographic and lifestyle aspect of a person that influence fashion involvement and consumer behaviour. The social component brings circumstances and inspiration through speechless conversation coupled with the transmission and perceiving of clothing messages. Using the dance costume as a nonverbal communication, the senders are the dancers who use the costume to perform the dance, and the receivers are the audience who claps in praise or boos in rejection of the dance performed. Therefore, non-verbal communication through clothing such as the silent language of clothes, reading clothing messages, sending and receiving messages is a social context.

Cultural theory

The last but not the least framework that informs this study is equally supported by the cultural theory. With this theory, it is possible to see how a material culture view would promote a close study of changes in clothing designs as objects that portray underpinning methods of social and political change (Beaule, 2018).

Though clothing transmits messages about a person's status, wealth, gender identity, class, religious membership, politics, and nationality, garments themselves are social objects. Cultural theorists argue that the social life or biography of an object reflects its function and purpose within its social context, and when that context is shifting, the thing becomes an "object in motion" (Barrkman, 2006, 87). Garments are social objects in motion that influence and

are consolidated by identity politics, but so too are the traditional identities they may epitomise. Culture identity is normally portrayed through the costume we wear in our traditional dance and the information which the dancers communicate to us. These symbolisms can be communicated non-verbally.

Associations happens within a specific socio-cultural situation in which physical and social objects including conditions, must be explained or classified depending on individual interpretations. In this case, interaction occurs during traditional dance performance on occasions such as festivals and funerals. Also, deductions flow from associations with other persons and with community, and deductions are endlessly generated and reconstructed through decoding procedures during association with others

Empirical Literature

The Concept of Dance

Galván (2014) is of the view that, dance is an integral component of tradition and a vital programme that provides many reasons in the traditional environment. Individuals and groups perform it during religious ceremonies, festivals, funerals, marriages, and almost all social occasions. The researcher is of the view that dance actually add a sense of joy and beauty to any music that is played. According to Nair (2014), dance played a significant role in the oral and performance means of transmitting stories from generation to generation before written languages were invented. Another early element in the social history of dance is believed to have been the employment of dance in euphoric trance states and healing rituals. Dances are a means of passing down information and customs.

Different notions of what defines dancing have been understood and defined. Darko (2017) is of the view that, dance is a kind of communication as well as a sign. It has the capacity to convey both an action and an idea simultaneously. A person dancing, for instance, can communicate and convey a sense of mood while also expressing a sign of delight. The use of dancing in religious rites has both internal and cultural relevance because a sign receives its meaning from its nature, and a tool assumes its value for what it is employed for. Bannerman (2019) also expressed the view that, dance is an expression of how people behave and a symbol of the values they have. A complex cultural phenomenon like dance has components that help people identify as being a part of a certain cultural group. Darko (2017) goes on to define dance as the body moving continuously in a variety of styles to music. She sees dancing as a form of art that can be loved and valued, which enables it to be utilized to worship God and unite people in peaceful coexistence. According to Nair (2014), this movement is recognized as dance by actors and viewers within a particular culture. It also has aesthetic and symbolic significance.

In the view of Rini (2020), dancing has the personality of an archipelago, which is full of beauty and majesty, and it teaches that one must be full of personality. However, Bresnahan, (2019) discuss that dance has been performed all through history on account of politics, art, social, education, therapy, religious and other reasons. There are also versions of performance on the issue of which many would regard dance seriously, such as digital performance, or classes of competitive dance that have characteristics that portray them similar to artistic sports like gymnastics or figure skating, so what constitutes a dance is the matter in some instances as well.

Clay et al (2012) argue that movement is the original language of dance. Developing interactions for the sole purpose of a live performance does not fall within the scope of traditional design. Coordination in performances can be spotless, and ought to reflect the beauty of their own and completely attract the attention of the dancer and also the audience. Petersen, Iversen, Krogh, & Ludvigsen, (2004) proposed that adding the aesthetic outlook to user centered plan is an aesthetic interface strives to stimulate and captivate the performer to engineer creativity.

Harrington (2020) points out that, modern cultural dynamics promote a fetishization of limits of approaches, the generation of an aesthetic that depends on social allocations of being male and female, and highlighting the brand and image, eliminating somatic consciousness. He explained further that, dance can involve religious, socio-cultural, self, or political exhibitions, and more so performance. It could concern entertainment, technique, personal-expression, cultural orientation, sex, spiritual transformation, art, or transcendence. According to Nair (2014), dance has maintained a powerful, ongoing tradition in India up till the present day, influencing ritual, culture, and especially the Bollywood entertainment sector. Similar links can be made between a number of different contemporary dance styles and historical, ceremonial, traditional, and ethnic dancing. More than an ordinary performer, the actor assumes the status of a bonafide fellow of the traditional environment. Local storytellers, healers, tutors, and ordinary persons espouse defined roles while performing. Performers should accordingly probe into costume choices, handling of gender, body biases, choosing music, instructional, and activity strategies to dance.

Typically, dance is regarded as the most interesting tool for effective communication. According to oral tradition, a baby's cry (sound) at birth heralds the arrival of a new soul. This cry then develops into a beat, which is strengthened by vibration and causes the body to start moving. This ideology achieves the framework on which the Anlo Ewe music and dance tradition is programmed to display the full character of Ewe Dance as a widespread cultural practice. (Kuwor, 2012) There are various categories of dance, modern and traditional dance but for the sake of this research, it will be limited to only traditional dance.

Turino (2008) defines traditional dance as any local dancing practice that is frequently closely related to regional musical forms and/or regional beliefs. In Western culture, traditional dance is also referred to as folk dance. When a traditional dance's cultural origins are highlighted, it is used more frequently. African societies place a high value on cultural dancing. These dancing traditions help people mature and honour community members while enjoying festivals and other occasions. They also serve to educate moral principles and social graces. Traditional dance is typically a more social than a competitive exercise, however it is usually choreographed. Traditional dance still exists in all the forms as well as being a self-reflective tool in their own investigation and the investigation of cultural practices.

Nair (2014), explains further that, dance in Africa is totally interwoven into community and big occasions in a society are regularly conveyed in dances are performed for weddings and wars, births and funerals. Traditional performance influence cultural values, including religious practices and sexual canons; provide avenue to control sentiments, such as grief; inspire members of

a community to collaborate, whether during battles or milling grain; promulgate mystical sacraments; and invest in social cohesion.

According to Khutniah & Iryanti (2012), customary performances in Indonesia come from both the royal family and the general populace. In its presentation, it primarily involves an identity, a character, and a purpose. Kaliki, (2018) documented that Kabasaran dance is a traditional war dance of Minahasa community, this is carried out by numerous persons. Kabasaran dancers in Minahasa frequently work as farmers or as villagers' security guards. The dancers will transform into warriors if their area is under threat from an enemy onslaught. Originally, this dance was known as "Kawasilan," which is made up of the words "Kawasal" and "Sarian." Kawasal means to accompany and follow, while Sarian is a war chief who directs the ancient Minahasa military dance. However, when the Malay language of Manado evolved over time, the letter "W" was replaced by the letter "B," changing the term to "Kabasaran". Currently, the Kabasaran dance is no longer carried out for war, because there has never been a war or oppression by irresponsible parties. However, the Kabasaran dance is still being preserved and performed at sacred places in the Minahasa area such as funeral, weddings, official pick-ups, and opening important events. The same way the Atsiagbekor dance was also a traditional war dance performed by the Anlos in the Volta Region of Ghana is now played at various occasions for various reasons.

Atsiagbekor is a descriptive performance which permeates and harmonises dancing, drumming, chanting, singing and to narrate the history of a little community which gallantly doused an invasion by comparatively formidable advanced military formation of well past 500 years behind

(Montague, 2011). To keep account of the triumph for future generations, the traditional head of the little community assembled the most talented artists of the time composed the song of victory, Atsiagbekor. Locke (2011) explains that, the traditional ensembles of Atsiagbekor are made up of seven separate instrumental pieces, each of which has its unique design, sound, and rhythmic feature and orientation. The Atsiagbekor antiphonal feature (“call-and-response”) dominates virtually exclusively between the lead drum and the performers. Therefore, each six auxiliary ensembles components retain their ostinato rhythms and do not seek to outshine each other.

As stated by Whitehead (2010) the Ewe war dance Atamga (Oath (atam) Great (ga), which alludes to the oaths people took before engaging in combat, is now known as Atsiagbekor. These contemporary motions, which are typically made in platoon formation, are used to bolster and motivate the troops as well as to demonstrate battle tactics. Atsiagbekor is still played today for entertainment at gatherings and during customary activities. The harmony between the performers and the master drummer is a key aspect of this dance. Every rhythmic theme coming from the master drum has a corresponding trail of dance steps that are precisely timed to match the rhythms of the drum. Songs from the Atsiagbekor tradition are a vital part of Ewe oral culture. The majority of the songs contain historical references to their chiefs, migration tales, wartime commanders, and themes relating to the Ewes' indomitability against their enemies, themes of valour, loyalty, and death, among other things.

In Ghana, to watch an Atsiagbekor performance is to witness scenes that may have their exact origins in conflicts waged as the Ewes traversed extremely hostile terrain in search of peace. The researcher is also of the view

that since Atsiagbekor performances contain a vital heritage in Ewe/Anlo oral tradition, the costume could also have a symbolic meaning attached to it which could be the reason behind the choice of a particular costume. Dixon (2015) is also of the view that, traditional dance also has a supporting element such as dance costume which will create a more beautiful performance in the stage.

Dance costume and its physical features

The study's primary focus is on traditional dance costumes. Although costumes and fashion are similar in that they both consist of apparel, the two are distinct. Costumes help actors convey themes, moods, character attributes, historical eras, and setting. Even outfits that mimic current trends are not considered fashionable. (Brach, 2012, p. 53). Dance costumes are the clothing items used during traditional dance performance. Every traditional dance costume has its own features that make it unique to a particular dance. In the view of Rifaldi & Masunah (2020). Costumes and apparel are ways to dress for a certain environment. The costume was typically created for the event, which was typically utilized for dance performances. They went on to say that a costume could be an overall look or a particular fashion choice for the neighbourhood during a certain time. The researcher disagrees with them that costume is a general outfit but of the opinion that the general outfit is clothing and clothing becomes costume when they are used for performance. This term also related to the artistic arrangement of accessories on images, sculptures, or poems based on the time, place, or situation.

Rifaldi & Masunah (2020) explain further that dance costumes could be anything that covered the dancer's body. In accordance with body proportions, costume, therefore, had its parts such as head part, upper body part and lower

body part which comprise the headdress, dress, cloth and pants. Generally, the colours of the costumes are chosen based on the colours which had theatrical meaning and emotional touch. Regarding the colour selection, it could match the combination of makeup and hairdo so that it could form the unity in the application of the character that would be raised. The costume was a complementary element that was important to support the creation of costumes, makeup, decorations, and accessories. The costumes help to draw the character, emphasized the impression of the character and changed it into the needs of the casts or players.

Scafidi (2015) argues that what differentiates costumes from everyday clothes could be a subject of context, based on when and how the costumes are worn or by whom they decorate, including the views of the audience. In short, for performance which can be dance or drama. Costume allows the performer to assume a different personality aside his or her usual personality and also attain a fresh image. As one wears a garment, his or her body attains the state of a fresh orientation or character.

Regalia could be looked at as an auxiliary cover that generates a glimpse of personal-knowledge, personal-display, and exhibition. Some may argue that garments could drift from a stage activity and that it ought to infuse with the atmosphere, around but away, yet in most situations, it could further 'make or break' a dancer. (Musgrove, 2019 and Barbieri, 2017).

In the view of Saearania, & Rahimb (2020), choosing a performance garment is a core component of Malay dance. The advantage between garments and performance moves is a component of the splendour of Malay dance. Also the design of modern performance could commence with the adoption of current

garment. Dance moves can be engineered from the garments and could ultimately yield something fresh. In addition to the motivation from fashion, other current sources of life can be relevant thoughts for the evolution of dance.

Bugg (2014) is of the view that, garment may by itself assume the status of a dancer but that is dependent on the body it contains and the manner in which it correlates with the rhythm. Bugg, again point out that, regalia as body type located by scenography within which the body, garment, arranges and observers every move to transmit a message, possibly engineering a thought or some type of sensory practise.

Costumes are in touch with the skin either remotely, constrictively, or deeply, changing the body by both sight and touch when moving. However, Trimmingham (2017) argues that carved garment is rather far demanding as it could change the thinking of the audience as well as the thoughts and body of the performer. Hanna (1965) explains that costumes of traditional African dance generally reflect modernity in contemporary Africa. Before extensive European contact, Africans commonly used dance costume for comfort and aesthetic reasons. Costume often served as an extension of parts of the body to emphasize and inspire movement; as such, it is an important part of dance. Costumes were usually made of materials found in the local area, such as skins, feathers, grasses, dried flowers, and bark. In some areas, and on some occasions, the dancers did not clothe themselves.

Dance garments are packaged such that the performers could navigate freely in them as expected devoid of any interference within the dance movement. Penley (2020), underscores the fact that, costuming and movement constitute a very significant, but often overlooked part in character construction.

Say, should a performer be raised up, the regalia will normally be crafted in a manner such that the fingers of lifter are not likely to catch on it. In other instances, the armhole is shaped abnormally high for ease of navigation around the armpit. According to Maclaurin & Monks (2018), it is important to emphasize that various aspect of costume do not present themselves sequentially onstage. Rather a single stage costume is capable of enabling all exchanges between actor and character, actor and scenography and scenography and audience. These can also be applied in dance costume among the dancers and audience

Mansyur (2020) also documented that Galombang dancers wear costumes which consist of loose pants called 'galembong' pants and also loose clothes that are traditionally black. The use of this costume by the way the bottom of the shirt is inserted into the waist and the pants are rolled up slightly and tied with batik cloth that is formed in a triangle. In the middle corner of the triangular fold is placed face down behind the hip.

According to Harms (1938), the Russian folk regalia, with their soft features, their shinny symphonic colours, and the holistic turns of their tumultuous ornamentation signals an obvious expression to the inner feelings of the national composure. However, in Swedish folk costumes are firm styles and strong coloration. The repeated use of stripes for decoration with complementary appeals of red and green makes the desirous character of the people is exposed. These characteristics could be seen in the folk garments of central Europe, likewise those of Switzerland and Austria.

In the view of Steele (2005), regalia repeatedly portray unique features of design and could also possess fittings such as fake cuffs, sleeves, shawls, and

collars. Usually, a garment needs to adjust swiftly to changes; this is normally aided by velcro or hook fasteners. In some garments, the base of the material is made heavy to allow for navigation in a majestic manner. Lining could be applied to a garment in a formation to allow shape, talent and highlight areas of concern.

Hanna (1965) illustratively, consider the dance costumes of the Acholi in Uganda whose costumes are representative of many ethnic groups in Africa. Aboriginally, young Acholi girls merely wore a girdle of roughly twelve fibre threads hanged at the right-hand side. These girdles are adorned with metal beads and discs hinged in front and back fringes; vacillating to and from within performance, they stressed the mission of the hips which is predominant in Acholi dance. After puberty, Acholi girls wore two short fibre aprons, one on the front and the other on the back. Hanna (1965) continues that, the older the girls became, the broader and longer were the assigned garments and tails. In addition, they wore tail hairs of giraffe or gargets of coiled brass wire around their necks and coiled wire on their upper arms, wrists, and legs. Flashing in the light of the sun or moon, these burnished ornaments enhanced movement. The boys of Acholi wore a small rat skin to veil the genitals and the men used incompatible skins of bigger beasts around their waists.

Dance costumes are an extremely important part of every dance team for their performances and competitions. Costumes help bring to life the performance that dancers work so hard to complete. They help accentuate the dancer's movements making them look more flowing and elaborate. The physical features of dance costumes serve as a non-verbal form of communication.

Dance costume as a non-verbal form of communication

Costume as non-verbal form of communication is its symbolism which can be seen in its physical features. Symbolism is the art of using an object or a word to represent an abstract idea. Symbolism is in everyday life and often found in colours, objects, flowers and animals just to mention a few. An individual and what is worn in the wider socio-cultural setting is determined by symbolism (Langer, 2009). The most popular means of dressing portrays the contemporary or traditional patterns that treasured aesthetic requirements. The garments are seen as a communal and personal physical channel and with the aid of it, a defined group in modern tradition could be fruitfully explained. Clothing offers an integral component of the human body (Marsden, 2006). Associating art with clothing harmonizes the social and spiritual dimensions of human behaviour, and further reflects comparisons as well as figurative correlations in the anthropogenic world.

According to Tijana, Tomaž, & Čuden (2014), individuals can leverage clothing as their foremost journey to speechless conversation with the environment. Apart from the purpose of personal turnout, clothing further reflects our inner being. What we wear draws the attention of those around. Through the wearing of attire, we converse with those around, stimulate signs of welcome or objection, or shared virtues in connection in addition to appreciating something that is pleasant, affable, upright etc. What is worn could be understood as a spread of record between a performer and audience, using speechless messages in the specific or general scheme of the garment tradition. In such open conversation, people create their individuality through what they wear. Personal messages are visually transmitted and perceived.

Tijana, Tomaž, & Čuden (2014) explain further that, the concept of communication is often considered a fundamental transmission concept, and could convey an important area of non-verbal conversation and exchange of information within societies using clothing. Clothing may be construed as an exchange of record between performer and audience using speechless messages in the broad or particular aspect of dressing tradition. Within a public interaction, people create their individuality using what they wear. Messages and information concerning oneself are physically transmitted and perceived. The most sophisticated, multilayer and most coded conversation between persons and communities are interacting in several aspects and interpretations in their speechless conversations. Prevailing garment, accessories and the channels of perceiving subjective interpretations using semantic encryptions are in their most prevailing and natural utility that is physical. This results in a two-dimensionality and as concerns garment, it is perceived in the material as well as symbolically represented. When one considers clothes as a code, the perceiver could divide it into several aspects. Such separations will normally not be done merely by function and purpose of the attires, but through the depth in symbolism that must be considered. Perceiving garments in such a way helps draw a distinction between every day costume, ceremonial, festive, uniform, etc. All such categories reflect their unique meanings and underscore a symbolic value

Jablon (2016), explains that in Western theatre, one of the fundamental objectives of a costume is to communicate to the audience. This is not the trait of the performer donning the garment and to transmit additional objectives and dispositions concerning the production as a different from the objective of the

traditional costume. Garments are purposed to give information concerning talents whole. Dennis (2014) argued that mankind has over the years used the costumes they wear to engage in non-verbal communication within the society.

