



The Symbolic Interaction of clothing: The regalia of chiefs in Anlo State

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the symbolism of clothing regalia used by chiefs in Anlo State in the Volta Region of Ghana. The theoretical approach used was the symbolic interactionism theory in relation to clothing, which focuses on social processes related to how meanings are constructed and reconstructed in everyday life and uses the term 'meaning' more often in this perspective. The study adapted ethnographic design aspects of qualitative research method. The population for the study were the four hierarchy of political authority in the Anlo State. These chiefs are the Awoamefia, who is the paramount chief of the Anlo State, and the military wing divisional chiefs who are the Awadada, Dusifiaga and Mifiaga and their elders. The study adopted expert purposive sampling technique to sample eight key informants, two for each chief. Data was collected using a semi-structured interview guide with sixteen interview sessions and an observation guide to observe the clothing regalia of the chiefs during the Hogbetsotso Festival. The study identified various forms of clothing regalia used by the Anlo State chiefs. These symbols were; the type of cloth (Ewe Kete, Adanuvor or Klala), jumper, a hat (Fiakuku), chiefs' sandals (Fiafokpa), a walking stick and beads (Dzonu) for adornment. The Lashi or Sorshi also formed part of their clothing regalia. The choice of Anlo State chiefs clothing regalia was influenced by the occasion they attended, colour and their role as chiefs. Occasions like installation, confinement and coronation of the chiefs and festivals depicted them in different clothing regalia. The interaction and interpretation of the symbol to the Anlo State symbolized spiritual protection for them. It also symbolized a historical event and a legacy of their forefathers, as well as depicted their affluence and authority. The scope of the study was limited to the four hierarchy of political authority in the Anlo State. They are Awoamefia, Awadada, Dusifiaga and Mifiaga who have authority and rule over the entire Anlo State. The study mainly focused on the clothing regalia used by the Anlo chiefs and its related symbolic meanings which included their clothing and adornments but excluded their throne. The study identified the different forms of clothing regalia used by the Anlo State chiefs and the factors that influenced the choice of their clothing regalia, but the spiritual implications attached to some of the clothing regalia made it difficult to probe further and observe those clothing regalia. Chiefs in Anlo State are revered in the society and the relationship between their clothing regalia and the meanings associated with them are symbolic in the traditional setting therefore, traditional leaders must continue to

Kumatia, K.A., & Gavor, M. E. (2022). The Symbolic Interaction of clothing: The regalia of chiefs in Anlo State. *International Journal of Home Economics*, 15(2), 5-22.

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use occasions like durbars, festivals and other ceremonies to sensitize their subjects on the importance of preserving their culture. This will educate the Anlos about the symbolic meanings of the clothing regalia used by their chiefs and also provide good sources of reference materials for the future generation to continue the legacy.

KEYWORDS: ANLO STATE CHIEFS, CLOTHING, CLOTHING REGALIA, CULTURE, SYMBOLIC MEANING

Introduction

Clothing refers to items worn to cover the body (Gilligan, 2016). Clothing has long been an intimate part of humans as earliest studies in the psychology of clothing have distinguished four inherent basic functions of clothing as modesty, immodesty, protection and adornment (Aishwariya, 2018). Other reasons for wearing clothing by other researchers have been explained as group identity, social status and social affiliation (Bellorado, 2020; Safdar et al., 2020). With these reasons, the early human societies focused on the primary functions of clothing as it was very practical and primitive rather than the symbolic messages that clothing communicated.

Clothing is an inseparable part of the human body and through clothing a person makes a first step into the nonverbal communication to the world. Tijana et al. (2014) suggested that, communication through clothing is treated as a basic carrying concept and may imply an aspect of the nonverbal interaction and exchange of information in the society. Clothing can be interpreted as a transmission of information between a carrier and recipient through symbolic messages in the general or specific scope of the dressing culture. Howlett et al. (2013) explained that, it provides a plethora of information about the wearer without having to meet or talk to the person. In that open communication, people create their individuality through their appearance and messages and information about themselves are visually sent and received.

Throughout history, societies have used clothing and various forms of bodily adornment to nonverbally communicate their rank, gender, status, maturity, occupations, class, wealth and group affiliation, serving as a form of free speech (Dzrmedo, 2009). Omatseye and Emeriewen (2012) indicated that, clothes still remain a vital tool for the nonverbal communication mode of the language of clothing, indicating the significance that accompanies the motifs and symbols expressed in them. These clothing and various forms of bodily adornment are expressed in the forms of signs, symbols and iconography which served as nonverbal but visual forms of expressing their habits, thought, techniques and conditions that characterized society as a whole (Dzrmedo, 2009).

Traditional leaders in our society are embodiment of our culture (Dzivenu, 2011). They are described as “guardians” of traditional norms, values and practices that are respected in particular communities from generation to generation (Chinsinga, 2006) and as such important channel through which social and cultural change can be realized. The chieftaincy institution in Ghana which is highly cherished by most indigenous Ghanaian societies has been very instrumental in the socio-political and economic development in the country (Bewiadzi, 2013). The chieftaincy institution gives a sense of identity and belongingness and also gives an appreciation of what our predecessors did and enables us to reminisce and deduce the things we want to continue (Kleist, 2011). Chieftaincy is predominantly defined in terms of tradition, as Essel (2021) defined tradition as any cultural product created or pursued in whole or in part by past generations, and that having been accepted and preserved in whole or in part by successive generations, it has been maintained to the present. Schramm (2004) also asserted that, the Ghanaian institution of chieftaincy is epitomized as a guarantor of cultural

authenticity and it is in the discourse of cultural nationalism that the institution of chieftaincy functions as a major cultural symbol.

Ghanaian chiefs are regarded as custodians of the nation's cultural beliefs and practices, their position as intermediaries between the ancestral spirits and the people they represent makes them sacred figures and their regalia sacred objects (Senah, 2013). Chiefs in Ghana, particularly in the Anlo State are traditionally both the political head and the religious head, and the prohibitions relating to their conduct and mannerisms are all intended to remind them, their subjects and others that, the position they occupy are sacred including their regalia. This belief is the source of the great dignity, respect and veneration with which they are always treated (Oku, 2013).

Culture cannot be devoid of clothing for the reason that, the importance of clothing transcends cultures, times and geography. Culture is important for every society and like history; it provides the basis to assess the past and to provide a compass for the future. Culture explained by Marrie (2008) refers to the language, beliefs, values and norms, customs, roles, knowledge, skills and all other things people learn that make up their way of life especially 'dress'. Anquandah (2013) viewed culture as a totality of the lifestyle of a particular group of people and also described culture as a psychic fabric, a second skin and an organic component of a nation. Hence, clothes are used to express cultural values and social norms that provide shape and structure to society. Tijana et al. (2014) stated that, the symbolism of clothing determines a person and what is worn in the broader social and cultural milieu as some anthropologists refer to clothing as "the social skin" (Gilman, 2002). It is also culture that decides what, when and how to wear certain clothes and guides its members to interpret the messages communicated through them (Park Larsson, 2014).

Different cultures have different costumes and fashion history that identify them, from the most primitive to the most sophisticated, using clothes and adornments as a means of communicating their social and personal status (Dzramedo et al., 2013); it is the culture of the people that marks them out distinctively from other human societies in the family of humanity. The Ghanaian culture gives distinctive identity including the Anlo culture, which is expressed in ethnic content and manifests in the humanistic dimension of artistic forms which are elaborated on through clothing. Likewise, Kaiser (1997) affirmed that, the way people create and interpret the meaning of clothing and other tangible objects can vary from culture to culture, and the material objects that substantiate cultural categories and intangible values are linked to the cultural belief system. These make references in distinguishing the various ethnic groups' culture during festivals, social gathering as well as funeral celebrations through their clothing. The Anlo State chiefs' clothing regalia is significant and has various communicative messages to the Anlo State which can be relevant in the promotion of tourism (Gavor, 2015). This comes in the form of the different types of clothing they put on during different occasions. It is in the light of these that this study seeks to investigate the symbolic interaction of clothing regalia of chiefs in Anlo State in the Volta region of Ghana in order to document its cultural and communicative values for future reference.

Rationale of the Study

The Ghanaian chieftaincy is characterized by the magnificent and splendour of classical attributes such as the grand durbars, colourful *Kente* cloths and the skilfully design golden jewellery which has become national symbols. The Ghanaian culture including that amongst the Anlo-Ewes is largely dependent upon oral tradition and many of the historical discoveries of the Anlo-Ewes still remain in oral tradition (Geurts, 2003; Green, 1998 & Shonsey, 1995). Kuwor (2013) stated that, when keepers of African oral tradition die, they literally take libraries of African culture into the grave where it is entombed and lost to the world forever. In addition, observations made through literature research identified lack of comprehensive documentation

of the Anlo State chiefs clothing regalia, despite the potential distinctive contribution that can be added to national development and the Ghanaian education on cultural sensitivity.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the symbolism of clothing regalia used by chiefs in Anlo State in the Volta Region of Ghana.

Research Objectives

1. Examine the factors that influence the forms of clothing regalia used by chiefs in Anlo State.
2. Discuss the philosophical and symbolic meanings of the forms of clothing regalia used by chiefs in Anlo State and its relevance in Ghanaian contemporary society.

Theoretical Framework

Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Symbolic interaction is derived from the American philosophy of pragmatism and was conceived by George Herbert Mead and Charles Horton Cooley pragmatic method to interpret social interactions. Blumer (1986) a student and interpreter of Mead coined the term “Symbolic Interactionism” and is considered as the founder of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interaction examines the meanings emerging from the reciprocal interaction of individuals in social environment with other individuals and focuses on which symbols and meanings emerge from the interaction between people (Aksan et al., 2009).

Principles of Symbolic Interactionism

The Symbolic Interactionism theory according to Blumer (1986) consists of three core principles namely: *meaning*, *language* and *thought*. *Meaning* implies that, human beings act towards other people and things according to the significances they have given to them. It is the human consciousness about their environment that leads to the possibility of meaning. For Blumer (1986), humans form meaning in two ways that is, meaning is something attributed to objects, events, phenomenon, etc. and meaning is a physical attachment imposed on events and objects by human. *Language* gives humans a means by which to negotiate meaning through symbols and interactions that are comprehensible to the mind and which helps in formulating assumptions (Carter & Fuller, 2015). Symbols form the basis of communication and differentiate social relations of humans from the level of communication of animals. Blumer explained that, people interact with each other by interpreting or defining each other’s actions instead of merely reacting to each other’s actions. Hence, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols and signification, by interpretation or by ascertaining the meaning of one another’s actions. *Thought* implies the interpretations that are assigned to the symbols. These meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretative process used by persons in dealing with the things they encounter (Flint, 2006). The foundation of thought is language, and thought is a mental conversation about the meanings, names and symbols that requires different points of view. The thought includes the imagination which has the power to provide an idea even about an unknown thing based on known knowledge. The symbolic interaction believes that through interaction with others, the individual understands the common meaning associated with the symbols but may modify and change. The same symbol may have different meanings in different settings, for different individuals depending on how the individual interprets the setting.

The symbolic interactionist theory in relation to the Anlo chiefs clothing regalia are how the Anlo chiefs respond towards their clothing regalia, which is based on the meaning they have ascribed to the symbol (clothing regalia). Meaning is given to the clothing regalia based on their

consciousness of their environment which is based on their traditions and customs of the Anlo State. The meaning of the clothing regalia is nonverbally communicated as a result of the interaction between the chiefs and the Anlo people during such occasions. As the Anlo people receive the meaning of the symbol, the message derived from the symbol may reflect the true meaning of the clothing regalia. On the other hand, if the message is not properly communicated, the Anlo people can modify and change the true meaning of the clothing regalia based on how they interpret the meaning in their mental thought.

Research Methodology

The study adapted ethnographic design embedded in qualitative paradigm. Ethnographic studies are described by Creswell and Poth (2018) as qualitative procedures employed to describe, analyse and interpret a culture characteristic. It is used to study a group of people to gain a larger understanding of their lives or specific aspects of their lives. The design was appropriate and adapted for the study in order to gain insight into the clothing culture of chiefs in Anlo State in the Volta region of Ghana. The design was also used to describe, analyse and interpret the forms of clothing regalia used and its symbolic meanings.

The population for the study comprised the four hierarchy of political authority that rule the entire Anlo State and their elders. These chiefs are: the *Awoamefia*, who is the paramount chief of the Anlo State, and the military wing divisional chiefs who are the *Awadada*, *Dusifia* and *Miafiaga* and their elders.

The study used expert purposive sampling technique to select key informants to provide relevant information for the study. The intent is not to generalize from the sample to a population but to explain, describe and interpret a phenomenon (Maxwell, 2013). Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) explained purposive sampling as identifying and selecting individuals or group of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest.

Key informants are the knowledgeable persons who are considered as authorities pertaining to the history and culture of a community (Schutt, 2006). Thus, the key informants for the study were the Kingmakers (*Lafe* clan and *Amlade* clan) in charge of certain rites and because they are the custodians of the traditions and customs in the Anlo State. The Kingmakers were the expert or knowledgeable persons to provide the true meaning of the clothing regalia of the Anlo chiefs. In all, eight key informants were used, two for each chief and this was necessary to check for trustworthiness that is, validity and reliability of data in this qualitative research.

Data was collected using a semi-structured interview guide and observation guide which was based on the study objectives. The semi-structured interview guide involves a prepared questioning, guided by identified themes in a consistent and systematic manner interposed with probes designed to elicit more elaborate responses (Given, 2008). The semi-structured interview guide had ten structured questions and five probing questions for research objective one. Research objective two had five structured questions. The questions were open ended allowing for flexibility which elicited more probing questions as the interview went on. The type of questions asked were the same for each chief's key informants. The observation guide had the characteristics of the clothing regalia to be observed for each chief and was used during the Festival to have pictorial evidence of information obtained from the interviews.

Data for the study was collected within a period of four months. An introductory letter from the Vocational and Technical Education Department in the University of Cape Coast to visit the various palaces of the chiefs and to formally inform them about the purpose of the study and to explain how the instruments was to be used that is, one-on-one interview with the key informants and note taking, and the approach of data collection thus, with the permission use

of an audio recorder, and observation by taking photographs of some of the clothing regalia. In-depth interviews were held with key informants on an average duration of 40-50 minutes on a scheduled date. Key informants for each chief were given pseudonyms to protect their identity as portions of the interviews were stated verbatim. Pseudonyms used for the key informants were; *Awoamefia's* key informants (W1, W2), *Awadada's* key informants (X1, X2), *Dusifiaga's* key informants (Y1, Y2) and *Miafiaga's* key informants (Z1, Z2).

Description of interview process

CHIEF	FIRST KEY INFORMANTS	SECOND KEY INFORMANTS	INTERVIEW SESSIONS
<i>Awoamefia</i>	W1 (a, b)	W2 (a, b)	4
<i>Awadada</i>	X1 (a, b)	X2 (a, b)	4
<i>Dusifiaga</i>	Y1 (a, b)	Y2 (a, b)	4
<i>Miafiaga</i>	Z1 (a, b)	Z2 (a, b)	4

Note: Each key informant was interviewed twice. "a" represent first interview session for all key informants. "b" represents second interview session for all key informants. In all, sixteen (16) interviews were conducted.

To check for internal consistency of the data, each key informant was interviewed twice. Non-participant observation was also used which helped to enter the social system to observe events, activities and interactions with the aim of gaining a direct understanding of the phenomenon in its natural context. Observation was indirect as the situation was studied in its natural setting without altering the conditions (Parke & Griffiths, 2008). This was done to confirm the description made by key informants regarding the clothing regalia of the Anlo State chiefs. Observation was overt, as participants understood the role of the observer for research purposes (Liu & Maitlis, 2010). The main observation was done at the annual *Hogbetsotso* Festival as all the chiefs were present at the gathering.

