West African Indigenous Design Patterns as a Source of Inspiration for Contemporary Ghanaian Textile Designs

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Abstract
The purpose of the study was to explore the possibility of generating contemporary Ghanaian textile designs from indigenous West African Design Patterns. Qualitative research design was adopted for the study. The data collection instrument was observation. Purposive sampling was used to select five (5) indigenous West African Design patterns which could be manipulated with CorelDraw to generate contemporary Ghanaian textile designs. The findings revealed that designs from selected indigenous textiles could be used as motifs and textures. Additionally the indigenous design patterns had aesthetically pleasing colour combinations that could be used in textile designing. The study concluded that indigenous design patterns from West Africa can be used to generate contemporary Ghanaian textile designs. It is recommended that textile designers in their quest to design should explore all possible or available themes, since there is a lot that can be derived from the unknown. Also other researchers (textile designers) should be encouraged to further investigate the possibility of generating contemporary textile designs from indigenous ones.
Keywords: Contemporary textile designs, Ghanaian, Indigenous Design Patterns, West Africa.
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1. Introduction
Textiles in Africa are one of many creative manifestations of cultural identity that have shaped the communities that inhabit its various regions. Color preferences, materials, embellishments, and design convey cultural, religious, and ritual meanings, as well as reflecting priorities associated with behavior, age, grade, and ritual practices. Textiles and clothing are also important barometers of change because they are inextricably linked to trade, inter-cultural contact, political and ideological change, and shifting religious adherence, all of which are critical to understanding economic and cultural links between nations and continents. Almost everything Africans make is inspired by culture such as spoons, carved calabashes (gourds), gold weights, pendants, designs in pottery and on mud walls, details on carved house posts or masks, and indigenously patterned fabrics. It offers a one-of-a-kind opportunity to learn about Africa, its costumes, and cultures. Africans frequently wear their art, which is densely packed with visual symbols. The designs convey culturally significant meanings.

Textile design is a subset of the larger term "designing," which refers to the process of creating a design. According to Sackey (2002), a design must be original, innovative, and constructive, as well as capable of satisfying man's utilitarian and aesthetic needs. As a result, design can be created with a specific goal in mind, which can be functional or aesthetic. Every work of art is founded on design knowledge. Because "Art is design," and design is art summed up, the functionality and artistic purpose of any art work are critical. Technology is changing the way people design. Successful textile designers combine a creative vision of how a finished textile will look with a thorough understanding of production techniques and the properties of fiber, yarn, and dyes. Designs for woven and printed textiles frequently start with a drawing or watercolour sketch of the finished design. Today, however, the majority of professional textile designers use computer-aided design software created specifically for this purpose.

The local market (in Ghana) is being challenged by finished imported textile prints such as calico, grey baft, and furnishing materials, which are typically sourced from Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, China, and, more recently, India and Pakistan. Consumers have argued that, while locally produced finished fabrics are of higher quality, the market for imported products has grown because the products have appealing colors, new designs, and a softer and glossier finish (Quartey, 2006). This research seeks to improve the appearance and aesthetic quality of contemporary Ghanaian textiles in order to make them more appealing to a wide range of people. It will focus on designs used in West Africa's indigenous textile industry and how some of these designs can be used to create unique textiles that will sell and possibly help revive Ghana's local textile industry.

1.1 Indigenous Textiles of West Africa
1.1.1 Quilt
Quilting is the process of sewing layers of fabric together to create a cover of some sort. They may be padded or

stuffed with cotton waste, wool, or even horse hair in colder climates. Quilting is not widely practiced in West Africa. Its distribution appears to revolve around the Djerma people of Middle Niger. The purpose of heavily padded clothing is not to keep you warm, but to protect you from arrows and other weapons. Quilted amour was made by sewing several layers of locally woven cotton cloth together and was designed for both warriors and their horses. Stitching is frequently used to add pattern to the garment, and pieces of cloth in one or more colors may be used (Picton & Mack, 1989). Quilting is a relatively simple technique. Layers of cloth are layered and tacked together, frequently with padding or stuffing. They are sewn together securely around the edges and at intervals across the central area using running stitch or back stitch, which holds full layers in place and gives a padded effect (Gillow & Sentence, 2006).

1.1.2 Patchwork
Patchwork is a method of making textiles that involves sewing together pieces of fabric to form a geometric design. The patches are usually of the same shape, such as squares, rectangles, or hexagons. Although it is not commonly used to make the decorative tops of quilts, patchwork is frequently used in the production of clothing, banners, and other articles (Gillow & Sentence, 2006). The difference between patchwork and appliqué is that the textile fragments sewn together to form larger cloths are not overlapped, but are stitched together along their common borders. In this context, the term "patching" as it is commonly used refers to a technique that is more properly classified as appliqué. Patch work implies what is sometimes referred to as "invisible mending" - the attachment of a patch in such a way that no overlap is visible. Some Fante Asafo flags are patch worked rather than appliquéd (Picton & Mack, 1989).

1.1.3 Yoruba Adire Cloth
Adire is the Yoruba word for indigo resist-dyed cloth. The cloth is mainly produced in Abeokuta and Ibadan, though dyeing is practiced throughout most of Yorubaland. Factory-made white cotton shirting fabric of lengths of about two and a half yards long and a yard wide are prepared for dyeing. When the dyeing is finished, these will be sewn together and hemmed to form a square cloth. Adire is classified into two types. In one, the resisting agent is raphia, iko (leaves of raffia plant), and tying and stitching are used to create patterns. These are known as Adire Oniko. The resisting agent in the other category is starch, eko, which is either painted or stenciled onto the cloth before dyeing. These are referred to as Adire Eleko.

1.1.4 Korhogo
This type of cloth is made by the Sunofo people of the Ivory Coast and is designed by using mud to paint the cloth in various geometric designs. The mud is typically black, brown, or rust in color and is sourced from various locations throughout Western Africa. The fabric is used to make clothing, pillows, and home furnishings. Men make fine line drawings of human and animal forms on coarsely spun, narrow-woven cotton strips sewn together to form the large hanging using simple tools. Their "paint" could be fermented mud or modern pigments that they apply while sitting or kneeling in front of their homes. The designs are inspired by paintings that once adorned ritual houses. The artists are given free rein in creating stylized human, animal, bird, and snake forms, with some resembling costumed dancers. When a visitor enters a Korhogo village, they are greeted by hundreds of these drawings, which are attached to mud-brick walls and spread on the ground.

1.1.5 Embroidery
Embroidery is the practice of using stitches as a decorative feature in their own right. It is very versatile and does not require heavy equipment like weaving, and unlike weaving, where the patterns must be linear, curvilinear work is simple to accomplish (Gillow & Sentence, 2006). Embroidery is the decoration of a garment with a needle and thread. The structure of the ground weave has no bearing on the form of embroidery. Embroidery in West Africa is an art form that is generally associated with the Islamic peoples of West Africa, as embroidery developed within the context of Islamic culture. This is not to say that only Muslims wear embroidery clothing, which is far from the case, but conformity to an Islamic dress fashion must be counted among the factors promoting West Africa's gradual Islamization. According to Heathcote (1976), the first embroidery in Hausa land must have been imported, but by the fifteenth century, there would have been some local embroiders in larger towns and cities like Kano. Heathcote (1976) also speculates that the more elaborate embroidered embellishment of Hausa dress is a relatively recent development.

1.1.6 Appliqué
Appliqué is a decorative sewing technique in which small pieces of material are sewn onto a background fabric. It arose from the possibilities presented by sewing patches onto damaged fabric (Gillow & Sentence, 2006). Appliqué is the process of adding additional materials to a woven textile base. Appliqué comes from the French word appliquér which means to "put on". In appliqué, one layer of fabric is sewn on top of another layer of fabric.

The term refers to the application of additional pieces of textile, but other materials such as beads and shells, metals and jewelry, animal fur, and medicine bundles may also be used. Ceremonial cloth, banners, and flags are frequently appliquéd, as are cloths containing magical substances and skins embellished with beadwork. This method is indigenous. It appears that because appliquéd cloths are distinguished from undecorated textiles, their owners or weavers would frequently acquire such cloth to mark their own distinction and identity. It is frequently associated with prestige and social standing (Picton & Mack, 1989).

2. Methodology

The qualitative research design was employed for the study because it sort to gain insight into attitudes, behaviours, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture of indigenous design patterns from West Africa. It was also used because it could provide results that were rich and detailed, offering many ideas and concepts to inform findings. The population for the study were indigenous design patterns from West Africa which included quilt, patchwork, Adire from Nigeria, Korhogo from Ivory Coast, Embroidery and Appliqué.

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of various indigenous design patterns from West Africa. Design patterns were selected because they had particular characteristics that were of interest to the research. Decisions concerning the individual designs to be included in the sample were taken by the researcher based upon a variety of criteria. The first criteria were designs that was most likely to contribute to the creation of appropriate designs both in terms of relevance and depth. Secondly, the selected designs were chosen because they had particular features or characteristics which would enable detailed exploration of the research objectives. Finally the selected designs were easily manipulated with CorelDraw.

The research instrument that was used for the study were observation. This instrument was used to scrutinize, distinguish and document pertinent information on indigenous textiles from West African which would be useful to the study. It provided further insight into how indigenous design patterns could be used in contemporary Ghanaian textile designs. . Indigenous design patterns from various West African states were observed and suitable ones were selected to produce contemporary Ghanaian textile designs. The preferred design patterns were evaluated and checked to see if they could be used for textile designs. Corel Draw was used to manipulate selected indigenous design patterns from West Africa to produce suitable contemporary Ghanaian textile designs. Designs from the selected textiles were used as motifs and textures. These were arranged in full drop, half drop etc. to produce contemporary Ghanaian textile designs. Below is the breakdown of the processes used in generating the final designs. The design patterns from the different West African states were grouped into Quilt, Patchwork, Adire, Applique Korhogo and Embroidery. A lot of pictures were sampled and the suitable ones were selected to produce the designs.

2.1 Design One

Design One (1) was derived from a quilt. The image of a quit in Figure 1 (a) was power traced in CorelDraw to convert it into vector graphics. Unwanted portions were erased to create two motifs as shown in Figure 1 (b). Each motif was grouped so that it could be used as a single unit. To create the final design in Figure 1 (ci), motif B was arranged diagonally and given two different colours. Dots were used as textures for this design. The final design in Figure 1 (cii) was achieved by arranging motif A is an allover pattern. The motif was given two different colours. Figure 1 (ciii) was obtained by arranging motif A in linear order. Irregular lines were used as textures. The final design in Figure 1 (civ) was acquired by arranging motif B in an over pattern. Unequal circles were used as textures for the design.

Figure 1 (a): Image of a Quilt (2)
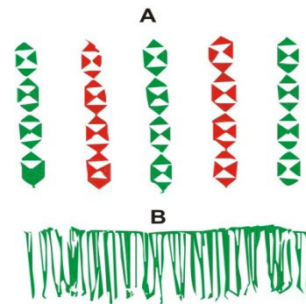Source: Picton & Mack (1989)
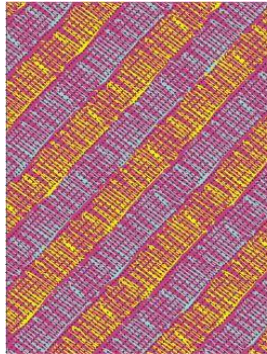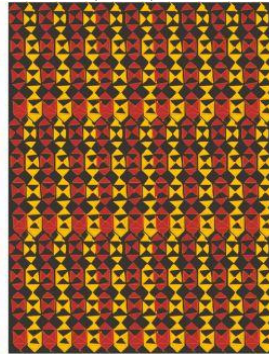
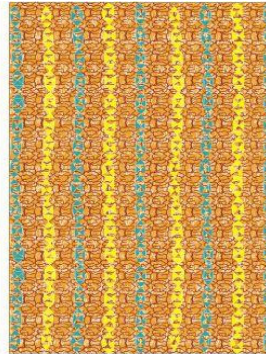

Figure 1 (b): Motifs Derived
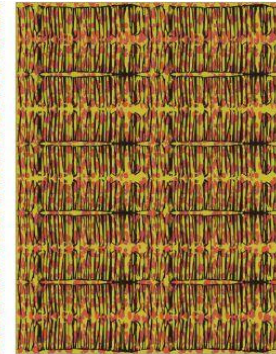

Figure 1 (ci)   Figure 1 (cii)   Figure 1 (ciii)   Figure 1 (civ)
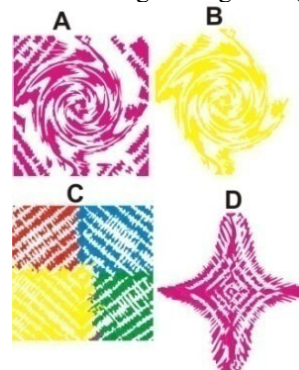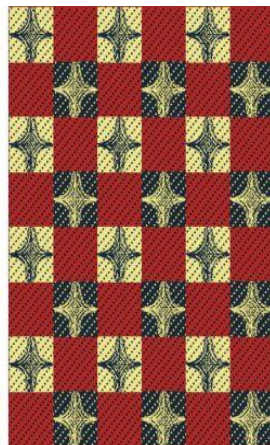Figure 1 (c): Final Designs Derived

2.2 Design Two

Figure 2 (a) is an image of a patchwork which was loaded in CorelDraw and power traced to convert it into vector graphics. Two motifs were derived from the image namely motif A and B as shown in Plate 5.3.5 (b). Motif B was used to create the final designs. In Figure 2 (ci) and Figure 2 (ciii) the motif was arranged in half drop pattern and dots were used as textures. In the final design in Figure 2 (cii) the motif was arranged in full drop pattern and again dots were used as textures.

Figure 2 (a): Image of a Patchwork (5)

Figure 2 (b): Motifs Derived

Source: www.quiltersmuse.com
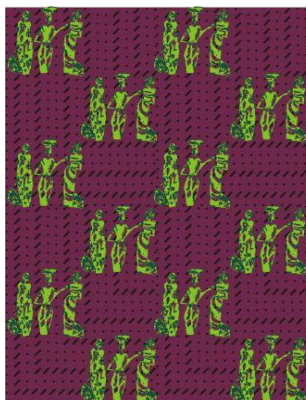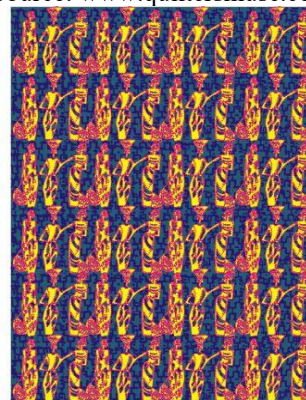
Figure 2 (ci)   Figure 2 (cii)   Figure 2 (ciii)
Figure 2 (c): Final Designs Derived
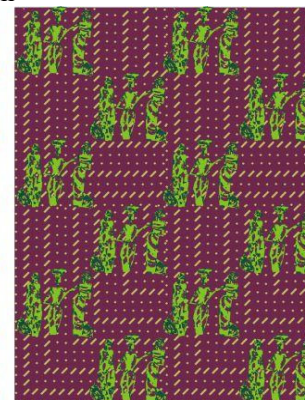
2.3 Design Three

The image in Figure 3 (a) is an Adire Oniko cloth which was imported to Corel Draw and power traced to convert it into vector graphics. The distort tool was used to create the motifs in Figure 3 (b). To produce the final design in Figure 3 (ci) motif B was arranged in half drop pattern. Wax effect and curved lines were used as textures. The final design in Figure 3 (ci) was created by arranging motif C in half drop pattern with dots as textures. To achieve the final designs in Figure 3 (ciii) motif D was arranged in full drop pattern. Motif B was arranged in full drop pattern with diagonal lines as textures to produce the final design in Figure 3 (civ).
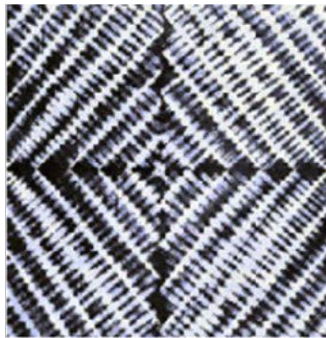
Figure 3 (a): Image of an Adire Oniko (5)
Source: *British Museum*

Figure 3 (b): Motifs Derived

Figure 3 (ci)   Figure 3 (cii)   Figure 3 (ciii)   Figure 3 (civ)
Figure 3 (c): Final Designs Derived
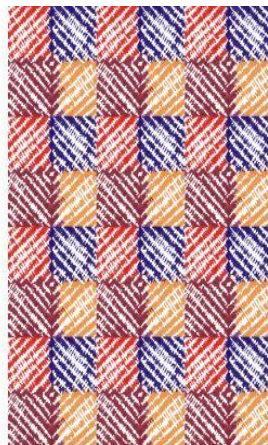
2.4 Design Four

Shown in Figure 4 (a) is an image of a Korhogo cloth which was imported into CorelDraw. It was then power traced to convert the image into vector graphics and ungrouped. Selected sections of the image were used as motifs as seen in Figure 4 (b). To create the design in Figure 4 (ci) motif A was used. The motif was put in a circle and they were grouped to make them a single unit. It was then arranged in half drop pattern. Wax effect and lines were used as textures. Motif D was used to achieve the final design in Figure 4 (cii). It was arranged in half drop pattern and the outline of sand was used as texture. Figure 4 (ciii) was created by arranging motif B in full drop pattern and with dots as textures. The final design in Figure 4 (civ) was produced by arranging motif C in full drop pattern and lines were used as textures.

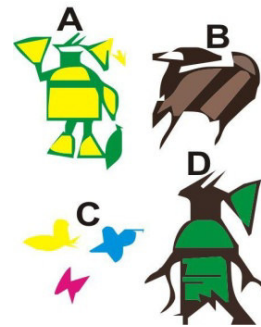Figure 4 (a): Image of a Korhogo (1)
Source: www.yahoocitymap.com

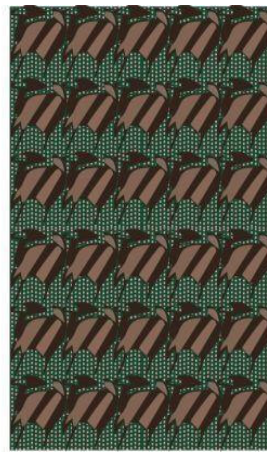Figure 4 (b): Motifs Derived

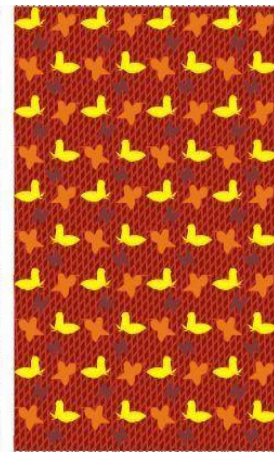| Figure 4 (ci) | Figure 4 (cii) | Figure 4 (ciii) | Figure 4 (civ) |

Figure 4 (c): Final Designs Derived

2.5 Design Five

The image of an embroidery in Figure 5 (a) was power traced in CorelDraw to convert it into vector graphics. The image was ungrouped and selected portions were used as motifs as seen in Figure 5 (b). The final design in Figure 5 (ci) was achieved by arranging motif A in full drop pattern. Motif D was rotated at 45° and arranged in full drop pattern to create the final design in Figure 5 (cii). To acquire the final design in Figure 5 (ciii) motif B was also arranged in full drop pattern with circles and wax effect as textures. Finally motif F was arranged in full drop pattern to produce the final design in Figure 5 (civ).
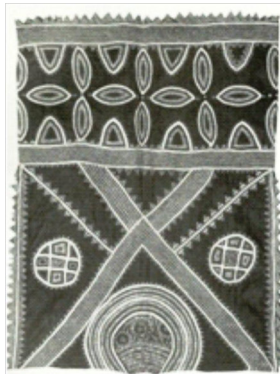
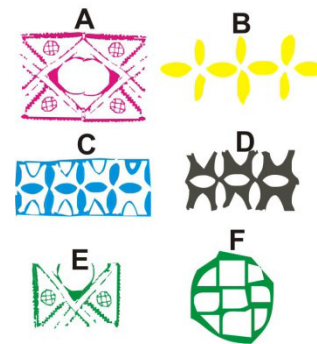Figure 5 (a): Image of an Embroidery (3)
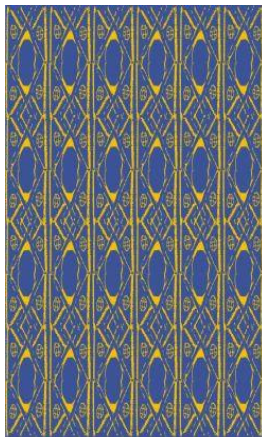Source: Picton & Mack (1989)

Figure 5 (b): Motifs Derived
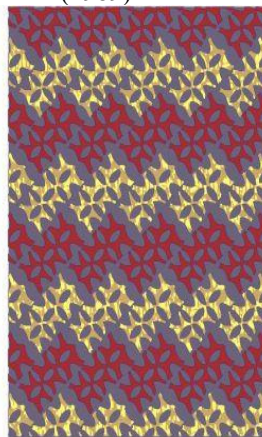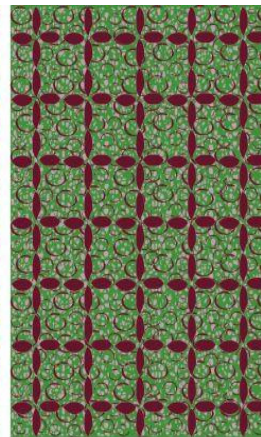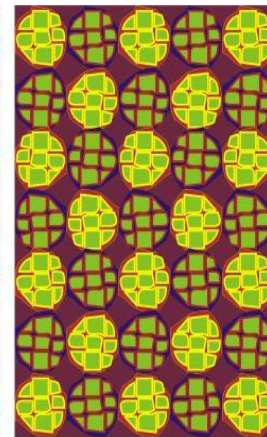

Figure 5 (ci)   Figure 5 (cii)   Figure 5 (ciii)   Figure 5 (civ)

Figure 5 (c): Final Designs Derived

2.6 Design Six

Figure 6 (a) is an image of an Appliqué which was loaded in CorelDraw and power traced to convert it into vector graphics. The image was ungrouped and the erase tool was used to derive the motifs in Figure 6 (b). To produce the final design in Figure 6 (ci) motif B was copied, mirrored and grouped to make it a single unit. It was then arranged in half drop pattern with wax effect and veins as textures. The final design in Figure 6 (cii) was produced by arranging motif A in full drop pattern. The spaces created were filled by the reduced size of motif A.

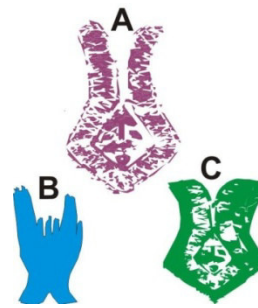Figure 6 (a): Image of an Appliqué (2)
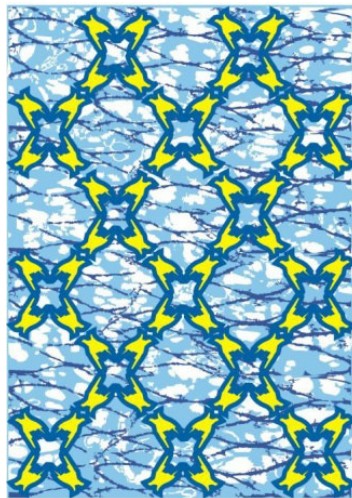Source: Picton & Mack (1989)

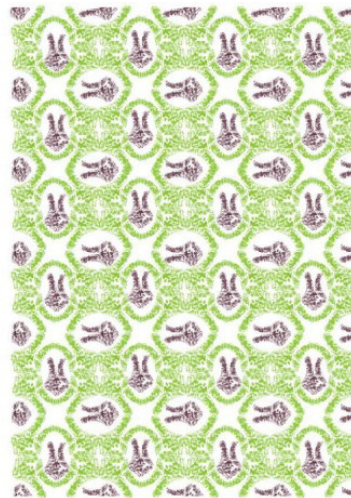Figure 6 (b): Motifs Derived

Figure 6 (ci)

Figure 6 (cii)

Figure 6 (c): Final Designs Derived

3. Results and Discussion

The design in Figure 7 is derived from an image of an indigenous quilt. It is part of the British Museum Collection but its manufacturers are not documented. It is believed to have originated from the Ivory Coast (Piction & Mack, 1989). The design was developed from the fringes in the image in Figure 1(b). The fringes were arranged in all over diagonal pattern. Dots arranged in diagonal form were used as textures. The colour red was tinted to turn into pink and used as the background colour. Also tints of yellow and blue were used for the motifs. This gives the design a pleasant appearance. This design can be used as a mummy's cloth for women and girls because of the colours used. This cloth is named 'Manquant' because of its assumed French background and the fact that it is not documented. 'Manquant' in French means 'missing'.
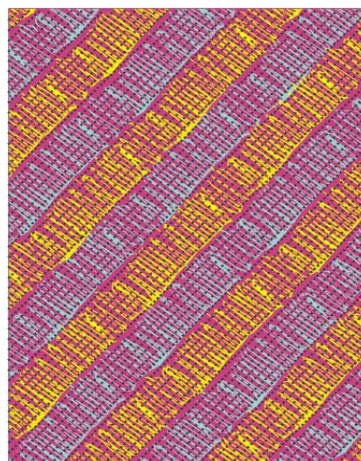

Figure 7: Textile Design from a Quilt

The design in Figure 8 was derived from a patchwork. The image had three women who seem to be going to the market and having a chat on the way. This image was arranged in an all over pattern and the colours red, yellow and blue were used. These colours were used because they are warm colours and on a bright day they are lovely to use. This design can be used by women groups at churches, institutions and many other places. A suitable name for this cloth will be 'Obaa' which in local twi parlance means woman.

Figure 8: Textile Design from a Patchwork

The design in Figure 9 was obtained from an Adire Oniko design. The image was broken into four parts and given different colours. They were then re-joined. This design will be suitable for making home interior decoration items like curtains, chair backs etc. it can also be used for upholstery in cars and chairs. This is primarily because of the colours that were used. It will be quite difficult to see when they are dirty. They can also be used as a mummy's cloth. Its name is 'Together'
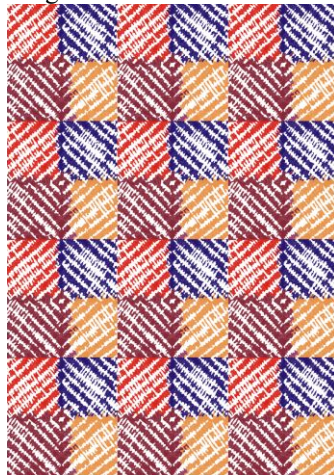