Rini (2020) expressed the view that, besides dancers mastering dance moves, dancers must also understand the concepts in dance and its costume. According to Jablon-Roberts, & Sanders (2019), costumes are composed of garment, and whereas that brands them moderately comparable to fashion, the two occur in different spectrums. Garments are applied to communicate dispensations, codes, behaviour traits, moods, and locations. Even garments projecting modern designs are not taken as fashion. Costume designers are responsible not only for the visual appearance of actors but also for interpreting visually and verbally the action, style, and characters of the play and nature of the ancient time (Cunningham, 1989, p. 12). Creating garments for historically arranged theatrical productions occur with an outstanding level of setbacks owing to the extra stage of the communication of time period.

In the view of Dennis (2014), contemplating the concept of costume, it is obvious that the inner spirit of an individual influences his or her outward and noticeable sign. Therefore, the inward character traits of a person become obvious through the garments they have on. This is explained by the fact that every occasion reflects specific features that define it as unique from others. Denis also noted that, the type of garment used during each dispensation is unique to its citizens as it distinguishes them from the others and the communicative role that garments possess in a non-verbal way. It is generally held that the costume worn on stage by an actor reflects his or her inward spirit,

which becomes obvious to the society. The mood of the actor is, therefore, communicated to the audience.

Accordingly, dance costumes function as a speechless means of engaging with the audience. This is upheld by Kurland (2004) when he argued that “costumes are not mere garments. They are visual tools used to release the soul of a character, a way to lift a character off the page into a three-dimensional world”. The position of Kurland therefore underscores the point that through the wearing of garments, the emotional thoughts of a performer is unveiled to the observers. Therefore, appropriate use of costumes by actors is key to transmitting information about their personality and the role they play for the audiences to clearly appreciate. Accordingly, Arnold (2001) argued that “the character definition expressed through costume must support rather than impede the actor’s work”. This should also be applied in the dancer’s world.

Kaiser (1985) upholds the position of Kurland (1985) in ‘The Social Psychology of Clothing and Personal Adornment’ that costumes are largely palpable and perceivable beyond other traits of individual-behaviour’. The argument of Kaiser here shows that the negligibility of a person’s behaviour, by far, becomes largely obvious through the costumes worn. Thus, costume become an integral and significant feature of his/her behaviour. Costumes transmit reliable information such as the dispensation of the dance and culture, the dancer’s social ranking, and the design of garments in addition to affective information as well as the mood of the dancer, the personality, and the dance’s essence.

Jablon (2016) is of the view that, a foremost purpose of a regalia is to engage with the observers. Garments are thus purposed to give information

concerning the talents and personal values of the dancer donning them as well as convey greater objectives and dispositions about the production in general. Lennon, Johnson, Noh, Zheng, Chae, & Kim (2014) are also of the view that individuals associate with one another employing characters to which meanings were defined. Words are the foremost symbols for emblematic conversation because people have observed to decode words in a regular manner. However, other parts of people's behaviours also carry symbolic relevance. These dimensions comprise facial and bodily gesticulations including portions of style. The figurative relevance of most fashion accessories is needed because individuals are able to describe circumstances and tailor their attitudes in such conditions.

According to Kuwor (2012), an important means by which most African and foreign communities transmit their norms and traditions is through forging solidity in their culture by engaging the constituents in allocating the same meaningful world, often characterized or amplified in emblematic features like dance, religion, or music. Communities develop their unique garments to promote the message being transmitted to the observers. Garments worn during performances in Africa are described by Amegago (2011) as “reflect the socio-cultural group, the nature of the performance, the occasion of the performance, performance style, the mood of the performers; and the requirement for dramatic enactment” (2011, p. 185).

Dabney & Wise (1930), both producers and tutors of theatre garments, also defined three shades of garments, confirming that historical and current costumes deserved their own classifications. Beside the two, Dabney & Wise (1930) added “poetic, fantastic, mechanistic and other non-realistic and

experimental costumes” a class of ostensibly related to Grimball and Wells’ fantastic/symbolical grouping. Beyond the current and historical garments, Prisk (1966) discovered state regalia, those worn by individuals from a specific geographic zone as well as from some traditional groupings, as a particular formation. In addition, she defined a fourth class, “traditional costumes are symbolic, stylized representations of specific characters, such as Pierrot, Pierrette, and Harlequin.” Here, Prisk ostensibly purposed symbolic to read as costumes that are swiftly and smoothly identified by discerning observers as reflecting these group performers of pantomime and Commedia dell’Arte, Prisk observed that “there are many other kinds of costumes: circus, fantastic, dance, skating, animal, and so forth. Most of these, however, are based on or derived from the four basic types” (Jablon, 2016).

There are four components of Joged Mataram which include Sengguh, Ora Mingkuh, Greget, and Sawiji. Each element connotes a unique message and can be applied in social settings. In Sawiji, complete concentration is required and the dancer must as much as feasible stay focus on his or her performed role. Once the dancer attains and retains total concentration, distractions around him become insignificant. Greget provides the spirit or dynamics within a dancer’s soul. The dancer’s burning spirit must be regulated and channelled towards the right dance method. The dancer can perform with his subtle feelings when his emotion is appropriately channelled. Greget as an intrinsic dynamic reflecting the talent of a dancer, so it could not be practiced to by other performers. Sengguh is the personal-assurance within performers which does not result in self-importance. Self-belief is so essential for performers, mainly because they need to be certain that they perform correctly and suitably both in tune with his

movements and the principles. Sengguh represents the attitude of a performer which needed to be integrated within the dance moves. The dancer's mission is communicated to the audiences through the dance moves.

Lastly, Ora Mingkuh involves taking personal responsibility and keeping things. The three essentials for dealing with situations in dance performance include loyalty, strength, and courage. The four elements of Joged Mataram reflect the traditional wisdom and the philosophical concept in dancing. This concept can equally be useful to communities in everyday life. Given that society is at the stage of industrial development, both individuals and the community at large are confronted with real challenges and will need to apply the philosophy of Joged Mataram. All these attributes are complimented by the various dance costume.

Rini (2020) advanced the argument that, the concept of Joged Mataram is a technique that performers who are training on Javanese dance must perfect. Perfecting the Joged Mataram technique is essential for persons training on dance skills to appreciate aside of the physical talents, the philosophy of dance must also be well appreciated. Thus, mastering Joged Mataram is key to discovering its relevance and urgency in dance life and also in everyday life. As a Javanese dance, Joged Mataram can be used in everyday life particularly in contemporary life when individuals were influenced by many things.

Yulianti (2015) said that, value is something that is understood by the community about what is meaningful that can be interpreted by the community towards the contribution of something to people's lives. Yulianti sees that, for example from the aspect of history, will be valuable if it can be understood by society, and history itself gives meaning and contribution to society. Like dance

costume, it will be valuable if it can provide something valuable and beneficial to society, whether its benefits, symbolism or knowledge that will be absorbed by the community. Then something will be valued if the value is attached to what will be valued.

Kim, Cho, & Lee (2015) also propound that Tsam performance garments differ in shades in line with their specific objective, but the ones typically used by the foremost actors is made up of a robe like the Mongolian deel, with huge triangular sleeves adorned with multi-coloured stripes, and decorated with animal bones. The main garment in Mongolian Tsam include a deel, adorned with an apron that cloaks around the waist, a divination symbol ornamented with beads, and a cape that covers the shoulders. The Mongolian deel is a dress type with the skirt and jacket adjoined, with a line along the front neck opening and five folds at the waist connected to the bodice that looks like a gusset. The multi-coloured hoops on the sleeve and the true shape of the bodice vary with each actor. Designs applied for the lines reflect flame, skulls and the Geumgangjeo mark. The sleeves are triangular and funnel-styled, the cuffs are open than the armhole and reflect a flapping effect during performance.

Kim, Cho, & Lee (2015) continues that, the Mongolian traditional performance costume is popular in the use of animal symbolisms that include, among others, skull decorations, face shields of deer and bulls, little decorations of bell, busts of deer and cows, various pieces of cloth, that reflects a classic semblance to Shaman garments. Mongolian Shamans are understood to fly smoothly in space and replace the souls, such that the dance costume is applied as a tool to reflect the smooth motion of Shaman.

Therefore, regarding the designs and symbols of the costumes of Mongolian Shamans, entities of belief are employed for the main adornment and cost of the performance materials. Also, foundational in each belief of Shaman is the dance costume of the Mongolian which is characteristic of used features as directed by the god master or mother whose position was possessed by a spirit or transmitted from generation to generation. According to Mongolian Shamanism, the spirit world is denoted by colour and the earth by darkness. Moreover, the sun is denoted by yellow, the sky by blue, Savdag (water spirit) by black, fire by red, and the earth or Lus (the spirit of earth) by green and dark blue. Important sentiments and features of manhood, like responsibility, sin, sacrifice, fortune, and symbol are denoted by black and white and the human life. (Kim, Cho, & Lee: 2015)

In the view of Moen (2007), the Body Bug is an applicative example of an artistic association (part of a costume). This device was developed with the view to exploring movements and association, and particularly the quality of movement that could be deduced from contemporary performance. Clay et al. (2012) explain that, the performer is followed and could communicate with virtual codes displayed on stage. The virtual codes are showcased to the observers, while the actor is the one that engages with them.

Clay et al. (2012) explains further that, for artists, synchronising those fields unearthed a fresh area of consideration for invention in dance, where the performer can alter the visuals and sound and apply them for creativity at the same time. They propounded five versions that can be integrated to produce augmentations and interactions. The first one is gesture tracing, i.e. ability to learn the precise conformation of the performer's body on stage in real time,

and his position on stage. The second one is a style of displaying motion in quest for perceiving sentiments, which could reveal motion features and the sentiments that the performer exhibits with the dance movements. The third one is a musical ensemble that produces sentimental clues from a specific emotion. The fourth one is a process that produces a humanoid robot of a sentimentally-dear action, from a defined emotion. Finally, the fifth include a physical and software system to showcase augmentations on stage. The gathering of these various processes enables us to generate a number of movement-centred associations.

According to Courgeon, Buisine, & Martin. (2009), several approaches exist to augmenting the performance of a dance using emotional spectacles. In two preliminary dance activities, the first argued that the dance activities with a virtual feature that unveils passions using facial codes and by the MARC forum. In a second trial, there is the will to apply an embodied scheme within the actual world through which the performer could display, and apply physical symbols of sentiments so as to connect with the performer.

Mansyur (2020) documented that, in the appearance of Galombang duo baleh, there are completeness consisting of traditional objects as supporting elements, such as: a small flag (marawa kecil in Minang) and a betel place (carano). Marawa was held by a man who is to restrict the dancers whose two rows of lines have approached each other whose positions are almost met. The role of the marawa is as a breakthrough by being put down between two groups of dancers who are approaching. Until now, the flag is still used in the performance of Galombang duo baleh and it cannot be said to be abolished. The people supporting Galombang duo baleh still believe in the performances

realized by the movements of pencak silat which are impressed by the two groups of dancers lurking at each other. If it is very close there will be mutually attacking and fighting between the warriors. Carano is used to welcome guests by inviting betel leaf as a symbol to manifest a sincere feeling in receiving guests.

Shannon (2017) argues that, in the pre-industrial Ottoman period in the Balkans and approximately up until the First World War, special events such as weddings and holidays were marked by the absence of work and the presence of dance. On these occasions people put aside their everyday clothing to don ceremonial dress, distinguished by elaborate ornamentation and a repertoire of symbolic motifs passed down for generations (Shannon 2011).

Tijana, Tomaž, & Čuden (2014) opined that members of a group, for example dance group uses non-verbal communication in a defined garment. Through this, they could channel individual, communal engaging, communal acceptance, and familiarised views regarding norms, aesthetical ideas and standards, and equally exhibit and emphasize the prevailing social stratification and multiplicity. Indirectly, costumes exhibit several social occasions in society, apportioning procedures or the foremost way of dressing and accordingly showcasing foresight into the way of life of a particular dispensation.

Tijana, Tomaž, & Čuden (2014) point out that, the manner of dressing, aside from discovering the global constants that could be over-done, is not conditioned on the toughest rules of fashion i.e., transience, and it provides several elements, socio-cultural “borrows”, changes in norms and aesthetic skills. Modern expressions of dressing are consistently located within a defined and recognisable traditional grouping, which provides us the chance to

relatively appreciate the manner in which to explain garment signs on communicative level including symbolic. Traditional dance costume as a non-verbal form of communication has a cultural identity and meaning ascribed to it.

Cultural identity and meaning ascribed to costume

According to Bannerman (2019), culture is commonly understood as the way of life of a group of people. This includes their way of singing, types of music, dance, dressing, and food among others. Through the strong socialization process in most Ghanaian communities, the younger generation are linked to their culture. Similarly, through socialization music and dance with their enormous significance to the history and culture of a society is exposed to the new generation and with time it becomes part of the way of life of the new generation. Dance, therefore, creates a platform for the people to negotiate their identities, and also find integration within their culture or the environment in which they find themselves.

Through social events such as dancing, communication generates account, with a sense of presenting in the conversant outward or public, coordinated activities or social sphere. Tijana, Tomaž, & Čuden, (2014) are of the view that, within a class of individuals, also in some cultures, portraying the inward, bodily, or social circumstances of an individual unveils the composition of that group etc. Culture produces the most common world-view that underscores social living and human life. Global-perspective is universal with the view that some level of association of an individual and the general values are attained. Given the type of norms the community recognizes as acceptable, this kind of echoing was created in management, science, architecture, art,

economics, and the style of garment. Notwithstanding the conversation around culture, items (fabric items) like garments, agree with or even reinforce their psychological and social meanings in the situation generated in social sphere which could be restricted through professional, regional, sub-cultural, historical, national, and confessional or some other barriers. The interplay of ideas, culture and dressing produces the interpretations on many degrees and is in association with several themes, and also several personal and inter-cultural associations.

Sugiarto, & Lestari (2020) explains that, customary performances have traditional and mystical connotations that cannot be tutored by machines. The dance costume also has cultural and spiritual value. Customary performance is a legacy that has specific codes in its transmission schemes, which should not be changed so is the dance costume. On the contrary, invention is a crucial means of dealing with the industrial revolution and this can be seen through the dance costume. According to Mansyur (2020), Galombang duo baleh as a cultural statement has a role in conveying the values adopted by the community; namely the value of ethics, attitude of respect and courtesy. Another important point is the attitude of 'always' maintaining dignity and maintaining the safety of the village with vigilance and resilience. All values are realized by symbols through various elements in the appearance of Galombang duo baleh. Each symbol has a meaning related to a phenomenon of the life of the community supporting this art, namely the Sintuk community. All these can be impacted into the costume.

Kaliki (2018) documented that, Culture in Minahasa consists of various backgrounds, including beliefs, customs, dances, and very phenomenal habits among the people of Minahasa. But from all existing cultures, Minahasa is

famous for dancing. Dance gives its own colour and meaning to Minahasa people who love harmony and comfort in their own area. Each region has its own distinctive culture that varies according to geographical location of its territory, not least with the Indonesian territory which is rich in cultural treasures and diverse customs. One of Indonesia's richness is known in accordance with the field is the traditional dance art because almost throughout the region in Indonesia each has a variety of traditional dance arts that existed since ancient times until now and there has even been modified without changing the actual elements of dance. At the time, many generations are no longer interested in traditional dance, especially in traditional dance clothes. The decreasing desires of the public's knowledge of the meaning contained in a traditional dress or costume of a dance due to the birth of various kind of modern dance which attracts the attention of the public, especially among young people. Traditional dance is one of the ancestral heritages that must be applied in everyday life because traditional dance contains various kinds of stories and meanings that have occurred in a culture in the past.

Mansyur (2020) explains how the perpetrators of the Galombang duo baleh movement or dancers consisted of twelve men. Based on the form, the dancers are divided into two groups. Each consists of six people. Twelve dancers are divided into two groups. Each group consists of six people. Mansyur (2020) continues that, this represents the symbol of the existence of the Sintuk community consisting of groups of people (called tribes) consisting of six tribes, namely: koto, pinyalai, guci, sikumbang, tanjuang, and jambak. In context, the form in Galombang duo baleh symbolized by six dancers shows the meaning that all members of the community are involved in maintaining the security of

the village from various threats or hazards, especially the dangers that come from the outside that is people who are considered strangers at one time or one side can be the guest.

According to Kaliki (2018), Kabasaran dancers in North Sulawesi, Indonesia have traditional clothing that is worn when dancing or while fighting. The clothes show more about the character of the soldiers when fighting and adding to the beauty of the character while dancing. Where the Kabasaran dancers costume which is dominated by red and is equipped with various attributes, each of which has a meaningful symbol. On the Kabasaran cloths there are two colours, namely: Red colour and Chocolate colour. The red colour is used in Kabasaran clothing explains the meaning of the character of the Kabasaran dance which is a war dance. Red symbolizes courage, strength, blood, joy and victory. Red colour is also believed to be a burning spirit, so that the ancestors chose red as the traditional colour of Kabasaran dance clothing. Chocolate colour symbolizes bark. In the old days Kabasaran clothing was made of bark, because the people did not know the existence of cloth. But after going through the times the people had begun to recognize cloth, and they began to use typical Minahasa fabrics in making Kabasaran robes.

Kaliki (2018), continues that Kabasaran dance is famous for its unique hat, it has fur and beak that adds beauty and dignity. But, the hat and its various attributes are not just to show beauty. But Kabasaran dance hats have a very useful meaning for Kabasaran dance dancers and Minahasa people. Kabasaran dance caps symbolized as living things, so, when making a Kabasaran had it must resemble a rooster that has a beak, wings and tail. The beak is the bird's beak called the taong bird by the Minahasa people. As a symbol of immortality,

because the taong is able to survive for many years. The feathers used are rooster feathers as a symbol of the virility of a Minahasa warrior. Animal fangs as a symbol of the might of a soldier or dancer. The fangs are taken from wild fangs.

