

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC EDUCATION

KROBO DIPO DRESS FASHION TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY GHANA

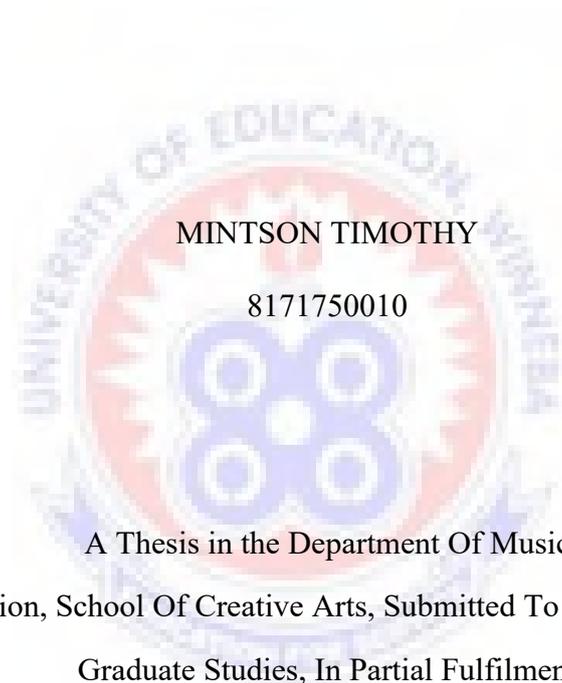


MINTSON TIMOTHY

JUNE, 2020

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

KROBO DIPO DRESS FASHION TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY GHANA



MINTSON TIMOTHY

8171750010

A Thesis in the Department Of Music  
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of the Requirements For The Award Of the Degree of  
Master of Philosophy (Arts and Culture)  
In the University of Education, Winneba

JUNE, 2020

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, hereby, declare that this submission is my own work towards the Master of Philosophy Degree in Arts and Culture and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person or material which has been accepted for any other degree in this university or elsewhere, except where due acknowledgement has dully been made in the text.

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### Supervisors' Certification

I hereby certify that the preparation and presentation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with guidelines and supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

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(Co- Supervisor)

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to the Mintson family especially Uncle Morgan of blessed memory.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must admit that so many people have contributed to this study. Most important are my supervisors – Dr. Osuanyi Quaicoo Essel and Dr. Ebenezer Acquah for their superb contributions and ideas directed to writing this thesis.

I humbly recognise and appreciate these honourable persons: Mrs. Baidoo, Mr. Shaibu, Cita photos and Traditional Chief Priest from Odumase Krobo for granting me an interview sessions, not forgetting the fashion designers; Gavachy and Afro Mod trends.

JUNE, 2020

M.T



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
ABSTRACT	xi
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Overview	1
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	4
1.3 Objectives to the study	7
1.4 Research questions	7
1.5 Significance of the study	7
1.6 Delimitation	8
1.7 Definition of terms	9
1.9 Abbreviations	11
10.0 Organisation of the rest of the text	11
<b>CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</b>	<b>12</b>
2.0 Overview	12
2.1.0 Theoretical Framework	12
2.2.0 Philosophy of fashion	13
2.3.0 Dress Fashion: The Art of Decency and Provocation	14
2.3.1 Dress Fashion	14
2.3.2 Decency or Modesty in Dressing	20
2.3.3 Indecency or Immodest or Provocation in Dressing	22
2.3.4 Christian concept of modesty and immodesty/provocation in dressing	26
2.3.5 Islamic concept of modesty and immodesty/ provocation in dressing	28
2.3.6 African Concept of Decency and Provocation in Dressing	31

2.3.7	Western Culture of Decency and Provocation in Dressing	33
2.4.0	Clothing and Fashion in Africa	35
2.4.1	African clothing and fashion expressionism	37
2.4.2	Impervious nature of African clothing and fashion	40
2.4.3	Convergence and divergence of African clothing and fashion	42
2.5.0	The Significance of African Cultural Values on Clothing and Fashion	44
2.5.1	Purpose of the cultural significance and values of African clothing and	45
2.5.2	The significant influence of African cultural values on clothing and	49
2.5.3	Negative effects of clothing and fashion on African cultural values	50
2.5.4	Revitalising African cultural values and its significance through	51
2.6.0	The Classical and Contemporary Practices of Dipo Rite	53
2.6.1	Dipo rite as a positive and negative cultural practice	54
2.6.2	Disparities in Dipo classical- contemporary rite	55
2.6.3	Perpetuation of Dipo rite in classical –contemporary times	59
2.6.4	Controversies surrounding Classical-Contemporary Dipo practices	60
2.6.5	Dipo Dress styles of the Krobo	62
2.7	Summary	64
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b>		<b>70</b>
3.0	Overview	70
3.1	Research Design	70
3.2	Population	70
3.3	Sampling Techniques	72
3.4	Sample Size	71
3.5	Data Collection Instruments	72
3.5.1	Interview	72
3.5.2	Observation	73
3.5.3	Photography	73
3.5.4	Document review	74
3.6	Data Collection Procedure	74
3.6.1	Semi-structured Interview	74
3.6.2	Observations	75
3.6.3	Photography	76

3.6.4	Documents Review	76
3.7	Data Analysis plan	77
3.8	Trustworthiness and Authenticity	79
3.9	Ethical considerations	78
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>		<b>81</b>
4.0	Overview	81
4.1	Major Dipo dress fashion trends from 1950 to 2019	81
4.1.1	Tying of string	82
4.1.2	Cleansing initiation	86
4.1.3	Victory initiation	92
4.1.4	Dress-up	103
4.1.5	The revolutions and trends in Dipo dress fashion of the Krobo people	119
4.2	Critiques on Dipo dress fashion	121
4.2.1	Textual analysis on Critiques against Dipo dress fashion	121
4.2.2	Textual analytical results on critiques of Dipo dress fashion	136
4.2.3	Context and content of critiques against Dipo dress fashion	139
4.3	Cultural values and contemporary relevance of Dipo dress fashion	139
4.3.1	People in touch with the Dipo custom	140
4.3.1.1	Respondent 1	140
4.3.1.2	Respondent 2	142
4.3.1.3	Respondent 3	144
4.3.2	Fashion designers	146
4.3.2.1	Gavachy	146
4.3.2.2	Afro mod trends	153
4.3.3	The relationships between cultural values and relevance of Dipo dress	158
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>		
5.0	Overview	161
5.1	Summary	161
5.2.1	Conclusions	161
5.3	Recommendations	165

5.4	Suggestions for further studies	172
	REFERENCES	177
	APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE	184
	APPENDIX B: FIRST (1 <sup>ST</sup> ) OBSERVATION GUIDE	185
	APPENDIX C: INFORM CONSENT FORM	190

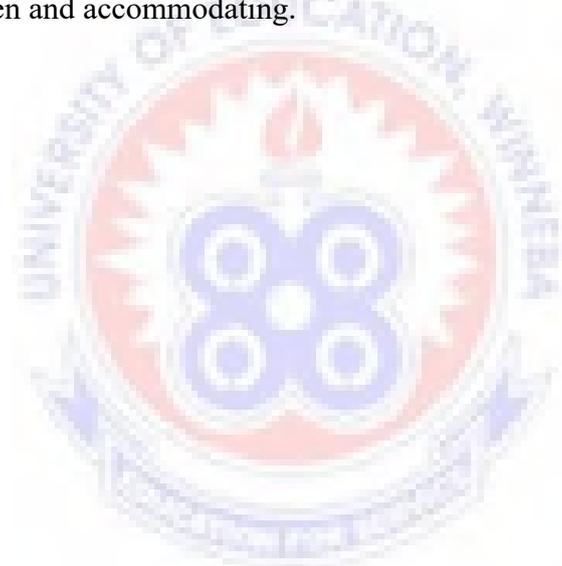


## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. An elderly woman putting a palm string called <i>soni</i> round	85
2. Three younger initiates with a string tied at their waste and red loin	89
3. An initiate wears red loin printed cloth dress fashion hung at the shin	90
4. An initiate wears red loin printed cloth dress fashion.	91
5. An initiate wears red loin printed cloth dress fashion hung at the shin	92
6. An initiate adorned with white fabric as loin cloth and as breast	97
7. An initiate adorned with white fabric as loin cloth with bare breast.	98
8. An initiate adorned with white fabric as loin cloth with bare breast.	99
9. Two initiates adorned with white fabric as loin cloth with bare breast.	100
10. An initiate wears a conical woven straw hat covered with white fabric	101
11. An initiate adorned with white fabric as loin cloth	102
12. An initiate dressed in the first Dipo outdoor dress up	107
13. Priest dressed in all white fabric wearing conical straw woven	108
14. Two initiates (teenager and pre-schooler) dressed	109
15. An initiate dressed in the first Dipo outdoor dress up	110
16. An initiate dressed in the first Dipo outdoor dress up	111
17. An initiate dressed in the first Dipo outdoor dress up	112
18. An initiate dressed in the second Dipo outdoor dress up	115
19. An initiate dressed in the second Dipo outdoor dress	116
20. A section of initiates at a durbar dressed in the second Dipo	117
21. An initiate dressed in the second Dipo outdoor dress	118
22. A male model in pose dressed in Gavachy Dipo jumper shirt	150
23. Two models (male right and female in the picture plane)	151
24. A female model dressed in Dipo skirt complemented with a dressed	152
25. A female model dressed in afro mod's Dipo skirt posed	155
26. A female model dressed in afro mod's Dipo blouse posed	156
27. A female model dressed in afro mod's Dipo straight-dress posed	157

## ABSTRACT

Dipo rite is, perhaps, one of greatest legacies of the Krobo people in Ghana which has undergone major transformations and modifications. People believe this cultural practice has no significance in modern Ghana. Primarily, because, Dipo dress fashion and custom has generally been understudied. Therefore, this research was conducted to build a documentary on dipo dress fashion trends from classical to contemporary times. The paradigm of the research is qualitative which employed guided interviews, observations, photographs and documentary reviews as primary and secondary data collection instruments. The respondents gathered for the study were sampled purposively and later put into strata in these categories: three (3) Traditional rulers/People knowledgeable or in touch with the Dipo custom, three (3) photographers, twelve (12) Authors who have commented on Dipo dress fashion and two (2) Fashion designers. The study revealed four major Dipo dress fashion stages with various trends under it: *tying of strings, cleansing initiation, victory initiation and dress up*. The researcher realized that modern values were inherent with dipo dress fashion trends therefore recommending to dipo custodians that traditional and modern practices should be promoted and rebranded to make the ceremony evergreen and accommodating.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Overview

This chapter primarily presents on the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives to the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation, definition of terms, abbreviations and organization of the rest of the text.

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

In Ghana, there are several ethnic groups spread across the length and breadth of the country. These ethnic groups such as Akans, Dagombas, Guans, Ewes among others, are distinct from one another in origin of migration, cultural practices, occupation and language. For the dangmbe ethnic group, Krobo or Klo, among Ada, Ningo, Shai, Osudoku, Prampram, Kponi, Labadi, Christiansborg and Teshie (Mate-Kole, 1955, p. 133), according to Opare-Darko (2016, p.10), Krobo are the most numerous among the Adangbe ethnic group of the southeastern part of Ghana, numbering about 8,246 with males consisting of 46.5% and females consisting of 53.5% respectively.

The Krobo are divided into two; the *Manya* and the *Yilo*, showing differences in some of their traditional practices. Presently, the *Manya* Krobo people are settled at Odumase Krobo and Yilo Krobo people at Somanya. These two major towns of the Krobo people are the capital of the ower- manya Krobo municipality and yilo krobo municipality respectively. The major economic activities by these municipalities are: Agriculture, Services, Trading, Small Scale Industrial activities (tailoring and dress making, hair dressing etc.) and pot and bead making which have put them on the tourist map of Ghana.(Ghana Statistical Service, 2014;Opare-Darko,2016). Among the krobo groups, *nmayem* festival is celebrated by the chiefs and people of Odumase-Krobo whiles the chiefs and people of yilo Krobo celebrate Kloyosikplemi festival to pay homage to their

ancestral home on the Krobo Mountain. According to Huber (1993), notable among other rites performed by the Krobo is the *Dipo*. The Krobo practice the Dipo rites usually in March and April every year (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).

Although many ceremonies are celebrated in Ghana, and distinct from one ethnic group to the other, the Dipo rite is only one greatest legacies of the people of Krobo, usually performed in March and April every year (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). It is a Ghanaian puberty rite which has stood the test of time. Among the neighbouring Krobo people, Huber (1963) says the dipo rite was traditionally elaborate and formerly protracted up to one year of seclusion where the girls who were undergoing the puberty rites would ordinarily spend at least twelve months in the ancestral mountain homes of the people under the supervision of priestesses and old women. Dipo ceremony has then been shortened, first to three months and has become a three (3) to six (6) week affair (Quarcoo, 1965) and more recently been transcended to last for four (4) days in its contemporary celebrations (Boakye, 2010, p. 1). Regardless of the shortened days in the Dipo rite celebration, it is still recognised and performed for different purposes and “therefore offer a prism which breaks up the seemingly harmonious culture and let fissures appear” (Muttenez, 2005, p. 38).

The Dipo rite provides Krobo girls with the opportunity to benefit from basic values in education, domestic skills and various family and communal responsibilities as an adult to bestow high moral standards. It ensures cultural continuity from one generation to another (Salm, 2002; Gyekye, 2003; Steegstra, 2005 as cited by Boakye, 2010, p. 3). Meanwhile, Dipo has undergone major transformations due to various influences. These changes resulted in debates between researchers (Adjaye, 1999). For example, on religious doctrinal premise, Hudson (1998) and Schroeder and Danquah, (2000) (as cited by Emefa and Selase, 2014, p. 136) share concerns that reverend

ministers, priests and pastors at public gatherings and in newspapers regard the dress culture of Dipo girls a negative, primitive image of Ghanaians and if care is not taken, this can lead to rape and immoral behaviour. But Gennep (1960) reacts that sexual enjoyment is not dependent on the dress culture of dipo but may be experienced earlier or later depending on the individual. Again, Steegstra (2005, p. 284), under influences from education and human rights, points out that “transformation in the Dipo rites is inherent, where young girls reach adolescence, could reason for themselves and may refuse to go through the rites”. But Sackey (2009, p. 285) thinks otherwise. Sackey says, modernity which influences Dipo rite, is an Eurocentric view on African tradition endorsed by our behaviour. This means that the dress culture associated with Dipo has been abolished so that the breasts are now covered. Yet when an American film actor, Steven Seagull, visited Ghana he was welcomed by bare-breasted Dipo girls (Sackey, 2009). Also, in the contemporary sense of Dipo, Boakye (2010) and Abbey (2016) critiqued some of the stages of Dipo rites that tend to ridicule the human social system because participants as young as three (3) years are initiated without any reasons except to make them Krobo women.

