

BRANDING A PARAMOUNT CHIEF THROUGH VISUAL IDENTITY DESIGN: EVIDENCE FROM GLOBAL SOUTH

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ABSTRACT

In Sub-Saharan African culture, the supremacy of chiefs is highly respected therefore, the study used artistic research to promote the supremacy of the paramount chief of Yilo Krobo Traditional Area in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The study identified the indigenous totems of the traditional area and used them to design a customised clothe to brand the paramount chief. Constructionism philosophy and qualitative research approach were used. Expert purposive sampling was also used to select 34 participants, and focus group discussion and document study were used for data collection. The data was analysed thematically and findings revealed that, there are six divisional totems used by the traditional area and one state totem used by the paramount chief. However, the traditional area does not have any traditional clothe that identifies their paramount chief. The researchers based on the findings to design a customised clothe that gives unique identity to the paramount chief. The customised clothe was further discussed through aesthetic appreciation by using Edmund Burke Feldman's criticism model as a criteria. The model prescribes that, aesthetic appreciation of an art work must reflect the following elements: description of the work, analysis of the technical qualities of the work, making logical interpretations of the work based on the concept, and making informed judgment to indicate whether the work is good or bad. The aesthetic appreciation revealed that, the elements used in the design actually reflects the traditional totems and symbols of the Yilo Krobo ethnic group. It also creates unique identity for the paramount chief and accentuates his supremacy in the traditional area.

Keywords: Yilo Krobo Traditional Area, Traditional Textile Design, Krobo Customised Clothe, Visual Identity Design, Brand Identity Design.

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INTRODUCTION

The institution of chieftaincy has been integral part of indigenous cultures in Africa from pre-colonial era till date. In all African countries, chiefs are highly respected because; they are the custodians of stools, culture and traditions (Donald et al., 1996). In Ghana for instance, the chieftaincy system is organised in hierarchical order: kingdom, paramountcy, divisional chiefs, chiefs, and sub-chiefs. A kingdom is made up of different paramountcy of an ethnic group that has united into a kingdom and it is ruled by a king. In Akan culture, the head of united paramountcy is called 'Otumfuo'-which in Akan language means the most powerful. An example is the Ashanti kingdom (Quintana, 2010 & Academia.com, n. d.).

A paramountcy consists of people of the same ethnic group who have settled in different towns and all the chiefs of the towns are ruled by a paramount chief. Paramountcy is headed by a paramount chief known in Akan culture as 'Oman Ohene'- which in Akan language means head of states. Divisional chiefs could be chiefs in a paramountcy that have been given different title or position by the paramount chief or prominent nonroyals from the paramountcy or outside the paramountcy who have been given a title or position. The divisional chiefs are members of the council of states of the paramountcy (National House of Chiefs, 2008, pp.26-27). A chief in Akan culture is called 'Odikro'- which means owner of a town in Akan language. The chiefs also appoint other sub-chiefs from their towns to form a council. Aside this system, other important people such as linguists, head of families, royal kingsmen, community elders etc. are appointed to join the council (National House of Chiefs, 2008, pp.26-27).

Though there are five major ethnic groups in Ghana, namely Akan, Ga-Damgme, Ewe, Guan and Mol-Dagbon, this study is focused on the culture of the Krobo ethnic group. The Krobo ethnic group is a sub-group of the Ga-Damgme

ethnic group located in south eastern coast of the republic of Ghana. The Krobo traditional area is geographically located in the Eastern Region of Ghana. It is surrounded by a mountain which stretches South-East towards the Volta Region. The traditional area consists of two groups: *Yilo Krobo* and *Manya krobo*. The Yilo Krobo Traditional Area comprises of several towns and villages and its capital town is Somanya. The traditional state is sub-divided into six namely; Bornya, Plau, Bunase, Nyewer, Ogome and Okper in chronological order (African 101 last tribes, n. d.). The Manya traditional area is close to the Volta Region and comprise of several towns and villages. Its capital town is Krobo Odumasi. The two main festivals celebrated annually in the Krobo state are Kloyosikplemi festival celebrated by the Yilo Traditional Area and Ngmayemi festival celebrated by the Manya Traditional Area.

The Krobos in Ghana are mainly identified with the production and use of beads (Malek, 2009). This form of cultural identity has become entrenched due to the prominent use of beads during their Dipo (Traditional puberty rites). However, the groups have different traditional totems that express their philosophical and ideological orientations. Anecdotal evidence indicates that, the group uses the totems to produce artifacts such as linguist staff, stools, palanquins, ambarellas, drums, sword and others which are used in their palaces and in their regalia during traditional functions (awonyenarkie. wordpress.com, 2016). literature indicates that, some studies have been done on the Krobo beads in relation to their famous traditional puberty rites called 'Dipo' (Malek, 2009). Even though the beads and totems the Krobos display during occasions give them identity in general, the researchers belief that, at such important traditional gatherings, the costume of the paramount chief must be distinct from the costumes of his subordinate chiefs so as to portray his supremacy in the Krobo state.

Based on this belief, the researchers decided to research into the different traditional totems used by the Yilo Krobo Tradition Area to know their specific representations, features and meanings, and use their knowledge and skills in Branding, Visual Communication Design and Textiles Design to manipulate some of the totems to develop motifs and use them to create a customized clothe for the paramount chief through practiced-based artistic research. The researchers believe that this form of traditional identity design will create unique identity for the paramount chief in the traditional area and accentuate his supremacy among the chiefs and over his subjects especially during public gatherings.

In order to support the findings of the study with relevant literature, and concepts, the researchers reviewed literature on relevant themes like symbol, totems, visual communication theories, branding, aesthetic appreciation and criticism, and developed a conceptual map that explains how certain variables can influence effective traditional brand identity design.

