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An Innovatively Woven Totemic Ewe Kete with Lace Effects for Unity and Identity in the Volta Region, Ghana

Dr. Abdul Fatahi Ibrahim

Senior Lecturer, Department of Textile Design and Technology,
Takoradi Technical University, Ghana

George Akoto

Senior Technician, Department of Textile Design and Technology,
Takoradi Technical University, Ghana

Issahaku Boyong Gbene

Assistant lecturer, Department of Textile Design and Technology,
Takoradi Technical University, Ghana

Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to identify and generate motifs from Ewe totems to be used in the design and construction of Ewe kete with "lace effect" (or breathable) to symbolise the unity and identity of the Ewe people in Ghana. As an art studio-based practice, the study employs Adobe Photoshop, the computer graphics software that aids in easily manipulating images for textile designs, as a main design tool for generating the designs. Motifs were developed from various clan totems in the Anlo state and finally used to weave the Ewe kete with a Traditional loom. The research was based on a qualitative approach using studio-based practice and descriptive research methods. A purposive sampling technique was used to determine the sample population of chiefs, linguists, kete weavers and kete sellers. Observation and unstructured interview guides were the main instruments used for data collection. The study revealed that clan totems from Agbozume, Klikor, Anloga, Keta and Anlo-Afiadenyigba and the adjoined communities from Ketu South Municipality and Anlo-Keta Municipality could be fused or embedded into Ewe Kete. This study concluded that totems and other traditional symbols can be used for textile design (weaving) with relevant computer-aided software. It emerged from the study that the woven Kete fabric can educate the youth and identify and unite clans and the weaving industry in the region. The researchers, therefore, recommended that a chart of the traditional Ewe totems, as well as the abstracted ones made by the researchers, should be displayed in museums, libraries, and cultural and social centres for identification and education.

Keywords: Kete, ewe totem, lace effects, innovation

1. Introduction

Volta Region is one of Ghana's sixteen administrative regions, with Ho designated as its capital. It is located west of the Republic of Togo and east of Lake Volta. Divided into twenty-five (25) administrative districts, the region is multi-ethnic and multilingual, including groups such as Ewe, Guan, and Akan (Arabische, 1997). The narrow loom cloth weaving technique among the Ewe people of the Volta Region in Ghana is one of the cultural heritages handed down from ancestors as an art practised and upheld with high esteem. Kete refers to narrow-woven strips which are joined to form a large piece of cloth (Frimpong & Asinyo, 2013). The Ewe people call it Kete instead of Kente, their native tongue. "Ke" means "Open", while "Te" means "Close". It depicts the process of making the cloth that gives it the name Kete. Kete production among the Ewes in the Volta Region is excellently practised in several townships and villages such as Agbozume, Klikor, Agotime-Abenyinase, Agotime-Kpetoe, Akatsi, Anyako, Dzelukofe, Kpando and many more. Kete weaving can be traced back to the olden days of the people of Volta, which has one of the biggest Kete markets in West Africa (Sak- Multimedia 2011). Kente weaving among the Ewes, according to Akpo in an oral interview, as cited by Ofori (2013) has it that, in their present-day settlement, they never forgot about the cultural heritage their ancestors inherited from their stay in Egypt; thus, the weaving of Kete which they modified from the production of "logo" (a well-beaten logo fibre from the log tree to produce a more refined cloth called "adorable"; which looked like sisal bag) to cover their nakedness. According to Dotse (2011), as cited by Ofori (2013), the Ewe's perhaps learnt the art of weaving from the ancient Egyptian empire, which was carried along anywhere they went. Hence, upon arrival in Sudan and Somalia, where they had access to cotton, art was practised and perfected. While the women spun cotton into yarns the men did the weaving. This they perfected in their stay in Ketu, Notsie from its fundamental form of three pegs woven to cover their nakedness to the present-day advanced form of four pegs to two pairs of equal heights. Keteku (2011) asserts that one of