Kaliki (2018), explain further that traditional Kabasaran dance clothing made of typical Minahasa fabrics. However, the cloth used to make Kabasaran clothes must use a cloth that has been used as a door cloth (Pampele) Minahasa language. Kabasaran Robes is made by having many fringes around it which is the symbol of war clothes in the past. It constitutes the skull heads and amulet. There are several skull heads placed on the dance clothes chest. These skull heads are hunted by several animals such as monkey, pig, deer, and cow debt. Skull heads have meaning based on the number. The skull heads of the animals are symbolized as human heads which are defeated and gained in a battle against the enemy. The amulet which are security symbols that function as incantation prayers from the ancestors, so that the warriors or dancers are protected from human strength and supernatural powers and all kinds of dangers that can threaten their lives.

According to Churchill (2019), application of the kilt as a garment of dancing, the coming into use of which showed together with foremost channels of Irish performance costumes, produced a division, both animated and operational, which could be theorised through examining the conditions under which it emerged. Firstly, the tradition of female kilt-usage in Ireland, which was traditionally related to the Celtic Revival and Revolution as a male national dress, is almost complete devoid of standard. Many recent studies portray the kilt as male costume only. Second, the advent of this dressing practice, which in many conditions, substituted established feminine channels of competition

regalia and recommends a conscious disruption. Finally, the arc of the kilt's arrival, fame and drop in Ireland is opportune; intersecting with the nascent state's strengthened the authority and fixation with the institutionalisation of gender disparities and the supremacy of the family.

Churchill (2019) further explains that, the drift in the context of dancing, from private to public facilitated a desire for a regalia where hitherto none had occurred. Before the revival, an individual could wear any garment he or she had, or, if possible, his or her 'Sunday best', which contained the user's best-produced and most ostentatious garments and conveyed an ambitious personality in the society. One woman defined her 'cross roads' performing gown as made of a white lawn bib, apron and red garment with a Grecian bend. Dancers navigated between 'garments' and 'Sunday best' dress till about the early 1920s among a number of competitive, exhibitionary and social situation. The forms of dancing regalia echoed the range of national garment designs that came into vogue within urban middle class and Castle-Set Irish. During the era 'dressing Irish' was generally construed and mirrored both the 'personal views of history' and the specific social, political, and economic challenges of every group

Churchill (2019) continues that, photography and demonstration written in the Gaelic League's. A Claidheamh Soluis and in regional magazines recommend that earlier on two dress categories predominated in the early twentieth century. Cullinane observed that his mother, Annie Philpott, used the two garments within the season with varying conditions. His application of 'uniform' in this context significant, proposing a sense of 'responsibility' was connected with performance around the season. The earliest costume, Philpott's

performance regalia for the Cork Pipers Club, was of the ‘Sunday best’ type enhanced by a yellow sash adorned with the letters ‘CPC’, dark stockings and a green hooded wrap. By history, sash reflected the political formation of a person, connoting a developing relationship among political formations and traditional practice. Cullinane defines the green, white and gold of the CPC performance costume as promoting Ireland, although they represented the Irish tricolour or the green and golden Irish Citizen’s Army Flag is, yet, unfathomable. These cultural meaning ascribe to these costumes also have cultural identity that identify the community that the dance is been performed.

Today, traditional dances are strongly tied to cultural identity and continue to be practiced both for their symbolic meaning and as a way to preserve cultural heritage. This can also be applied to the traditional dance costume. Garment has a straight and strong association with the culture it espouses; hence, the specific costumes a defined culture use are less relevant than the purpose for their use. Apart from garments mirroring culture, it also creates a linguistic objective, especially when used in literary pieces. Throughout literature and history, we can show proof of vital traditional transformations which occurred between WWI and the start of the Great Depression. Nair (2014) is of the view that, dance has played a vital part in promoting a communal feature among most cultural and ethnic groups of Latin America. Dance served to unite most Africans. These dances are performed in costume, so if the dance identify cultural and ethnic groups then probably the costume will also identify ethnic groups and cultures.

Tijana, Tomaž, & Čuden (2014) are of the view that, regalia is strong manifestation of individual’s personality and world, as a person and as a

community, and the definition of the individual or society. This is revealed through tribalism, or renunciation, the annexation of identity. Through dressing, we semiotize, encrypt, with our body becoming insensitive. Observing the association between individuals and community, one observes that garment is part of the channels of communicating with the body and synchronous interactions across cultural urban environments. An individual with dress code is exceptional with national, affluence, and standing, personality, and within it, some behaviours and associations can be revealed towards defined professional, cultural, artistic, and different standard of living.

According to Johnson (2018), defining costuming as a part of stage and offstage activities is key. Pangayan, Shafii & On (2018) declared that Kimaragang is the foremost traditional formation within Kota Marudu, Sabah. The exclusivity in values of the Kimaragang community could be understood along the lines of the garments and regalia they were – as an ideographic character of the people of Kimaragang. The traditional regalia of the people of Kimaragang has two classifications which include the lapoi and sinudot. The sinudot, the male garment has a manly, and elegant outlook, thus reflecting a vigorous and courageous feature, while the lapoi used by women, subtly showcasing the malleability and graceful exhibition of the character of symmetry and ornamental code of craft. It is essential to appreciate the traditional regalia of the people of Kimaragang as a strategy for stressing and conserving the cultural norms.

Kuwor (2012), also documented that, dance has assumed a strong position in influencing the steps involved in personal introspection and the formation of personal traits among the Anlo Ewes of Ghana. Similarly, the

researcher is also of the view that, the above is equally important for one to understand the significant of the symbolism of the Atsiagbekor costume. This is because the costume always accompanied the dance

Sumberg (2011) explain, the time, skill and resources that went into the making of these costumes affirm the importance they had to their wearers. In Balkan village culture up until the early twentieth century, personal adornment was not seen as strictly 'personal'. Brides were dressed in the bridal costume corresponding to their village and social rank, as prescribed by custom and tradition, like their mothers and foremothers before them. According to Stewart (2000) there was no 'choice' of wedding dress, nor was a wedding seen as an opportunity for individual expression. Priestesses in antiquity also used ritual costume, jewellery, headdress and ornaments, not solely as personal expression, but as a means to move beyond personal identity and embody a larger power.

National regalia is a physical symbol of ethnic traits, which generates a most important domain and fits next to the group of allocation garments. In the view of Tijana, Tomaž, & Čuden (2014), this is an expression of local culture, aside the ethnical persuasions, but also has a broad acknowledgment of some regional culture, around certain place, since that era it has blended socio-economic and political opportunities, together with art (fabric, artistic, craft s-man) jargons and competences. National regalia showcase the spirit of epoch, indicating pillars of a society, and some cultural inheritances, procedures, and outcomes evolving from space and individuals in that society.

Beaule (2018) explains that in some cultures, indigenous textiles have endured as prestigious symbols of ethnic identity and socio-economic standing, sometimes neglected albeit later adjusted for the global market due to their

aesthetically attractive rich designs and colours. Examples include bark garments which adopts bark from an equatorial breed of fig tree and raffia garment laced from the fibrous raffia palm, which grows in a large band of West Africa. Raffia cloth is worn to illustrate family wealth, because in the past, only ordinary wore bark garment. Typically laced on a loom by men and embroidered by women, raffia garment has been worn during occasions in the royal capital to strengthen royal power, including Kuba (a historical kingdom in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) funerary rites where the dead is decorated in raffia garment so that her family and ethnic community groups can acknowledge her. There are a lot of changes that occurs in dance costume due to one reason or the other.

Evolution of dance costume

Oxford (1992), define evolution as any net directional change or any cumulative change in the characteristics of organisms or populations over many generations. An example of evolution is how cell phones have changed over time. Dance costume may also evolve or changes over time or simply modify for various reasons. In the view of Beaulé (2018), clothing is a tool that people can use to actively and publicly reject cultural change. Clothing is a vital creator of social standing, gender, wealth, religion, marital status, and nationality; due to its flexibility and personal nature, it is an especially rich area of material culture that we can adopt to engineer changing categories of social identity in contexts of colonialism.

Churchill (2019), is of the view that dance costume, as an intimate account of the body 'talks' in the dialect of the body. The body 'in revolution', thus, navigates the sophisticated grouping of power using racial, class, and

sexual identity. In looking at costumes of dance ‘from the point of history’, a person can appreciate the manner in which performance provided women agency, given also the boundaries of their agency within the Irish cultural nationalism beyond 1923.

Fashion in modern times is pivoted on amendment. Studies into the processes and occurrences, dispensation, and altering of some features of dressing and their features found expression in global value arrangements which recognised, together with specific circumstances defining a certain ethnic formation was created and established. According to Tijana, Tomaž, & Čuden (2014), from this stage, a particular garment with the national foretoken in some ethnic communities is consistent criteria of political antiquity and reliable demonstration of every socio-economic associations and cultural display. Mentioned can be made of ethnic groups with variations in garments, and palpable difference exists among their features and style, presence, make of materials, or paucity of decorations. Such dissimilarities in national regalia occasioned the development of multiple determinants which maybe devoid of possibility to select garments, kind of designing in diverse conditions in connection with optional or obligatory socio-cultural interactions, also there is huge impact of vital climatic situations. Meanwhile, there is a national regalia which was counted as a component drawn from the foremost culture, and outside external connections, which directs the manner of regalia in subdued cultures.

The dissimilarities from one garment to another depend on individuals who wore them and group or society they belong. Such distinctions were done during specific dispensations. Therefore, the garments did not only vary by

religious and ethnic associations, but also relying on seniority, given season around the linear aging life of all people including mimicking the selected design, taste, aesthetic standard including the period of change to the new clothing sophistication and its varying interpretations (Horowitz, 2000)

Conceptual Framework

Dance costume as a non-verbal form of communication is its symbolism.

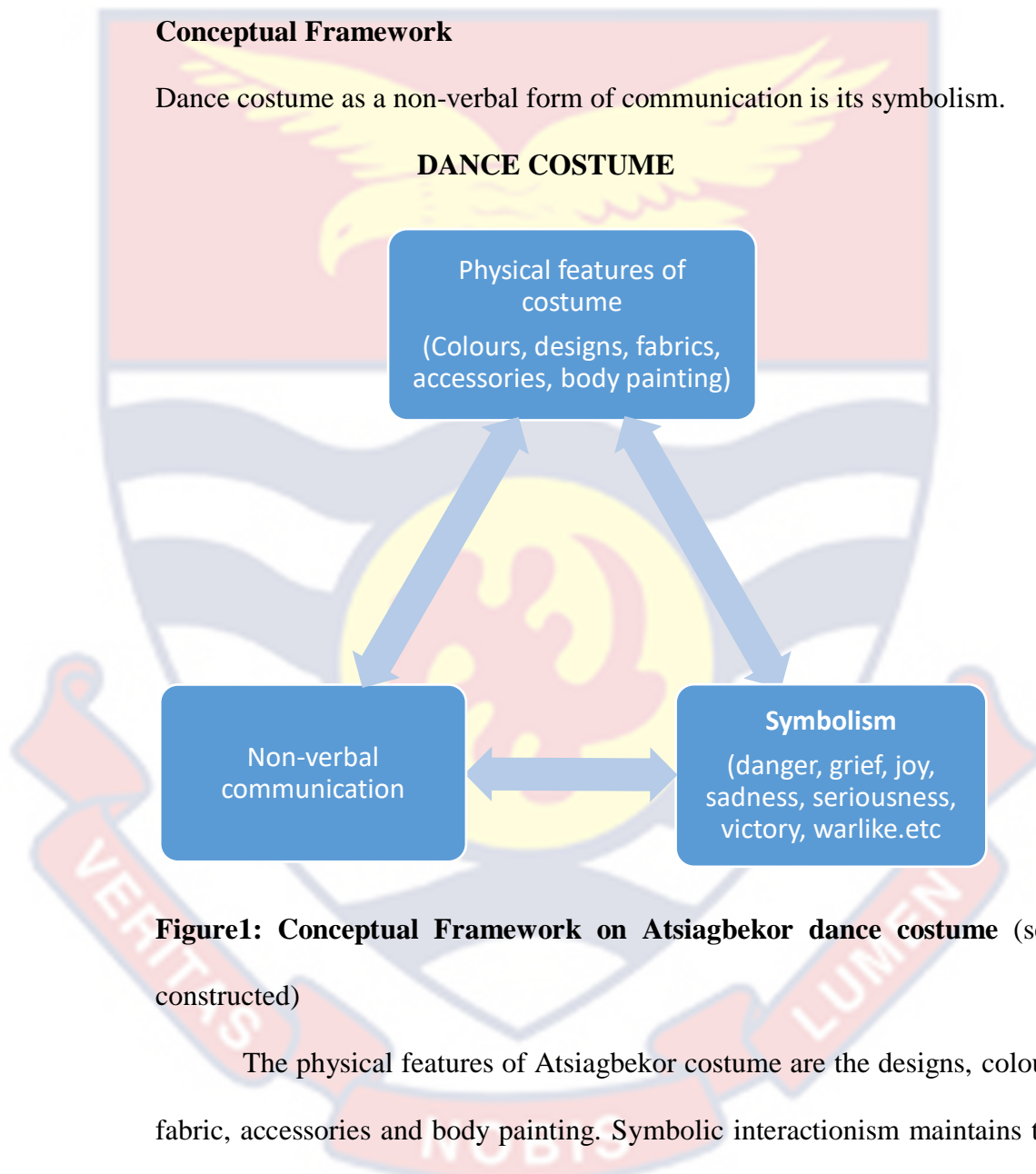


Figure1: Conceptual Framework on Atsiagbekor dance costume (self-constructed)

The physical features of Atsiagbekor costume are the designs, colours, fabric, accessories and body painting. Symbolic interactionism maintains that people interact with each other using symbols that can be manifested in objects like garments, the meanings of which are continuously established and refined through the experiences of current and remembrances of previous interactions. The features of Atsiagbekor costume are non-verbal but send a lot of messages.

These messages communicate a lot of information which symbolises joy, grief, sadness, warlike and many more. Communication, which involves transfer of understanding using language and sign is understood to reflect individual's sense-making of the world around them (culture identity).

Therefore, whatever costume one wore communicate and the messages depends on the features in the costume and the features also symbolise the emotions been communicated and equally depict the culture of the people.

Chapter Summary

Semiotic, symbolic interactionism and cultural theory are the theoretical lens from which the entire study is viewed. Dance as an integral component of tradition has a vital programme that provides many reasons in traditional environment such as religious ceremonies, festivals, funerals, marriages and other social occasions. There are various types of dance but this research is limited to traditional dance. Atsiagbekor is a traditional war dance performed by the Anlos in the Volta region of Ghana. Traditional dance has supporting element like costume which helps create a more beautiful performance. Every traditional dance costume has its own features that make it unique to a particular dance. The physical features of dance costumes serve as a non-verbal form of communication. Costume as non-verbal form of communication is its symbolism. Traditional dance costume as a non-verbal communication has a cultural identity and meaning ascribed to it.

Traditional dances are strongly tied to cultural identity and continue to be practiced both for their symbolic meaning and as a way to preserve cultural heritage and dance costumes constitute an integral part of the dance as well as the cultural heritage. A lot of changes occur in dance costumes due to changing

times and many other factors, and these changes account for the evolution of the dance costume. The chapter end with a self-constructed conceptual framework.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

The study is about Atsiagbekor dance costume and its symbolism in the Anlo culture. This chapter deals with the methodology with emphasis on the research design, population, sampling techniques and others. The chapter begins with the rationale for using qualitative research with the focus on the ethnography approach as the research design. A brief description of the study area and the rationale for the choice of the study area. It also talks about the population, sampling procedure, sample size, data collection instrument, data collection procedure, data management and data analysis. It continues with information on the tools for establishing credibility of the findings, ethical considerations, the role of researcher in the research process and then bracketing in qualitative research.

Research Design

Qualitative research procedure was employed for the study. Specifically, ethnography study, where the researcher studied the social interactions, behaviours and perceptions that occur within the dance groups. An account of the way of life with specific emphasis on the practices within the Atsiagbekor group was done. The study described the distinctive social and cultural features of the Atsiagbekor Society.

The central aim of the study is to provide rich and holistic insights into people's views and actions, as well as the nature (that is, sights, sounds) of the location they inhabit, through the collection of detailed observations and interviews on the dance costume. As Hammersley (2006; p. 242) states, "the

task of ethnographers is to document the culture, the perspectives and practices of the people in these settings. The researcher is of the view that this method was the most appropriate to investigate the symbolism of Atsiagbekor dance costume. In this study, to obtain information on the costume, the researcher interacted with the Atsiagbekor dancers in the various communities where the dance is performed in its traditional context.

Study Area

Volta Region is divided into 18 administrative districts namely; Adaklu Anyigbe, South Dayi, North Dayi, South Tongu, North Tongu, South Ketu, North Ketu, South Nkwanta, North Nkwanta, Ho Municipality, Hohoe Municipality, Jasikan, Kadjebi, Krachi East, Krachi West, Biakoye and Keta.

The study was conducted in the southern part of the Volta Region, specifically Keta municipality (Kedzi, Anloga, Anyako and Anlo Afiadenyigba). Southern Volta is made up of nine administrative assemblies including Ketu North, Ketu South, Anloga and Keta that constitute the Eastern part of Southern Volta. Some of the district assemblies were created in 1988 but later on upgraded to municipal assemblies when their population increased. Keta District is one such districts. It was upgraded to municipal assembly status in 2007. (Younge, 2011)

The study area is bounded by the Gulf of Guinea to the east and south, River Volta and South Tongu District to the west, Akatsi District to the north and northwest, and Ketu South to the northeast. The indigenes in the study area are the Anlos and the Avenors who use Ewe as a medium of communication. Some of the key economic activities in the area are farming and fishing. Apart from Atsiagbekor, there are other traditional dances such as Agbadza, Adzobo

and Kenka that are played and enjoyed by the people during funerals, naming and marriage ceremonies and traditional festivals.