On the contrary, Dipo served as a traditional means of preventing promiscuity (Schroeder & Danquah, 2000); blaming the change in the social focus to the pressure and the perception of the Krobo people: that Christianity is a symbol of modernity (Sackey, 2009). Christians, therefore, argue that Dipo rite is not too bad, but just that the dressing of the initiates is outmoded and needs some modifications. However, in some communities today, initiates are allowed to cover their breast with a wax print cloth (Emefa and Selase, 2014). Adu-Akwaboa, (1994) affirms, saying, the history of Ghanaian fashion to which the people of Krobo are not exempted trace back to the pre-colonial era when indigenous Ghanaians used barks of trees and hides of animals to clothe

themselves. Nithyaprakash (2015, p. 2) states, fashion trends come and go; meanwhile a society's values are established and evolving characteristic to their beliefs and culture. Boakye (2010) and Abbey (2016) observe that one of the characteristics that climax the Dipo rite is that the girls are dressed in colourful Kente cloth complemented with beads around their neck, arms and waist. This implies that the impact of fashion trend in the society lies on the interpretation given to it as a standard measure of social acceptance (Nithyaprakash, 2015). The researcher therefore agrees with Dzamedo (2009) that Dipo fashion like any other fashion, no matter what form it takes, affects the life of everybody at a given point in time. Irrespective of how tradition has been influenced greatly the trends needs to be studied.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Dipo rite of passage was used to guide Krobo girls to achieve a stronger sense of personal responsibility in the past (Teyegaga, 1985 as cited by Abbey 2016, p. 1), but Dipo is not altogether praised in Ghana. The practice has aroused a number of debates. While some people believe it is a cultural practice that should be continued, others are of the opinion that it is old-fashioned and has no significance in the modern Ghanaian society (Boakye 2010).

Boakye (2010) claims Steegstra (2004) and Huber (1963) have got the comprehensive and elaborative documentation on the people of Krobo; yet, Dipo custom has been generally understudied. Notwithstanding, Boakye (2010), Abbey (2016) and Kumetey (2009) have studied the dipo custom diversely under anthropology, psychology and sociology. Firstly, Boakye conducted a study on Dipo rites of passage; He sought to inquire about the historical background of the Dipo rite, the changes it has undergone and reasons for these changes. Again research into the significance of such a practice in modern Ghana and how it has been preserved from various influences.

His study revealed that the practice was a form of vocational training for young women in which they were taught generally how to assume their roles as responsible women in the society. Though the rites involved bodily exposure, initiates were allowed to cover their breasts sometimes during the rites instead of having them exposed the entire time as was the case in the past. Again, changes showed that the duration of the rites has also reduced from about a year to four days. Christianity, modernisation, formal education and environmental changes have been attributed to these changes. Again, the study shows that the custom is a means of female empowerment in a patrilineal society as it is aimed at bringing females into the limelight as a significant practice in modern Ghana today as well as the future of the rite. For the Krobo people, despite the external and internal influences and pressure, the deep sense of belonging to the rich custom and ethnic hallmark, therefore, becomes part of the motivation to engage in the practice, hence its preservation power.

Next, Abbey (2016) examined the perceptions of Krobo girls about their cultural values, its significance; and attitudes to Dipo rites and the sexual behaviour of Krobo girls which may be related to various impacts of Dipo rites. In addressing the issues on psychological correlates on Dipo rite, the study conducted by Abbey (2016) significantly sought to prevent promiscuity, teenage pregnancy and premarital sex until Krobo girls were of age to marry.

In Phase one (1) of the study, two (2) main findings were revealed. Firstly, the belief that Dipo is traditional and true Christians must not participate in such activities. Secondly, the belief that Dipo is a cultural rite of passage which is necessary for all community members. These two views might have resulted in different stereotypic behaviours that could cause psychological distress among members in the community. Also, Phase two (2) of the study revealed that, girls who have not undergone Dipo rites

recorded a higher level of psychological distress than initiates. Initiates on the other hand recorded higher positive score on Dipo perception than non-initiates.

Kumetey (2009), also, studied the people of Krobo with regards to their perception on contemporary Dipo rite, with emphasis on underage Dipo girls, to find out if the practice is still promoting its aims and to find out what non-Krobo residents are saying about the practice. The study sample employed 43 respondents from a target group of males and females who are fifteen (15) years from Somanya. The study showed that the aims of Dipo (preserving the virginity of young girls before entering into marriage, and preparing young girls for marriage) were not being achieved. Many Dipo girls could not enter into marriage after the practices because they were too young to do so. However, most of them were practising pre-marital sex. The study also revealed a high perception among the people that, Dipo in contemporary Ghana had outlived its usefulness and had been reduced to just a traditional ceremony.

A comparative analysis on the above studies suggests these authors; Boakye (2010), Kumetey (2009) and Abbey (2016) failed to address the fashion trends of Dipo and its cultural significance value in the rite. However, Boakye (2010) study gave a hint on the emergence of a new cultural practice in Dipo ceremony but failed to address which particular Dipo dress fashion trend had emerged. Despite Kumetey (2009) revelation, that contemporary Dipo in Ghana is not useful but just a traditional ceremony, Abbey (2016) believes Dipo still has some cultural values and significances in the society that are hidden in a new cultural practice which needs to be unearthed. This new practice in Dipo rite focuses on Dipo dress fashion trends in contemporary Ghana.

### **1.3 Objectives to the Study**

This study sought to:

1. investigate into the major Dipo dress fashion trends of the Krobo people from 1950 to present.
2. examine the contexts and contents of critiques labelled against Dipo dress fashion.
3. analyse the cultural values and contemporary relevance of Dipo dress fashion practice.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What are the major trends in Dipo dress fashion from 1950 to present among the Krobo people?
2. Under which contexts has Dipo dress fashion been critiqued?
3. What are the cultural values and contemporary relevance of Dipo dress fashion that needs to be established?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Several authors have written on the practices and rituals of Dipo rites due to the interest that has aroused many to document and publish in order to retain this custom from eradication. This study, offers the gate way to throw more light on the contemporary trends in Dipo dress fashion which has become a new phenomenon that has escaped the attention of researchers because several critiques and praises from modernists, Christians and Krobo custodians striking several differences needs to be researched into. The researcher believes that the outcome of this study will be a reference for debaters to rethink the symbolism of the exposure of breast by initiates and the covering of the breast also. Again, as a benefit to fashion institutions, fashion sales men and women and fashion investors, the study will serve as a source of information for fashion designers to follow the trends in the fashion industry to take effective decision on production. Socially,

Ghanaian fashion institutions and fashion designers will find the study useful in order to promote a Ghana made product influenced by the Krobo cultural beliefs and values and using locally produced fabrics in sewing their dresses.

The focus of education in the area of fashion can be equated to the interest of the youth today. Therefore several courses have been mounted in fashion to which this research will add to academic knowledge and serve as the basis for further research into Dipo custom, textiles and fashion to benefit fellow researchers, fashion institutions, students, anthropologists, sociologist etc. The study sought to reveal the relationship that existed previously and what exist currently with regard to the practices of Dipo rites and the gradual progress that have resulted in the trends in the Dipo dress fashion. The study inquires a review into history, to revisit other knowledge (authors) and show what Dipo dress fashion was and is today. Fashion designers will therefore have the chance to develop creatively, a new style of designing fashionable dresses/ costumes in order to establish a brand in the fashion world.

### **1.6 Delimitation**

Geographically, the study is focused on the Krobo people of the Eastern Region of Ghana. However, the selected respondents for the study were largely indigenes (both initiates and non-initiate) from the Manya Traditional area. The study is on dipo dress fashion from the colonial, post-colonial to contemporary times in Ghana, its cultural values and contemporary relevance. Also the study focused on people who have knowledge in dipo custom as population sample.

Although, the conduct of the study did not come easily for the researcher, certain terms are used to enable the reader to understand the study.

### **1.8 Definition of Terms**

Afro mod trends: This is a Ghanaian fashion brand that uses the concept of Dipo in

producing dresses

- Bobum: This refers to the final stage of the Dipo rite which involves Newuom and Kawa
- Bordom: A type of bead that is used by the Dipo girls mostly yellow in colour.
- Christianity: The belief or practice system based on the Holy Bible
- Dipo: This refers to a practice that is celebrated annually in Kroboland for young girls
- Dipo -bee: This refers to a woven hat that is worn during the Dipo rite by a Dipo girl
- Dipo –yo: This refers to a Krobo word for a Dipo girl
- Dipo -yi: This refers to a Krobo word for Dipo girls
- Eurocentric: European or Western ideas on the meaning of Dipo
- Fashion trend: This refers to a popular dipo dress fashion that becomes the taste for Dipo girls within a specific time.
- Fecundity: A symbolism of beads tied to initiates waist to represent the intellectual ability and creativity of a Dipo girl
- Fissures: Unrecognised/Unidentified items about Dipo
- Gavachy: Is a fashion designer/ a fashion brand who/shows design outfits (dresses) related to the concept of Dipo
- Huazi: A type of bead tied at the knee of a Dipo girl
- Huadziatɔ: A type of bead tied around the leg of a Dipo girl
- Hungua/Hunua: A type of beads that are specially tied at the Dipo girls' waist

- Kawo:** This is the second type of Bobum dress worn by new (Dipo girls) Krobo women to dance the Klama and for final outdoor of the Dipo rite
- Kente:** Is a popular Ghanaian woven fabric worn by Dipo girls during the dipo ceremony
- Klama:** This is a special Dipo dance of Krobo people that is performed by Dipo girls during the Dipo rite
- Koli:** A type of bead that used by initiates mostly blue in colour.
- Kpawomi:** A Krobo expression meaning tying of string
- Krala:** Is a type of white fabric that is used as a loin cloth for the Dipo girl
- Krobo:** They are indigenes who celebrate Dipo ceremony
- Malleable:** Refers to the fact that Dipo adapts easily to influences and changes
- Modernity:** Refers to current happenings or practices in the society
- Newuom:** This is the first type of Bobum dress worn by Dipo initiate.
- Okumo:** Is a name of a traditional Krobo priest/priestess
- Powa:** A type of bead tied around the knee of a Dipo girl
- Social puberty:** Refers to the rite that depends on a person's social, mental and emotional experiences but not sexual pleasure
- Soni muom:** This refers to the first stage in Dipo dress fashion of tying a raffia-type fibre of a date palm
- Suboe:** This is a red fabric that is used as a loin cloth for the Dipo girls
- Skobeke:** A type of bead that is worn around the legs by Dipo girls
- Yomoyo:** This is a title name used in calling an older Krobo woman
- Zagba:** A type of beads which Dipo girls worn around their leg.

Tradition: Refers to past or old practices of a society

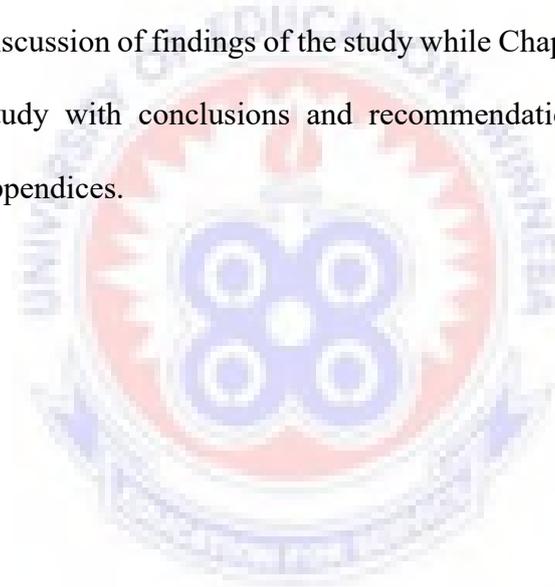
### **1.9 Abbreviations**

FGB: Free Grace Broadcaster

NCC: National Commission on Culture

### **10.0 Organisation of the Rest of the Text**

Chapter Two is the review of the related literature, showing relevant headings that relate to the topic while Chapter Three covers the methodology for the study. It explains the research design, population of the study, sampling technique as well as data collection tools and procedure, analysis plan and ethical consideration. Chapter Four contains the presentation and discussion of findings of the study while Chapter Five summaries all the findings of the study with conclusions and recommendations. This is followed by References and Appendices.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.0 Overview

This chapter reviews literature that relates to the study and a presentation of the theoretical framework. It is organised under the following topics: Dress Fashion; The Art of Decency and Provocation, Clothing and Fashion in Africa, The significance of African Cultural values on clothing and fashion and the classical and contemporary practices of Dipo rite

#### 2.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical principles that establish this study are the theory of modernisation with the subsets of modernity and hybrid modernity theories. Ajani (2012, p. 109) informs that the theory of “modernisation” predicts the decline of traditional values and their replacement with “modern” values depicted by rationality, tolerance, trust and participation. This means that the modern person by thought makes himself/herself susceptible to change (Fägerlind & Saha, 1989 as cited by Boakye, 2010, p.70). When modern values is being shown in terms of rationality, it means that dipo dress fashion has seen changes from classical to contemporary times. However, it is appropriate to investigate into the major dipo dress fashion trends with the people who are knowledgeable or in touch with the dipo custom. By rationality, the study proves that, dipo dress fashion has seen changes from classical times to contemporary times. However, it was necessary to investigate the major dipo dress fashion trends among people in touch with the dipo custom. Through the attitude of tolerance, exhibited by the people of Krobo, the cultural values that guide dipo dress fashion practices have thrived several influences to prove the stance of O'Brien (1999) as cited by Boakye, (2010, p.69) that, the changing faces of African clothing and textiles as well as fashion is built largely

on the theory of modernity that states that modernity is inherently transformational making modern societies open to change continually.

However, since there are changes in modern societies, several critiques have been raised against dipo dress fashion practices given the true reflection of unsecured traditional practices of the Krobo people needed to be examined. In the participatory phenomenon, to depict modernisation, contemporary designers sought ideas from traditional customs to usher new trends in textiles, clothing and fashion to achieving similar settings of “the theory of hybrid modernity which juxtaposes traditional African materials and design techniques with Western modern conceptualisation” (Oton, 2013, para. 6). The theories provide analytical spectacle to understand dipo dress fashion through time and to appreciate the traditional values and significance of Krobo culture despite the prevalence of modern values and influences. More to this, this theory also ensured that the respondents for the study comprised people with diverse opinion on the classical and contemporary dipo rite practices to prove the dynamics in culture as the world evolves.

The modernization factors in the world’s revolution on dress fashion reflect the mixed acceptance in the standard of dressing. In most African countries, clothing and fashion have distinct cultural values, especially in relation to classical and contemporary dipo rite practices in Ghana.

### **2.2.0 Philosophy of Fashion**

The fashion philosophy that underlines this study according to Matteucci and Marino (2017) establishes that “Anti-fashion: if not fashion then what?” The statement opens up a case for contention of which fashion is portrayed negative. This is because fashion in general has the characteristic of being critiqued from different point of views. For instance, in dress fashion, different cultures exhibit various dress styles which is

imbued with the cultural values and practices of a particular society. In this study, Dipo dress fashion is heightened by critics as an Anti- fashion. I believe that if such was not the case of Krobos dipo dress fashion, then there would not be any stance to justify this practice as anti- fashion. Moreover, Dipo dress fashion, haven been identified as anti-fashion, has resorted to trends in contemporary Ghana which is established in this study. This can be traced to the statement made by Wilde (n.d) that “A fashion is merely a form of ugliness so absolutely unbearable that we have to alter it every six months”. The researcher agrees with Wilde (n.d) that the decision to modify some outmoded or archaic aspect of the Dipo rite (barring of body of initiates) paved way for Christian and modern influences. Subsequently, from different dispensations, particularly from 1950 to 2019, various trends have emerged from Dipo dress fashion to suit contemporary demands and pressure to making this cultural practice appropriate for all stake holders (custodians, old and younger initiates and Ghanaians at large). However, altering Dipo dress fashion from time to time depicts the ongoing innovations of some dipo practices and other cultures that are merged and redefined and accommodating to keep the cultural rite perpetuating.

### **2.3.0 Dress Fashion: The Art of Decency and Provocation**

#### **2.3.1 Dress Fashion**

Dress is an English pronunciation word and a verb which means “to put on cloth” (Macmillan Dictionary, 2002, p.). Technically, I refer to dress as pieces of cloth/fabric which has been cut and sewn together in a specialised pattern or style, patronised by humans to cover and protect the skin and to enhance the appearance of a person. According to Koester and Bryant (1991, p. 21) “dress comes in so many materials such as: leather, fabrics/cloth, metals in different styles such as skirts, shirts, trousers, jacket, uniforms etc”. However, the various materials found with dresses have specific purposes for which it is used.

