

# Arts and Crafts Education in Ghana Promotes Local Culture

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## ABSTRAK

Terletak di pantai barat Afrika, Ghana adalah negara sub-Sahara. Sekitar 25 juta orang diperkirakan tinggal di sana. Perekonomian negara ini, yang secara historis berakar pada pertanian, berpusat pada pertanian, yang mempekerjakan lebih dari 40% populasi pekerja. Selain itu, mereka juga berbagi kerajinan serupa yang dibuat di beberapa tempat, seperti ukiran kayu dan tenun keranjang. Seni visual yang diciptakan oleh masyarakat adat Ghana diperkirakan memiliki tujuan seremonial, rekreasi, terapeutik, dan komunikasi. Mengajari anak-anak sekolah dasar Ghana tentang seni tradisional dan konsep seni abadi adalah tujuan utama dari proyek penelitian kurikulum ini. Berdasarkan informasi yang dikumpulkan dari jajak pendapat para spesialis seni tradisional Ghana dan sejarah seni, maka dibuatlah. Kerangka proyek ini dikembangkan dengan menggunakan data kualitatif. Secara keseluruhan, hasil survei kualitatif awal menunjukkan bahwa tidak banyak yang diketahui tentang kesenian tradisional Ghana. Setiap orang yang menjawab pertanyaan tentang karya seni penting atau khas yang telah membentuk identitas masyarakat Ghana sepakat bahwa ada karya seni berbeda yang telah membentuk masyarakat Ghana. Karya seni yang digambarkan antara lain bangku, boneka akuaba, patung kayu dan terakota, tenun kente, tembikar, keranjang, ukiran kayu, kerajinan kulit, tongkat ahli bahasa, dan tanda kerajaan. Setiap peserta berharap untuk melihat perubahan kurikulum nasional dalam metode

penilaian yang digunakan untuk mengevaluasi hasil pembelajaran dan kinerja siswa.

## ABSTRACT

*Situated on Africa's west coast, Ghana is a sub-Saharan nation. About 25 million people are thought to live there. The nation's economy, which has its roots in farming historically, is centered on agriculture, which employs over 40% of the working population. Additionally, they share similar handicrafts done in several places, like woodcarving and basket weaving. Visual art created by Ghanaian indigenous people is thought to have had ceremonial, recreational, therapeutic, and communication purposes. Teaching Ghanaian basic school kids the traditional arts and timeless artistic concepts is the main goal of this curriculum research project. Based on information gathered from a poll of specialists in Ghanaian traditional arts and art history, it was created. The project's framework was developed using qualitative data. Overall, the initial qualitative survey's results showed that not much is known about Ghana's traditional arts. Everyone who answered the question about significant or distinctive works of art that have shaped Ghanaians' identities agreed that there are distinct works of art that have shaped Ghanaians. The described artworks included stools, akuaba dolls, wood and terracotta sculptures, kente weaving, pottery, basketry, wood carving, leather work, linguist staff, and royal regalia. Every participant hopes to see a national curriculum shift in the methods of assessment utilized to evaluate learning outcomes and student performance.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Situated on Africa's west coast, Ghana is a sub-Saharan nation. About 25 million people are thought to live there. The nation's economy, which has its roots in farming historically, is centered on agriculture, which employs over 40% of the working population. Ten regions,

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numerous distinct tribes, and languages make up Ghana. Ghana comprises more than fifty ethnic groups, and their shared national legacy is reflected in their institutions and common values. According to Ghanaweb (2013), each of these ethnic groups has artistic expressions that highlight cultural traits and customs that provide its people a sense of identity, respect, and pride. Additionally, they share similar handicrafts done in several places, like woodcarving and basket weaving. (Acquah, Mensah, 2021) Visual art created by Ghanaian indigenous people is thought to have had ceremonial, recreational, therapeutic, and communication purposes. (Boamah, Liew, 2016) state that the cultural background, artistic styles, mediums, and materials of Ghanaians are all defined by the historical and anthropological chronology of natural and supernatural phenomena found in indigenous Ghanaian art.

(Cypruss, 2017) Ghana received a British-imposed culture that ignored the environment and the Ghanaian way of life. Ghana was forced to adopt the western educational model—more precisely, the British system—due to colonial schooling, which ignored the country's native customs, distinctive national identity, and custom of oral instruction. The sharpest criticism has been directed on Western education for imposing an abstract educational system that has alienated the African people. Art education does not currently have a well-designed structure or syllabi for passing exams or examinations that are based on Ghanaian standards and ideals in the educational system. Native Ghanaian art's inventiveness has been eclipsed by the written culture of the West. Ghana continues to instruct students and prepare them for exams in art classes using European ideals and norms.

This study will assist Ghanaians in learning about their traditional forms of art and ideals that have characterized them, which is why the researcher chose this title. Ghanaians are capable of growing from their own mistakes, making amends in the here and now, and achieving tremendous success in the future. Redesigning the curriculum to better represent Ghanaian culture, values, and beliefs is something that should never be too late. In order to help teachers of visual arts in Ghanaian basic schools teach their students to achieve the goals of the country's cultural policy, this study investigated how instructors are educated in Ghanaian traditional arts. Students in Ghana's elementary schools can use this study project as a tool to learn about their cultural values and the part that art plays in the formation of identity. In Ghana, students between the ages of six and eleven receive a basic education. A curriculum was created by research 5 to teach future generations about western art traditions and their own cultural identities.