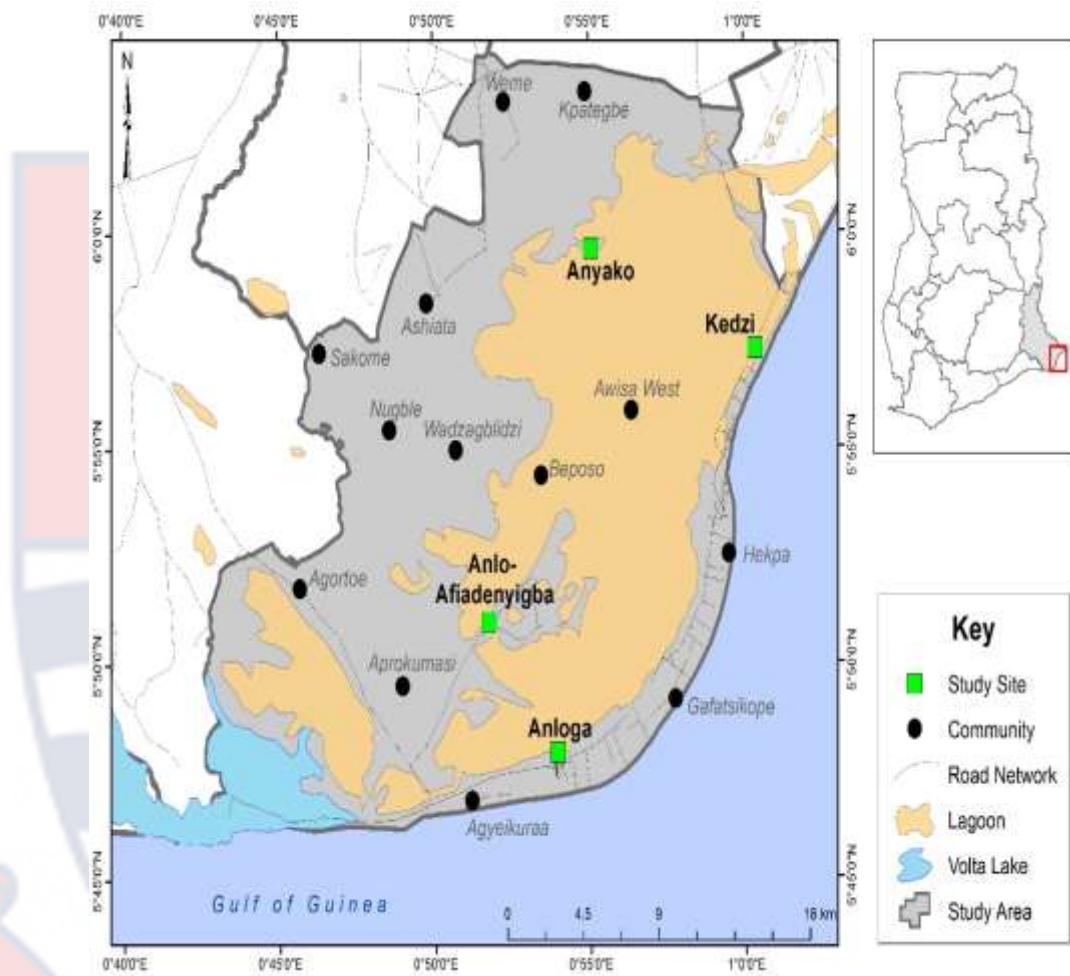


Figure 2: Map of Keta Municipality in the Volta Region of Ghana.

Rationales for Choice of Study Area

The study was conducted in the South Eastern part of the Volta Region of Ghana. The choice of the study area was informed by two major reasons. In the first place, communities such as Anyako, Dzogadze, Dzodze, Anlo Afiadenyigba, Kedzi, Anloga and Aflao in the Ketu North, Keta Municipality, Anloga District, Ketu South and Keta Municipality are the localities in which the Atsiagbekor originated and performed in its traditional context. (Younge, 2011)

Another major factor considered in the choice of the study area was the possibility of the full involvement of the researcher in the data collection process. The relevance of a researcher's participation in the group or area being studied is important to all approaches of qualitative methodology as the researcher plays such a direct and intimate role, both in the data collection and the analysis (Creswell, 2014). As an insider, the researcher shared commonalities (characteristics, roles and experience under study) with the participants, and this is an essential and ever-present aspect of an investigation of such nature (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

This study emphasises the importance of understanding the research context, which includes gender, class, ethnicity, as part of narrative interpretation (Angrosino, 2005). This will enable the researcher "to take an interactive role where the researcher knows the participants and the social context in which they live" (Lodico, Spraulding & Voegtler, 2006; p. 265).

In summary, the choice of the study area is informed by the idea of going native. "Native," "indigenous," or "insider" research in which scholars conduct studies with populations and communities, and identify groups to which they are also members and familiar with in terms of culture, language or any other form of identity. In the case of this study, the commonality that the researcher shares with participants is the culture, which is a vital component of the study.

Population

The population was made up of various Atsiagbekor traditional dance groups from Anyako, Dzogadze, Dzodze, Anlo Afiadenyigba, Kedzi, Anloga, and Aflao as indigenes of these communities perform this dance in its traditional context. These communities are found in four administrative assemblies; namely Keta and Ketu South municipalities, and Ketu North and Anloga districts. Only four communities were selected out of the seven communities that own the Atsiagbekor dance traditionally. Current and retired dancers, traditional leaders, costume designers and the youth in the above-mentioned communities constitute the population for the study. The researcher also sought information from informants in the academia, specifically the Dance Department of the University of Ghana, where Atsiagbekor is studied as a course. These individuals had adequate and key information that enhance the study.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study adopted both probability and non-probability techniques in selecting the participants. The probability technique was used randomly to select four out of the seven communities that perform Atsiagbekor. Two non-probability sampling techniques; purposive and snowball sampling were employed to select the participants for the study. According to Wolfer (2007), this style of sampling is only appropriate when the aim of the study is to look at a unique case and make an in-depth study of a case. From each of the four communities that constitute the sample for the study, the purposive sampling method was used to select a costume designer, and a traditional leader. Also a youth was selected randomly from each of the selected communities. The

snowball was adopted for selecting two retired dancers from each of the four selected communities. The current dancers were the members in the Atsiagbekor dance groups that were selected purposely from each of the four communities. The various groups have their own leaders. The sampling frame constitutes a list of current and retired dancers from various Atsiagbekor groups, members of the traditional leaders, the costume designers and a youth in the four selected communities in the study area.

Dance Department of the University of Ghana was also consulted. The sample size selection was influenced by a number of factors, including the purpose of the study and defined characteristics of the participants that were sampled. The communities selected for the study are; Kedzi, Anlo Afiadenyigba, Anyako and Anloga. Below is the table of the communities and the number of participants.

Table 1: Communities and their Participants

Community	Participants						
	Retired dancers	Traditional leader	Costume designer	A youth	Dance group leaders	Current female dancers	Current male dancers
Kedzi	2	1	1	1	2	2	2
Anlo Afiadenyigba	2	1	1	1	2	2	2
Anyarko	2	1	1	1	2	2	2
Anloga	2	1	1	1	2	2	2
Total	8	4	4	4	8	8	8
Grand total							44

Qualitative research often concerns developing a depth of understanding rather than a breadth, particularly when undertaken under a non-positivist paradigm. Boddy (2016) explains that in qualitative research, the determination of sample size is contextual and partially dependent upon the scientific paradigm under which the investigation is taking place. Theoretical saturation can be useful as a guide in designing qualitative research, with practical research

illustrating that, samples of twelve (12) may be cases where data saturation occurs among a relatively homogeneous population.

This logically means that the smallest acceptable sample size in this type of qualitative research is a sample of one (1). In many cases, therefore, the observation that many reviewers would be tempted to make, that such a sample is too small or cannot be generalized from, is not a valid criticism, particularly if the sample size is justified.

Data Collection Instrument

Two main data collection instruments were used for the study. These were observation guide for observations, focus group guide for focus group discussion. The observation guide was designed to observe the physical features during the dance performance. Focus group discussion guide was also developed and used to elicit information from current dancers and retired dancers, costume designers, traditional leaders as well as a youth in each of the selected community. They constitute the focus group. The focus group discussion guide was prepared based on the research questions of the study in order not to deviate from the scope of the study.

The items in the focus group discussion guide focused on answering the research questions stated for the study. The guide was therefore written in various sections with sub headings based on the research questions. Each section had a main item with probing questions that guided the researcher in collecting the required data for the study. The structure of the data collection instrument constitutes Bio data, Physical features of Atsiagbekor dance costumes, Costumes as a means of nonverbal communication, Cultural identity and meaning ascribed to these costumes, Evolution of Atsiagbekor dance

costumes and recommendations. The rationale to use the two data collection instruments was for triangulation and validation of the various findings and to address any deficiencies of each instrument.

The guide was then used to conduct focus group discussions in each of the selected four communities for members of the dance group in the study area to explore and clarify facts. To ensure equal representation of individual dancers from a dance group in each selected community, eight members from each dance group comprising two retired dancers, two group leaders, two female and two male current dancers were sampled from a group. Also costume designers, traditional leaders as well as a youth in each of the selected community were added. These groups constitute the focus group discussion which was organized separately in each of the selected communities.

According to Morrison-Beedy, Côté-Arsenault, & Feinstein (2001), focus groups can be used to gather rich, detailed descriptions of shared individual experiences and beliefs. Group process enhances the richness of the data obtained via this method. Cantrill, Sibbald, & Buetow (1996) also explain that, focus group technique is built on the notion that the group interaction encourages respondents to explore and clarify individual and shared perspectives. It also produces credible, valid information at a reasonable cost to both the researcher and participants. Focus group discussions provide an effective vehicle for the collection of abundant data. The richness of these data is augmented by both the common experiences shared by group members and the complexity of individual perspectives enhanced by group dynamics.

In addition to the focus group discussion, in-depth interviews were conducted for traditional leaders, a costume designer and a youth in each of the community which constitute the sample for the study.

Reliability

To test the reliability of the interview guide and observation check list, a pilot study was conducted using an Atsiagbekor dance group in Duakor, an Anlo community in Cape Coast. The pilot study was done to enhance the instrument in order to check for consistency, ambiguities, and comments as well as to seek other views. Issues and difficulties that were identified were used in training field assistants.

Recruitment and Training of Field Assistants

Three research assistants were recruited and trained to help in the data collection process. They were taken through interviewing skills. The training session included item by item analysis in order to help them understand the questions, their purpose and how to ask them. In addition, there were mock sessions with the Ewe version of the focus group discussion guide to ensure that specific issues in the guide are well articulated to elicit the right response. The field assistants were also trained on ethical issues so as to ensure complete compliance during the field work. Their roles included taking notes, observing non-verbal cues and recording while the principal researcher served as a moderator during the focus group discussion.

Ethical Considerations

A conducive environment was created to enable the participants feel comfortable and provide data needed for the study. This was basically built on participants trust for the researcher by comfortably sharing the intimate details

of their lived worlds in relation to the focus of the study (Hach, 2002). The ethical issues that were adopted to access the symbolism of the costume used in Atsiagbekor traditional dance included;

1. Obtaining ethical clearance from Institutional Review Board of the University of Cape Coast.
2. Giving the free-will to participants to decide not to participate or withdraw at any time was an important ethical issue that was adhered to in the study.
3. Obtaining the informed consent from participants before embarking on the data collection, ensuring the confidentiality of the respondents' information and also protecting the respondents from all kinds of harm was considered throughout the study.
4. Protecting the participants from economic loss, the participants were refreshed with drinks and snack after the instrument administration while a compensation for Travel and Transport for each participant was given to them as a sign of appreciation.
5. Taking measure to ensure that all COVID 19 protocols are observed in order to prevent the spread of COVID 19, all associated protocols were observed. Nose masks, hand sanitizer, soap and water were provided at each data collection site. During data collection, social distance protocol was also be adhered to.

Reconnaissance survey

Prior to data collection, all key-persons in the study area were contacted. This section of the study focused on discussions with leaders of Atsiagbekor dance groups, assembly members and chiefs in each sampled community. The

purpose was to establish good rapport with them and as well introduce the study and brief them on its objectives. This ensured community entering protocols during data collection without any interference.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection commenced after the defence and approval of the research proposal and the obtainment of ethical clearance from the IRB, UCC. An introductory letter was also obtained from the Department of Vocational and Technical Education of which the research is being carried out. Introductory letters and consent forms were given to all the participants to ensure their acceptance to take part in the study. Time was scheduled with them to ensure their convenience before meeting them as groups. Participants were reminded of the observance of the COVID 19 protocols. Veronica buckets were provided for the participants to wash their hands and nose masks were also given to them for protection against the deadly disease. Social distancing was also observed.

Before the focus group discussion, the participants were made aware of the ground rules in a polite way. The most important rule was that only one person speaks at a time. There may be a temptation to cut in when someone is talking; they were therefore advised to wait for each speaker to make his/her points before clarification from any other participant was given. They do not have to agree with the views of other participants in the group. The consent of the discussants was sought before recording the discussion.

During the discussion, one of the research assistants was recording with a digital recorder while the second one was taking notes on non-verbal cues of the participants. The third research assistant was also taking notes while the principal researcher moderated the discussion. Data was collected from 28th

August to 12th September, 2021. The focus group discussions lasted for two hours for each group. It was organized in a neutral and serene environment to ensure full concentration and participation of the discussants. In all there were eleven (11) discussants in four (4) focus group discussion making a total of forty-four constituting the participants for the study.

According to Twumasi (2005), during observation, it is crucial for the social scientists to know their field prior to conducting a study. He also advises that good rapport with the population is essential in ensuring that accurate information is received from the respondents. To achieve this, participant observation skills were used to create rapport with the participants in order to elicit the right data during the dance in a funeral period. In addition to funeral periods, the researcher had scheduled to equally elicit data during festival such as Hogbetsotso. However, because of the COVID 19 pandemic, no festival was organized. This was to have a direct observation of the Atsiagbekor dance in order to gain some understanding into the matrix of their traditional practices from the participants.

The passive participant observation approach was adopted in order not to interfere with the activities of the dance groups. Notes and pictures were documented while the performances were going on and relevant questions were asked after the performance. The purpose of the documentation was to have a record of past events (Sugiyono; 2012) and for future reference. Documents can be in the form of writing, images, or monumental works from someone. The research result would also be more credible if supported by existing photographs and academic papers. To support documentation, digital camera was used to

take pictures as a backup for documentation. The entire data collection process was within four weeks.

Data Management

The data management activities include naming files, keeping track of different versions and deleting those that were not needed. Also backing up valuable data and outputs and carefully storing the data on my laptop, pen drive and email for safe keeping. To prevent unauthorized access, password was put on them. Again, antivirus was activated to prevent files from getting corrupt. A hard copy was also printed and stored in a safe place.

Data Analysis

After data collection, the research assistants and the researcher transcribed the data for easy analysis. The transcribed data was edited and organized under specific themes by coding. To systematically analyze the data for easy comprehension, the data was analyzed based on the research questions stated for the study (Hatch, 2002). Thematic method of analysis was adopted based on themes generated from the data (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, & Terry 2018). In discussing the results, specific responses from the respondents were quoted verbatim to establish the real issues recorded from the field. The narrations from the participants were used to support assumptions and meaning of issues related to Atsiagbekor costumes and its symbolism in the Anlo tradition.

The Role of the Researcher

Researchers in qualitative research are viewed as the instrument for data collection (Patton, 2002; Maxwell, 2005). Patton further illustrates this point by stating that, the human being is the instrument of qualitative methods of

research. As an instrument in qualitative research, I took field notes, asked interview questions, and interpreted responses to make meaning out of the live experiences of the respondents. In qualitative research, the researcher assumes the roles of data collector, data analyst, investigator, and interpreter. In this study, my roles as a researcher were the following:

1. Establishing collaborative and non-exploitative relationships with all the participants (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative researchers normally become part of the community being studied and that is a foremost reason that the collection and analysis of data, and ultimately the reporting of data, has to be treated with much care and caution. To do this, I eliminated all personal biases and subjectivity throughout the study. Jones et al. (2006) argue that a “researcher must understand his or her position and power within societal structures in order to attend to her or his potential biases” (p. 103).
2. Ensuring that I did not intrude into the personal and private life of participants. I tried to gain the trust of participants by engaging them in other discussions prior to the actual interview, adhered to the dictates of moral character, and dealt with the work in a meticulous way or manner.

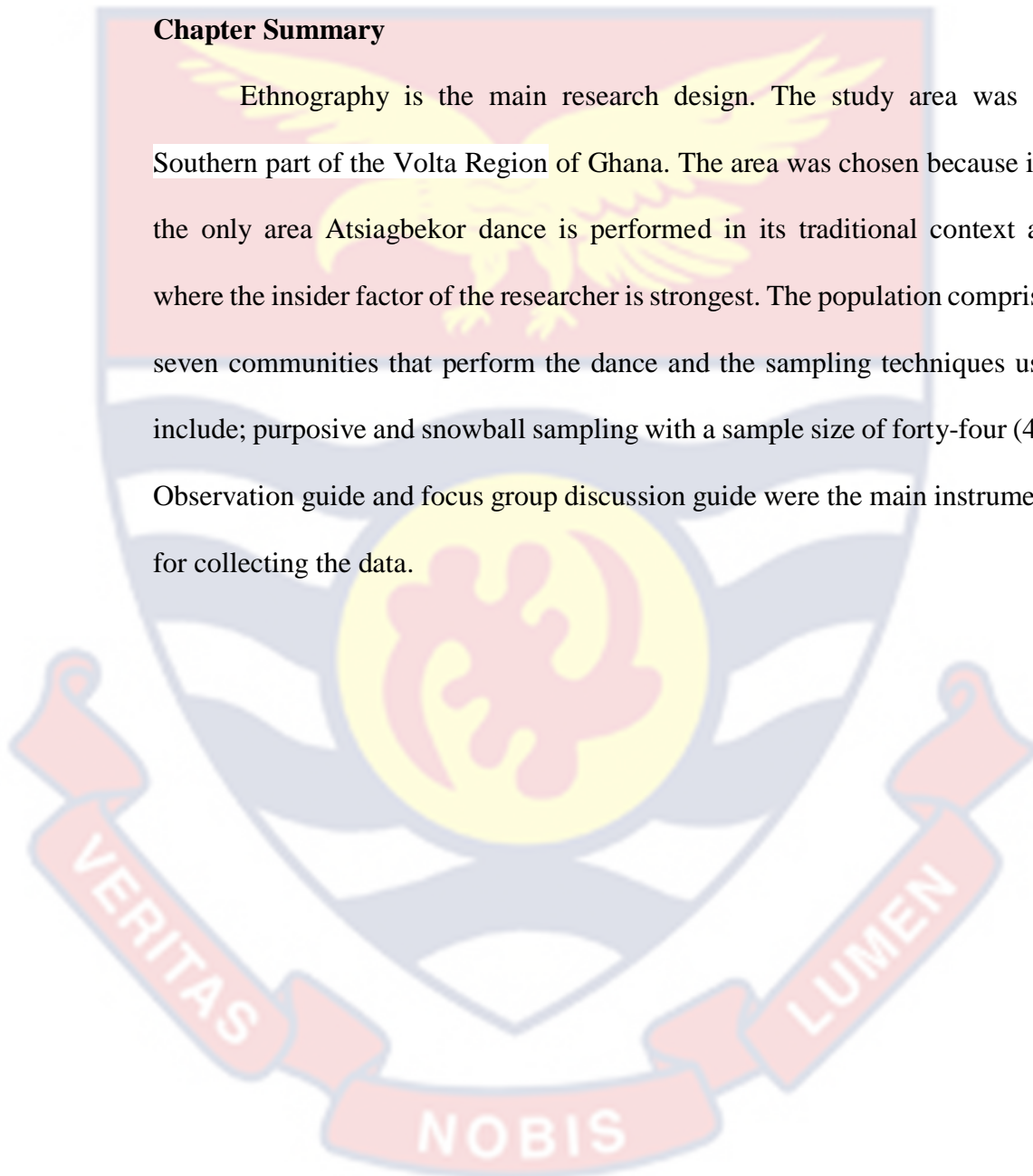
Bracketing in Qualitative Research

Bracketing is a method used in qualitative research to mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of preconceptions that may taint the research process. According to Carpenter (2007), bracketing is a methodological device of phenomenological inquiry that requires that the researcher put aside his/her own belief about the situation under investigation and knowledge about the subject prior to and throughout the. Chan, Fung, & Chien (2013) explain

racketing as holding in abeyance those elements that define the limits of an experience when uncovering a phenomenon. In this study, the researcher put aside her beliefs and what she knows about Atsiagbekor traditional dance costume and found out what is actually in existence from the participants.