Symbol is something that represents something due to costume, affiliation or connection. It can be two or three-dimensional visible item that represents an invisible object (Merriam-webster.com, 2021; Ayesu, 2015; & Amate, 2011). In Ghana, there are six main categories of symbols. These include oral literary symbols, linguistic staff symbols, Adinkra symbols, religious symbols, and stool symbols. Every symbolic group has something to say about the history of the society it represents or the way of life of the people in every circumstance that comes their way (Amate, 2011; Ayesu, 2015; Appiah, 2010; Amate, 2011).

For example, the Adinkra symbols symbolise ideas or proverbs and convey philosophical, allegorical, or satirical themes to illustrate religious, social, or political problems and to provoke thought about matters of beauty or

morality. They are widely utilized in logos, ceramics, and textiles. For instance, the Akans of Ghana include symbols into their traditional attire, known as Adinkra clothing, as a means of expressing their grief. Typically, people wear these garments to express sympathy for the bereaved family and to “bid farewell” to the deceased (Ampah, 2011; Glover, 1994; Tetteh, 2021). Such traditional symbols are also used as motifs and used on shrines, plaster decorations, funeral homes, royal regalia and others.

In indigenous African culture, oral literary symbols are forms such as fables, myths, maxims and proverbs which are used in the traditional society to express beliefs, values and feelings. For instance, proverbs are sometimes presented as carved artifacts that carry metaphorical and philosophical undertones. Examples of such proverbial symbols in Ghanaian culture are the three heads carved together, a hand holding an egg, a bed with the head turned backward picking something and others. These carvings are sometimes used as umbrella tops and on linguist staffs (Amenuke et al, 1999).

Colour symbolism is the use of colour as a representation or meaning of something that is usually specific to a particular culture or society. In Ghanaian indigenous culture, certain colours are associated with symbolic meanings which reflect their usage in society. For instance, red, brown and black represent anger, decay and hope respectively. Green represents fertility, yellow or gold represent royalty, richness and power, blue represent calmness, peace and tranquility, white represents purity and victory. These colours are often used when performing rituals in the life cycles of man (Rites of passage), during festivals, wars, installation of chiefs etc. (Amenuke et al, 1999).

Analysis of the concept of symbols described by the above authors indicates that, symbols are visual or non-visual elements adopted by

an individual, an organisation, ethnic group, a town or a country. Symbols are unique to the owners because, they have covert meanings that are associated with the culture and traditions of the people which require deep cultural knowledge and experience to unveil. The researchers also believe that, Ghanaian symbols are the forms in indigenous Ghanaian art that are primarily a translation of thoughts and ideas expressing and symbolising the values and beliefs of the people among whom they occur.

Etymologically, the Ojibwe, an Algonquin Native American ethnic group from north of the Great Lakes region of North America, are the source of the name “totem”. Adu-Gyamfi (2011), opine that, the term “totem” in Ojibwe refers to plants or animals that are considered sacred by individuals or groups of people. Apparently, totems are considered as emblems consisting of an object such as an animal or plant that serves as the symbol of a family or clan. These totems are revered by their custodians and treated as sacred (Lumor, 2009). In Sudan and some other African communities, totems are greatly used in many forms. They are used as a form of identification such as engravings on walls, body arts and totem poles. These forms of identification distinguish one clan from the other and help to link people easily to their root (Asare, et al, 2014).

Additionally, totems are assigned to clans in Africa, and in certain cases, totems are assigned to individuals from birth. A crest, a totem pole, an emblem, a tiny figure, or anything else that represents your animal guide could be used for this. While some tribes allow exceptions for exceptional occasions, others restrict eating or killing an animal that represents their totem (Amenuke et al., 1999). The assessments make it clear that, the historical and sociocultural relevance of these animals made them the choice of totems for many of the Ghanaian tribes. The

animals are designated as totems because they possess admirable traits that a specific clan aspires to imitate. They also depend on them for internal motivation and spiritual inspiration. The people’s cultural identity is maintained by doing this. Apparently, these perceived traditions remain relevant in our contemporary culture since they entrench our unique ethnic identities. As enshrined in the National Cultural Policy of Ghana, “the objective of cultural preservation is not to make our culture static or mysterious, but to consciously prevent the mindless sweeping away of our cultural heritage, a situation which can result in social instability and cultural disorientation” (National commission on Culture, 2004, p.8).

Heidi (2011) paraphrased the American Marketing Association (AMA) explanation of a brand on heidicohen.com. that, a brand is a name, word, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, designed to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors. Keller (2013, p.31) states different types of brand elements as brand name, slogan, logos and symbols, jingles, colour, motifs, etc. Such brand elements are used to distinguish one manufacturer or product from the other. Branding is also explained as a strategic corporate asset that companies must build in order to successfully compete (Aaker, 1991; Koehn, 2021; De Chernatony, 1999; Bastos and Levy, 2012). Singh (2012) claims that, a report from the Information Management and Business Review (2012), indicates that, the idea of a brand has permeated every aspect of our everyday lives. Keller (2013) also claims that, the bond between consumer and a strong brand mostly depends on high level of brand awareness and its positive unique association with consumer’s memory.