the most prominent features of Ghanaian culture is its long and proud textile tradition. Kente cloth has become the best-known and most widely recognized of all African textiles. Kente cloth has a unique ability to evoke powerful emotions and symbolizes some of the fundamental human ideas ever imagined in Africa, within Ghana, and can cut across ethnic divisions and instill a sense of national pride. Ofori (2013) adds that Kete cloth is a revered form of ceremonial bodily attire. It represents an indispensable element of the royal regalia and has its place in the customary and spiritual practices of their custodians. Ofori further states that weaving is imbued with spiritual significance, and weavers are regarded as specially gifted people. According to Terkpey (2009), Kete is a visual representation of history, oral literature, religious beliefs, social values, and political thoughts. It is not meant for humdrum activity or ordinary wear. It is reserved for social or religious occasions. It is often used as a special gift during ceremonies such as child naming, graduation, marriage, soul washing and other traditional rites or ritual ceremonies for departed souls during burial rites and ancestral remembrance ceremonies. Its significance as a symbol of royalty and prestige is evident during community celebrations and festivals when people proudly wear the best of their Kete clothes to reflect the spirit of the occasion. Kete (kente is its popular name) is a narrow-woven strip which is joined to form a large piece of cloth (Frimpong & Asinyo, 2013). Kete originates in the former Gold Coast of West Africa as a festive dress for special occasions. It is, therefore, an undoubted indigenous Ghanaian textile. The cloth is the best-known African textile and one of the most admired fabrics in many parts of the world. It is very colourful, attractive, and usually produced with a manual loom. Weave patterns in Kete are assigned names with symbolic meanings or interpretations that portray the social and cultural life of the people of Ghana. There are over 350 patterns for Kete Cloths (Kodzo, 2009). The patterns are created during the hand-weaving process and are determined by how the threads are intertwined. This Ghanaian traditional woven textile can be associated with the Asante, Ewe and Northern people. The development of the art of Kete weaving cannot be attributed to their ethnic groups alone. Some examples of Kete designs are Kpevi, Wargagba, Fiawoyome, Suklikpe and Takpekpe le Anloga. Keteku (2011) opines that Kete cloth is a revered form of ceremonial bodily attire. It represents an indispensable element of royal regalia and has its place in the customary and spiritual practices of their custodians. Weaving is imbued with spiritual significance, and weavers are regarded as specially gifted people. Any strip of hand-woven Kete cloth, or any individual pattern or cloth in general, has a name and a meaning. The names and their meanings are usually derived from historical events, such as wars, farming, heavy rains etc., proverbs, personalities, philosophical concepts, moral values, human behavior, and certain attributes of plant and animal life. Weavers use vibrant colours and complex patterns to portray each cloth's profound philosophical meaning. According to Amenuke et al. (1991), the meanings, notions or symbolism of colour in Ghanaian society are not based on any scientific theories; rather, it is based on three concepts. These are philosophical, psychological, and spiritual or religious. Kete cloth has come to represent the history, philosophy, ethics, and moral values of African culture. Its production has greatly increased, with the prestige remaining. Amenuke (1991) adds that, in the Ewe Kete cloth, one is quick to find the concepts, philosophy, proverbs, and adage of the people embedded in the cloth. The Kete weavers in their world have their criteria that each woven strip, or the cloth, in general, has to be subjected to what as far as the aesthetic values or qualities are concerned. Like the ancient Egyptian artist who must follow certain norms in his artworks, a Kete weaver who deviates from these accepted norms or criteria in his weaving is condemned heavily or rejected completely by the community (Amenuke, 1991). According to Katie (2017), the manufacture of lace dates back to the fourteenth century in France, where it was used exclusively by the clergy of the Catholic Church. Lace then became fashionable, and lace-making spread throughout Eastern and Western Europe in the sixteenth century. Sebastian (2016) also opined that lace has long been a treasured decorative element for fashion, especially bridal fashion. Cherished for its delicate workmanship and airy patterns, lace has been worn since the 15th Century. Sebastian (2016) further argued that there is some dispute over whether Italy or Flanders claims the invention of needle-lace in the 15th Century. Certainly, bobbin lace was first developed in Italy and Flanders (a region on the border of Belgium and France) at around the same time. However, it is unclear if one region was the first to develop the technique. Before the late 15th century, no true lace was created (although there is some speculation that it may have been made by the ancient Romans). Decorative trims were created by a system of drawn work, in which threads are removed from a woven cloth to create open patterns, which are then reinforced with embroidery. When the techniques for bobbin and needle lace were created, it was a departure: rather than remove sections from a solid cloth, the open designs were created in thread over a pattern, and there was no backing fabric. Tortora and Merkel (2005) again opined that, in 1813, John Leavers improved the earlier machine, and the leavers lace Machine became the basis of the American and European lace industries. When the word 'type' is used with the name of a lace, it indicates that the lace is machine-made and not handmade or true lace. Some of the well-known laces include Alencon lace, Allover lace, Aloe Lace, Antique Lace, Battenberg Lace, Binche Lace, Blonde Lace, Breton Lace, Chantilly Lace, Cluny Lace, Dresden Point Lace, Irish Lace, Lille Lace, Maline Lace, Milan Lace, Needlepoint Lace, Nottingham Lace, Ratine Lace, Renaissance Lace, Rose Point Lace, Spanish Lace, Torchon Lace, Valenciennes Lace. The lace effect is a brand term for novelty fabrics with open, lacy effects produced by various methods. For example, leno weaves and machine embroidery are on sheet ground. Mock leno effects, open work knitting. A lace stitch is used to make bobbin lace. Its purpose is to fill the inside and lighter parts of designs. A raised or open effect is produced in a plain knitted fabric by the transfer of a needle loop to an adjacent needle. Encarta (2009) indicates that the term totem is derived from the language of the Ojibwa, a native of a North American tribe and is defined as an object, animal, plant, or other phenomenon revered as a symbol of society, and often used in rituals among some people. The totemic relationship is widespread and has been observed in several nations, such as Asia and Africa, including Ghana. It is even stronger among some Native Americans and Aboriginal Australians. Among these societies, the totem is often regarded as a companion and helper with supernatural powers, and as such, it is much respected. Merriam (2008) confirms that the individuals of a totemic group see themselves as partially identified with the totem that may be referred to by special names or symbols. Descent may be traced to an original totemic ancestor that becomes the symbol