In ethnographic research, analysis takes place throughout the research process and is tightly connected with interpretation. Data collection for the interviews were done concurrently with transcription of the interviews (Roper & Shapira, 2000) and the reason was to monitor when data saturation point is reached. Transcripts were read multiple times and examined to identify and categorise themes and key issues that emerged (Reeves et al., 2008) so as to get a vivid description. All the themes and categories identified were compiled separately and compared to establish similarities and differences in their clothing regalia. The observation made through note taking were merged with the analysis of the transcribed interviews corresponding to each chiefs' key informants. The interpretation of important statements was stated verbatim.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues considered were informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, and beneficence. Informed consent form was given to key informants to inform them about the purpose of the study, method of data collection and their right to withdraw at any time of the study. In assuring anonymity, key informants were given pseudonyms and were reminded not to mention their names or say anything that will reveal their identity. On the part of assuring confidentiality, data collected was handled and managed by the researcher and findings were reported based on the data gathered. To ensure beneficence in the study, the researcher worked with key informants based on their request of what information to be given out. Information in which key informants thought to be sensitive were not given out.

Key informants in this study voluntarily and willingly provided information for the study even though written informed consent was provided for participation, key informants declined to sign. They declined to sign because they considered it a duty to give information about their

culture. Permission was granted to take photographs of the chiefs during the *Hogbetsotso* Festival and to use the images of the chiefs as most of these images are on the official webpage of the Anlo Traditional Council which can be accessed via <https://www.facebook.com/anlotraditional?mibextid=ZbWKwL>

Findings

Findings of this study are presented based on the following themes.

1. The factors that influence the forms of clothing regalia used by Anlo State chiefs.
This identified the forms of clothing regalia used by Anlo State chiefs, Occasions and articles of clothing regalia used by Anlo State chiefs, Colour influence, Role of the Anlo chiefs and its influence on their clothing regalia, and Clan and inheritance influence on the clothing regalia of Anlo chiefs.
2. The philosophical and symbolic meanings of the clothing regalia used by Anlo State chiefs and its relevance in Ghanaian contemporary society.
The symbolic interaction of clothing regalia of Anlo chiefs emerged three distinct meanings; these are Spiritual symbolism, Historical and Philosophical symbolism, and Social symbolism.

Factors that influence the forms of clothing regalia used by Anlo State chiefs

Forms of clothing regalia used by Anlo State chiefs

Kente is a ceremonial cloth for most chiefs in the southern part of Ghana and the Anlos have their own special type of *Kente* called *Ewe Kete* or *Afe Kete* which is used by the Anlo chiefs. The *Kete* is also called *Agbozume Kete* or *Klikor Kete* and the name is assumed for the *Kete* due to the fact that the local weaving industries are sited in these areas. The *Awoamefias' Kete* is usually woven by special weavers upon his request or already designed *Kete* to depict the status of a king. One of the key informants said:

Our tradition is not like the *Akan* tradition. In our part of the region, there is no particular cloth which is meant for a chief. Our chiefs use *Kete* which is also called *Agbozume Kete*, *Afe Kete* or *Klikor Kete*.

Some of the names of these *Kete* used by the Anlo chiefs are *Fiyome*, *Babadu*, *Kalenyako*, *Easter Sunday*, *Agbedoe* and *Ehianaga*.

Adanuvor is another type of *Kete* cloth used by Anlo chiefs. *Adanuvor* simply means design or woven motifs, for example, the *Kpevi*. This type of *Ewe Kete* cloth is designed with *Ewe* symbols woven onto the cloth. These symbols are sword (*Fiyayi*), stool (*Fiazikpi*), hunters, palanquin (*Apaka*), umbrella, linguist staff, and gun (*Edugo*).

The Anlo chiefs also use white cloth or calico called *Klala*. The *Klala* is used during the installation of Anlo divisional chiefs. The Anlo chiefs also use expensive cloth (*Hogavor*) specially designed to depict the affluence of a chief and by so doing, making the cloth the most expensive to purchase by ordinary citizens except for the chiefs.

The results identified the type of yarns used in weaving the cloths. These yarns are factory produced cotton yarns which are of two types namely quality yarns (*Ka nyuito*) and dyed yarns (*Nevelia*). The quality yarns are *Dzisa* and *Con* which are produced with its colours whereas the second type of yarns are locally dyed with vegetable dyes which usually fade after washing and is mostly used as funeral cloth (*Amedivor*). The *Ewe Kete* weavers usually use two yarn colour

combination for their cloths, these are black and white, black and blue, white and blue, pink and gold, pink and green, black and green, and these colour combinations sometimes determine the name of the cloth. A key informant view is captured below:

...Although we are all Ghanaians, our colours are different from the Ashanti's *Kente*, Ashanti *Kente* usually use yellow, green and blue. But for us Anlo-Ewes we use black and white for Easter Sunday, white and blue as *Ehianaga*, black and blue, pink and gold, pink and green, black and green, or gold used in the middle but the design is different from the Ashanti's *Kente*. Ewes don't use yellow, whenever yellow is used then it is Ashanti *Kente*. With our *Kete* when two colours are used it is called (*Ale*) not like the *Akans* who use motifs and proverbs or other things for the names. We usually use two colours and even when one colour is used, the design is different. This is how we name our cloth.

The jumper was identified as an important clothing regalia used by the Anlo chiefs. An Anlo chief does not appear in public or even in the house without wearing a jumper under a cloth. This statement was made emphatically by all key informants and one of the statements is captured verbatim:

...the difference in appearance of any Anlo chief is that we put on jumper. You cannot go out to any place without wearing a jumper as it happens in the *Akan* or *Ga* areas, we normally put on jumper before we put on the cloth. Even when you are in the house you must put on jumper under a cloth and that decision was taken by *Togbui Sri II*. He decreed that Anlo chiefs should appear in jumper before they put on the *Kete* cloth.

The *Fiakuku* is the headgear (crown or hat) which is an important clothing regalia used by the Anlo chiefs. The Anlo chiefs use either the crown or the hat depending on the occasion. On ordinary occasions, the hat made of any cloth to match their outfit is used while on festive occasions, the crown made of velvet fabric and sometimes studded with gold motifs is used. Aside these, the *Awoamefia* has two types of headgears which are the *Batemi kuku* made from raffia and the crown made of a velvet fabric studded with gold motifs. The *Batemi kuku* is worn during his installation and the reconciliation rites before the *Hogbetsotso* Festival while the crown is worn during *Hogbetsotso* Festival or on other ceremonial occasions. The *Awadadas'* hat is quite different from the other chiefs as it is always white in a fluffy style. The *Dusifiağa* and *Miafiaga* also use crown but not in the design of the *Awoamefias'* crown.

The *Fiafokpa* is the footwear or sandals used by the Anlo chiefs. The *Fiafokpa* is also an important clothing regalia used in the installation of chiefs especially that of the *Awoamefia*. The *Awoamefias'* sandals are provided for by his kingmakers and then sent to Notsie for spiritual consecration. The *Fiafokpa* is then brought back from Notsie and used for the installation of the *Awoamefia*. The *Fiafokpa* is usually made of the skin of an animal. The initial design of the *Fiafokpa* was made in the design of the *Oheneba* with no motif except for the *Awadadas'* own with the motif of a gun or gun powder.

The walking stick is an important feature that constitute the clothing regalia of the Anlo chiefs. It is believed that, a chief does not walk alone therefore, the walking stick is used to support the chiefs whenever they go out even when they are in the company of others. Based on this believe, some of the walking sticks are filled with spiritual protecting herbs serving as protection for the chiefs.

Anlo chiefs basically adorn themselves with beads (*Dzonu*). The most commonly used beads are *Adzagba*, *Sui* and *Blotsi*, others are *Hego* and *Togomegbodzi*. The beads are always worn on the

right hands to signify their status as chiefs. The source of the bead's points to the place of settlement as they believe it was deposited by God. Key informants explained that, they did not migrate with the beads but rather found it on the land they had settled on, as they believe it was deposited by God. The beads usually used are made from glass (*Atsukpa*) and chemicals, others are from stone (*Ekipedzonu*).

The Fly whisk (*Lashi* or *Sorshi*) is an important clothing regalia used during the installation of a chief. The *Lashi* is made of a tail of an animal and is occasionally used. A key informant view is stated below:

...the *Lashi* these days are used for (function) aesthetic purposes that everybody carries on ordinary days but it is not commonly used here. The only time the *Lashi* is used, is when the chief is coming from the installation grounds, he waves it to clear bad people or evil spirits that want to bring him down. Therefore, it is not an ordinary fly whisk but rather it is fortified for the chief so that no one can bring him down.

Occasions and articles of clothing regalia used by Anlo State chiefs

Installation

In the Anlo traditional setting, installation rites are performed for chiefs before confinement. Installation rites performed for the *Awoamefia* is different whereas the rites performed for the divisional chiefs are the same. During the installation rites for the *Awoamefia* with most of the rituals performed late in the night and in secrecy, the *Awoamefia* wears a black or blue-black cotton gown (*Bishi*) and a type of hat called *Batemi kuku*. This type of hat is used by fetish priests which means that the *Awoamefia* plays the role of a spiritual leader of the Anlo State. The *Awoamefias'* sandals *Fiafokpa* is provided for by his kingmakers and then sent to Notsie for spiritual consecration. A herbal creeping plant called *Kakla* or *Kakli* is woven and worn around the head, neck and around the joint elbow. The *Kakla* leaves are known as *Nyanya* in *Twi* and African cucumber in English, and the botanical name is *Momordica charantia* (*Cucurbitaceae*). The *Awoamefia* is given a long walking stick called *Dzizikpo* or *Trokpo* and he can only use this form of clothing regalia during the reconciliation rites before *Hogbetsotso Za* or when he finally joins his ancestors. During this period, he is sent to all the major shrines in Anlo State which their great grandfathers brought from Notsie.

The installation rites performed for the *Awadada*, *Dusifia* and *Miafia* are the same except for the cloth used. During this period, a white cloth or calico (*Klala*) is used. The white cloth is worn over the shoulder and a strip tied around the waist. The white cloth signifies victory for the successful installation. The *Kakla* leaves are also woven and worn around the head, neck and joint elbow.

After the installation, the chiefs are confined for a period of time. It is that white cloth or calico (*Klala*) that will be on them for the seven days confinement period.

Coronation

Coronation is when the newly installed chiefs are out-doored to the public. It is a joyous moment to celebrate the successful installation of the chiefs. Most of the cloths used for this occasion are white or any other multi-coloured cloths in combination with the white cloths, but mostly white cloths dominate. The chiefs must at all times be in Jumper, with a hat and walking stick and as well as adorn themselves with beads.

Reconciliation rites

Reconciliation rites, *Nugbidodo* are special rites performed before the *Hogbetsotso* Festival. During this period, the *Awoamefia* plays a dual role, thus he is the spiritual head (fetish priest) and the political head (ruler) of the Anlo State. The *Awoamefia* wears the black or blue-black cotton gown (*Bishi*), *Batemi kuku* with the *Dzizikpo* or *Trokpo* and *Sorshi* worn during his installation. This clothing regalia is worn once in a year during the reconciliation rites before the *Hogbetsotso* Festival but the other chiefs can be in any multi-coloured cloths but white cloths dominate except for the *Awadada* who is always in white clothing regalia.

Festivals

The Anlo people have one major festival that is the *Hogbetsotso Za* to celebrate their exodus from Notsie. Customarily, the *Awoamefia* is carried in a palanquin to the *durbar* grounds. The *Awoamefia* is dressed in full clothing regalia for this occasion and his clothing regalia must always be above his sub chiefs. He dresses in a nice *Afevo* that is *Hogavor* which means the most expensive cloth specially designed by weavers that he chooses from or a special cloth woven for him upon his request. The *Awoamefia* must always wear white jumper under the *Kete* cloth, with his *Fiakuku*, walking stick and the *Fiafokpa* which was brought from Notsie during the installation, and as much as possible adorn himself with old original beads which are the most expensive and this is shown in Figure 1.



Photo credit Anlo Traditional Council, *Hogbetsotso* (2017)

Figure 1 The *Awoamefia* Torgbui Sri III in his Clothing Regalia at the Annual *Hogbetsotso* Festival

The *Dusifiga* and *Miafiaga* must also dress elegantly in Ewe *Kete* but not as the *Awoamefia*. They must also be in jumper, *Fiakuku* but not as the design of the *Awoamefias'* crown, sandals, walking stick and adorn themselves with beads and this is shown in Figure 3 and 4. The

Awadadas' clothing regalia must at all times be white, white cloth, white jumper, white hat, walking stick and white sandals. He does not appear in any expensive jewellery. This is shown in Figure 2.



Photo credit: Anlo Traditional Council, *Hogbetsotso* (2017)

Figure 2 The *Awadada Torgbui Agbesi Awusu II* in his Clothing Regalia at the Annual *Hogbetsotso* Festival



Photo credit: Anlo Traditional Council, *Hogbetsotso* (2017)

Figure 3 The *Dusifiaga Torgbui Gbordzor III* in his Clothing Regalia at the Annual *Hogbetsotso* Festival



Photo credit: Anlo Traditional Council, *Hogbetsotso* (2017)

Figure 4 The *Miafiaga Torgbui Nyaho Tamakloe V* in his Clothing Regalia at the Annual *Hogbetsotso* Festival

Burials and Funerals

The *Awoamefia* does not attend funerals, likewise he does not even hear about the announcement of any funeral or his name being used to announce a funeral as this might spell doom or calamity for the Anlo people. The *Awoamefia* can use the black or blue-black cotton gown (*Bishi*) worn during his installation rites when he finally joins his ancestors. The rest of the chiefs attend funerals and the cloth mostly used are black, red or black and or red multi-coloured cloths.

War times

The Anlos practice the grid system during warfare. The military wing divisional chiefs led by the *Awadada* goes to war. The *Awoamefia* is always in seclusion and is protected by the military wing chiefs. The right wing and left-wing divisional chiefs organise the men who fall under their jurisdiction to take control of the right and left settlement whereas the *Awadada* takes control of the middle division as the commander in chief to prepare for battle. The cloth used is the *Adewu*, a war garment which is a red cloth.

Casual days

On casual days, any type of cloth can be worn but for Anlo chiefs, anytime they put on cloth, they must always be in jumper, even when they are in the house along with a hat and a walking stick.

Colour influence

Colours were identified as a significant factor in the determining the type of clothing regalia that the Anlo chiefs used. Given that, when a chief uses red cloth as it was during war times, then it signified war, danger and or bloody situation. Black cloth worn with red cloth denotes mourning or sorrow. Predominantly, when white cloth is being used, it symbolises peace and victory. Green symbolises plenty farm produce or good harvest.

Role of the Anlo chiefs and its influence on their clothing regalia

The role performed by the Anlo chiefs plays an important factor in determining the type of clothing regalia used. For the Anlo State, the role of the *Awoamefia* as both the spiritual head and the political head is very sacred. The role of the *Awoamefia* as the paramount chief of the Anlo State is shown in the type of clothing regalia that he uses as he must dress above all his sub chiefs and must be the most expensive because he is the overall authority in the Anlo State. This statement was emphatically made by all key informants and one of the views is expressed below:

...During festivals, before the *Awoamefia* wears any cloth, he displays three different cloths and quickly sends his kinsmen to spy at the *durbar* grounds to find out what the other chiefs will be wearing so that he does not wear the same cloth...and any chief who attempt to wear the same cloth is regarded as competition to the *Awoamefia* ...

The *Awadadas'* role is similarly significant since he is the war leader and the second in command, in addition to that, he act as *Awoamefia* whenever the *Awoamefia* joins his ancestors. The *Awadadas'* clothing regalia is heavily influenced by the position he holds in the Anlo State. The *Awadada* usually sit very close to the *Awoamefia* and his clothing regalia must always be white. The *Awadada* wears a white jumper and a white cloth over the shoulder, a white fluffy hat, white sandals and white walking stick. The *Dusifia* and *Miafia* being part of the military wing of the Anlo State also sit on the right and left hand of the *Awoamefia* respectively. They must also dress appropriately to fit their status as military wing divisional chiefs but not to upscale the dressing of the *Awoamefia* .

Clan and inheritance influence on the clothing regalia of Anlo chiefs

The clan of which the *Awoamefia* comes from which is either the *Adzovia* or Bate clan did not have any influence on the type of clothing regalia that was used. They emphatically stated that, it did not influence their clothing regalia in any way, in that all *Awoamefias'* should dress elegantly to fit their status. Although they admitted having clan cloths, they were not used for a special purpose as in some *Akan* culture. In similar vein, no Anlo chief inherits the clothing regalia, all Anlo chiefs must procure their clothing regalia upon assuming the role as a chief. A key informant view is expressed below:

Although Bate and *Adzovia* clans have clan cloth they do not use them in our part of the region as it happens in the *Akan* areas. No, no, there is no influence of the clan on the clothing regalia of our chiefs. All *Awoamefias'* must just dress elegantly to fit their status.

The philosophical and symbolic meanings of the clothing regalia of chiefs in Anlo State

Spiritual symbolism

Everything among the Anlo-Ewes has spiritual meanings or is understood in a spiritual sense. Spirituality of an Anlo chief is of great significance to the entire Anlo State. The authority of a chief is imbued in the rituals performed for the chief and the clothing regalia worn during such

occasions to transform him into a ruler. The *Awoamefia* of the Anlo State is a human being, but after he had gone through the necessary rites, transforms into a “god of the people”. The installation rites performed for the *Awoamefia* are different from that of his divisional chiefs as he plays a dual role as a spiritual leader and a political ruler. The clothing regalia used during his installation and the reconciliation rites before the *Hogbetsotso* Festival signifies that, he is the head of all the fetishes in the Anlo State. The *Awoamefia* does not remove his clothing before entering any shrine thus, he has authority over all the gods in the Anlo State. His status as a political ruler also symbolises his authority, that is, he is the overlord and his supremacy transcends the entire Anlo State. The *Awoamefias’ Fiafokpa* is always sent to and brought back from Notsie for spiritual fortification and consecration. The *Lashi* or *Sorshi* used during the installation symbolises spiritual protection for the chief. The *Lashi* or *Sorshi* is waved by the newly installed chief from side to side in order to ward off bad people or evil spirits intention against the newly installed chief. The *Kakla* or *Kakli* leaf woven and worn around the neck and elbow joints also symbolises spiritual protection for the newly installed chief.

Anlo chiefs usually adorn themselves with beads but the usage of some particular beads have spiritual protection for the wearer. The *Sui* and *Blotsi* beads worn together is believed to hold supernatural powers of protecting one from evil eyes. The walking stick used by the chiefs are filled with spiritual herbs for protection, and as the walking stick leads them, it protects or ward off evil spirits or bad people’s intention against the chiefs.

Historical and Philosophical symbolism

The Anlo chiefs believe in their traditions and the legacy their forefathers left behind and therefore they strive to continue those legacies. The three most important clothing regalia are the jumper, the hat and the walking stick. The jumper was decreed by *Torgbui Sri II* that, Anlo chiefs must always be in jumper before they put on the cloth and a hat to match their outfit. It is also believed that a chief does not walk alone therefore, the walking stick is used as support or lead the chiefs even when they are in the company of others. An Anlo chief must always be with these three important clothing regalia whenever they step out and that is their legacy. The *Awadadas’* white clothing regalia proceeds a historical event which were the wars fought in the past. The Anlos were not defeated in those wars which account for the *Awadadas’* white clothing regalia today which symbolises peace and the victories over the wars fought in the past.

Social symbolism

The social significance of the clothing regalia used by the Anlo chiefs are that, it communicates to the Anlo people about the specific occasion for them to dress appropriately to suit such occasion. It also demonstrates joy and happiness amongst the Anlo people during occasions like the installation, coronation of chiefs and especially during the *Hogbetsotso* Festival as they celebrate their freedom over the ordeal in Notsie. Traditionally for the Anlos, the *Ewe Kete* or *Afe Kete* is used by royalty and persons with significant status in the Anlo society. The paramount chief of the Anlo State who plays a dual role as a spiritual leader and a ruler usually uses this important occasion to communicate with the entire Anlo State. This is because he usually lives in seclusion. The *Awoamefias’* social eminence is identified by the special cloth made by special weavers, beads for adornment and other important clothing regalia. The special cloth woven for the *Awoamefia* is worn only in times of great importance especially during the *Hogbetsotso* Festival to show his nobility. It is an expensive cloth “*Hogavor*” purposely designed for him to communicate his affluence and authority over the Anlo State. The clothing regalia of the Anlo chiefs during such important occasions depicts their supremacy and authority in the Anlo State. Their role as chiefs being influenced by the type of clothing regalia used shows the different positions and authorities that the Anlo chiefs’ hold.

