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An Examination of the Kente Industry in Ghana: A SWOT Analysis Perspective

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper's objective is to present a thorough SWOT analysis of Ghana's Kente industry in order to create a framework that will improve the industry's value addition, market accessibility, and sustainability. Ghana's Kente industry represents one of the most symbolically powerful and globally recognised indigenous textile traditions in Africa. Despite its economic relevance and cultural prestige, the industry faces structural, technological and competitive pressures that threaten its long-term sustainability. This study provides a strategic assessment of the Ghanaian Kente industry using a structured Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analytical framework.

Methodology/Design: An empirical quantitative study was adopted to examine the SWOT analysis of the Kente industry. A stratified random sample technique was employed to select 150 weavers and kente traders for the study, adopting a Google Form survey.

Findings: Kente business is a valuable cultural and commercial resource that is in great demand both domestically and internationally. Government backing and a strong cultural legacy are among its advantages. On the other hand, weaknesses include counterfeit goods and restricted financial access. The industry can use digital platforms and e-commerce to expand. Sustainable production processes and creative weaving techniques are part of a successful framework. For the industry to be viable in the long run, cooperation and research and development spending are essential. The industry can guarantee its worldwide recognition and economic contribution by promoting Kente craftsmanship and conserving its history.

Practical and Social Implications: There are several ramifications for Ghana's Kente industry's expansion. In terms of the economy, it gives weavers and craftspeople employment and revenue prospects. In terms of culture, it maintains Ghanaian heritage and traditional craftsmanship. Socially, it fosters cultural identity and strengthens local communities. By using digital platforms, the sector may reach a worldwide audience, promoting sustainable practices and introducing the world to Ghanaian culture.

Originality: This paper provides a comprehensive knowledge of Kente industries in Ghana, advancing existing knowledge and paving the way for long-term viability and global recognition.

Keywords
Kente industry, strength, weakness, opportunities, framework.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Kente cloth, a handwoven fabric valued by the Ashanti, Ewe, and northern people for its cultural significance and economic worth, originated in Ghana. Because of its rich colours, intricate patterns, and historical significance. Kente fabric is a rapidly growing industry with potential for both domestic and international markets. As a reflection of the unique cultural history and socio - economic contributions of the art, weaving techniques, materials, and marketing strategies may vary across different locations (Asinyo et al., 2021; Afriyie et al., 2023). The traditional kente sector in Ghana is a significant cultural and economic endeavour (Frimpong & Asinyo, 2013). Many Ghanaian groups have strong historical and traditional ties to this business. Ghana's Kente industry is more than just an artistic endeavour; it is a vital component of the nation's economic and cultural landscape. Traditional woven kente is significant

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to both local communities and the global market because of its deep integration into social gatherings and rituals, as confirmed by Ayesu et al. (2021) and Wemegah et al. (2021). As globalisation alters customer tastes and industrial techniques, it has become increasingly crucial to comprehend the dynamics of this industry. Despite the Ghanaian Kente industry's rich history and bright future, many studies have focused on particular aspects of the weaving process, materials, looms, accessories, or market dynamics, neglecting how these factors mix to produce design and product innovation (Frimpong & Asinyo, 2013; Ayesu et al., 2021; Afriyie et al., 2023; Boadi et al., 2025).

Boadi et al. (2025) posit that changes in the environment, politics, formal education, and technology have affected the manufacturing processes, tools, and materials utilised in traditional weaving. Unfortunately, these challenges continue as the Ghanaian Kente sector relies on indigenous techniques, tools, and equipment that require adaptation and modernisation to enable the industry to realise its full potential in a competitive market (Boadi et al., 2025; Afriyie et al., 2023). The main issues affecting Kente weaving were low supply and demand for the product, obsolete production methods, a lack of export marketing, and a data and motivation management system. Many experienced Kente weavers are worried that as they age, their skills and knowledge will not be sufficiently passed down to the next generation (Frimpong & Asinyo, 2013; Afriyie et al., 2023; Boadi et al., 2025). The commercialisation of Kente weaving has also given rise to concerns about cultural appropriation, intellectual property rights, and the exploitation of Kente weavers (Okyere & Denoncourt, 2021). This paper will further elucidate the Kente industry's dynamics and foster its advancement and global promotion. Despite growing academic interest in African textiles, existing studies on Kente weaving remain fragmented, often focusing on history, symbolism or production techniques in isolation. There is limited empirical synthesis that holistically evaluates the industry’s internal and external environment to support strategic development. The absence of a structured SWOT-based synthesis of Ghana’s Kente industry constitutes a critical research gap. This study, therefore, aims to examine the Kente industry in Ghana using a SWOT analysis framework. The study set out the following specific objectives.

- To examine the current state of the Kente industry in Ghana.
- To evaluate the factors that influence the strengths and opportunities of the Kente industry in Ghana.
- To assess the weaknesses and threats influencing the Kente industry in Ghana.

1.1| Historical Background of Kente in Ghana

The Ashanti Region is known for its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, earning it the nickname "cradle of culture." Kente weaving is a cherished tradition in this region, passed down through generations of Akan and Ewe people. However, Frimpong et al. (2020) state that the origins of Kente are subject to different interpretations and perspectives. The Tekyiman people claim to be the originators of Kente weaving, a tradition that may have roots in Africa's ancient textile practices. Nonetheless, the Asante people of Ghana have a well-documented history of Kente weaving dating back to the 17th century, as noted by Ross (1998). Historians suggest that Kente weaving has its roots in various West African textile traditions that predate the Ashanti Kingdom. Archaeological evidence indicates that narrow-strip fabrics were woven in West Africa as early as the 11th century AD, with similar textiles found in Mali's Bandiagara cliffs. These ancient cloths, used in burial ceremonies, share technical and aesthetic similarities with Kente and other West African textiles (Picton & Mack, 1989; Ross, 1998). Ross (1998) opines that the Asante Kente is celebrated as a premier African textile, prized for its beauty and cultural significance. Woven in towns like Adanwomase, Bonwire, and Ntonso, Kente has a rich history dating back to its exclusive use by monarchs, as confirmed by Ross (1998). Ayesu et al. (2021) claim that as its popularity grew, Kente spread beyond its origins, becoming an integral part of West African cultural heritage. From its origins as a handcrafted cloth reserved for royalty, Kente has evolved into a widely accessible and affordable product in Ghanaian shops. Yet, its importance has endured, and it is now regarded with even greater reverence (Okyere & Denoncourt, 2021; Frimpong & Asinyo, 2013). Adom (2024) also confirmed that the Asante Kente's striking patterns and geometric shapes have made it an iconic representation of Ghanaian and African cultural identity worldwide.

