ITFP-GH
Institute of Textiles and Fashion Professionals - Ghana

Journal of Design and Craft Studies

Volume 1, (2026), Pages 30-41

Journal homepage: https://journal.itfpgh.com/jdcs/index



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

DOI: https://doi.org/10.35738/jdcs.v1.2026.03

Enhancing Men's Casual Wear With Indigenous Woven Kente Fabric

Hendrey Kuudifa[1*], Josephine Aboagyewaa-Ntiri [2], Solomon Marfo Ayesu [2]

[1] Department of Fashion Design and Textiles Education, University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development, Kumasi, Ghana.
[2] Department of Fashion Design and Textiles Studies, Kumasi Technical University, Kumasi, Ghana.

Correspondence (*)
Name: Hendrey Kuudifa

Affiliation: Department of Fashion Design and Textiles Education, University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development, Kumasi, Ghana.

Email: kuuhco1990@gmail.com

Check for updates

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This study integrates kente into men's casual wear, sustaining Ghanaian heritage, enhancing comfort and aesthetics, fostering entrepreneurship, and promoting textiles internationally while advancing cultural identity and sustainable development.

Abstract

Purpose: The study seeks to design and produce men's casual wear enhanced with indigenous woven kente fabric. The study, enriched with locally woven kente fabric, would preserve culture and update its functionality in the era of globalisation.

Methodology/Design: The research adopts a studio-based research methodology and a product design process to explore the creative and aesthetic dimensions of improving the style of men's casual wear using indigenous kente woven fabric. Data were collected through interviews with 25 participants. Focus group discussions included 10 participants. This comprised (2) traditional leaders and (2) kente weavers in Bonwire township and (6) fashion designers and customers from three municipal districts (Oforikrom, Kwadaso and Atwima-Nwabiagya South). Participants were selected through purposive sampling with random stratified sampling from the four selected municipal districts in the Ashanti Region. Weavers and traditional leaders who were readily available and willing to respond to inquiries were chosen for the study using convenience sampling. Data were thematically analysed.

Findings: The study highlights the importance of comfort and aesthetics in choosing casual wear. Kente fabric was highly regarded by stakeholders, who emphasised its cultural and social significance. Kente remains a staple of Ghanaian culture and is ingrained in the country's traditions. Stakeholders were enthusiastic about the new designs because they saw how they could promote Ghanaian textiles internationally.

Practical and Social Implications: The study sustains Ghanaian heritage. It promotes appreciation of Ghana's tradition and culture through apparel products. It draws Ghanaians' attention to creativity in the apparel and fashion industry, which sometimes relies on modern sources of textiles. The findings inspire entrepreneurship and encourage socio-cultural traits in youths.

Originality: This study's uniqueness lies in its innovative incorporation of Kente's rich aesthetic and cultural symbolism into casual wear, moving beyond its customary ceremonial or royal uses in contemporary apparel. This approach would highlight the fabric's storytelling aspect and address the contemporary challenge of preserving traditional weaving while creating innovative designs, potentially involving research into applying different Kente patterns, colours, and craftsmanship to create unique garments for a modern market.

Keywords
Casual wear enhancement, culture, garment industry, indigenous fabric, kente

1 | INTRODUCTION

Indigenous textiles are vital cultural artefacts that represent history, philosophies and beliefs of a given people (Ayesu et al., 2023; Daitey et al., 2025). Numerous studies have demonstrated that indigenous African textile fabrics are unique, distinctive, and visually appealing (Bawa, 2021; Armah et al., 2023). In Ghana, these textile designs and motifs are seen as special and exclusive in various societies (Armah et al., 2023). Among the Akan people of Ghana, the designs and motifs in the Kente fabric that one puts on determine the person's belief, ideology and even his or her status in society (Armah et al., 2023). Acquaye (2018) puts forward that designs and motifs used in Kente fabrics have philosophical and moral tenets associated with them. Observably, Ghanaians have generally become more accepting of using indigenous fabrics rather than just reserving them for traditional ceremonies (Ayesu et al., 2023). Indigenous fabric industries offer different jobs or business prospects as they help to promote the Ghanaian heritage to the world (Freeman et al., 2022). However, the importation of foreign textile goods into the country somehow affects our indigenous woven fabrics and fashion industries (Daitey et al., 2025).

Casual wear is considered to be an inevitable part of our lives. These are clothes that help us feel comfortable (Collins, 2024). Casual wear is the most commonly worn type of clothing inside and outside the home in casual

Received: January 05, 2026. **Revised:** April 25, 2026. **Accepted:** August 18, 2026.

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s). Published in the Journal of Design and Craft Studies by the Institute of Textiles and Fashion Professionals – Ghana (ITFP-GH). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Common Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/). This license permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.35738/jdcs.v1.2026.03

settings such as shopping, meeting friends, etc. (Gupta, 2012). Incorporating indigenous woven fabric into contemporary fashion is not only about innovation, originality, and elegance, but also about increasing awareness of traditional beauty and preserving cultural heritage (Ayesu et al., 2023). Nonetheless, to gain support and recognition among young people, the Indigenous woven fabric should be incorporated into modern clothes that update traditions (Freeman et al., 2022). This would help broaden the usage of indigenous woven fabric, thereby neutralising the perception of using indigenous fabrics as opposed to just reserving them for traditional ceremonies (Ayesu et al., 2023). According to past research, the introduction of modern materials, ideas, and methods of clothing production has altered Ghana's demands for fashion and apparel. This has influenced, in some manner, the woven fabric of Ghanaian society (Boadi et al., 2023). Due to fast fashion and increasing globalisation, the market for local textiles has been overtaken by cheaper, mass-produced equivalents, putting their survival and ongoing cultural relevance in jeopardy (Daitey et al., 2025). According to Agyekum (2025), young people in Ghana no longer primarily rely on the indigenous woven fabric as their source of work. These factors contribute to Ghana's high youth unemployment rate (Dawa Industrial Zone, 2025). This raises the question of whether these fabrics will endure in a shifting cultural and economic landscape, influencing, in some manner, the woven fabric of Ghanaian society (Boadi et al., 2023).

Designing and producing men's casual apparel enhanced with locally woven kente fabric not only upholds tradition but also modernises its usefulness in the age of globalisation. By incorporating these materials into modern designs, Ghanaian fashion has the potential to become a global force, support the economic growth of artisans, and increase cultural pride. Adding locally woven kente materials to men's casual wear would also allow Ghanaians to observe the creativity of the fashion and garment sectors, which at times relied on modern textile resources. This would support Ghana's rural areas and small-scale enterprises while educating and motivating people to work for themselves. It might also encourage people to launch their businesses, hire more workers, lower unemployment, and import textiles from other countries. The study aims to design and produce men's casual wear enhanced with indigenous woven kente fabric. The study showcases the art and aesthetics of combining traditional woven kente and contemporary fashion fabrics through apparel products.