The researchers opine that, the concept of brand identity in marketing can easily be

replicated in cultural studies where totems of ethnic groups, clans, towns and chiefs can be used to create identity design works that will distinguish them from their neighbours. It is based on this concept that the current researchers decided to apply their knowledge and skills in Visual Communication Design to create unique motifs from the traditional symbols of Krobo ethnic group to brand their paramount chief. Though the motifs developed for the clothe were abstract symbols, native Krobo people who are knowledgeable about their traditional totems can easily associate the motifs with their tradition. Keller (2013) claims that, to enhance the recognition of any form of logo or symbol, it must be created to reflect certain principles. Example, it can depict the philosophy, aims, objectives, or mission of the organisation, an item(s), tool(s) used by the organisation and a product of the organisation can also be used. Juxtaposing these identity design principles to the motifs created for the clothe prove that, the motifs reflect the traditional and cultural philosophies and belief systems of the Krobo ethnic group in Ghana.

Perception, appreciation and interpretation of artworks are often influenced by certain theories. In Visual Communication, Gestalt theories, semiotics and other visual perception theories can consciously be applied. In this study, Gestalt theories of similarity, anomaly, figures and grounds, closure and continuation were applied in the planning and designing of the clothe. On lisettewillemsen.wordpress.com (n.d.), it is explained that, Gestalt theory of similarity states that, things that share homogeneous visual characteristics such as, shape, size, colour, texture, value or orientation will be seen as belonging together or to create a pattern. This theory was applied in the designing of the motifs, planning of colour scheme and pattern arrangement of the clothe to achieve harmony in the design. The theory of figure and ground was also applied to achieve good contrast in the colour

application whiles the theory of anomaly was used to create emphasis on some elements in the design.

Britannica.com (n.d.) and Study.com (n.d.) explain aesthetics as a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of art, beauty, and taste, with the creation and appreciation of beauty. Amenuke et al (1999 p.59) also defined aesthetics as “the study of the theory or the science of beauty”. Additionally, Amenuke et al (1999) further defined art appreciation in (p.54) and (p. 61) respectively as “intelligent discussion about an artwork” and art criticism as “a way of passing judgment on a work of art”. study.com (n.d.) also explained art criticism as analyzing and evaluating works of art. Analysis of the concept of art appreciation and art criticism expressed by Amenuke, et al (1999) suggest that, appreciation and criticism are distinct activities used in art commentary; however, the explanation of art criticism given on study.com seems to perceive both activities as integral and overlapping in art commentary.

Amenuke, et al (1999) model states the following as the format for aesthetic appreciation: *Identification of the work, inventory of items in the work, description of technical qualities of the work and interpretation of the work*. Often, these interpretations are inspired by aesthetic theories such as formalism, imitationalism, instrumentalism, impressionism, expressionism, conceptualism, symbolism, semiotics etc. Though several models of aesthetic appreciation and art criticism are available, study.com (n.d.) states Edmund Burke Feldman’s criticism model as the major one used in art commentary. The components of the model consist of *Description, analysis, interpretation and judgment*. To achieve high standards in studio-based artistic research, it is imperative that, the various stages of the production processes are subjected to critical jury. In this artistic research, relevant

aesthetics principles were applied in the production processes.

Based on the purpose of the study, the researchers also developed a conceptual map that indicates the theoretical foundations of the research and the connectivity that exist among the various variables in the map. In the conceptual map, the researcher's belief that, to be able to promote the identity of a traditional group through visual identity design, it is important that the designer studies the culture of the group to identify relevant traditional symbols that identify

them. These symbols must be analysed and the most appropriate one(s) is selected for the identity design. The researchers also believe that, to achieve good identity design, the designer must apply appropriate Visual Communication theories, processes and principles of identity design. In this study, the researchers used gestalt theories of similarity, anomaly, figures and grounds, closure and continuation, and principles of identity design and design processes to execute the design. Figure 1 is the conceptual map of the conceptual framework:

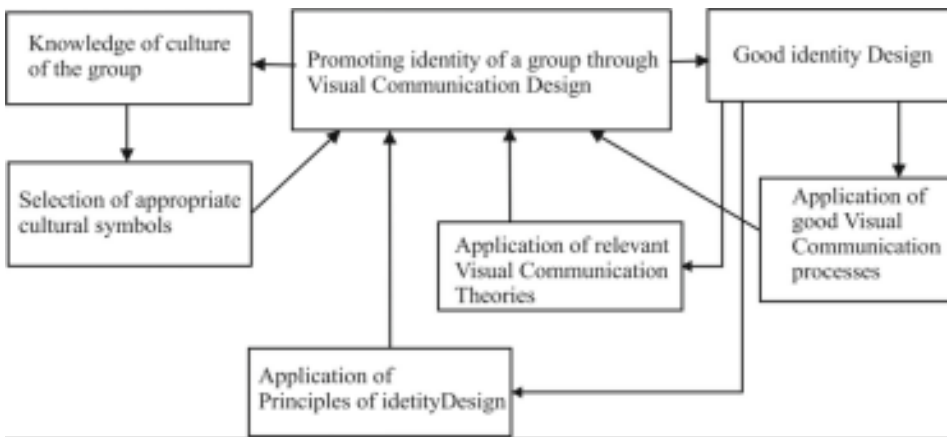


Figure 1: Conceptual framework: Creating effective visual identity design for a group through Visual Communication Design (Researchers' construct).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the study was situated in the Constructionism (Interpretivism) paradigm. Which resulted in the use of qualitative research approach. In the opinion of Kusi (2012) and Gray (2004), the interpretivism paradigm and qualitative research approach allow a researcher to use his or her personal skills, experience, knowledge, and opinions and experience of participants to construct knowledge and draw inferences. The researchers also used studio-based artistic research design and qualitative descriptive design for the study. This methodology was

used because; it permits the researcher to employ different technical, creative and logical methods to execute a project.