The Asante Kente fabric is a vibrant and intricately designed textile that serves as a powerful communication tool for indigenous communities, conveying meaningful messages through its colours, patterns, and themes (Badoe & Opoku-Asare, 2014; Adom, 2024). The name "Kente" originates from the word "Kenten," meaning basket, which refers to the traditional use of raffia or palm leaf fibres to weave

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a basket-like cloth. With over 300 distinct patterns, each Kente design has a specific name and meaning rooted in historical events, spiritual beliefs, and cultural practices. Throughout its history, Kente weaving has undergone significant transformations in terms of materials, techniques, and applications, evolving from raffia to traditional hand-spun cotton and eventually incorporating synthetic yarns (Ross & Adu-Agyem, 2008; Okyere & Denoncourt, 2021; Adom, 2024). The use of pre-dyed yarns has streamlined Kente production, allowing for greater accessibility and affordability. Modern Kente fabrics often combine rayon, cotton, and silk, catering to a wider range of consumers. Although traditional designs are still valued, contemporary weavers are creating new patterns with more straightforward meanings. Kente cloth, once exclusively worn by kings and chiefs for significant occasions, is now commonly worn for both formal and casual events. The production of Kente has undergone notable changes over time, including the incorporation of patterned warps, doubled threads, and Adinkra designs through stamping with ink or dyes. However, patchy yarn dyeing has not been integrated into Kente production (Ross & Adu-Agyem, 2008; Frimpong et al., 2020).

1.2| Importance of Kente Cloth (Akan)

A popular African textile that became well-known worldwide in the 1960s, Kente fabric is a potent symbol of Pan-Africanism and Afrocentric identity (Ross & Adu-Agyem, 2008; Adom, 2024). Kente weaving is an essential component of the cultural history of the Asante people, who invented it (Adom, 2024). Historical reports, such as the arrival of a Danish envoy to King Opoku Ware's court in the 1730s, underline the textile's prominence and its tight ties to the Asante Empire and its royal court in Kumasi (Bowdich, 1819). As a symbol of wealth, social status, and cultural sophistication, the Kente cloth is highly prized (Ross & Adu-Agyem, 2008; Adom, 2024). Kente fabric, formerly known as the "cloth of kings," is now widely available and made from a range of materials (Ross & Adu-Agyem, 2008; Adom, 2024). The Kente and Kuba fabrics from Zaire continue to be the most respected and famous textiles in Africa (Ross & Adu-Agyem, 2008). The small community of Bonwire in Ghana's Ashanti Region is renowned as the nation's hub for Kente weaving (Adom, 2024). Kente fabric is known in Asante as "woven cloth" or nwentoma. A corruption of the name Kente is "Kenten," which means "basket" in Asante. This is because the fabric was made from the fibre of palm fronds (Asihene, 1978; Fening, 2006; Adom, 2024). The designs "Wofro dua pa a na yepia wo," "Akyempem," and "Nyankonton" are popular Asante Kente designs (Okyere & Denoncourt, 2021; Adom, 2024).

1.3| Aesthetic and Philosophical Meaning

Ghanaian Kente patterns serve both aesthetic and philosophical functions and are deeply ingrained in their values and beliefs. According to Asamoah-Yaw and Safo-Kantanka (2017), Kente textiles express traditions, values, and aspirations. Through Kente design sales and shows, Bonwire successfully supports these standards despite having little involvement in weaving. Borgatti (1983) asserts that Ghanaian Kente art is a philosophical expression that reflects social, humanistic, and cultural ideals. It serves as a silent communication medium and is more than simply a fabric; it is a visual depiction of history, political opinions, moral principles, oral tradition, and social norms. Furthermore, the meaning and interpretation of an art form are shaped by cultural contexts, resulting in different understandings across societies (Leuthold, 2011).

It is impossible to define universally since its meaning is contingent upon the beliefs of its practitioners. Consequently, the symbolic interpretation of the objects is what unites all civilisations. Leuthold (2011) confirmed that human endeavours require symbolization. Cassirer's insight that art has a significant impact on symbolic interpretations is supported by recent scholarship showing that art functions as a symbolic language shaped by cultural context (Adom, 2024). Cassirer (1962) asserts that art creates a philosophical divide between the audience, the artist, and the artefact, enabling encounters with human creations to yield more insights. Ross and Adu-Agyem (2008) argue that the colours used in Ghanaian Kente fabrics, which are inspired by daily activities, serve as a reminder of traditional norms and beliefs. Adom (2024) argues that colours represent who we are, where we came from, and where we are going. The Kente ideology of the nation promotes the deeper comprehension required to uncover hidden meanings and untold stories. Cassirer (1962) asserts that people can efficiently acquire signals by transitioning from more familiar facts to less familiar ones thanks to the artefact's symbolic representation. Artefacts are created using locally understood materials from an aesthetic and philosophical perspective. Culturally aware artists are able to decipher and understand the meanings conveyed through visual communication. An in-depth knowledge of the culture is necessary to fully understand the meanings

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these artefacts convey. Popular designs emphasise the importance of cultural understanding because of their symbolic meanings (Adom, 2024; Okyere & Denoncourt, 2021).

2 | METHODOLOGY

Research design: A cross-sectional descriptive survey was adopted in this empirical quantitative research to examine the SWOT analysis of the Kente Industry in Ghana. This design was chosen because it allows the use of inferential statistics to analyse the SWOT dimensions of the Kente industry and make appropriate recommendations (Creswell, 2014; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

Sample and sampling approach: A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation of key stakeholder groups within the Kente industry. The study sampled n = 150 respondents from a target population of approximately N = 500, comprising weavers (n = 27), traders (n = 37), suppliers (n = 39), retailers (n = 34), and exporters (n = 13). Regionally, respondents were drawn from the Ashanti Region (n = 75), Northern Region (n = 41), and Volta Region (n = 34). Although the primary focus was on the Ashanti Region, supplementary data from other weaving regions were incorporated to corroborate and strengthen the analysis. This approach enhances representativeness and supports the application of inferential statistical analysis (Creswell, 2014; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

Study location: While Bonwire in the Ashanti Region served as the main case study, Daboya (Savannah Region) and Agbozume (Volta Region) were included to provide comparative insights and support the robustness of the conclusions.

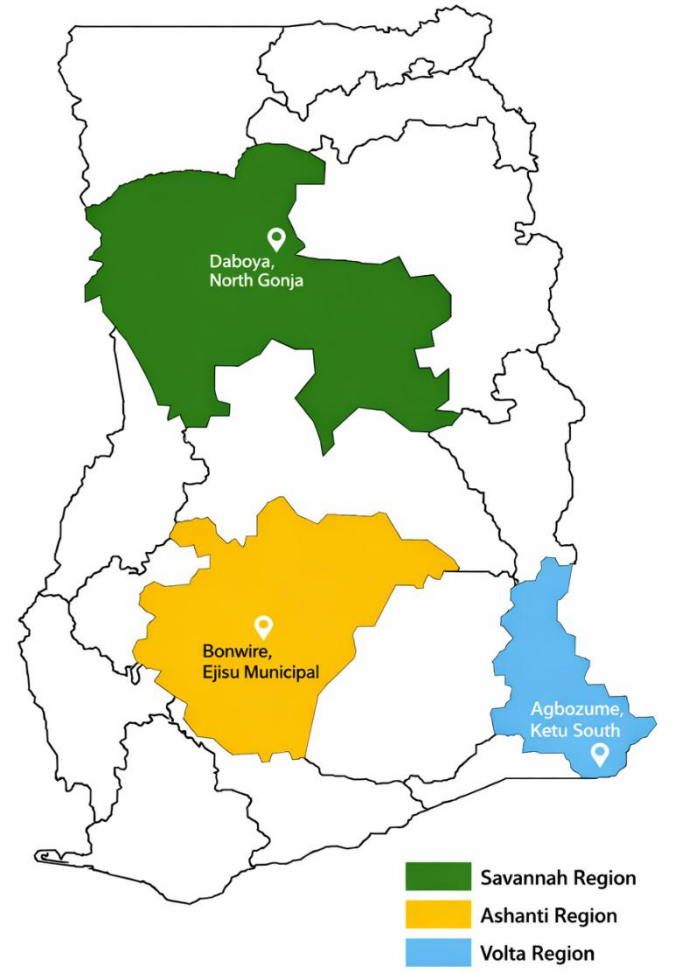


Figure 1. Geographical location of study (authors creation, 2025)

Instrumentation: To obtain information for assessing the SWOT analysis of the Kente, a structured interview was developed that employed closed-ended questions with a 5-point Likert Scale divided into sections to assess the various variables.

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- Current State (15 items): The items were grouped into Product and Craftsmanship, Market and Sales, and Support and Policy, reflecting cultural heritage preservation, industry competitiveness, and development frameworks (Porter, 2008; UNESCO, 2003; World Bank, 2020).
- Strengths and Weaknesses (8 items): Items were classified into Strengths and Weaknesses based on internal resource capabilities and competitive advantage theory (Barney, 1991; Porter, 2008)
- Opportunities and Threats (8 items): Items were structured into Opportunities and Threats using external environmental scanning and global economic frameworks (Aguilar, 1967; Johnson et al., 2017; World Trade Organization, 2021)
- Strategic Recommendations (15 items): Items were grouped into Value Addition, Market Access, and Sustainability, informed by competitiveness, industrial development, and sustainable development frameworks (Porter, 1985; UNIDO, 2013; United Nations, 2015; ITC, 2019)

In order to ensure clarity and cultural appropriateness, the questionnaire was piloted with 10 participants within the Ashanti Region for necessary revisions to be effected before final phase piloting.

Data collection and ethical considerations: The collection of data was done over a period of 8 weeks (June - July, 2025). The distribution of the questionnaire was conducted online using Google Forms. This was made possible as about 71% of the respondents were well adjusted to technology. This mode of assessing the views of respondents was chosen due to its numerous merits. Google Forms is a free, user-friendly tool that allows for quick creation, easy distribution, and automatic collection and analysis of survey data in real time (Nurmahmudah & Nuryuniarti, 2020). Participation in the questionnaire was voluntary, with respondents informed of their right to decline or withdraw at any time without penalty, ensuring ethical compliance in line with established research standards (Creswell, 2014).

***Data Analysis*:** Data collected from the questionnaire were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations were used to summarise the data. In addition, the internal consistency of the research instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to ensure reliability, with values closer to 1 indicating higher reliability of the scale (Cronbach, 1951; Field, 2018; Pallant, 2020).

3 | FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1| Demographic Information of Respondents

The study achieved a 100% response rate with 150 participants (Table 1). Most respondents were young (below 30 years) and male (62%), indicating a youthful and gender-skewed workforce. The Asante Region dominated participation (50%), reflecting its central role in the Kente industry. In terms of occupation, suppliers (26%) and traders (24.7%) were the most represented, while exporters were the least. A majority had less than 5 years of experience (56%) and Second Cycle education (42%), suggesting a relatively young and moderately educated workforce.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Age	21–30	53	35.3
	31–40	22	14.7
	Above 20	6	4.0
	Above 40	15	10.0
	Below 20	54	36.0
	Total	150	100.0
Value Chain	Exporter	13	8.7
	Retailer	34	22.7
	Supplier	39	26.0
	Trader	37	24.7
	Weaver	27	18.0

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	Total	150	100.0
Region	Asante Region	75	50.0
	Northern Region	41	27.3
	Volta Region	34	22.7
	Total	150	100.0
Years of Experience	11–15 years	17	11.3
	16–20 years	14	9.3
	5–10 years	18	12.0
	Above 20 years	17	11.3
	Below 5 years	84	56.0
	Total	150	100.0
Level of Education	Bachelor's Degree	1	0.7
	Basic Education	39	26.0
	Second Cycle Education	63	42.0
	Tertiary Education	47	31.3
	Total	150	100.0
Gender	Female	57	38.0
	Male	93	62.0
	Total	**150**	**100.0**

3.2| Statistical Test

Table 2 presents the internal consistency of the constructions. Because all measurements fell within the permitted range of 0.7-0.8, the study concluded that they were valid and reliable.

Table 2. Internal Consistency of Construct

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Current State of the *Kente* Industry	15	0.782
Strengths and Opportunities	7	0.781
Weaknesses and Threats	7	0.804
Strategic Recommendation	9	0.850

3.3| Descriptive Analysis

3.3.1 | Objective 1: To examine the current state of the Kente industry in Ghana

Objective 1 analysis (Table 3) indicates that the overall mean for the Kente Industry as of currently was 3.43. This indicates that the vast majority of the respondents agreed with the variable of the current state. Specifically, it was realised that "There are sufficient platforms (e.g., exhibitions, trade fairs) for Kente products to be showcased" (Mean=3.88: SD=0.91). The respondents also agreed that "Authentic Kente cloth effectively competes with mass-produced imitations in the market" (Mean=3.93: SD=1.07). Again, the respondents agreed that "There is strong domestic demand for authentic Kente cloth in Ghana" (Mean=3.79: SD=0.99). The respondents further agreed that "The Kente industry effectively utilises e-commerce and digital marketing to reach customers" (Mean=3.17: SD=1.35). Also, the respondent agreed that "International demand for Kente cloth is growing significantly" (Mean=3.71: SD=1.0).

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of the Current State of the Kente Industry

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
The traditional *Kente* weaving techniques are being effectively preserved and passed down to younger generations.	150	1.00	5.00	2.47	1.43

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Kente weavers have access to sufficient high-quality raw materials (e.g., yarn, dyes) at reasonable prices.	150	1.00	5.00	2.82	1.06
The time and effort required to produce authentic *Kente* cloth are adequately compensated in its market price.	150	1.00	5.00	3.59	1.12
Kente weavers have access to modern tools and equipment that could improve efficiency without compromising tradition.	150	1.00	5.00	3.43	1.07
The quality of authentic, handwoven *Kente* cloth in Ghana is consistently high.	150	1.00	5.00	3.71	0.98
There is strong domestic demand for authentic *Kente* cloth in Ghana.	150	1.00	5.00	3.79	0.99
The *Kente* industry effectively utilises e-commerce and digital marketing to reach customers.	150	1.00	5.00	3.17	1.35
International demand for *Kente* cloth is growing significantly.	150	1.00	5.00	3.71	1.01
Authentic *Kente* cloth effectively competes with mass-produced imitations in the market.	150	1.00	5.00	3.93	1.07
The pricing of authentic *Kente* cloth is fair and competitive in both local and international markets.	150	1.00	5.00	3.01	1.26
The Ghanaian government provides adequate support and incentives for the *Kente* industry.	150	1.00	5.00	3.35	1.13
There are effective policies in place to promote and protect authentic *Kente* cloth.	150	2.00	5.00	3.52	0.86
The *Kente* industry is actively promoted as a significant cultural and economic asset of Ghana.	150	2.00	5.00	3.53	0.87
Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders provide meaningful support to *Kente* weavers.	150	2.00	5.00	3.53	0.87
There are sufficient platforms (e.g., exhibitions, trade fairs) for *Kente* products to be showcased.	150	1.00	5.00	3.88	0.91
Overall Mean				**3.43**	

The respondents under consideration further agreed with the following statements: "The traditional Kente weaving techniques are being effectively preserved and passed down to younger generations" (Mean=2.47: SD=1.43), "Kente weavers have access to sufficient high-quality raw materials (e.g., yarn, dyes) at reasonable prices" (Mean=2.82: SD=1.06), "The time and effort required to produce authentic Kente cloth is adequately compensated in its market price"(Mean=3.59: SD=1.12), "Kente weavers have access to modern tools and equipment that could improve efficiency without compromising tradition"(Mean=3.43: SD=1.07), "The quality of authentic, handwoven Kente cloth in Ghana is consistently high"(Mean=3.71: SD=0.98), "The pricing of authentic Kente cloth is fair and competitive in both local and international markets"(Mean=3.01:SD=1.26). Finally, the respondents also agreed with the following statements: "The Ghanaian government provides adequate support and incentives for the Kente industry" (Mean= 3.35: SD=1.13), "There are effective policies in place to promote and protect authentic Kente cloth"(Mean=3.52: SD=0.86), "The Kente industry is actively promoted as a significant cultural and economic asset of Ghana"(Mean=3.53: SD=0.87) and "Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders provide meaningful support to Kente weavers"(Mean=3.53: SD=0.87).

The study's first objective was to examine the current state of the Kente industry in Ghana. However, the study reveals that with access to high-quality raw materials and modern equipment, traditional Kente weaving techniques are being maintained and transmitted to the next generations. Ghana produces high-quality, original Kente fabric, which is in high demand both domestically and internationally. With efficient laws supporting and safeguarding the sector, the Ghanaian government offers incentives and support. With reasonable prices in both domestic and foreign markets, the sector is being marketed as a cultural and financial asset.

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3.3.2 | Objective 2: To evaluate the factors that influence the strengths and opportunities of the Kente industry in Ghana

The descriptive analysis of Objective 2, as indicated in Table 4, respondents were asked to score their level of acceptability on a five-point Likert scale for eight (8) selected factors. The components consisted of the Kente sector's potential and strengths. With an aggregate mean of 3.75, Table 4 displays the possibilities and strengths impacting Ghana's Kente Industry. This indicates that the vast majority of the respondents agreed with the variables of strengths and opportunities influencing the Kente sector. Specifically, the respondents agree that, "Kente products are recognised and valued both locally and internationally" (Mean=4.07: SD=0.90). The respondents also agree that, "Collaboration among weavers and stakeholders can strengthen the industry" (Mean=3.90: SD=0.78). The respondents again agreed that, "There is strong craftsmanship and skill among Kente weavers" (Mean=3.83: SD=0.88). Furthermore, the respondents agreed that, "E-marketing and online sales can expand the reach of Kente products" (Mean=3.73: SD=0.98). The respondents under consideration agree with the following statements: "The Kente industry provides significant employment and income for local communities" (Mean=3.65:SD=1.13), "Kente weaving preserves important Ghanaian cultural heritage" (Mean=3.59: SD=1.126), "There is a growing demand for Kente in contemporary fashion and global markets" (Mean=3.69: SD=0.98) and "Technology and innovation can improve Kente production and marketing" (Mean=3.54: SD=1.00).

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis of the strengths and opportunities of the Kente Industry

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES					
Kente weaving preserves important Ghanaian cultural heritage.	150	1.00	5.00	3.59	1.12
The *Kente* industry provides significant employment and income for local communities.	150	1.00	5.00	3.65	1.13
There is strong craftsmanship and skill among *Kente* weavers.	150	1.00	5.00	3.83	0.88
Kente products are recognised and valued both locally and internationally.	150	1.00	5.00	4.07	0.90
There is a growing demand for *Kente* in contemporary fashion and global markets.	150	1.00	5.00	3.69	0.98
Technology and innovation can improve *Kente* production and marketing.	150	1.00	5.00	3.54	1.00
E-marketing and online sales can expand the reach of *Kente* products.	150	1.00	5.00	3.73	0.98
Collaboration among weavers and stakeholders can strengthen the industry.	150	1.00	5.00	3.90	0.78
Overall Mean				**3.75**	

According to the study's findings, Kente weaving maintains a large portion of Ghana's cultural legacy, generates a substantial amount of revenue and employment for nearby communities, and is a craft that is highly skilled and crafted by its weavers. The results also demonstrate that Kente goods are respected and acknowledged both domestically and abroad, that Kente is becoming more and more popular in modern fashion and worldwide markets, and that Kente manufacturing and marketing may be enhanced by the use of innovation and technology. Lastly, the study shows that cooperation between weavers and stakeholders may boost the business, and e-marketing and online sales can increase the reach of Kente products.

3.3.3 | Cultural and Historical Foundations of the Kente Industry within a SWOT Framework

The historical and cultural evolution of the Kente industry in Ghana is not merely contextual background; rather, it constitutes the structural foundation upon which the industry's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are constructed.

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Cultural heritage as strategic strength: Kente cloth originated among the Akan people, particularly in the Ashanti kingdom, where it was reserved for royalty and sacred ceremonies. Its symbolism, embedded proverbs, and colour semiotics continue to confer legitimacy and authenticity on the product. Within the SWOT framework, this heritage represents a core strength. The industry benefits from: deep cultural symbolism, global recognition of Ghanaian identity, strong ceremonial and diaspora demand and nation branding value. Unlike mass-produced textiles, Kente possesses intangible cultural capital, which enhances differentiation and resilience in premium markets. Thus, cultural authenticity functions as a competitive advantage rather than merely a historical narrative.

Cultural Globalisation as Opportunity: The global resurgence of African identity, Afrocentric fashion and diaspora cultural pride creates new opportunity structures for the Kente industry. Historically, ceremonial cloth is now used in graduation regalia worldwide, incorporated into global fashion design, marketed digitally across continents, and symbolically associated with Pan-African identity. These developments transform cultural heritage into an export opportunity. The relatively high opportunity score (M= 3.72) reflects this expanding symbolic economy. Thus, globalisation does not dilute cultural meaning; instead, it expands its commercial horizon.

The industry's importance: Studies emphasise Kente's ceremonial importance, its role in rites of passage, and its increasing integration into global fashion markets. The literature also highlights commercialisation pressures and concerns about cultural appropriation. Adom (2024) demonstrates how changes in the environment, politics, formal education, and technology have affected the manufacturing processes, tools, and materials utilised in traditional weaving. Unfortunately, these challenges persist because the Ghanaian weaving sector relies on industrial methods, tools, and equipment that prevent it from realising its full potential in a cutthroat market. Furthermore, King et al. (2023) state that the main issues affecting Kente weaving were low supply and demand for the product, obsolete production methods, a lack of export marketing, and a lack of data and motivation management systems. While descriptive and ethnographic studies dominate the literature, few studies apply strategic analytical frameworks such as SWOT to the Kente industry. This limitation constrains policy-relevant insights, justifying the present study's approach

Strengths: The findings confirm that strong cultural symbolism, intergenerational knowledge transfer and recognition constitute the core strengths of the Ghanaian Kente industry. These results align with prior studies that characterise Kente as both a cultural artefact and a symbolic communication system embedded in Akan social hierarchy and cosmology. The preservation of symbolic motifs and proverbs within woven patterns reinforces Kente's cultural authenticity, which remains a competitive advantage in global ethnic fashion markets (Oguamanam & Yeboah-Appiah, 2024). From a creative economy perspective, cultural authenticity functions as intangible capital. The survey responses indicating pride in heritage and sustained ceremonial demand support arguments in the literature that indigenous textiles derive resilience from their embeddedness in ritual, identity and tradition. Thus, the strength of the Kente industry lies not merely in production capacity but in its symbolic legitimacy and heritage value (Daitey, Takyi, & Bonnah, 2025; Oguamanam & Yeboah-Appiah, 2024).

Opportunities: The analysis reveals significant growth opportunities in digital marketing, cultural tourism, diaspora markets, and intellectual property protection. These findings are consistent with the literature emphasising the transformative potential of digital platforms for indigenous artisans (King et al., 2023; Daitey, Takyi, & Bonnah, 2025). Furthermore, Ghana's expanding tourism sector presents strategic opportunities to integrate Kente weaving into experiential cultural tourism models, including weaving demonstrations and heritage workshops (King et al., 2023; Oguamanam & Yeboah-Appiah, 2024). Intellectual property frameworks, such as geographical indication protections, also present opportunities to safeguard authenticity and differentiate genuine Kente from imitators (Okyere & Denoncourt, 2021; Oguamanam & Yeboah-Appiah, 2024).

3.3.4| Objective 3: To assess the weaknesses and threats influencing the Kente industry in Ghana

The Descriptive analysis of Objective 3 (Table 5) examines respondents' opinions of the threats and weaknesses affecting the Kente industry in this section. On a five-point Likert scale, respondents were asked to score their level of acceptance of eight (8) selected aspects. The *Kente* sector's threats and

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vulnerabilities comprised the elements. Table 5 displays the Weaknesses and Threats, with an overall mean of 4.03. This indicates that the vast majority of respondents agreed with the variables for Weaknesses and Threats influencing the *Kente* Industry. Specifically, the respondents agreed that, "Modern fashion trends may erode the traditional value of *Kente*" (Mean= 4.23: SD=0.74). The respondents also agreed that, "There is insufficient government support for the *Kente* industry." (Mean=4.14: SD=0.86). The respondents further agreed that, "The presence of counterfeit *Kente* products negatively affects the market" (Mean=4.17: SD=0.74). Again, the respondents agreed that, "Access to finance is a major challenge for *Kente* business owners" (Mean=4.14: SD=0.73). The respondents under consideration agreed with the following statements: "Lack of export promotion limits international market access" (Mean=4.05: SD=0.84), "Fluctuating prices and high costs of raw materials impact profitability" (Mean=3.90: SD=0.93), "Competition from imported second-hand and fake textiles threatens the *Kente* market" (Mean= 3.82: SD=0.88) and "Traditional production techniques can limit efficiency and output" (Mean=3.77: SD=1.01).

Table 5. Descriptive Analysis on weaknesses and threats influencing the Kente Industry in Ghana

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Access to finance is a major challenge for *Kente* business owners.	150	1.00	5.00	4.14	0.733
There is insufficient government support for the *Kente* industry.	150	1.00	5.00	4.14	0.86
The presence of counterfeit *Kente* products negatively affects the market.	150	2.00	5.00	4.17	0.74
Traditional production techniques can limit efficiency and output.	150	2.00	5.00	3.77	1.01
Competition from imported second-hand and fake textiles threatens the *Kente* market.	150	1.00	5.00	3.82	0.88
Fluctuating prices and high costs of raw materials impact profitability.	150	1.00	5.00	3.90	0.93
Modern fashion trends may erode the traditional value of *Kente*.	150	1.00	5.00	4.23	0.74
Lack of export promotion limits international market access.	150	1.00	5.00	4.05	0.84
Overall Mean				**4.03**	

Cultural commodification and external threat: However, globalisation also produces a threat. Mass production in foreign markets, particularly through machine imitation, undermines authenticity and pricing power. The historical sacred status of Kente becomes diluted when counterfeit products enter global markets, cultural symbols are reproduced without context, and intellectual property protection is also weak. The highest mean score recorded in the analysis (M= 4.00) reflects stakeholder concern about cultural commodification. Therefore, the threat is not purely economic; it is symbolic erosion. Cultural dilution threatens both identity and market sustainability. The findings suggest a structural paradox. Thus, culture simultaneously fuels Strength and Opportunity while intensifying Weakness and Threat. This duality explains the observed statistical imbalance. The industry possesses symbolic capital but lacks sufficient structural modernisation to defend that capital.

Traditional production systems as structural weakness: While cultural heritage strengthens identity, traditional weaving structures also contribute to internal weaknesses. Historically, production has been family-based, informally organised, apprenticeship-driven and technologically limited. These characteristics preserve authenticity but simultaneously constrain scale expansion, standardisation, quality consistency and modern market responsiveness. Therefore, cultural preservation and structural rigidity intersect. The SWOT weakness dimension (M = 3.52) can partly be interpreted as reflecting inherited production limitations rooted in tradition rather than contemporary managerial failure.

Weakness: Despite its cultural strength, the study identified structural weaknesses, including limited technological modernisation, inadequate financing, production inefficiencies, and an ageing artisan population (King et al., 2023; Adom, 2024). The findings correspond with broader research on small-scale craft industries in sub-Saharan Africa, where informal production structures constrain scalability

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and innovation (World Bank, 2020; King et al., 2023). Similar studies on indigenous crafts highlight the risk of knowledge erosion when youth participation declines (Oguamanam & Yeboah-Appiah, 2024). Additionally, limited access to capital restricts the adoption of improved looms, dye technologies, and digital marketing tools, thereby reducing competitiveness against mechanised textile imports (World Bank, 2020; King et al., 2023). The persistence of manual-intensive methods also contributes to longer production cycles and higher costs (Ross & Adu-Agyem, 2008; King et al., 2023).

Threats: The most pressing threats identified include imitation textiles, cheap imports, cultural appropriation, and declining youth interest. The proliferation of machine-printed "Kente-style" fabrics significantly undermines authentic handwoven production. This aligns with global scholarship on craft commodification, where mass reproduction weakens traditional artisan markets. Additionally, globalisation exposes the industry to price competition that small-scale producers struggle to match. Without strategic branding and legal protection, the industry risks dilution of cultural identity and market displacement (Okyere & Denoncourt, 2021; Oguamanam & Yeboah-Appiah, 2024; King et al., 2023).

Inferential analysis of SWOT dimensions: To strengthen the analytical rigour of the study beyond descriptive statistics, inferential analyses, confidence intervals, and effect sizes were conducted on composite SWOT dimensions. Composite indices were computed for Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat dimensions by averaging the respective Likert-scale items. To improve precision and transparency, 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were calculated (Table 6). Also, to examine whether perceptions of the SWOT dimensions differed across demographic characteristics, independent-samples t-tests and a one-way ANOVA were conducted.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics and 95% Confidence Intervals for SWOT Dimensions

Variable	N	M	SD	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
Strength	—	3.21	0.58	3.12	3.30
Weakness	—	3.52	0.76	3.40	3.65
Opportunity	—	3.72	0.69	3.60	3.83
Threat	—	4.00	0.65	3.90	4.11

Note. CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit.

The strength dimension (Table 6) recorded a mean score of 3.21(SD = 0.58), with a 95% confidence interval of (3.12, 3.30), indicating moderately positive perceptions of the industry's internal strengths. The weakness dimension also yielded a mean of 3.52 (SD = 0.76), with a 95% CI of (3.40, 3.65), suggesting moderate acknowledgement of structural and operational challenges. The opportunity dimension recorded a relatively high mean of 3.72 (SD = 0.69) with a 95% CI of (3.60, 3.83), also indicating a strong perceived external growth potential. The threat dimension produced the highest mean score of 4.00 (SD = 0.65) with a 95% confidence interval of (3.90, 4.11), reflecting substantial concern regarding external pressures such as imitation textiles and market competition. Notably, perceived threats exceeded perceived strengths, suggesting that external pressures may outweigh internal capacities within the industry.

Table 7. Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Gender Differences Across SWOT Dimensions

Variable	t	p	Cohen's d
Strength	-0.54	.588	-0.09
Weakness	-0.14	.892	-0.02
Opportunity	-0.61	.542	-0.10
Threat	-0.73	.468	-0.12

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine whether perceptions differed by gender across all SWOT dimensions. There were no statistically significant gender differences found (Table 7). Effect sizes were, however, negligible (|d| < .20), indicating trivial practical differences. These findings suggest strong consensus between male and female stakeholders regarding internal and external industry conditions.

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Table 8. One-Way ANOVA Comparing Education Level Across SWOT Dimensions

Variable	F	p	η^2
Strength	0.32	.813	.006
Weakness	1.77	.156	.035
Opportunity	0.89	.472	.018
Threat	1.12	.345	.022

One-way ANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences across education levels for Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (Table 8). Effect sizes ($\eta^2 < .06$) were small, confirming the limited practical impact of education on SWOT perceptions. The absence of statistically significant demographic differences across all four SWOT dimensions indicates uniform perception across stakeholder groups. This suggests that concerns regarding high external threats and moderate internal strengths are not isolated to specific subgroups but reflect a shared structural understanding of the industry's condition. Such homogeneity in perceptions strengthens the credibility of the findings and supports the argument that strategic intervention must occur at the industry-wide level rather than targeting segmented groups.

3.4| Framework to enhance the Kente Industry

Public education and awareness campaigns are among the best strategies to promote Kente workmanship. Kente weaving will be easier for future generations to understand and preserve if it is incorporated into educational curricula. In addition to offering practical experiences, workshops and cultural events can help people develop a deeper understanding of the art. For Kente's history to be preserved and its importance to be acknowledged globally, museums and other cultural organisations may be essential. Cooperation between academic institutions and weavers may also aid in documenting weaving methods and the symbolic implications of Kente designs (Oguamanam & Yeboah-Appiah, 2024). For Kente to remain up to date with modern fashion and design, innovation is essential. Even while traditional patterns have historical value, incorporating contemporary styles could draw in younger customers and foreign markets. Kente has started to be used in modern fashion designs by designers, drawing clients from all over the world (Adom, 2024). Cooperative societies can be formed to guarantee fair pay, give access to high-quality resources, and boost collective bargaining strength in order to support international trade shows and present genuine Kente textiles to the world (King et al., 2023). Additionally, the tourism sector has an opportunity to promote Kente-based goods, drawing travellers who are curious about African craftsmanship and heritage. Lastly, e-commerce platforms and online marketplaces can enable artists to access a worldwide audience and earn more profits (King et al., 2023). For conventional industries to survive, government regulations are necessary. The Ghanaian government and cultural heritage agencies must implement policies that protect indigenous craftsmanship and prevent cultural appropriation. Programs like financial incentives, subsidies, and low-interest loans for weavers can help sustain the sector. Furthermore, UNESCO's historic recognition of Kente weaving facilities would boost global support and funding for preservation initiatives, as argued by Oguamanam and Yeboah-Appiah (2024). Kente's workmanship may be given the protection and promotion it needs if it is officially acknowledged as an essential component of Ghana's cultural identity.

Ethical and environmentally friendly production practices are essential to the longevity of Kente craftsmanship. The use of eco-friendly hues and natural textiles may lessen the environmental impact while maintaining authenticity. The implementation of moral labour laws, such as equitable compensation and improved working conditions, should encourage the artisans who dedicate their lives to this profession. To encourage sustainable production methods and reduce textile waste, upcycling and recycling initiatives can also be put into place (Adom, 2024). In the contemporary digital era, social media and technology are efficient ways to promote Kente. On websites like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, artists may tell their stories, interact with a global audience, and demonstrate their weaving technique. Collaborations with fashion influencers and celebrities can raise exposure and demand for Kente. Virtual reality (VR) experiences can also be used to generate immersive narratives about Kente's history and craftsmanship, as indicated by King et al. (2023). Targeted online marketing campaigns could also draw attention to Kente's origins and cultural significance, differentiating it from mass-produced imitations (Okyere & Denoncourt, 2021).

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4 | IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

The study reveals that innovative weaving methods, the use of natural fibres and environmentally friendly colours, product variety, and instruction on current design trends will all raise the value of Kente goods. The key to growing Kente's market reach is e-commerce, international trade exhibitions, partnerships with designers and brands, and improved branding. The future of the sector also depends on government support, partnerships with travel companies, and environmentally friendly production techniques. Long-term productivity also depends on weavers receiving training on resource management and information sharing. The viability of the sector also depends on community-based cooperatives. Campaigns for education and awareness are among the best strategies to promote Kente workmanship. Younger generations will be better equipped to understand and preserve Kente weaving if it is incorporated into educational curricula. In addition to offering practical experiences, workshops and cultural gatherings may promote a deeper comprehension of the art. To preserve Kente's history and guarantee that its importance is acknowledged globally, museums and other cultural organisations may be essential (Oguamanam & Yeboah-Appiah, 2024). Artificial intelligence (AI) and 3D printing are two digital methods that can assist in expediting production without sacrificing authenticity. Furthermore, craftsmen can learn new skills through training programs that combine contemporary textile technologies with ancient weaving methods (Adom, 2024). Finally, the opening of online marketplaces and e-commerce platforms can help artisans reach a global audience and secure better financial returns (King et al., 2023).

5 | LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While this study provides valuable insights into the Kente Kente industry in Ghana, it is not without its limitations. The study's scope was limited to one weaving community in each of the three regions, which may not be representative of the entire industry. Additionally, language barriers in the Northern and Volta regions may have impacted the accuracy of the findings. Moreover, the study's emphasis on weaving may not be transferable to other contexts or applications. The study's regional focus and reliance on self-reported survey data may limit generalizability. Future studies may employ longitudinal or comparative regional analyses. Therefore, further research is necessary to build upon these findings, including more comprehensive and quantitative studies that explore other regions and domains.

6 | CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STUDIES

The study's objective was to conduct a SWOT analysis of the Kente industry in Ghana. The study highlights Ghana's preservation of traditional Kente weaving techniques through access to high-quality raw materials and modern equipment. The country produces high-quality, original Kente fabric, in high demand both domestically and internationally. The government offers incentives and support, and the sector is marketed as a cultural and financial asset. Assistance from NGOs and stakeholders is also emphasised. The study emphasises the problems the Kente sector faces due to counterfeit goods, company owners' financial difficulties, and the government's lack of support. The market is also impacted by imported second-hand textiles, high raw material prices, and traditional manufacturing processes. Modern fashion trends may compromise Kente's historical significance, and a lack of export marketing limits access to international markets. The study emphasises the obstacles that the Kente industry faces, such as conventional production methods, high raw material costs, counterfeit goods, financial difficulties for Kente enterprises, and inadequate government assistance. It also suggests that modern fashion trends may undermine Kente's historical significance, and that a lack of export marketing restricts international market access. The study suggests that Kente goods' value can be increased through innovative weaving methods, natural fibres, and design trends. To expand the market, e-commerce, international trade exhibitions, and partnerships with designers and brands are key. Government support, travel companies, and environmentally friendly production techniques are also crucial. Long-term productivity depends on resource management training and information sharing. Community-based cooperatives and education campaigns are essential for promoting Kente craftsmanship. Workshops and cultural gatherings can also deepen understanding of the art. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- To guarantee a consistent, reasonably priced supply of high-quality materials for weavers, stakeholders in the Kente industry must make investments in regional cotton cultivation and yarn

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manufacturing. Additionally, alternative raw materials that are more affordable and environmentally friendly need to be investigated, including expanding the usage of organic fibres that are supplied locally.

- For craftsmen to embrace contemporary weaving technology and effective business management techniques, training and resources should be made available. Partners must also fund training programs to teach contemporary weaving methods and the use of semi-automated equipment. This can assist in creating industry standards for Kente production, such as rules for materials, design, and quality control, boost production capacity without compromising the originality and quality of Kente products, and foster customer trust by guaranteeing consistency in product quality.

- Additionally, product variety should be promoted to accommodate wider markets and customer preferences. Encourage more robust protection of intellectual property rights by trademarking Kente designs, enforcing laws that prohibit the illegal manufacture and sale of copycat Kente items, and informing customers about the distinctions between genuine Kente and imitations through in-store signage, product labelling, and marketing initiatives.

- To transfer skills and maintain the industry's workforce, partner stakeholders should start mentorship and apprenticeship programs for young people. To draw in and educate the next generation, Kente weaving and textile arts should be incorporated into school curricula and vocational training facilities, while promoting the establishment of cooperatives and organisations that will enable resource sharing, advocacy, and collective bargaining. The Ghanaian Kente industry can ensure its sustainability and growth for future generations by putting these suggestions into practice, building on its strengths, addressing its shortcomings, seizing new possibilities, and reducing risks.

6.1| Policy Implications and Strategic Recommendations

From a SWOT analytical perspective, strengthening Ghana's Kente industry requires an integrated policy framework that simultaneously addresses structural weaknesses and external threats while leveraging cultural strengths and emerging global opportunities. Central to this transformation is the consolidation of intellectual property (IP) protection mechanisms. The formal operationalisation and enforcement of a Geographical Indication (GI) regime for culturally significant textiles such as Kente would safeguard origin-linked authenticity, prevent misappropriation, and enhance market differentiation (Okyere & Denoncourt, 2021). Institutional collaboration between relevant intellectual property authorities and cultural heritage institutions should prioritise streamlined registration processes, reduced barriers for small-scale artisans, and targeted IP literacy programs within weaving clusters. Furthermore, the introduction of collective trademarks and standardised certification marks would strengthen quality assurance systems and build export credibility. Enhanced border surveillance and anti-counterfeiting enforcement are equally necessary to mitigate the threat posed by imported synthetic imitations that undermine local producers and distort market value (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019; Oguamanam & Yeboah-Appiah, 2024).

Complementing IP reforms, sustainable and sector-specific funding models are required to address chronic capital constraints and low technological adoption within the Kente industry. The establishment of dedicated support mechanisms for artisan enterprises would facilitate access to low-interest credit, equipment modernisation financing, and innovation grants aligned with SME development strategies (World Bank, 2020; King et al., 2023). Blended finance mechanisms that combine public funding, impact investment, and development partner grants could reduce risk exposure while catalysing private-sector participation (OECD, 2019). In addition, cluster-based cooperative financing schemes would enhance creditworthiness, promote economies of scale, and strengthen collective bargaining power within weaving communities. Export-oriented incentives, including trade facilitation support, market intelligence services, and participation in international exhibitions, would position the industry within global ethical fashion value chains (King et al., 2023; World Trade Organization, 2021). Collectively, these IP and financing interventions constitute a dual-policy strategy aimed at formalisation, value addition, and competitiveness enhancement. By protecting indigenous knowledge assets while simultaneously expanding access to capital and export markets, Ghana's Kente industry can transition from a culturally rich yet vulnerable informal sector into a resilient, innovation-driven, and globally competitive creative economy subsector (Oguamanam & Yeboah-Appiah, 2024; King et al., 2023).

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available. Access to the data may be provided by the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to ethical and confidentiality considerations.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The author declares no conflict of interest.

ETHICS APPROVAL STATEMENT

The confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were assured.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the authors used ChatGPT, Kimi K2.6, Grammarly and Qillbot to help refine the language, improve clarity and enhance its structure. After that, they reviewed and edited the content as needed, and they take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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passionate about textiles and fashion innovations, and his research focuses on harnessing the potential of textiles to drive technological advancements and sustainable fashion practices. Isaac aims to contribute to the textile industry by promoting sustainable practices, fostering inventions, and enhancing the intersection of textiles, fashion, and technology.

Benjamin Kwablah Asinyo (PhD) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Industrial Art, KNUST, Kumasi. He has been lecturing officially for over ten (10) years. He is a research fellow, designer, curriculum developer and lecturer. He instructs in Textiles, Curriculum Development, Research Methodology and Computer Applications in Design. His initiative is to encourage ICT application in higher education, and he has several articles to his credit.

Solomon Boateng is a lecturer and researcher at Sunyani Technical University. Passionate about academic excellence and cultural preservation, he teaches courses in textile design, dyeing techniques, and fashion innovation, inspiring creativity among students. His research explores Ghana's rich textile heritage and sustainable textile and fashion practices, contributing to the advancement of the industry. Beyond academia, he engages in community projects, empowering artisans and young designers. Bridging tradition and modernity, Solomon continues to shape the future of textiles and fashion in Ghana, leaving a lasting impact through education, innovation, and artistic expression.