



Textile & Leather Review

ISSN: 2623-6257 (Print) 2623-6281 (Online) Journal homepage: www.textile-leather.com Journal doi: [10.31881/TLR](https://doi.org/10.31881/TLR)

Textile Art Creation as a Tool for Raising Awareness of Corruption in Ghana

Solomon Boateng, Benjamin Kwablah Asinyo, Ebenezer Kofi Howard, Edward Apau, Raphael Kanyire Seidu

How to cite: Boateng S, Asinyo BK, Howard EK, Apau E, Seidu RK. Textile Art Creation as a Tool for Raising Awareness of Corruption in Ghana. Textile & Leather Review. 2021; 4(2):111-127.

<https://doi.org/10.31881/TLR.2020.23>

How to link: <https://doi.org/10.31881/TLR.2020.23>

Published: 1 June 2021

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)



Textile Art Creation as a Tool for Raising Awareness of Corruption in Ghana

Solomon BOATENG¹, Benjamin Kwablah ASINYO², Ebenezer Kofi HOWARD², Edward APAU¹, Raphael Kanyire SEIDU*

¹Department of Visual and Industrial Art, FBEAA, Sunyani Technical University, Sunyani-Ghana

²Department of Industrial Art, CABE, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi-Ghana

*seiduraphael@gmail.com

Article

UDC 677:74:328.185

DOI: 10.31881/TLR.2020.23

Received 23 December 2020; Accepted 17 March 2021; Published Online 26 March 2021; Published 1 June 2021

ABSTRACT

Textile art possesses the ability to communicate with the viewer in as much as the viewer understands the visual images. It involves art made of textiles or about textiles by utilising techniques such as embroidery, patchwork, quilting, applique, tapestry, dyeing, and painting, among others. This study explores the use of conventional and non-conventional textile materials in a mixed-media technique in the production of artefacts aimed at raising awareness of corruption in Ghana; a national canker that is retarding the country's growth. It employed a practice-based research approach to gain new ideas or knowledge in the study through practice. The study revealed that the artefacts serve as an effective communication tool to create awareness of the dangers of corruption in the country, thereby expanding the frontiers of textile art by exploiting various techniques and materials.

KEYWORDS

Textile art, Conventional and non-conventional materials, Mixed-media, Corruption

INTRODUCTION

Corruption has become a universal phenomenon that goes beyond national boundaries. It has increasingly become a household word discussed by politicians, media houses and the entire citizenry. Corruption remains as a canker for economic development and ought to be given keen attention in a country's developmental agenda. According to Knoema [1] and Trading Economics [2], in 2020, Ghana scored 43rd in the corruption perceptions index. In Ghana, the quest to deal with this economic menace has been pivotal among governments of the Fourth Republic, which led to numerous establishments of committees and implementation of rigorous policies to curb the canker, for example, the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) in 1993, the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) now known as Economic and Organized Crime Office (EOCO) in 2010, the Citizen Vetting Committee, the Public Tribunal, the National Procurement Authority (NPA) and the office of the Special Prosecutor (SP) in 2017. Regardless of these efforts, corruption seems too predominant in Ghana. It can be stated that corruption can increase a country's brain drain problems. Curtailing it is only possible with the support of a wide range of stakeholders and the citizenry.

CHRAJ is the national institution for protecting and promoting fundamental rights and freedoms and administrative justice in Ghana. It combines the Anti-Corruption Agency's work, the Ombudsman, and the human rights commission under one umbrella. However, the commission exists to enhance the scale of good governance, democracy, integrity, peace and social development by promoting, protecting and enforcing fundamental human rights and freedoms and administrative justice for all persons in Ghana [3]. It is mandated to investigate the abuse of power and "all instances of alleged or suspected corruption and the misappropriation of public monies by officials" [3]. Yet, new commissions have been established, including the Special Prosecutor (SP) in 2017. This notwithstanding, corruption remains a significant problem in the country [4, 5]. Corruption is a decay that allows a decision-maker (an official) to deviate from his/her decision-making and consent for bribes [6]. Iyanda [7] asserts that corruption is the illegal use of power by a public official/individual for enriching him or herself or for other reasons at the expense of the public, contrary to the laws that are in force. Society stigmatises corruption and attributes its tendencies to political offices and government institutions, yet the length and breadth of corruption extend to private establishments and even the home. The repercussions of corruption do not always receive condemning utterances, especially if the corrupt person extends the amassed wealth to a group of people. This is evident when Frunzik [8] indicated that "the use of public office for private gain" is not always perceived in a given community to be corruption since the individual that has personal gain is directly making a positive impact on the community. In this instance, the community may see it as acceptable and may sometimes reward the individual. Heidenheiner [9] categorised corruption into "black, white and grey". He explained that White acts are more or less accepted by both officials and citizens and do not attract any form of punishment.

In contrast, Gray acts are considered corruption, but the public's opinions differ from that of the decision-makers. Thus the opinions between the citizens and public officials are divided. Black, on the other hand, is seen as wrong and condemned by both officials and citizens.

Corruption exists in bribery, kickbacks, extortion, embezzlement, favouritism, nepotism and patronage. The influence corruption has on developing countries cannot be overemphasised; hence the consequences are often hazardous. For example, the eleven (11) years of war in Sierra-Leone were attributed to persistent corruption in governance's domains. According to Smith [10], corruption jeopardises some of the nation's potential assets, the eagerness, idealism and empathy of its youth. Corruption can have diverse effects on human capital formation, thereby decreasing tax administration, leading to tax evasion and exemptions, lower education level and a poor health care system. Mauro [11] opines that corruption affects economic development by influencing the choice of projects undertaken by governments. Moreover, Onongha [12] posits that corruption is a severe challenge in the contemporary world which demoralises good governance, basically distorts public policy and leads to misallocation of resources.

Bright Tetteh Ackwerth is a Ghanaian-born contemporary satirical illustrator whose work style is a satirical representation of socio-political and religious issues in an incisive manner that provokes conversation and sparks debate and elicits a response. He published an art piece (Plate 1) that provoked the Chinese ambassador to Ghana to write a letter to the President of Ghana and the Minister of Natural Resources. In the image, China's president, Xi Jinping, can be seen doling out dirty brown water from a vase bowl held by the Ghanaian president and Natural Resources minister. Besides the Chinese president, there is the Chinese ambassador to Ghana smiling and holding gold. This art piece has an empirical meaning that Ghanaians are sitting on gold but begging for sand.



Plate 1. "We dey beg" [13]

Abdoulaye Konate is another Malian contemporary artist who is committed to his own culture and his textile sculptures offer a limitless source of artistic and spiritual expression. He utilises a traditional Malian fabric which he dyes with pigment and cuts into strips. Playing with volume, depth and colour, he layers and superimposes these strips into large-scale abstract and figurative compositions. In most of his art pieces, he delivers his interpretation of world events and references his cultural history. For instance, in his series titled "Generation Biometrique" (Plate 2), which was completed in 2017, he reflected on the generalised government method of processing immigrants. He highlighted the plight and conditions of African immigrants entering the EU and America.



Plate 2. "Generation Biometrique", 2008, applique - Abdoulaye Konate [14]

Victor Ehikhamenor is a Nigerian textile artist whose primary source of inspiration is his ancestral home, Udomi-Uwessan in Edo State. His works depict abstract, symbolic and politically motivated motives, as can be seen in the piece he entitled "Girls of Aba" where he campaigned for the release of a group of girls captured by Boko Haram. He uses mixed media, paint, textiles, photographs, thread, rosary beads, or anything pertinent to his message. His works are heavily titled, which assists the viewer in understanding the situation, the character and the intention behind the art piece as seen in Plates 3 and 4.



Plate 3. Castrated History, 2016



Plate 4. "Girls of Aba"

Mixed media on canvas, 180 x 15 by Victor Ehikhamenor [14]

Ai Weiwei is considered among contemporary artists to be allied with political activism (Plate 5). Most of his artworks speak about corruption practices in China and other political issues. Some of his outstanding works which tackle social issues include "The study of perspective" and the installation "Remembering" where he campaigned on behalf of those who fell victim to the 2008 earthquake in China. Even though he has faced many criticisms, he uses his artworks to speak for the many [15].



Plate 5. Remembering, 2009 [16]

Pyotr Andreyevich Pavlensky (Plate 6) is often referred to as a 'living pain' artist. He is a Russian contemporary artist and a publisher of Journal Political Propaganda. He chooses performance art that usually takes the form of extreme acts as his political language. Some of his stunts involve sewing his mouth, shut-in political protests against the incarceration of Pussy Riot members, wrapping himself naked in barbed wire as a commentary on a series of laws suppressing civic activism and intimidating the population. Blurring the boundaries between art and his anti-Kremlin views, he sets himself apart from other similar artists [17].



Plate 6. Untitled [17]

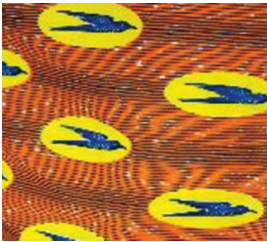
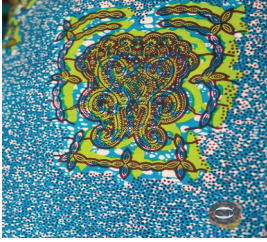
Considering the works of the aforementioned artists, who create awareness of the unscrupulous practices and issues affecting society's well-being, this study employs the mixed-media technique coupled with conventional and non-conventional textile materials to produce textile artworks to campaign against corruption in Ghana. Since corruption exists in all governance branches, and there is often a lack of probity and accountability, the culprits often enjoy impunity [4]. This is a matter of great concern for individuals and policymakers who are trying to minimise corruption in order to achieve economic growth.


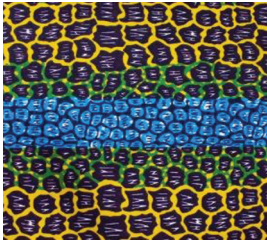


MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed practice-based research and relied on studio activities for the execution of the projects. According to Mills [18] studio activity requires the use of materials, techniques, tools and aesthetic analysis to gain new ideas or knowledge through practice and achieve the result of that practice [19]. Carving, painting, applique and bonding were the techniques employed for the execution of the results. Materials used were wood, foam, plywood, and adhesives, with fabrics being the chief materials. Tools used included a stapler, cutting knife, jigsaw, pair of scissors, pressing iron, hammer and brush. Some of the materials used were collected as scrap or waste from tailors and refrigerator repairers.

The fabrics scraps selected were mainly African prints to show the artists' originality and the art pieces. They were employed in the art pieces for identification and originality. According to Howard [20], African prints are clothes with designs that depict images of proverbs, local emblems relating to kingship traditions or authorities of chiefs and designs with educational significance. Ghana is one of the leading countries in the production of African prints. It is of interest to note that these fabrics are designed to mirror various African cultures and traditions. Most of these fabrics produced in Ghana have local names such as "efie mmosea", Yaw Donkor, and of fellow Ghanaians. Both the motifs and the colours have symbolic connotations which reveal the ethics of Ghanaian culture. Table 1 shows some selected African prints and their symbolic meanings.

Table 1. Names and symbolism of the selected African prints used [21]

African Prints	Name	Meaning
	Sika wo Antaban	"Money has wings" is the literal translation of this print. Indeed, money has wings, and if one does not handle it well, it will fly.
	Akyekydee akyi	This design was deduced from the proverb "Huriye si akyekyedee akyi a, osi ho kwa", which translates as, "the tsetse fly sits on the tortoise's back in vain, it cannot suck any blood through the hard shell". This suggests that engaging in futile enterprise serves one no good.

	Nsubra	<p>Nsubra is an Akan name for a well. The tiny dots in the spiral form resemble the ripple made in a well after water is fetched from it or when a stone drops into its depth.</p>
	Efie mmosea	<p>Efie mmosea means “house pebbles”. Proverbially, it suggests that it is more painful for a relative to hurt you than an outsider.</p>
	Highlife	<p>This fabric represents the most famous music genre in Ghana. This genre is loved by many, due to its originality and the quality of sound made by most of the highlife musicians.</p>
	Aniwa	<p>This is an Akan word for eye. The meaning behind this print is to be careful with your actions. Although people may be silent, they are watching you when you do something wrong. It can also mean that God watches over the action of every individual.</p>

A suitable Design Thinking model [22] was adopted, of which a new model was constructed for the study (Figure 2). The model evolves through empathy, ideation, prototyping, evaluation and production. According to Clarke [23], a model identifies basic thoughts and defines the reality and the situation under study.

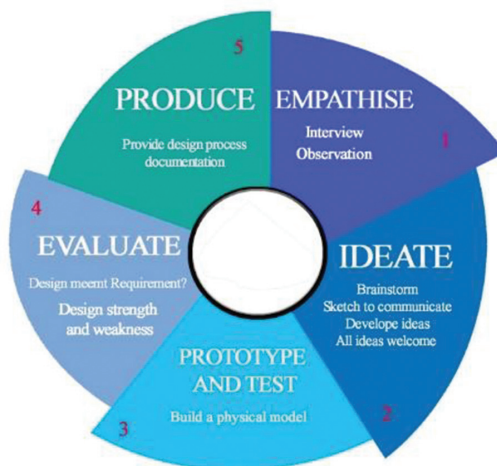


Figure 2. Design Thinking Process

Empathy Phase

According to Waloszek [24], empathy is the foundation of the human-centred design process where one makes an observation and interacts with users to uncover their needs. A structured interview was the tool used to obtain relevant information to develop concept-based images on corruption and to ascertain the respondents' level of understanding of corruption. A face-to-face interview was conducted with sixty (60) respondents via the purposive sampling technique.

The study revealed that bribery, the act of taking or receiving from people before offering or granting them help or favour, is the most common form of corruption in Ghana. Further, it became apparent from the findings that 97.8% of the respondents were ignorant that demanding sex or any other materials aside from money is also a form of corruption. However, 54.8% of the respondents stated that the best remedy to curtail corruption in Ghana is to abstain from paying bribes to corrupt officials. When asked whether textile art could play a role in the campaign against corruption in Ghana, 85.5% of the respondents affirmed that it would be an excellent and interesting idea.

IDEATION PHASE

This stage entails the generation, development and conceptualisation of ideas. Textile art is an area of art that requires a high sense of creativity in the manipulation and arrangement of different materials [20]. Therefore, sketches (Figure 3) were made to guide the creation of the art pieces.

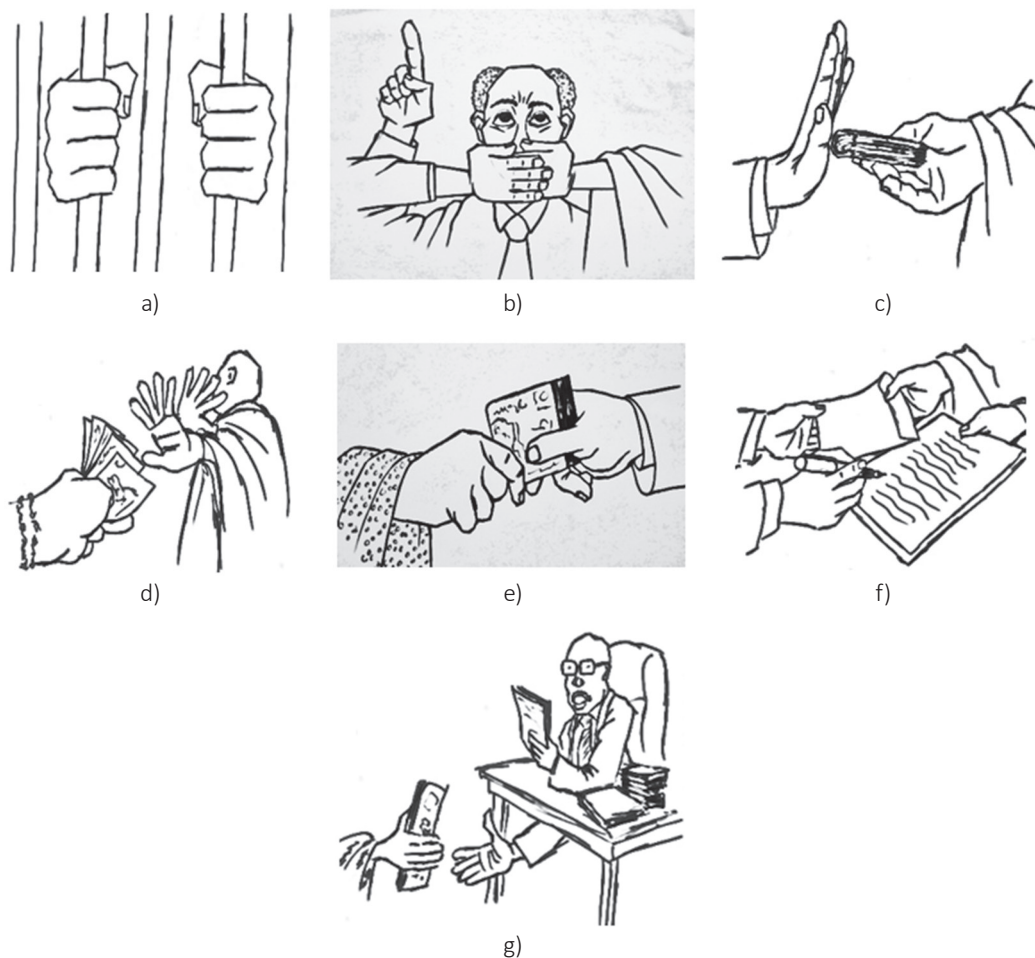










Figure 3. (a) Behind Bars; (b) Keep Quiet; (c) My Integrity; (d) Resistance; (e) Mutuality; (f) Percentage; (g) Wrong Benefits

Relevant Adinkra symbols were used to enhance the visual communication of the artefacts. Adinkra symbols are visual notations with historical and philosophical significance printed initially on cloths. These symbols serve as a shorthand for communicating deep truths in visual forms. They were contextually added in the art pieces to understand the discussion (Table 2) better.

Table 2. Adinkra symbols used and their meanings [25]

Symbol	Name	Meaning
	Nsa ko, na nsa aba	This represents the cooperation and the support shown by people who come together and offer help in working towards the promotion of a good cause.
	Nyansapo	This symbol is a reserved symbol of the Akans and is a symbol of wise leadership, ingenuity and intelligence.
	Epa	This symbol represents handcuffs, a symbol of bondage. The symbol reminds offenders of the uncompromising nature of the law. It also discourages all forms of slavery.
	Akoben	Warhorn, a symbol of a call to action or readiness to be called to action, and voluntarism.
	Akofena	A symbol of state authority, legality, the legitimised authority of a ruler, and recognition of the gallantry of heroic deeds.
	Obi nka bi	Bite not one another. It symbolises justice, fairness, freedom, peace, forgiveness, unity, harmony, and the avoidance of a conflict or strife.
	Boa me na mmoa wo	It is a symbol of cooperation and interdependence.
	Mate masie	This symbol represents the prudence of taking into consideration the conspiracy about a person.

Developing Ideas into Compositions

According to Howard [20], in developing suitable concepts for textile art, the following factors are vital:

- The elements and principles of design should be interplayed in conformity to obtain a good result.
- Irrespective of the kind of textile art one is creating, a theme or concept is crucial in starting a good project.
- Non-realistic and simple designs should be used for textile artworks. Thus, realistic designs should be redeveloped into semi-abstract forms to suit the selected techniques and media.
- It is also essential for the textile artist to bear in mind the types of media, tools, and techniques to be employed when designing for mixed-media textile art. This helps the designer to modify his or her subject to suit the selected techniques and media. This in turn helps to limit problems that are liable to crop up during production.

The idea behind these designs (Figure 4) was chosen and developed by considering the various forms of corruption. To fully convey a message about the forms of corruption, visual images that are communicative enough about corruption were used.

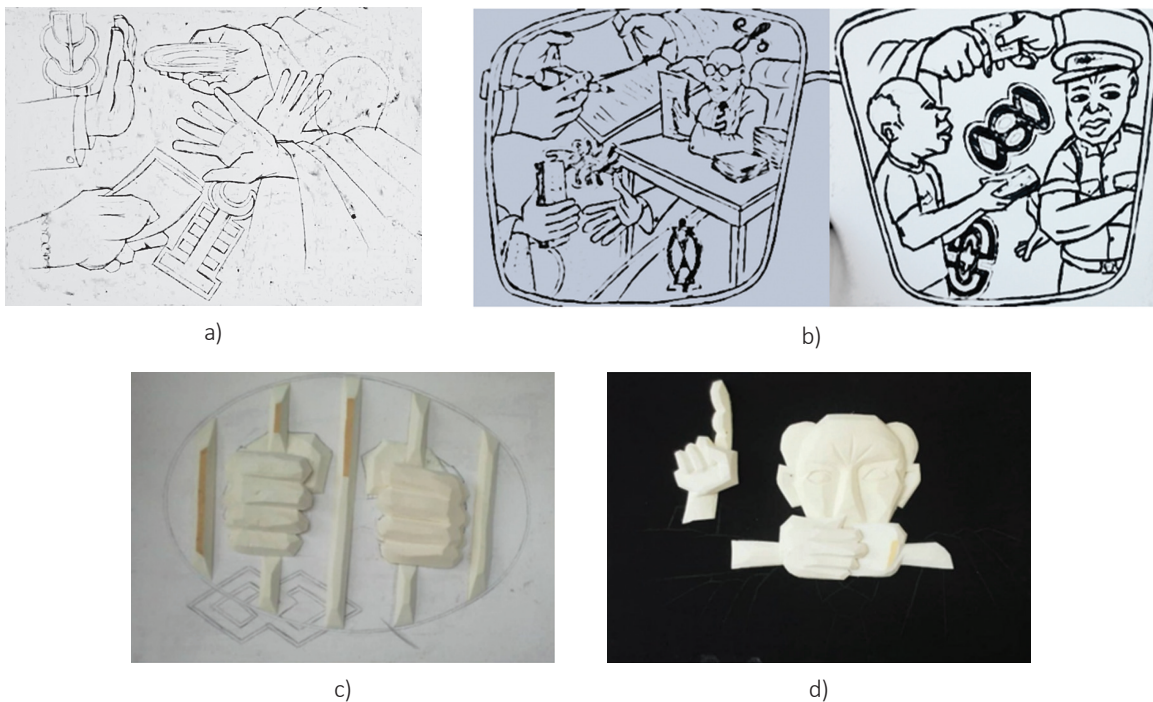


Figure 4. (a) *Me man nti* - For the sake of my country; (b) The Perspective of Corruption; (c) Behind the Scene; (d) Consequences

Prototype Phase

A prototype can be defined as an early model or a sample of a released product which is built to test a concept or a process [26]. A prototype is a term which can be used in different settings to assess a new design to enhance precision. In this vein, a prototype was produced to solicit information from the public whether the topic under consideration has achieved its intended purpose. It was also to know the feasibility of non-conventional textile materials intended for the work. This aided in the choice of materials to be used for the execution of the art pieces.

Evaluation Phase

Evaluation, according to Maheshwari [27], is the process that allows one to make a general judgment about the value of a thing through observation, interviews, questionnaires, amongst others. To obtain relevant comments, the artworks were exhibited at the reception centre of the Faculty of Art Building at KNUST-Ghana, to students, artists and the teaching staff to obtain their thoughts and comments. Generally, viewers expressed their disappointments in how corruption has destroyed the economic fortune and growth of Ghana. Further exhibition was done via online survey (Facebook and WhatsApp) for additional views. Participants (which comprises people with and without art background) were overwhelmed and stated that the art pieces were insightful, contextual and interesting for educating the general populace on corruption since the works attract viewers' attention and communicate visually on the issues of corruption. However, it was observed that the art pieces could only be used indoors, since the adhesives used are water-soluble. Moreover, the fabrics used may also fade over time due to the exposure to sun and rain. The study revealed that fabric waste could be recycled into a useful art product for economic and artistic purposes. The use of fabric scraps and Styrofoam in the execution of the art pieces was aimed at combating corruption problems confronting the country.

Production Phase

This phase explains the production stage of the work where different kinds of base materials (fabrics) with different dimensions were used for the works. A base material with a dense width was used for the project to ensure that the background of the work is stable. The procedures used in the execution of each work are discussed in the next section of the paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Four major art pieces were created to depict and combat corruption. These have been philosophically named and discussed to sensitise the general populace and create the needed awareness of corruption issues confronting the country.

Production and Philosophical Underpinning of the Textile Artworks

Artwork One - Me man nti, 3ny3 me nti (For the Sake of My Country)

An illustration of people rejecting bribes was made. The techniques employed were painting, carving and applique. Materials used were canvas fabric, fabric scraps, Styrofoam and papers. To achieve a three-dimensional effect, thick Styrofoam was used for the skins of all the figures. The figures were then traced onto the Styrofoam and carved out using a cutting knife. The figures, as well as the background of the work were painted. The fabric scraps were cut to conform to the Adinkra symbols that were fixed onto the canvas with an adhesive (Bond 99). The figures were all wrapped with fabrics and then left to dry. The money was cut out from brown papers and painted to simulate the Ghana cedis currency (GH ₵50), as shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5. Me man nti, 3ny3 me nti (For the Sake of My Country)

The work in Figure 5 is titled “Me man nti, 3ny3 me nti”, which means “for the sake of my country, not my own”. It is said that where there are bad nuts, there are also good nuts. While some will resort to collecting bribes, others will reject it. Considering the multi-coloured background of the design, it connotes that corruption can be avoided irrespective of our background or the type of job we do. Moreover, since most corrupt practices are done in the dark, the multi-coloured background suggests that corruption’s true nature can be revealed. This confirms (John 1:5) which says, “The light will shine in darkness and darkness will not understand it”. The work suggests that corruption can emerge from anywhere regardless of one’s personality. The figure on top wearing a suit represents a few politicians who are patriotic and do reject bribes. When corruption is mentioned, it is mostly attributed to politicians with the notion that they are corrupt [5]. However, not every politician is corrupt or is involved in such practices. The other figure also illustrates a person trying to influence a traditional leader with money. Nevertheless, the traditional leader being mentally strong has objected and does not even want to look at it to be persuaded.

The choice of two (2) Adinkra symbols in the design sought to strengthen the idea of campaigning against corruption. Abissah (Personal communication March 26, 2019) asserts that Adinkra symbols have proverbial meanings which portray historical events, human behaviour and attitudes. The first Adinkra symbol at the top is called “Nyansapɔ” which means “wisdom knot”. This symbol is a symbol of good leadership, ingenuity and intelligence. It teaches that a person can choose the best means to accomplish a goal. The second Adinkra symbol is known as “Akoben” which means “war horn”. This sign, according to Adinkrahene [28], is used to sound a battle cry. The sound warns others of the impending danger so they can prepare for an attack and set up a defence to protect their territory from an enemy. Corruption is an enemy to a nation, and every citizen has to rise to fight against it from all spheres of life, hence the use of the “Akoben” symbol in this respect.

Artwork Two - The Perspective of Corruption

Sketches were made on paper to ascertain the outcome of the final piece (Figure 6). Materials used for the art piece’s execution include plywood, fabrics, foams (Styrofoam and latex) and papers. Techniques adopted for the execution are carving, adhesive bonding, painting and applique. Plywood was carved out in a concave shape in the form of a spectacle. To achieve the concave effect of the spectacle, a flat latex foam was fixed on the plywood and then covered with a piece of black velvet fabric. This was transferred onto the prepared spectacle glasses and then traced and carved onto the Styrofoam. The carved images were glued onto the spectacles with an adhesive. The background, as well as the carved images, were painted with acrylic paint using bristle brushes to give the work a special touch and appeal. The colours were care-

fully arranged from darker to lighter tones. Fabric scraps were cut and subsequently used to clothe each image. The documents, monies and envelopes were all cut and pasted with an adhesive. The monies were painted to simulate the currency of Ghana and the canvas for the spectacles was prepared by priming and painting. With the help of a stapler, the spectacles were fixed onto the canvas. Lastly, flexible plastic trimmings were used along with the frame of the spectacles.



Figure 6. The Perspective of Corruption

This work (Figure 6) reveals the types of corruption which, according to Andvig et al. [29] are grand or political corruption, petty corruption and private corruption. The various types of corruption are depicted in this work. The activities on the right side of the spectacles identified political or grand corruption of which Elaine [30] revealed that it involves decision-makers and law enforcers abusing their power or using their office to acquire wealth. It can be observed from the artefact that some top officials are seen taking bribes before awarding contracts. This scenario is one of the many examples which normally happen before a contract is awarded. One has to pay a certain percentage of money before being awarded with a contract. Furthermore, an Adinkra symbol “Nsa kɔ, na nsa aba” which means “hand go and hand come” was used in the work to strengthen the communication. This symbol encourages and teaches citizens to lend a helping hand to those in need. It also represents the cooperation and support shown by people who come together to offer help in working towards the promotion of a cause. Contextually, this Adinkra symbol connotes that one has to offer something before he or she can also get something in return. Another Adinkra symbol seen beneath the figures, “Boa me na me mmoa wo” which means “help me to help you” supports the idea of “hand go, hand come”. It is a symbol of collaboration and interdependence. The symbol represents the need to transform the world by creating a space that promotes interdependence and cooperation among a group of people working towards a greater goal. However, the Adinkra symbol was chosen in this context to enlighten the popular saying “you scratch my back, I scratch your back” which implies that you have to give what you have to get what you want. These practices have a diverse effect and dig deep into the economic fabric of a nation, resulting in the misallocation of resources [30].

The left eye of the spectacle explains another type of corruption which is petty or minor corruption [5]. Petty corruption, also known as bureaucratic corruption, is the day-to-day corruption in which bureaucrats demand or take money from civilians to satisfy their basic needs. Riley [31] affirms that petty corruption is the contribution of small monies that aids junior officials in the public service. Although it is called petty and the amounts involved are often small, the accumulated amount often reaches billions of dollars [32]. This affirms the quotation from the Songs of Solomon (2:15) “catch all the foxes because little foxes spoil the vine”. This means petty corruption should be nipped in the bud because its pettiness will later grow to become grand. In the artefact, a police officer who is a law enforcer is seen accepting a bribe. The Adinkra symbols “Mmra krado”, which represents justice and authority and “Nokore”, which represents truth, speak of how people or citizens see police officers and judiciary as an epitome of enforcement and peace-making.

These symbols inspire truth and transparency in everything we do as citizens in a country. However, these institutions that were established to be the epitome of law enforcement and peace-making are ranked as the most corrupt institutions in Ghana [33]. According to Amankwah, Bonsu and White [34], a renowned and investigative journalist in Ghana, Anas Aremeyaw Anas, exposed some corrupt judges and magistrates who were caught accepting bribes. The spectacles were then fixed on a plywood board to act as a support and hold them together. In between the spectacles is a nose which, metaphorically, is a road full of potholes. This shows some negative effects of corruption. Tanzi and Davoodi [35] opine that corruption leads to the misappropriation of resources and also affects economic growth by diverting state properties for personal gain. Abstracted Adinkra symbols which were used include “Akofena” (symbol of authority), “Akoben” (readiness and preparedness for action), “Mmra krado” (symbol of justice) and “Metem masie” (symbol of knowledge and wisdom) on the supporting canvas. All these symbols have, contextually, added to the debate against corruption in Ghana as projected in the work.

Artwork Three - The Oppressors Rule

A sketch was made and transferred onto a canvas. The required images were transferred onto the Styrofoam and then carved out. The carved-out figures were then fixed onto the canvas and painted in various tones. Fabric scraps were then cut to conform to the respective image size which was then fixed onto each image (Figure 7).



Figure 7. The Oppressors Rule

Ghana is believed to be among the top countries in Africa practising democracy. A portion of the anthem of Ghana reads “to resist the oppressors’ rule” meaning the dictatorship rule is not encouraged in the country. Moreover, Ghana’s constitution calls for a system where there are checks and balances, the share of power between a President, a single-house parliamentary system, a council of state and an independent judiciary system which are being put to practice [36]. It is believed that people are seen practising corruption in workplaces, but, due to some circumstances, we cannot voice it out. Holmes [37] reveals that fear is a factor that facilitates people to act corruptly. For instance, junior staff may fear losing the job if he or she does not act like the corrupt superior. Under this circumstance, it is either you join them or stay away. Figure 7 portrays an elderly person who is trying to comment on a wrong social act, but he has been silenced by the strong and powerful hands of leading figures in society. Arguably, there have been some instances where some media personalities have been persecuted in their attempt to unveil bad practices in society. Holmes [37] suggests that nepotism is another factor that contributes to corruption. Thus, “blood is thicker than water” syndrome is a factor that contributes to corruption and there is also an Akan adage

that supports the above statement, “Bebia a y3 didi ko no, y3nnsei ho”, which means “the hands that feed you should not be condemned”. So, it will be very difficult to expose a person who helped or is helping you. Therefore, oppression and superiority are significant factors of corruption.

Artwork Four- Behind Bars

A sketch was made on a canvas and then traced onto Styrofoam for carving. The carved-out Styrofoam images were glued onto the canvas with the Bond 99 adhesive. The background was then painted and followed by the main figures, which are the hands and the metal bars (simulated prison bars). It was dried for a while and afterwards various tones of colours were painted. An Adinkra symbol was also traced onto a piece of fabric, cut out to the conformed image on the canvas and then glued. Finally, a black wire was used to frame the work to give it an appealing effect (Figure 8). The techniques employed for this art piece include applique, carving, adhesive bonding and painting.

This work highlights the consequences of corruption. In life, every choice has its consequences. In supporting this statement, Galatians 6:7 says, “any person will reap what he sows” (The Good News Bible). This composition shows a person behind bars, creating awareness of the consequences of practising corruption. The two hands holding the iron bars represent the end of the corruption journey for each individual. The background of the work was painted in black to symbolise being “out of sight”. When there is a blackout in one’s life, everything comes to a standstill. Additionally, the Adinkra symbol beneath the bars with the African print symbolises the originality of the work and the end-users as well. The Adinkra symbol is known as “Epa” and it represents handcuffs, a symbol of bondage which creates awareness that there is punishment for any person who practices corruption.



Figure 8. Behind Bars

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Corruption is an enemy to any state and for that matter should be curtailed. In Ghana, many Presidents and various institutions have tried their best to solve or bury corruption but to no avail. The study revealed that textile art communicates ideas and expresses feelings and, therefore, can be used as an alternative medium to help create awareness in the fight against corruption. Communication is the act of relaying information from one person to another by using mutually understood symbols and signs. To achieve this, visual images were selectively used to communicate the direct meaning and the impact of corruption. It highlights the various forms of corruption in the country.

The study however identified bribery as the major form of corruption, indicating that the respondents are oblivious to the other forms of corruption. Ghanaian anti-corruption law primarily criminalises active and

passive bribery, extortion, wilful exploitation of public office, use of public office for private gain and bribery of foreign public officials [38]. The study concludes that the fight against corruption is not the duty of the President alone, the law enforcement agencies, the judiciary system and the media houses, but that citizens also have a role to play. In this respect, textile art can be used as a means to educate people on corruption through art exhibitions. Textile art can act as a medium through which societies can come together to share ideas and thoughts. It serves as a good platform for awareness creation and a campaign against corruption. Textile art provides the conditions for awakening humanity by providing a medium of knowing, experiencing and learning. Art works produced are used to educate and create awareness on issues of great concern to the society.

The study, therefore, urges other artists to explore various media and techniques and come out with art pieces that tackle social issues such as corruption. It is also recommended that textile art producers also consider concept-based textile art to help deal with corruption and other social menaces in the society. The teaching of concept generation in art should be encouraged at the elementary, secondary, tertiary, technical and public institutions in Ghana to enhance the level of creativity among students in combating issues the society is confronted with.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization – S.B., B.K.A. and E.K.H.; methodology – S.B., B.K.A. and E.K.H.; formal analysis – S.B., B.K.A., E.K.H., E.A. and R.K.S.; investigation – S.B., B.K.A., E.K.H., E.A. and R.K.S.; resources – S.B., B.K.A., E.K.H., E.A. and R.K.S.; writing-original draft preparation – S.B., B.K.A., E.K.H., E.A. and R.K.S.; writing-review and editing – S.B., B.K.A., E.K.H., E.A. and R.K.S.; visualization – S.B., B.K.A., E.K.H., E.A. and R.K.S.; supervision – S.B., B.K.A., E.K.H., E.A. and R.K.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding

This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- [1] Knoema, Ghana - Corruption perceptions index. 2021. Available from: <https://knoema.com/atlas/Ghana/Corruption-perceptions-index>
- [2] Ghana Corruption Rank 1998-2020 Data | 2021-2023 Forecast | Historical | Chart, Trading Economics. 2021. Available from: <https://tradingeconomics.com/ghana/corruption-rank>
- [3] Anti-Corruption Authorities (ACAs) - Profiles: Ghana, Anti-Corruption Authorities. 2015. Available from: <https://www.acauthorities.org/country/ghana>.
- [4] Rahman K. Overview of corruption and anti-corruption in Ghana. 2018. Available from: <https://www.u4.no/publications/overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption-in-ghana-2018-update.pdf>
- [5] Chêne M. Overview of corruption and anti-corruption in Ghana. 2010. Available from: <https://www.u4.no/publications/overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption-in-ghana/>
- [6] Jain KA. Corruption a review. *J. Econ. Surv.* 2001; 15(1): 71–121.

- [7] Iyanda OD. Corruption: Theories and concept. *Oman Chapter Arab. J. Bus. Manag. Rev.* 2012; 2(4): 37–45.
- [8] Voskanyan F. A study of the Effects of Corruption on Economic and Political Development of Armenia [dissertation]. Yerevan: American University of Armenia; 2000. 60 p.
- [9] Heidenheimer JA. *Political corruption: Reading in Comparative analysis.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston; 1970.
- [10] Smith TM. Corruption, Tradition and Change. *Indonesia.* 1971; 11: 21–40.
- [11] Mauro P. Corruption and the Composition of Government Expenditure. *J. Public Econ.* 1998; 69(2): 263–279.
- [12] Onongha KK. Corruption, Culture and Conversion: The Role of the Church in Correcting a Global Concern. *J. Appl. Christ. Leadersh.* 2014; 8(2): 67–82.
- [13] Lang A. Bright Ackwerh Uses His Polarizing Satirical Illustrations To Tell the Hard Truths of the World. 2018. Available from: <https://www.okayafrica.com/bright-ackwerh-uses-his-polarizing-satirical-illustrations-to-tell-the-hard-truths-of-the-world/>
- [14] Contemporary African Textile Art. Available from: <https://www.contemporary-african-art.com/contemporary-african-textile-art.html>
- [15] Connolly K. Ai Weiwei: I’m looking forward to arguing with Brits about Brexit. 2019. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/sep/13/ai-weiwei-brits-brexit-chinese-dissident>
- [16] Ai Weiwei: So sorry. 2018. Available from: <https://www.br.de/fernsehen/ard-alpha/sendungen/kunstraum/ai-weiwei-so-sorry-100.html>
- [17] Eberstadt F. The Dangerous Art of Pyotr Pavlensky. 2019. Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/11/magazine/pyotr-pavlensky-art.html>
- [18] Mills MC. Materiality as the Basis for the Aesthetic Experience in Contemporary Art [dissertation]. University of Montana; 2009. 43 p.
- [19] Candy L, Edmonds E. Practice-based research in the creative arts: Foundations and futures from the front line. *Leonardo.* 2018; 51(1): 63–69.
- [20] Howard KE. Exploration of Mixed-media Techniques in Textile Art. *Int. J. Humanit. Soc. Sci.,* 2013; 1(1): 7–17.
- [21] Empress A. The history and hidden meanings of African Wax Print Cloth. 2020. Available from: <https://ashantiempress.com/blogs/news/history-of-african-wax-print-cloth>
- [22] Hobcraft P. An Introduction to Design Thinking. 2018. Available from: <https://blog.hypeinnovation.com/an-introduction-to-design-thinking-for-innovation-managers>
- [23] Clarke T. *Corporate Governance: A Survey Elements in Corporate Governance.* Cambridge: University Press; 2021.
- [24] Waloszek G. Introduction to design thinking. 2012. Available from: <https://experience.sap.com/skillup/introduction-to-design-thinking/>
- [25] Prempeh P. Adinkra Symbols and Meanings: West African Knowledge Symbols. 2020. Available from: <https://www.adinkrabrand.com/blogs/posts/african-adinkra-symbols-and-meanings>
- [26] Blackwell HA. *UXL Encyclopedia of Science, 3rd ed.* U·X·L, 2015.
- [27] Maheshwari KV. *The Concepts of Evaluation.* 2017. Available from: www.vkmaheshwari.com.
- [28] Adinkrahene. Adinkra Symbols and Meanings. 2019. Available from: <http://www.adinkrasymbols.org>
- [29] Fjeldstad OH, Andvig JC, Amundsen I, Sissener T, Søreide T. Corruption: A review of contemporary. *C. Rep.* 2001; 7: 122 p.

- [30] Byrne E. Definitions and Types of Corruption. 2009. Available from: <http://elaine.ie/2009/07/31/definitions-and-types-of-corruption/>
- [31] Riley PS. Petty Corruption and Development. *Dev. Pract.* 1999; 9(1–2): 189–193.
- [32] Matsheza P. Corruption: Concept and Definition, specialised training workshop, Mombasa, Kenya.
- [33] IEA, Socio-Economic and Governance Survey of Ghana: November – December, 2015 Main Report. 2015. Available from: <https://media.africaportal.org/documents/IEA-Socio-Econ-Survey-Main-Report-19-01-17.pdf>.
- [34] Amankwah AS, Bonsu GA, White P. Media Exposé of Judicial Corruption in Ghana: Ethical and Theological Perspectives. *Legon J. Humanit.*, 2017; 28(1): 1–9.
- [35] Tanzi V, Davoodi H. Corruption, Public Investment and Growth, In: Shibata H., Ihori T. (eds) *The Welfare State, Public Investment, and Growth*. 1998; 41–60. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-4-431-67939-4_4
- [36] Asare KS. Breathing Life into Separation of Powers in 1992 Constitution. 2020. Available from: <https://www.cddgh.org/breathing-life-into-separation-of-powers-in-1992-constitution/>
- [37] Holmes L. *The End of Communist Power: Anti-Corruption Campaigns and Legitimation Crisis*. New York: Oxford University Press; 1993.
- [38] Ghana Corruption Report. 2020. Available from: <https://www.ganintegrity.com/portal/country-profiles/ghana/>