of the group. Except for some totemic rituals, killing or eating the totem is prohibited. Studies have revealed that the Bakwena tribe of Botswana in South Africa is named after Kwena, the crocodile, whilst the Batlout in Botswana is named after "Tlou", the elephant. To honour the totem animal, it was forbidden that anyone from the tribe, clan or group should hunt or harm it. As the Bakwena protected the crocodile, they also did not hunt the species of antelope it preferred for food. They feared offending their totem animal by depriving it of its favourite food. In this way, they reduced the chance that the crocodile would attack their goats or children (Rattray, 1959). Biodiversity (2008) states that the Batlout protected the rhinoceros and the hippopotamus, traditionally regarded as the elephant's cousins. In return, it was believed that none of these potentially dangerous creatures would harm members of the Batlout clan. It has been noted, too, that, in India, the conservation of many plants and animals in their jungles is a part of the culture of the Warli's tribe. The protection of these totems is embedded in and perpetuated by customs and religious beliefs. Biodiversity (2008) has also intimated that the sacred groves of the Adivasis and Hindus have turned out to be the few remaining areas in India, with climax forests and wide species diversity since no animal or plant could be harmed. Practical examples of the practice of totems in Ghana can be found among the indigenes of Buabeng Fiaman in the Brong Ahafo Region, whose reverence for monkeys has brought about the now famous monkey sanctuary. Moreover, the people of Old Ningo consider turtle gods and have made their area a haven for marine creatures. One needs only to be particularly observant of umbrellas or staff of a chief's linguist and other cultural paraphernalia at any traditional gathering to notice that almost every traditional ruler, chief or king has a totem in Ghana. Apart from the chiefs, however, members of almost every clan or tribe and even the entire nation have a totem. As revealed by Okyeame Ampadu-Agyei, any wildlife species are regarded as totems due to their historical or socio-cultural significance and their symbolic quality. He disclosed, for instance, that each of the eight clans of the Akan tribe of Ghana has a totem called Atweneboa, which means an animal leaned on or relied upon for spiritual inspiration. Each of these Akan totems has a symbolic quality, which chiefs and clan members are expected to adopt or emulate Rattray (1959). Asare et al. (2015) further indicate that totems are significant in the social, political and spiritual realms of the society. At the international level, many countries have totems. Ghana uses the Tawny eagle as a totem and emblem in her Coat of Arms. Cote d'Ivoire uses an elephant, Gabon has a bird, and the United States has an eagle. In the same way, many political parties in the world, particularly in Africa, have totems and use them as symbols for their campaigns during elections. Similar to the Republican Party of the United States of America, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) of Ghana has the elephant as its symbol. Totemic is part of the sociocultural life of Africa. It is seen in homes, clans, villages, tribes, chieftaincy systems, social clubs, political parties and the nation. Every member of the totemistic group has a common bond and aspiration with colleagues and shares a common appellation. Nukunya (2003) avers that totemism can thus be exploited as a tool to galvanize or bring about solidarity in human societies, particularly in Africa, for biodiversity conservation. It is like sounding a war cry to awaken the cultural instinct for the protection and defence of the animals or totems, which are held in high esteem but are in danger of extinction. Our cultures should ensure that man and animals live harmoniously with nature. Textile art is seen in everyday and ceremonial life. Although totems are popular spiritual symbols throughout West Africa, their use in textile design is not so pervasive in Ghana (Asare et al., 2015). Although the earliest cloth was made primarily of local natural fibres, today's textiles and clothing incorporate different materials and styles. Ghana is endowed with various symbols or motifs, including those of Adinkra and Kete, with totemic symbols almost relegated to the background. How the various symbols, patterns, colours and motifs can be viably applied to the cloth lies on a resourceful artist who can intertwine tradition with his or her aesthetic preferences. Totems are important cultural symbols sacred to the society in which they are found. Textile artists must explore the possibility of deriving inspiration from totems for textile designs. Such clothes are likely to promote unity and cohesion among members. Again, these clothes can be used in important ceremonies, ancestral shrines, and state events such as durbar, rallies, symposiums, etc. Nukunya (2003) posited that Ghana has a tribal system that most of the population, except immigrants, are part of. There are five major tribal communities in Ghana today: the Akan, the Ga-Adangme, the Ewe, the Gonja and the Mole-Dagbani. The Akan people include groups such as Akwapim, Akyem, Aowin, Asante, Bono, Denkyira, Fante, Kwahu, Nzema and Sefwi. To the Akans, textile art is not only for aesthetic contemplation but is also part of a complex system of thought. It articulates ideas, probes moral concepts and memorializes the dead. The Akan lineage organization comprises matrilineal clans (mmusua, plural; abusua, singular.) that have major and minor segments. In various places, different names may be used for the same abusua. Each abusua is identified by its proper name and its common emblem, totem, or symbol. According to Akan-abusua (2008), among the Asante, the eight clans and their totems are: i. Aduana (Dog), v. Asona (Crow/wild boar), ii. Agona (Parrot), vi. Bretuo (Leopard), iii. Asakyiri (Hawk/Eagle), vii. Ekuona (Buffalo), iv. Asene (Whale), viii. Oyoko (Hawk/Falcon). Among the Kwahu, the eight clans and their totems are v. Aduana (Dog), v. Asona (Crow), vi. Agona (Parrot), vi. Bretuo (Leopard), vii. Asakyiri (Vulture), vii. Ekuona (Bull), Vii Asene (Bat) viii. Totems are considered natural objects or animals believed to have a spiritual connotation or significance within a particular society (Atiase, 2012). These are considered sacred and not harmed or allowed in the community. Doing anything contrary to these things is considered a taboo. In some Ewe communities, for example, it is taboo for someone to bring a dog to the town. Other communities would not allow you to kill a sparrow. These animals are used to represent something significant either within a clan or a community. They could reveal a particular kind of spiritual strength that affects those living in the physical (Heider, 2001). The staff and umbrellas (the top of the umbrella) used by these clan heads or traditional rulers would have totems that signify what they stood for. A buffalo among the Tovia clan is a display of strength and aggressiveness. As part of the funeral rites of a deceased member of the Tovia clan, right before the person is buried, people are seen to knock their heads against each other, depicting the strength and aggressiveness of the buffalo, thus depicting their nature as a people. The bee, for the people of Peki, depicts diligence and productivity. The dove and the crab, among some clans, are symbols of peace. The chameleon is a depiction of patience among the people of Hohoe. Other animals which are considered totemic are the cow, which signifies growth and development; the lion and the