1.1| Indigenous woven fabric (Kente)

There is no complete history of Kente since several authors have offered different accounts of the genesis of the fabric, which are partially explained by a legend and partially by a factual account (Asihene, 1973). According to Asante mythology, Bonwire was first taught kente weaving by Ota Kraban and Ameyaw while living under Nana Bobie's authority. They claim to have gotten the concept from a spider's web (Asihene, 1973; Ayesu et al., 2023). This idea is supported by the fact that, at this time, among other textiles, the Ota Kraban century produced lace, woven products and needlework (Ross & Adu-Agyem, 2008). Kente cloth is constructed and worn according to gender. Most Ghanaian Kente designs are not only used for aesthetic reasons but also convey notable symbolism grounded in their values and beliefs (Ayesu et al., 2023). In the context of Ghanaian art, its function goes beyond ordinary aesthetic appreciation to carry a philosophical basis inherent through symbolic utilisation of motifs, colours and materials (Ayesu et al., 2023). According to Asamoah-Yaw and Safo-Kantanka (2017), Kente fabrics, apart from their aesthetic relevance, serve as a tool for communicating our norms, values and aspirations as a people to others who seek to inquire. These textiles are a visual depiction of the general public's aesthetic standards, political beliefs, religious beliefs, ethics, philosophy, history, and oral literature (Armah et al., 2023). Despite having similar weaving techniques, these fabrics' designs vary from Ghanaian region to region.

1.1.1| Materials and weaving techniques

Weaving apparatus are hand-made by the weavers themselves or by others who have specialised in equipment making (Frimpong & Asinyo, 2013). A set of weaving apparatus includes the loom, which is constructed with wood; a set of two, four or six heddles (asatia, asanan or asasia) attached to treadles with pulleys (awidle) with spools (donowa) inserted in them; shuttles (kurokurowa) with bobbins (awua) inserted in them; beaters (kyeree) and sword stick (tabon). Other supporting equipment are the skein winder (fwirdie) and bobbin winder (dadabena), the bobbin holder (menkomena) "I walk alone" used for holding bobbins (awua) during warp-laying (nhomatene) and the heddle-making frame (asakuntun or asadua). These apparatuses, like motifs in a cloth, have symbolic meanings and are accorded a great deal of respect. Yarns for weaving come in a variety of forms, colours and qualities. In the past, yarns were either spun from locally grown cotton or unravelled from cotton and silk cloths imported from Europe and Asia (Fening, 2006). Today, factory-made cotton, silk or spun rayon yarns are obtained from factories in Ghana and outside Ghana. Various colours of yarns may be combined in particular ways to reflect the symbolic significance of a cloth. The quality of yarns used in weaving a particular cloth reflects on the level of prestige associated with the cloth. Silk yarns are usually considered the most prestigious and are therefore the most highly valued. Silk cloth, in the past, was reserved for royalty and the wealthy. The average width of a strip is 4 inches. Several strips are carefully arranged and hand-sewn together (some weavers use sewing machines in recent times) to obtain a desired size. Tradition has it that Kente is woven mainly by men. Today, factory-spun yarns have replaced hand-spun yarns (Frimpong & Asinyo, 2013).

1.2| Casual wear

Casual clothes have existed since civilisation began, but across cultures, the biggest determining factor separating formal and casual garments was the class divide. Even in the heyday of the Golden Age of Style, clothing was expensive, meaning that most people had smaller wardrobes at least compared to today (Collins, 2024). The

DOI: https://doi.org/10.35738/jdcs.v1.2026.03

working class usually wore practical garments made from easy-to-clean materials. Even though certain periods of history saw practically everyone of every class wearing garments made from fibres like cotton or linen, these garments were radically different depending on how much money you could spend on them (Collins, 2024). According to Gupta (2012), casual wear is described as a relaxed, comfortable Western dress code that can be worn occasionally as well as for daily activities and household tasks.

1.2.1| Reasons why people wear casual wear

Casual wear is considered to be an inevitable part of our lives. These clothes are worn primarily for comfort (Collins, 2024). It promotes relaxation, which lowers stress and distractions (Gupta, 2012). Casual clothing provides a better range of motion than more constricting formal attire because of its loose fits and soft, breathable materials like jersey and cotton. Casual wear often used sheer fabrics that complemented dance moves: pleats gave freedom of movement, while fringe, beads, and tassels swayed with the beat. According to Clare and Hibbert (2005), Casual clothing expressed this desire to look good and to seem fit and powerful. Wearing clothes that fit and feel good might make you feel more confident and happier. Casual clothing is useful for everyday tasks, including completing manual labour, running errands, and just getting through a hectic day. It is often easier to put together and requires less upkeep, such as ironing or dry cleaning (Clare & Hibbert, 2005).

1.2.2| Features of casual wear

Casual wear is characterised by comfort, relaxed silhouettes, and versatile styles, allowing for individual expression (Gupta, 2012). It's typically made from comfortable materials such as cotton, denim, and jersey. Simplicity and ease are key, with clothing items like T-shirts, jeans, and sneakers being staples (Collins, 2024).

- Comfort: Casual wear prioritises comfort and ease of movement, often using breathable and flexible fabrics.
- Simplicity: Casual styles tend to be simple and easy to put together, allowing for effortless style.
- Relaxed Silhouettes: Casual clothing often features looser fits and relaxed silhouettes.
- Versatility: Casual wear can be dressed up or down depending on the occasion, making it a versatile option for various settings.
- Personal Expression: Casual wear provides opportunities to express personal style through colour, patterns, and accessories.
- Material: Comfortable fabrics like cotton, denim, and jersey are commonly used.
- Everyday Use: Casual wear is designed for everyday activities and is not typically reserved for formal occasions.

1.2.3| Fabrics used for casual wear

With the rise in popularity of spectator sports in the late 20th century, a lot of athletic attire, like jogging suits, running shoes, and track clothing, has impacted casual wear (Clare & Hibbert, 2005). Denim, cotton, jersey, flannel, and fleece are standard fabrics used for casual attire (Clare & Hibbert, 2005).

2 | METHODOLOGY

The research adopts a studio-based research methodology and a product design process to explore the creative and aesthetic dimensions of improving the style of men's casual wear using indigenous Kente-woven fabric. The study adopts a studio-based research design, which is relevant because it involves the practical, aesthetic process of developing and enhancing men's casual wear using native Kente-woven fabric. The product design process includes the methods and steps used in the conversion of a given design concept to a finished garment. This process combines all steps involved, starting from the initial idea, design, and production up to quality control. It combines technical and creative elements to be in line with both form and function. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with 25 participants for qualitative data regarding this study. Interviews were employed for the study because they sought to probe their opinions on indigenous kente woven fabric in men's casual wear in the four municipal districts of the Ashanti region. Focus group discussions included 10 participants and were used to gather in-depth qualitative data through structured conversations. The participants comprised of (2) traditional leaders and (2) kente weavers in Bonwire township and (6) fashion designers and customers from three municipal districts (Oforikrom, Kwadaso and Atwima-Nwabiagya South). The participants were selected through purposive Sampling with random stratified sampling from the four selected municipal districts in the Ashanti region. The fashion designers and regular customers were deliberately situated in three municipal districts of different socio-economic statuses in the region. The researchers employed Convenience Sampling to select weavers and traditional leaders who were easily available and willing to answer questions. The number of initial volunteers shrank as many lost interest or had busy schedules.