The target population of the study consisted of the paramount, divisional chiefs, chiefs, linguists, royal stake holders and elders of the Yilo Krobo Traditional Area. Expert purposive sampling technique was used to select participants from each of the six categories of the participants. In all, one royal stakeholder, linguist and elder were selected from each of the divisional palaces as well as the paramount chief's palace. The paramount chief as well as the chiefs of each division were also selected. Also, one divisional chief was selected from

each division. These categories of participants were used for the study because, they have knowledge and experience in the history, customs and traditions of the ethnic group. Table 1 indicates how the sample population of the study was selected:

Table 1: Sample Distribution: Selection of Participantss for the Study (Source: Fieldwork, 2023)

Category of Participants	Number Selected
Paramount chief	1
Divisional Chiefs	6
Chiefs	6
Royal Stakeholders	7
Linguist	7
Elders	7
Total	34

The researchers' used focused group discussion and still-picture photography to collect primary data. During the interview sessions, the responses of the participants were recorded electronically. However, in two of the palaces, one of the elders could not join the discussion. However, this limitation did not affect the outcome of the discussions because, the remaining participants were equally knowledgeable. The focused group discussion was used because, the participants in each palace had similar experience and knowledge of their traditional area. The discussions were conducted at the pre-design, design and evaluation stages of the research. The focus group discission conducted at the pre-design stage sought information about the type of traditional totems used by the ethnic group, their specific representations and features. Six focused group discussions were conducted at this stage, and the researchers' spent about two weeks on the field. During the discussions,

the researchers took still-pictures of all the totems that were displayed by the participants and collected some of them.

The second phase of the focus group discussion were conducted during the design and evaluation stage. The researchers' engaged the participants during the exhibition of the customized clothe at the palace of the paramount chief to seek their views on different aspects of the designs and wrote down their responses. These instruments were used because; Kumar (1999) believes that they enable researchers to gather qualitative data for analysis. The study also adopted descriptive qualitative analysis, thematic analysis and art appreciation to analyse the data and discuss the findings of the study.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure ethical standards in the study, the researchers gave prior notice to the registrar of the Krobo Traditional Council to indicate their intention to conduct research in the traditional area. Prior to the discussion sessions, the consent of every participant was sought which assured them of maximum confidentiality, privacy and anonymity in the presentation and publication of their responses in the study. To hide the identity of the participants in the study, the researchers represented the participants with alphabets A, B, C, etc. These principles of trustworthiness are highlighted by Guba (1981) as inevitable component of qualitative research.

Framework for the Artistic Research Processes

The researchers developed a framework that conceptualised the chronology of the artistic research process as well as tools and materials used in the design processes. Tables 2 and 3 respectively, indicate the conceptualisation of the design process and tools and materials the researchers' used.

Table 2: Conceptualisation of the Artistic Research Process (Source: Researchers' construct 2023)

Activity	Descriptions
Pre-designing	Data collection (Field work)- Data processing and selection of totems for motif design. Ideation-Exploration of visual ideas for motifs, colour schemes, textures, pattern arrangements and reflections. Selection and composition of motifs, colour schemes, textures and patterns to produce the customized clothe.
Designing and evaluation	Presentation of designs to chiefs and traditional elders for jury Analysis and reflections on feedback from jury
Final Design	Incorporation of relevant views from jury to create final design

Table 3: Tools and Materials Used (Source: Studio Practice, 2023)

Tools and Materials	Specific Uses
HB pencil	For sketching
Rotary pen and ink	For picking out the outlines of sketches
Bond sheet (A4 size)	The sketches were made on it
Tracing paper	For duplicating sketches easily
Eraser	For cleaning unwanted part of the sketches
Personal Computer	Used to render the prototypes, the final design of the clothe, editing pictures and working drawings.
Scanner	For scanning the motifs

Pre-designing Research Activities

To enable the researchers', identify the indigenous totems used by the divisions in the Yilo Krobo Traditional Area, the researchers' conducted series of focused group discussions with 35 participants of the traditional area and took photographs of the totems during the discussion sessions. The responses were transcribed and read thoroughly to understand the features and representations of each of them. Findings from the data analysis were presented in the following themes:

Divisions and Ruling System of Yilo Krobo Traditional Area

The findings revealed that, the Yilo Krobo Traditional Area has six divisions and each is ruled by a chief, council of elders and a linguist. There is also a paramount chief who oversees all the divisional chiefs and palaces. This traditional ruling system is consistent with the cultures of most ethnic groups in Sub-Saharan Africa and Ghana (National House of Chiefs, 2008 pp.26-27). Figure 1 is the organogram of chiefs and ruling system of the Yilo Krobo Traditional Area:

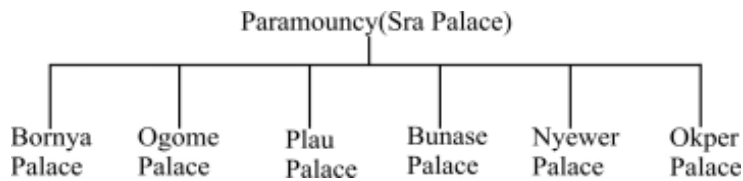


Figure 2: *Organogram of Chiefs and Ruling System of the Yilo Krobo Traditional Area* (Source: Researchers' Construct, 2023)

Indigenous Totems used in the Yilo Krobo Traditional Area and their descriptions by participants



Fig 3: Aklo Bia Klo-State totem



Fig 4: Bornya Totem



Fig 5: Ogome Totem

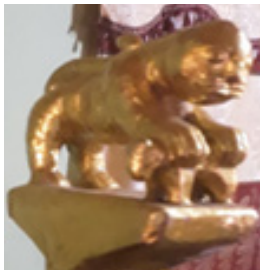


Fig 6: Bretuo Totem (Nyewer)



Fig 7: Bunase Totem

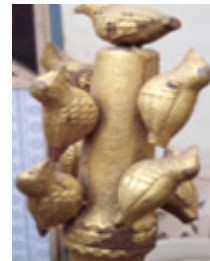


Fig 8: Plau Totem



Fig 9: Okpe Totem

Note: All the images presented in figures 3-9 are owned by the authors. They are pictures taken by the authors upon permission during data collection in the Krobo Traditional Area in 2024. The one in figure 9 was drawn by the researchers.