elephant, which signifies strength and power; the owl, which is a symbol of insight and mystics; the rooster, which represents new beginnings and powers in sexuality, the frog which represents productivity, fertility and profusion and many others. Totems are thus said to have symbolic undertones mostly derived from proverbs. Many clans/tribes in Ghana have totems, which are either animals or plants that the people relate with closely and treat specially. This practice has nothing to do with superstition or primitivism. The cultural significance of totems in many cultures throughout the world is that people have long placed a high premium on certain animals regarded as their totems. These totems differ in their cultural symbolic meaning from one to another, and the patterns of society have been remarkably influenced by the behavior of these animals. In the savanna belt, in particular, this system of beliefs and the associated practices bring the python (which is the totem of many tribes in the northern part of Ghana) into close relationship with humans. The Dagaaba of the upper west region, the Frafra (of Sirigu) and the Tallensi of the upper east region, the Mamprusi of the northern region, as well as the Ewes of the Volta Region of Ghana (who accord the python high respect by calling it *Togbe Dagbey*), all have the python as their totem. The python is, therefore, treated in special ways by these tribes. It is not killed, harmed or eaten by these clans. If the totem (python) dies accidentally, it could be mourned and buried with the same honours as a member. According to Ibrahim (2015), a totem is an object (as an animal or plant) serving as the emblem of a family or clan, and Totems are important cultural symbols that are sacred to the society in which they are found. Textile artists must explore the possibilities of deriving inspiration from totems for textile designs for ceremonial cloth. Such clothes are likely to promote unity and cohesion among members. Again, these clothes can be used in important ceremonies, at ancestral shrines, and at state events such as durbar, rallies, symposiums, etc. Steven and Salm (2006) added that the totem system or totemic served and still serves to identify different geographic and dialectic identities by associating each group with a natural species, usually an animal. A totem is an object (such as an animal or plant) serving as the emblem of a family or clan and is often seen as a reminder of its ancestry. The Ewe people of Ghana have an extensive history of weaving yarns into Kete. These Kete designs obtain their values from the messages woven into them. More than just fashion accessories, Ewe Kete is rich in Ewe's history and traditions. The various messages they come with point out the functions or the occasions on which they are to be worn. According to Keteku (1999), the Ewe people call it Kete in their native tongue instead of Kente. "Ke" means "Open", while "Te" means "Close". It depicts making the cloth that gives it its name, Kete. In Ewe, Kete cloth has its symbols, which depict animals such as cows, sheep, elephants, and horses and human figures, ceremonial stools, hats, trees, flowers and household objects such as forks. These symbols all have their meaning. Some Ewe cloth also has written texts. Every year, the Kete (Kente) festival is held in the Agotime Traditional Area in the Volta Region, Ghana. The festival showcases and celebrates the cultural Ewe Kete cloth.