2.1| Design Process

The design process included ideation, visualisation, experimentation, creation and interviews of physical artefacts in the collection of designs to validate their feasibility and applicability, as represented in Figure 1.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.35738/jdcs.v1.2026.03

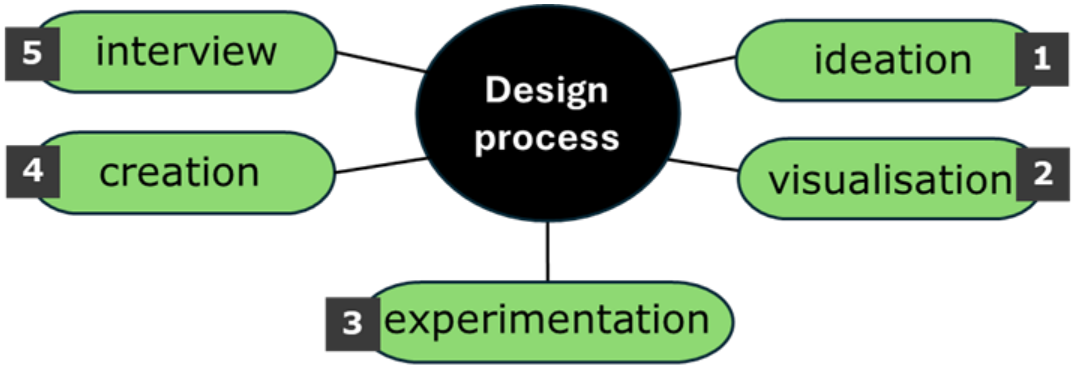


Figure 1. Design process (Source: Researchers' construct, 2025)

2.2| Ideation

Everything starts with an idea. Arguably, even the most innovative breakthroughs have humble origins as simple ideas, sketched on a post it or piece of paper. Ideation is essential to the development of innovative products, services, and technologies (Chulvi et al., 2013; Romer et al., 2001). According to Jonson (2005), ideation is the creative process of generating, developing and communicating new ideas, where an idea is understood as a basic element of thought that can be either visual, concrete or abstract. Graham and Bachmann (2004) state that "ideation is all stages of a thought cycle from innovation to development to actualisation". In order to create new designs that combine traditional aspects with contemporary wearability, the study's ideation process entails comprehending the aesthetic qualities, weaving techniques, and symbolic significance of Kente. In order to create designs that appeal to contemporary consumers while maintaining cultural heritage, this process entails investigating historical and cultural contexts, experimenting with various motifs and colour schemes, and modifying the woven fabric's qualities, such as flexibility and breathability, for particular casual wear styles. The design process's conceptualisation is depicted in Figure 2.

2.3| Visualisation

Visualisation is a process of mentally constructing, shaping and understanding information and the ability to externally communicate it. This process extends beyond simply representing in visual terms – using manual activities such as drawing, imaging (photography, collages), or making skills (Idi & Khaidzir, 2010). Rather, it relies on these abilities as methods for thinking, conceiving, exploring, and proposing ideas. In essence, visualisation is the pathway for design (Anderson & Lilly, 2004). Visualisation as a design process for enhancing men's casual wear with indigenous Kente fabric involves interpreting the visual and symbolic meanings embedded in the fabric's patterns and colours, then manipulating these elements using digital tools or handcrafts to create contemporary, yet culturally significant designs for modern garments. This process bridges traditional aesthetics with the demands of casual fashion, resulting in garments that tell cultural stories through their form, colour, and construction, rather than just serving as decorative pieces. Figures 3 to 6 represent the visualisation in the design process.

2.4| Experimentation

Creativity and experimentation are often considered to be core elements of the industrial design process (Hall, 2011). The products start to become differentiated to have some market appeal. Iteration ensures that continual incremental improvements are made to enable increased performance and to keep pace with functional and technological developments. This process involves incorporating traditional woven kente fabric into contemporary styles through design innovation, material selection, and aesthetic integration. Key aspects include exploring new Kente patterns or colours, incorporating Kente fabric into casual wear designs; experimenting with selected Kente fabric, integrating it into modern aesthetics, and collaborating with stakeholders to ensure cultural authenticity while meeting market demands.

2.5| Creation

The concept of design involves emulating the visual characteristics of natural phenomena as well as human-made artefacts. The approach facilitates designers in contemplating a design problem from various perspectives that are contingent upon the design discipline they opt for (Hassan, 2023). Creation is a core element of the design process, where designers translate ideas and concepts into tangible solutions. This often involves ideation, sketching, prototyping, and refining designs to meet specific needs and goals. The design process itself can be viewed as a systematic approach to problem-solving and creation, involving stages like research, planning, and evaluation. Integrating locally woven kente fabric into modern designs that respect cultural heritage while satisfying contemporary functional and aesthetic requirements is one way to enhance men's casual wear. Important considerations include creating clothing that honours the intrinsic symbolic worth of kente, making sure the styles appeal to wearers, and preserving the textile's continued significance.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.35738/jdcs.v1.2026.03

2.6| Interview

In order to comprehend the study's aesthetics, comfort, and usefulness, rich qualitative data from traditional leaders, Kente weavers, fashion designers, and regular consumers is gathered through interviews used in the design process for men's casual wear enhanced with indigenous Kente fabric. These interviews help with design choices, including incorporating traditional woven Kente into contemporary clothing, picking suitable hues and patterns, and producing a finished item that honours the fabric's cultural legacy while still being functional for modern consumers. The study employed focus group discussions to obtain a comprehensive grasp of the study's suitability.

3 | RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents and discusses the findings obtained through qualitative data collection, including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with traditional leaders, Kente weavers, fashion designers, and regular customers from selected municipal districts in the Ashanti Region. The results were analysed thematically based on the study's objectives. Figure 2 represents the themes and sub-themes emerging from the study.