## 2. METHOD

For this study, qualitative data served as the framework. For this study, the survey methodology worked well because my objective was to gather information on particular topics from a sizable number of traditional art specialists and art educators. Participants in this study were given a questionnaire to complete and were sent an email link.

A questionnaire was used to administer the first survey, which was distributed to Ghanaian art educators, art historians in both the US and Ghana, local history speakers in Ghana, and practical basic school art teachers in Ghana. There were open-ended questions on the survey. The second poll was distributed solely to art teachers working in basic schools. A few of these educators took part in the survey on art history as well. Both closed-ended and open-ended items were included in the second survey's questionnaire. Particularly significant to the significance, conclusions, and outcomes of this investigation are the responses to questionnaires and surveys, which provide the opinions of those involved in the qualitative inquiry.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### Results of the Art History Survey

Fifteen questions made up the questionnaire, and the answers were derived from the responses. It was anticipated that the analysis and interpretation of the questions would produce a response that would rank the subjects according to participant choice and their applicability to Ghanaian traditional arts, as well as compare and contrast the similarities and differences.

According to participant polls, all participants (100%) felt that Ghanaians were identified by their own artwork. The artworks that were listed were stools, wood and terracotta statues, royal regalia, 31 akuaba dolls, basketry, wood carving, leather work, kente weaving, adinkra symbols, beadwork, and linguist staff. The most widely acknowledged art form that has defined Ghanaians is kente weaving, with Adinkra symbols and woodcarving coming in second. The participants' opinions on the components, tenets, and subjects of Ghanaian art differed. Out of all the participants, only forty percent felt that color and shape are two essential elements of design in Ghanaian art. Twenty percent of participants believed that rhythm and unity are key artistic principles in Ghanaian art. The utilitarian, religious, and symbolic issues were discussed.

#### Formulating the Curriculum

The curriculum design was impacted by the researcher's conclusions from the art history survey. For elementary school pupils in Ghana, the curriculum places a strong emphasis on the country's traditional arts and timeless creative concepts. It includes the main media that traditional artists work in. Additionally, certain modern Ghanaian artists are acknowledged, along with their creations. It was intended to give participants a self-assessment of their prior and post-acquisition art knowledge, as well as to explain and interpret traditional arts.

#### Result of the Curriculum Survey

The results of the practicing art teachers at basic schools regarding the curriculum are covered in this section. Divergent perspectives on traditional arts were held by the attendees. The crafts and artwork mentioned represent Ghanaians' cultural heritage, values, and beliefs. Traditional Ghanaians used these arts in their daily lives for activities such as playing, singing, dancing, cooking, and clothing. Participants acknowledged their lack of familiarity with Ghanaian traditional arts. Their limited understanding came from participating in some traditional dance, singing, and sculpting as well as voluntary travel to neighboring villages and towns that practiced these arts. A nationwide curriculum shift in the methods of assessment used to evaluate students' performance and learning outcomes is what all participants expect to see. The national curriculum, they hope, will be implemented in the upcoming years.

Respondents stated that they typically select a subject, break it down into smaller subjects, and organize projects or stages for the kids to create artwork based on the subject. The participants shown great enthusiasm towards the novel lessons and expressed a strong desire to put them into practice in order to witness their positive impact. According to those who took part, these new lessons will provide pupils a better understanding of the wide range of cultural backgrounds and give them the opportunity to experience the arts of many groups while also applying the skills they have learned to their own artwork. Due to the new classes' high level of education and ability to express oneself, participants are confident that students will embrace them. Every participant reported that adjusting to these lessons was simple. Each participant will instruct their classmates using the lessons they have learned. Every participant reported that the assessment units were very beneficial. The majority of

participants expressed their appreciation for the lesson plans' overall design and incorporation of nature.

#### 4. SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the indigenous cultural traditions and values of Ghana, this research serves as a curriculum construct for visual art education programs. Future study ideas include expanding the sample size and including a wider range of perspectives from participants. Additional research on Ghanaian art principles and themes, indigenous elements, surveys of modern artists and their works, and more lesson plan design would all be beneficial to this subject.

The significance of traditional arts in defining Ghanaians was uncovered by this study. A curriculum was created using information gathered from specialists in the traditional arts. The course covered traditional arts and crafts, Ghanaian art history, the works of modern artists, the use of found objects, Kente weaving, traditional architecture, cultural identity, and communal life. Visual art teachers at basic schools received the curriculum to review. According to the teachers' evaluation, the lessons were age-appropriate and quite informative. Every lesson was evaluated consistently according to the curriculum's assessment strategies. In general, educators advise against teaching traditional arts in classrooms. They considered the classes to be very beneficial, and they will act as a basis for teachers creating lesson plans about Ghanaian traditional arts.

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