Chapter Summary

Ethnography is the main research design. The study area was the Southern part of the Volta Region of Ghana. The area was chosen because it is the only area Atsiagbekor dance is performed in its traditional context and where the insider factor of the researcher is strongest. The population comprised seven communities that perform the dance and the sampling techniques used include; purposive and snowball sampling with a sample size of forty-four (44). Observation guide and focus group discussion guide were the main instruments for collecting the data.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The broad and overarching purpose of this study is to assess the symbolic meaning of the costumes worn by performers of the Atsiagbekor dance in the Volta Region of Ghana. Qualitative research method was employed for the study. Specifically, ethnography study was adopted. The actual samples used for the data collection were current and retired dancers from various Atsiagbekor groups, traditional leader, a costume designer and a youth in four selected communities. The researcher also sought information from informants in academia, specifically the Department of Dance, University of Ghana, Legon, where Atsiagbekor is studied as a course. The findings were presented according to the various research questions formulated for the study. Thematic method of analysis was adopted based on the themes generated from the data.

This chapter focuses on the findings from the observations and focus group discussion conducted and the discussions of the findings. The first part of the findings deals with some background information from participants while the second part is about the results of the main research and the discussion.

Background characteristics of participants

Basically, the study focused on Atsiagbekor dance groups in Keta Municipality. Four Atsiagbekor dance groups were involved in the study. These were Atsiagbekor dance groups from Kedzi, Anloga, Anlo-Afiadenyigba and Anyako. Four (4) current dancers, two (2) retired dancers, two (2) dance group leaders, one (1) traditional leader, one (1) costume designer and a youth in each of the above-mentioned communities constitute the participants for the study.

Therefore, eleven (11) members were selected from each of the communities and the total sample size is forty-four (44). The tables 2 to 7 below present the background characteristics of the four dance groups in the Keta Municipality that served as participants for the study.

Table 2: Gender characteristics of the participants

Gender	Kedzi	Anloga	Anlo-Afiadenyigba	Anyako	Total
Males	6	8	7	10	31
Females	5	3	4	1	13
Total	11	11	11	11	44

Source: Field data, 2021

Out of the 11 participants who were involved in the study from Kedzi, 6 were males and 5 were females. (Table 2) The Anloga community had 8 males and 3 females, in Anlo-Afiadenyigba, 7 were males whereas 4 were females. The pattern, so far, indicates that there are more male participants than female. The participants in Anyako are all male except their designer who is a female. With the participants of the four groups put together, there were 31 males and 13 females.

Table 3: Age of participants

Age range (years)	Kedzi	Anloga	Anlo-Afiadenyigba	Anyako	Total
18	1	4	4	0	9
20-30	2	3	6	4	15
31-40	2	1	0	6	9
41-50	3	0	0	0	3
51and above	3	3	1	1	8
Total	11	11	11	11	44

Source: Field data, 2021

Table 3 indicates the age of participants. Participants from the Kedzi group had an age range between 18 to 50 years and 3 elderly that were above 50 years. There were a lot of young ones in the Anloga group, with their ages ranging from 18 years to 40 years, but there were some retired dancers.

Concerning the Anlo-Afiadenyigba, the ages range from 18 to 30 years and an elder who is 65 years. The age range of the Anyako group was between 20 and 40 years with the majority being between 20-30 years and an elder of 55 years. This implies that, of the four groups, the Kedzi group had the oldest participants (age range between 42-50 years). The Anyako group comes next (30-40 years), then Anlo-Afiadenyigba group (20-30 years) and the Anloga group having the youngest participants (below 20 years).

Table 4: Marital Status of participants

Marital status	Kedzi	Anloga	Anlo-Afiadenyigba	Anyako	Total
Married	7	3	5	6	21
Unmarried	4	8	6	5	23
Total	11	11	11	11	44

Source: Field data, 2021

Out of the 11 selected participants from the Kedzi community, 7 were married and 4 were not married. Most of the participants from the Anloga community were not married. With the participants from Anlo-Afiadenyigba, only 5 were married with the majority (6) being unmarried. Out of the 11 selected from Anyako, 6 were married and 5 others were yet to marry. The Kedzi group, therefore, had the largest number of married participants, followed by Anyako, Anlo-Afiadenyigba and Anloga groups respectively.

Table 5: Religion of participants

Religion	Kedzi	Anloga	Anlo-Afiadenyigba	Anyako	Total
Christian	8	8	9	7	32
Traditional	3	3	2	4	12
Total	11	11	11	11	44

Source: Field data, 2021

Table 5 indicates that the participants were of two main religious backgrounds. Majority of the participants are Christians and the others are traditional practitioners.

Table 6: Level of education of participants

Education (n)	Kedzi	Anloga	Anlo-Afiadenyigba	Anyako	Total
Primary	7	4	5	4	20
Secondary	4	5	3	5	17
Tertiary	0	2	3	2	7
Total	11	11	11	11	44

Source: Field data, 2021

From Table 6, it is revealed that out of the 44 participants, only 7 had tertiary education; two (2) each from Anloga and Anyako, three (3) from Anlo-Afiadenyigba and none from Kedzi. Seventeen (17) had secondary education; five (5) from Anloga, five (5) from Anyako, four (4) from Kedzi and three (3) from Anlo-Afiadenyigba. The table indicates that most of the participants, 20, stopped at the primary school level; seven (7) from Kedzi, five (5) from Afiadenyigba and four (4) each from Anloga and Anyako. This implies that the Anlo-Afiadenyigba and Anyako group members were the most educated having reached the tertiary levels of education, and the majority of the Kedzi group members had the least level of education (primary education level).

Table 7: Number of years in the dance group

Number of years	Kedzi	Anloga	Anlo-Afiadenyigba	Anyako	Total
Below 5 years	1	4	1	3	9
5-10 years	5	5	6	8	24
11-15 years	3	2	2	0	7
16-20 years	2	0	2	0	4
Total	11	11	11	11	44

Source: Field data, 2021

As at the time of data gathering, the newest members from the Kedzi community had been in the group for about one (1) year and the oldest spending over 20 years. The data showed that majority of the participants had been in the group between 5-10 years. Concerning the members from the Anloga community, their membership in the group ranges from one (1) year to fifteen (15) years and are the majority. Most of the participants from the Anlo-Afiadenyigba had been in the group between 5-10 years with a few others, (2 participants), between 11-15 years as well as 16-20 years. The number of years for members of the Anyako group ranges from two (2) to ten (10) years. The members from Kedzi and Anlo-Afiadenyigba had the most experienced members as they have been with their groups between 16-20 years. This is followed by members of the Anyako group who had between 5-10 years of experience, and the Anloga group had the least experienced members with number of years below 5.

Research Question 1: What are the Costumes used in Atsiagbekor Dance?

Data gathered revealed the existence of various forms of costumes for the Atsiagbekor dance. The costume as presented in this study includes anything worn or carried that (seen or hidden) on the body. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has identified two main categories: the traditional and the contemporary costume.

The Traditional Atsiagbekor Costume

The interview sections revealed the kind of materials used in the traditional costume and what they are used for. These include: raffia (ela), animal skin (belt) gun, cutlass, black powder (etsi), red piece of cloth, cowries and cosmetics (painting of face).

In response to the questions on the physical features of the Atsiagbekor costume, this is what one of the participants from the Anloga group explained. *The dancers originally performed the dance bare-chested with only raffia around the waist but later added other accessories. They used animal skin to sew something in the form of belt which they tied on the raffia at the waist. The warriors hid bullets in this animal-skin-belt. They usually carried gun and cutlass which they used during the performance to depict war movements. They also had a small container of black powder (etsi) wrapped in a red piece of cloth which was tied on the left hand. They also used cowries around the wrist and neck. The warriors or dancers would usually disguise themselves by painting their face with charcoal.* (69-year-old retired male dancer in Anloga).

According to another participant

The raffia is woven in a form of a skirt and wrapped around the waist. For it to be properly secured, it is strongly tied to fit the waist of the dancer (45-year-old current dancer at Anyako).

Another participant added,

The dancers originally used only the raffia skirt around their waist without any accessories. It was later that other things were added. (42-year-old current male dancer at Anloga).



Figure 3: The raffia skirt

Source: Field data, 2021 from Anloga

According to one of the participants:

With what we see in the picture, for the raffia to be formed into a structure that can be worn, the raffia strings are looped onto one long raffia string and the looped raffia hangs like frills. The string on which the fringes hang is then tied around the waist. To secure the raffia skirt in place. (69-year-old retired male dancer in Anloga).

He continued that,

Animal skin is sewn in a form of belt and tied on the raffia skirt at the waist to strengthen the waist and also prevent the raffia skirt from untying during war. This belt is also made in such a way that it can contain bullets.

The participants could not show me the picture of the belt because they lost most of these items to the floods.

According to another participant,

The warriors needed bullets but couldn't just hold them in their hands, so they hid them in the belt made from animal skin and tied around their waist for easy access.



Figure 4: Cutlass

Source: Field data, 2021 from Anloga

According to one dancer,

The dancers use gun and cutlass to depict the actions that took place on the battlefield and how they were able to defeat their opponents. (60-year-old retired dancer in Kedzi).



Figure 5: Black powder

Source: Field data, 2021 from Anloga

Black power (etsi) is also part of the accessories

One of the participants explained that:

The powder is a very powerful mixture of plantain peels, charcoal, alcohol, saltpeter and other things mixed together that the warriors used to protect themselves on the battlefield. (A retired male dancer)

Our forefathers believed in protection. They believed that they could get protection from some local plants. These plants are burnt and put together and used as a form of protection, especially during battles. (70-year-old elder in the community)

However, the secrets about the ingredients that spiritually protect the warriors were not revealed by the participants.



Figure 6: Red piece of cloth

According to a participant,

A red piece of cloth is also one of the accessories of the traditional costume. The warriors hid the black powder in the red cloth and tied it on the left arm for protection.



Figure 7: Cowries from the sea shore

Source: Field data, 2021 from Anlo-Afiadenyigba

One current dancer explained,

Cowries were equally tied on the wrist and neck of the warrior-dancers for protection. The cowries are put together with a special leaf in a thread-form so that it could easily be tied around the wrist and the waist. (35-year-old current dancer in kedzi)

Another participant explained that:

The cowries are collected from the seashore. They have some spiritual powers that protect the members of the community. It is believed that the cowries carry the strength of the sea from which they come. (a 69-year-old retired dancer in the Anyako community)

He further explained that,

In addition to all the accessories, the warriors or dancers also paint their faces. The face painting is done to enable them disguise themselves.

The warriors paint their face so that they would not be easily identified by the enemies and that is why the dancers also paint their face. (One current dancer in Anloga)

According to majority of the participants, the recurring flood washed away most of their belonging including their dance costumes and pictures. It was therefore difficult to get pictures of the traditional Atsiagbekor costume.

The Contemporary Atsiagbekor Costume

Data collected revealed that, overtime, there were some changes in the Atsiagbekor dance costume. The dancers and/designers have tried several designs. In this study, the focus was on the costume mostly used by most of the contemporary dance groups. The contemporary costume contains the following features: tsaka, red jumper, red cloth, wooden sword, horse tail and a hat.



Figure 8: A picture of the Tsaka (Knicker)

Source: Field data, 2021 from Anloga

According to one dancer from one of the communities,

Tsaka is a special type of knickers in the Anlo culture. It is designed with the local woven kente, jute (akpanya), velvet, or any suitable fabric in dark colours. It has two projections known in the local language as “avuto” (ear of a dog) or funnel shape at the back lower end of the knicker. (a 35-year-old current male dancer)



Figure 9: Red jumper

Source: Field data, 2021 from Anloga

The top is a red jumper with a cloth tied around the waist. The fabric used in sewing these costumes is always red in colour.(a 35-year-old current male dancer)

Another dancer added that,

The women, who usually constitute the singing part of the performance, wear simple kaba or tie a red cloth around the top of their breast and extend it down below their knees. This distinguishes the men from the women. (52-year-old current dancer in Kedzi community)



Figure 10: Red cloth tied on the tsaka

The researcher learnt from one of the participants that:

Red cloth is tied at the waist on the tsaka to strengthen the waist. (Current dancer in Kedzi)



Figure 11: Wooden sword

Another participant also informed me that:

The wooden sword replaced the cutlass and is used to depict war movement (current dancer in Anloga)



Figure 12: Horse tail

It is revealed by one of the dancers that:

The dancers also carry horse tail (dancing whisk) known in the local language as “adedzo” or “sortsi” while dancing (a 35-year-old current dancer).



Figure 13: Togbenya (Hat)

Source: Field data, 2021 from Anloga

One elder added that:

The hat (togbenya) is a special type of hat in the Anlo culture worn by the lead dancer. Togbenya is an Anlo traditionally knitted hat which is worn over the head to cover the ears. It is knitted with 2 sticks with yarns. It is usually worn by the leader in front of the dance troupe. (a 65-year-old retired dancer in Anloga)



Figure 14: The contemporary Atsiagbekor costume



Figure 15: Another contemporary Atsiagbekor costume

Due to COVID19, the researcher did not get original pictures from the community where Atsiagbekor is performed in traditional context. The above pictures were therefore retrieved from the internet considering the descriptions from the participants.

The findings also revealed that there are a lot of dance groups in the performing industry with a slight difference in the design of their costumes; and each group produced something more colourful and attractive for artistic innovation. The various groups have, therefore, designed their costumes in order to attract audience and make them marketable. They also select their costume to suit the occasion of the performance. Performing industries use different kinds of fabric to design their Atsiagbekor costume but the colours and designs are selected according to the occasion.

Research Question 2: What do the various Atsiagbekor costumes symbolized?

This research question sought to find out how the dance costumes were used to tell stories about the occasion or ceremonies during which the dances are performed. In other words, the research sought to establish how the costumes can serve as a non-verbal form of communication and its symbolism.

Symbolism of Traditional Costume

Various items of Atsiagbekor costume together with the materials they were made from were identified in the research. The focus of this section of the results is to outline the communicative value of these items. Raffia among the physical features of the traditional costume which, the search revealed, is a spiritual plant among the Anlo people. It is one plant that is used to reinforce the spirituality of the Anlos. It is, therefore, used to empower the warriors spiritually and prepare them for battle.

In line with this, an elder in one of the communities explained:

In the olden days, there were a lot of wars and our forefathers always wanted to prove their bravery (kaleworwor). They, therefore, used things that would inspire and psych them up. Raffia was one plant that they used to reinforce their spirituality. Also, the raffia wrapper around the waist of the warrior or dancers should fill them with a war-like spirit and place them within the space and period of urgency. (65-year-old retired male dancer in Anyako).

He continuous that,

Most of the Atsiagbekor dance movements in the olden days depicted the movements of some animals. This explains why in various performances; the dancers would wear the skin of the animal whose movements they want to

depict. For example, whenever the dancers wanted to depict the movements of a leopard, they would use the skin of the leopard as a feature of their costume.

One of our participants rightly explained:

Facial painting also communicates. The warriors used this feature particularly to disguise themselves to look fearful. The charcoal painting and raffia wrapper are particularly a very crucial part of the costume. Both of them have the potential of rendering them invisible or inconspicuous to the enemies in a situation of war. (Current dancer in Anloga).

Another participant also noted that,

The spy-warriors of the Anlos would use these features (facial painting) in order not to be easily identified whenever they lay ambush for the enemies. These features therefore serve the purpose of sending the enemies/opponents the wrong signal about the Anlo warriors (60-year-old retired dancer in Kedzi).

On the other hand, whenever the warriors came face to face with their opponents, these features, which make them look fearful, serve the purpose of frightening the opponent-warriors (60-year-old retired dancer in Kedzi).

When asked about the symbolism of the gun and cutlass used during the dance performance, the same participant explained that:

The gun and cutlass which are used during the performance depict war movements. The movements depicted by these tools represent a re-enactment of major events of some of the wars they fought.

The next feature of the dance costume that need to be talk about are the cowries around the wrist and waist of the dancers, and this is what one participant had to say:

My grandmother told me that, cowries symbolize the power of destiny in the Anlo culture. The cowries transfer magical powers and good luck to the warriors at the battle field (a 35-year-old current male dancer in Anloga).

With regard to the symbolism of the black powder, one of the participant explained:

The black powder (etsi) is very powerful and really protects us from a lot of spiritual problems (a 75-year-old retired male dancer).

The interaction we had with the participants revealed that the dancers of Atsiagbekor could perform with or without the black powder in the red piece of cloth. However, in the dancing arena, the sight of the cloth alone is very significant as it adds a sense of urgency and power to the performance.