The type of dresses worn separated the elite and their slaves in the community (Auslander, 2014) which lights up the importance that dress has been one of the effective ways of communicating societal values, which informs that “an appearance of a person shows a social etiquette and effective form of nonverbal communication” (Nithyaprakash, 2015, p. 5). It is obvious the two statements above complement each other on the effectiveness of dress when it is worn but with different perspective of definition. Further interpretation explains cultural acceptance on societal gap between elites and slaves with regards to their different levels of economic fortunes. Dresses then became social indicators to show these separate class of people. This reflects how dresses represent discriminations but in a calmer way which it unspotted. According to Pathak (2013) as cited by Nithyaprakash (2015, p. 7), “the way dress communicates in the society is sophisticated because when a particular style of dress comes in vogue it is blindly followed”. Since dresses show disparities between two separate classes of people (elites and slaves), it can be defined as a secrete tool which either deviates or conform to societal values on humanity.

In contemporary times, “dress is not just representing the culture of the present; it also preserves the knowledge accumulated during the centuries” (Vagasi-Kovacs, 2013, p. 15). I therefore infer from Vagasi-Kovacs’ comment that dresses across the world are produced with different methods, skills and ideas inspired by different cultures from Africa, Europe, Asia, and America. Because the world is now seemingly a global village, cross cultural experiences is rampant with new style of dresses being produced creatively by fashion designers. These dresses are inspired by cultural precedence which is now produced in a hybrid form yet still keeping the essence of traditional values in contemporary times. Similarly, (National Commission on Culture [NCC] 2015, para. 5) refers that “as you mature, the trends or habit fall away, you dress more for yourself, your

style evolves and you understand what suits you”. Meaning, the revolution in dresses have accumulated more issues and debate based on how individuals and the society perceive and purpose it; of which I vouch dresses as a collective agenda by the society to perpetuate the cultural heritage of a group and an individual agenda of expressing one’s self or feeling. These changing scenes of dresses from societal initiative to individual innovations contribute to dress fashion styles which are in different collections all over the world.

I consider Fashion as one of the top priorities in the world next to creativity. To some extent “fashion is presented in many aspects of life: in politics, business, entertainment, academics, law, among others which imply that fashion cannot be defined or described only from the viewpoint of one discipline” (Vagasi-Kovacs, 2013, p. 13). Another definition by Rouse (1993) and Drew (1992) as cited by Sarpong, Howard, and Osei-Ntiri (2011, p. 98) consider fashion as a “particular style that is popular for a period of time which can either be clothing, furniture, housing, automobile, food, toys, and many others at a particular time”.

In textiles and clothing, fashion is referred by Rovine (2011) as “the changing styles of dress and other body adornments that are motivated by the social value placed on innovation”. Also, Dzamedo (2009, p. 1) refers to fashion as:

clothing styles and its accessories (covering and decoration for a person’s body) as seen in appearance, depicting the manner in which people dress, wear the hair, behave socially or do other things at a given time. It implies that, all items used in covering, decorating or ornamenting the body, as found in body arts.

In all the four definitions presented above, the writers, project *style* as a common character associated with fashion without which any item cannot be classified as such. These writers show dress as the dominant item relative to fashion for mankind. However, fashion styles propelled by innovations become popular within specific dispensations as

fashion trend. This innovation then becomes an aesthetic quality and creative ideas in clothes by fashion designers.

In another development, NCC (2015, para 1) opines that:

fashion is not only influenced by the society and culture of a given place but a way we choose to present ourselves in the society. It captures whether or not we choose to be on trend, but also by weather, environment, personal experiences, beliefs and values of an individual.

I have observed that the Ghanaian clothing and fashion industry presents products based on cultural motivations in either designing cloths or dresses. Though modernity has become so dominant on the Ghanaian clothing and textiles industries, it only propels traditional dresses and cloths as innovative fashion trend in present societies. Ideally, NCC (2015, para 3) believes that “true fashion aids in identifying a particular culture of a group of people by looking at the way an individual or group of people dresses”. This makes it difficult to assume that a person dressed in a certain style is linked to a particular cultural background, which also exemplified cross-dressing as a difficult communication phenomenon to be understood by some Africans.

Personally, dress fashion has gradually shifted from how people will recognise a person in a gendered outfit traditionally or modern classic outfit (portraying a high-status personality or an ordinary person) to revealing a true self through conceptual dresses. This statement agrees with Nithyaprakash (2015, p. 1) stance that:

Fashion communication has undergone a 360-degree shift in its communicable aspects starting from projecting a basic image of how we look like and how we feel like to expressing our emotional experiences through interactive implements in the dress.

Around the world different cultures have their representative ways of interaction and how they interpret social issues such as death, birth, etc through clothing. Mostly, by just wearing a particular colour of dress or cloth, communication becomes imperative to all who understand in a cultural context. Therefore, between Africans and Europeans,

fashion communicates different meaning through dresses by traditional and modern values.

Dress fashion/style is a virtue or vice that conveys one's personality and is influenced by many essential elements ranging from cultural, social and economic conditions (Schuster, 2011 as cited by Haruna, 2016, p. 17). Personally, dress fashion becomes an aspect of culture when it revolves around a particular society at a specific time period and place which becomes an accepted attitude and behaviour that characterises the taste of every member in terms of values which are adhered and practiced. Social wise, dress fashion becomes an informer among people in the society. In most cases the people in the society are the initiators of such dress fashion which are used as symbolic meanings to their beliefs or everyday life, mark a person as a member of the society. Economically, I reference dress fashion as a production by fashion designers to make sales of the materials that inform a particular dress style. These materials are mostly found within a person's immediate environment and related to the culture of the society. Nenad (2013) as cited by Schall and Appiah (2016) expresses that modern-day dress sense is influenced by celebrities resulting in some cases of abuses and rapes. My analysis is that modern fashion trends around the world are seen as provocative, probably, because technologies were not in its full development about fifteen years ago. Currently, technology has become a culture across the world transmitting the fastest information through several mediums. However, comparing African fashion and European fashion, western celebrities have shabby dress influence on the African youth so in attempt by the African youth to express their social and cultural identities (Disele, Tyler, & Power, 2011), they imitate the indecent dressing of celebrities which are mostly provocative. On the contrary, technology has influenced contemporary African fashion dress rewardingly in several aspect of clothes surface designing. Agbada, (2009) claims

Nigerians are constantly expressing their social and cultural identities on dress fashion positively by wearing their traditional Yoruba dress type of flowing wide-sleeved robe, usually decorated with embroidery.

The new trend in African dress fashion starts a new direction of innovative fashion trend such that their traditional dress type matches presentably in contemporary times yet still portraying the African identity as they wear such outfit. In the western world, Elung'Ata (2013, p. 15) narrates that:

Though King George II imposed the "Dress Act" in 1746, outlawing all items of Highland dress including kilts with the intent of suppressing highland culture for the next 35 years, during those years it became fashionable for Scottish romantics to wear kilts as a form of protest against the ban.

The act of imposition from the statement above reflects the travail perspective to which unacceptable style of dresses has to birth a new fashion trend. The controversies which surround the decision on highland dress, is being experienced in contemporary times on cross-dressing thus males and females exchange dresses such that the male wears female dresses and vice versa.

In modern perspective, the distinctive dress fashion between male and female is trousers and skirts (Elung' Ata, 2013). Though this is the most obvious division between man and a woman, cross-dressing is presumed as the first recognition globally when during the early 19th century the highland kilt was adopted by Lowlanders and the Scottish Diaspora as a symbol of national identity (MacCorkill, 2011). In most part of the world, the Scottish kilt is adjudged as a cultural deviation because it does not appear appropriate as a male outfit however kilt is exemplified as a type of cross-dress. Meanwhile Elung'Ata (2013, p.13) redresses that

Clothing can reflect modesty or immodesty depending on the situation because the evolution of certain forms of dress as the characteristic style of any era is the same evolutionary process that establishes the customs of dress for different tribal, geographical, social, and age groups called fashion today.

From the perspective of the writers, it can be examined that the kinds of dress fashion used as body adornment is in appropriation with societal and individual preferences which infringes decency and indecency under different cultural background. Therefore, the rules on modest/ decency and immodest/indecent/ provocative dressing are void yet further discussions will unleash understanding on these cultural practices based on scholars' views based on the Christian, Islamic, African and western concepts. However, Ira Meilita, Taufik, AbuBakar, and Muthualagan (2016) believe different societies and cultures have different rules, different mores, laws and moral ideas on decent and indecent dressing.

### ***2.3.2 Decency or Modesty in Dressing***

I believe that when a person puts on a dress or any outfit it is supposed to guarantee the quality that the individual automatically portrays high societal standard for modest, politeness and respect. However, in its true reflection, authorities have pronounced which criterion characterises decency/modesty. Therefore, Haruna (2016, p. 23) explains that:

Modesty is the covering of a person's body according to the code of decency of that person's society. However, Standards of modesty differ among various cultures and situations, and they change over time; by wearing appropriate or inappropriate clothing, people show their acceptance or rejection of their social environment.

The idea of decency as stated by Haruna reflects changing scenes of diverse cultural practices which is unique within societal perimeters, portraying modesty among a group of people. Meanwhile William (2018, p. 254) admits that "modesty has become so bound up with clothing that it is difficult to think the two apart". Therefore, an attempt to critique a particular dress code of an ethnic group, a person would need more education or knowledge about their cultural beliefs, values, norms and practices. No wonder Entwistle (2000, p. 328) cited that "we learn to wear fur or feathers or to despise or avoid

wearing them”. Meaning that cultures revolve around so many circumstances therefore different cultures would have to be understood likewise fashion trends which changes quickly to accommodate different standard of decency. Further interpretations reveal that “the concepts of decency, properness, and appropriateness have the idea that certain body parts are shameful and should therefore be covered” (Inglessis, 2008, p. 8).

By wearing appropriate or inappropriate clothes, the dignity as we regard modesty in dress fashion is relative to the different cultures. Therefore, modesty lies between dress and human body parts that tend to define the standard of decent dressing of a particular culture. Furthermore, William (2018, p. 260) opines that:

When dress becomes habitual in a society whose sense of modesty has also developed to a high degree, the suggestive effect is so great that the bare thought of unclothing the person becomes painful, and we have the possibility of such a phenomenon as mock modesty.

The type of modesty that is being referred by the author can be linked to the Christian and Islamic concept of decency. They believe that certain part of the human body is very sensitive and can arouse sexual desires therefore as a suggestion, Anadi, Egboka, and Aniorobi, (2011) as cited by Akpan (2018, p. 360) advised that “there should be the need to cover appropriately: the stomach, belly, back shoulders, chest and the legs below the knees with a dress”. Yahaya (2013) as cited by Gbadegbe and Mawuli (2013, p. 167) confirms that decent dressing is part of human life, because it elicits respect and protects the person’s dignity. Sometimes the acts of undressing or exposing certain parts of the body publicly elicit shame, which becomes so difficult to quench the psychological trauma. After all “decency and dignity is what is unique in dress sense; not outrageous sheer obscenity and prostituting in tight-fitting, unfitting clothes in the name of fashion” (Abdullahi, and Umar, 2013, p. 19). Also, Zohre, Kamaruddin and Shokouhi, (2016) emphatically pronounce modesty as mode of dress and deportment intended not to encourage sexual attraction or avoidance of sexual attention. Dresses which are worn

describe a lot more of the relationships that exist between the wearer and the purpose the dresses that they wear are intended to achieve. Dresses which portray tight-fitting and unfitting clothes are assumed as a sign of prostituting which tarnishes the dignity of a person. Accordingly, Fatima Centre (2004, p. 3) informs that prostitution dresses that expose the body are dangerous and displeasing to men, defining such a person as being “anti-woman”.

In another development, Mofoluwawo and Oyelade, (2012, p. 86) announces that fashion is “recognised as a good trend when modesty is applied, the principle of dress code in many tertiary institutions is apparently to promote and embrace important values, cleanliness, neatness, modesty and decency”. This has rendered suggestions by some universities to establish rules on students’ appearance. However, dress code disallows freedom of dressing (Freeburg, Workman, and Lentz-Hee, 2010 as cited by Ifedili & Ifedili, 2013, p. 28) abusively. This kind of dress control policies are important but very difficult to initiate. In Ghana, few tertiary institutions, mostly teacher training and nursing training schools are known to follow such dress code with the purpose of creating uniformity and preventing indecent dressing among students. However, Maguette (2011) believes students who are endowed with Kersa decency, especially girls, wear correct and suitable clothes and behave correctly towards teachers and school administration. Vice versa, girls with indecent/immodest/ provocative dress styles are presumed to disrespect teachers and school authorities.

### ***2.3.3 Indecency or Immodest or Provocation in Dressing***

The subject under review is contrary to decency, meaning that indecency reflects a negative or low standard of behaviour by using dress to portray offensiveness, being sexual appellations or indecorous. As a matter of fact, clothe that is not appropriate for a particular occasion or situation is deemed indecent; though being naked necessarily does

not mean indecent dressing especially among married couples in their privacy (Adeboye, 2012 as cited by Gbadegbe & Mawuli, 2013, p. 168). This means that a dress must not necessarily show some exposed parts of the human body before it is considered immodest but the mere fact that it is not the required dress code to an occasion or place makes it inappropriate. Similarly, there is a biblical reference that a guest attended a wedding feast who was inappropriately dressed and was mishandled for wearing the wrong garment (Matthew 22:11-13). In a more provocative sense, Barrand (1996) as cited by Inglessis (2008, p. 9) and Ira Meilita, Taufik, Abu Bakar and Muthualagan (2016) describe indecent dressing as using clothes to deliberately draw attention to one's body in public which is seen contrary to a normal dressing code. The male and female gender in one way is characterised by the kind of dresses they wear. Now society becomes accustomed to a particular dress style to these genders such as trousers for men and skirt for women which is considered normal. In support, Orakwelu (2012) as cited by Ifeoma (2014, p.148) thinks indecent dressing is the act that is against the morality or ethics of a given society, organisation or group. Supposing a woman dresses in a male outfit and vice versa (cross dressing), such dressing is perceived as indecent (not a normal dress code) in certain cultures yet not exposing one's sensitive body parts. This deviation in dress codes are mostly adjudged with the cultural practices of a society as kilt is considered appropriate and decent as men's outfit by Schottisches, but in Ghana, kilt is only decent when it is worn by women as skirt hence it is indecent to be worn by men.

According to Wolfendale (2016, p. 622), men are agents of provocation to the detriment of women clothing regardless of women's stated desires. This measure of indecency is arguable to the fact that a dress is therefore said to be indecent "when it has provocative or stimulating influence on almost all those that happen to view it" (Omede, 2011, p. 229), connoting that "men like women are affected negatively by indecent

dressing whether by means of criticisms or physical abuses because of the absence of dress code” (Ifedili & Ifedili 2013). The idea of dress code cannot be a solution to reducing indecency because in every group, occupation or community, there are certain accepted standard of dress that are considered right, proper and appropriate while other forms of clothing are looked upon as wrong (Ira Meilita et al., 2016, p. 10) especially as Hughes, 2001 as cited by (Free Grace Broadcaster [FGB], 2010, p. 2) declares that no one can deny that much of the clothing available in stores today is scandalously immodest, that modesty has disappeared, dead and buried among the teenagers. These are the tendencies in contemporary times which are revoking traditional values to competing with modern values in the youth due to ready influences mostly fuelled by technology, sometimes through media, making some students to dress in a manner by showing off parts of their bodies and even under wears particularly those of the ladies that need to be covered (Egwim, 2010 as cited by Olorunda, 2018, p. 5).