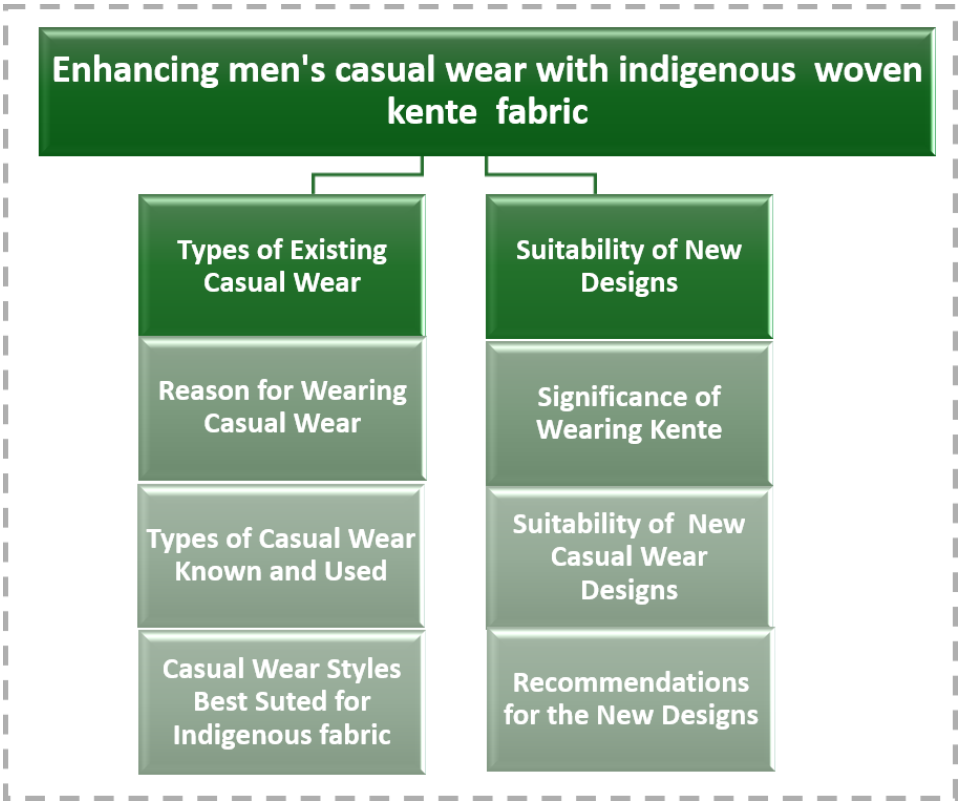


Figure 2. Themes and sub-themes emerging from the study (Source: Researchers' construct, 2025)

3.1| Symbolism of identified Kente fabrics

In traditional Akan culture, Kente is never worn merely for fashion; every colour, geometric shape, and woven pattern encodes specific socio-political history, moral values, and philosophical thoughts (Ayesu et al. 2021). For the benefit of this study, "sika futuro" "gold dust" and akokobaatan "hene mother" were considered.

- Sika Futuro: Literally means "gold dust." Before the use of coins and paper as money, gold dust was used as a medium of exchange among the Akan peoples and was therefore considered a symbol of wealth and prosperity (Ayesu et al., 2021). The predominant use of intricately textured patterns in yellows, oranges, and reds replicates the visual characteristics of gold dust in Figure 3. The cloth symbolises wealth, royalty, elegance, spiritual purity and honourable achievement.
- Akokobaatan - Mother hen: "Akokobaatan" depicts a symbol of motherliness, parental care, parental discipline, and tenderness. This kente fabric was derived from the proverbs: "Akoko baatan tia ne ba so a, onku no" and also "Akoko batan na onim dea nrmma bedi". When it literally means the hen steps on the feet of her chicken, she does not mean to kill them. That is, parental admonition is not intended to harm the child, but to correct the child. Also, the good mother knows what her children will eat. A good mother not only feeds her children food, but also feeds them with love, affection, warmth, tenderness and care (GhanaWeb, 2015). Figure 4 represents the kente fabric of "Akokobaatan".

DOI: https://doi.org/10.35738/jdcs.v1.2026.03



Figure 3. (a) Sika Futoro kente fabric (b) Akokobaatan kente fabric (Source: Bonwire weaving centre)

3.2| Concept and Sketch Development

The study draws inspiration from indigenous woven kente fabrics because kente is more than just a cloth. Like most of Africa's visual art forms, Kente is a visual representation of history, philosophy, ethics, oral literature, religious belief, social values and political thought (Armah et al., 2023). Originally, its use was reserved for royalty and limited to special social and sacred functions. When its production increased, it became more accessible to those who could afford to buy it. However, its prestigious status was maintained, and it has continued to be associated with wealth and high social status. Today, in spite of the proliferation of both the hand-woven and machine-printed Kente, the cloth is still regarded as a symbol of social prestige and nobility. The effective selection of the final design can be done by refining ideas. Refining ideas refers to modifying an idea so that it functions more effectively or looks more aesthetically pleasing; this does not necessarily change the entire form but rather makes minor tweaks to improve the concept. It is very key to keep the design brief in mind when refining an idea. Also, the idea refinement should reflect the intended style and effectively interpret the source of inspiration, function effectively for the intended purpose, be produced using available fabrics and techniques and appeal to the target market. Design sketches were developed to bring the concepts through garment design. The sketching process consisted of playing with different silhouettes, construction styles, and placement techniques for incorporating Kente fabric details. The first sketches were adjusted after fashion professionals weighed in on them. The key to refinement was the recalibration of combinations of design elements, colour schemes and construction features to maximise aesthetics with functionality. Figures 4 to 7 represent the CAD version of sketch development of the silhouette men's casual wear garment.

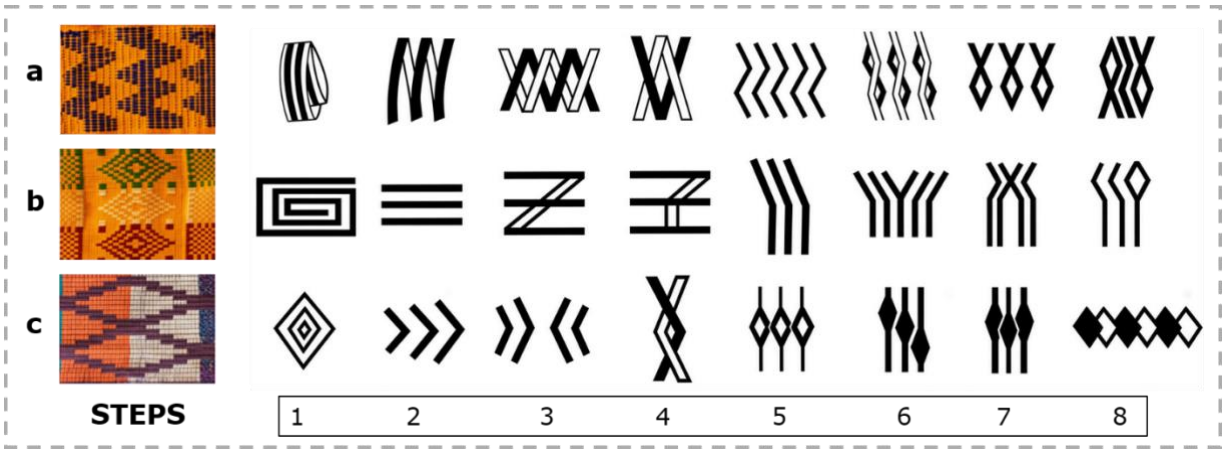


Figure 4. CAD version of idea development from two selected Kente motifs and patterns as represented A, B And C (Source: Researchers' Construct, 2025)