Symbolism of contemporary costume

Features of the contemporary costume, just as the traditional ones, also serve as a form of communication and has its own symbolism. Prominent among the contemporary features is the tsaka as indicated earlier in this chapter. One of the participants in the Kedzi group described the tsaka as having three (3) patterns:

The short is up to the knee level and designed in a kente cloth; but between the legs to cover the buttocks is a simple cloth piece. There is a smaller piece that extends at the back called avuto (the ear of a dog). They therefore see the tsaka as a dog and the avuto is what they put at the back because the warriors consider themselves as a dog that can run without getting tired.

He further explained that,

The dancers also wear a red jumper at the top of the tsaka. This is because the dance is a war dance which depicts serious and dangerous times or mood. This

attire is worn by the men. Apart from the red colour of the jumper which exhibits the bravery of the warriors, the jumper symbolizes nothing to them than just covering themselves. The symbolism is actually in the tsaka and the props they carry (35-year-old current male dancer in Kedzi).

The next feature is the horse tail (dancing whisk) according to an elder, *the adedzo (horse tail) is a spiritual horse tail that the warriors use to communicate to each other in the battle field (Retired dancer in Kedzi).*

Another participant reiterated this function by explaining that:

The adedzo (horse tail) is believed to possess a charm. It is believed that when it is pointed at you and certain words are pronounced, whether it touches you or not, it might have an effect on you (65-year-old traditional leader in Anloga).

To another participant:

On the battle field, the adedzo (horse tail) serves as a weapon, alongside or in place of the sword and the gun. The contemporary dance groups, therefore, use it in place of the sword and the gun to establish communication among dancers as well as determine dance moves (42-year-old current dancer in Anlo-Afiadenyigba).

It can be deducing from these statements that, in the dancing arena, the Adedzo (*horse tail*) is not a simple accessory, but an active agent in the communicative agenda of the Atsiagbekor performance.

What red symbolized in Atsiagbekor costume

Red is a predominant colour in the costume of Atsiagbekor dancers. It is used in garments and in direct bodily decoration. The red colour from plants is also used for face and body painting in order to create a sense of seriousness and fear. However, the red cloth, face and body painting with red may

communicate a lot more as it is used to exhibit the bravery of the warriors and tell stories of sacrifice and bloodshed of our forefathers. It is also in line with the symbolic significance of colour red as hard work, sacrifice and bravery in Anlo culture. This perspective is corroborated by the account of one of the participants in one of the communities:

We usually perform Atsiagbekor during funerals of chiefs and elders in the Anlo community. Such funerals are always treated with solemnity and war-like importance in the community. Reds are therefore used to depict seriousness and war-like situation. The red colours in the cloth and the props they carry, with the red dominating, refers to the blood which our forefathers who fought for us shed. The colour red, therefore, symbolizes the blood of people who laid their lives down for us in many ways (65-year-old retired dancer in Anloga).

Occasions in the Anlo Culture on Which Atsiagbekor Dance is performed and Messages the Costume Communicate

The Atsiagbekor dance, according to information gathered from the interview, is now performed on various occasions. Key among these occasions are:

- Festivals (Hogbetsotso)
- Funerals
- Enstoolment of chiefs etc.

When asked about occasions on which atsiagbekor dance is performed, this view point was shared by one of the participants:

Atsiagbekor is usually performed during Hogbetsotso festival. The Anlo people escaped the wicked chief, Agorkoli, by walking backwards, dancing and drumming to war songs. Each year the Anlos hold the Hogbetsotso festival to remember their journey and the brave leaders who guided them. The festival is

celebrated each year on the first Saturday in the month of November at Anloga which is the customary and ritual capital of the Anlo state. (a current dancer in Anloga).

Another participant explained:

Atsiagbekor used to be a war dance and it was only performed at the chief's palace after war. These days, because there are no more wars, Atsiagbekor is performed at social events such as funeral of a member of the group, when a chief or an elderly person in the Anlo community dies, during traditional festivals and also played at parties for entertainment purposes (65-year-old retired dancer in Anlo- Afiadenyigba).

Another participant is of the view that:

The dancers may, therefore, use red to let the audience know that it is a funeral or a moment of mourning. At funerals where red is the dress code because it was a painful death, the dancers could paint their face and body in red. They also used red colours at festivals and enstoolment of chiefs as a way of re-enacting the Anlo stories of battles and sacrifices. (70-year-old retired dancer in Kedzi).

Another retired dancer stressed the fact that:

Red and black fabrics are usually used for funerals and traditional festivals. But sometimes when the person who died is an elderly person usually above hundred years, white fabric is usually used by the dance group. It is believed that they have been called to glory and therefore there is a need to celebrate their funeral than mourning them (a 60-year-old retired dancer in Kedzi).

Indeed, because Atsiagbekor is a dance born out of war, the data confirmed the use of two (2) principal traditional colours by the Atsiagbekor dancers: black and red. The views of a current dancer reiterate this position:

Red in the Anlo culture usually symbolizes seriousness, and at war, there is the need to be serious so that the enemies will not defeat you. Red also symbolizes danger and whenever there is war it means there is danger and you do not have to go near (a current dancer from Anloga).

It was also observed that, with the contemporary dance groups, the colour used for the face/body painting depends largely on the occasion or the event. The contemporary dance groups equally perform at funerals, festivals and enstoolment of chiefs whereas the traditional performance was done only in the chief's palace after war.

Research Question 3: How relevant are costumes in establishing cultural identity and the meaning ascribed to these costumes?

The aim of research question 3 is to find out the meaning attributed to the features of the Atsiagbekor costume within the Anlo culture and how the costume identifies the dancer as an Anlo. This aspect of the study, therefore, would place Atsiagbekor within the context of the Anlo culture to uncover the relationship that the Atsiagbekor costume maintains with the culture.

The findings from the focus group discussion revealed that,

In the Anlo-Ewe local setting, music and dance is considered as a significant part of everyday life, and as such, it is seen, to a large extent, as the foundation on which the culture of the people is built. This culture, when taken from the native setting to the national urban stage, becomes a representation of the people (A male traditional leader in Anyako).

According to the data, tsaka and the jumper shirt reveal a significant aspect of the Anlo identity as they portray the dancers, particularly the dance, as Anlos. An elder in one of the dance communities explains that:

Anytime you see anybody wearing tsaka and jumper, that person can be associated with the Anlos because apart from the Anlos, there is no other tribe in Ghana that wear tsaka. There might be a similarity in other tribes but the design is different. One important symbolism of the tsaka is the “avuto” at the back of the shorts. Therefore, the described Atsiagbekor costume helps to identify the Anlo ethnic group (an elder from Kedzi).

Another participant added that,

The tsaka and the jumper as a way of dressing is unique to the Anlo culture and would always identify anyone dressed that way as portraying that uniqueness. (25-year-old current dancer in Anloga).

In addition to the tsaka and the jumper, the hat, “togbenya” worn by the leader of the Atsiagbekor group, is another feature that could be seen as typical of the Anlos. The designer of the Anyako group explained that:

There is always a leader in front of the dancers during the performance. This leader puts on a special hat known in Anlo as ‘togbenya’. The hat worn on the costume portrays the status of the wearer as the leader of the dance.

As another participant of the group rightly stated:

It is only in Anlo culture that this special hat (togbenya) is used. Therefore, when used in the performance of the traditional dance, it creates the platform to display that unique Anlo cultural identify (62-year-old retired dancer in Anyako).

It is unique to the culture to the extent that people knit this hat. As stated by one of the participants, *this hat is knitted using two sticks with yarns.*

My findings revealed that out of all the features of the Atsiagbekor costume discussed in this chapter, the ones identified in this segment of the study could be portrayed as typically Anlo. The other features such as the raffia, cowries, etc. even though portray some historical, spiritual and cultural aspects of the Anlo people, could not be said to be typically Anlo. However, one of the participants explained the predilection of the colour red in the costume:

In terms of colour, it is assumed that many ethnic groups believe in a certain colour and what they represent, and the Anlos are noted for using red. Red in Anlo culture means hard work, sacrifice and bravery (70-year-old retired dancer).

He continued that,

The colour red is dominant in the costume of Atsiagbekor, and this fact, therefore, should identify or help, to a large extent, to identify the origin of the dance and define the qualities and values being portrayed by the dancers.

Research Question 4: How the Atsiagbekor dance Costume has evolved?

This is the fourth and last research question. Its aim was to find out the changes that the Atsiagbekor costume has undergone since its inception; and this brings us to the study of the evolution of dance costume. The views of one of the participants during the focus group discussion linked the evolution of the costume to that of the shelter condition of the Anlos:

Just as our forefathers lived in caves and later in mud houses and then in cement houses, so is the dance costume. This implies that the dance costume, which could be compared to housing for the dancers, should definitely evolve with the

changing times. The evolution of the dance costume is directly linked to the evolution of the Atsiagbekor dance itself (60-year-old retired dancer).

Another participant had the following to say about the evolution of Atsiagbekor dance.

The dance, Atsiagbekor, as has already been established, started as a war dance which was only performed at the chief's palace after battle. With war becoming an age-old phenomenon in the Anlo society, the dance itself evolved from a war dance to a social one and performed at social gatherings such as funerals, traditional festivals as well as any other social functions for entertainment purposes (70-year-old retired male dancer).

The above observation is supported by a younger participant:

The dance, which was originally the reserve of males, now accepts female dancers. As the dance has evolved, so has the costume. (a 30-year-old current dancer)

Some participants explained some of the changes in the Atsiagbekor costume.

Down wear

The dancers traditionally wove raffia in a form of skirt around their waist. It was later changed to "tsaka" a special knicker in the Anlo culture. A red cloth is tied at the waist on the tsaka.

Top wear

The dancers originally dance Atsiagbekor bear chested with only raffia skirt at the waist. Today they wear jumper on the "tsaka" to cover their body.

Accessories

The wooden sword and the horsetail (dancing whisk) have replaced the cutlass and the gun respectively. A hat (togbenya) is also worn by lead dancer in the contemporary performance.

Other participants are of a similar view:

The Atsiagbekor dance costume was originally made with natural features or materials such as plants (raffia or ela), animal skin, cowries, tools of war such as gun and cutlass, and other things such as black powder (etsi) and red piece of cloth etc. Dancers performed the dance bare-chested with only raffia woven in a form of skirt around the waist and later added accessories mainly in red colour and body painting using local materials such as charcoal or certain plants. With time, the costume designers replaced the original features/materials with more modern and artificial ones such as: Tsaka (knicker), red jumper, red cloth, wooden sword and horse tail (dancing whisk) etc. (68-year-old retired dancer).

The tsaka itself was originally made with a local fabric/ material known as akpanya (jute), and later made with a variety of woven fabric. (38-year-old current dancer).

Another participant added:

Before civilization, tsaka and jumper shirt were used to perform the dance. Jute (akpanya) was the fabric used to sew the tsaka which is often used by the Atsiagbekor dancers in the various communities where Atsiagbekor is played in traditional context. Later the (akpanya) was replaced with the local kente woven by the people in the community (70-year-old retired dancer).

Putting these views together, the researcher could deduce that the change in material culture and social conditions necessitated the evolution of the dance and the replacement of traditional or original features with contemporary ones. It is equally worthy to note that in contemporary times, there are lots of dance groups in the performing art industry with a slight difference in the design of their costumes; each group produces something more colorful, attractive and innovative. They, therefore, design their costume in order to attract audience and make themselves marketable. They also select their costume according to the occasion in which the dance will be performed. So, from the colours of the costume, you can judge whether there is victory, joy, sadness, grief, danger, or seriousness. Red and black fabrics have generally become the traditional colours for the modern costume, especially during funerals and traditional festivals.

Discussion

Background characteristics of participants

From the findings presented on the background characteristics of the participants, one can see that, even though the four Atsiagbekor groups used for this study are comprised both males and females, it appears that Atsiagbekor as a dance is more male dominated than female. This observation is supported by information from the leaders of the four groups who stated that the dance was originally not for everybody but for a specific group of people in the community. Atsiagbekor was a war dance, and if you were not a warrior, you would not be permitted to be part of the dancers. Therefore, it was only men who were allowed to go to war. According to the cultural theory, it is possible to see how a material culture view would promote a close study of changes in

clothing designs as objects that portray underpinning methods of social and political change (Beaule, 2018). In contemporary times, even though women are involved in the performance of Atsiagbekor, it is still a male dominated enterprise since men are traditionally predisposed to fight wars.

The above view on the composition or membership of the groups is supported by some of the responses gathered during the interview sessions. From the data collected on the issue of membership, some participants explained that, generally, in African communities, wars are not fought by women and it was only in rare instances that you would find women in war, for example, Yaa Asantewa in the Ashante Region of Ghana. So, the Atsiagbekor dance was only for men. Other participants also added that, the dance was performed by people above 20 years. Compared to the situation of marriage where you need to be of age, be able to buy a gun, build a house and take decisions for yourself before you are considered mature to marry, one needs to attain the age of maturity to be admitted into the dance. However, these days, anybody, including children, dance Atsiagbekor because times have changed and Anlo people no longer fight in wars as they did in the past. The dance is symbolic so the narrative has changed hence everybody can participate.

Still on the issue of membership, even though members of the four groups that constituted the research population are either Christians or traditionalists, membership of the Atsiagbekor dance group depends currently on personal or self-interest, irrespective of religious background. Level of education is also not a prerequisite for membership; this is because the dancer's background and knowledge of culture are enough to enable him function in the group.

In terms of the number of years the dancers have been performing, it spans from one (1) year for the newest members to about twenty (20) years for the oldest members. There are also married and unmarried dancers in the various groups. Looking at the current membership criteria of the Atsiagbekor groups, it is obvious that all the restrictions or close nature membership in terms of gender, age, religion among other characteristics, have been relaxed.

Physical Features of Atsiagbekor Costumes

With the responses from the data, one can easily identify the following as physical features of the traditional Atsiagbekor costume: raffia (ela), animal skin, gun and cutlass black powder (etsi), red piece of cloth, cowries and face painting.

In the past, because the warriors were in the wilderness, the only thing they found around were natural materials mostly derived from plants and animals. Raffia and animal skin were the most popular materials used. This is confirmed by Trimingham (2017) that, costumes were usually made of materials found in the local area, such as skins, feathers, grasses, dried flowers, and the bark of trees. The traditional Atsiagbekor costume, therefore, derived from the close relationship and interaction the Anlo people had with their immediate environment for their survival. The strength and flexibility of the raffia plant, as well as that of the animal skin made in the form of belt, speak volumes of the reasons why they were selected as features of a costume for warriors and dancers, both involved in physical activities that require a lot of energy. Since most of the materials were from natural sources and could be degraded naturally, these characteristics of strength, flexibility, durability,

agility, and endurance of the raffia and animal skin could make these materials last longer than other materials in their environment.

Raffia is also very useful in many of the Anlo/Ewe traditions. In Ghana, the Anlos also live along the coast characterized by wet soil where the raffia plant grows well. Kamga et al. (2002) explain that, the raffia fiber is obtained from the raffia palm tree, which grows in tropical regions and in wet soil in Africa. The raffia palm is made of long leaves that can attain 60ft (18m), which makes it the palm tree with the largest branches. The raffia fiber is soft, pliable, strong, durable, and easy to dye. In fact, the raffia palm tree holds the largest leaves of all plants on planet earth: 25 meters long and 3 meters (Kamga, et al., 2020). It is believed that the strong nature of raffia guided the forefathers of the Anlos to use it as a dance costume.

The study also revealed that when the spies returned from their errands, they re-enacted the movements that depicted how they fought their way through and thus proving that life was safe (agbekor) for the journey to continue. These spies who were the warriors wove raffia which they used as wrapper around their waist. Rifaldiand & Masunah (2020) are of the view that dance costumes could be anything that covered the dancer's body in accordance with body proportions. From the observation of the indigenous costume, the raffia was woven according to the size of each warrior so that it will not be too big or too small.

The other features of the traditional costume are the gun, the cutlass, cowries, black powder wrapped in a red piece of cloth and the body painting, which, according to our analysis, served as narrators or story tellers that recounted the exploits achieved by the Anlo warriors during their battles. The

gun and the cutlass were the main weapons used in the battle; so during the dance, they are used to depict war movements. This finding resonates with the view expressed by Whitehead (2010) that, Atsiagbekor is a war dance Atamga (Oath (atam) Great (ga)) alluding to the pledges performed by individuals prior to embarking on a battle.

Guns always use bullets to function. These bullets cannot be exposed or carried in bare hands. They needed something which could contain their bullets. They, therefore, sew animal skin in a form of belt and put the bullets in it for safe keeping during the battle. The animal skin has become part of the costume. The warriors also used black powder (etsi) for protection. According to the data, the black powder is very powerful and because red is considered as a symbol of power, the black powder is hidden in a red piece of cloth and tied on the left arm for protection against enemy bullets. This has also become part of the costume. It is believed that with the red piece of cloth on the left hand, the warriors could not be hit by bullet from their enemies.

Cowries are also tied on the wrist and neck for protection against any form of spiritual attacks. Even though the cowries are for protection, they have become part of the accessories on the costume that add some beauty to it. These findings are in congruence with the views expressed by Marsden (2006) who asserts that associating art with clothing harmonizes the social and spiritual dimensions of human behaviours, and further reflects comparisons as well as figurative correlations in the anthropogenic world. Therefore, the cowries, whose foremost purpose as a feature of the costume was spiritual protection and the show of strength, have come become one of the accessories that bring out aesthetic dimension of the costume. This aesthetic dimension of the costume

could be equally expressed by the painting of face and body, a feature which hitherto, was supposed to express fear, danger and disguise the warriors/dancers.

Currently, the Atsiagbekor dancers tried several designs and finally decided on the Tsaka and jumper as well as other accessories such as red cloth, wooden sword, horse tail and a hat were added. This is because the dance has evolved over time and thus, there is the need for contemporary costumes that would make the performance beautiful and express the exigencies of the moment without losing the original meaning of what the dance stood for in the past. This point is supported by Dixon (2015) who is also of the view that, traditional dance has a supporting element like a dance costume which will create a more beautiful performance on stage.