2. Materials and Methods

Yarn is the most prominent or significant material used for the construction or production of Kete. These were mainly different types of coloured rayon yarns, dyed cotton yarns, embroidery threads and polyester threads. These materials pose different physical appearances, counts, and twists. These textile materials were chosen because of their uniqueness in texture, handle, and tensile strength, among others, that are used for plain and twill weave structures. They added some textural effects as far as the aesthetical value was concerned. Other equipment used were the Traditional loom and its accessories. The totemic motives with the lace effect technique were found most appropriate to be woven manually into a plain weave structure, which formed unique surface designs. The traditional loom was chosen for this project because the researchers sought to obtain the unique features of Ghanaian kete fabric design. These items were used in different ways to suit the materials and techniques employed for the creation of innovative totemic Kete with lace effect. As a Practice-based research, the study aims to advance knowledge partly by utilizing practice. This type of research is an original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge and understanding. It includes the invention of ideas, images, performances, and artefacts, including design, which lead to new or substantially improved insights in the field of practice. Moreover, practice-based research is also research where some of the resulting knowledge is embodied in the artefacts. Whilst the significance and context of that knowledge are described in words, a full understanding can only be obtained concerning the artefact itself (Candy, 2010). As practice-based research, the project was conducted in the weaving studio of the Department of Textile Design and Technology, Takoradi Technical University. The production processes and the invention of ideas and explorations of the woven samples were executed solely in the studio, which includes the following:

2.1. Warp Laying

It involves aligning the warp yarn in parallel formation for proper interlacement of weft yarn and estimation of warp size (quantity of ends). W Yarns on cones were arranged on a spool rack to help align the warp yarns in parallel formation to prevent entanglement during weaving. Pegs were nailed into the ground as a guide that held the crosses of the yarn. The yarns were then moved to and from these pegs till the total length and number of ends needed were acquired, as seen in figure 1.



Figure 1: Warp Laying

2.2. Beaming

In narrow or traditional loom weaving, Yarns from warping mills or boards are rolled on each other by uniformly spreading them under tension. This was done to prevent slackness during weaving from either the selvedge or any other part of the warp. This is known as beaming. A total of ten yards of warp yarns were used for the project, with eight yards specifically for the warp and two yards of waste. The warp threads were ready for heddling after the beaming process, as seen in figure 2. It was finally rolled up, as in figure 3.



Figure 2: Beaming



Figure 3: Rolled Warp Yarn after Beaming

2.3. Heddling

After beaming, the warp ends were threaded through the eyes of the heddles or healds, suspended by the heddle frames. Heddling is the process of passing the ends through the eyes of the healds. The heddling order depends on the type of fabric structure to be woven. The researchers identified some functions of the heddles or healds. These are:

- Shed creation
- Identification of broken yarns
- Determination of the structure of the fabric to be woven
- Since the fabric to be woven was a plain structure, the heddling order adopted was one (1) over one (1) under (1), as seen in figure 4.



Figure 4: Heddling

2.4. Reeding

After heddling, there was reeding; in this wise, all the yarns were passed through the dents of the reed. A Reed hook was the right tool for reeding, but in this case, a small knife and bamboo-made reed hook were used to push the yarn through each dent of the reed. The bamboo-made reed had wider spaces than the metal reed with small spaces. The bamboo-made reed was used by the researchers because it has a wider space and is convenient to use. This gave the fabric its loose density, which was appropriate for comfort. Before the reeding process, the reed was positioned well for an effective beating-up process. The reed size used was six (6) inches, and the reed number was 10. The warp was counted three per dent (three warp yarns into a dent of a reed), and the Kete cloth size reed was four point five (4.5) inches, as seen in figure 5.



Figure 5: Reeding / Denting

2.5. Tying up

The loose ends were tied to the reed (see Figure 6). A small rod was slipped through the knotted yarns. These were hooked with a strong cord and knot and then stretched to hook the roller, making sure the tie-up was of equal length to provide a proper opening of the shed. The treadle was hung evenly and parallel to the same height from the ground within easy reach of the foot to create a good shed. There are two ways of tying up on the traditional or narrow loom. These are either by tying warp yarns to the load for tension or by tying warp yarns to the cloth beam for continuous weaving.