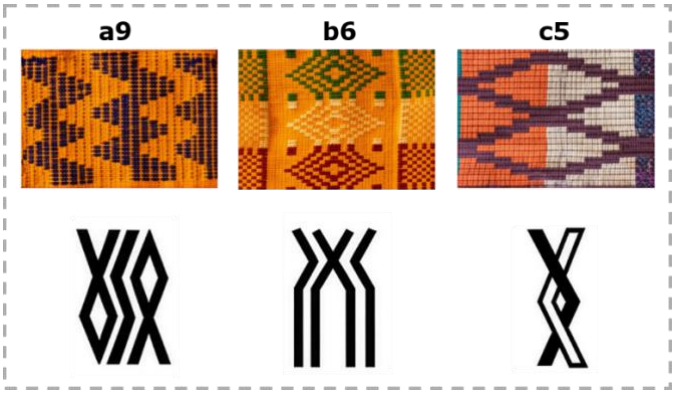


Figure 5. Motifs selected for the final silhouette styles (Source: Researchers' construct, 2025)

DOI: https://doi.org/10.35738/jdcs.v1.2026.03



Figure 6. CAD version of silhouette men's casual wear style (DDF 1) design from 'akokobaatan' kente fabric. (Source: Researchers' Construct, 2025)

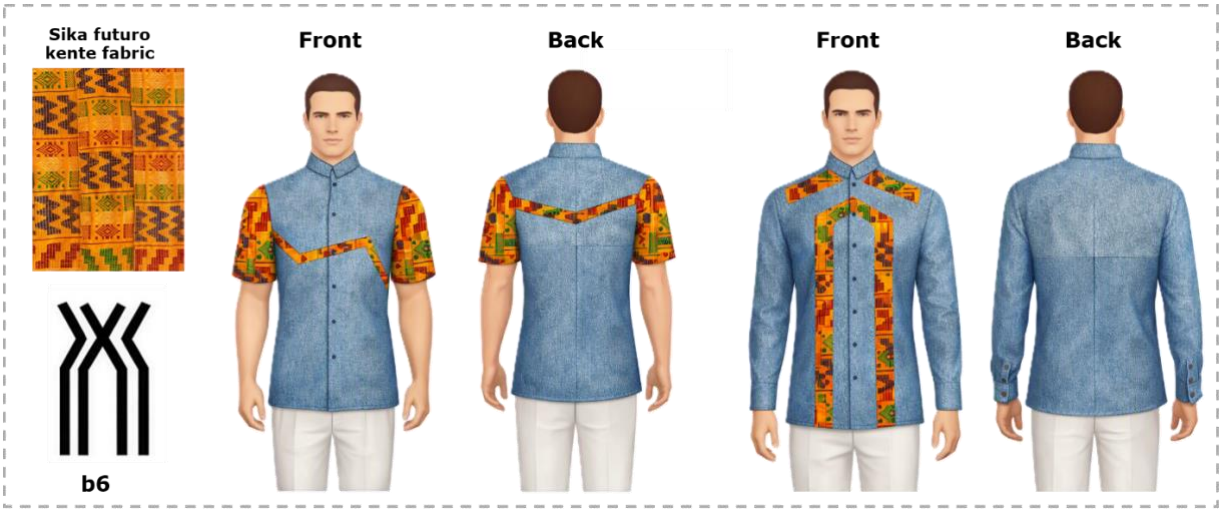


Figure 7. CAD version of silhouette men's casual wear style (DDF 3) design from 'Sika futuro' kente fabric. Source: Researchers' Construct (2025)

3.3| Production of final garments

A strong case for the cultural and financial sustainability of current African fashion is made by the new men's casual wear designs reinforced with locally woven kente cloth, which help to integrate traditional legacy with modern identity. Every figure in this study reflects a particular design decision that has both practical and symbolic meaning. The main contention is that kente, which has historically only been worn by royalty and during ceremonial occasions, may be modified for casual wear without losing its deep cultural significance. The figures show how this modification makes the cloth more widely available, profitable for regional weavers, and an effective means of expressing cultural pride in a contemporary, international setting.

The "akokobaatan" men's casual clothing styles are seen in Figures 8 and 9. Standard light-ash polyester shirts with "akokobaatan" woven kente fabric on the front of both shirts and short sleeves. These figures show how kente is easily incorporated into a well-known casual fabric. The "Akokobaatan" pattern, which represents motherliness, parental care, parental discipline, and tenderness, indicates that the purpose of parental admonition is to correct the kid rather than do harm. A good mother also understands what her kids will eat. A good mother provides her children with love, affection, warmth, tenderness, and care in addition to nourishment (Asamoah-Yaw & Safo-Kantanka, 2017). "Sika futuro" men's casual clothing styles are depicted in Figure 9. The sleeves, front, back, and shoulders of this basic light-blue polyester button-down shirt are made of "Sika futuro" kente fabric. For those who like a minimalist look, these designs demonstrate how kente can be quietly incorporated. The use of "Sika futuro" gold dust, which represents wealth, royalty, elegance, spiritual purity, and honourable achievement, is significant because it shows that even small accents can have profound meaning. This expands the market appeal beyond those who would wear a full kente garment (Ayesu et al., 2021).

DOI: https://doi.org/10.35738/jdcs.v1.2026.03



Figure 8. Final production of men's casual wear style (DDF 1) design from 'akokobaatan' kente fabric. Source: Researchers' Construct (2025)



Figure 9. Final production of men's casual wear style (DDF 3) design from 'Sika futuro' kente fabric. (Source: Researchers' Construct, 2025)

3.4| Theme 1: Types of Existing Casual Wear

This theme investigates participants' views on casual clothing, including their inclinations, knowledge of various styles, and thoughts on the best looks for local textiles. Three sub-themes were identified: (i) reasons for wearing casual wear, (ii) types of casual wear known and used before, and (iii) casual wear styles best suited for indigenous fabrics.