This attribute that technology in one way or the other has primarily become a culture among humans which is also regarded as the new age of civilisation but this has tremendously been mistaken, reflecting the conditions of uncivilised nature of humans (Obeta & Uwah, 2015, Ifedili & Ifedili 2013), being possessed with immodest dressing in tight dress, figure hugging, sexy clothes, unnecessary jewellery or accessories, bermuda pants, sagging pants, mini skirt, hot pants, tube, pyjamas, and others which are found in higher learning institutions (Ira Meilita et al, 2016). These educational institutions which are presumed as learning centres for creating intellectuals have rather “led to the growing decline in modesty and the increasing spread of negative fashion which underscores the need for a proper dress orientation from the home and the other agents of socialisation” (Schall and Appiah, 2016, p. 28).

Since the societal values have started deteriorating from the most trusted educational institutions, Ira Meilita et al., (2016) and Fayokun, Adedeji & Oyebade, (2009) recount that the loud out and the widespread advocacy for the application of dress codes especially in our higher learning institutions has forced the authorities of certain institutions to enact dress codes to stem the tide and restore high moral standards, integrity and decency. Despite the effort of certain authorities to correct a lot more of the fallen standards in the societal values, Omede (2011) is of the view that there is hardly any tertiary institution in this country that is not faced with this nauseating problem, and further stressed that ways students on campuses particularly, the females dress seductively leaves much to be desired. Hence accounting that the rate at which indecent dressing has sprung virally, Davidson (2012, para 18) cautions that “any attempt to blame only women for their “provocative” dress is only a reinforcement of “stereotypical ideas of a patriarchal culture that blames” women for everything when males are the ultimate consumers of the dress women wear”.

The objection to discredit women as submitted by Davidson (2012) is resting on “cultural, religious and social factors which tend to permit clothing and women’s body parts are sexualised” (Wolfendale, 2016, p. 622) but Egwim (2010) as cited by Olorunda (2008, p. 5) is of the opinion that dresses that show off parts of the body need to be covered to enhance decently dress attitudes among males or females. Interestingly Abdullahi and Umar (2013), and Gollub (2006) as cited by Ibrahim & Haruna (2014, p. 14), believe:

The indecent dressing mode of the youth in our society is a manifestation of inferiority complex baring the truth that females who dress indecently have maladaptive ideas about themselves whether attractive or unattractive and are highly prone to sexual harassment.

This statement explains the “Down theory” which emphasises that “people with low self-esteem and perception will always do things to meet up with others” (Chukwudi

and Gbakorun, 2011, p. 29). Most of all, I reason that the right to be indecent may be distributed equally as influences from modern fashion trends, attitudes of people and culture of a society. Meanwhile, by realising the fact that none of these reasons can widely infest people solely, it gives clue to address that what is termed indecent or immodest or provocative in dressing:

does not always imply that a woman wearing revealing clothing is acting immorally or unlawfully, and does not generally imply that the feeling provoked in a man by a woman's outfit is moral outrage as opposed to arouse them. This does not successfully capture the central meaning behind the concept of provocative dress (Wolfendale, 2016, p. 614).

The issue of indecency or provocative dressing of a person is dicy and unrevealing of the psychological intent of the wearer. But people have the perception that the intension to cause a stare or to draw attention is deliberate. It is otherwise known in the Christian concept of modest and immodest dressing that a wearer's motive does not matter but a doctrine to be followed.

#### ***2.3.4 Christian Concept of Modesty and Provocation in Dressing***

The Christian concept of modesty reflects morality when a dress is unrevealing of a person's body just as revealing certain sensitive part of the body is indecent and perked and geared towards immorality. However general understanding of decent and indecent dressing may also relate to Christian doctrines on dressing and other cultures. The Christian system of beliefs and practices are based on the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Such teachings have standard for Christians regarding clothing and fashion. In order to conform to those standards a Christian is stem as obedient/righteous or otherwise a sinner or law breaker in the concept of indecency. Again, the concept of Christian modesty and provocation is based on biblical teachings and doctrines, as such Elung' Ata (2013, p. 14) reference that "the book of Genesis in the Bible indicate clothes were worn for modesty and later for display and

protective magic”. Among these three fundamentals for using clothes, modesty is the most concern for the study because it has raised so many debates about some traditional and modern dress fashion. Within the context of the book of “Genesis 3:7-10, after Adam and Eve sinned, they made 'coverings' for themselves and Genesis 3:21, The Lord made 'tunics' for them i.e. Adam and Eve” (Ifeoma, 2014, p. 149). This is the first-time dressing as a practice was initiated and/or made known to man and was purposely used as coverage to disguise sensitive parts of the body and to show decency. The context reflects that clothed or covered body gives evidence of modesty while uncovered body reflects immodesty. This phenomenon relates the opinion of Ira Meilita, Taufik, AbuBakar, and Muthualagan, (2016, p. 13) that “decent dressing and indecent dressing can be discussed based on moral theories”.

Zohreh, Kamaruddin and Shokouhi, (2016, p. 236) emphasise that “Jewish, just like Christians also follow biblical practices of modest dressing”. However, “in the Judaic culture modesty is called *tzeni'ut*, *zeni'ut* or *tzniut* (Hebrew) meanings: humility and also the character of being modest; used with regard to the rules of women dress” (Zohreh et al., 2016).

On the other hand, the contentions on the Christian concept of provocation in dressing is found in the biblical passages 1 Timothy and 1 Peter; that immodesty partly results from inappropriate and luxury dress, hair style and adornments. These pointers of Christian immodesty in dressing (luxury dress, hair style and adornments) are still ongoing in contemporary fashion trends that are not nearing to seizure. This is confirmed by Crank (2002) as cited by Zohreh, Kamaruddin and Shokouhi, (2016, p. 251) that “fashion is what majority of Christians seem to follow today which typically lead them to immodesty, while the minority of them only tries to dress modestly”. This gives reasons to believe that Christians find it difficult to follow this religious dress practice so

when given the option they make a different choice which is regarded as immodest.

Weiss, (2009) as cited by Latifah (2015, p. 44) concern that:

in 1 Corinthians 11:5, biblical text admonishes that it becomes immodest when a woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head, it is just as though her head were shaved just as head covering is one of the key rationalisations that protects the woman's sexual modesty in the society.

It looks as if head covering is one of the acts of worship for Christians and Muslims. Islamic women are required strictly to cover the head and face appropriately in order to perform ablutions. This virtue also reads for Christian women in prayer or prophecy.

I have analysed that the Christian practice of modesty has stayed uncompromised or rather, other cultures have either gotten influenced or have adopted the Christian dress concept or be regarded as immodest just as diplo dress fashion have suffered several critiques. Little is known of the Christian influences on Islamic modest and immodest dressing but a dive into it may probably recount a clue.

### ***2.3.5 Islamic Concept of Modesty and Immodesty/ Provocation in Dressing***

The Islamists just as Christians are indoctrinated based on the teachings of Mohammed as laid in the Quran. The teachings require every Muslim to live with the values of Islam in all aspects of life especially in dressing. Unfortunately, in academia, much scholarly attention is currently being paid to the issue of Islamic dress for women according to Salem (2013) as cited by Latifah (2015, p. 3). Perhaps Islamic scholars did not have any concern regarding Islamic dress practices to be put into writing or it is 'haram' to pronounce negative of any Islamic dress practice. According to Zohreh, Kamaruddin and Shokouhi (2016, p. 230)

Modesty does not belong to any specific culture but today it has become the subject of intense scrutiny in the Islamic context. Islamic teachings consider modesty in all behaviours and practices including in dress, which involves the wearing of the veil. Islamic teachings on modesty/ decent dressing require that women and men appearing in public must adhere to a mandatory dress code.

Women's dress especially must be loose fitting and cover their heads, necks, arms and legs all year round (Amnesty international, 2010, p. 3 & Aziz, 2010, p. 128).

To an extent, Akou (2010) believes that “the practice of modesty or covering known as ‘hijab’ has become one of the most visible and controversial elements of Islamic practice in the twenty-first century. Because the hijab conceals the hair and neck and usually has a face veil that covers the face which is believed that Muslims hide behind such dress code to disguise their faces from recognition whiles engaged in all sort of criminal activities. Siraj (2011, p. 716) argues that:

the hijab as an embodiment of modesty is related to spatial relations: it offers women the opportunity to assert themselves in religious practice and allows them to integrate within society, but it can also be seen to restrict women's mobility and freedom in public spaces.

When a Muslim woman fails to use the hijab, she is regarded as indecently dressed however she does not have any identity belonging to the Islamic community. Family members and the Authorities in such vicinity do not take it lightly with such an indecently dressed person; she can be disowned. The phenomenon as supported by Siraj (2011, p. 724) regards that although “the ‘dupatta’ was regarded as a sign of modesty in South Asian dress, it left the hair exposed and therefore it did not meet the correct requirements of modest dress in Islam”. However, the opposite of hijab could be referred as dupatta. On the other hand, “some Muslim women who use hijab testify that it causes men to respect them the more” (Sanghani, 2014, para. 13).

The Islamic concept of immodesty or provocative dressing focuses on the wearing of “clothes that do not cover the body in a descent manner” (Ira Meilita, Taufik, Abu Bakar, and Muthualagan, 2016, p. 11). Giving in example, Abdullahi and Umar (2013, p.18) and Hilal (2012, p. 2) refer that:

based on discussions in print and electronic media and even at Islamic gatherings, the dressing of young Muslim girls leaving their bodies scarcely covered, skimpy

and designed to be very low in height and to show their shoulders and the top part of their breasts is outrageous, demeaning, profane, obscene and obnoxious.

Also, “some journalists simply describe such Muslim girls as under dressed in décolleté dress, backless, chemise and very tight-fitting attires that manifest all features of a Muslim girl” (Abdullahi and Umar, 2013, p. 18). This level of indecency as far as Islamic principle of modesty is concerned is unusual of Muslim girls especially with such attitude which attracts all sorts of punishments. Evidences by Amnesty international (2010, p. 3) revealed that:

in Iran this misbehaviour is regarded as a violation of the dress code, which are criminalised under Article 638 of the Islamic Penal Code which states that “anyone who offends public decency will be sentenced to imprisonment from 10 days to two months or to up to 74 lashes”

The issue of Islamic concept of immodest dressing is taken as a real deal in Islamic countries such that human right abuses are so great to safeguard this religious principle. Again, Markosian (2011, p. 22) shares that “some Islamic men of the Islamic high council started approaching women, publicly shaming them for violating Islamic modesty laws and handing out brochures with detailed descriptions of appropriate Islamic dress for females”.

My suggestion is that the action by Islamic men shaming indecently dressed women is dehumanising and inappropriate approach to such sensitive issues. Meanwhile, this approach seems more convincing to curing such misbehaviour. On the contrary, giving out brochures has a slimmer guarantee of appropriating indecent dressing especially with the large number of African-Islamic populace who cannot read. However, this appears more decorous in handling issues of this nature which appear more western. Generally, Islamic concept of modesty and provocation in dressing strikes a balance with most African concept of dress fashion and is mostly handled more aggressively and radically.

### ***2.3.6 African Concept of Decency and Provocation in Dressing***

Africanism relates as a characteristic bond with African cultural beliefs, customs and values inseparably. The uniqueness of African ethnicity is diverse in history and practices of decency and indecency in dress fashion. Almost all countries in Africa fashioned their clothing from the skins of animals and cloth made from pounded tree bark (Chingono, 2015). This innovation began the first step of using natural materials from the environment as clothes by both males and females to cover their bodies and a sign that the African society is founded on moral values which reflects decent dressing. According to Hansen (2014, p.4) “women’s shoulders and their private parts which includes the thighs as defined by African culture should not be exposed because they are very sensitive to arouse sexual desires”. This idea explains the fact that African concept of modesty may include different forms of dressing with the exception of the private region which should be covered appropriately; sometimes the breast is either covered or left bare. Quaicoo and Opoku-Mensah (2017, p. 13) opine that “bare-chested dress fashion is a pre-colonial Ghanaian classic style that has influenced cosmopolitan dress whether formally educated or not”. I wish to reference that the bare-chested dress fashion style is a cultural distinction of the people of Krobo in Ghana which is regarded as a cultural symbol of chastity, practiced in the Dipo rite and it is not classified as indecent dressing. Not all African cultures recognise ‘bare-chest’ of cultural members as decent dressing; it may depend on the cultural practice involved. According to Omede (2011, p. 228):

the African culture and particularly that of Nigeria encourage modesty in appearance as do the Christian and Islamic religions where the larger population of these youths claim to be worshipping God but modest is diversified in each school of thoughts.

The assertion from the statement above shows that although the Africans practice their own concept of modest dressing, the Christian and Islamic influences on them have

also shown different directions of modest dressing which deviate the African cultural values.

I have realised that the African concept of indecent/ immodest dressing is diverse within different cultural practices. In Ghana, for instance, among the Krobo, during the Dipo rite, when a Dipo girl wears attire/ dress with breast covered instead of being exposed for the ceremony, culturally, it is considered indecent/inappropriate. Meanwhile Maguette (2011, p. 58) states that:

in Senegal, girls dressing is very restricted and sensitive such that just by showing one's arms or legs, it is considered indecent which is subjected to a lot of critiques from elders and religious leaders, indicating that girls who are wearing inappropriate clothes are therefore consistently sent home.

The reaction therefore confirms that indecent dressing in some African countries was due to the patriarchal system which bounced on the suffrage of women (Hagan, 2010 as cited by Chingono, p. 153). However, in contemporary times:

this has transcended to the use of dress as a tool to communicate messages of resistance and rebellion throughout many higher institutions in Nigeria and across Africa. Hence current African generations (youths) have misinterpreted this demonstration to making indecent dressing become the emblem of modernity (Abanyam, 2013, p. 26, Abdullahi and Umar, 2013, p. 15 & Olorunda, 2018, p.4).

Despite the effort of such demonstrators, the action sometimes results in female empowerment in Africa, lifting a bit of the patriarch system burdening the young African women. Meanwhile, this is different from the Dipo dress fashion. Because the level of indecency is degrading the cultural heritage of some countries, Amnesty International (2010, p.3) reported that "in Sudan, indecent or immoral dress under Article 152 is punishable by law in the criminal act of 1991 (In the case of journalist Lubna Hussein)".

Altogether, I share the sentiment that the concept of African modesty and immodesty are found as different cultural perspective among different ethnic groups and tribes. Therefore, it is difficult to put them under the same standard of decency or provocation so as the western concept of modest and immodest dressing. But in

contemporary times, some African cultures have shown distinct harm/ abuse of human right on members by the type of dress styles worn. However, the western values are matched as the standard measure which adjudges African dress fashion practices. Therefore, some cultures are categorised as appropriate and inappropriate based on the cultural dress code.

### ***2.3.7 Western Culture of Decency and Provocation in Dressing***

The western concept of dressing decently or provocatively in my view is dicey, but in practice, the purposes to be achieved by a particular dress code/style tend to either make it appropriate or inappropriate. My assertion is that this western culture cannot be predicted just as the African concept of dressing. An attempt to categorise certain kinds of dress code or pattern of dressing as decent and indecent is a wrong way to understand this western concept. Wolfendale (2016, p. 622) admits that “in Western culture, there are many contexts in which revealing and tight-fitting clothing and even nudity is not sexualised, such as during drawing classes with nude models, and at dance rehearsals, swimming classes and the gym”.