Tsaka is special knickers in the Anlo culture. What makes it special is that, it is designed with the local woven kente, jute (akpanya), velvet, or any suitable fabric in dark colours. The design of this costume can be compared to the Galombang dance costume. This finding agrees with the view expressed by Mansyur (2020) who documented that Galombang dancers wear costumes which consist of loose pants called 'galembong' pants and loose clothes that are traditionally black. With the use of this costume, the bottom of the shirt is inserted into the waist and the pants are rolled up slightly and tied with batik cloth so that it is formed in a triangle. In the middle corner of the triangular fold is placed face down behind the hip. This costume is similar to the contemporary Atsiagbekor costume. The “Tsaka “is also a loose pant just like the 'galembong' pants but with two projections known as “avuto” (dog ear) or funnels at the back lower end of it that makes it unique to the Anlo culture. Galombang dancers

wear shirt with the bottom of the shirt inserted into the waist. Meanwhile, with the Atsiagbekor costume, the top is a jumper with a cloth tied around the waist. These attires enable the dancers execute the dance movements elaborately. The Tsaka and the jumper being loose in nature probably provides room for the dance movement and do not restrict the dancers.

As part of the contemporary Atsiagbekor costume is a special hat known as “togbenya”. This type of hat, which is usually worn by most elders in the Anlo culture, is worn by the lead dancer during the performance. It may be worn significantly symbolized power, authority and control. Beside the hat, are other features such as the wooden sword and horse tail. These two accessories have replaced the cutlass and the gun in the traditional costume. Like the cutlass and the gun, the wooden sword and the horse tail play similar roles of storytelling as they are used to depict the war movements, re-enact the war tales and recount the exploits of some warlords and prominent personalities in the Anlo society. The conceptual framework confirms that dance costume as a non-verbal communication is its symbolism.

Atsiagbekor Costumes as a non-verbal form of Communication

The field of dance costume design is based not only on the necessity of literally clothing the bodies of dancers, but also on the understanding that clothing can communicate. This view is shared by Kaiser (1997) who asserts that communication in this sense is “the meaningful exchange of information through visual personal cues” (p. 211). Costume designers depend on the communicative properties of appearance, but the underlying assumption that this process exists has not been examined in the costume literature. However, within the fashion and apparel field, several theories are utilized to support the

conclusion that a garment can be the medium by which a message is sent from one person to others.

Symbolism of the Traditional Costume

In the past, there were lots of war, and the Anlo warriors always wanted to prove their bravery. They, therefore, used things that would inspire and psych them up. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the traditional Atsiagbekor costume has a lot of features and each of them comes with its symbolic meaning. In the Anlo culture, raffia is a very important plant. That is why the raffia wrappers became the dancers costume. This implies that whenever the people of Anlo or the warrior-dancers come into contact with the raffia or raffia wrappers, the war mood is activated. Therefore, the raffia wrappers around the waist of the warriors or warrior-dancers should fill them with a war-like spirit and place them within the space and period of urgency.

Beaule (2018) supports this assertion as he explains that in some cultures, indigenous textiles have endured as prestigious symbols of ethnic identity and socio-economic standing, sometimes neglected albeit later adjusted for the global market due to their aesthetically attractive rich designs and colours. Moving from the war field to the dancing arena, we could infer from the above information that, during the dance performance, these elements put the dancers and the audience alike in the situation of war; creating a context which brings out the importance and seriousness of the event.

The gun and the cutlass used in the battle field as weapons, become costume features that are used to depict war movements and re-enact some of the major events that occurred on the battlefield. The role of narrators or story-tellers played by the gun and the cutlass as costume features is enhanced by

other physical features of the costume such as the bullet wrapped in an animal skin belt for safe keeping during the battle, the black powder (etsi) wrapped in a red piece of cloth for protection, cowries tied on the wrist and neck for protection, and the face/body painting done by warriors to disguise themselves.

These features provide support or serve as evidence for the war narrative being constructed during the performance by the gun and the cutlass. The addition of these features to the dance costume equally helped create an atmosphere of importance, seriousness, fear, and power that characterized the performance.

The black powder, for instance, served as a feature that would repel any spiritual attack or spell against the warrior-dancer. The fact that the substance is wrapped in a red piece of cloth and tied on the left hand should reflect the message of seriousness, warlike and emotional touch of the event (war or dance performance). In Anlo/Ewe societies, dance has proven to be one of the most impressive tools for effective communication for many generations, and this observation extends beyond Anlo-Ewe land as documented by scholars including Ajayi (1996), Amegago (2011), Burns (2009), Chernoff (1979), Nketia (1974), Opoku (1965) and Welsh-Asante (1998). These scholars, have discussed the various ways in which dance becomes an important tool for communication in various parts of Africa. The focus of this study is to bring to light how costumes, and specifically Atsiagbekor costume, contribute immensely to this communication or makes it more effective as has just been demonstrated with the traditional features of the atsiagbekor costume. With all the features whose functions have been discussed so far, it is possible to conclude that most of them, as our findings reveal, convey one message or another.

For instance, the cowries around the wrist and neck constitute a signal to the opponents that they face warriors who are protected by charms. In the Anlo culture, just like most Ghanaian and African cultures, the cowries have been used to convey some message of spirituality. According to Love (2015), in Yoruba, cowries are used in the spiritual practices of divination and the interpretation to predict future events and determine a course of action for the person seeking advice. African legends, according to Gates (2014), cowries represent the protective power of the Ocean Goddess Yemaya. They were fashioned into jewelry by women all over Western Africa as a symbol of fertility, womanhood, and successful births. Also, Royals from African and American cultures also wore rows of these cowries to signify wealth, prosperity, and protection. According to the ancient Hausa proverb: “Whoever is patient with a cowrie shell will one day have thousands of them.”

Gates (2014) further explained that, People adorned with sacred cowrie are said to be blessed and protected by the Ocean Goddess Yemaya. Also, warriors were known to glue cowrie onto their costume to protect them in battle. They were also commonly added to baskets and other household items to secure a successful harvest and abundance within the home. Some historians suspect that because of their widespread use as protective charms, cowries were smuggled into America as a symbol resistance against the slave trade.

The small container which contains the black powder (etsi) and hidden in a red piece of cloth tied on the left hand equally carries a message of spiritual protection. From my experience and as a native of Volta, etsi is usually made of medicinal herbs and used for physical and spiritual protection. It is used in several ways depending on the kind of protection desired. In the case of

Atsiagbekor, it is carried on the body. Some could be mixed with soap for bathing, some are injected under the skin, and others are added to food while some are ingested through the mouth. These are all done for physical and spiritual protection.

Symbolism of the Contemporary Costume

Just like the indigenous costume, the contemporary Atsiagbekor costume also communicates a lot with its features. Confirming this, Ravelhofer (2006), observes that every costume or each part of a costume communicates a piece of information which is vital to understanding the culture of a group of people which includes music and dance. The Tsaka, which is the main feature of the contemporary costume, plays this communicative role. According to the findings, the Tsaka identifies the dancers as Anlos because it is only in the Anlo culture that this Tsaka is worn. Even though, according to the participants, the jumper which is worn on top of the Tsaka may not symbolize anything than just covering their body, it must be noted that the colour of the jumper, usually red, plays a significant role in creating the atmosphere for the performance just as earlier indicated with the symbolism of colour red. The Tsaka, the main feature of the contemporary costume, judging by its design, still projects, like the raffia wrapper, a sense of urgency and danger. Furthermore, the fact that the dance used to be performed bare chested in the past, and currently with a jumper, is indicative of the change in material culture of the Anlo people.

The horsetail, another feature of the contemporary costume of Atsiagbekor, plays the role, as stated earlier, such as the gun and the cutlass of the traditional costume, of narrator or story-teller as it is also used to depict dance movements and re-enact war events. Beyond this role, it serves as an

element of communication between the warrior-dancers as it did as a weapon during the wars. It is also one of the features that puts the dancers in high spirit. Dennis (2014) confirms the fact that, contemplating the concept of costume, it is obvious that the inner spirit of an individual influences his or her outward and noticeable sign. Therefore, the inward character traits of a person become obvious through the garments they have on. This is explained by the fact that every occasion reflects specific features that define it as unique from others. The horsetail, therefore, perhaps influences the inner spirit of the Atsiagbekor dancers, that is why when it is pointed at you it is believed that something might happen to you.

Kurland (2004) also argued that “costumes are not mere garments. They are visual tools used to release the soul of a character, a way to lift a character off the page into a three-dimensional world”. The position of Kurland, therefore, underscores the point that through the wearing of garments, the emotional thoughts of a performer is unveiled to the observers. Therefore, the appropriate use of costumes by actors is key to transmitting information about their personality and the role they play for the audiences to clearly appreciate. It is believed that, the use of a horsetail and other features releases the soul of the dancers during the performance of Atsiagbekor.

According to Kuwor (2012), an important means by which most African and foreign communities transmit their norms and traditions is through forging solidity in their culture by engaging the constituents in allocating the same meaningful world, often characterized or amplified in emblematic features like dance, religion, or music. It may be the case that these emblematic features are

not performed naked. Communities, therefore, develop their unique garments to promote the message being transmitted to the observers.

The Symbolism of the Colour Red

Cerrato (2012) is of the view that, colour is a form of non-verbal communication. This means that, colours can awaken thoughts of memories, stimulate the senses, and represent abstract ideas. Colour could be very symbolic depending on the perception of the people in respect to colour. Colour can influence our decision-making, thinking, and impact our moods. People attribute different meanings to the same colour based on personal experiences, cultural connotations, gender and context. Depending on our interpretations, they can be used for good or evil. In daily life, people might choose a specific clothing colour to convey their emotions, often subconsciously

Red has a range of symbolic meanings through many different cultures, including life, health, war, courage, anger, love and religious favour. The common thread is that all these require passion. Red is a colour with high visibility that tickers alertness and often used to indicate danger; and this perhaps, is the main reason why it was chosen by the Atsiagbekor dancers. According to Guillaume, Andersen, & Vuori (2016) red is an emotionally intense colour that demands attention. In effect, it draws attention, cautions, provokes and gives energy. More so, red is a dramatic colour. It instills anger, aggression, dominance and impulsiveness, giving emotions like action, energy, passion and power.

Guillaume, Andersen, and Vuori (2016) as well as Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002) explain the psychological meaning of red. According to them, the colour red is rich not only in its meanings but also in its history. They

continued that in Ancient Egypt, the colour red invoked the protective power of the blood of Isis. Also, red can actually be traced way back to that period. Red represented war back then because of its associations with fire and blood. Today, most of our symbolism of red comes from those powerful associations from the past. In view of this, Kaliki (2018) explains that Kabasaran dancers in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, have a traditional costume that is worn during a dance performance. The costume shows more about the character of the soldiers when fighting and it adds to the beauty of the character while dancing. This is equally the case with the Atsiagbekor costume. The traditional Atsiagbekor costume also shows the character of the warriors on the battle field as it adds beauty to the character while dancing.

Kaliki (2018) continues that the Kabasaran dancer's costume which is dominated by red is equipped with various attributes, each of which has a meaningful symbol. On the Kabasaran cloths there are two colours, namely: Red colour and Chocolate colour. The red colour is used in Kabasaran costume explains the meaning of the character of the Kabasaran dance which is a war dance. Red symbolizes courage, strength, blood, joy and victory. Red colour is also believed to be a burning spirit, and that is perhaps the reason why the ancestors chose red as the traditional colour of Atsiagbekor dance clothing.

Occasions in the Anlo Culture on Which Atsiagbekor Dance is Performed and Messages Send

According to City (2015), a festival is an event ordinarily celebrated by a community and centering on some characteristic aspects of that community and its religion or cultures. It is often marked as a local or national holiday. Festivals are very important in several ways: historically, religiously, socially,

economically, culturally, morally and politically in the lives of Ghanaians. Festivals are an expressive way to celebrate glorious heritage, culture and traditions.

Hogbetsotso is one of the indigenous festivals in Ghana. It is celebrated by the Anlo people to commemorate their escape from Notsie in Togo to their present abode in the Volta Region of Ghana, between the fourteenth and the fifteenth century. The celebration starts in the month of November at Anloga, which is the traditional and ritual capital of the Anlo state. The festival is celebrated on the first Saturday of the month of November every year. The traditional drumming and dancing, cheering crowds, palanquins in different shapes and sizes and singing of traditional war songs, combine to make the Hogbetsotso festival a must-not-be-missed spectacle. Hogbetsotso is one of the festivals in the Anlo culture that Atsiagbekor is performed. Historically, Atsiagbekor as a war dance is associated with the migration of the people of Anlo. Therefore, Hogbetsotso cannot be celebrated without Atsiagbekor dance. The Hogbetsotso festival being a reminder to the people of Anlo of their journey from Notsie to their present abode could also be a journey during which the Anlos were confronted with people whom they had to fight. The Atsiagbekor could, therefore, be a reminder of these wars and the sacrifices their forefathers made.

Another occasion on which Atsiagbekor is performed is funeral. A funeral usually is a ritual through which the corpse receives a final disposition. Culturally, black and red attire are used for funeral ceremonies in Ghana and it signifies a grieving period. Traditionally, red is associated with danger and black with grief, hence the use of these colours to communicate the passing of

a loved one. In the Anlo culture, when an elderly person, a chief, or a member of the Atsiagbekor group dies, the dance is performed.

Enstoolment is also an occasion on which Atsiagbekor is performed. Enstoolment is a process of enstooling, or raising a chief to power. Chiefs obtain their position through enstoolment and can lose it through destoolment.

Cultural Identity and the meaning ascribed to these Costumes

Cultural theorists argue that the social life or biography of an object reflects its function and purpose within its social context, and when that context is shifting, the thing becomes an “object in motion” (Barrkman, 2006, 87). The world has many cultures and many different traditional costumes. Each costume has its own beauty and regional and national identities.

Tsaka is a special knicker in the Anlo culture of Ghana. It is only in the Anlo culture that they use this type of knicker. Therefore, Atsiagbekor dancers are identified with the special knickers they wear. Traditional costumes may go through a thousand years of life with each detail symbolic of the nation. The special hat “togbenya” worn by the lead dancer in Atsiagbekor dance also identifies the dancers as Anlos. Sugiarto and Lestari (2020) explain that, customary performances have traditional and mystical connotations that cannot be tutored by machines.

The Anlos also noted for using red. The emotional influence of the colour red is defined by the culture one belongs to. Most Western cultures see red as a warning; this view is most likely connected to the image of blood and is present in most modern danger and warning signs. Even though red can in most cultures have both a positive and a negative meaning, the importance and

expression of each of these meanings is different in each culture. Therefore, each culture has its own way of interpreting and expressing the meaning of red.

The evolution of Atsiagbekor costume

The Atsiagbekor costume has evolved from the use of local materials in the immediate environment. This could be due to the invention of new fabrics which could be equally used to sew the costume. Also, owing to the fact that the dance has evolved from a war dance to serve other purposes, the dancers find it necessary to change the costume as well. The fashion world has taken us through various stages of evolution of the clothes seen for different climates and eras. Many styles have come and gone with more still evolving, even though the pace might differ. This phenomenon has also affected the various costumes used by dancers, including Atsiagbekor dancers.

The Atsiagbekor dancers also took inspiration from their culture and decided to use their special knicker (Tsaka) and hat (togbenya) which are peculiar to their culture for easy identification.

Atsiagbekor costume has also evolved due to the changing nature of man or civilization but the fact remains that the original traditional costume has features whose importance cannot be forgotten. According to the data, the warriors used natural materials such as raffia because that is what they found around them. They used natural materials because they did not know the existence of cloth. The dancers later started using cloth when they began to recognize fabrics. This is confirmed by Kaliki (2018) that, in the olden days, Kabasaran clothing was made of bark, because the people did not know the existence of cloth. But after going through the times, the people had begun to

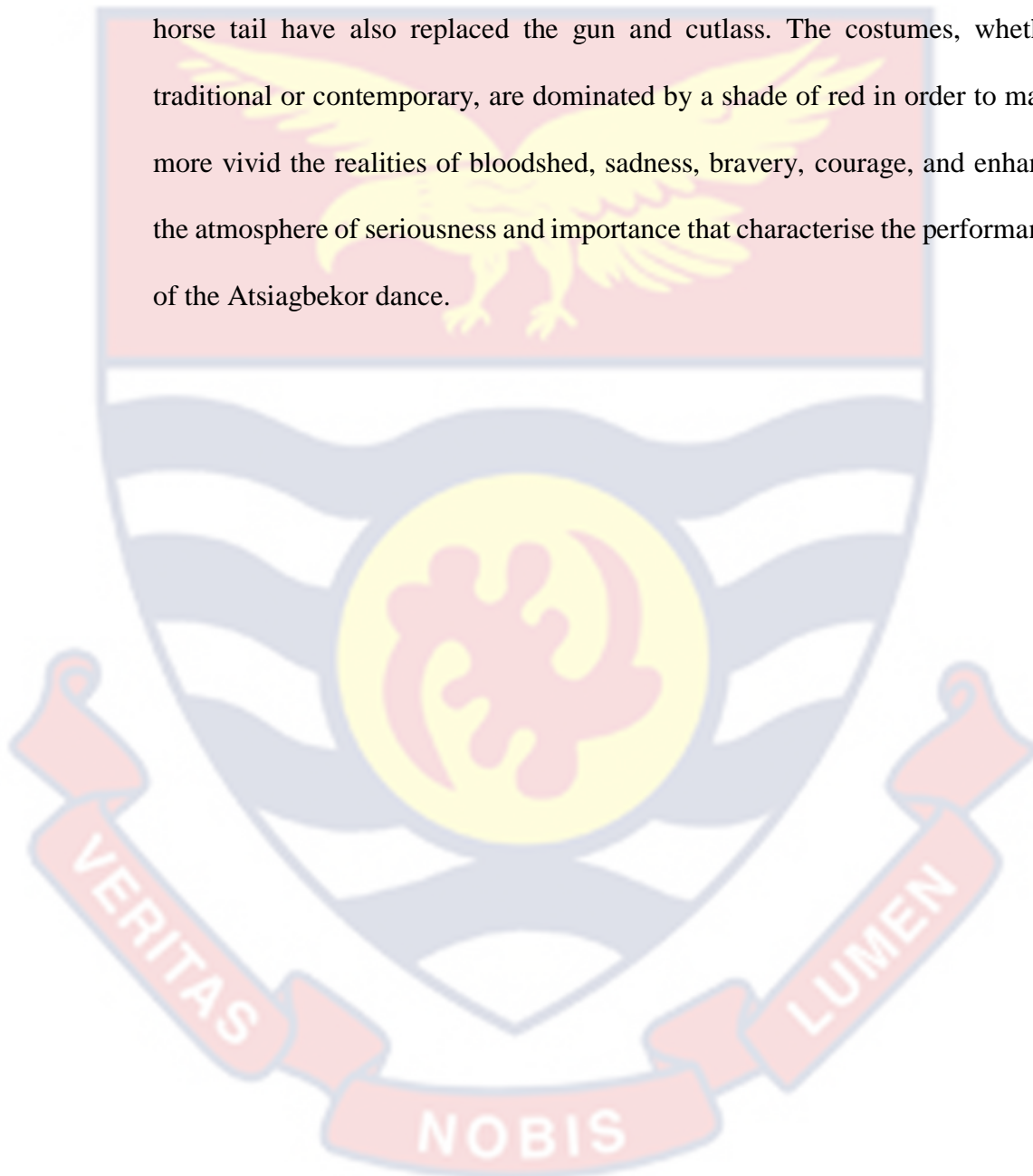
recognize cloth, and they began to use typical Minahasa fabrics in making Kabasaran robes.