Aklo Bia Klo-State totem

This is the totem in figure 3. The findings revealed that, the totem is used at the Sra Palace (The Paramount Chief's Palace). During the discussion sessions, a participant described the elements of the totem as follows: "at the paramountcy level, the elements of the totem are crocodile with a stool at the back and a man sitting on the stool and pointing hand into the sky." (Participant A, Sra palace, fieldwork, 2024).

Bornya Totem

The findings indicated that, this is the main totem used by the division. During the discussion session, a participant said that, "We have two totems in the division. that is; the cock and a hand holding a key. But the major one is the cock." (Participant B, Bornya Divisional Palace, Source: Fieldwork, 2024). Unfortunately, there was no evidence of the cock totem in the palace so an image of it could not be obtained. The one with a hand holding a key is presented in figure 4.

Ogome Totem

This totem is presented in figure 5. The findings indicate that, the totem is used by the Ogome division. During the discussion session, a participant said that, "there are two totems that identify us but the main one has two people sitting opposite each other with a dish in front of them, and they are both eating

from that dish." (Participant C, Ogome Division Palace, Source: Fieldwork, 2024).

Bretuo Totem (Nyewer)

The findings revealed that, even though different totems are used by the Bretuo division, the most prominent one is the totem that depicts a lion with a goat in its grip. This was confirmed by a participant during the discussion sessions. He stated that, "there are a number of totems that identify us which are songs, special appellations and symbols of the past history. Among all these, one of the totems supersedes the others and it has become our main identity. It is known as 'bretuo'..." (Participant D, Nyewer Divisional Palace, Source: fieldwork, 2024). Another participant also described the totem as follows: "The element of the totem is a lion with a goat in its grip..." (Participant E, Divisional Palace, Source: Fieldwork, 2024). This totem is presented in figure 6.

Bunase Totem

The findings indicated that, the totem in figure 7 is used by the Bunase division. During the discussion sessions, one participant stated this to describe each of the totems: There are two totems which identify us, these are a man standing on the tail of a snake and holding it at its neck. The other one is a man standing on hippopotamus and firing a gun in his hand. It is only the former you can get now" (Participant

F, Bunase Divisional Palace, Source: Fieldwork, 2024).

Plau Totem

This is the main totem used by the Plau division. It depicts Canary birds pecking on a ripe palm fruit. During the discussion sessions, one participant said that, “Our principal totem is beautiful canary birds pecking on ripped palm fruit.” (Participant G, Plau Divisional Palace, Source: Fieldwork, 2024). The totem is presented in figure 8.

Okpe Totem:

The findings indicated that, this is the main totem used by the Okpe Division. It depicts a broom bend over by both hands. Upon responding to the question, what are the types of totems you use in this palace?

one participant said during the discussion sessions that, “There are totems which identify us as a division; some are songs and symbolic emblems but our main totem is a broom bend over by both hands.” (Participant H, Okpe Divisional Palace, Source: Fieldwork,

2024). Actual sample of this totem was not available so, a sketch was made to create an artist impression of it based on the description given by the participant. The sketch is presented in figure 9.

Designing of the Customised Traditional Clothe

The researchers’ used different artistic processes to design the customised clothe. The processes are described below:

Selection and Drawing of Totems for the Motif Design

The findings of the data analysis revealed that, some of the divisions have more than one totem. However, one of them was mostly used. The researchers also found out that, there is one totem that is used to represent the Yilo Krobo state. The researchers therefore selected the prominent totems used by each of the divisions and the state totem and made outline drawings of them. The sketches were done at studio. Figures 2-8 are the outline drawings of the totems:



Figure 10: Aklo Bia Klo
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)



Figure 11: Bornya Totem
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)



Figure 12: Okper
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)



Fig. 13: Nyewer
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)

Fig. 14: Ogome
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)

Fig. 15: Plau (Source:
Studio Practice, 2024)



Figure16: Bunase (Source:
Researchers' Studio Practice, 2024)

Ideation Processes for Motif Development

The researchers' applied different idea development techniques such as addition,

subtraction, truncating, mirroring etc. to develop ideas for the motifs.

Figures 9- 17 are evidence of the initial ideas of the motifs developed through studio practice:



Fig. 17: Idea dev. For motif 1
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)



Fig. 18: Idea dev. For motif 2
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)



Fig. 19: Idea dev. For motif 3
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)

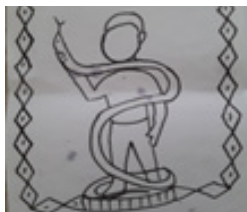


Fig. 20: Idea dev. For motif 4
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)



Fig. 21: Idea dev. For motif 5
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)



Fig. 22: Idea dev. For motif 6
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)



Fig.23: Idea dev. For motif 7
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)



Fig. 25: Idea dev. For motif 8
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)



Fig.26: Idea dev. for motif 9
(Studio Practice, 2024)

Development of Final Motifs for the Fabric Design

Upon developing initial motifs from the totems, the researchers' added different elements to the state totem to create the central motif for the fabric.