Figure 6: Tying up

2.6. Weft Preparation

Weft yarns interlace the warp yarns to create a fabric. Yarns were wound onto bobbins made from bamboo sticks for weaving. This is the winding of yarns packaged in cones and hanks onto bobbins for picking. In weft preparation, the weaver prepares the colour of yarns intended for the woven cloth to match the warp combination, as seen in figure 7.



Figure 7: Preparation of Weft Thread

2.7. Test Weaves

After the weft preparation processes, a test weave was conducted to ascertain the correct layout and weave before the actual weaving commenced. Figure 8 shows a test conducted on a plain weave structure for an intended design, followed by the actual weaving of the fabrics.



Figure 8: Test Weaves

2.8. Weaving Order

Weaving is the interlacing of warp and weft yarns to form a fabric. Weaving order is the way and manner a weaver depresses various pedals to give a variety of patterns or effects in the fabric. The weaving order is always deduced from the heddling order, as in the actual weaving, as seen in figure 9.

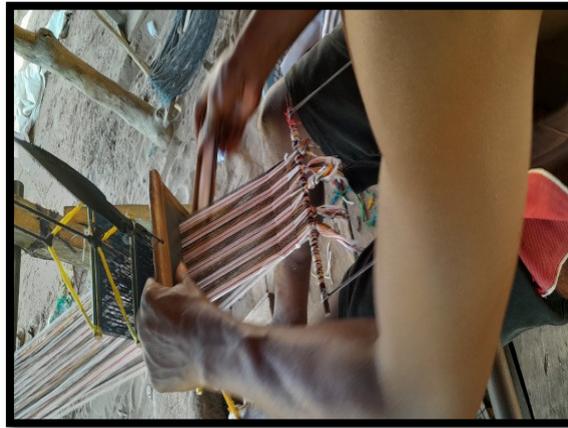


Figure 9: Actual Weaving

The design was made from plain and tapestry weaves. In weaving, a bobbin of weft thread contained in a shuttle is driven from one side of the loom to the other through a shed. One weft thread is laid down to form part of the fabric, and then the harness changes position so that the higher warp threads become the lower ones. This forms a new shed which encloses the weft yarn just laid down. Once the filling yarns had been prepared and the warp yarns had been set in place, the loom went through the primary principles of weaving: Shedding, picking, beating up, letting off and Taking up motions. These motions were followed throughout the weaving of Anlo and Ewe totemic Kete cloth.

2.8.1. Shedding

The shed was formed by raising the harnesses to form an open area between the sets of warp yarns. The formation of the shed is known as shedding, as seen in figure 10.



Figure 10: Shed Creation

2.8.2. Picking-up

While the shed was opened, the weft yarn was transported across the opening to lay a filling yarn across the width of the loom. The insertion of the filling is known as picking. A single-filling yarn is known as a pick. The speed of weaving machines is generally expressed as the number of picks per minute or meters of filling inserted per minute. Speed is related to the width of the loom and wider looms; weaving wider fabrics would require more time for one filling insertion, as seen in figure 11.



Figure 11: Picking up

2.8.3. Beating up

Beating up is done with the reed, the comb-like device that pushes the filling yarn close against the woven fabric (to the fell of the cloth) to make it more compact, as seen in figure 12.



Figure 12: Beating up

2.8.4. Letting off

As the woven fabric was formed, it must be moved or let off from the warp beam and taken up on the cloth beam to make room for more fabric (Asmah, 2004), as seen in figure 13.



Figure 13: Letting off

2.8.5. Taking up

This was when the woven fabric was wound onto the cloth beam. All these functions were harmonized so that they occurred in the appropriate sequence and did not interfere with one another, as seen in figure 14.



Figure14: Taking up

2.8.6. Totems Woven into Fabric Strips

The Ewe totems were picked up onto the woven stripe of fabric by tapestry technique. The tape measure was used to measure the length of each totemic motif design using 0.5 inches. The totem was picked in the form of a tapestry and repeated nine (9) times on each woven stripe of fabric. The whole length of one strip of the woven fabric measured 140 inches for four yards. Eighteen (18) of these strips were joined to make eight (8) yards of the totemic Kete fabric. The totems are seen in figures 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19.



Figure: 15: Picked Totem One (1)



Figure 16: Picked Totem Two (2)



Figure 17: Picked Totem Three (3)



Figure: 18 Picked Totem Four (4)



Figure: 19 Picked Totem Five (5)

2.9. Lace Effect

The lace effect was achieved on the woven strip of ewe kete by creating small holes as perforations on the striped fabrics. To achieve this, six crochet yarns were laid along the length of the strip and pulled tightly along the warp direction. The exerted pull along the warp face created a hole representing the lace effect. The crocheting yarns were interlaced with the laid warp yarns, and reasonable lengths of yarn were made to float along the length of the strip perforating sections at regular intervals, as seen in figure 20.