In most cases, dresses that show the nudity of wearers, based on the Christian and Islamic concept of dressing are condemned as provocative and a form of showing sexuality. Meanwhile western concept revokes this religious doctrine. The activity of models, dancers, swimmers and trainers requires them to engage smartly and swing easily hence tight-fitting clothing becomes ideal dress code to achieve maximum level of training. Amnesty International (2010, p. 2) recorded that:

Russian President Ramzan Kadyrov called for women to dress modestly, in line with tradition, and to wear a headscarf whiles School girls over the age of ten (10) and female students at higher educational establishments have been obliged to wear headscarves or face expulsion.

Unlike Wolfendale, the report by Amnesty International informs of an existed western traditional custom of decency which appears stricter such that the hairs on the head are covered. This custom is revisited to attest that modern concept of decency also includes nudity but in a context. However, the concept of western decency or modest dressing is of two schools of thoughts, which reflects that, west Europeans are flexible on their values on dresses which they consider indecent but in east European countries, especially Russia, Markosian (2011, p. 3) describes that:

the mere refusal to wear a headscarf or for dressing in a manner which these men deemed insufficiently modest, women were subjected to attacks by men, including law enforcement officials while much delight is given to only women wearing headscarves.

This was how in the west-European countries, women's dress reflected their submissive role to males during the period in which patriarchy rule dominated as social system. But women rebelled against male rulemaking way to the acculturation of the dress culture in the world's sphere (Chingono, 2015, p. 153).

The aftermath of the rebellion resulted in a new dawn of dress fashion concept which considered the east-European modest dressing rather immodest by west-Europeans because it causes loss of freedom just as Muslim women in the hijab (Carland, 2011). On the contrary east-Europeans concept of immodest dressing reflected the exposure of one's body or any dress that induces sexual enticement and is against their tradition. In a study, Clark and Casey (2012, p. 12) recount that "a survey prepared for the Vermont governor's prevention of domestic and sexual violence task force in England concluded that women who wear tight to revealing clothing are inviting sexual comments or advances".

The statement above is reinforced by McLeod (2010, para 3) on the premise of "attribution theory, which reads that short dresses, provocative appearance and skimpy dresses are responsible to women for their sexual assaults and experiences of sexual harassment". This indication interprets that dresses which are short, tight etc. on the wearers body as well as revealing some sensitive parts of the body is provocative or

indecent, however “influencing the Southern American continent especially Brazil, which a study proves that women who wear tight-fitting clothes are attacked” (Astrid & Neher, 2014, para. 2). Another conception of indecent dressing in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century refer women who wear high heels and corset as passive sexual objects by the male (Ott & Mack, 2010 as cited by Chingono, p. 155). From the above, it can be deduced that the western concept of clothing and fashion have connotative meanings which is quite different from African clothing and fashion which reflects the traditional custom of the people. Therefore, the western and African concepts of clothing and fashion have different stems.

Notwithstanding, the issues on classical and contemporary Western concept of decency that looked down on women, to Africans, it may represent symbolism in cultural practices. In either way, western immodest dressing which was meant to correct this bias on women has failed, subjecting women to several sexual abuses because unlike African concept of immodest dressing it has no societal relevance.

#### **2.4.0 Clothing and Fashion in Africa**

The meaning of clothing and fashion vary among people depending on different beliefs and values. “People, who share the same or similar beliefs and values as others can understand the same meaning of what clothing and fashion can convey” (Alexandersson & Matlak, 2017, p. 6). This is largely dependent on the cultural settings of the people involved and how clothing and fashion is useful in their everyday activities. For Shoko (2013, p. 451) clothing in different cultures also “shapes the traditional beliefs of people and the roles they play as well as giving them identity”. Generally, Kodzoman (2019, p. 9) believes that:

Clothing serves many purposes: it protects the wearer by enhancing safety; it protects by providing a barrier between the skin and the environment; it can insulate against cold or hot conditions; it can provide a hygienic barrier also

wearing clothes is a social norm. It may also function as a form of adornment and an expression of personal taste or style.

Kodzoman (2019) statement reflects functional purposes of clothing in both classical and contemporary times. That means the essence of clothing in Africa has traditional and western influences. This makes clothing and textile products very lucrative once they enter into a market. Their value is mainly determined by the taste and understanding of the buyer. Likewise, the product's aesthetic qualities, functionality, ritual history or status as souvenir attracts the buyer (Akinbileje, 2014). However, this ascendancy reflects a dynamic fashion industry which is emerging in Africa and described as 'fashion's new frontier' (Jennings, 2011 as cited by Langevang, 2016, p. 2). Hansen (2014, p. 2) emphasizes that "in several countries in West Africa, distinct regional dress styles that are the products of long-standing textile crafts in weaving, dyeing, printing etc. today co-exist with dress styles introduced during the colonial period and after".

A host of cloths and dress from Africa relate with countries and tribes in the following; the Ukara cloth of the Igbo, Abomey appliqués of the Dahomey Kingdom thus now known as the republic of Benin (Akinbileje, 2014, p. 629). There are popular styles considered in West Africa also which includes:

the *boubou* (a loose robe made from a single piece of fabric and with a neck opening, worn both by men and women), the *kaftan* (a straight tunic adopted from Arab culture) and the *kaba* (a two- or three-piece women's dress that consists of a Western inspired sewn blouse, sewn or wrapped skirt, and an unsown cloth used as a second wrapper or head gear).. The *smock*, worn by Ghanaian men, is a loose fitted shirt made from hand-loomed strips of fabric. It originated in northern Ghana and is, together with the *kente cloth* (associated with the Akan kingdom), considered Ghana's national dress. (Langevang, 2016, p. 20).

In East Africa, "*kitenge* and *gomesi* is considered a national dress for Ugandan women whiles *kikoi* and *kangas* are used by Kenya and Zanzibar" (Langevang, 2016, p. 21). In contemporary fashion trends, African cloth and textiles designers are often seen collecting clothing materials from different sources to be used for dresses which are later

paraded at fashion shows both locally and internationally. The metaphors and ensigns of cloth and clothing, expressed in their form and colour, are not limited to the traditional milieu, but are expressed in contemporary institutions (Adesanya, 2005 as cited by Akinbileje, 2014, p. 632). Also, the contemporary imported second-hand clothing in Africa plays an active role in this process by providing stylistic components that are incorporated into new tailor-made designs (Grabski 2010) as cited Hansen (2014, p. 3). However, the desire for second-hand clothing has changed from being a need to a “new look” dress aesthetic that plays itself out in everyday life (Hansen, 2014, p. 5). The transitions and trends in African clothing and fashion show the intent of using clothes to express culture. Therefore the various influences and transformations restructure African clothing and fashion to perpetuate from generations to generations, sometimes showing instances of unity and disunity by the various external influences.

#### ***2.4.1 African Clothing and Fashion Expressionism***

The talk about African clothing and fashion expressionism vary in terms of cultural interactions and responses that are communicated through cloths and dresses produced using indigenous means and/or by Africans. According to Dzrmedo (2009, p. 35),

cloth plays a dominant role in the cultural life of the African, relating to social, religious, political and economic life therefore cloth indicates social status and wealth within the African communities whiles its artistry expresses what is associated with vital occasions and ceremonies.

In terms of social status, the type of Kente cloth worn by the Asante-hene (King of the Asante kingdom) distinguishes him from his subordinates. Also, clothes distinguish elites from their slaves likewise uniforms distinguish teachers from students. Hence the respect and prestige accorded these separate classes of people are determined by their outfit. Also, in constructing Kente, the intricacy and complexity of design affect the

pricing and sales. Therefore, whoever patronises these cloths based on the intricacy and complexity of designs is presumed as wealthy. This describes cloths as the “visual expression of complex social differentiation found around man, by man and for man” (Röschenthaler, 2015, p. 629).

In terms of artistry, I wish to emphasise that cloths are made up of elements and principles of design that follow particular arrangement styles and guidelines to establish their beauty and creativity which echoes the facts by Röschenthaler (2015, p. 705) that:

Malian fancy cloth is composed of a basic design available in a few colours that act as the background on which further images are arranged; these can include names, proverbs, logos and photographs that expresses ideas or thoughts about someone, occasion or a business.

The motifs in the Malian cloths show the designs which communicates effectively to the audience. These motifs in cloths have now become the modern ways of advertising products or services and portraying traditional ideas in textiles. Also, Meyer (1994) as cited by Dzramedo, (2009, p. 37) makes known that:

African textiles are sourced mostly from wood barks and are highly colourful and disregards that fabrics are not purposed only to body protection against climate but to express the prestige of dignitaries, to enable them stand out of the crowd.

My personal survey with cloth sellers is that natural sources of cloths production are characterised as strong and authentic products produced using indigenous methods and processes which makes cloths very expensive. Dignitaries (influential people) may be regarded as the elite class in the community, they demand quality, unique and expensive cloths that befit their status because locally produced woven ‘batakari’ and kente type of clothing symbolises respect sophistication and social advancement which act as an instrument to push and realise influences on people (Röschenthaler, 2015 and Suriano, 2008).

In colonial times, African clothing and fashion sense took a new turn in expressionism. During this era, “British colonialism fashion was used by urban youths to

articulate their agency and to re-establish a negotiation over African tradition by copying the colonial fashion styles for their identity” (Suriano, 2008, p. 110). Also, “Christians and Muslims, elite and non-elite creatively appropriated Western clothes in order to express new identities and aspirations and foster social changes to bring about political transformations” (Suriano, 2008, p. 95). This indeed regards clothing as a societal icon that seeks to transfer knowledge of the past to present and adapts easily to new trends.

In the post-colonial era, the urgency by Africans to reclaim power from their colonial masters resorted in the use of African clothing and fashion to restore power according to Biney (2011) as cited by Quaicoo (2015, p. 32), identifying Batakari as Kwame Nkrumah’s (Ghana first president) choice for independence declaration which symbolised the “common man” and celebrated indigenous styles during a time when Western-style dress was enormously popular.

Also, the emergence of fashion design in contemporary times, offers insights into “the cultural construction of Africans and the significance of dress as a tool for negotiating shifting control to define identities and traditions” (Rovine, 2009, p. 61). Throughout African Fashion, Global Style, African designers have become innovative by using their garments for ‘storytelling’ and has become the standardised signature of African fashion in the twenty first century, expressing what is genuinely African (Hahn, 2017 and Dzamedo, 2009). I believe the clothes/dresses which African fashion designers portray are western imitated patterns except that the African fabrics used have symbolic designs that express African beliefs, ideas and values which make it a perfect match accessory of African touch.

On the other hand, African clothing and fashion currently expresses a “self-outlook of which Ghanaian fashion designer Osborn Boateng explicitly references his African heritage collection entitled "Ashanti Hip Hop" which he has drawn from his own

experience of African identity rather than African traditional symbols” (Rovine, 2009, p. 61). Boateng’s dress collections become his concept of African fashion revealing a transition from traditional and modern trends to a more personalised style.

Generally, African clothing and fashion has shifted from traditional proverbial way of expressing to a boundless expression in terms of designing in the 21st century. This gives the indication that classical societal trends have outlived its usefulness yet it is still represented by the traditional wax print cloths, traditional woven cloths (smock, kente etc.) as textile products showing resistance to change completely despite revolutions in surface designs and fashion trends. However, in newness, African clothing and fashion express personal feelings.

#### ***2.4.2 Impervious Nature of African Clothing and Fashion***

One of the stem characteristics of African clothing and fashion is its quality of not being impenetrable. In spite of the changing scenes of civilization in Africa, the new trends in African clothing and fashion have modern creativity and distinctiveness. Most traditional African cloths have varying degrees of socio-economic status and an asset commodity in the societies that predates to colonial times (Clark 1994, Dogbe 2003 as cited by Bowles, 2016, p. 55). The indication however is that African clothing and fashion dates back to pre-colonial times in terms of the originality in African wax prints, dyed fabrics, woven fabrics, knitted fabrics with decorative African details and dresses. In support, Rovine (2011, p. 58) reveals that “kente, kaba and embroidery is firmly rooted in precedent, a style that reaches far back into the past yet whose meanings and forms reflect changing influence”. The royal kente, like any other originated cloth from Africa has ceased not to change because of how they are hyped (Barfuo, 1993 as cited by Dzramedo, 2009, p. 35). In Ghana, during the colonial and independence times:

an incorporated *kente-kaba* were revolutionary as a popular stylish and nationalistic forms of attire for women, particularly for special events. The merge of traditional cloth and contemporary fashion style ascribe how changing trends sustain African clothing and fashion (Richards, 2016, p. 19).

Accordingly, *kente*, which is distinctly a Ghanaian clothe is now a new symbolic affirmation of African identity and Pan-African unity especially among the African-Americans (Clarke, 2002 as cited by Dzamedo, 2009, p.35). However, “African fashion cycles have been driven historically by ongoing innovation and change, as well as a constant reinterpretation and negotiation of various external influences” (Sylvanus, 2015, p. 246). In sustaining African clothing and fashion, it becomes a battle of influences between old and new trends. Sometimes traditional concepts are lost or altered in order to reinstate the new mode in clothing and fashion. Nonetheless this becomes appropriate for the African youth to appreciate African tradition which is given in support by Sylvanus (2015, p. 245) that *kente-kaba* and Malian embroidered tunics which exemplified as:

new approach in Modern day African textiles was spear-headed by fashion designers on the continent who are constantly reinventing local materials and forms with specific reference to classical African designs but with references from global fashion systems.

“Conceptual African designs implicitly invoke African forms and histories as they travail in garments with no recognisable stylistic substrates but imbued the quality of African design” (Sylvanus 2015, p. 245). These conceptual designs found on African wax print fabrics are printed to instil cultural symbols and meanings to Africans in sustaining African values. Therefore, with “the introduction of Friday wear in Ghana, the idea to celebrate African traditional clothes, have more local content in terms of fabric and accessories with international appeal which puts a stamp on the fashion map globally” (Amankwah, Howard & Sarpong, 2012, p. 573). Another remedy which is sustaining African clothing and fashion is fashion runways. According to (Rovine, 2011) they are

now an assured method that provides insights into the continued importance of traditional practices as well as the primacy of innovation in Malian embroidery fashion and other African fashion trends.

It is obvious that modern innovations which include fashion runways add new flavour to African fashion. In the sense that quality African designs and motifs that express traditional values are exhibited in weird modern trends that abuses the message traditional fabrics are communicating. Notwithstanding, the modern innovations have made African clothing and fashion popular and in demand.

I hereby emphasise that African everlasting powers on clothing and fashion is hinged on modern technology and practices and the willingness of Africans to allow traditions to be influenced productively to embrace change.

#### ***2.4.3 Convergence and Divergence of African Clothing and Fashion***

In whatever ways African clothing and fashion is being perceived or portrayed, I believe sources of its originality and external influences as innovations come together as an accepted culture yet they seem paradoxical. In the first encounter, Dzamedo (2009, p. 39) pushes this agenda clearer; “fashion has more of European-oriented concept than African; nonetheless, it will still be a fallacy to say that forms of fashion never existed within the continent before European intrusion”. However, McLeod (1981) cited by Dzamedo (2009, p. 37) believes African fashion existed on variations in clothing based on rank and activities upon which indigenous Africans were engaged. Meanwhile, Newell (2012) is of the view that European concept of fashion attached to the African clothing and fashion was a brainwashing mechanism to write off African culture (destroyed authentic African culture). But Rovine (2009, p. 46) concludes that “traditional African styles and fashionable Africanism by international designers construct one another”. This

gives reasons to believe that traditional fashion is dynamic and keeps changing over the years (Dzramedo, 2009).