Some of the initial ideas were selected together with four of the totems and used as subordinate motifs to the central motif in the actual clothe designs. Figure 18 is the central motif developed for the clothe of the paramount chief:



Figure 27: Central motif of the paramount chief's clothe (Source: Studio Practice, 2023)

Idea Development for Background Textures

Based on the type of fabric to be designed and the personality of the user, the researchers' used traditional objects that symbolise royalty in Ghanaian culture as source object to explore visual ideas of textures.

The items include sword, drum, and stool. Figures 19-24 are ideas of the background textures:

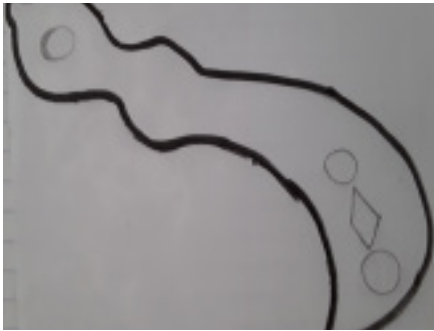


Fig. 28: Idea dev. for texture 1
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)

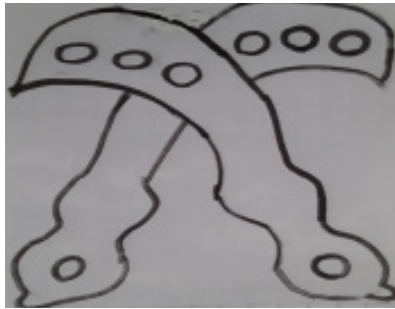


Fig. 29: Idea dev. for texture 2
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)

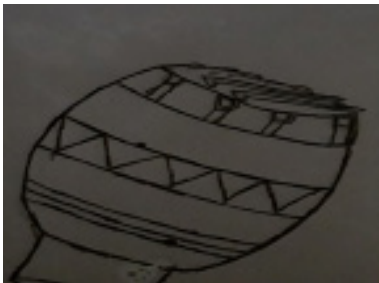


Fig. 30: Idea dev. for texture 3
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)

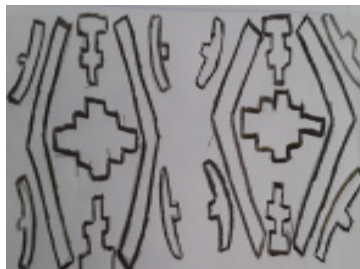


Fig. 31: Idea development for texture 4
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)

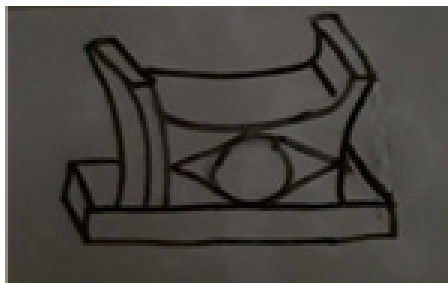


Fig. 32: Idea dev. for texture 5
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)

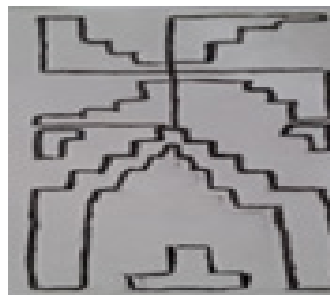


Fig. 33: Idea dev. for texture 6
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)

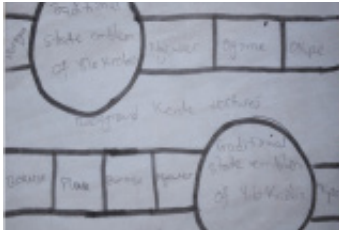


Fig. 34: Idea dev. for pattern 1
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)

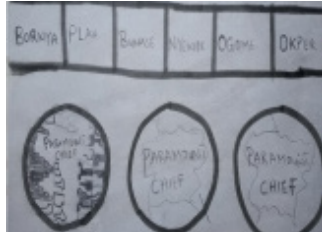


Fig.35: Idea dev. for pattern 2
(Source: Studio Practice, 2024)

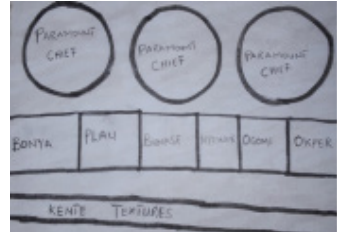


Fig.36: Idea dev. for pattern 3
(Studio Practice, 2024)

Development of Ideas for Pattern Arrangement

The researchers' explored two pattern arrangement styles (full drop and all over patterns) to organise the motifs and textures.

Figures 34 - 36 are some ideas of the pattern arrangements:

Exploration of Colour Schemes

In order to create aesthetically appealing fabric design, and also portray the royalty of the paramount chief in the design, the researchers' tried different colour schemes and pattern arrangements. Colour schemes

such as analogous, complementary and others were explored.

The colour combinations explored are: orange and green, violet and yellow, blue-violet and brown, orange and blue-violet, gold and shaded-blue, green and purple, green and golden-brown, blue-violet and orange and green and gold and brown.