Society changes, and things change with it. The study has uncovered a lot of Atsiagbekor dance groups, and each group wants to produce something innovative or more colourful and attractive. The dance groups look for designs and colours that they think will be attractive to the public. These designs are so diverse that there now exist a lot of varieties in Atsiagbekor costume. These designs and colours depend on the motives of the dance groups and the occasions where the dance will be performed.

In summary, this chapter focused on the presentation of the results from the observation and focus group and their discussion. It is revealed that there are various forms of costumes for the Atsiagbekor dance; the traditional and contemporary costumes. The features of the traditional Atsiagbekor costume include: raffia (ela); animal skin; gun and cutlass; black powder (etsi); red piece of cloth; cowries; and painting of face. With the contemporary Atsiagbekor costume, Tsaka (knicker); red jumper; red cloth; wooden sword; hat (togbenya) and horse tail (dancing whisk) were identified. It is revealed, most importantly, that every single feature of the costumes, traditional and contemporary, carries a piece of information about the history, cultural values and belief system of the Anlo people. Atsiagbekor started as a war dance and the costume contributes greatly to the war narrative of the Anlos.

The research equally revealed that the costumes do not only tell stories about the occasions or ceremonies where they are performed, but most of the features of the costumes reflect the Anlo identity and cultural values. Since the costumes constitute an integral part of the Anlo story, every transformation

experienced by the Anlo society affects the dance costume as well. This explains why, over the years, the costume has undergone a lot of transformation in terms of design, fabrics, colour and accessories, as the Tsaka has replaced the raffia wrapper, fabrics are used in place of the local materials, wooden sword and the horse tail have also replaced the gun and cutlass. The costumes, whether traditional or contemporary, are dominated by a shade of red in order to make more vivid the realities of bloodshed, sadness, bravery, courage, and enhance the atmosphere of seriousness and importance that characterise the performance of the Atsiagbekor dance.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An Overview

This chapter provides a summary of the study process as well as the findings. It also presents conclusions drawn from the findings, recommendations for further research.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the features of Atsiagbekor dance costumes in Keta municipality in the Volta Region of Ghana. The broad and overarching research question that guided the study was “what was the symbolic meaning of the costumes worn by performers of the Atsiagbekor dance in the Volta Region of Ghana. Four research questions were developed out of the broad research question to guide this research.

Qualitative research method was employed for the study. Specifically, ethnographic research method was adopted. The actual samples used for the data collection were current and retired dancers from various Atsiagbekor groups, traditional leader, a costume designer and a youth in the four selected communities. The researcher also sought information from informants in the academia, specifically the Dance Department of the University of Ghana, where Atsiagbekor is studied as a course. The findings were presented according to the various research questions formulated for the study. Thematic method of analysis was adopted based on the themes generated from the data.

The researcher has also realized that the costume used for Atsiagbekor in the past is different from what is being used today. Therefore, this study focuses on the symbolic significance of Atsiagbekor dance costume as well as how it

has evolved over the years. This will be done by assessing the physical features of the past and present Atsiagbekor dance costumes and the cultural identity and meaning ascribed to these costumes.

The study was conducted in the Keta Municipality of the Volta Region of Ghana. The choice of this Municipality for the study was based on the benefits of the researcher's 'Insiderness' or 'Nativity' as well as anecdotal evidence gathered by the researcher as she interacted with some Atsiagbekor dance groups in the study area.

Summary of Key Findings

1. Concerning the physical features of the costumes used in Atsiagbekor dance, two main categories were identified; the traditional costume and the contemporary costume. The physical features of the traditional Atsiagbekor costume include: raffia (ela); animal skin; gun and cutlass; black powder (etsi); red piece of cloth; cowries; and painting of face. The physical features of the contemporary Atsiagbekor costume include: Tsaka (knicker); red jumper; red cloth; wooden sword; hat (togbenya) and horse tail (dancing whisk).
2. In relations to what the various costumes symbolized in Atsiagbekor dance, it was realized that, each of the features of the Atsiagbekor dance costumes serves as a non-verbal form of communication as they are used to recount an aspect of the war stories of the Anlo people as well as the stories of the other occasions or ceremonies during which they are performed. The findings indicate that the Anlos fought a lot of wars in the past, and they would always want to recount their stories of bravery and spirituality. Raffia is one plant which was used to reinforce the spirituality of the Anlos, while the charcoal painting on the faces and other parts of the body of the warrior-dancers was done to disguise them

and/or to make them look fearful and frightening to the opponent-warriors, and to make them less visible or inconspicuous to the enemies in a situation of war. Furthermore, the gun and the cutlass which are used during the performance depict war movements or recount major war events. The cowries around the wrist and neck of the warrior-dancers, together with the small container of black powder (etsi) wrapped in a red piece of cloth and tied on the left hand, are seen as symbols of spiritual protection. It equally contributes to the atmosphere and mood of seriousness, war and emotional touch. Put together, the red piece of cloth, the black powder, the cowries and the painting of the face/parts of the body, constitute the complementary elements that support the creation of costumes.

With the contemporary costume, each of its features is equally symbolic. The horse tail is used as a means of communication between the dancers as it was between warriors on the battlefield. The colour red, which is the dominant colour in the Tsaka, the red jumper and other features, tells the stories of sacrifice and bloodshed in line with the symbolic significance of colour 'red' as hard work, sacrifice and bravery in Anlo culture.

3. In terms of the relevance of the costumes in establishing cultural identity and the meaning ascribed to these costumes, it was also realized that, the tsaka and the jumper shirt portray the dancers as Anlos. It is only in the Anlo culture that the special knicker "tsaka" is worn. The special hat "togbenya" worn by the lead dancer, as well as the colour red, identifies the dancers as Anlos.
4. The costumes have also evolved in terms of design, fabrics, colour and accessories. This can be seen in the top wear and down wear of the costume. In terms of design, the Tsaka and red jumper have replaced the raffia skirt used by

the traditional dancers. Also, a fabric is used instead of the local materials. In addition, the wooden sword and the gun, as well as the horse tail, have also replaced the gun and cutlass used by the traditional dancers. A hat (togbenya) is also worn by the lead dancer of the contemporary dance groups.

Conclusions

The following conclusions could be drawn from the findings of the study. The physical features of the costumes used in Atsiagbekor dance could be derived from what the dancers found around them. This means that, over the years, whatever objects have been used for the costumes, would be determined by the material conditions of the various times.

The study has revealed that, the Atsiagbekor dance costumes serve as a non-verbal form of communication as they are conceived of as story-telling elements. Some of the virtues that are communicated through the use of the various costumes during the performance of Atsiagbekor include: bravery; the need for spiritual protection; seriousness/determination, sacrifice and bloodshed.

On the relevance of the costumes in establishing cultural identity, the tsaka and the jumper shirt portray the dancers as Anlos. In terms of colour, the Anlos are noted for using red which depicts hard work, sacrifice and bravery. The red dominated costume in Atsiagbekor, therefore, identifies the dancers as Anlos where the dance originated from. This presupposes that, every culture is unique and that there is the need for individuals from various ethnic groups to be abreast with their culture in order to know what defines them as individuals. This could be very challenging in our current dispensation looking at the increasing advancement of technology and its associated developments that

tend to promote the influx of foreign cultures as local cultures are demonized. Yet, there is the need to ensure that our cultures contain a lot of values which define us as a people, and which need to be preserved for posterity.

Again, the Atsiagbekor dance costume has evolved over the years. As time changes, things change with it. Just as the world has advanced from the stone-age period to a period of technological advancement, so has the Atsiagbekor dance costume evolved over the years. This implies that, certain elements of culture that are outmoded or tend to retard progress and development need to give way for new ones.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Traditional leaders and performers of Atsiagbekor should use the opportunity to educate the audience on the features of Atsiagbekor costumes anytime the dance is being performed and this should be documented for future reference.
2. Retired and current dancers should adopt various strategies, including public education and documentation to inform the public about the virtues that are communicated through the use of the various costumes during the performance of Atsiagbekor. There is the need to equally educate the public about the significance or the symbolic meanings attached to these traditional dance costumes. These virtues are significant and, as such, there is the need to apply them to our daily lives. Perhaps, there is the need to reinforce these values in both educational and non-educational centers today. It would also provide good sources of reference materials for the future generation to continue the legacy.

3. Traditional leaders should use occasions like durbars, festivals, funerals and other ceremonies to educate their subjects on the importance of preserving their cultural heritage. This would ensure that, the important elements of the various cultures that define a group of people are preserved and maintained for posterity.
4. Costume designers should point out to the various dance groups for which they design that, individuals should learn modern ways of doing things right and be abreast with current technological advancement in order to remain relevant in their societies.

Areas for Further Research

The study could be replicated in other areas in the Volta Region or in other regions in the country with other traditional dance costumes.

Also, the study was conducted using 44 participants. Future studies may increase the sample size and also include resource persons from the various cultural centres that have knowledge about Atsiagbekor dance in order to make the study richer.

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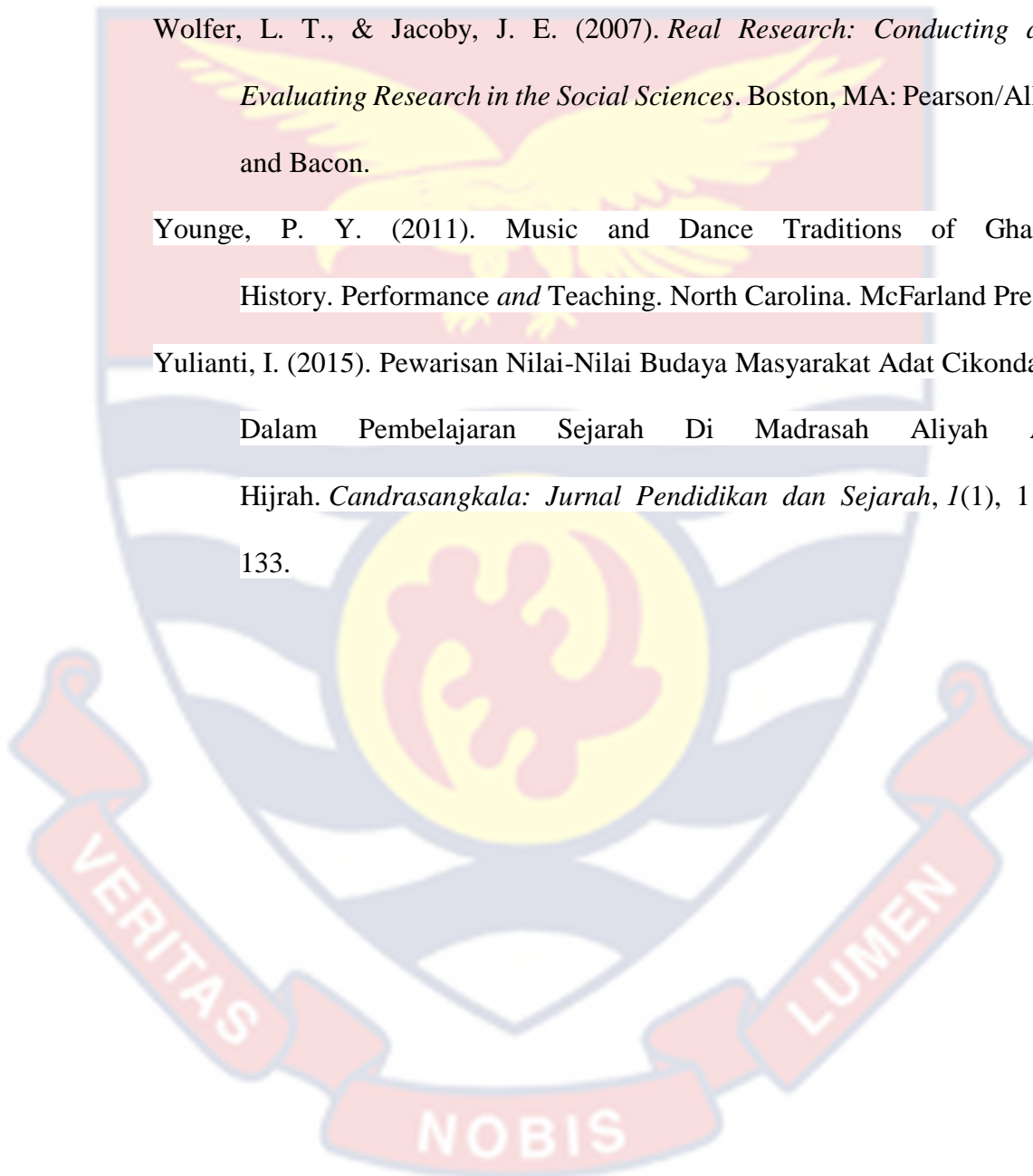
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APPENDICES**APPENDIX A****UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST****COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES****FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION****DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION****FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

This is a focus group discussion guide by M.Phil. Candidate in Home Economics (clothing and textiles) at the Department of VOTEC UCC. This instrument is designed to elicit your views on the topic, Costume symbolism: “Atsiagbekor” traditional dance in Keta municipality-Volta Region, Ghana. This study aims at assessing the physical features of Atsiagbekor dance costume and its symbolism in the Anlo culture. The data is for academic purpose only and be assured that any information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. I wish to also seek your indulgence to record the proceeding with an audio recording device to enable me capture your true speech for accuracy purposes.

**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE ON THE TOPIC: COSTUME
SYMBOLISM: “ATSIAGBEKOR” TRADITIONAL DANCE IN KETA
MUNICIPALITY-VOLTA REGION, GHANA**

A. Background characteristics of participants

1. Please tell me about yourself.

(**Probe**; Sex, age, marital status, religion, level of education, community, name of dance group, years of exposure in the dance group.)

B. Physical features of Atsiagbekor dance costumes

2. Could you please share with me the history of Atsiagbekor dance costume?

(**Probe;** for specific costume items)

3. What are the physical features that characterise the Atsiagbekor dance costume?

(**Probe;** colour and its symbolism, design features of costume and factors that affect the choice of costume.)

C. Costumes as a means of non-verbal communication

4. On which occasions are Atsiagbekor dance performed?

(**Probe;** whether there are different costumes for different occasion and the messages they send to the community)

D. Cultural identity and meanings ascribed to these costume

5. What cultural identity does Atsiagbekor dance costume contribute to the Anlo culture?

(**Probe;** the relevance of the costumes in establishing the cultural identity of the Anlos)

6. What does costume symbolise in the Atsiagbekor dance? (**Probe;** specific costume and their symbolism, how are this symbolism preserved and the cultural meanings of these costumes)

E. Evolution of Atsiagbekor dance costume

7. What are the changes that have occurred on the Atsiagbekor costume over the years?

(**Probe;** specific date that characterise specific evolution, effects of the changes of costume on the Atsiagbekor dance and the reasons for costume change)

F. Recommendations

8. Please is there any other thing about Atsiagbekor dance costume you will love to share with me?

Thank you for participating in this study.



APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES

FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

OBSERVATION GUIDE ON THE TOPIC: COSTUME SYMBOLISM:

“ATSIAGBEKOR” TRADITIONAL DANCE IN KETA

MUNICIPALITY-VOLTA REGION, GHANA

Physical features of Atsiagbekor dance costumes

1. Colour of costume.....
2. Type of fabric used.....
3. Design features of the costume
4. Comfortability of the costume in relation to the dance.....
5. Props used during the dance.....
6. Colour of body painting.....
7. Occasion.....
8. Any other things observed apart from the above.....

APPENDIX C

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Direct: 03320-91097
Telegrams & Cables: University, Cape Coast



University of Cape Coast
Cape Coast

Our Ref: VTE/IAP/V.1/161

9th December, 2020

The Chairman
Institutional Review Board
UCC

Dear Sir/Madam

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

We have the pleasure of introducing to you **Doris Mawuse Akuaku** who is an M.Phil student of this Department and working on the thesis topic "**Costume Symbolism: 'Atsiagbekor' Traditional Dance in Perspective**".

Currently, she is at the data collection stage of her research work and we would be most grateful if you could grant her an ethical clearance from your outfit to enable her proceed with the collection of data.

Thank you

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Augustina Araba Amissah'.

Dr. Augustina Araba Amissah
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

NOBIS

APPENDIX D

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SECRETARIAT

TEL: 0558093143 / 0508878309
 E-MAIL: irba@ucc.edu.gh
 OUR REF: UCC/IRB/A/2016/1060
 YOUR REF:
 OMB NO: 0990-0279
 IORG #: IORG0009096

19TH AUGUST 2021

Ms. Doris Mawuse Akuaku
 Department of Vocational and Technical Education
 University of Cape Coast

Dear Ms. Akuaku,

ETHICAL CLEARANCE – ID (UCCIRB/CES/2021/28)

The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB) has granted Provisional Approval for the implementation of your research titled **Costume Symbolism, “Atsiagbekor” Traditional Dance in Perspective**. This approval is valid from 19th August 2021 to 18th August 2022. You may apply for a renewal subject to submission of all the required documents that will be prescribed by the UCCIRB.

Please note that any modification to the project must be submitted to the UCCIRB for review and approval before its implementation. You are required to submit periodic review of the protocol to the Board and a final full review to the UCCIRB on completion of the research. The UCCIRB may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the research during and after implementation.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the UCCIRB within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

Always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence with us in relation to this protocol.

Yours faithfully,

Samuel Asiedu Owusu, PhD
 UCCIRB Administrator

ADMINISTRATOR
 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
 UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST