International Journal of Culture and Art Studies (IJCAS)
Journal homepage: https://ijcas.usu.ac.id/

Exploring Materials for Constructing Fancy Dress Masquerade Costumes in Winneba, Ghana (1958-2020)

Albert Dennis [*1] & Fabiola Mamle Opare Darko [2]
[1] *Department of Theatre and Film Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana.*
[2] *Department of Theatre Arts, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon Boundary, Accra, Ghana.*
[*]Corresponding Author: adennis@ucc.edu.gh

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 09 March 2024
Revised 29 March 2024
Accepted 26 April 2024
Available online 30 April 2024

E-ISSN: 2654-3591
P-ISSN: 2623-1999

How to cite:
Dennis, A., & Opare Darko, F.M. (2024). Exploring Materials for Constructing Fancy Dress Masquerade Costumes in Winneba, Ghana (1958-2020). *International Journal of Culture and* Art Studies, 8(1), 001-015.

http://doi.org/10.32734/ijcas.v8i1.15858

ABSTRACT

The representation of Fancy Dress masquerades in Ghana, particularly in Winneba, has been revered as part of the country's popular culture. Fancy Dress masquerade performances, which originated in coastal towns of Ghana during the 18th century under the aegis of colonialism, are currently seen in popular parades and club competitions. Undoubtedly, the utilisation of costumes forms the cornerstone of Fancy Dress masquerading. Although Fancy Dress masquerade costumes add to the depth and breadth of the performance, little empirical study exists on the materials used to construct costumes for this performance. In this study, we explore materials used to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes in Winneba, Ghana, from 1958 to 2020. Using a qualitative approach, multiple instruments, and engaging thematic and document analytical frames to analyse the data, the findings of the study revealed the use of fabrics; leather and jute bags. The rest were foam; agricultural products; paper, strawboards and used packaging boxes; net, fibre and plastic sachets to construct costumes such as 'cowboy', 'tigers' and 'hunters'. With a treasure trove of materials, fabrics were chiefly used due to their unique physical properties. On the heels of the finding, we recommend that practitioners explore non-conventional and sustainable materials to maintain ecological sustainability. Ultimately, the study advances the understanding of masquerade costumes by addressing gaps in the literature and providing new perspectives.

Keywords: Costume, Costume Construction, Fancy Dress Masquerade, Materials, Winneba

1. Introduction

A majority of African scholars and professional circles have paid close attention to the use and place of masks in the African space from antiquity to date (Duerden, 2000; Furniss, 2015; Flock, 2017). As a result, masks are commonly hanged in rooms, used for worship and worn on the faces of individuals for both utilitarian and aesthetic purposes. Subsequently, masking in Africa is well-regarded and seen as "a firm mode of artistic expression" (Ganyi, Inyabri, & Okpiliy 2013, p. 52). This is because masking serves as an outlet through which aspects of African philosophy can be expressed in a non-verbal form (Sarpong & Botchway, 2019).

Without doubt, the use of masks in performances has been on the rise, and notable among such performative arts is masquerading, which thrives on disguise and has caught attention in some African countries. Accordingly, Duerdon, as cited by Akubor (2016), positions masquerade as a unique African art form peculiar to Africans. While masquerades exist in other continents as well, their uniqueness to Africans lies, to some extent, in how they revere and appreciate this performative art form as part of their national culture. This is because, as an art form, masquerading is regarded differently depending on the cultural context in which it is used since it serves different purposes in different continents. Akubor (2016) raises concerns about the appreciation of masquerades in Africa and Europe and establishes the dichotomy that exists, which is based on cultural variations. This is because, to Africans, masquerading is seen as ritualistic and that which embodies the dead, ancestors and the use of cultic powers and charms to perform in society (Amaechi, 2018;

Agoro, 2010; Ottenberg, 1982; Ododo, 2001). It is these kinds of masquerades that are regarded as Traditional African Masquerades (Emiemokumo, 2012) and are characterised by "spiritually oriented performances of the longstanding traditional masking and secret societies in Africa" (Sarpong & Botchway, 2017, p. 180). Undoubtedly, they are an ageless practice in most African communities (Enendu, 2004; Johnson, 2004; Ottenberg, 1982). Notable examples of Traditional African Masquerades are *Egungun* among the Yorubas in Nigeria, *Poro* in Sierra Leone and Liberia, and *Guere* in the Ivory Coast (Anderson, 2018; Peek & Yankah, 2004).

There also exists another kind of masquerade known as Fancy Dress masquerades, which are secular, unlike the former, which is characterised by spiritual orientations (Micots, 2014; Sarpong & Botchway, 2017). It is this category of masquerades—Fancy Dress—that we sought to investigate the materials used to construct their costumes.

Fancy Dress as a term, was used to depict individuals who wore extraordinary costumes and engaged in an open-air performance in the Caribbean, West Africa, Brazil and India by American and European travellers and colonial soldiers. Later, performers who engaged in Fancy Dress organised parties and wore stylish costumes. The term Fancy Dress was adopted by some communities along the coast of West Africa and then defined to meet the cultural needs of the community (Micots, 2014). Ghana was one of the countries that adopted and adapted Fancy Dress. Fancy Dress was adopted to refer to an open-air street parade performance characterised by dance movements and the wearing of stylish costumes (Micots, 2014). To this end, Sarpong and Botchway (2019) view Fancy Dress masquerading as a mixture of music, dance, a social movement, space, a profile, an attitude, or a philosophy.

Within this context, Nicholls (2012, p. 10) views a masquerader as "a street performer who entertains by dancing and other antics while disguised in a costume and usually a mask." Nicholls's postulation points out the locale for masquerade performances: the street, which is the open space for audience appreciation where masquerades move from one space to the other to assume "a moving art" (Emiemokumo, 2012, p. 1) that travels the length and breadth of communities. Ordinarily, because Fancy Dress masquerading takes place on the street, the relationship between masquerades and their audience is not spatially defined.

Significantly, the use of costume, a key visual element in performances that aids in disguising performers in masquerading, is also expressed in Nicholls' submission. Essentially, costumes help to achieve the idea of disguise in masquerading. This is because Fancy Dress masquerade costumes cover the faces of performers down to their feet, which serve as a second body for the performers.

Fancy Dress masquerading has gained popularity in Ghana and has become an integral part of local celebrations like Easter, Christmas, and New Year's Day, among others. It was endorsed by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in 1958 and became part of the year-long independence celebration in 1958. Subsequently, Fancy Dress masquerade performances are predominant in some regions, particularly in Western, Central, Volta, and Greater Accra (Micots, 2014).

In the Central Region of Ghana, Fancy Dress masquerades are predominant in Winneba, Cape Coast, Elmina and many more. Fancy Dress masquerading in Winneba, which is the thrust of this study, has gained attention in the entire Ghanaian community. At Winneba, there are Fancy Dress masquerade clubs that showcase their artistry in diverse shades. Over the years, since 1958, Fancy Dress masquerade clubs in Winneba have engaged in competitions and adjudicators have assessed and continue to grade performances on the first day of January. The Fancy Dress masquerade club that is adjudged the best is hailed and awarded a prize. The competitions among masquerade clubs started in 1958 (Micots, 2014; Taylor, 1997).

The Winneba Fancy Dress masquerade festival, which hosts the competition, draws many people, including international tourists, government officials, traditional rulers, students, and community folks.

Notably, Fancy Dress masqueraders are always disguised in costumes. This is because as soon as the masquerade appears in his or her recommended costume, psychologically, the actor assumes the posture of the character he will be personifying. Thus, costume becomes one of the transformative elements in character creation. As noted by Asigbo (2010, p. 6), "[f]or the masquerade art, costume is everything, as there can be no masquerade without costume." Asigbo's illumination brings to the fore the use of costume as the dominant element rooted in this art form. This is because "even though the masquerade art is more than... costume, the costume remains the cornerstone upon which all other elements of the masquerade hinge" (Asigbo, 2010, p. 4). Inference from the foregoing brings to the fore Fancy Dress masquerade costumes as the nub of masquerading, and for that matter, there cannot be masquerade performances when masqueraders are not in their required costumes. Ultimately, costumes evolve to reflect contemporary trends and needs (Kwakye-Opong & Adinku, 2013). Akyeampong and Yankholmes (2016) argue that Fancy Dress masquerade costumes are dynamic in driving performances. Considerably, some studies have been carried out in the field of Fancy Dress masquerading in Ghana. These include Akyeampong and Yankholmes (2016), Brown (2005), Micots

(2014), Micah (2014), Sarpong and Botchway (2017), and (2019). Though these studies make important contributions to the discipline and principally Winneba, they are not related to the use of costumes in this performative art or, most importantly, materials used to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes in Winneba, a town that is a renowned citadel of Fancy Dress masquerade performance in Ghana. This is the gap this study fills. This article, therefore, explores materials used to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes in Winneba, Ghana, from 1958 to 2020 to help fill the existing lacuna in the literature.

2. Materials for Constructing Fancy Dress Masquerade Costumes

We acknowledge the seeming paucity of literature on the phenomenon being explored and, for that matter, the need to draw inferences from general perspectives to help situate the review in context. Materials are common elements used to construct all kinds of costumes (Gavor & Dennis, 2013). In this study, we define materials as all items used in costume construction. Scholars (Ingham & Covey, 1992; Strand-Evans, 2015) have identified materials within the costume domain to include fabric, strawboard, cardboard, polythene, prosthetics, paper, leather, leaves, foam, metal, and found objects.

For the majority of costumes, fabric is the main material used for their construction. When choosing fabric for costumes, there are important considerations to be made. These include the strength of the fabric, the fibre, the cost of the fabric, the impact of the fabric's colour on the style being constructed, and the wearer's complexion (Crist, 2014; Gillette, 2000). Tracing the origins of Fancy Dress masquerading, Nicholls (2012) observes that it began in the mediaeval era and continued through the Elizabethan period. According to Wilcox (1958), the use of fabrics made from natural fibres was distinctive to the mediaeval era, with notable examples such as cotton, wool, silk, and linen. Similarly, in the Elizabethan era, historic costumes were used for masquerading purposes. Barton (1961) discusses the various materials that were employed to make such costumes, which include brocade, velvet, fine linen, lace, linen edged with lace, silk, taffeta, and woollen fabrics. Similarly, as observed by Hooks (1990), calico fabric was used to construct costumes for Fancy Dress masquerades on the Caribbean Islands in general. The calico fabric, which is typically white, was dyed in a variety of shades to match the preferred fabric colour for the building of costumes. This perspective has implications for the current study because it suggests that fabrics that don't match the preferred colour scheme for making Fancy Dress masquerade costumes can be dyed to get the desired colour without having to navigate the entire neighbourhood for the desired hue of fabric. Micots (2014) submits that appliqué and lace fabrics were some of the materials used in the creation of Fancy Dress masquerade costumes. On the part of Hook (1990) and Regis (2006), the cowboy-head masquerade costume of the Caribbean Island was made of patchwork fabric, while the tail was also constructed with newsprint papers. Beyond this, newsprint papers were used to mould masks and hats, thereby validating paper as a material for making Fancy Dress costumes. In a different study, Callender (2017) focuses on the use of leaves to create masquerade costumes and notes that leaves and other agricultural products were used to build costumes in the Caribbean Islands. This was due to the Caribbean's agrarian economy, which was characterised by a variety of crops.

In addition, Nicholls (2009), Nunley (2010), and Regis (2006) detail how wire mesh and fibre were used in the Caribbean Islands in 1837 to create Fancy Dress masquerade masks. In another study, Nicholls (2012) observes that Fancy Dress masquerade costumes were commonly made in the Caribbean Islands using rice sacks. The study's conclusions demonstrated that actors donning rice-sack costumes faced no difficulties, which led to a rise in the popularity of rice-sack Fancy Dress masquerade costumes. In the early days of Caribbean masquerading, particularly in Barbados, participants dressed for their performances just like they would at home. With the advancement of fabric production technology over time, printed fabric and wax prints were also used in the creation of Fancy Dress costumes. As a result, performers wore costumes made of printed textiles.

According to Callender (2017), feathers were increasingly used in the Caribbean Islands to create masquerade masks and other parts of masquerade costumes. To match the colour of the mask, the feathers were first dyed in a variety of colours. When Micots (2014) looked into alternative materials for making masquerade masks, he discovered that Christmas rattles (balls and trees) were occasionally used to create costumes for Fancy Dress masquerades. Observing generally, red and green hues are used in Christmas decorations almost everywhere in the world to symbolise the season. This highlights symbolic interpretations of colours as crucial components in masquerade discourse. Beyond these, rubber has also been used to make masquerade masks in the Caribbean (Nulley, 2010). As a result, the wearing of masks made from rubber became popular among masquerades. According to Ottenberg (1982), some Caribbean costume designers also experimented with making masks out of leaves, cloth, gourds, fibre and occasionally a combination of multiple materials, which yielded a successful outcome. From the discussions, a key issue emerges: the Ghanaian space and, by extension, Africa as a whole have not been adequately represented in the literature

on the materials used to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes. This further serves as an avenue for the current study to fill the knowledge gap regarding the kinds of materials used in crafting Fancy Dress masquerade costumes in Winneba, Ghana.

3. Scope of the Study

Fancy Dress masquerading is practiced by a number of communities in Ghana. However, Fancy Dress masquerades in Winneba were chosen for studying. This was because, from our experiences and observations, the annual performance of masquerades at Winneba on 1st January every year gains popularity throughout the entire nation largely as a result of the wide variety and array of costumes. The time frame for the study was 1958 to 2020. There were two main reasons why 1958 was chosen. First, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the president of the Republic of Ghana at the time, endorsed Fancy Dress masquerading in Ghana in 1958. Subsequently, Fancy Dress masquerading formed part of the activities that marked the celebration of Ghana's independence in that year. Second, 1958 was the year in which Fancy Dress masquerade clubs in Winneba started competing among themselves, with the best club awarded a trophy (Micots, 2014). The year 2020 was also chosen because that was the year that data was collected, and we wanted to capture current developments within the masquerade cycles at the time.

4. Methods

The study employed a qualitative approach to research. Our selection of a qualitative approach was that it examines cultural activities (Tracy, 2013), of which Fancy Dress masquerade costumes are examples of the popular culture of the people of Winneba. Qualitative historical and qualitative descriptive research designs were employed in undertaking this study. As noted by Willis (2007, p. 68), "qualitative historical research is a critical inquiry into the whole truth of past events in the understanding and interpretation of facts that apply to current issues and problems." As a result, a qualitative historical research design was employed to interrogate materials used to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes from 1958 to 2019. The qualitative descriptive research design is concerned with the present state of a phenomenon (Galfo, 1983), and for that matter, it was employed to explore materials used to construct the 2020 Fancy Dress masquerade costumes.

The population for the study comprised costumiers and masqueraders from all Fancy Dress masquerade clubs in Winneba, Ghana. There are five masquerade clubs in Winneba, namely: Nobles, founded in 1921; *Egyaa,* founded in 1926; *Tumus,* founded in 1930*;* Red Cross, founded in 1933; and Royals, founded in 2014 (Brown, 2005; Micots, 2014; Taylor, 1997). The accessible population comprised masqueraders and costumiers of Fancy Dress masquerade clubs that were set up by 1958, the starting year for this study. Four masquerade clubs passed. These were the Nobles, *Egyaa*, *Tumus,* and Red Cross Fancy Dress masquerade clubs. The Royals Fancy Dress club did not pass because, since its formation in 2014, there have been a number of contestations over its establishment. As a result, the Royals Fancy Dress club has not contributed to masquerading in Winneba. Two non-probabilistic sampling techniques (purposive and snowballing) were employed to identify participants for the study.

The purposive sampling technique is used to select participants with unique characteristics or qualities related to the phenomenon being addressed (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2015; Leavy, 2017; Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This required participants to have in-depth knowledge and experience of the materials used to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes in Winneba from 1958 to 2020. There were participants who were hard to reach because some of them had advanced in age and were staying with their children within the Winneba community other than where participants used to stay. As a result, the chain or snowball sampling technique was employed to identify such participants.

Data saturation was employed to arrive at the sample size. Guest, Namey and Chen (2020), Omona (2013), and Sandelowski (2008) have noted that an effective way of arriving at a qualitative sample size is the use of data saturation, which is the point when the collection of new data does not make any major impact on already collected data. The data saturation technique served as a criterion to determine when data collection must be discontinued. A total of nineteen (19) participants formed the sample size. All nineteen participants were male adults. This affirms Sarpong and Botchway's (2019) illumination that Fancy Dress masquerade activities have been male-dominated since their inception and that the involvement of females and children is a recent phenomenon.

Table 1. A representation of the sample size for the study

Names of masquerade clubs	Number of masqueraders	Number of costumiers	Total
Nobles	2	3	5
Egyaa	2	2	4
Tumus	3	2	5
Red Cross	2	3	5
Total	**9**	**10**	**19**

(Source: Field work, 2019 to 2020)

The study engaged multiple instruments for data collection: semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documents. The semi-structured interview was preferred over others because it was more flexible and also allowed interviewers to probe further into what had been reported by interviewees.

The second data collection instrument was document. Documents are materials that are either in written form, visual, digital, or physical that a researcher intends to study for research purposes (Merriam, 2009). For the current study, documents such as photographs of Fancy Dress masquerade costumes and recorded versions of Fancy Dress masquerade competitions over the years in Winneba were retrieved from individual masqueraders, costumiers and some media companies for study.

The third data collection instrument was observation. Our role as observers was on the level of a non-participant approach. Specifically, we observed the kinds of fabrics used for the construction of the various Fancy-Dress masquerade costumes and the 2020 masquerade festival at Winneba on Wednesday, January 1, 2020, at the advance park. We made field notes, sought permission from the masqueraders, and took photographs for the development of this article.

The interview data were transcribed, coded and analysed. Qualitative content and document analysis were employed in analysing the data. Documents were analysed using document analysis. Document analysis is a systematic means of studying and appraising documents, which include but are not limited to videos, movies, historical documents, pictures, transcribed speeches, music and many more (Bowen, 2009; Leavy, 2017). This is done to give meaning, interpretation, and voice to the document (Buckland, 2013).

5. Ethical considerations

Participants were informed about the nature of the study, and their consent was sought before participating in the study. Again, we sought permission f participants to record the interview sessions. Participants were also assured of their confidentiality and anonymity. On confidentiality, participants were assured that their responses would be accorded the highest protection and would be used for research purposes only. On the basis of anonymity, participants were informed that their identities would remain private and confidential. For example, we used the expression "a participant of the Nobles Fancy Dress club" other than the participant's name to represent the participant.

6. Results and Discussions

6.1. The use of fabric

A synthesis of the data revealed the use of fabric emerged as a key material for constructing Fancy Dress masquerade costumes by participants even before 1958 by all masquerade clubs. From the results, it was evident that although masquerade practitioners used different kinds of materials to construct their costumes, fabrics were the most dominant. A participant informed:

> *The common material we used to construct our Fancy Dress masquerade costume was fabric. This was because most fabrics were comfortable to wear and also absorbed sweat on our bodies readily as we performed* [*Tumus* participant five].

The rationale for the use of fabrics was anchored on the unique physical properties associated with them. Two of such properties were that fabrics were comfortable to wear and could absorb moisture readily. Another dimension, as echoed by a Red Cross participant, was its availability on the market, which made it easy to access. From the foregoing, three key thrusts have been identified. First, given that masqueraders engage in choreography and other antics during their performances, it was appropriate for them to use materials that were comfortable to wear. It is the case that when masqueraders do not feel comfortable with the materials used to

construct their costumes, they may not have the needed concentration and may deviate from the movements associated with their choreography. When this happens, it may detract from the success of the overall performance and also have the potential for the masquerade club to be marked down.

Second, the absorbency of most fabrics also served as factor when constructing masquerade costumes. Since masqueraders engage in dancing during their performances and, for that matter, will sweat profusely given the hot climate in Ghana. This calls for the use of a material that can readily absorb sweat, thereby making fabrics preferred over other materials. The last issue was the availability of fabrics. It is important to acknowledge that since practitioners construct costumes every year for Fancy Dress masquerading purposes, they needed to consider the availability of the material to be used to construct their costumes. This, therefore, served as an impetus for practitioners' copious use of fabrics.

The use of fabrics as the most dominant material in costume construction is affirmed by Gillette (2000). Nevertheless, some participants indicated that they used different fabrics to construct their costumes. A synthesis of the data revealed eight predominant fabrics: velvet, brocade, satin, calico, polyester, flour sack, lace, and wax print. The *Egyaa* club used all her resources to buy velvet, despite its high cost in the 1960s and 1970s. At the end, they were able to buy a few yards of the fabric to build three costumes. However, in the 1990s, the *Egyaa* club masqueraders were financially resourceful and were able to buy enough yards of velvet to sew their costumes. This time, a majority of masqueraders wore costumes made from velvet. On the heels of the foregoing, we argue that among the key driving forces that determined the kind of fabric to use was money. The use of velvet was due to its expensive nature and the aesthetics associated with the fabric. The high cost associated with buying velvet fabric brings it to the fore, showcasing an expensive lifestyle through inconspicuous consumption by masqueraders. Despite the seeming expensive cost associated with velvet, it was used to construct masquerade costumes in 2020. Figure 1 is a testament to the use of velvet by the *Egyaa* club during the 2020 masquerade performance.

Figure 1. An *Egyaa* club masquerader in costume constructed with velvet in 2020
(Source: Photographed by researchers)

This is a testament to the fact that velvet, which was in use during the 1960s, is still being employed to construct masquerade costumes in the year 2020. By this, we submit that Fancy Dress masqueraders have sustained the use of some fabrics, especially velvet, for several years. The use of velvet to construct masquerade costumes, as noted by Barton (1961), was prevalent during the mediaeval and Elizabethan periods. Importantly, all masquerade cubs used velvet fabric to construct their costumes.

The use of brocade, satin, calico, polyester, flour sack, lace, and wax print for constructing Fancy Dress masquerade costumes is affirmed by Barton (1961), Hooks (1990), Nicholls (2012), Ottenberg (1982), and Wilcox (1958) as fabrics used to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes during the Elizabethan era and in the Caribbean Islands in general. With the exception of wax print fabrics, brocade, satin, calico, polyester, flour sack and lace were all used by the four masquerade clubs during the late 1950s. However, while the use of polyester to construct Fancy Dress was on the rise during the 1980s, it declined in the 21st century following the low quality associated with its production. Inference from this suggests that masquerade practitioners are preoccupied with the quality of fabrics they use and are prepared to drop some fabrics if their production qualities decline.

Wax print also surfaced as a type of fabric for constructing Fancy Dress masquerade costumes. A *Tumus* participant shared this:

> *….However, we have also started using wax print fabric to construct our masquerade costumes in 2020. Wax print is produced in Ghana, but we do not see why we should not use it to construct our masquerade costumes. Most clubs do not use wax print fabrics to construct their costumes because it is a*

> *locally made fabric…. We have to change our mindset and use our own locally produced fabric in Ghana to sew our costumes and stop using imported fabrics* [*Tumus* participant one].

The *Tumus* club decided to break away from using fabrics of Euro-American origin, such as satin and brocade, among others, in 2020 to use wax prints produced in Ghana to construct their masquerade costumes. A call by the *Tumus* participant for all masquerade clubs to use wax prints to construct their masquerade costumes was a good one. The participant emphasised the importance of adopting a fresh viewpoint by utilising wax print fabrics made in Ghana rather than imported fabrics. By doing so, the *Tumus* club moved from western cultural imperialism to identifying with their own. We contend that the *Tumus* club's resolute decision to use wax print may have been influenced by the 2006 call for wearing and using costumes made in Ghana, which was spearheaded by former Ghanaian president John Agyekum Kufour.

The advantages of using locally manufactured wax prints for constructing masquerade costumes are twofold. First, it has the potential to increase the demand for wax prints, which will lead to an upsurge in production. Unarguably, this has greater effects on the Ghanaian economy because an increase in production will call for the engagement of more personnel. Second, the use of wax prints may add some Ghanaian flavour to the costumes. This will arise from the intricate motives in the fabric, which are characterised by Ghanaian philosophy, thereby giving the costume an air of "Ghanaianess." Figures 2 and 3 represent a *Tumus* club masquerader in Cow Girl costume made with wax print.

Figure 2. Front view of a *Tumus* club masquerader in costume constructed with wax print in 2020
(Source: Photographed by researchers)

Figure 3. Back view of a *Tumus* club masquerader in costume constructed with wax print in 2020
(Source: Photographed by the researchers)

From the data, it came out that since Fancy Dress performance was a competition, there was a need to change the kind of fabrics used almost on a yearly basis. Two main reasons account for this. First, the use of the same kind of fabric to construct a costume over time tends to make the costumes monotonous. Second, when the same fabrics are used over time, spectators could easily predict the kind of fabrics to be used to construct Fancy Dress costumes, and this has the potential to undermine the beauty that characterises the costumes.

While it was possible to switch up the materials used to make masquerade costumes, there were other situations where masquerade practitioners were forced to stick with the same material over time. As acknowledged by a *Tumus* participant, when masqueraders are portraying Traditional Masquerade Costumes, they are compelled to use the exact fabrics used to construct such costumes in the various communities where such costumes originated to craft theirs for masquerading purposes. To this end, if they wanted to showcase the costumes of the people of the Upper West Region, it was imperative to use different kinds of smocks to achieve variety. This situation does not allow costumiers to vary their fabrics.

Fabrics used to construct masquerade dresses were also used to adorn the pairs of sneakers worn by masqueraders. This practice was in vogue during the 1950s and has travelled to present times. Beyond using fabrics to adorn pairs of sneakers, fabric was also used to mould some masks worn by masquerades from the 1950s to date.

6.2. The use of leather

Participants listed a variety of materials, including leather, to construct their masquerade costumes. Participants from all four masquerade clubs acknowledged using leather from the late 1950s to make their Fancy Dress masquerade costumes. However, its usage was minimal as compared to fabric. This resulted from multiple issues. First, the wearing of masquerade costumes constructed with leather was characterised by excessive heat. Since leather has a structure that makes it difficult for air to pass through, the energy expended by masqueraders during the various dance movements produced heat that did not have any outlet to leave the body but stayed on the masquerade so long as they wore their costumes.

Second, the inability of leather to absorb sweat was of great concern to masqueraders. Generally, leather does not absorb sweat, and as a result, masqueraders' bodies were soaked in sweat, and as Red Cross participant three puts it, "*sweat ran down our bodies like a river when we wore masqerade costumes made from leather.*"

Third, the joining of the seams of the various parts of the costume to form a whole using leather was characterised by the continued breaking of machine needles. This arose because the thickness of the leather on the feed dog did not allow the sewing machine needle to easily penetrate through to form stitches.

Fourth, the expensive cost of leather as compared to fabrics and the existence of fake leather, which easily cracked and went bad, were among some of the setbacks for using leather to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes.

In an attempt to continue with the use of leather to construct masquerade costumes in the late 1990s, despite its seeming challenges, an *Egyaa* participant revealed that they blended the leather with fabric, specifically lace. This was done to allow air to circulate around the bodies of masqueraders. Granted that lace fabric is characterised by bigger spaces in its weave structure, it would be argued that it was the right choice of fabric for use. This is because the bigger the space in the weave of the fabric, the wider it would allow more air to penetrate. In spite of the various challenges associated with the use of leather to construct masquerade costumes, masquerade costumes constructed with leather surfaced during the 2020 masquerade performance at Winneba. This is evident in Figure 4, with the use of multiple colours of leather to construct the costume. The use of leather is systematic with literature by Nicholls (2009), who confirmed the use of bull hides to construct masquerade costumes in the Caribbean Islands.

Figure 4: A Red Cross club masquerader in costume constructed with leather in 2020
(Source: Photographed by researchers)

6.3. The use of Jute bags

Jute bags were yet another material for constructing Fancy Dress masquerade costumes. From the data, it came out that the use of jute bags for constructing masquerade costumes existed long before 1958. However, literature is silent on the use of jute bags to construct masquerade costumes. Jute bags were used to construct masquerade costumes and were sometimes painted to lend beauty to them. This phenomenon, as indicated by Red Cross participant three, was widespread in the early 1960s. However, the use of jute bags declined during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The rationale for the decline was that the yarns in the jute bags made masqueraders uncomfortable and caused them to have itchy skin. This resulted in the scratching of masqueraders' bodies. Stemming from this, most clubs stopped using jute bags to construct their costumes. As

participants of the Red Cross and *Tumus* club described it, "it's been long since we saw any club use jute bags to construct Fancy Dress costumes." Subsequently, the use of jute bags to construct costumes is old-fashioned.

The use of jute bags to construct Fancy Dress was prevalent in the 1960s; however, it declined gradually, and there is no evidence of its usage among the four clubs after the mid-70s. It can be deduced from the narrative that masquerade practitioners are selective about the kind of material they use to construct their costumes and that the inappropriateness of a type of material at any given time would be eroded.

6.4. The use of foam

Foam was one of the materials used in the construction of Fancy Dress masquerade costumes. From the data, it emerged that, in the early 1950s, foam was used to make masquerade costumes. Precisely, foam was used for interlining the masquerade costume, making masks and pairs of *dipples* (boots). The wearing of costumes with foam as an interlining was associated with heat, and this did not make masqueraders feel comfortable. As a result, the Red Cross club had to put on hold the use of foam for interlining their costumes since 1980.

Beyond using foam for interlining purposes, it was also used to prepare pairs of *dipples* or boots. Figures 5, 6, and 7 show the use of foam for preparing the *dipples*, or pairs of boots. Observing the figures closely, it can be seen that foam was cut and fixed around an existing pair of sneakers to build the *dipples,* with the use of fabric and strands of crocheting thread to adorn the *dipples*.

Figure 5. A Nobles club costumier preparing masquerade boots using foam in 2020
(Source: Photographed by researchers)

Figure 6. Completed boot constructed with foam by Nobles club in 2020
(Source: Photographed by researchers)

Figure 7. Use of foam to prepare masquerade *dipples* (boots) in 2020 by the *Tumus* club
(Source: Photographed by researchers)

An *Egyaa* club participant one, brought another dimension to the use of foam. While most clubs used foam for interlining purposes, the participant submitted that they constructed masquerade costumes using foam alone in the 1980s. The costumes were painted in various colours to add beauty. However, the participant revealed that it was time-consuming to join the various parts together. This was because foam did not move easily on the feed dog of the sewing machine. As a result, he had to use hand-worked running stitches, which was time-consuming. Red Cross participant two alluded to the fact that the wearing of costumes with foam as an interlining was associated with heat, which did not make masqueraders feel comfortable. As a result, the Red Cross club put on hold the use of foam for interlining their costumes in the 1980s.

From the foregoing, an issue arises: the year 1980 was characterised by the use of foam to construct costumes by the *Egyaa* and Red Cross clubs, which were subsequently abandoned in the same year due to the challenges associated with their use. The use of foam to build masks was also prevalent in the 1950s and has been held in high esteem to date (2020). The use of foam as a material to construct costumes is affirmed by Covey (1992) and Strand-Evans (2015) in their study, which sought to identify possible materials for constructing costumes.

6.5. The use of agricultural products

Agricultural products also surfaced as materials used to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes. The *Tumus* club participant one, recounted being unsuccessful when his club attempted to use some leafy vegetables to construct masquerade costumes in the early 90s, the starting point of engaging agricultural products as materials in Fancy Dress masquerade costume construction in Winneba. This was because they did not have time to explore the varied ways to use the leaves to produce their costumes. The Nobles club on the other hand, was able to use some agricultural products to construct their costumes. As noted by Nobles club participant

five, they were able to use corn and corn husks to construct separate costumes in 2019. As evident in Figure 8, corn was used to artistically construct the costume. Specifically, the tint and shade of yellow corn were used to achieve varying colour schemes for the costume. Similarly, corn husks were dyed into the colours of South Africa's flag: gold, green, white, blue, black, and red, as seen in Figure 9. Again, the corn husks were arranged to have the Y-shape that characterises the flag in the costumes. In 2020, the club used groundnut shells to construct their costumes. Figure 10 shows a Nobles club masquerader in his costume constructed with groundnut shells during the 2020 masquerade performance. Following the success of using some agricultural products to construct costumes, the participant indicated that he was going to explore other agricultural products as well.

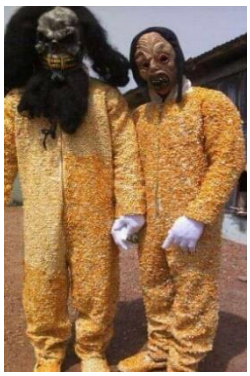

Figure 8. Nobles club masqueraders in costumes prepared with corn in 2019 (Source: Mr. Kyereboah's library, Winneba)

Figure 9. Fancy Dress masquerade costume prepared with corn husk by Nobles club in 2019 (Source: Mr. Kyereboah's library, Winneba)

Figure 10. Nobles club masquerader in costume constructed with groundnut shells in 2020 (Source: Photographed by researchers)

The use of agricultural products to construct masquerade costumes has added to the repertoire of materials for constructing masquerade costumes. Gradually, the use of corn husks, corn and groundnut shells has been successfully explored with positive outcomes. It is envisaged that these frontiers will be expanded to encapsulate other materials in the ensuing years. The use of these agricultural products for constructing masquerade costumes is a testament to the alternate uses to which these materials have been put. Callender (2017) and Nicholls (2009) affirm the use of agricultural products in the Caribbean Islands to construct masquerade costumes.

6.6. The use of paper, straw boards and used packaging boxes

Paper, straw boards, and used packaging boxes were other materials identified for constructing Fancy Dress masquerade costumes. The aforementioned materials were mainly used to construct hats or masks. From the data, it became known that paper has been the core material for making masks since the inception of masquerading in Winneba and has persisted through to current times (i.e., 2020). The papers mostly used to make masks were newspaper, cement, and brown paper. Figure 11 is a Red Cross masquerader in a mask prepared using paper and later sprayed to achieve the needed effect.

The production of hats in the 1950s was achieved by using used packaging boxes. Packaging boxes were picked up from a few shops that existed in Winneba and were cut into desired shapes to arrive at the various styles of hats. The advent and widespread use of strawboards in the Winneba community in the 1980s, as noted by a *Tumus* club participant, saw a number of masquerade practitioners relegate used packaging boxes to the background in favour of strawboards. This came up because strawboards were associated with smooth surfaces, a physical property that used packaging boxes do not possess. However, the cost associated with buying strawboards compelled some practitioners to either stop using them or blend strawboards with used packaging boxes.

Figure 11. A Red Cross masquerader in mask prepared from paper.
(Source: Mr. Afful's library, Winneba)

Figure 12. Samples of used packaging boxes to construct masquerade hats by the *Egyaa* club
(Source: Photographed by the researcher)

Figure 13. An *Egyaa* club masquerader in masquerade hat made from packaging box in 2020
(Source: Photographed by the researcher)

The use of imported masks by all clubs also came up in the late 1950s and has existed till date. However, as indicated by Red Cross participant two, such imported masks were chiefly made from latex or rubber.

The use of paper to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes is confirmed by Hook (1990) and Regis (2006), who noted that cowboy masquerade masks were constructed using paper in the Caribbean Islands in general. However, the literature appears to be silent on the use of strawboards and used packaging boxes.

6.7. The use of net, wire mesh and fibre

Net, wire mesh and fibre have also gained ground as materials for constructing Fancy Dress masquerade costumes. As indicated by participants of all the clubs, net and fibre were mostly used for building masks.

Participants from the four Fancy Dress masquerade clubs alluded to the use of net and fibre to construct Fancy Dress masquerade masks at the inception of masquerading in Winneba, Ghana, to date. The net and wire mesh were preferred over other materials because the tiny holes associated with their structure served as a conduit for easy breathing when they wore the masks. Figure 14 shows an *Egyaa* masquerader in mask made from wire mesh.

Figure 14. An *Egyaa* club masquerader wearing mask made of wire mesh in 2015
(Source: KOVID multimedia)

Although the use of fibre to construct masquerade masks had been explored by the Nobles club, they could not use it because masqueraders could not breathe easily through the material at the initial stages. As a result, it was not used for performances. This brings to the fore that not all materials are suitable for constructing masks, given that the masquerader needed a channel to breathe. To curb this challenge, costumiers fixed wire mesh at the mouth and nose areas of the mask to allow masqueraders to breathe. Following the blending of fibre and wire mesh to produce masks, the use of fibre flourished in masquerading cycles. Another factor that led to the rise in the use of fibre for making masquerade masks was its availability on the Ghanaian market. As indicated by Red Cross participant two, this made it possible for costumiers to access it. However, it must be noted that the fibre was used together with the net.

Emerging from the discussions is that, exploring materials to construct masquerade costumes, specifically mask, is underpinned by the ability of the masquerader to easily breathe through that material. The use of wire mesh and fibre to construct masks is confirmed by literature by Nicholls (2009), Nunley (2010) and Regis (2006) as materials used to build masquerade masks in 1837 in the Caribbean Islands.

6.8. The use of plastic sachets

The final material identified for constructing Fancy Dress masquerade costumes was plastic sachets. According to the data, the use of plastic sachets is a recent phenomenon that has sprouted in the twenty first century. Without a doubt, literature is silent on the use of plastic sachets to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes.

The results revealed that in 2003, the *Egyaa* club used plastic sachets of water to construct some of their costumes. Masqueraders who wore those costumes complained of heat in the costumes. This was because rubber, which is the material used to produce plastic sachets, does not possess properties that allow air to pass through; hence, the heat accompanied by the dancing by masqueraders stayed on their bodies. Although spectators cheered on masqueraders who wore costumes constructed with plastic sachets because that was the first-time using sachets to construct masquerade costumes in Winneba, the *Egyaa* club stopped using plastic sachets to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes due to the heat associated with it. While the *Egyaa* club stopped using plastic sachets to construct their costumes, the Nobles club explored using sachets of ice cream, popularly called FanChoco in Ghana, to construct Traditional Fancy Dress masquerade costumes. This is evident in Figure 15, which is characterised by two Nobles club masqueraders in smocks constructed with the sachets of FanChoco.

Figure 15. Nobles club masqueraders in costumes constructed with Fan Choco ice-cream sachets in 2020. (Source: Photographed by the researcher)

It is noteworthy that both the *Egyaa* and Nobles clubs have identified and used plastic sachets, which are non-conventional materials, to construct their costumes. These materials were readily available as waste materials and could be obtained at no cost, thus cutting down on the cost of materials. Also, the use of these materials could be seen as the use of waste from the environment. Subsequently, this contributes to ecological sustainability as waste rubber sachets are reused for a worthy purpose. From the emerging discussion, the successful use of sachets to construct Fancy Dress costumes serves as a springboard for other non-conventional materials to be explored to construct masquerade costumes in Ghana.

7. Conclusion

Fancy Dress masquerading is one of the avenues for showcasing the popular culture of Ghanaians, more specifically the people of Winneba. The study sought to explore materials used to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes in Winneba, Ghana (1958–2020). Exploring various materials used in Fancy Dress costume construction, the study offers valuable contributions to our understanding of this cultural practice. Findings regarding the use of materials such as fabric, leather, jute bags, foam, agricultural products, paper, strawboards, used packaging, net, fiber, and plastic shed light on the diversity of materials utilised in masquerade costumes. Fabric, leather, jute bags, foam, paper, net, and fibre were all used during 1958. However, masquerade practitioners stopped using jute bags in the 1970s because the yarns were very sharp and pierced masqueraders, thereby causing them to scratch their bodies. Fabric was chosen above the other materials because of its ability to absorb perspiration from masqueraders' bodies during performances. The main types of fabrics used were brocade, satin, calico, polyester, flour sack, lace, and wax print. It is worth noting that the use of wax prints is a recent phenomenon that emerged in 2020. The various kinds of fabric used to construct the masquerade costumes were also used to adorn pairs of sneakers worn to complement the dress.

The use of leather and jute was minimal due to their poor absorbency properties. Masks were made of fibre, fabric, wire mesh, net, and paper. All these were in vogue during the 1950s and have been sustained to date. Beyond these, masqueraders have since 1958 also worn imported masks made of latex or rubber. Costumiers and masqueraders' awareness of conventional materials to construct costumes informed the use of certain materials. While acknowledging that these were vital, the need to explore non-conventional materials to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes has been key in recent times. This study holds significant value in elucidating new insights into masquerade culture in Ghana, particularly in Winneba. By focusing on the materials used in crafting Fancy Dress masquerade costumes, this research successfully fills a gap in the existing empirical literature.

We recommend that masqueraders and costumiers explore and expand the use of non-conventional and other sustainable materials to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes to maintain their gains in ecological sustainability in this cultural practice. When this is achieved, it has the potential to expand the scope of materials used to construct Fancy Dress masquerade costumes. Consequently, this research not only provides novel insights but also offers a new direction in more sustainable masquerade practices. It is important that non-conventional materials, such as sachets, are disinfected properly to prevent any health effects on masqueraders and costumiers before use. Since Fancy Dress masquerading is also held in other regions of Ghana apart from the Central Region, we suggest that other scholars should explore the kinds of materials used to construct costumes in those areas as well. When this is accomplished, it will broaden the discourse on Fancy Dress masquerade costumes in Ghana.

References

Acquaye, R. (2018). *Exploring indigenous West African fabric design in the context of contemporary global commercial production*. (Doctoral thesis, University of Southampton). Retrieved from https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/429749/1/Final_PhD_Thesis_25751093.pdf

Agoro, S. N. A. (2010). The demise of the performance art of masquerade: A case study of the phenomenon in Igbogene State. *Kamla 8*(1), 13-19.

Akubor, E. O. (2016). Africans concept of masquerades and their role in societal control and stability: Some notes on the Esan people of southern Nigeria. *Asian and African Studies*, *25*(1). 32-50.

Akyeampong, O.A., & Yankholmes, A. (2016). Profiling masquerade festival attendees in Ghana. *Event Management*, 20. 285–296.

Amaechi, L. (2018). The use of masquerade cult and Umu-Ada fraternity (Igbo daughters) for peace and conflict resolution in Eastern Nigeria (Igbo land). *American International Journal of Social Science*, *7*(2), 83-91.

Anderson, S. (2018). Letting the mask slip: The shameless fame of Sierra Leone's Gongoli. *Africa*, *88*(4), 718-743. doi:10.1017/S000197201800044X

Asigbo, A. C. (2010). Transmutations in masquerade costumes and performances: An examination of Abuja carnival 2010. *Journal of Arts and Humanities, 13* (1) .1-13.

Barton, L. (1963). *Historic costumes for the stage*. Boston: Walter H. Baker Company.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal, 9* (2), 27-40.

Crist, B. (2014). *The art of costuming: Interpreting the character through the costume designer's eyes*. (Master's thesis, Liberty University). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1469&context=honors.

Callender, A. (2017). Folk culture and costume at the folk museum in Barbados. Retrieved from http://www.clothestellstories.com/index.php/telling- stories- with-clothes/folk-culture-and-costumes-at-the-folk-museum- barbados.

Duerden, D. (2000). The discovery of the African mask. *Research in African Literatures*, *31*(4), 29-47.

Emiemokumo, A. A .N. (2012). Visual art form in motion: Traditional African masquerade as theatrical phenomenon. *Mgbakoigba: Journal of African Studies*, 1, 1-8.

Enendu, M. (2004). The nature of the African masquerade in performance. *Sankofa Journal of the Humanities*, *2*(1), 47-68.

Flock, T.S. (2017). Disguise: Masks and global African art. *African Arts, 50* (3), 85-86.

Furniss, G. J. (2015). Viewing sub-saharan African art with Western eyes: A question of aesthetics in the context of another culture and time. *Art Education, 68* (6), 28-35.

Gavor, M., & Dennis, A. (2013). Evolution and use of patchwork fabric (nsasawa) in Ghana. *The Parnassus: University of Uyo Journal of Cultural Research, 9*(2), 225-237.

Ganyi, F. M., Inyabri, I. T., & Okpiliya, J. O. (2013). Performance aesthetics and functionalism: The legacy of Atam masquerade of the Bakor people of Ogoja local government area. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Invention, 2*(10), 50-62.

Gillette, M. J. (2000) *Theatrical design and production: An introduction to scene design and construction, lighting, sound, costume, and makeup*. (4th ed). New York: McGraw Hill.

Hooks, B. L. (1990). *The Crisis*. *97* (10), 7-8.

Johnson, E. (2004). *Aesthetics: The dialectics and theatrics of theatre and communication.* Lagos: Concept Publications.

Kwakye-Opong, R., & Adinku, G. U. (2013). Costume as medium for cultural expression in stage performance. *Arts and Design Studies*, *8*, 9-18.

Ingham, R. & Covey, L. (1992). *The costume designer's handbook: A complete guide for amateur and professional costume designers*. (2nd ed.). England Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice – Hall, Inc.

Micots, C. (2014). Carnival in Ghana: Fancy Dress street parades and competition. *African Arts, 47* (1), 30-41.

Mamiya, W. A. S. (2016). *Costume aesthetics: Found objects as dressing in the production of the slaves.* (Master's thesis, University of Ghana) Retrivedfromhttp://ugspace.ug.edu.gh/bitstream/handle/123456789/2346/Costume%20Aesthetics%20Found%20Objects%20as%20Dressing%20in%20the%20Production%20of%20the%20Slaves.pdf?sequence&isAllowed=y

Micah, V.K.B. (2014). *Beliefs and practices associated with masquerading culture in winneba, Ghana*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Department of Music Education, University of Education, Winneba.

Negi, M., Rani, A., & Singh, A. (2015). New horizon for Aipan (folk art of uttarakhand): Motifs through appliqué. *International Journal of Research-Granthaalayah*. *3*(9). 36-48.

Nicholls, R.W. (2009). Running John Bull: The provenance of a masquerader in the Lesser Antilles. *Folklore 120*(2). 133-156.

Nicholls, R.W. (2012). *The jumbies' playing ground: Old world influences on afro-creole masquerades in the eastern Caribbean*. Jackson: University of Mississippi.

Nunley, J. (2010). Jolly masquerades of Sierra Leone and the Creole histories of Atlantic Rim performance arts. In A. Apter & L. Derbry (Eds.), *Activating the past: History and memory in the black Atlantic world*. New Castle, Tyne: Cambridge scholars publishing.

Ottenberg, S. (1982). Illusion, communication, and psychology in West African masquerades. *Ethos, 10*(2), 149-185.

Ododo S. E. (2001). Theatrical aesthetics and functional values of ekuechi masquerade ensemble of the Ebira people in Nigeria. *African Study Monographs*, *22*(1), 1-36.

Peek, P.M., & Yankah, K. (2004). *African folklore: An Encyclopedia*. New York: Routledge.

Regis, H.A. (Ed.). (2006). *Caribbean and southern transnational perspectives on the U.S. south*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press.

Strand-Evans, K. (2015). *Costume construction*. (2nd ed.). Long Grove, Illinois; Waveland Press, Inc.

Sarpong, A. and Botchway, D.N.Y.M. (2019). Adults are just children …? Child fancy dress parades as a carnivalesquue suspension of adultism in Winneba, Ghana. In Botchway, D.N.Y.M., Sarpong, A. &

Quist –Adade, C. (Eds.) *New perspectives on African Childhood: constructions, histories, representations and Understandings* (pp.171-195). Wilmington*:* Vernon Press.

Sarpong, A. and Botchway, D.N.Y.M. (2017). Freaks in performance? The Fancy Dress masquerade as heaven for negotiating eccentricity during childhood. In Bohlmann, M.P.J. (Ed.) *Misfit children: An inquiry into childhood belongings* (pp. 176-196) Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

Tojo, N. (2012). *Prevention of textile waste: Material flows of textiles in three nordic countries and suggestions on policy instruments*. Nordic council of ministers.

Wilcox, R. (1958). *The mood in costume*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.