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Indigenous Art Forms in The Akuapem North Basic Schools' Cultural Festival

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Abstract

This study investigated the indigenous art forms exhibited at basic schools' cultural festivals within the Akuapem-North Municipal Assembly. The study used Schechner's (2003) performance theory as the theoretical framework for the study. Employing a qualitative approach and a descriptive design, data was collected through interviews and questionnaires from 28 participants, including 14 pupils, 7 head teachers, and 7 school-based cultural coordinators, and analysed thematically. The findings revealed that the cultural festival served as a platform to showcase diverse Ghanaian musical and cultural practices. Common performing art forms identified were visual arts exhibitions, drama and theatre, poetry and storytelling as well as drum language. The study concluded that these indigenous performing arts embody Ghana's culture through artistic expressions rooted in traditional practices, with visual arts activities like drawing, painting, sculpture, and literary arts being encouraged. Participation in these arts was found to enhance pupils' communication (listening, observation, language, speech), build confidence and self-esteem (through leadership opportunities), stimulate creativity (through imaginative roles and competitions), and promote inclusivity (by expressing diverse perspectives and fostering understanding). The study concluded that Indigenous Arts should be integrated into the school curriculum, providing resources and teacher training, encouraging guest performances, and organizing cultural exchange programs to better support and project indigenous performing arts in basic schools.

Keywords: Indigenous, Arts forms, cultural festival, Akuapem-North



Introduction

Globally, history has shown that arts and culture are two words that are not separable as they are interdependent. Every culture has a specific art form that is peculiar and specific to a particular societal tradition (Appiah, 2004). The culture of a particular society is associated with the traditional art forms that culturally identify with the people in a particular society. However, other non-material cultural elements including established ways of tradition and conventional norms that articulate ideas also exist.

These established ways of tradition and conventional norms include dancing, literature, drumming, songs, and other traditional forms of customary ideas that focus on man and his society. The material elements associated with art forms include pottery, basketry, textiles, sculpture, and leatherwork. Asihene (1978) observed that, every single cultural performing art end with an artwork. This means that, art offer us colourful ideas about past culture and plays an important role in the political, social and religious systems in the traditional Ghanaian life, which continues today. The arts, therefore, provide us with ideas about past and present cultures and play a significant role in the political structures and socio-religious lives of traditional Africans.

The origins of indigenous African arts have a very complex and long history dating back to prehistoric times and in most cases, their origins are explained by myths found in oral African traditions. Read (1970) also defined art as the way and manner in which symbolic touchstones are used to make good through the use of tools, materials, images, and movements. The performing arts relate to the art forms perceived by human senses, particularly, the kinaesthetic sense. Indigenous art forms are not creations but are performed using the voice or body in conveying artistic expressions like storytelling, music, acting, and dancing (Agordoh, 1994).

Adjepong (2018) noted that, performing arts include drama, dance, and music performed during durbars, festivals, naming ceremonies, funeral rites, and marriages to entertain people. Adjepong (2018) further noted that the performing arts teaches societal norms, promotes fitness, and teaches societal values.

Amenuke, Dogbe, Asare, Ayiku, and Baffour (1991) observed that, in addition to the emotions that performing arts bring, poetry recitals, music and dances performed during festivals also teach and educate people on proper societal behaviours. Performing arts during festivals offer instrumental and intrinsic benefits to individuals in a particular community. According to McCarthy et al., (2004), the intrinsic benefits derived from performing arts in festivals include cognitive growth, social bonding, emotional experience, and empathy, whilst the instrumental benefits derived from performing arts in festivals include the understanding of cross-cultural activities, community development, and economic activity. This art forms performed during festivals are relevant because they not only educate people but also entertain them as well.

In the view of Appiah (2004), performing arts includes jublations, chanting, dancing, and drumming to promote cultural and religious activities like naming ceremonies, funerals, and festivals among other rites in African traditional societies. Similarly, Lope (2007) observed that, performing arts includes oratory, music, mime, dance, and other forms of art, where the performing by humans are the main object. Lope further observed that, those who perform these arts mostly wear special costumes and make-up to attract their audience.

In Ghana, Kemevor (2004) define a festival as a joyous occasion that is characterised by pageantry and pomp in celebrating important cultural events. The word festival originated from the Latin word 'Festivus' which means feasting or enjoying. Ogunba (1978) defines festivals in a more cultural context by defining them as an indigenous institution of culture and a form of African-nurtured activity over many centuries, which has developed distinct characteristics and has become an important and dynamic aspect of the culture of alienated Africans. Adjepong (2018) sums it all up by defining African festivals as seasons for participation, sacrifices, and ceremonies that are laudatory and where traditional African acknowledge, the blessings of God, the blessings of lesser gods, and other ancestral spirits for providing good health, abundance of children and good harvest.

Festivals in Africa have therefore become occasions for social entertainment, cultural spectacles, and observation of rituals. Arts and culture go together and depend on each other, and cultural festivals provide an avenue to display both culture and performing arts.

Indigenous cultural arts in Ghana have suffered significant setbacks since the middle of the 19th century because of foreign influences including religion and Western education in Ghana. Foreign religious beliefs such as Christianity and Islam have succeeded in some aspects of our cultural beliefs, norms, customs, and values that are not consistent with Western culture and have imposed foreign culture on the people of Ghana. These foreign cultures perceive some aspects of the cultural life of Ghanaians as primitive, childish, idolatrous, and paganistic. For instance, these foreign cultures perceive some Ghanaian cultural practices like widowhood rites, trokosi, Dipo, and pouring of libation among others as primitive and pagan. In addition, the pronunciation of some Ghanaian towns has changed from their original pronunciation to new foreign influence pronunciation. Among these changes is the change of the town's name from Kyebi to Kibi. Apart from language, traditional customs like widowhood rite and trokosi, have also been invaded by these western civilisations.

This study attempts to assess the indigenous art forms in the Akuapem-North basic schools' cultural festivals. The study specifically focused on the art forms presented during basic school cultural festivals, and the indigenous performing art forms in the art forms presented during the basic school's cultural festivals. The study also focused on the benefits of indigenous performing arts to pupils and the challenges faced by basic schools in projecting indigenous performing arts in basic schools' cultural festivals in the Akuapem-North Municipality.

Statement of the Problem

The foundation of every community revolves around its culture. As an institution, culture emphasizes the checks and balances which ensure orderliness in the community at large. Through exposure to these cultural activities in their communities, children acquire skills and knowledge about indigenous cultural performance, occasions in which such cultural activities are performed as well as their utilitarian values.

Since most of these activities are participatory, pupils' direct involvement in them helps them to acquire the necessary skills, experiences, and competencies which enable them to showcase their talents when the opportunity arises. During the Basic School's Cultural Festival, the pupils are presented with the opportunity to showcase the talents they have acquired through exposure in their respective communities and the festival has been profoundly competitive in the Municipality over the years.

Furthermore, the Municipality became vibrant, resourced, and well-known in the Eastern Region because almost all the art forms contested during the National Basic School's Cultural Festival were represented by pupils from the Akuapem-North Municipal making the Municipality a force to reckon with in terms of the festival in the Eastern Region.

The school cultural festivals therefore became an innovative means of inculcating indigenous Ghanaian arts into basic school pupils by providing them with the skills, knowledge, and understanding of indigenous arts through the traditional performance of indigenous arts during basic school cultural festivals sanctioned by the Ghana Education Service.

Specifically, basic school cultural festivals in the Akuapem-North Municipality were once vibrant and were widely recognized in the Eastern Region for their outstanding performances at the indigenous art forms they contested during the National Basic School's Cultural Festival. This made the Municipality very popular when it comes to the National Basic Schools' Cultural Festivals.

However, in the past few years, the standards of basic schools in the Akuapem-North Municipality in the Regional Basic Schools' Cultural Festivals have increasingly fallen and the performance of the entire region in the National Basic Schools' Cultural Festivals is even worse as the Municipality now lies at the bottom in the zonal and regional cultural festivals competition. For instance, according to the Education Management and Information System (EMIS) of Akuapem-North Municipal Education Directorate, the participation of pupils in choral music at the basic school's cultural festival fell from 100% in 2009 to 30% in 2019, sight singing performance also dropped from 100% in 2009 to 30% in 2019, drum language performance fell from 100% in 2009 to 30% in 2019. The evidence from the Akuapem-North Municipal Education Directorate also shows that dance performances in the basic school's cultural festival dropped from 100% in 2009 to 30% in 2019 and Drama in English dropped from 100% in 2009 to 11% in 2019. The evidence further shows that Poetry recital performances dropped from 100% in 2009 to 55% in 2019, exhibition performance dropped from 100% in 2009 to 22% in 2019 and finally, proverbs performance fell from 100% in 2009 to 44% in 2009 (Akuapem-North Municipality, 2020).

Clearly, the evidence shows a consistent lowering of the arts forms in the basic school's cultural festivals in the Akuapem-North Municipality. The lowering of standards in performing of the arts forms of basic schools in the Akuapem-North Municipality in the Regional and National Basic Schools' Cultural Festivals is as a result of several factors. First, teachers who double as school cultural coordinators find it very difficult to project indigenous cultural values in basic schools because of the many challenges they face including lack of training in indigenous arts, lack of knowledge and skills to teach and lack of teaching materials. Consequently, the teachers are only able to teach the theoretical aspect of indigenous cultural values and are unable to teach the practical aspects. In some instances, some teachers do not even teach the pupils at all because of the above-mentioned challenges and limitations.

In addition to the above, it appears that, studies on the assessment of indigenous art forms at the basic school-level cultural festivals in Ghana in general and the Akuapem-North Municipality are non-existent presenting both a knowledge and literature gap that the present study seeks to address. The present study therefore attempts to assess the indigenous art forms at the basic school-level cultural festivals in Ghana using the Akuapem-North Municipality as a case study.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the various art forms performed during the basic school's cultural festival in the Akuapem-North Municipality.

Theoretical framework

The study used Schechner's (2003) performance theory as the theoretical framework of the study. The fan model of Schechner's performance theory, which describes the performance as a variety of acts and activities that are not necessarily intended for theatre.



Figure 1: *Fan model* (Schechner, 2003: xvii)

According to Schechner's (2003) performance theory, performances are not only exclusive the theatre performance but includes performances at different locations in various circumstances and for different goals or objectives. Stated differently, the theory opines that, drama is no only confined to stage work but in everyday life and remain a cross-cultural phenomenon. According to the theory, there are no historical or cultural boundaries to the definition of performance. Schechner's (2003) define performance as the framing, presenting highlighting and framing of an action. For instance, the Dipo puberty rites celebrated by the Odumasi Krobo people in the

eastern region of Ghana are defined by ceremonies that usher virgin girls into puberty or womanhood.

The Dipo rites therefore involves several activities as the girls go through a series of rituals and tests as a proof of their virginity before qualifying to participate in the festival. During the first day of the rites, these young girls' heads are shaved and specially clothed on their waist to their knee level. A special mother who helps the girls to transition from childhood to adulthood performs this ritual. On the second day, the chief priest performs the initiation ritual bath by pouring libation to ask for blessings for the girls. The third ritual is when the girls sit on the sacred stone to prove their virginity. Upon qualification, the girls are kept in a specific location for a week where they are trained in housekeeping, cooking, childbirth, child nurturing and learn the Klama dance. After keeping them for a week, they are released and gathered at a community centre to celebrate their transition to womanhood.

Shechner summarizes all these activities in the Dipo puberty rights as performances.

Despite the fact that, these rituals are not performed in the traditional theatre, Schechner (2003) classifies them as performances. This study is consistent with Shechner's interpretation of performance because the arts performed in school cultural festivals are designed as activity performing arts and can be performed anywhere depending on the activity and situation. The purpose can be to celebrate and encourage good behaviour, or to reprimand change.

Indigenous Arts in Ghana

Indigenous arts in Ghana are diverse, vibrant, and deeply rooted in the country's rich cultural heritage. These arts encompass a wide range of artistic expressions, including visual arts, music, dance, crafts, and storytelling. They play a significant role in preserving the history, traditions, and beliefs of various Ghanaian ethnic groups (Larbi, 2009).

Ghanaian visual arts are characterized by their intricate designs and symbolism. Traditional art forms include Adinkra symbols, Kente cloth weaving, woodcarvings, and pottery. Adinkra symbols, for example, are ancient visual representations with specific meanings, often used on textiles and in various decorative contexts (Bame, 1991). Music and dance are integral to Ghanaian culture, with each ethnic group having its unique musical styles and dances. Drumming is a fundamental aspect of Ghanaian music, and different types of drums have different purposes for various occasions and ceremonies. Traditional dance forms, like the Adowa, Kpanlogo, and Agbadza, are dance forms for festivals and social gatherings (Gbadegbe, 2013). Ghanaian traditional music and dance have links with the country's culture and history. Drumming and dancing play a crucial role in various social and religious ceremonies, including funerals, festivals, and initiation rites. Different ethnic groups have their distinct styles of drumming and dancing, each carrying its meaning and significance (Agordoh, 1994).

Ghanaian Craftsmen and women produce a variety of intricate crafts using traditional techniques. Basket weaving, leatherworking, beadwork, and metalworking are some of the crafts passed down through generations. These crafts often have both utilitarian and artistic purposes. Ghana is famous for its colourful and beautifully designed textiles (Ampomah, 2014). The most renowned among them is the Kente cloth, which is handwoven and features vibrant patterns and colours. Each Kente design has its meaning and significance, often representing social status, cultural values, or historical events. Kente cloth is an iconic and brightly coloured

woven fabric that originates from the Ashanti and Ewe ethnic groups in Ghana. This elaborate and intricate textile is historically significant, as it was reserved for royalty and special occasions. Today, Kente cloth is used as a symbol of Ghanaian cultural identity and is often worn during important ceremonies and events (Nukunya, 2003).

Ghana has a long history of traditional visual arts, including pottery, weaving, basketry, wood carving, and metalwork. These art forms have been essential in everyday life, serving practical purposes and religious or ritualistic significance (Edusei, 2004). Ghanaian craftsmen and artists have been skilled in producing intricate and aesthetically appealing works of arts, reflecting their cultural values and beliefs. Ghanaian sculptors have created a vast array of statues and sculptures throughout history. These pieces often depict religious or ancestral figures, as well as objects associated with spiritual practices (Frimpong & Asinyo, 2013). Many sculptures have been found in sacred spaces or shrines, emphasizing their importance in traditional religious contexts. Adinkra symbols are a unique form of visual representation, comprising a collection of intricate and meaningful symbols that carry specific messages. They were traditionally hand-stamped on clothing, fabrics, and pottery by the Akan people of Ghana. Each symbol has a particular meaning and is used to convey proverbs, wisdom, and life lessons. Adinkra symbols hold deep cultural significance and are still prevalent in Ghanaian art and clothing.

Storytelling is a crucial part of Ghanaian oral tradition. Griots and storytellers pass down the history, myths, and legends of their communities through generations. These stories provide insights into the cultural values, moral lessons, and ancestral wisdom of the people. Festivals are an integral part of Ghanaian cultural expression (Salm & Falola, 2002). They often involve a combination of music, dance, crafts, and storytelling, serving as occasions for communities to celebrate their heritage, pay homage to ancestors, and display their artistic talents (Afeadie, 2013). In addition to traditional arts, contemporary Ghanaian artists have gained recognition on the global stage. They use various media, such as painting, sculpture, photography, and mixed media, to explore modern themes and express their unique perspectives while drawing inspiration from their cultural roots (Brimmah, 1994). Various government initiatives, cultural organizations, and local communities support the preservation and promotion of indigenous arts in Ghana. These efforts aim to ensure that the artistic heritage of Ghana remains alive and continues to be celebrated both locally and internationally.

Methodology

This study adopted the qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is a methodological approach used in social sciences and other fields to explore and understand individuals' subjective experiences, behaviours, and social phenomena. The qualitative research approach was adopted for this study for several reasons (Cameron 2014). First qualitative research allowed the researchers to gain a deep and comprehensive understanding of indigenous art forms in the Akuapem-North basic school's cultural festival investigated. The study also adopted the descriptive research design because it aided the researcher in obtaining a deeper understanding of the research problem. The approach allowed the researcher the freedom to use varied instruments to collect data on the indigenous art forms performed in the Akuapem-North Basic School's cultural festival. Thematic analysis used in the study is also in line with a descriptive study design. The study population included all pupils who had ever participated in

the school cultural festival and all school-based cultural coordinators and head teachers. The sample for this study included fourteen (14) pupils from seven selected schools and fourteen (14) school-based cultural coordinators and head teachers within the Akuapem-North Municipality, all totalling twenty-eight (28). The primary data include personal observations, interview and experiments of the performances. Qualitative data were analyzed with the use of thematic data analysis. In its broadest sense, thematic analysis is a qualitative data classification strategy. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytical technique designed to identify, analyze and report patterns and themes within research data without the need to establish specific guidelines. The Researcher followed the procedures for thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clark (2006); 1) Familiarize yourself with your data, 2) Generate initial code, 3) Find topics, 4) Explore topics, 5) Define and name your topics, 6) Build your results.

Discussion and Analysis

The various art forms performed during the basic school's cultural festival

The first objective of the study was to explore the various art forms performed during the basic school's cultural festival at the Akuapem-North Municipality. To achieve this objective, the study not only identified the various art forms performed during the basic school's cultural festivals but also explored the various activities associated with the identified art forms during the basic school's cultural festival at the Akuapem-North Municipality.

To identify the various art forms performed by pupils during the basic school cultural festival, the pupils in the selected schools who have ever participated in the basic schools' cultural festival were tasked to indicate the art forms they performed during the school cultural festival. The responses from the pupils indicate that the art forms performed by pupils during the school cultural festival include drama, music, dance, literature, visual arts and drum language. This is evidenced in the following quotations from the pupil participants:

"Well, as far as the school cultural festival is concerned, I performed at least two of the art forms including music and drama while other pupils also participated in arts like poetry, literature, exhibitions and drum language" [Pupil 1].

"In my opinion, five key art forms are performed during the school cultural festival in the basic school's cultural festival and these art forms comprise of drum language, visual arts, dance, choral music and drama" [Pupil 2].

To further explore the various art forms performed by pupils during the basic school's cultural festival, the study explored the various activities performed in each of the art forms performed by pupils in the basic school's cultural festival.

Drama Performances

For pupils who performed drama, they were first asked to indicate the title of the play they performed and the responses suggested that, the titles of the drama performed by pupils included "Adepa", "This is our own, let's cherish it", "Culture is globally gold" and "The Relevance of Cultural Education to the Ghanaian economy"

I performed drama and the title of the play I performed was "Adepa" and "This is our own, let's cherish it" [Pupil 3].

As far as I am concerned, I have performed three plays in the school cultural festival with the titles, let's cherish it", "Culture is globally gold" and "The Relevance of Cultural Education to the Ghanaian Economy" [Pupil 4].

Pupils were also asked to indicate the role they played in their drama performances during the basic school's cultural festival and the responses show that, pupils played the role of a newscaster, a seller, a minister of state, a customer and a daughter.

The responses also show that the other roles played by drama pupils in the basic school's cultural festival include the role of a family friend, a son, a teacher, a mother, a child, a nurse, a father, a pupil, a doctor and a stagehand. The accrual responses from the pupil participants are quoted as follows.

"I played three roles during the basic school cultural festival: a family friend, a son, and a teacher. Other pupils played roles such as a mother, a child and a nurse" [Pupil 5].

"I have played various roles in the drama I performed during the school's cultural festival. These roles included that of a father, a student, a doctor and a stagehand" [Pupil 6].

Drama pupils were also asked to indicate how they prepared for their roles in the drama they performed during the basic school cultural festival and the responses show that pupils prepared for their roles by watching local movies, observing their mothers and through rehearsals. The actual responses from the pupils are quoted as follows:

"I dedicated myself to preparing myself for my role in the schools cultural festival by closely observing the mothers, immersing myself in local movies, and taking part in rehearsals. I wanted to truly understand the experiences and emotions behind our culture, and hoped to bring that authenticity to my performance" [Pupil 7].

"Well, rehearsals have been the primary focus of my preparation for my role in the drama performance, allowing me to refine my skills and connect with my character. Additionally, I find that watching local movies enhances my understanding of performance styles and techniques, contributing to my overall growth as an actor" [Pupil 8].

Finally, pupils were asked to indicate how they felt participating in the basic school cultural festival and the responses show that the pupils felt very happy with their performances during the school's cultural festival. The following are the responses from the participants.

"I felt incredible happy and excited about my performance during the basic school's festival. It was a memorable experience that showcased my skills and passion" [Pupil 9].

"I would say that, I felt more than happy and excited about my performance during the basic school's cultural festival" [Pupil 10].



Figure 2: A drama performance during the basic school's cultural festival

Music Performance

To ascertain the various activities performed by pupils who performed music, pupil participants were asked a series of questions to tease out the activities they performed during the basic school's cultural festival in the Akuapem-North Municipality.

Pupils were first asked to indicate the type of instrument they played during the basic school's cultural festival and the responses show that pupils used several instruments during their music performance in the basic school's cultural festival.

These instruments according to the pupils include drums, microphones, a keyboard and a guitar. The responses offered by respondents are quoted below.

"During my participation in the cultural festival at the basic school festival in Akuapem-North Municipality, I showcased my musical talent by playing the drums and the keyboard" [Pupil 11].

"Throughout my experience at the basic school's cultural festival, I have the opportunity to perform with various instruments, with a particular emphasis on guitar, drums, and keyboard" [Pupil 12].

Pupils were also asked to indicate how long they practised before performing at the school cultural festival and the responses suggest that pupils practised for more than one hour before performing at the basic school's cultural festival. The responses by the pupil participants are provided in the following quotes.

“I think I practice between one and two hours before carding out my music performance during the basic school’s cultural festival in the Akuapem-North Municipality” [Pupil 13].

“If I can recollect, I spent more than one hour practising for my music performance during the basic school’s cultural festival” [Pupil 14].

Participants were further asked if they performed as a solo artist or as part of a group and the responses suggest that, some pupils performed as solo performers while others were part of a group or part of a choir. The responses offered by participants are quoted below.

“I would say that, I have taken part in multiple performances and performed as a solo performer as well as part of a group” [Pupil 1].

“As a performer of music at the basic school’s cultural festival at the Akuapem -North Municipality, I have performed as a solo performer and also as part of a choir” [Pupil 2].

Pupils were also asked to indicate the titles of the music they performed and the responses show that, the titles of the music performed during the basic School’s cultural festival include “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”, “Adehye kronkron”, “Ghana bapaa ba”, “Tumtum kpe ma” and “Ghana Lom”. The actual responses offered by participants are quoted as follows.

“I have performed in several music performances with different titles including “What a friend we have in Jesus” in the basic school’s cultural festival” [Pupil 3].

I have performed several music performances with titles ranging from “Adehye kronkron”, “Tumtum kpe ma”, “Ghana bapaa ba” and “Ghana Lom” [Pupil 3].

The pupils’ participants were finally asked to indicate if they had previous experience with music or if it was the first time they were performing, the responses show that the pupils had previous experiences with music performances, which is evidenced in the following quotations.

“Oh yes, I had previous experience with music performances before participating in the basic school’s cultural festival in the Akuapem- North Municipality” [Pupil 4].

I participated in music performances in my church on several occasions before participating in the “basic school’s cultural festival” [Pupil 5].



Figure 3: *Pupils performing traditional music during the basic school’s cultural festival*

Dance Performance

To ascertain the various activities performed by pupils who danced, pupils' participants were asked a series of questions to tease out the activities they performed during the basic school's cultural festival in the Akuapem-North Municipality.

Participants were first asked to indicate the type of dance they performed during the school's cultural festival and the responses showed that pupils performed traditional dances. The following are the responses from the participants.

"As it is a cultural festival, we primarily perform traditional dances at the basic school's cultural festival" [Pupil 8].

"All the dances we present at the basic school's cultural festival showcase the rich traditional heritage of the region hosting the national festival. This allows us to celebrate and share our culture with wider audience" [Pupil 8].

Pupil participants were also asked to indicate the length of time they practised before dancing and the responses show that pupils practiced for more than one week before participating in the dance performances in the school's cultural festival. This is evidenced in the following quotations from the participants.

"I dedicate at least nine days to practice to ensure that I am fully prepared for my dance performance at the basic school's cultural festival. This commitment helps me showcase my skills and contribute to a successful event." [Pupil 9].

"Well as far as I can remember, I spent more than one week practising the dance I performed during the basic school's cultural festival" [Pupil 9].

Pupil participants were also asked to mention their inspiration for the various dances performed by pupils in the basic school's cultural festival in the Akuapem-North Municipality and the responses show that the pupils were inspired by the cultural heritage of Ghana, their father and traditional chiefs. This is evidenced in the following quotations.

"I drew my inspiration from my father and the cultural heritage of Ghana. I was motivated and influenced by the cultural values and traditions, particularly, the traditional dances of Ghana. Again, I am inspired by the traditional leaders of my community as they showcase their dances during significant events, their performances embody the essence of our culture and traditions." [Pupil 9].



Figure 4: *Pupils performing traditional dance during the basic school's cultural festival*

Oral poetry and storytelling performance

To ascertain the various activities performed by pupils who performed poetry and storytelling, pupil participants were asked a series of questions to tease out the activities they performed during the basic school's cultural festival in the Akuapem-North Municipality.

Pupils were first asked to mention the form of poetry and, storytelling they performed during the basic school's cultural festival and the responses show that pupils performed poetry, short stories, and essays as evidenced in the following quotations.

"I have successfully, showcased my skills in various forms of poetry and storytelling at the cultural festival of basic schools, including poetry, shot stories and essays. I performed different forms of poetry and, storytelling in the school cultural festival including poetry, short story and essays" [Pupil 10].

"I have confidently showcased my skills in multiple forms of poetry and storytelling, including poetry and essays, at the cultural festival of basic school in the Akuapem-North Municipality" [Pupil 10].

Pupil participants were also asked to mention the themes of the poetry and, storytelling they performed during the basic school's cultural festival and the responses show that some of the themes included "Yenkura Y'amammere", "Menim amammere,nti mensee amammere" and "Ghana Amammere ma Impuntuo" as evidenced in the following quotations.

"The themes for my poetry and, storytelling performance at the basic school's cultural festival in the Akuapem-North Municipality are "Yenkura Y'amammere", and "Ghana Amammere ma impuntuo" [Pupil 11].

My poetry and, storytelling performance at the basic school's cultural festival in the Akuapem - North Municipality includes "Ghana Amammere ma impuntuo" and "Ghana Amammere ma Impuntuo" [Pupil 11].