These colour combinations were used for motifs and textures. CorelDRAW version 16 was used to explore the colour schemes. Figure 37 are evidence of some colour schemes explored:

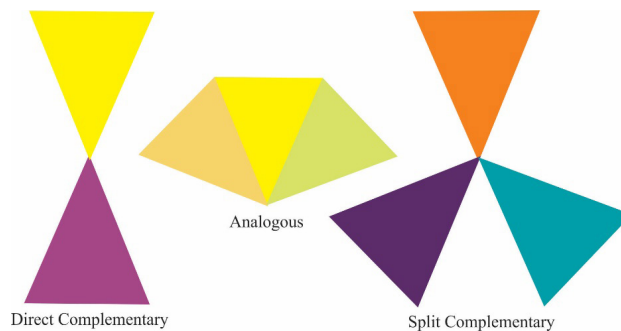


Figure 37: Samples of colour schemes explored (Source: Studio practice, 2024)

Rendition of Final Prototype Clothes

The researchers' reflected on all the ideas generated for the fabric design and composed them into different designs (Prototypes)

using computer aided design. A total of nine prototypes were generated and all of them were designed to reflect the objectives of the study. CorelDRAW version 16 was used to

generate the prototypes. Figures 29A-H are samples of the prototypes:

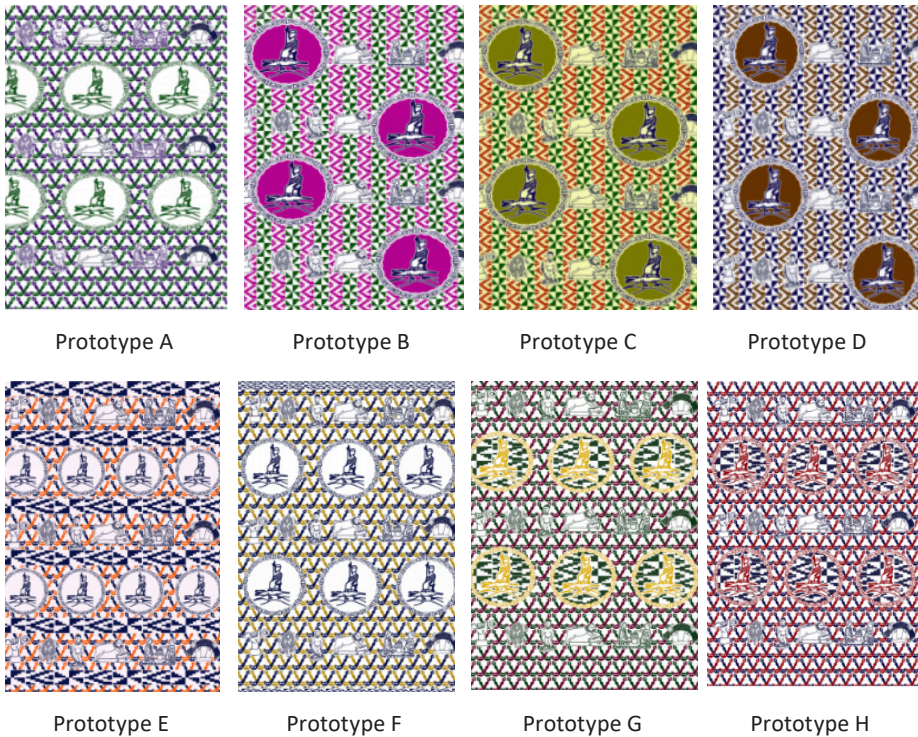


Figure 38A-H: Prototypes of the Cloth Design (Source: Studio Practice, 2024)

Note: All the cloth designs in figure 29A-H are owned by the authors. They were generated by the authors during studio practice

Exhibition and Evaluation of Prototype Clothes

The researchers' projected all the prototype cloth designs to the participants including the paramount chief at the Sra Place and explained the concept behind each of the designs to them. After lengthy discussions of the designs, they unanimously agreed that, all the prototypes have features that represent the supremacy of the paramount chief.

However, they resolved that, the crocodile and mountain depicted in the central motif must be emphasised a little and also, they preferred a colour scheme that reflects royalty and

rich vegetation since these symbols will suit the personality of the paramount chief. The researchers' reflected on all the suggestions the participants made during the exhibition jury and combined ideas from some of the prototypes to produce the final design. The final design was presented to the paramount chief at the Sra Palace for approval and it was accepted. Figure 30 is the final customised cloth design:

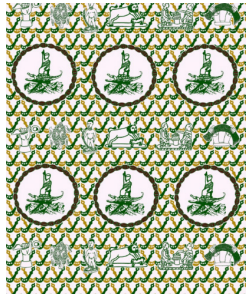


Figure 40: Final customised Cloth Design for the paramount chief (Source: Studio Practice, 2024)

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Prior to the studio practice, all the qualitative data gathered from the field were analysed thematically and the findings were used as the bases for the studio practice. In this section, comprehensive aesthetic appreciation of the final cloth design was made. The discussion was done in reference to the objectives of the study. Edmund Burke Feldman's criticism model was used for the aesthetic appreciation.

Aesthetic Appreciation of the Final Cloth Design

The appreciation was made in the following order: Description, Analysis and Interpretation and judgment

Description of the Work

The work is a computer-generated traditional customised cloth designed in an A4 size with CorelDraw version 16. It was co-designed by the current authors. The designed cloth is in the custody of the researchers at the moment because, negotiation is still on-going between them and the Yilo Krobo paramountcy to reproduce (Print) the cloth. The design is a composition of a circular central motif depicting the Sra motif of the Yilo Krobo Traditional Area enclosed in a circular ring

formed with drawings of beads arranged rhythmically.

The design also contains other small-sized motifs developed from the totems of each of the six divisions of the Yilo Krobo Traditional Area which are treated as minor motifs to the central motif. The background of the cloth is defined with textures developed from a royal sword while the selvedge is designed with obituary motifs. The presentation of the description of the work in the appreciation also reflects the fundamental requirements of the second component of aesthetic appreciation model proposed by Amenuke et al (1999).

