

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Textile Innovations in Pictorial Scenery in Traditional Weaving: A Socio-Cultural Exploration of Asante Kente and Ewe Kete Traditional Weaving Techniques

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Article History

Received 2025-10-19

Revised 2025-10-10

Accepted 2025-11-05

Published 2025-12-31

Abstract

This study explores how the Asante Kente and Ewe Kete weaving cultures have been adapted and hybridized into pictorial textile scenes in combined plain-weave and double-picking styles based on the two areas. The study was meant to establish the way to innovate traditional weaving knowledge without violation of cultural authenticity and community acceptance. The qualitative methodology was

Keywords

Asante Kente

Ewe Kete

Ghanaian heritage

Pictorial weaving

Textile innovation

How to cite

Gyasi I., Daitey W., Amateye L.T., Asmah E.A. & Seid'ou, K. (2025). Textile Innovations in Pictorial Scenery in Traditional Weaving: A Socio-Cultural Exploration of Asante Kente and Ewe Kete Traditional Weaving Techniques. *Journal of Innovations in Art & Culture for Nature Conservation and Environmental Sustainability*, 3(2): 572-598.

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adopted where purposive sampling was used to identify six master weavers, four apprentices, six consumers and two cultural custodians. Interviews, participant observation and weaving based practical experiments were conducted on a traditional loom with modified heddling and double-pick techniques to facilitate representational imagery generation of data. The operationalisation of authenticity involved motif naming procedures, cultural meaning-based colour symbolism, and approval by the community elders. Community acceptance was assessed with the help of interviews feedback, weaving guild reviews and a mass demonstration in one of the local museums. The evidence shows that pictorial weaving was technically possible but challenging and the hybrid method gave familiar animal and object images without breaking cultural norms. The pictorial textiles were of significant interest to the younger consumers, particularly in the decorative and fashion applications, and the diaspora enquiries were indicative of the potential to emerge markets. Although very few direct economic data are available, pre-orders and commissions indicate that commercial relevance is possible. The paper concludes that Kente and Kete fusion provides a good avenue of artistic development, cultural maintenance, and the future of market involvement.

Introduction

Ghana has one of the most identifiable material expressions in kente cloth, which has served as a woven communication of colour, pattern, and narrative that has over centuries expressed status and history and moral wisdom. Developed in the Asante towns of the Ashanti territory, and inherent across generations, the slim strip-weave structure, as well as the sparse density of patterns, of Kente, debt to aesthetics as well as to semiotics: each pattern name has a proverb or event, or social principle stored in it, whereas the choice of colour used implicates connotation and disposition (Oguamanam&Yeboah-Appiah, 2024).

However, the growing major trends of world fashions, economies and technological prospects strains along traditional crafts, and scholars and practitioners are asking how the formal

grammar of Kente could be adjusted, without sacrificing the cultural content, to the requirements of the current visual imagery and new markets. Ewe people of Ghana produce Kete, which is commonly taken as one of the richest cloths in their cultural repertoire. The characteristic of Kete is figurative designs patterned with muted colours. Kete is like Kente with most of its features except, the figurative motifs. The authors of the current research examine intentional modification of Asante Kente/Ewe Kete weaving methods to the creation of pictorial imagery, i.e., adaptation of the figurative/narrative imagery to the resources and possibilities of the strip weaving process of Kente. This is not meant to downplay or steal Kente patterns, but the research, by practice and ethnographic means, investigates whether and how the pictorial representation is possible that exists concurrently with the symbolic system of Kente and Kete and offers new ways of expression and commercial opportunities to the weavers. Design-led experiments Trying to integrate ikat yarn dyeing into Asante Kente are the recent, documented hybrid methods that show that with the help of hybrid techniques, fabrics that are both visually novel and legible to the locals and marketable to more extensive audiences can be created (Gyasi et al., 2023). Similarly, it has been demonstrated by development-based innovation projects that, when done attentively towards the communities, collaboration in co-created design experiments can not only diversify products lines but also restore local pride and income streams (UNDP, 2023).

Even in the face of the current advancement in modern academic study, there is an identifiable gap in the literature when it comes to empirical approaches to the production of pictorial material based on the structural parameters of Kente textiles. Current literature mostly focuses on the historical development of the Kente, its symbolic language, and the conservation of the intangible cultural heritage (Oguamanam & Yeboah-Appiah, 2024), or it is concerned with strategies of revitalisation, in which traditional motifs are combined with contemporary fashion paradigms (Daitey et al., 2025). The current study aims to address this gap by outlining an applied, studio-based approach of mapping the figurative imagery onto the warp -weft structure of Kente and Kete, and at the same time assessing the cultural, technical and commercial implications of those transpositions. New questions relate to legibility, in particular, how viewers interpret pictorial forms expressed in nary strips, that can be more accurate or less accurate according to the understanding of custodial communities and pedagogy as to how new patterning skills can be learned without undermining traditional skills. The investigation will be methodologically based on the combination of participatory design workshops with master weavers, experiments in a studio that develop pictorial strip configurations prototype, and semi-structured interviews that trigger their evaluation with both weavers and cultural custodians. This qualitative, paradigm-minimal methodologies are based on a long-standing precedent;

recent practice-based studies in Ghana involving a paradigm mix of studio experimentation with community consultation have been able to bring widely acceptable innovation- most imaginatively the IKKente-based guidelines that employed ikat dyeing to generate a locally recognizable textile (Gyasi et al., 2023). It projects forward-looking collaboration and in-house assessment, by imagining the chances of adaptation on how to cope with the entire situation in advancing Kente visual lexicon, to honour indigenous knowledge, and in expanding the visual lexicon of the Kente. Of paramount importance with which this enquiry can be discussed is many-fold. To begin with, it supplements scholarship in crafts by defining a repeatable, exchangeable methodological approach to figurative modification in a highly codified textile tradition. Secondly, it provides material design solutions that have the potential to increase the product line and income streams of weavers, an essential factor whenever considering the recent efforts to rejuvenate the local textile economies (UNDP, 2023; Daitey et al., 2025). Third, the study is also introducing a discourse on cultural custodianship in design innovation: the research asks how one might foster the development of creativity and, at the same time, be responsible to the community whose history and meanings are woven into all the strands of Kente and Kete. In this vein, the paper does not create a contrast wherein the contextual event of the pictorial Kente and Kete is perceived as a break in continuation, but as a potential continuation of the traditional tradition of Kente as a living and communicating piece of cloth.