Figure 20: Woven Strips with Lace Effect

The actual weaving of the Ewe Kete fabric was made of different background colours, such as white, red, yellow, blue, black, and gold. Cotton yarns were used as weft yarns, whilst green metallic yarn was used for the warp yarns. Black and white cotton yarns were also used as binders in most warp yarns. Perforations were used to create lace effects to make the Kete cloth breathable and unique; the strips were made with gold, white, blue, green and wine colour crochet thread linking each perforation lengthwise. Another technique employed was the tapestry. It was a technique used in the Kete weaving. This technique differs from other forms of patterned weaving in that no weft threads were made to carry the full width of the fabric, except by an occasional design that occupies the whole width of the fabric. Each unit of the pattern was woven with a weft thread of the required colour that was inserted back and forth only over the sections where that colour appeared in the design. The weft threads outnumbered the warps to the extent that they concealed them completely.

The warp yarns in a finished tapestry appear as marked parallel ridges in the texture or grain of a fabric, according to their coarseness or fineness. The crochet yarns were pulled tightly to create holes or perforations along the length of the strip. This striped fabric consisted of nine totem motifs and nine lace effects. The lace effect was created by weaving 0.5cm and then leaving 0.5cm for the designed totems, repeatedly nine times along the length of the strip to form one unit. After weaving these strips of totemic Kete with lace effect, eighteen (18) strips of the various colours of the Kete were joined together with a sewing machine to form eight yards of Ewe totemic fabric by name; unity is strength, *dekawɔwɔ me ηuse le* (Volta Region), which measured 140 by 81 inches. It symbolizes Creative Ingenuity, Innovation, Uniqueness, Perfection, royalty and Exceptional Achievement. The project employed plain lace and tapestry weave for the integrated woven Ewe Anlo totem cloth. Even though Kete cloths are worn for special and important occasions such as coronations, durbars, parades, religious rites, and other major ceremonies, the Ewe (Anlo) had no integrated special Kete cloth with the clan's totem embossed or fused in one piece as a sign for unity and identity, (personal communication, 2nd April 2023). It was, therefore, important to design and construct a special Kete cloth for the people of the Volta Region, Ghana, using the clan's totem that portrays the ideals, values, identity, unity, education, aspirations, and rich history of the clan.

2.9.1. Cutting and Joining of Strips

After weaving into long strips, the stripes of the woven fabric were cut into four yards each. With the help of a sewing machine, the strips were joined together with a zigzag stitch. All the eighteen striped woven fabrics were joined together to make eight yards of Kete cloth, which made one Male cloth. This was done by overlapping each strip of about 1/8 of an inch. The tacked stitches were removed after sewing, and the raw edges were finished by knitting technique, as shown in figure 21.



Figure 21: Joining the Woven Strips

The reason behind the creation of this innovative fabric was to emphasize the prevailing unity in the Volta region for rapid development. This unity can change the face of indigenous woven fabrics in the Region and Ghana.