Analysis

A thorough examination of the designed cloth reveal proper application of principles of design to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the cloth. This is indicative of variety of colours and motifs used in the design. Classic combination of green and yellow hues in the design also indicates that, the colour scheme is analogous and it has created good harmony among the colours in the scheme. The use of brown to render the rhythmic beads that enclose the Sra totem in the central motif, white background of the cloth and dotted rhythmic circles in the crossed sword that form the background texture indicate good application of principle of contrast in the colour scheme.

The precision in the arrangement of the cross sword to form the background textures and the arrangements of the central and subordinate motifs in the design as well as the linkages that have been carefully created in the composition of the visual elements in the design have created perfect synergy of all the elements in the composition. This proves that, the principle of unity has been applied well in the design. It is also obvious from the analysis of the final cloth design that, the full drop pattern arrangement that was used

to organise the background textures and the motifs, the clarity and simplicity evident in the rendition of the central motif and the background textures, resulting from the vivid presentations of the crocodile and the man, and the cross swords in the background textures in silhouettes, are characteristics of a good design. Apparently, all these technical qualities of the clothe design prove that formalism principles were applied in the design.

According to ukessays.com (n.d.), formalism is prescribed as one important theory that guides good Visual Communication design works. Such principles include high craftsmanship, good application of elements and principles of design, methodical and systematic planning of a design and logical reasoning. Broekhuszen (1992) and Amenuke et al (1999) also emphasize that, formalism is applicable in Visual Communication Design.

Interpretation and Judgment

The main objective of the studio-based artistic research was to gather information about the traditional totems used by the Krobo Traditional Area, analyse the data, and base on the findings to design a customized traditional clothe to brand the paramount chief of the traditional area. A logical analysis of the final clothe design portray that; the entire design is an epitome of symbolic representations. The main illustration in the central motif which depicts a man dressed in a traditional clothe and sitting on a stool placed on a giant crocodile with his hands raised above his head was derived from the state totem of the Krobo Traditional Area. Naturally, crocodiles are amphibians that are known to be strong animals but slow on earth and fast in water. Also, in Sub-Saharan African culture, a stool symbolizes the soul of a society of a group of people. In Ghana, traditional beads making and opulent display of traditional beads in traditional costumes and events is

a predominant characteristic of the Krobo traditional area which cannot be compared to any ethnic group in Ghana. The interpretations of the symbols in the central motif clearly shows that the design was carefully planned to create unique identity for the paramount chief. These unique features of the central motif are a characteristic of a true identity design as described by Bastos and Levy (2012) and Keller (2013).

Based on the interpretations made by the researchers on the elements of the central motif, the researchers can induce that, there are covert cultural philosophical meanings inherent in the symbols.

The researchers can subjectively conclude that, traditionally, the Sra totem (State totem) portrays the crafty characteristic of the paramount chief and the traditional authority and supremacy he has over his subjects. It therefore suggests that, the central motif of the designed clothe was well-planned to reflect the status of the paramount chief of the Krobo Traditional Area. This form of symbolic interpretation is highlighted by Amenuke et al (1999) as one criterion used to make interpretations in aesthetic appreciation and judgement. The researchers can also conclude that, the use of all the totems of the six divisions in the traditional area as subordinate motifs in the clothe design to accentuate the supremacy and authority of the paramount chief in the traditional area, also indicate the respect and support, he receives from his council and subjects. It is also obvious from the symbols in each of the divisional totems that, they have culturally inherent significant philosophical meanings that describe diverse socio-cultural, socio-political and religious aspects of the Krobo ethnic group in Ghana. These conclusions of the researchers have also been speculated by Keller (2013).

Again, a thorough analysis of the colour scheme used by the researchers in the clothe design indicates that, they considered colour symbolism of Sub-Saharan African cultures in selecting the colour scheme even though the participants made significant suggestions during the design and evaluation stage. For instance, the use of the yellow colour in the colour scheme traditionally symbolises the richness of the royal family due to their authority over the natural resources of the traditional area.

The green colour also symbolises the vast vegetation and the fertility of their land, while the brown colour symbolises the vastness of their land. The traditional symbolisms of colours in Sub-Saharan African cultures have been discussed extensively by Amenuke et al (1999).

CONCLUSIONS

A comparison of the findings of the analysis of the field data that was used to design the clothe, the description of inventory of items in the design, detailed analysis of the technical qualities of the final clothe design, and the reasons given to justify the interpretations of the symbols used in the clothe design with the objectives of the study, the researchers can infer that, the study has achieved its objectives because of the following reasons:

- The clothe designed for the paramount chief is appropriate because, the main image used in the central motif in the design represent the characteristics of the traditional totem of the state used by the paramount chief and this is an important feature in identity design.
- The main image used in the central motif is enclosed with traditional beads arranged rhythmically to form a circle around the image which is generally associated with the culture of the Krobo ethnic group in Ghana.

- The design also contains six other small-sized motifs each of them represents one of the six divisions of the Krobo Traditional Area.
- The background texture was a motif developed from a royal sword used among royal families in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- The colour scheme used in the customised clothe design reflect the symbol of royalty and possession of wealth by royals in Sub-Saharan African cultures.
- The technical qualities of the customized clothe design also makes it looks prestigious and aesthetically appealing which can effectively fit the status of the paramount chief.

Based on the findings and conclusions made, the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. The Yilo Krobo Traditional Area must document their traditional totems in a catalogue.
2. The traditional area must adopt the customised designed cloth and task the researchers to reproduce it for the paramount chief.
3. The paramount chief must wear the customised clothe at every traditional gathering.
4. The traditional area must contract the current researchers or other designers to use their indigenous totems to design a state clothe for them which will be used as costume by members of the traditional area during festivals.
5. The traditional area must also use their traditional totems to brand other items in their royal regalia.

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