3.4.1| Reasons for Wearing Casual Wear

Comfort, ease of movement, and convenience were among the main reasons given by the majority of participants for their choice of casual attire. Several representative answers showed: "I wear casual wear because it makes me look smart and comfortable" (PDO 2). "Casual wear is simple and allows free movement" (PCK 1). "Casual wear is easy to wash and simple to wear" (PCK 2). These responses highlight the importance of comfort and aesthetics in the choice of casual wear, which conforms to Collins (2024). Casual wear is considered to be an inevitable part of our lives and helps us feel comfortable. According to Gupta (2012), casual wear is descriptively interpreted as a comfortable, relaxed Western dress code, suitable for occasional wear and cooling off for routine chores and daily use

3.4.2| Types of Casual Wear Known and Used

Participants demonstrated awareness of different types of casual wear, including sporty casual, active casual, business casual, and smart casual. Their choices varied based on personal style and function. Some insights include: "I like sporty casual because it looks simple on me" (PDO 2). "I am aware of smart and active casual, and I prefer them because they make me feel comfortable" (PCK 1). "I know rugged casual and sporty casual, and I wear all casual attire regardless of type" (PCO 2). The findings suggest that stakeholders are knowledgeable about different casual wear styles and make selections based on their lifestyle needs. According to Collins (2024), comfort or "perceived comfort", is now the ruling factor in how many of us dress. These are clothes that help us feel comfortable. Casual wear is the most commonly worn type of clothing inside and outside the home in casual settings such as shopping, meeting friends, etc. (Gupta, 2012). It is descriptively interpreted as a comfortable, relaxed Western dress code, suitable for occasional wear and cooling off for routine chores and daily use.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.35738/jdcs.v1.2026.03

3.4.3| Casual Wear Styles Best Suited for Indigenous Fabrics

Most participants believed that active casual wear and smart casual wear are the most suitable styles for indigenous fabrics like Kente, tie-dye, and batik. Some responses include: "Active casual and smart casual work best for indigenous fabrics" (PCO 3, PDA 1, PCK 3). "Wax print in evening casual wear makes it look more elegant" (PDA 1). "Indigenous fabrics are suitable for making various outfits, but tie-dye and batik are best for smart casual" (PDO 2). One participant noted that "woven Kente fabric may be too expensive for casual wear, suggesting that batik and tie-dye are more affordable alternatives" (PDK 1). These findings emphasise the need to integrate indigenous fabrics into contemporary casual wear while considering affordability and accessibility. Incorporating indigenous woven fabric into contemporary fashion is not only about innovation, originality, and elegance but also increases awareness of traditional beauty and preserves cultural heritage (Ayesu et al., 2023).

3.5| Evaluation of final garments

The focus group testing of final garments yielded critical insights into texture, cultural sensitivity, and structural adaptation. Analysing the content thematically from fashion experts, prospective consumers, and cultural stakeholders revealed specific lessons, distinct challenges and an ultimate impact on the final work.

3.5.1| Lessons learnt during the testing

i. Weight and Breathability Mismatch: In contrast to modern worsted wool, traditional handwoven Kente is inherently thick and compact. Focus groups noted that full Kente clothing is uncomfortable in tropical areas and everyday informal settings because it retains too much body heat.
ii. Symbolism Matters: Every Kente motif, pattern name, and colour has deep philosophical, political, or historical significance, according to cultural stakeholders. When they are haphazardly incorporated into casual styles, cultural misrepresentation may occur.
iii. Value Perception: Prospective buyers linked handwoven Kente to outstanding quality and high price, suggesting a strong market readiness to buy if adequately casualised.

3.5.2| Challenges encountered

i. Structural Rigidity: Kente's tiny weave structure rendered fabric extremely resistant to fluid draping and Western-style casual tailoring (like slim-fitting pants or casual shorts).
ii. Seam and Finishing Frailty: The edges of the hand-loomed strips frayed significantly when they were cut to fit modern pattern pieces. This put the seams' physical integrity and longevity in jeopardy.
iii. Conflicting Stakeholder Expectations: Fashion experts' demands for structural innovations, customers' need for pure comfort, and cultural traditionalists' demands for rigorous adherence to historical norms created a structural tension.
iv. Maintenance Concerns: Testers brought up concerns about the functionality of everyday use, pointing out that handwoven Kente necessitates careful hand washing and air drying, which conflicts with expectations for low-maintenance casual wear.

3.5.3| Ultimate impact on the final work.

i. Adoption of Structural Blends (Appliqué): In order to keep the clothing breathable, the final line shifted from building entire garments out of Kente to carefully positioning Kente on the yoke, sleeves, and small sections of the front.
ii. Weave and Lining Modification: In order to improve airflow, the study matched hydrophilic, single-layer linings with a reduced thread count for custom-woven parts.
iii. Fabric Stabilising Adjustments: The study developed fabric stiffeners and specific bonding methods along cut edges to provide flawless, long-lasting seams in order to address the fraying problem in the final work.
iv. Intentional Design Narration: The last line eliminated arbitrary pattern selections, utilising only motifs that reflect modern casual values (tenderness and elegance).

3.6| Suitability of New Designs

This examines participants' views on the suitability and acceptance of newly designed men's casual wear incorporating indigenous woven Kente fabric. Three sub-themes emerged: (i) significance of wearing Kente, (ii) suitability of new designs, and (iii) recommendations of new designs to others.

3.6.1| Significance of Wearing Kente

Participants strongly valued Kente fabric, emphasising its cultural and social significance. Some representative statements include: "Kente is treasured because it is highly regarded in important ceremonies like marriages, naming ceremonies, and durbars" (TP 2). "The craftsmanship behind Kente reflects the creativity of our forebears, and I am proud to inherit such a craft" (KP 1)."Our society holds Kente in high esteem, as it features prominently in special occasions" (KP 4). These responses affirm that Kente is deeply embedded in Ghanaian heritage and remains a fabric of cultural pride. Indigenous textiles are vital cultural artefacts that represent history, philosophies and beliefs of a given people (Ayesu et al., 2023). Native textiles, specifically kente, provide significant religious, historical, and social information on their respective cultures (Acquaye et al., 2023). These textile designs and motifs are seen to be special and exclusive in various societies (Armah et al., 2023). Among the Akan people of

DOI: https://doi.org/10.35738/jdcs.v1.2026.03

Ghana, the designs and motifs in the Kente fabric that one puts on determine the person's belief, ideology and even his or her status in society (Armah et al., 2023). Acquaye (2018), puts forward that designs and motifs used in Kente fabrics have philosophical and moral tenets associated with them.

3.6.2| Suitability of New Casual Wear Designs

Participants expressed excitement about the new designs, recognising their potential to showcase Ghanaian textiles globally. Some responses include: "I feel excited because these products are cool for all occasions and will help promote indigenous fabrics" (PCA 3). "Since Kente is a national fabric, integrating it into casual wear enhances its appeal" (PCO 1). "These designs provide an opportunity to market Ghanaian fashion on a global scale" (PDO 2). "This development uplifts the image of Ghana" (PDK 1). These findings suggest that stakeholders view the fusion of Kente with casual wear as a positive step toward cultural preservation and economic development. These were in line with the findings of Ayesu et al. (2023) and Freeman et al. (2022), who noted that the rich cultural history of the people is symbolised by handicrafts, which must be preserved to uphold the feelings of community self-belonging. Ghana's indigenous fabric industry has contributed significantly to the development of the nation.