Pupil participants were also asked to indicate the length of time of practising their script before performing their art form and the responses indicate that, pupils rehearsed their script for more than one week before performing their art forms during the basic school cultural festival. The responses from the participants are quoted as follows.

"I dedicate nearly two weeks to practice before performing my poetry and short stories during the basic school's cultural festival in the Akuapem-North Municipality" [Pupil 12].

"Within two weeks of learning my script, I commit to dedicating two hours each day to its study. I prioritize this time after school hours to ensure my progress." [Pupil 12].

Pupil participants were finally asked if they participated in any readings or discussions related to the literary work before performing at the basic school cultural festival and the responses show that almost all pupils who performed poetry and, storytelling participated in some readings and discussions related to their literary work before performing.

The responses from the participants are quoted as follows.

"I actively engaged in series of readings and discussions centered on my literary work, leading up to my performance during the basic school's cultural festival in the Municipality" [pupil 13].
I have been participating in several readings and discussions as preparation to perform at the basic school cultural festival" [pupil 14].



Figure 5: (a) Pupil engaged in poetry (b) Pupil performing storytelling during the basic school's cultural festival the basic school's festival

Findings

The findings of the study from both pupils and teachers suggested that the various art forms performed during the basic school's cultural festivals in the Akuapem-North Municipality include drama performance and music performance. The other art forms including dance performance, poetry and storytelling performance and visual arts were performed at the basic school's cultural festival, and the four highest art forms performed by pupils include drama, dance, music and drum language performances with poetry performances being the highest art form performed.

For drama performers, the pupils had "Adepa", "This is our own, let's cherish it", "Culture is globally gold" and "The Relevance of Cultural Education to the Ghanaian Economy" as the titles of their drama. The roles played by pupils include the role of newscaster, seller, minister of state, customer, daughter, family friend, son, teacher, mother, child, nurse, father, student, doctor and stagehand.

The findings also demonstrated that drama performers prepared for the festival through watching local movies, observing from their mothers and through rehearsals. This finding is consistent with Nzewi (2003) who points out that "social events in traditional societies include musical events that force public participation" through which the public acquires performing arts knowledge and skills.

For music performance, pupils performed with a drum and all the music performers trained for more than three weeks, the pupils performed as part of a choral group. The findings also suggested that the titles of their performance included “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”, “Adehye kronkron”, “Ghana bapaa ba”, “Tumtum kpe ma”, Ghana Lom, and “Ghana yie ye” In addition, pupils had previous experience of performing music.

For dance performance, the pupils performed traditional dance and rehearsed for more than one week before they perform during the basic schools’ cultural festival, dance performers were inspired by the cultural heritage of Ghana and our traditional leaders. The findings on the dance performance demonstrated that pupils who danced during the school cultural festival were very happy about the dance they performed during the basic school’s cultural festival in the Akuapem-North Municipality.

For poetry and storytelling performance, the pupils performed poetry, short stories and essays during the basic school’s cultural festival and the performers had “Yenkura Y’amammere”, “Ghana Amammere ma imputuo” and “Menim amammere nti, mensee amammere” as their theme and majority of pupils practised for more than one week before performing. The findings of the study also demonstrated that the pupils participated in some readings and discussions related to their literary work before performing.

Conclusion

the study concludes that, the popular art forms performed by pupils during the basic school’s cultural festival include drama performance, music performances, dance performances, poetry and storytelling performances and visual arts performances. The study of the indigenous art forms of basic school cultural festivals with their cultural context will not only provide a corresponding understanding of the various indigenous art forms for pupils but also, it will offer pupils valuable insights into the culture of the people who produce such indigenous arts. The outcome of the study will further help in educating pupils on indigenous traditional arts including recital of poetry, performing traditional drama and dance, sing patriotic and traditional songs among other indigenous arts. This will offer pupils the opportunity to acquire traditional knowledge and skills, which will help them, participate and engage actively in the communities where they belong.

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