Discussion

Research Objective one: Examine the factors that influenced the forms of clothing regalia used by the Anlo chiefs

The study identified the various forms of clothing regalia used by the Anlo State chiefs. These were; the type of cloth (*Ewe Kete*, *Adanuvor* or *Klala*), jumper, a hat (*Fiakuku*), chiefs' sandals (*Fiafokpa*), a walking stick and beads (*Dzonu*) for adornment. The *Lashi* or *Sorshi* also formed part of their clothing regalia. These forms of clothing regalia represent the symbol and the meaning given to them in the symbolic interaction theory. Occasions were found to be an important factor in the selection of the clothing regalia. For Anlo chiefs, cloths usage varied depending on the function they attended hence, it is not one cloth or one colour that was used. Occasions like installation, confinement, coronation, reconciliation, festivals, burials and funerals, war times and casual days all portrayed different clothing regalia. It is through such occasions that interaction and interpretation of the symbols are made.

Festivals were important occasions for the Anlo chiefs to display their affluence as they dress in full clothing regalia. Their role as chiefs is also influenced by the type of clothing regalia used. The *Awoamefias'* clothing regalia is always above his sub chiefs' whereas the *Awadadas'* clothing regalia is always white. The *Dusifiaga* and *Miafiaga* also dresses in full clothing regalia but not to upscale the dressing of the *Awoamefia* who is the overlord of the Anlo State and this is seen in the traditional setting as chiefs of lower ranks must not dress to upscale the dressing of chiefs of higher ranks. Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 show the Anlo chiefs in their full regalia at the annual *Hogbetsotso* Festival which depict their ranks. This also shows that the importance of rank in chieftaincy is not only shown by the name of the chief but must be shown publicly without necessarily using words thus, clothing being a good means of nonverbal form of communication in this case is of the means used. This also conforms to practices of other ethnic groups in Ghana like the Ashanti's where the *Abrempong-ntoma* used during festive occasions easily identifies Ashanti paramount chiefs. The clothing regalia worn by Anlo chiefs does not only distinguish them from their subjects but also differentiates them from chiefs from other parts of the country. The clothing regalia of the Anlo chiefs shows the uniqueness of their tradition and culture, thus the difference in their clothing regalia is the jumper worn under any cloth, the hat and a walking stick and the beads for adornment.

Research Objective two: Discuss the philosophical and symbolic meanings of the clothing regalia used by chiefs in Anlo State and its relevance in Ghanaian contemporary society

In relation to the symbolic interaction theory used, the Anlo chiefs respond towards the symbol (clothing regalia) based on the meaning they have ascribed to the symbol. These meanings are also based on the traditions and customs of the Anlo State. The spiritual meanings given to these symbols such as *Lashi* or *Sorshi*, *Kakla* or *Kakli* leafs, *Awoamefias'* *Fiafokpa*, *Sui* and *Blotsi* beads and walking stick worn during occasions like the installation and the reconciliation rites of the Anlo chiefs depict their spiritual embodiments. These meanings are also linked to the legacy of their forefathers and a historical event which is very crucial in the history of Anlo State. The meanings of the symbols are nonverbally communicated as a result of the interaction between the chiefs and the Anlo people during such occasions. These meanings are peace, victory, joy and happiness among others; the social eminence, nobility and affluence of the Anlo chiefs as well as their authority and supremacy over the Anlo State. As the Anlo people receive the meaning of the symbol, the message derived from the symbol may reflect the true meaning of the clothing regalia. On the other hand, if the messages are not properly communicated, the Anlo people can modify and change the true meaning of the clothing regalia based on how they interpret the meaning in their mental thought. Even though generation have passed on, these meanings are still relevant in the Ghanaian contemporary society.

Implications

This study has identified the different clothing regalia used by chiefs in Anlo State and their symbolic meanings, and the factors that influenced the choice of their clothing regalia using the symbolic interaction theory. The study has also provided an in-depth knowledge and symbolic understanding of the historical antecedents underpinning the clothing regalia used by Anlo State chiefs in the Volta region of Ghana, but the spiritual implications attached to some of the clothing regalia made it difficult to probe further and observe those clothing regalia. The study has therefore provided the basis for anthropologists and ethnologists by enriching their knowledge about the symbolism of clothing worn by chiefs in Ghana.

The social psychology of clothing tells us that, humans nonverbally communicate with clothing about themselves and to others whether socially or psychologically. The type of clothing worn by an individual signal to others the social status and social affiliation of that individual in a particular society. The Anlo State chiefs are revered in the society and the relationship between their clothing regalia and the meanings associated with them are symbolic in the traditional setting. This is so because the messages they communicate with their clothing regalia informs the Anlo people to appreciate and value their culture since clothing indicates who they are individually and collectively as a society. It is important that traditional leaders must continue to use occasions like durbars, festivals and other ceremonies to sensitize their subjects on the importance of preserving their culture. This will educate the Anlos about the symbolic meanings of the clothing regalia used by their chiefs and also provide good sources of reference materials for the future generation to continue the legacy. As custodians of tradition, they must preserve the cultural heritage and to make people become conscious about the sustainability of our cultural values through the use of indigenous Ghanaian clothing in order to promote tourism. The clothing regalia of the Anlo chiefs are not just for adornment but also have communicative values which are educative and must be uphold as a culture that can be passed on to the younger generation. It is therefore essential that, kingmakers or keepers of Anlo traditions and customs should as much as possible document important aspect of the clothing regalia of the Anlo chiefs and not rely solely on oral tradition which can be altered or debunked by others. Nevertheless, the clothing regalia of the Anlo State chiefs cannot be undermined, while it is prominent in the history of the Anlo-Ewes and shows their cultural heritage, there is the need to continue to investigate and document the unknown in order to comprehend and gain a deeper meaning into their lives.

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