3.6.3| Recommendations for the New Designs

Participants supported recommending the new designs to others, seeing them as a means of promoting Ghanaian craftsmanship and boosting local industries. Sample responses include: "I will recommend these designs because they are stylish and help promote Ghana" (PDA 2)."The new designs will strengthen both the weaving and garment industries" (KP 4). "Encouraging people to wear locally designed casual wear will enhance national identity" (PDO 2). The enthusiastic response from participants indicates that the new casual wear designs incorporating Kente fabric are well received and have strong potential for market adoption, which emphasises the finding of Nwaokorie (2020). Customer involvement in new product development influences the new product development process. According to Hsieh and Chen (2005), to achieve superior new product development performance, it is important to involve stakeholders in the new product development process. The innovation was excited and embraced by the stakeholders, emphasising that the Kente pattern can be realised as another usage and expression of culture. Creating breakthrough designs pays more attention to value creation added to products rather than just considering style for form and technology for the function of products (Cagan & Vogel, 2018). Participants affirmed that the new designs would enhance development in both the weaving industries and apparel industries in Ghana, as indicated by Freeman et al. (2022).

4 | IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

The study's findings have significant implications for the Ghanaian fashion industry. Encouraging the use of indigenous fabrics in casual wear helps sustain Ghanaian heritage. It would bring about appreciation of the tradition and culture of Ghana through apparel products. Incorporating traditional fabrics into modern styles may appeal to younger generations. It would help the youth to embrace the traditional way of dressing as a way of preserving tradition and culture. Enhancing men's casual wear with indigenous woven Kente fabrics serves as a means to draw the attention of Ghanaians to creativity in the apparel and fashion industry, which sometimes relies on modern sources of textiles; doing so would lead to increased demand for locally woven textiles and could support weavers and fashion designers. The designs could inspire entrepreneurship, which would encourage socio-cultural skills training for youths, which will revive the disappearing traditional woven fabrics, even though their production is stressful, leading to employment opportunities and strengthening small-scale weaving and garment businesses. Educating the public on the versatility of indigenous fabrics may boost local textile appreciation, thereby promoting traditional textiles in everyday wear that supports eco-friendly fashion choices. Establishing a strong identity for Ghanaian textiles could position Ghana as a leader in African fashion. The designs have the potential to attract international buyers interested in African fashion. Merging traditional and modern aesthetics fosters creative growth in the fashion industry.

5 | LIMITATIONS OF FINDINGS

The study focuses on designing and producing men's casual wear enhancement with indigenous woven kente fabric; therefore, several limitations were considered. The study focused on a relatively small sample size of 25 participants due to its saturated nature, which included traditional leaders, kente weavers, executive fashion designers and regular customers. These may not fully represent the increasing diversity of the broader fashion and weaving industry in Ghana. The sample was unintentionally skewed toward women, with limited male participation because of the high rate of females in the fashion industry, which could introduce a gender bias in the findings. Again, a sample of two Kente fabrics cannot be considered representative of the entire population of Kente designs. Kente cloth is woven in numerous towns across Ghana, especially in the Ashanti and Volta regions, with designs that are diverse in patterns, motifs, and colours. A study with only two fabrics will miss this richness and diversity. In addition, the study primarily relied on interviews as the main data collection method. While interviews provide rich, qualitative insights, they are subject to biases such as participant self-reporting and interviewer interpretation. Again, reliance on interviews without triangulation from quantitative data or consumer testing limits generalisability. The absence of detailed demographic data of participants constrains the assessment of representativeness. Future iterations might incorporate mixed methods or expand participant diversity to bolster validity. The study was again limited to stakeholders in four selected municipalities in the Ashanti region. The study

DOI: https://doi.org/10.35738/jdcs.v1.2026.03

did not also include other indigenous woven fabrics in Ghana, and therefore the design outcome is not generalisable, given that the process may differ from other indigenous fabric designs.

6 | CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STUDIES

The study concludes that enhancing men's casual wear with indigenous woven Kente fabric is a viable approach to promoting Ghanaian culture while fostering economic and social development. This would lead to enrichment of culture among the Akan people and also create jobs for the youth. Also, the study highlights the positive reception of Kente-enhanced casual wear and its potential to transform the Ghanaian fashion industry. The findings indicate that stakeholders appreciate the fusion of tradition and modernity, and they recognise its cultural, economic, and aesthetic value. Designers should employ the same methods to design for females in order to preserve indigenous textiles and promote their usage on various occasions. This will help preserve Ghana's rich cultural heritage and promote it in the country. Stakeholders, including traditional leaders, customers, policymakers and the general public, are recommended to use the new casual wear design to help preserve indigenous Ghanaian textiles. Efforts should be made to educate the public on the cultural significance of indigenous woven textiles and the need for their conservation. Future research could explore the adaptability of other indigenous fabrics in contemporary fashion to further enhance cultural identity and sustainability in the industry. Future research could also explore consumer perception in casual wear enhancement with indigenous woven textiles, sustainable textile practices, and digital marketing for Ghanaian fashion brands.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to acknowledge the traditional leaders, kente weavers, fashion designers and regular customers for their contributions to this study. The authors are grateful for the feedback provided by the reviewers throughout the research process.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing applies to this study upon an acceptable request from the corresponding authors.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used Quill Bot and Turnitin as AI-powered writing assistant that helps authors refine phrasing, manage citations, screening, and check for accidental plagiarism during the drafting process. All research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, and conclusions were developed by the authors. After using this tool, the authors carefully reviewed and edited all suggested text and take full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the manuscript.

ORCID

Hendrey Kuudifa - https://orcid.org/0009-0005-1137-8521
Josephine Aboagyewaa-Ntiri - https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3465-2352
Solomon Marfo Ayesu - https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3640-0298

REFERENCES

Acquaye, R. (2018). Exploring Indigenous West African Fabric Design in the Context of Contemporary Global Commercial Production. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Southampton.

Acquaye, R., Sawyerr, N. O., & Seidu, R. K. (2023). Reinventing Indigenous West African Fabric Design for Contemporary Commercial Application. *Journal of Urban Culture Research.* 261-76. https://www.doi.org/10.14456/jucr.2023.39

Agyekum, F. (2025). Ghana's Unemployment Crisis: A Ticking Time Bomb. Available at: https://www.modernghana.com/news/1382422/ghanas-unemployment-crisis-a-ticking-time-bomb.html (accessed on May 12, 2025)

Anderson, E. & Lilly, B. (2004). Visualisation in the design process: introducing two- and three-dimensional sketching techniques to enhance creative thinking and communication. Paper presented at the 7th International Engineering and Product Design Education Conference, Delft.

Armah, L., Adjei, D. A., Menetey, B. K., & William, K., D. (2023). Emblematic Interpretation of the Designs of Selected Kente Fabrics among Ashanti People of Ghana. *Art and Design Review*. https://doi.org/10.4236/adr.2023.113020

Asamoah-Yaw, E., & Safo-Kantanka, O., B. (2017). *Kente Cloth: History and Culture*. Xlibris UK.