Figure 9: Textile Design from Adire Oniko

The design in Figure 10 was derived from an image of a Korhogo cloth. Its name is 'Masquerade' because the motif resembles someone dressed for a masquerade performance. Tints and shades of black and white were the colours used in the design. White in most parts of Africa means new, purity and happiness. Black is normally for sorrow or sadness. Examples are during naming ceremony of child and during the burial of a person who dies an accidental dead. It can also be used by both men and women.
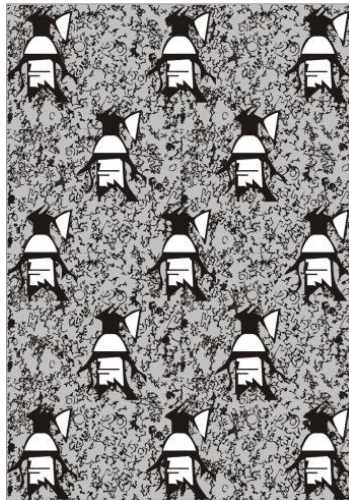
Figure 10: Textile Design from a Korhogo cloth

This design (Figure 11) is derived from the image of an embroidered cotton tunic from Cameroun. The motif derived was arranged in all over pattern and tint and shade of complementary colours green and red were used. This cloth will be suitable for use as a Friday wear or a mummy's cloth. Also because of the rich green colour, it can be used by farmer associations or agriculture associations as their corporate cloth. It is named 'Fruit'.
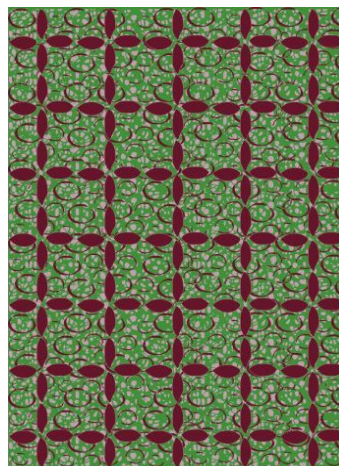

Figure 11: Textile Design from an Embroidery

This design (Figure 12) is derived from the image of a wool and hide ceremonial tunic from Benin, Nigeria. This can be used as a mummy's cloth. Tint and shade of blue have been used with a little yellow to bring the motifs out. The name of this design is 'Anago' in honour of the craftsmen and women of Nigeria who produced the original design.
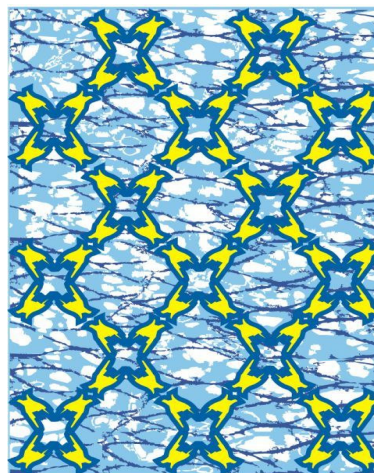

Figure 12: Textile Design from an Applique

4. Conclusion

The study reveals that indigenous design patterns can be incorporated into contemporary Ghanaian textile designs. Furthermore it shows that it is possible to create new designs from old ones and make it appeal to current trends. Additionally, it demonstrates that it is probable to use computer aided design programmes to produce textile designs. This makes it easier and faster to produce the textile designs. It is recommended that Computer aided design programmes like CorelDraw, Adobe Photoshop, Auto Card etc. should be incorporated into school curriculum and emphasised in the teaching and learning of textile designing to help students explore their creativity much more easily. Thus computers, software setup and others should be made available to students and their teachers. Additionally, Textile Designers in their quest to design should explore all possible or available themes, since there is a lot that could be derived from the unknown.

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