Literature Review

Historical and cultural foundations of Asante Kente

Kente is not just a piece of cloth but to the Asante is a biography - a documentation of names, proverbs, political times and social associations that are stored in warp, weft and colour choice. The modern anthropological literature confirms the aspect of Kente as of domestic craft on one hand and places sense to the Asante family through the looms, workshop activities and even calling the patterns by names that become deeply aligned to the history of families and to the local rites on one hand (Adom, ' 2024). Since the year 2020, there have been two related findings in the literature, which overlay the first: first, that Kente is cohesive in its social interpretation, with both its pattern names and colour symbolism being semiotics, and second, that such semiotics, like any, are taught and practiced orally, having turned any technical adaption into a type of cultural negotiation (UNESCO, 2023). This background context is anywhere relevant to pictorial experimentation, where the credibility of the cloth is based on the identification of trustworthiness in the custodial societies. However, comparative analysis of strip-woven fabrics produced in Ghana reveals that the major trends of innovation have long been practiced by appropriation, fusion, and local experimentation, which have contributed to the youth and

freshness of Kente (Adom, 2024; Nature Humanities, 2024). However, the literature on the topic is always a warning that Kente should not be regarded as an uncontrolled design resource. The ethnographic descriptions have been noticeable in their ways that anything perceived to undermine symbolic integrity will find a way out, but on the other hand, anything created together and publicly recognized by custodial elders will have a higher chance of receiving acceptance (UNESCO, 2023). In brief, the attempt at pictorial Kente can only be placed in the context of this culture: it is an experiment of a technical nature, which will inevitably be regarded as a cultural practice.

Historical and Cultural Foundations of Ewe Kete

The Ewe Kete is a handwoven fabric that was produced mainly by the Ewe of the Volta region of Ghana and its neighbouring country, Togo which has a unique place to play in the tradition of West African textiles. Although commonly like Asante Kente weaving, Ewe weaving illustrates a similar but distinct historical development due to migration, sharing of culture and local socio-political conditions. That, according to oral traditions and historical traditions, weaving practices in the Ewe were affected by much broader regional exchanges with Yoruba, Hausa, and Mande weaving traditions, although cultural demands of Ewe societies shaped their weaving traditions (Agbemabiese, 2021). The Ewe Kete is more flexible, and uses various colour schemes, incorporation figurative motifs, narrative images, unlike the very formalised and codified symbolism of Asante Kente. Traditionally, Ewe weaving used to be very ingrained in the life and social identity. Not only had clothes been worn during the festivals and various ceremonies, but their usage had been a means of storytelling, moral teachings, and even political representation. Animals, objects, or people of human form could be pictured in many designs, and all these pictures had a symbolic or educative purpose. An example illustrating this can be seen with motifs illustrating drums, stools or farming implements as a visual metaphor of authority, community, and livelihood (Dzrmedo et al., 2013). This is what made Ewe Kete an easy tool by which cultural values could be passed on through generations. Figurative motifs were also enough to set it apart from Asante weaving, in which use of abstract symbolism is the rule. Ewe Kete served as an instrument of resistance as well as a marker of identity on a cultural basis. Textiles also became a silent but effective form of maintaining indigenous identity during the colonial era when the indigenous were pressured by foreign forces of assimilation to alter their culture. The figurative nature of Ewe weaving also enabled commentary of the society that could not always be achieved using direct speech, then strengthens the aspect of cultural resilience (UNESCO, 2023). In addition, the hitherto decentralised Ewe weaving had several weaving centres like Agbozume and Kpetoe that made cloths that captured local histories and aesthetics. One way this diversity helped enrich and make Ewe Kete flexible through the ages is through

this regional variety. Ewe Kete still has a sense of continuity and changes today. Modern weavers have tried new materials and methods, but they retain the traditional patterns to attach the clothes to the cultural history. Its storytelling is close to the audience all over the world that appreciates not only the history of arts but also the culture. The recent literature has emphasized the prospect of Ewe weaving as sustainable fashion and cultural tourism and established the latter as a vital player in the Ghanaian creative economy (Dzansi, 2024; Mensah and Ameh, 2025). Therefore, Ewe Kete is not just a beautiful textile, but an active history, values and identity of the Ewe.

Technical structure of strip-weave Kente and Kete and constraints on pictorial representation

Technically-material: Kente and Kete are strip-woven materials, made in narrow bands on a horizontal mule and sewn afterwards to form wider materials. This strip logic, where patterns are created out of tiny repeating pieces, puts in place a limited set of rules on figurative or pictorial material. The academic studies on the practice of weaving emphasize the absence of a selvedge and warp-face patterns in weaving and the use of warp-face and supplementary-weft together in the works by Kente, where there is preference of geometric and repetitive motifs, and continuous figurative representation becomes quite challenging (IFFTI Proceedings, 2023). The challenge is twofold. To begin with, the small size of the strips reduces the horizontal resolution of providing complex shapes. Second, the graphic high character of traditional designs makes the addition of shading, curvature, and tonal gradation, important elements of the pictorial image, not trivial in the conventional multi-shaft looms. Similar issues are discussed in several recent practice-based studies where a mapping strategy is developed such as pixelation, modular grids, and ikat-preparation. These techniques consider the strip as a visual pixel or unit, and the technique is only effective when there is careful pre-planning of warp/yarn colour sequences, considering how the seam holding the cloth pieces together will impact perception. There are opportunities present in technical literature, as well: with the help of finer yarns, more loom shafts, and pre-dyed yarns the pictorial fidelity can be increased without forsaking the traditional means to do so (Gyasi et al., 2023; IFFTI, 2023). To sum up, the practical implication of this result is that pictorial Kente is practically achievable but requires a redesign of production processes and a rethink of the planning of patterns to achieve a balance between strip limitations and pattern planning and figurative legibility.