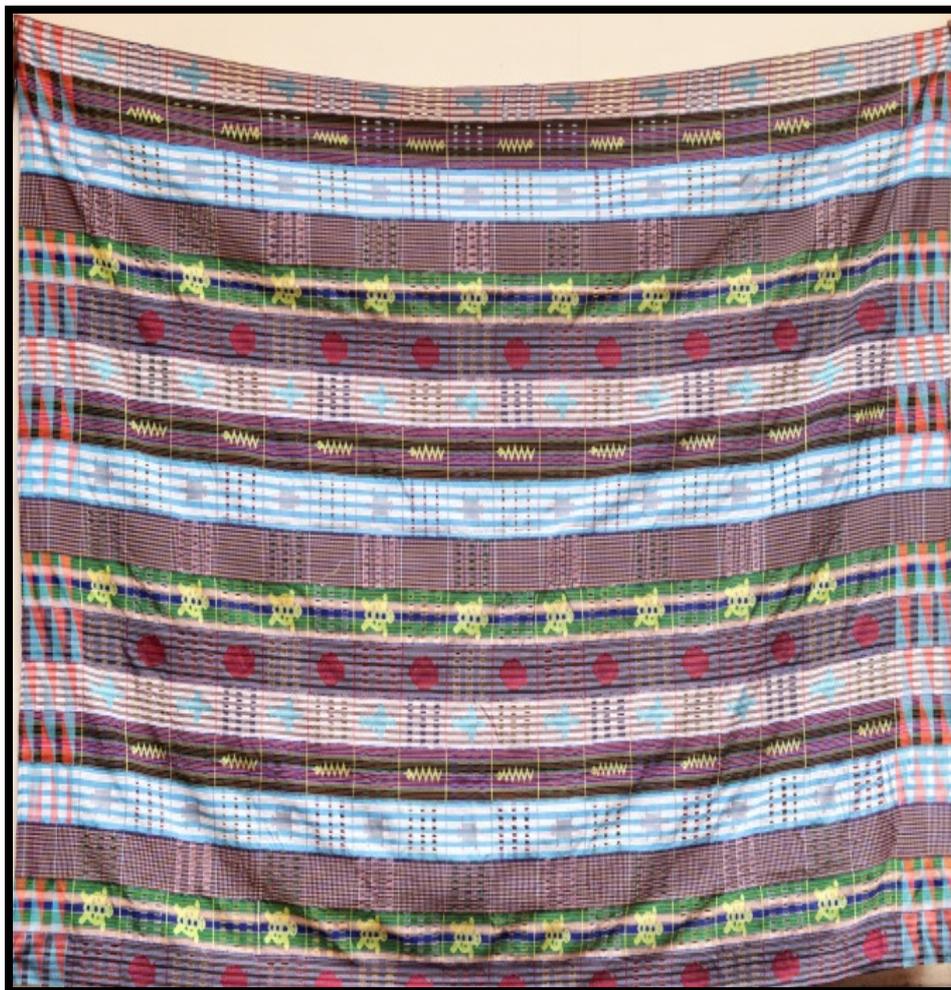


Figure 22: Final Totemic Woven Kete

The Ewe Kete cloth conveys harmony and unity in diversity, hence the name: unity is strength, *dekawɔwɔ me nuse le* (Volta Region).



Figure 23: Adorned Totemic Ewe-Kete

3. Results and Discussions

This chapter deals with the results and discussion. It explains the step-by-step procedure undertaken by the researchers in the execution of the project. It covers four (4) objectives of the study, stated below:

- To identify and document Ewe ethnic clans and their totems.
- To generate motifs based on the identified clans and their totems.
- To weave Ewe Kete based on the generated totemic motifs and make the cloth breathable.
- To assess the significance of woven Ewe totemic Kete in promoting peace and unity among the ethnic clans.

4. Main Findings

The researchers worked around four major objectives and came up with the following findings:

First and foremost, the assertion of Kpodo (2020) affirmed that there are about fifteen clans among the Anlo of Ghana. The clans are Lafe, Amlade, Adzovia, Bate, Like, Bamee, Tovi, Klevi, Yetsofe, Agave, Tsiamé, Amé, Dzevi, Uifeme and Blu. He also argued that membership of a clan carries many distinguishing characteristics, including clan totems, and it was discovered that each clan had its own unique totem and taboos. Out of the fifteen totems identified, five were adopted and tweaked to generate motifs for incorporation into Ewe kete weaving design. It was possible to convert the symbols of the totems into motifs as envisaged by the researchers. The five totems used were the monitor lizard representing the Lafe clan, the swordfish for the Like clan, the fish for the Adzorvia clan, the tortoise for the Blu clan, and the snake representing the Dashi clan. The incorporation of motifs generated from totems into kete designs was a possibility. Additionally, the introduction of the lace effect to make the kete cloth breathable was also possible. Initially, the researchers worked with rayon yarns to show the lace effect, but the outcome was poor. When the crocheting thread was next used, the lace effect was achieved with greater ease. Notable feedback from the field during the post-studio activities was that the most popular cloths amongst the Anlos of Ghana had no motifs of clan totems. Sampled photographed like the Kpevi, Klogo Lorlorwuhó Akpedó, and Sasa from Agbozume and Fiawoyome, Wargagba, and Doklidekpo from Agortime Kpetoe had no clan totem motifs. They were pure reproductions of old designs without any improvement in originality, creativity, technique and style. The creation of this project, therefore, is a novelty so far as the introduction of the lace effect and totemic motifs are concerned.

Respondents agreed that the totemic motifs designed into one creative woven design would inevitably evoke youth knowledge about the totems they represent in their clans. They believed it would serve as a unifying art piece and encourage future researchers to be more creative and innovative in woven designs.

5. Conclusions

The study revealed that totems put societies together and, therefore, unite ethnic groups. The newly woven fabrics, when put on by chiefs on occasion, will communicate to their people and can identify themselves better with it. This, among the Anlo people, is not seen; therefore, there is a need for totemic design in the production of Ewe kete.

As a result of this, the researchers successfully gathered a number of existing Ewe totems and collated them as stated in the first objective of the study. This provided the names of the clans from which the totems were generated and their meaning. Five (5) motifs were generated from the Ewe totems, and strips of Kete were designed and woven with them in various backgrounds and colours. This study revealed the possibility of incorporating Ewe totems and lace effects in Kete weaving to increase comfortability (or make it breathable). It provides Kete designers with a range of materials

and culture totems to be used in designing Kete fabric, which will give higher dimensions of product competitiveness through cultural diversity. They can also be promoted through their use in the production of Kete, which is affordable and used by all Ghanaians.

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