Asihene, E. V. (1973). Art education development and curriculum planning for national development in Ghana (Publication No. osu1486739989931675) [Doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University].

Ayesu S. M., Anokye D., Fobiri G. K., Acquaye R., Godomey B. (2021). Aesthetic and Philosophical Meanings of Indigenous Asante Kente. *Textile & Leather Review*. 4(4):267-281. https://doi.org/10.31881/TLR.2021.12

Ayesu, S. M., Acquaye, R., Howard, E. K., & Asinyo, B. K. (2023). Promotion and Preservation of Indigenous Textiles and Culture in Ghana. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 15–29. https://doi.org/10.46606/eajess2023v04i01.0252

Bawa, A. (2021). Function of Textile Design and Fashion as Potential Tools for Sustainable Development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Language, Literature & Art Studies*, 9, 1-6.

Boadi, A. M., Frimpong, C. & Seidu K. R. (2023). The Influence of Change on Indigenous Strip-Woven Fabrics in Ghana. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 60(1), 593-616. https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096231176740
Cagan, J., & Vogel, C. M. (2018). Creating Breakthrough Products: Revealing the Secrets that Drive Global Innovation (Version 1). Carnegie Mellon University. https://doi.org/10.1184/R1/5788092.v1
Chulvi, V., Gonzalez-Cruz, M. C., Mulet, E., & Aguilar-Zambrano, J. (2013). Influence of the type of idea-generation method on the creativity of solutions. *Research in Engineering Design*, 24(1), 33-41. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00163-012-0134-0
Clare & Hibbert, A. (2005). A history of fashion and costume. The Twentieth Century. New York: Facts On File. https://www.siamcostumes.com/cutters_guides/pdf/the_twentieth_century_(history_of_costume_and_fashion_volume_8).pdf
Collins, J. (2024). The (Surprisingly Rich) History of Casual Style. Available at: https://www.gentlemansgazette.com/the-origins-of-casual-style/ (accessed on May 12, 2025)
Daitey, W., Takyi, E., M., & Bonnah, N. (2025). The Revitalisation and Preservation of Indigenous Ghanaian Textiles in Contemporary Fashion Design. *International Journal of Social Science, Education, Communication and Economics (SINOMICS Journal)*, 3(6), 1595–1610.
Dawa Industrial Zone (2025). The New Address for Ghana's Emerging Textile and Garments Industry-Dawa Industrial Zone (DIZ). Available at: https://www.diz-ghana.com/en/updates/the-new-address-for-ghanas-emerging-textile-and-garments-industry-dawa-industrial-zone-diz/42 (accessed on May 12, 2025)
GhanaWeb. (2015). *Kente cloth: Fabric of royalty*. GhanaWeb Entertainment Portal. https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/entertainment/Kente-Cloth-Fabric-of-royalty-341546
Fening, K. O. (2006). History of kente cloth and its value addition through design integration with African wild silk for export market in Ghana. In trainers course and 4th international workshop on the conservation and utilisation of commercial Insects Duduville, Nairobi (Vol. 1, pp. 62-66).
Freeman, A. S., Asmah, A. E. & Okpattah, V. (2022). Enhancing Indigenous woven Fabrics for Suit making in Ghana. *ADRRI Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 19(4(7) October-December)
Frimpong, C., & Asinyo, B. K. (2013). A comparative study of history, equipment, materials, techniques, and marketing approach of traditional weaving in Ghana. *Arts & Design Studies*, 17, 1–18.
Graham, D. & Bachmann, T. (2004). Ideation: The Birth and Death of Ideas. US: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
Gupta, T. (2012). Textile Crafts and their contribution in India Fashion. *The American Sociological Association ASA*:2-16.
Hall, A. (2011). Experimental Design: Design Experimentation. *Design Issues*. 27 (2): 17–26. https://doi.org/10.1162/DESI_a_00074-Hall
Hassan, F. J. (2023). Defining the design process: Methodology and creation. *Journal of Design and Textiles*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 20–35, doi: https://doi.org/10.32350/jdt.21.02
Hsieh, L. F. & Chen, S. K. (2005). Incorporating voice of the consumer: does it really work?". *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, Vol. 105 No. 6 pp. 769–785, https://doi.org/10.1108/02635570510606996
Idi, D. B. & Khaidzir, K. A. M. (2010). Visualisation in Design Process. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276891257 (accessed on May 12, 2025)
Jonson, B. (2005). Design ideation: the conceptual sketch in the digital age. *Design Studies*, 26(6), 613-624. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.destud.2005.03.001
Nwaokorie, I. P. (2020). Customer Involvement in New Product Development: Investigation of customer involvement in the development of a product in a Clean-Tech Company in Sweden. (Master's thesis, Uppsala University). DiVA Portal.
Römer, A., Pache, M., Weißhahn, G., Lindemann, U., & Hacker, W. (2001). Effort-saving product representations in design—results of a questionnaire survey. *Design Studies*, 22(6), 473-491. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0142-694X(01)00003-5
Ross, M., & Adu-Agyem, J. (2008). The evolving art of Ashanti Kente weaving in Ghana. *Art Education*, *61*(1), 33–38. https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2008.11518985

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Hendrey Kuudifa is a clothing and textiles teacher at Jacobu Senior High Technical School (JASTECH), Amansie-Central, Ghana. Fashion Designer and a founder of KuuhCo Fashion (formerly known as Dodo-fair fashion). Hendrey obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Fashion Design and Textiles Education from the University of Education Winneba (UEW), Kumasi. MPhil in Fashion Design and Textiles at Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development (AAMUSTED), Ghana. Having spent his early years in a household with regular traditional discussions, he developed a keen interest in indigenous arts and their cultural relationship to ideology. His key areas of work and research focus on indigenous fabrics, culture, and modernism.

Josephine Aboagyewaa-Ntiri (PhD) is a senior lecturer in Fashion Design and Textile Education at Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development (AAMUSTED), Ghana. She has a background in fashion technology, with a Master of Arts in fashion and textiles from Nottingham Trent University and a PhD in fashion from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Australia. She has over 20 years of teaching experience in fashion and textiles in tertiary institutions in Ghana and abroad. Her research interest is in incorporating traditional ideas, especially symbols, into modern garments to preserve them and promote their use.

Solomon Marfo Ayesu (PhD) is a seasoned academic and researcher who hails from Akuapem Mampong in the Eastern Region of Ghana. He currently serves as HOD and senior lecturer in the Fashion Design and Textile Studies Department at Kumasi Technical University. Ayesu holds a PhD in Textile Design Technology, a Master of Fine Art in Textile Design, and a Bachelor of Art in Textile Design from the Department of Industrial Art at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). He also earned a Higher National Diploma from the Kumasi Technical University, formerly Kumasi Polytechnic. His research interests span a diverse range of fields, including Textile Design, Fashion Design, Creative Design, History of Arts and Culture, Critical Thinking, and ICT.