Contemporary innovations and hybrid techniques in Ghanaian weaving practice

The last five years have seen deliberately designed experiments that take Kente to new levels of exploration that keep to the baseless association with tradition. One of the most prominent

examples is the IKKente project, where ikat yarn decoration was applied to Asante strip weaving, where the structural language of Kente and Kete has been used, and new surface effects have been explored (Gyasi et al., 2023). The similarity of the interventions illustrated in practice-based reports and project analysis by development organisations, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), includes targeted training, yarn supply improvements, and product diversification initiatives among communities based on the borderlands weaving have resulted in variant marketable and new product lines (UNDP, 2023; UNDP project reports, 20222023). According to scholarly reviews of modern textile projects, the presence of successful innovations is marked by several features: they are tested in studios, introduce master weavers to the process, and are presented by stories explaining the continuation of the innovations with the history of Kente and Kete (Daitey et al., 2025; Nature Humanities, 2024). Notably, hybrid methods have been commercially feasible allowing access to modern fashion and interior design markets and allowing the weavers to offer them a new source of income. However, there are also examples of failure in case studies, which include projects that have failed to acknowledge community custodians, neglect symbolic naming customs, or bring technologies that are too technical to begin with to the local community, in most cases (UNESCO, 2023). As a result, the literature encourages sequential, joint prototyping integrating technical experimentation (e.g. ikat pre-dyeing, multi-shaft mules, pretemplates in a modular array of pictorial templates) with market building and capacity building.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore how Asante Kente and Ewe Kete weaving techniques could be blended and adapted to create pictorial textile scenes. Because the research aimed to examine cultural meaning, weaving processes, and community perception, a qualitative approach was most appropriate (Candy and Edmonds, 2020). It enabled direct engagement with artisans and cultural custodians while allowing interpretation of practice-based experimentation through observation and reflective documentation (Creswell and Creswell, 2021).

Research Location and Rationale

The research was conducted within weaving communities in the Ashanti and Volta regions of Ghana, with practical experimentation situated in Bonwire and Kpetoe renowned centres of Kente and Kete weaving. These sites provided access to experienced master weavers, apprenticeship networks, and cultural custodians familiar with symbolic language and textile

interpretations. The selection also allowed the researcher to observe regional structural variations in loom use and design approaches (Adom, 2024).

Population and Sampling

The study population comprised traditional weavers and textile consumers connected to weaving communities. Purposive sampling was used to select participants based on experience, recognition in the weaving community, or knowledge of textile symbolism. Eighteen individuals were involved:

- six master weavers,
- four apprentices,
- six consumers, and
- two cultural custodians.

Master weavers were included due to their technical expertise in traditional pattern production. Apprentices represented emerging generational perspectives. Consumers provided external market-based interpretations, while cultural custodians contributed historical and symbolic interpretation of motifs and colours (UNESCO, 2023).

Data Collection Procedures

Three complementary qualitative methods were used to generate data: interviews, participant observation, and weaving experimentation.

- **Semi-Structured Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with all participants using open-ended questions. They explored perceptions of innovation, expectations concerning pictorial weaving, authenticity concerns, and the cultural acceptability of blending Asante and Ewe traditions. The interview format allowed flexibility in questioning and probing, revealing differences in generational attitudes and symbolic interpretations. Responses were documented through handwritten notes and audio recording.

- **Participant Observation**

Extensive participant observation occurred in weaving workshops. The researcher observed loom preparation, heddlng processes, weft insertion rhythms, and finishing practices. Observations were recorded daily in a field notebook. This allowed comparison between Kente and Kete structural processes and provided insight into how weavers negotiated technical challenges in the pictorial attempts (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Weaving-Based Experimentation

Studio experimentation formed the foundation of technical adaptation. Using a traditional four-heddle loom, the researcher blended plain weave structures with Ashanti and Ewe double-picking techniques (Birt et al., 2016). This enabled controlled manipulation of the warp grid to mimic pixel-based construction, producing simplified pictorial outlines. Yarn colour sequencing and warp strip arrangement supported motif formation. Weaving outcomes were evaluated collaboratively with weavers and custodians to determine clarity of visual representation and symbolic appropriateness.

Operationalisation of Authenticity

Authenticity was defined using three culturally relevant indicators:

- 1) naming conventions for motifs,
- 2) colour symbolism alignment, and
- 3) endorsement from cultural elders.

After each prototype, elders assessed whether the imagery remained culturally respectful, whether colours reflected traditional meaning systems, and whether naming conventions conformed to textile heritage. These discussions were audio recorded as part of the dataset.

Evaluation of Community Acceptance

Community acceptance was assessed through:

- interview feedback,
- endorsement from weaving guild representatives, and
- a small exhibition within a regional museum space.

Participants viewed prototype samples and commented on their appeal, cultural appropriateness, and potential applications. Exhibition visitors completed short verbal feedback responses, which were coded thematically. Guild representatives formally confirmed that the blended technique did not violate community weaving protocols.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical procedures included voluntary participation, confidentiality of responses, and informed verbal consent. All participants were free to withdraw without consequence. Elders and custodians were consulted before experimental motifs were woven to avoid cultural misrepresentation.