In my candid view, the dynamism in African clothing and fashion is a result of modernism which has altered some traditional customs such that immodest dress attitudes are exhibited by the younger generations of Africans as fashion trends.

Also, among the West African sub-region, Islamic influences were paramount in clothing and textiles such that in the northern sector of Ghana, a distinctive talisman on traditional smocks was propelled (Phillips, 1995) as cited by Dzramedo (2009, p. 39). This gives the idea that African fashion is a copy of foreign styles because African designers lack formal fashion training (Amankwah, Howard & Sarpong, 2012 and Jennings). I second the above statement in the light that lack of education is the reason for the misappropriation of fashion trends and no wonder evidences show that fashion forward Ivoirian youths don't really understand fashion at all because of that their dress up doesn't conform to traditional or western semblance (Newell, 2012).

Again, "Ghanaian based fashion designer, Osborn Boateng presented his own version of Africa designs, an urban, cosmopolitan style that does not depend on explicit reference to forms associated with traditional cultures" (Rovine, 2009, p. 61). Hahn (2017, p. 218) shares in Osborn Boateng's view for the reason that African fashion is about the recognition of innovations which relay with the opinions of Röschenhaler (2015) and Suriano (2008) that generally we have failed to understand that the present-day meaning of African clothing, offers variety of reforms which should not be an issue because it gives rise to a continuous process of re-conceptualisation of 'modernity', re-appropriating and manipulating the use of foreign fashions. Either way, African clothing is significant in contemporary times just as classical times only that the values which seeks to be achieved has been reformed in each dispensation. This gives a bridge of

paradox on African clothing and fashion which portrays that currently, the ideas of modern fashion trends which are not appropriated accordingly through the African traditions have become a global influence and holding control of 21<sup>st</sup> century fashion trends significant to the African youths who patronise them unfeverishly.

### **2.5.0 The Significance of African Cultural Values on Clothing and Fashion**

The word 'Culture' has evolved under several school of thoughts regarding civilization of a particular time and place. However, Taylor (1871) as cited by Idang (2015, p. 98) and Lusting & Koester, (1999) as cited by Daramola & Oyinade (2015, p. 32) regards culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs or any other capabilities and habits acquired or learned by man and relatively shared to affect large group of people of a society. These habits shape “the behaviour, ideas, values and attitude of people who are bound together by environment, language and location through education, observation and exposure to establish such enlightenment” (Solo-Anaeto and Babafemi, 2015, p. 40).

Most of all, African culture relates to “the beliefs, customs, traditions, practices and behaviours of different people in human groups or tribes within the African continent” (Solo-Anaeto and Babafemi, 2015, p. 40). Unfortunately the rich African culture that needs to be proud of has suffered infiltrations by foreign cultures through non- patronage of local materials, globalisations and modernisation, altering cherished values which are affecting the African social structure that continues to erode the African fabric that brought people together (Daramola & Oyinade, 2015 and Olorunda, 2018). Alternatively, “modern technology by means of social media has served as a channel to display and introduce users to different ethnicity/cultures as well as sustain these ethnic and cultural values and strengthen the ties between users from the same ethnicity” (Solo-Anaeto and Babafemi, 2015, p. 41) which presents that communication through clothes

will be founded in the shared values and knowledge between people Campbell (1997) as cited by Alexandersson and Matlak (2017, p. 5).

Generally, Dress expresses “the culture of people and socially sets humans apart from other living species” (Shoko, 2013, p. 451). And is one of the “basic needs of man, there are absolutely no spheres of human activity in which African values and life styles can be clearly reflected than the cloths we wear” (Abanyam, 2013, p. 27). This classifies clothing and fashion as purposeful to the cultural values of the people. Throughout ages indigenous African fabrics have typically reflected traditional beliefs and cultures of the ethnic groups they originate from, giving reasons to believe that Ghanaians are reasserting their African identity in contemporary times by patronising local fabrics and fashionable dresses (Patrick, 2005 and Olshin, 2006 as cited by Dogoe (2013, p.8, 9) which threads that various influences on African clothing and fashion are significant despite other attributes which shows negative effects such as the replacement of traditional values with modern values. Thanks to fashion policies and modern interventions fashion runways, the significant values of clothing and fashion is revamped.

### ***2.5.1 Purpose of the Cultural Significance and Values of African Clothing and Fashion***

African clothing has been anticipated objectively as functional in use. In this regard, the uniqueness of African clothing and fashion is based on its construction, designing and adornment which is guided by beliefs and values that propel some traditional practices significantly to achieve understanding and the meaning of messages which clothing and fashion are being used to convey, giving identity to a group of people (Barnard, 2014 as cited by Alexanderson & Matlak, 2017, p. 6). This attributes African clothing and fashion as one of the mediums that is used in ensuring the continuity of African culture. Therefore, the urge to make African culture everlasting according to

Akinbileje (2014, p. 632), formed the basis to which indigenous and contemporary production of “cloths and textiles have turned to a scroll where the socio-cultural map of Africa can be viewed and enjoyed; they often document the historical and symbolic past and also serve as a reference point to the world”.

References point cloths as products of African textiles with indigenous materials, techniques and pattern of designs originated by either Africans or African societies for the purpose of carrying culturally constructed meaning that also resides in clothes, dresses and to mediate social values or culture (McCracken, 1986 cited by Katende, 2013 and Manwa, Ndamba & Jinga, 2013). By unfolding the keys (that is materials, techniques and pattern of designs) of African textiles, Twigg (2009, p.13) agrees that “cloths reflects current social and cultural concerns about the African history, beliefs, proverbial symbols and practices which act as agents and medium through which African cultural values are maintained in contemporary times and are made known to the world”.

Also, Clothes and fashion are referred as nonverbal communication of values and norms which fashion exchanges these values and norms with cultural members that can even be regarded as signifier of the culture from which values stem (Barnard, 1996 as cited by Katende, 2013, p. 53).

Sometimes, African values are communicated in proverbial symbols and colours of clothes that are represented as surface designs on African textile products which cultural members would have to draw meaning and interpret accordingly. However:

dresses are used to structure behavioural values that characterise the attitudes and lifestyle of a family which are reflected in their children such that they are able to comprehend and accept gendered dress codes communicated by their parents regarding societal expectations for males and females (Manwa, Ndamba and Jinga, 2013, p. 181).

Once cultural members are able to share these cultural values and knowledge, communication is successful from one generation to another hence perpetuating the African cultural heritage (Campbell, 1997 as cited by Alexandersson and Matlak, 2017).

The statement above correlates that only the persistence of traditional values is predicted to make modern values sustainable and that traditional values will continue to exert an independent influence on the cultural changes (Ajani, 2012) as cited by Akinbileje, 2014, p. 630). Furthermore, Perani and Wolff (1999) as cited by Akinbileje (2014, p. 630) denotes that:

the Dogon people of Mali cherish their traditional cloth so much that ‘to sell the family’s cloth is to sell the family’s value whiles the Yoruba will say “eniyan’aso mi” also equating the value of cloth to human beings.

This implies that “clothing and fashion are powerful tools with cultural significance that helps to rationalise in working towards development in Africa” (Musso, 2012, p.15).

The socio-economic importance of entrepreneurship by some fashion designers have brought about cultural change in African clothing and fashion which reflects contemporary societal values (Langevang, 2016, p. 30). Some African traditional values have shifted from societal demands in contemporary times reflecting Hansen (2014) and Omoyele (2016) stance that individuals and groups who use clothing are seeking not to break the African values and traditions by the expectations of the society and its moral convictions but as practices to advance different cultural viewpoints about the body and human values. The indication however is that traditional cultural values are gradually altering whiles modern values emerges. Supporting this claim, Eicher and Ross (2010) as cited by Musso (2012, p. 69) references that;

under ‘Banda’, strict rules around dress were enforced to honour conservative values that women’s thighs were erotic so any tight clothing including shorts and skirts that revealed women’s curves was not allowed in public as this was viewed to be obscene.

The assertion made from the above statement reflects negative influences on clothing which cracks the ideal significant influences which clothing and fashion is

predestined to achieve on African cultural values. That is to example that “concealing nakedness is an indicator of good Tswana cultural values of dress” (Disele, Tyler, and Power, 2011, p.12).

Despite the fact that clothing and fashion are seeking new methods and styles in order to exist, I believe the African traditional practices and modern values act as a check and balance on each other regarding the appropriateness of fashion trends to meet contemporary demands. The correlative phenomenon shows significant influences on African cultural values on clothing and fashion.

### ***2.5.2 The Significant Influence of African Cultural Values on Clothing and***

#### ***Fashion***

Personally, I consider African traditional values (perhaps the most important of all aspects of the African socio-cultural system) as one of the sustaining powers to traditional clothing and fashion practices in contemporary times; which commonly emphasises that the significance to the African cultural values among the criteria of aesthetic value and judgment are appropriate in clothing to occasions and ceremony (Gyekye, 2002 as cited by Awoniyi, 2015, p. 10). This is recounted when people wearing traditional dresses whether frequently or infrequently are referred as aesthetics, pleasure and hedonism, ethical values, spirituality and religiosity, self-esteem, ancestral mystical values, social status and an expression of African self-identity (Diop & Merunka, 2013, p.8). This makes the traditional dress styles adopted, liable to the values of a particular culture or group. Hence traditional dress styles become influential for cultural transformation (Kuma-Kpobee, Power and Otieno, 2008). Similarly, Disele, Tyler and Power (2011) emphasised that, “Botswana’s transformation across the broad spectrum, embrace their cultural values through dress which distinguishes them from other nations”. This poised the understanding that traditional influences on clothing and fashion, is

directly relational to the meaning which clothes or dresses convey and proportional in demand or rejection within a particular dispensation.

Largely, African cultural belief system influences the choice of dress so that the dress code in a particular society can be easily identified with people in a community who share common values (Manwa, Mdamba & Manwa, 2010). Instances of this sort can be identified with kente cloth of the Ashantes and smock dress of the northerners from Ghana. However, the Ghanaians consumption patterns have grossly affected their attitudes towards kente and smock dresses in contemporary times. Also, the major transformation influenced by cultural values is significant because it's present males and females modesty under cultural symbolisms which gives them distinction from infancy.

In contemporary times, the symbolism of traditional values guiding African clothing and fashion have global contention of which Solo-Anaeto and Babafemi (2015) infers that social media are filled with western-based ideas, values and culture which is deepening the eroding of African culture, even to the point of threatening their existence. The innovation diffusion theorists bare a reciprocal of the above statement that “modern practices will invade traditional practices with new innovations adopted and spread based on individuals’ perceptions, values and culture depending on the level of acculturation” (Dogoe, 2013, p. 14). The effect according to Disele, Tyler, and Power (2011, p. 6) proves that “traditional dress changes and undergoes transformation over time, as is the case with values and forms of culture but the traditional dress styles may be authenticated to the values of a particular culture or group”.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, global fashion turned to innovation with African traditional dress concepts which tend to boost local textiles and the fashion industry which agrees with the claims by Nwauzor (2017, p.9) that “the influence of urbanisation and the influence of different cultures is a positive thing because clothing in different cultures

also shapes the traditional beliefs of people and the roles they play as well as giving them identity”.

The premises drawn by the statement above is more debatable than the writer seems to put across. Because African identity is obvious in cultural practices and belief system therefore the idea is that once different cultural influences are shaping the traditional identity of a group, by way of clothing and fashion it fosters as a negative effect on African cultural value sitting on the edge of alteration.

The researcher has realised that traditional cultural values were significant influence on African clothing and fashion although this system still keeps the African culture and its practices alive, in contemporary times, it couldn't stand modern values infestation.

### ***2.5.3 Negative Effects of Clothing and Fashion on African Cultural Values***

The dissident outcome of modern-day clothing and fashion practices is battling with the traditional cultural values on clothing and fashion. These values are very important because they are the formidable guide that seeks to battle the sustainability of African customs in contemporary times. Therefore, “any negative impact on cultural values would be a case where fashion would not be applicable for development” (Musso, 2012, p.16). But Manwa, Ndamba and Jinga, (2013, p. 179) reframes that, “it is not the case in contemporary times, because the emphasis is on fashion rather than cultural values with regards to dress”. In a study, Shoko (2013, p. 456) proved by consultation with respondents that “the youths who are below 20 years of age showed they did not know the meanings attached to symbols used in dress and appearance management, so they did not know if the way they dressed portrayed their cultural values”.

In my opinion, the African youths below the ages of twenty years are ignorant of the African cultural values due to modern style of education and cosmopolitan influences

of fashion trends. However, the truth relies with the statement given by Oke (2006) as cited by Oyedola and Oyedola (2015, p. 94) regards that “cultural anti-revivalism rejects the revivalist solution, arguing that African traditional values are too obsolete to meet the demands of a contemporary scientific world, or the new world order”. Therefore, the kind of dresses African youth wore did not give any clue about their immediate environment hence the negative effect that such people have lost their identity and native cultural values as Africans (Shoko, 2013). This reflects the dominance of modern values which put African cultural values into extinction. In support, Ira Meilita, Taufik, AbuBakar and Muthualagan, (2016) opine that dressing has lost most of its values in our society and certain styles of dressing are now a serious threat to our societal cultural values. The reasons are that the youths in Africa now want to be exactly like their European counterparts in dressing, thus indecent clothing like skimpy, transparent and provocative dresses, miniskirts, skinned tight cloths that exposes; breast, chest, belly, upper arms, armpits etc. (Abanyam, 2013 and Ira Meilita et al, 2016, p.12). This undoubtedly has several implications on the indigenous culture and social values of the people (Olorunda, 2018). Which indicates that African child has lost his/her heritage on African clothing and fashion which needs to be rekindled in order to perpetuate the African culture

#### ***2.5.4 Revitalising African Cultural Values and Significance through Clothing and Fashion***

The African traditional practices on clothing and fashion have suffered archaism due to modern trends, therefore Musso (2012) announces that staying true to one’s core values become a personalise agenda of rejuvenating the African cultural values. The statement above can also be interpreted that most Africans have neglected/deviated from their traditional values hence the Akan word “sankofa” becomes a prerogative to rescue traditional customs in oblivion. Abanyam (2013, p. 28) blames this action on African

parents because they are not awake to their responsibilities and the teaching of certain aspects of African moral values which they should be fully aware. My opinion is that it is best if parents would incorporate modern and traditional values appropriately when training their children. This will help the younger generation to:

Appreciate and reformulate cultural values and valuing processes, in order to better understand the African culture and its meaning in material objects by first establishing the relationship between traditional dress and salient values and meanings (Disele et al, 2011, p.2).

In another development, Messay (2004) as cited by Oyedola and Oyedola (2015, p.94) unveil that Ethno-Philosophers have attributed that the restoration of the past cultural values for Africans faces the challenges of modernity. I believe there is no denial about this fact because social media is accounting as the top hindrance to the growth of African cultural values (Daramola and Oyinade 2015). Now fashion runways become instrumental in African fashion coupled with globalisation policy on clothing and fashion that takes into consideration the African culture, values and norms (Daramola and Oyinade 2015, p. 43). On the contrary, some Africans believe that adopting the globalisation policy is not all it takes to have traditional values restored in its fullness therefore one of such claims is revealed by Disele, Tyler and Power, (2011, p.19) which points that Botswana targeted to envisage transformation distinguished from other nations by embracing their cultural values through a traditional dress by 2016.

The preaching to revive traditional cultural values on clothing and fashion has a similar bearing on some classical Dipo rite practices. Although some contemporary practices have changed most African cultural practices and traditional values, regardless of the acculturation, Dipo dress fashion among other African clothing and fashion now rests on Africans to constantly renew their customs to fit into the global changes in fashion trends.

### **2.6.0 The Classical and Contemporary Practices of Dipo Rite**

The word classical is referred to as something which follows the original or traditional standard. “Classical can be related to language, literature, and culture of ancient Greece and Rome” (Macmillan Dictionary, 2002, p. 249). In the African settings, indigenous stuffs are regarded as primitive, old, past which synonymously refer to classical. This means that certain customs are archaic and may not be regarded or accorded the necessary attention as before. This shifts dominance of traditional phenomenon and activities of man to a new era or period. Apart from language, and literature, Fishman (1989) as cited by Rosowsky (2013, p. 2) also relate religion to classical and term it as “religious classical”, to denote with the liturgical and ritual discursive practices of many different faith settings mentioning Qur’anic Arabic, Biblical or prayer book Hebrew and Ecclesiastical, Greek among others.

I believe the term classical is attributed to anything that began and later improved or transformed with time in modern or contemporary times and subsequently used by some scholars to describe some old Ghanaian traditional cultural practices such as female genital mutilation, Dipo rite of the people of Krobo etc.

Furthermore, the term contemporary is considered as “modern or relating to the present time or someone alive at the same time as a particular event or person” (Macmillan Dictionary, 2002, p. 299). This definition can be related directly opposite in meaning to the term classical which makes old and new practices of Dipo rite show so many differences. According to Akinbileje (2014, p. 632) the differences show how “contemporary African art is dynamic and incorporates Western ideas and materials adapted with traditional belief system and concerns”.

Between classical and contemporary Dipo rite, some changes have resulted in practices hence Kumetey (2009, p. 65) revealed that “Dipo in the past promoted chastity

and also enhanced the chance of marriage among Krobo women” but in contemporary Ghana it had outlived its usefulness and had been reduced to just a traditional ceremony. This craved my attention to sort literatures to establish the reality of the issues dividing the truth about classical and contemporary Dipo rite of the people of Krobo as positive and negative cultural practice, Disparities, controversies, dipo dress styles and the Perpetuation from/between classical to/and contemporary times.

### ***2.6.1 Dipo rite as a Positive and Negative Cultural Practice***

Dipo rite has created several misconceptions of which several authors have raised concerns about it. Traditional believers deem it as a good culture but modernists also believe it is a bad cultural practice. This has made the practice unstable to be totally accepted by all persons which the study leads to reviewing such thoughts.

According to Schroeder and Danquah (2000) as cited by Sackey (2001, p. 68) parents target their girls to go through the rite and seek their sons to marry an initiated Dipo girl disregarding uninitiated girls as unclean who brings bad omen to the family. A girl becomes unclean to perform the Dipo rite when she loses her virginity prior to the day of the rites and/or conceive before having passed the Dipo rite; the punishment for violating this social injunction is to drive such girls away from the Kroboland (Glozah & Lawani, 2014, and Muttenz, 2005). This punishment predates as the orthodox ways of sanctioning cultural perpetrators but in modern times, banishing cultural offenders may seem as an opportunity for a rural-urban migration. However, such punishment has now diminished from traditional records. The punishment action of Dipo is streamlined through traditional conventions and bylaws that sanction promiscuous behaviour to deter early sexual relationships to instil a sense of sexual purity, chastity among Krobo girls, (Nanegbe, 2016). The traditional standard for checking such behaviours will tend to revolt constitutional mandates of fundamental human rights. Because such punishment

is unpardonable, Boakye (2010) share in view that, in contemporary times parents initiate their children at relatively younger ages, for the fear of losing their children to promiscuous acts, however they would not have good marriages, and should they even get married, their marriages would not last.

Therefore, until the rite is performed for an adolescent girl, she is regarded as unclean and not fit for marriage because husbands would not want to marry uninitiated Krobo girl (Glozah & Lawani, 2014). Also, the Krobo people who lived outside the Krobo-towns claim they would not be accepted in the family home if they were not initiated (Boakye, 2010), hence fear drives girls to participate in the rite (Nanegbe, 2016). Although sexual promiscuity is weighed as the great deal in classical times, similarly it is accorded the same frown in contemporary times. Meanwhile none of the traditional sanctions and religious doctrines and practices has been able to cease this uncalled-for behaviour; not even the Dipo rite.

I believe the continuous practice of the rite is to imbue the mindset of chastity into the youths or perhaps Dipo rite have truly outlived its usefulness since Dipo defection in modern times is non-prevalence of the competence associated with initiates after the rite (Sackey, 2001; Markstrom & Iborra, 2003 as cited by Nanegbe, 2016, p.53). In other instances, also classical and contemporary Dipo is not shared as a positive and negative cultural practice rather old and new practices contradict each another.

### ***2.6.2 Disparities in Dipo Classical-Contemporary rite***

The revolutions in Dipo rite from the classical to contemporary dispensations has shown inequality or differences between the developmental stages of Dipo to present day celebrations. When contemporary Dipo rites was juxtaposed with classical prototypes (rites), they show disparities in the ages of initiates, duration of rites and the status identity that is bequeathed after the rite (Nanegbe, 2016). I believe these differences are resultant

of the gab that exists between classical practices and contemporary practices which is being fuelled mostly by technological advances which also bridges generational gab.

In terms of the disparities in ages of initiates, Nanegbe (2016) says although menstruation was a necessary criterion in the past, aside the age 12 and above, currently, it is not given much priority due to early onset of puberty. However, a Krobo sub-queen mother pronounced and explained that from the ages of 12 and above; girls are matured and can retain lessons taught to them years after the rite (Nanegbe, 2016). Meanwhile contemporary Dipo include, and identifies dipo-yi as young as four years old for the initiation ceremony yet such a fellow is not a standard for marriage as the aftermath purpose of Dipo is regarded (Ostrow, 2011). These instances presented above are believed as reasonable ages categorised to recruit Krobo girls per the decision of the parents. But I believe classical criterion of adolescent ages for recruitment is appropriate and convincing than modern criterion age of pre-schoolers.

In terms of the duration of the rite, in the classical times, as informed by Steegstra (2002) and Ostrow (2011), the mountain was the ideal hub for dipo seclusion; the Dipo girls were confined to the shrine for at least one year in order for the Dipo girls to become fully-fledged women. But this routine genealogy was slashed by Manya Krobo paramount Chief Nene Emmanuel Mate Kole to reform the ritual in a week (Muttentz, 2005) of which Nanegbe (2016, p.53)

reasoned that the influence of Western education has simplified the rite between three to five days because of the need for girls to be in school preclude the ceremony from being undertaken for a longer duration as done in the past.

Although classical seclusion of Dipo girls took time, it prepared the girls adequately for the purpose of Dipo which contemporary practices have failed to occupy that gab. Contemporary practice also may seem inexpensive because it takes shorter periods of confining the girls, it is this very period that Dipo rite have accumulated so

much critiques on promiscuity of the girls. No wonder Sackey (2001), Markstrom and Iborra (2003) as cited by Nanegbe (2016, p.10) are of the view that the competences associated with the Dipo initiates are likely to be non-prevalent after the rite in contemporary times.

In terms of status identity, as part of long seclusion, it became very necessary that families/relatives would gain status in the community by affording the upkeep of their daughter(s) (Steegstra, 2002). But rather it became problematic in expressing the significance of adult identity; therefore, there exists incongruence about the official and personal reality of the Dipo rites and its significance (Adjaye, 1999 as cited by Nanegbe, 2016, p. 2). However, Boakye (2010, p.70) admitted that “modernity gravitate Krobo cultural values towards adult status identity of the Dipo girls because of the flexibility of the Krobo people, leading to so many infiltrations creating disparities in status identity as far as Dipo is concerned”.

The “majority of these girls still may not have assumed traditional adult roles nor are they competent in skill sets that define adulthood or reflect maturity” (Nanegbe, 2016, p. 2). In the classical times, making an identity of the Krobo girls is appropriated by initiates wearing certain dress fashion styles for each stage of the rite given references with the wearing of goat intestine necklaces (Ostrow, 2011) and sacred stone test on the third count through the most powerful pronouncement: Ware mo Klo-yo peehe 'we are making you a Krobo woman (Adjaye, 1999). Although this is not all it takes to gain status with the Dipo rite, classical practices showed that initiates were given cicatrix at the back of their hands, on their bellies and their waists by cut of the Krobo people, subsequently boycotted in modern society (Boakye, 2010). But this practice was to ensure that Dipo is continued by showing cicatrice evidence in future. This scheme was to

ensure the continued importance of the Dipo practice but its replacement with just a fernning shows great difference to persuade if an initiate had gone through the rite.

I believe Krobo people would say that the moment the mountain became inhabitable for them due to influences from the colonial masters and missionaries, modernity set in on their cherished Dipo custom. Up until now, Dipo rite is fast diminishing on traditional practices creating disparities with contemporary practices by modern values which keeps reinventing and appropriate some Dipo rite practices thrive the new age.

### ***2.6.3 Perpetuation of Dipo rite in Classical –Contemporary times***

The prolonging of the Dipo rite by the people of Krobo yearly in celebrations have come to define the stability of the Dipo rite and its accompanied practices hence its survival. Though most rites of passages in southern Ghana are extinct, Krobo people make sure the Dipo rite is practiced in modern times thus from the coming of early European traders and other visitors on the coast in early times (Sackey, 2001 as cited by Nanegbe, 2016). Because the Dipo custom has sustained till the contemporary times, according to Boakye (2010, p.83), this can be equated to:

the Akan word ‘Sankofa’ literally means ‘go back and take it’ thus a plea to return to the past and take up the good morals and values that existed and reflected the very traditional way of life which is also practiced in modern times.

For the Krobo people, the continuous importance of Nana Kloweki and the Dipo ceremony represents a symbolic cultural identity and the constitute means by which adolescence are socialised in the culture (Mutenz, 2005; Nanegbe, 2016). By embracing change from some traditional practices, the people of Krobo strongly impacted the continuity of the Dipo custom especially with the decrease in the duration of the rite and the slight modification of the rite (Nanegbe, 2016; Boakye, 2010) to infuse the final outdoor/ dressing up to slash several critiques from the Christian community

(Muttenez, 2005). Although the extinction of some traditional practices may seem a denial of the true practices of the Dipo rite, modern influences have bridge current generations to get fully involved in the traditional custom yet keeping the purpose of its institution. For example, Boakye (2010) reveals that the change which paved way for instituting Dipo dress up is believed to be the only time in the life of a Krobo girl when she is extensively dressed in beads. Currently, this has become the most decent of the Dipo dress fashion which Ghanaians in totality appreciate as decent dressing and cultural symbolism of the Krobo people which have minimised Dipo critiques (Muttenez, 2005). Also, the cicatrix on Dipo-yi are no longer marked with razor blades instead the priest/priestess will feign making marks with the fingers on their hands, belly, stomach and waists to symbolise that the girls have passed through the rites (Ostrow, 2011; Muttenez, 2005; Glozah & Lawani, 2014). The solution to end cicatrix may seem to instil debate whether one has gone through the rite or not. Although, it will be difficult to prove, its replacement by the symbolism of feigning has a good health standing as far as the continuity of the rite is concerned. I wonder how many people may have contracted various diseases through this practice. Most appropriately, such archaic practice among others have been resorted through gender programmes and modern methods of education which are now fused with traditional methods to complete Dipo as a means through which gender roles is effectuated in the culture and to ensure adolescent girls maintaining their chastity and health until marriage (Nanegbe, 2016; Glozah & Lawani, 2014). Unfortunately, some of these Dipo and modern values does not blend cohesively, however both Dipo and modern values become difficult to ascertain its graceful impact on the rite and Dipo initiates without a hinge of critique. Because of this the researcher is of the view that traditional practices should not be the sole way of guiding individuals or the community likewise modern practices should not be embraced fully. Until these two phenomenon blends

correlatively, controversies surrounding Dipo practices build a bad reputation of Ghanaian cultural practices.

#### ***2.6.4 Controversies Surrounding Classical-Contemporary Dipo Practices***

The argument that stand in contest between classical and contemporary Dipo practices pictures the Dipo practices in two different eras which outlines the traditional and modern, good and bad, dos and don'ts, appropriate and inappropriate conditions of the cultural practice. The Dipo culture has suffered limitations in its ideals due to the influences of Christian doctrines and formal education, leading to mixed acceptance and understanding of the rite, cultural denial and breakdown of cultural values that define the Krobo people (Nukunya, 2003; Sackey, 2001 as cited by Nanegbe, 2016, p. 51). Muttentz (2005, p.47) opines that in “1874-1906 missionaries vehemently objected to most Krobo ceremonies especially Dipo festivals compelling the Konor (chief) to introduce in 1896 a rite that was to replace Dipo”. The reason given was that, Dipo is traditional and true Christians must not participate in such activities; again, Dipo is a cultural rite of passage which is necessary for all community members (Abbey, 2016). This is given in suggestion by Boakye (2010, p.5) that:

Dipo is not altogether praised in Ghana and its practice has aroused a number of debates. While some people believe it is a cultural practice that should continue, others are of the opinion that it is old-fashioned and has no significance in the modern Ghanaian society.

I have realised that Dipo is one of the most popular cultures in Ghana in particular and the African continent in general; unfortunately, its popularity is lingering on repeated critiques. Traditionally, I believe Dipo is/was perfect in practice until modern practices were juxtaposed with it, revealing some Dipo practices as archaic. Since then modern societies disregard Dipo dress practice of barring of breast as indecent and obsolete (Sackey, 2009). Although the Krobo people still practice their authentic culture in modern

day, it is impossible in modern Ghana for one to expose the whole body (Emefa and Selase, 2014). This divergence in traditional practices and believes of the Krobo custom is breaking strong social structures (Nanegbe, 2016).

I believe the controversies surrounding the dipo rite cannot be hidden because, the world today has become a cosmopolitan area, as a cultural hub and cultural harvest for many people hence creating cultural clashes between traditional and other foreign cultures. This has resulted in the modification of some dipo dress fashion practices of which modern dress styles have become prevalent in contemporary practices of the dipo rite.

#### ***2.6.5 Dipo Dress Styles of the Krobo***

Dipo rite is well known for its dynamic but persistence practice of an initiation rite into womanhood. At every stage of the rite, Dipo girls wear spectacular dresses that differ from one stage to another or from one another in the same stage of the rite. Emefa and Selase (2014, p.138) explained that at the beginning stage of the Dipo rite, “a very large red loin cloth is affixed to string both in front and at the back of the girl to cover her genital organ”. This stage identifies any girl in this type of Dipo dress style as an initiate. The differences in styles of this type of Dipo dress of red loin cloth are identified with the longitivity of the red loin cloth. Adjaye (1999, p.12) makes known that “the regular loin cloth in the past was strapped loosely-hanging that almost reached the ground”. Some initiates strap the red loin cloth beyond the knee whiles others strap so short without reaching the knee in the semblance of a miniskirt. There are similarities that exist in the strapping of this red loin. Just as Emefa and Selase (2014), identified that the red loin cloth covers the genital organ, Ostrow (2011, p.13) also described that the red loin cloth hanging from initiates’ waist cover the private parts. Under the two identified authors, they put the focus that Dipo dress styles is more concerned to keeping

the dignity of the initiate than Abbey (2016,p.6) claiming that “initiates expose their bodies to signal Krobo men of their readiness for marriage”. However, the researcher believes that the strapping of the red loin cloth is more than just a menstrual and fertility symbolism. On the other hand, a male twin to a Dipo girl is also included in the ceremony. Boakye (2010, p.54) noticed that such a male initiate did not wear the red loin cloth but wore the wax-print and white cloths.