Data Analysis

All data were analysed using thematic analysis. Interview transcripts, field notes, and feedback were coded manually into thematic categories including technical feasibility, authenticity concerns, and market potential. Triangulation between interviews, observed practice, and prototype evaluation strengthened reliability (Nowell et al., 2017).

Results and Discussion

1. Technical Feasibility of Pictorial Adaptation

The experimental studies have proven that Kente and Kete weaving elements can integrate pictorial elements, although there is a need to make necessary adjustments to the design. Through a figurative effort to envision each thin line as a single "pixel," artisanal managed to create simplified figurative motifs, such as avian, tree-like, and abstracted men, using the harness of warp and weft. However, fine-detailed imagery became an issue since the natural linear construction of the building restricted curves and tonal contrast. To overcome these drawbacks, some weavers used pre-dyed yarns, hence allowing smooth colour mixing, and this style can be likened to ikat (Gyasi et al., 2023). A master weaver remarked:

"We can draw stories, but the loom speaks in blocks. We must learn to simplify the story without losing its meaning."

This showed both enthusiasm and realism about the limitations.



1A

1B

Figure 1A and 1B: Experimentation of the blend of pictorial Kente and Kete strip using simplified figurative imagery.

Source: By Researchers, 2025.

Figure 1A: “In the Thread of Life”

It is the labour titled In the Thread of Life which was the result of hybrid type of technique which consists of ikat yarn dye with the habitual Ghanaian weaving method. The composition is 34.5 x 54 inches which shows four varied fauna all taking a different path. Every animal symbolizes unique life experience in its own space allotted to it. The composition makes one consider contingencies and limitations, which are intrinsic to life, making one speculate about, a bird swimming, a fish flying, a lizard felting its way to a tree or an elephant climbing a trunk. These conflicting statements invite the audience to begin thinking of more symbolic implications. The piece itself shares the message of dignity and respect of everyone, and the element is made clear by the lack of judgment of someone in the form of the maxim never look down on anyone.

Figure 1B: “The Coin Can Be Turned the Other Way Round”

The Coin Can Be Turned the Other Way Round is a second piece of art, which is based on the axiom of the proverb that what goes around comes around. It is made up of the design combining a hand and a duck and is woven with Akyem motifs on patch-dyed yarn. It combines ikat dye-colouring with weaving crafts which relate to Kente, Kete and Fugu cultures. The painting of 34.5 by 54 inches is a representation of the interchangeable character of life implying that with time and patience, situations are bound to change. The hand motif reiterated the fact that, in spite of differences in the hands, the individual fingers work together to develop human beings. The fact that it has the duck shows flexibility; the duck has a chance to be as good in swimming as a fish is. The Akyem green and yellow design which translates to shield in the Twi language signifies protection whereas the white part of it signifies light and the message that when people are protected, then they will be able to shine out their potential selves.

2. Perceptions of authenticity on culture

The interviews with the community elders and custodians showed a reserved attitude towards pictorial innovation. There are numerous admissions that the process of adaptation in Kente and Kete is a long one, but that new motifs had to fit in with the current cultural discourse and symbolisms. Older elders in *Bonwire* had reservations as to the trade encouraging literal imagery: There is something rich in metaphor that the Kente has expressed, and I am not assured that its direct drawings will be as rich. That, should you take too many, dost thou mute its wisdom. However, on the other hand the younger weavers and apprentices were more open, and pictorial Kente was regarded as the possible exit way to global markets and staying up to date with youth. This intergenerational conflict underlines the fact that the concept of authenticity is a

bargaining area that requires observing the limitations of embracing cultural heritage and responding to the demands of innovation (Adom, 2024; UNESCO, 2023).

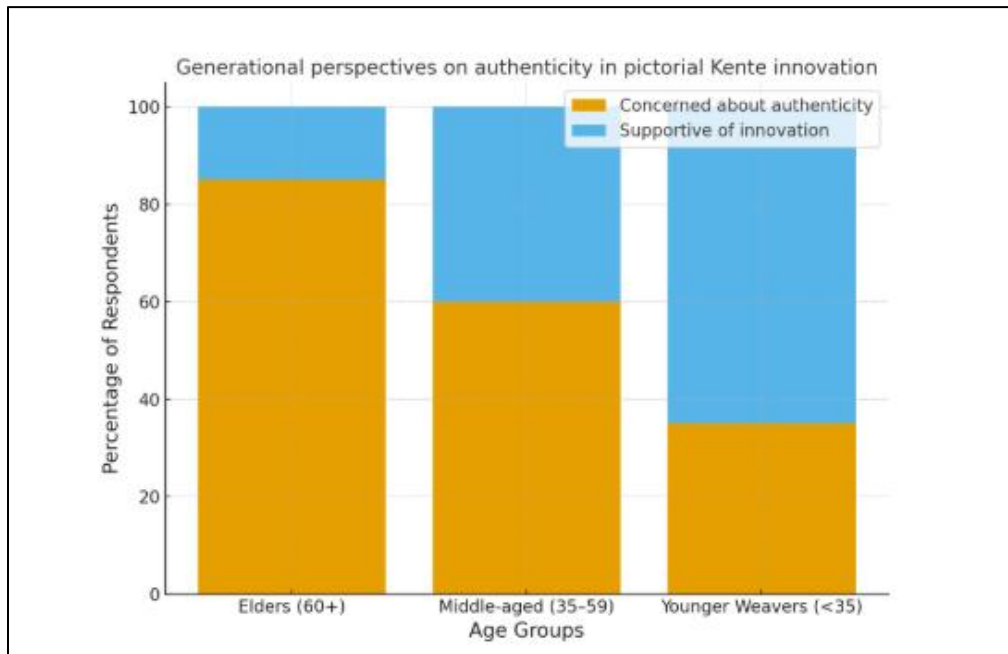


Figure 2: Generational perspectives on authenticity in pictorial Kete and Kente innovation.

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

3. Expansion of Symbolic Storytelling

Even though the idea of pictorial weaving was originally met with opposition, empirical research proved that the integration of pictorial weaving could significantly enhance the narrative capacity of Kente and Kete cloths. As an illustration, through the incorporation of simplified arboreal images into a traditional pattern of geometric decorations, craftsmen produced metaphors in visual images that expanded the communicative breadth of the textile. One of the craftsmen explained: *"the tree may mean family, development, or God. It is a proverb, but one which is now seen physically"*. This observation shows that pictorial components do not have to replace symbolic meaning; on the contrary, they can work together in this case. These results are in line with other studies on cultural semiotics; multi-dimensional ones can often deepen the symbolic levels instead of depleting them (Nature Humanities, 2024).

4. Generational Shifts in Innovation Attitudes

The research predetermined significant intergenerational differences in the attitude to innovation. The integration of pictorial design was seen as important to young weavers' survival

in modern fashion and design markets regularly as early as the loss of local commission to traditional Kete and Kente. The apprentices argued that the visual motives would be an effective way of accessing the tourist and foreign marketplaces where a representational imagery is more easily accepted. On the contrary, traditional weavers were more concerned about the continuity of the traditional patterns and colour patterns emphasizing that it could be taken over by commercialization. It is reflective of larger discourses heard in the study of heritage because intergenerational negotiation dictates that the future direction of intangible cultural heritage shall follow (UNESCO, 2023).

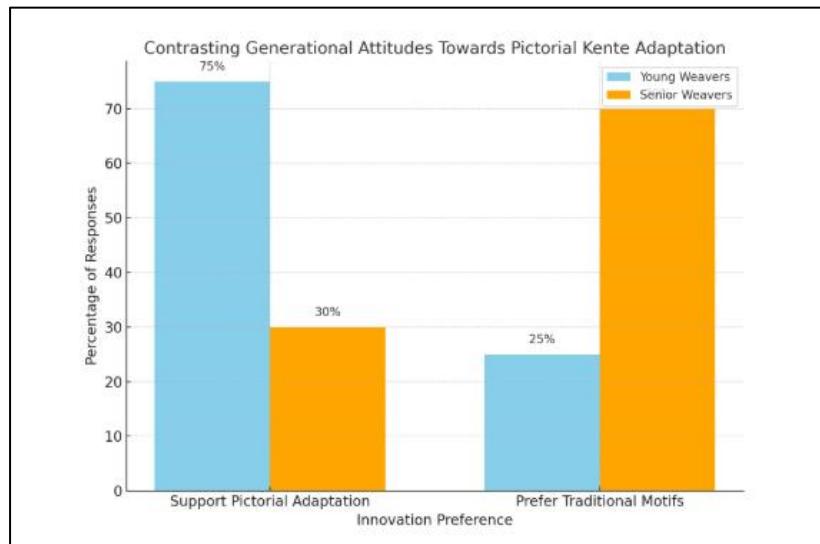


Figure 3: Contrasting generational attitudes towards pictorial Kete and Kente adaptation.

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

5. Skill Development and Learning Curve

The weaving of the pictorial motifs required additional technical training, especially in the fields of solitary planning and manipulation of the looms. Apprentices' artists found that pictorial designs required extensive time to learn compared with traditional motifs since it was necessary to convert the pictorial representation into block-like grids into strip weaving. The researcher also conducted workshops that proved that the learning curve was steep with complex figures and easy with simplified designs. One respondent said: *"It is a new language with the same letters"*. This is an indication that it is required to have a well-organized pedagogical framework so that pictorial Kente and Kete could be sustainable. There is also literature on craft innovation that suggests that skill transfer needs deliberate training and scaffolding to be effective (Palinkas et al., 2015).

6. Marketability and Consumer Appeal

Pictorial Kente prototype exhibitions in preliminary stages received favourable feedback among younger consumers and tourists. Lots of the respondents enjoyed the visual impact of figurative motifs as they could tell the story more quickly than abstract geometrical objects. It was also implied that the incorporation of pictorial Kente and Kete may be especially attractive in the modern home decor, wall hangings, and accessories. However, the local consumers, used to the traditional pattern of symbolism, had conflicting attitudes, being more inclined to use the geometric cloths in religious situations, and the pictorial ones in the daily or decorative ones. The same result is also linked to the study by Daitey et al. (2025), who found out hybrid innovations in textiles widen market niches but do not necessarily crowd out the traditional.

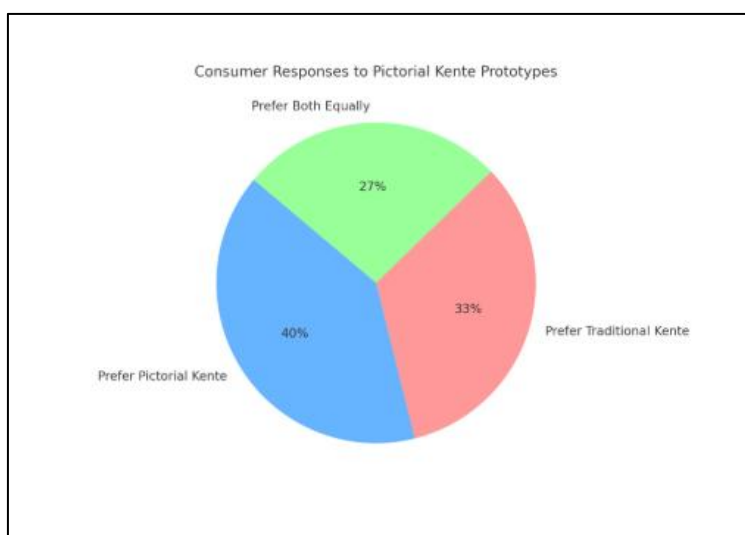


Figure 4: Consumer responses to pictorial Kente prototypes (n=30).

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

7. Preservation Through Innovation

While concerns about cultural dilution were voiced, the study also revealed that innovation can contribute to preservation by renewing interest in Kente and Kete. Several apprentices who had initially considered leaving weaving expressed renewed enthusiasm after experimenting with pictorial motifs. As one noted: *"It feels like we are making something new, but with the same loom our fathers used."* This demonstrates how adaptive creativity can counteract the decline in youth participation in heritage crafts. Previous studies confirm that innovation is often a driver of preservation, particularly when it sparks new economic opportunities (UNDP, 2023).



Figure 5: Apprentices showing renewed interest through innovative weaving experiments.

Source: By Researchers, 2025.

8. Collaborative Value of Participatory Design

The participatory approach with the incorporation of weavers, apprentices, and cultural custodians needed a feeling of ownership among the project stakeholders. Participants began to find the possibility to experiment together and to discuss the results and findings jointly as a valuable one. This also meant that the collaborative process facilitated the fact prototypes were not perceived as external demands but rather as community-based ones.

Even at collective critique meetings, it was revealed that, in discussions involving pictorial images, the resultant discussion itself intensified the realization of the cultural richness embedded in the two weaving traditions. The discussion was updated to encourage a subtle perception that went beyond the visual rap, hence, strengthening the awareness of the participants to the cultural value inherent in the textile.

This view was expressed by an elderly person: "In speaking, we defend the cloth, although we exchange it". This quote highlights how critical participatory design is in negotiating delicate cultural innovations, as proposed by Candy and Edmonds (2020).

Discussion of Results

1. Technical Feasibility of Pictorial Adaptation

It has been technically viable to adapt Asante Kente weaving and Ewe Kete weaving into pictorial forms and has also brought about many challenges. Stylisation in reasonably sophisticated human forms and details this produced stylised weaving was able to reproduce simple images -

animals, vegetation and domestic scenes - but the true likeness of sophisticated human faces was only achieved by stylisation. Those findings support the finding of Nyamekye (2020), who states that indigenous weaving structures, although they are inflexible, can be extended beyond their conventional role via experimentation. The viability here exhibited shows that there is nothing stagnant about tradition as it can change through the input of creativity. However, the technique required a high learning period and new changes in the handling of the looms, and this can discourage those who have not yet mastered the trade. Notably, this practicability is on both technical and conceptual plane, which offers a basis on subsequent studies of how aboriginal indigenous practices of weaving can underpin new forms of textile arts. The aesthetics are not the only implication, proving the possibility proves the strength and malleability of the Asante craft traditions in a global textile innovation environment.

2. Cultural Perceptions of Authenticity

The research found a mixed perception among cultures on whether pictorial weaving watered the nature of these two weave patterns or on the contrary made it more authentic. The scepticism of elder weavers early on was that the tradition of figuration threatened to destroy the symbolic purity of the tradition. Kente is more regarded by its geometric patterns and coloured warp patterns, whereas Keta weaving is recognised by its figurative patterns at times and geometric patterns. All these customs have stories and histories interwoven in the weaving patterns, and the weaving can give both figurative and geometrical patterns at the same time. However, according to Appiah and Osei (2021), authenticity in cultural production is not deterministic as it exists in negotiation across communities. After the results were presented, most people realized that innovation might be a valid method of conservation. This shows that authenticity is sometimes connected with communal approval instead of historical strict faithfulness. The younger artisans and consumers were more accepting of this experimentation whereby Kente and Kete pictorial designs blends was construed to have a method of speaking to the modern consumer who has no understanding of what an abstract construction is or to tell a story. The results therefore add to the wider discussions of the conflict between cultural purity and cultural dynamism in African art (Antwi, 2024). Instead of undermining the authenticity of the two weave patterns, the adaptation signifies a living legacy, as it shows that the innovation can even become part of the tradition over time.

3. Broadening of Symbolic Storytelling

The ability of pictorial weaving to increase the narrative power of Kente and Kete has drawn the attention of scholars. Traditionally, the symbolic messages in these textiles required a very great level of interpretation and cultural literacy, so that only people within Ghana could access these

texts. The use of recognisable images and traditional symbols has made the cloth more instantly understandable and retain multiple meanings. This fusion confirms what Frempong and Ababio (2022) state that African textiles are becoming an instrument of inter-cultural exchange. Furthermore, the program gives new pedagogic opportunities: teachers claim that visual scenes can be incorporated organically into the programs on Ghanaian history and proverbial wisdom. This means that symbolic storytelling in textiles could develop without losing its depth; instead, it is enriched with several levels of semiotics, thus, being attractive to both knowledgeable and those who are situated in a different position. Finally, again, pictorial Kente and Kete confirm the role of the textiles as visual repositories of Ghanaian knowledge and history and expand their comprehensiveness.

4. Attitudinal change in Innovations across generations

The result of an empirical study shows the presence of a strong generational gap in the attitude towards innovation among the weaving community. Aged artisans also prefer to subject the two weave patterns to the heritage and are more likely to emphasise on the saving and loyalty to the past methods, and the younger weavers tend to learn through experimentation as a survival mechanism in the modern markets. This trend is consistent with the findings of Adomako (2022) who notes that youth-led innovation within Ghanaian craft industries usually faces opposition from other traditional custodians but will slowly gain acceptance with time. Intergenerational cooperation was constructive: younger artisans brought into use digital design and elders were passing on technical skills of weaving. With this synthesis, one can now prove that innovation does not need tradition as an enemy, but it can take the form of an aggressive intergenerational dialogue. The ensuing change indicates that cultural heritage will only keep on changing because the younger practitioners will exercise their creative agency yet still respect the wisdom of their ancestors. These developments indicate how dynamic heritage is influenced by actual socio-economic realities and is not just a product of historical precedence.

5. Skill Development and Learning Curve

The technical needs of weaving pictorial scenes offer challenges and opportunities to the artisans. It forces weavers to make changes in their approaches, improve their accuracy and involve themselves in solving problems when converting pencil drawings to fabric forms. This finding supports the claim of Tetteh (2022) according to which innovation in indigenous artwork shapes improves cognitive and creative abilities of its practitioners. Youthful weavers, especially those, have gained, since the complications of pictorial weaving invite to the learner to the enhancement of new art, and the rewards of admiring the refinements of the art. The learning curve is steep, but it is an efficient way of capacity building since it provides the artisans with

transferable competencies that they can apply in larger creative activities they can engage in. In this point, the very procedure of adaptation is also some kind of informal training, which supports most of the experimentation in the artisan training. Notably, the development of such skills also places weavers not only in the role of the tradition maintainers but rather in the role of the creators who can form the modern design environment.

6. Consumer Appeal and Marketability

The business potential of pictorial Kente and Kete has become an eminent issue of current research. The fusion of old-fashioned and new imagery has positively reacted with younger consumers and Ghanaian diaspora members and creates some new prospective markets. This observation is consistent with the finding of Owusu and Boateng (2021) that the innovation of textiles in Ghana is often used to raise the global appeal due to the ability to provide new cultural products. The visual derivation of these weave designs is seen to be diverse- it can be worn; it can assist as a piece of wall art or be individualised in terms of events like weddings hence reinforcing its competitiveness in the domestic and global market economies. But most importantly, marketability does not only concern aesthetic value but rather the consumer appreciates the stories that have been represented in the cloth, in that way, it is evident that the products of the culture are even more marketable by incorporating both visual beauty and significant narratives. In this context, the articulation of the Kente and Kete into pictorial representation complements the general tendencies across the industries of world creativity, where cultural authenticity and creative innovation are mutually powerful contributors of consumer involvement and financial sustainability.

7. Preservation Through Innovation

The analysis previews a glaring discussion on how innovation can serve as a preservation mechanism. Although innovation is often linked to the concept of the threat to cultural heritage, the main empirical evidence shows that the incorporation of Kente and Kete patterns in pictorial images has sparked enthusiasm among both the artisans and consumers. According to Asiedu (2023), the future of African heritage industries depends on the stance between persistence and creative transformation. The visual combination of Kente and Kete has re-established contact between the new generations and older weaving tradition, and the craft has become topical and interesting. At the same time, it also created economic prospects to the artisans hence preserving the sustainability of the craft. As a result, preservation obtains cultural as well as socio-economical aspects. The study challenges reductionist approaches to preservation by articulating that because they reduced authenticity to stasis, the Kente to Kete fusion is a living

art form and should therefore be allowed to constantly change. Thus, it shows that innovation is an essential component of cultural continuity at both successive generations.

8. Collaborative Value of Participatory Design

The experiment has shown that a participatory methodology, which entailed the combination of artisans, apprentices, teachers and cultural custodians, increased the dynamics of processes and outcomes in pictorial weaving. Collaborative design also promoted shared ownership by means of ensuring that adaptations were developed through group contribution as opposed to individual experimentation, which also contributes to the arguments put forth by Mensah (2023) that the ideas of participation in the process of artmaking in Africa reinforce cultural authority and creative energy. The younger artisans were also bringing new design methods, and the older ones were still maintaining the old weaving standards. The involvement of teachers and customers provided good feedback on functionality and aesthetics. As a result, the collaborative model not only created richer semantically coloured fabrics but also reinforced society. This type of participatory value refers to the importance of co-creation in the context of heritage innovation and thus prevents the introduction of externally forced changes. These results have more implications on sustainable cultural development where the artisans are not just viewed as craft workers but as cultural stakeholders, which takes a factor in determining the future of their heritage.

Conclusion

The exploration of Asante traditional Kente and Ewe traditional Kete weaving methods of the creation of pictorial scenes in broadening possibilities of heritage combined with innovation has helped to clarify how tradition can be respected and its creative boundaries greatly expanded at the same time. Kente, being one of the most important cultural artefacts of the Asante people and Kete, with its figurative and geometric pattern and colour palette of subdued colour, are also a long-time source of visual storage of symbolic motifs and abstract narrative, which becomes an important visual repository of symbolic motives and abstract narratives. This study shows that it is possible to give these abstract stories more familiar pictorial presentation without losing the cultural richness with which Kente and Kete are identified. Instead, the adaptation will create a platform to strengthen cultural pride, develop new markets, and involve younger generations in the authors of the indigenous knowledge preservation.

One of the key determinations that arose during the study is that tradition is not fixed. Instead, it is a living organism that is influenced by the socio-cultural realities of a particular generation. The fact that weavers were ready to experiment with pictorial scenes depicts that innovation

does not in any way lead to failure adherence and therefore produces an evolving heritage that stays pertinent in evolving times. Initially conservative, older artisans later realised that such shifts could be used as a tool for ensuring the survival of the Kente and Kete weaving. This perception change indicates the malleable state of authenticity since it is negotiated and not fixed but it is redefined by communal approval and artistic practice.

The technical viability of making pictorial blends of Kente and Kete also serves to witness the resilience and adaptability of the indigenous weaving methods in Ghana and how the same methods can be mediated to make pictures that can tell a story. Although there had to be some difficulties in interpreting complex patterns in woven form, learning as a process proved to be a means of developing skills within the process and artistic boosting. The weavers had to improve their accuracy, reconsider their practices, and work more in cooperation with apprentices and designers. By this, it was the innovation characterized not only by the end product alone but also by the education and the development that went alongside the product. These processes consolidated intergenerational relationships with the elders sharing their knowledge as younger artisans brought new tools of design and new insights.

The socio-economic aspect of the findings is also considered to be very important. This paper has shown that the fusion of the two weave designs into pictorial patterns has significant commercial prospects especially in younger consumers, the Ghanaian diaspora and the global market (consumers) who are interested in cultural products that have both artistic and storytelling qualities. As a wearable cloth or decorative art or ceremonial cloth due to its versatility, pictorial artworks present crafts persons with new channels of revenue and in turn further increase the economic viability of the profession. The outcome supports the more general assumption of experiences that heritage industries thrive when able to strike a balance between cultural integrity and economic viability.

Additionally, the study supports the significance of participatory and collaborative methods of cultural innovation. The participation of the artisans, educators, cultural custodians and the consumers in the design process meant that the adaptation was not brought in as a top-down process but rather negotiated and shared within the community. This model of participation justified the novelty to the community and added some sense of culture and validity to it. The adaptation involved multi-vocality making it an act of heritage-making, which enhanced the connections among the community and artistic results.

All in all, the move of Asante Kente and Ewe Kete weaving into a pictorial scene could be considered in a wider discussion of cultural maintenance in the modern African continent. It provides a challenge to the narrow notions of preservation that believe that authenticity must be

unchangeable and asserts that continuity requires innovation. Instead of undermining the worth of these weave patterns, the adjustment has reenergised enthusiasm in them, widened their narration skills and placed them in a better position to be appreciated by people around the world. The final findings of the paper are that the future of Kente and Kete is not in the resistance to change but in developing thoughtful innovations that respect tradition and open up new creative and economic possibilities.

Overall, this study will resonate in the re-understanding of the role of indigenous weaving practice in the speedily globalising world. It gives a blueprint on how Kente and Kete weaving can be maintained as living heritage, by showing that pictorial adaptation is not only technically viable, but equally, culturally enriching. Broader still, it reminds us that innovation and preservation are not mutually exclusive powers but complementary ones that, when put in their proper proportions, spell the difference between the continuation and thriving of cultural traditions between generations.

Recommendations

Based on what has been revealed in this paper, the following are suggestions on how to make sure that the adaptation of Asante Kente and Ewe Kete weaving into pictorial scenes is a sustainable project and one to enrich the culture. The recommendations are focused on artisans and educators, as well as policy makers, as well as cultural institutions, as it is accepted that the survival of these weaving traditions depends on the concerted efforts of various stakeholders.

1. Support for Artisan Training and Skill Development

The paper proposes that research should come up with training programmes that will equip artisans with the technical skills needed in the creation of pictorial scenes. These programmes should be inclusive of workshops integrating the art of traditional weaving with design thinking, sketch translation and creative experimentation. Such initiatives will also enable the weavers to explore new artistic horizons with confidence by reducing the learning curve in which they have to adapt to pictorials.

2. Encouragement of Intergenerational Cooperation

There should be increased efforts towards stopping the isolation of senior master weavers and novice apprentices. The intergenerational collaborations also ensure that the traditional practices are not lost, whereas young artisans are allowed to implement modern tools, including digital design programs, within the construction process. Such exchanges can be formalised by the cultural establishment and weaving centres that set up formal mentorship programmes.

3. Emerging Market Platforms

Since pictorial combinations of Kente and Kete are marketable, there is a universal need to establish local and international platforms where they can be promoted. The way to make pictorial weaving known as a wearable art and a medium of cultural storytelling can be through exhibitions, fashion shows, and online sales platforms. The artisans can be assisted by government agencies and local investors in reaching the international markets where innovative African fabrics can be sold with high market demand.

4. Inclusion in Education Programs

The fusion of the Kente and Kete pictorial weaving in schools must be incorporated in school curriculums especially with the visual arts and cultural studies programs to preserve cultural heritage and involve younger generations. Teachers may use pictorial backgrounds during the process of teaching Ghanaian history, proverbs and moral teachings, thus making culture closer and more familiar to children. It is also a role of learning that enhances the sustainability of Kente and Kete weaving in the long run as a crucial means of cultural knowledge.

5. Frameworks of policy support and cultural preservation

Pictorial Kente and Kete are cultural innovations that policymakers can appreciably embrace and enhance using policy-making structures that protect and foster indigenous crafts. This may include investing in research and development of innovation in textile production, setting up intellectual property privileges to the artisans and declaring Kente and Kete weaving communities as cultural heritage areas.

6. Supporting the Participatory Design Approaches

New technologies should incorporate engagement in blending Kente and Kete weaving through the introduction of participatory design where the artisans, cultural custodians, teachers, and consumers are involved in the entire creative process. This inclusivity will make sure that new designs are culturally grounded and have community support. The participatory style would probably fear any feelings about watering down of culture and a share of stakeholders' ownership would be instilled.

7. Pictorial Kente Documentation and Archiving

There is a need to logically record and document the new forms of pictorial combination of Kente and Kete designs to be used by future generations. Cultural centres, museums and universities should take up the task of capturing behind these adaptations, the stories, methods

and meanings of such a story. Besides preserving the knowledge, such archival work is going to provide an invaluable resource to the future generations of artisans and researchers.

8. Marketing of Cross-Cultural partnerships

Lastly, projects in conjunction with foreign artists and designers should be nurtured to place the fusion of Kente and Kete pictorial design in the textile conversations of the world. Such interactions have the potential to improve visibility as well as mutual education. However, these partnerships should be well mentored so that design does not lose its cultural aspect and falls into the hands of cultural appropriation.

To recap it all, the Kente and Kete weaving into pictorial image adaptation has significant potential to maintain cultures, develop art, and be sustainable in socioeconomic aspects. In order to harness this potential to the maximum, there should be conscious steps taken to offer technical, educational, policies, and market support. Asante Kente and Ewe Kete can succeed in remaining a representation of the Ghanaian identity and as internationally applicable styles of art.

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Funding: This research received no external funding

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Authorship and Level of Contribution

Author- IG: Conceptualisation, Investigation, Writing – original draft.

Author- WD: Formal analysis and Methodology.

Author- LAT: Resources and Review & editing

Author- AEA: Project administration

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