When initiates dress in white loin cloth with “elaborated decorated quality of beads around the waist, arms and neck” (Adjaye, 1999, p.18), they enter into another stage of the Dipo rite. During this stage, Boakye (2010, p.41) describes that “raffia and strips of white cloth are hung across the initiate’s shoulder in a crisscross manner”. This style of Dipo dress replaced the old practice of goat intestine. This has offered a comfortable and more accepted patronage by initiates and maintains an indigenous flavour by the fibre strings that are gotten from the immediate environment of the Kroboland. Still on the white loin cloth, Boakye (2010) reveals that initiates either covers breasts with a wax print cloth when there is no ritual to be performed or leaves breast bare when there is a ritual to be performed. These styles of Dipo dress show the distinction between classical and contemporary practices of the Dipo rite. Furthermore, in complementing the white loin cloth, initiates wear white cape on top of their head then conical hat (Adjaye, 1999; Kumetey, 2009)

In Dipo dress styles, the dressing up stage accounts with girls dressed with a lot of beads on their necks, waists, arms and legs. According to Glozah and Lawani (2014) this is one significant moment in the life of a Dipo girl in which initiates have two opportunities of dressing differently for two days. In the first day, the Dipo girls dress in expensive velvet or wax print loin cloths which hung on waist beads such that they touched the ground (Boakye, 2010) and it further complemented with beads as necklaces

and jewelries. This dress style is different from what is worn on the second day of the dressing up. However “the final stage of the rite is climaxed with the Dipo girls dressed in colourful Kente cloth” (Abbey, 2016, p.4) on the second day of dressing up.

The contemporary dipo dress styles have been one of the resolving agenda to showing the commitment of the dipo custodians in responding positively to critiques and aswell pledging that the people of Krobo are bringing the dipo rite more into the world’s view in order to sustain the culture adequately.

Nonetheless, the literatures queued in affirmation to reviewing on the various topics and issues raised are essential to put academic marks on the study. Therefore, a recapitulation lifts the researcher’s assertions on the topics and issues for future examination.

## **2.7 Summary**

Dress is one of the most patronized items from cloths/fabrics by humans, in a specialized style produced with different methods, skills and ideas from different cultures. Dress is used as a tool to protect the human skin and enhance appearance of a person which either deviates or conforms to societal values. Around the world, dress is used in various societies to distinguish class of people (elites and slaves or the rich and poor). The ideas that back the styles which some dresses are fashioned and innovated have created several fashion trends and controversies because innovative fashion trends propelled by traditional dresses are sometimes unacceptable in modern times such as cross-dressing. But it means that dress fashion is no longer viewed as a societal collection rather a conceptual dress revealing the ideological make up of a person. In contemporary times these two stances on dress fashion shows decency and indecency under different cultural perimeters. However, decency lies between dress and human body within the cultural perimeters of modesty of a group. In that case, indecent dresses expose parts of

the human body, portray tight-fitting and unfitting clothe that tarnishes the dignity of a person. Which gives clues that immodest or provocative dressing implies immorality or unlawful. The concept of Christian modesty and provocation is based on biblical teachings and doctrines. Christian's modesty reflects that clothed or covered body gives evidence of modesty whiles immodesty/ provocative dressing reflects luxury dress, hair style, adornments and uncovered body. The Islamic concept of modesty entrusts Muslims to dress with their whole body covered. Meaning, it reflects clothes that do not cover the body decently, particularly for Muslim women. Failure to use the hijab, a Muslim girl/woman is regarded as indecently dressed even though she does not have any identity belonging to the Islamic community. In Islamic countries, human right abuses such as caning are enforced to safeguard this religious principle. African modesty and immodesty are different among ethnic groups; therefore, it is difficult to put them under the same standard of decency or provocation. The African concept of modesty may include different forms of dressing with the exception of the private region which should be covered appropriately. Some African cultures recognise 'bare-chest' of cultural members as decent dressing; it may depend on the cultural practice involved though. In modern times some African concept of modesty has deviated from traditional values to now embraced Christian and Islamic concept of modesty. Indecent dressing in Africa was due to the patriarchal system which put women as low class. Modern values dissert to shown distinct harm/ abuse of human right on members by the dresses prescribed during cultural practices. Therefore, modern values define what African immodest/provocative dress is. The western concept of dressing on decency/ modesty and indecency/ immodesty cannot be predicted just as the African concept of dressing. The western concept of dressing primarily revokes the religious doctrines and concepts on decency and provocation because any attempt to categorise certain kinds of dress code or pattern of dressing as

decent and indecent is a wrong way to understand this western dressing. For example, if the purpose of a dress is to achieve a certain discipline such as tight-fitting clothing by models, dancers, swimmers and trainers, this idea of dress code is modest. Also, nudity in a purposeful context is not provocative. Notwithstanding traditional western concept of decent dressing` requires that the hairs on the head are covered. For East-Europeans immodest dressing reflected the exposure of one's body or any dress that induces sexual enticement. In addressing the art of dress fashion, the issues on Western concept of decency looked down on women with the effort of appearing immodest to establish hierarchy against patriarch dominance but unfortunately it has rather subjected women to several sexual abuses.

The African societal definition of modest or provocative dressing does not rest without understanding clothing and fashion and how it becomes useful in everyday life. African clothing and fashion have two major stems of influences that are traditional and western. This means that textiles and fashion designers are often seen collecting clothing materials locally to providing stylistic component from tailor-made designs from different sources including second-hand clothing to meet international appeal. These clothes and styles express varying cultural interactions and responses in terms of social status/social advancement to distinguish separate class of people. Generally, the African clothing and fashion has shifted from traditional proverbial way of expressing to a boundless expression of designs in the 21st century including personal feelings. The African clothing and fashion, having existed in the pre-colonial times, has ceased not to change because of how they are hyped by ongoing innovation and change which becomes a battle of influences between old and new fashion trends. However, the everlasting powers of African clothing and fashion is hanged on modern technology, ongoing practicing of traditional cloth making methods and the willingness of Africans to allow

traditions to be influenced productively. The paradox of African clothing and fashion is that it is European-oriented concept than African. Meanwhile the dynamism in African clothing and fashion is a result of modernism which has altered some traditional customs of which the European concept of fashion attached to the African clothing and fashion is seen as a brainwashing mechanism to write off African culture. In a nutshell, the paradox of African clothing and fashion appropriate the ideas of modern fashion and traditions ideas which influence one another, becoming the holding control of 21<sup>st</sup> century fashion trends which the youth patronise unfeverishly. The trivial effort of African clothing and fashion has made the African cultural values so significant in contemporary times that despite suffering several infiltrations, it is still cherished.

Throughout ages, Indigenous African fabrics have typically reflected traditional beliefs, custom, traditions, practices and behaviour of the people which portray the African cultural values. This significant achievement of African clothing and fashion are found to be purposeful because it ensures the continuity of African culture by communicating proverbial symbols and colours for cultural members to draw meaning and interpret accordingly hence dresses are used to structure behavioural values. However, in establishing new styles on clothing and fashion, African tradition and modern values act as check and balance to meet contemporary demands. Most importantly, traditional cultural values were significant influence on African clothing and fashion although this system still keeps the African culture and its practices alive. In contemporary times, it could not stand modern values infestation, because global fashion has turned to innovations on African clothing and fashion boosting the local textiles and fashion industry and establishing male and female modesty under cultural symbolisms and distinction from infancy. On the other hand, there have been evidences of some negative effects of clothing and fashion on African cultural values. The first point of call

registers that African youths are now ignorant of their African values due to modern education and the cosmopolitan fashion influences however they have lost their identity as true Africans rubbing shoulders with their European counterparts by wearing indecent/provocative dresses. The consequence is that African cultural values are no longer effective because most Africans have neglected/deviated from their traditional values. Alternatively, the concept of 'sankofa' of the Akans meaning 'to go back and take', restores the significance of the African cultural values in contemporary times. Some restoration activities identify that social media is displaying most African styles and dresses on runways around the globe which has helped in sustaining the African culture. Also, the researcher admonishes that the power to restore African cultural values rests on Africans to constantly renew their customs on dress fashion to fit into the global change because indigenous ideas are regarded as primitive or classical. However, in reference to the classical, it is related to some old Ghanaian traditional cultural practices such as Dipo rite of the people of Krobo.

Dipo rite has two faces of recommendation; as a good cultural practice by indigenes and a bad cultural practice by foreigners. The overview given is that Dipo rite has some negative and positive practices. The first claim is that a Dipo girl becomes unclean and unfit for the rite when she loses her virginity prior to the day of the rite therefore she is driven away from her community. This punishment is too orthodox to scare people in contemporary times; Dipo rite offenders now see it as an opportunity for a rural-urban migration. Although sexual promiscuity is weighed as the great deal in classical times, similarly it is accorded the same frown in contemporary times. Meanwhile none of the traditional sanctions and religious doctrines and practices has been able to cease this uncalled-for behaviour; not even the Dipo rite. But certain disparities exist in terms of the ages of initiates, status identity etc. with respect to Dipo

rite as far as classical and contemporary times are concerned. However, Dipo rite is fast diminishing on traditional practices to contemporary practices but the Krobo people make sure Dipo survives in practice in modern times since the legacy of Nana Kloweki represents the ideal identity of every female Krobo. To keep this a reality, the researcher advised that traditional practices should not be the sole way of guiding individuals or the community. Likewise modern practices should not be embraced fully. Until these two phenomenon blends correlatively, good cultural practices can never be achieved with a group of people or society. That is why Dipo rite has suffered limitations due to influences of the Christian doctrines and formal education hence causing controversies. On the hand, these limitations and influences have resulted in the various dipo dress styles in contemporary times. Currently the world today has become a cosmopolitan area, as a cultural hub and cultural harvest for many people thereby creating cultural clashes between traditional and other foreign cultures.

The sum up of this chapter given reasons to believe that there is no pure indigenous culture anywhere in the world. Therefore, the study hammers on such discourse and with the objective of achieving the truth using scientific methods and procedures to arrive at a rational result as far as Dipo dress fashion is concerned.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Overview

This chapter covers the methods employed for the study. Specifically, it describes the research design, the population, sample size, sampling technique, data collection instrumentation such as observation and interview. It further discusses the data collection procedure and the data analysis plan.

#### 3.1 Research Design

A research design is a “plan that directs the researcher in the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data” (Taole, 2008, p. 72). The narrative inquiry was selected as the research design for the study to facilitate investigations through time, revolutions and dispensations on Dipo dress fashion trends in contemporary Ghana. The paradigm adopted for the study was qualitative method and its purpose was to give comprehensive overview which aimed at “understanding Dipo rite and its practices by considering why and how the dress fashion trends occurred” (Shelton, Smith, & Mort, 2014 as cited by Nanegbe 2016, p. 18). The qualitative method required data in the form of words, pictures, symbols among others. In order to interpret results of findings, hence a narrative, descriptive and document review research designs were needed to address the objectives of the study. In order to investigate the major Dipo dress fashion trends and ascertain the cultural values and relevance of Dipo dress fashion trends, narrative inquiry research design was used to trace back into times by requiring respondents to tell/reveal their fore knowledge about Dipo rite. Alongside, a descriptive research design showed a vivid description to specific items that made up Dipo dress fashion of classical and contemporary practices and evolutions that make up the trends. The study also delved into critiques against Dipo dress fashion using a documentary review design that helped

search and probe into literature and other authorities to establish facts. The nature of the research designs predicts the kind of population that needs to be perused relevant for the study.

### **3.2 Population for the study**

Population is referred to as an “entire group about which some information is required to be ascertained” (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010, p. 60). The population for the study comprised Krobo people of Ghana because they are the custodians of the dipo custom and Non- Krobo people because some have shown interest and concern in the dipo custom. Following from the above, the research targeted a group of the population of which Alvi (2016, p. 10) describes them as “the members who meet the particular criterion specified for a research investigation”. The study covered the Manya and Yilo Krobo people who are the originators and practitioners of the Dipo rite and have authentic information on Dipo rite. Also, Non- Krobo people from diverse cultures either Ghanaians or foreigners who have either worked around the dipo concept or have passed comments on the dipo rite. However, the accessible population drawn from the target population comprised traditional rulers/People knowledgeable or in touch with the dipo custom (especially Krobo people), who had experienced the dipo rite for at least a decade or two. Again, Photographers (Krobo and Non- Krobo people) who have been paparazzis during the dipo rites, authorities and authors who have critique dipo dress fashion (Non- Krobo especially) and Fashion designers (Non-Krobo people) who have worked around the dipo rite and themes and have dress fashion evidence to show.

It should be noted that the population were selected using specific techniques that were appropriate to contact the right persons to assist the study for accurate responses or data.

### **3.3 Sampling Techniques**

A non-probability sampling method was used for the study. In “non-probability sampling (also known as non-random sampling), not all members of the population have a chance of participating in the study” (Dudovski, 2018 para 1). The study employed purposive technique of non-probability sampling to trace specific resource persons as well as specific sources of information that were suitable for the study. For example, photographic images of the Dipo rite dating from 1950 and recent ones were gathered as data related to the trends in Dipo dress fashion. Again, traditional rulers/people knowledgeable or in touch with the Dipo custom were consulted to ascertain the cultural values and relevance of the Dipo dress fashion practice in this contemporary time. In addition, certain fashion designers who have kept keen interest in Dipo rite and have designed dresses related to Dipo dress fashion were specifically consulted for an interview. Likewise, comments that addressed Dipo dress fashion as critiques were deliberately sorted for textual analysis.

Subsequently, the stratified sampling technique was used to group the participants into ranks in the level of importance of information. They were put into strata, ranking from Traditional rulers/People knowledgeable or in touch with the Dipo custom, Photographers, Authorities and Authors who have commented on Dipo dress fashion (not necessarily Krobo indigenes) then Fashion designers. Ultimately, the purposive and stratified sampling techniques offer the accessibility of drawing the required and specific population sample for data.

### **3.4 Sample Size**

The definition of sample size refers to “the number of units that were chosen, from which data were gathered” for the study (Gary, 2011, p. 4). The study sought

responses from twenty (20) participants. The participant groups that were engaged in this study are presented below in a tabular form stratifically with their respective numbers.

Table 1:

*List of partipants in strata and their respective sample size*

<b>Participant groups</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Traditional rulers/People knowledgeable or in touch with the Dipo custom	Three (3)
Photographers	Three (3)
Authorities and Authors who have commented on Dipo dress fashion (not necessarily Krobo indigenes)	Twelve (12)
Fashion designers	Two (2)

The participants were sorted using stratified approach from the above because the nature of the responses in quest needs different data instruments to collect information or responses.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

The data collection instruments used in this study inquired responses from participants of the study. These data collection instruments were in the form of interview, observation and photographs as primary data. Also, secondary data that is literature from published thesis, journals, books, e-journals, and audio-visual materials, were relevant data for the study.

#### **3.5.1 Interview**

The study required an interview technique as a data collection instrument. The researcher used this instrument to solicit data in one-on-one session with the respondents

such as the Traditional rulers/people knowledgeable or in touch with the Dipo custom and Fashion designers. This instrument is very much important to allow interviewees to explain in details questions that solicited responses from people in touch with the dipo custom and fashion designers. The interview question guides were open ended despite the two (2) participant groups having separate interview questions. The first participant group (people in touch with the dipo custom) interview guide sought to address the cultural perspective of dipo dress fashion practice while the interview question guide for the second participant group (Fashion designers) sought the professional perspective and advantage of dipo dress fashion. However, for detailed information on interview guide used for the study, see 'appendix A'

### **3.5.2 Observation**

Observation as data collection instrument was used to gather first-hand information by observing dipo rite and dipo dress fashions. The researcher observed the dipo rite to identify the major stages of the ceremony and the accompanied dress fashions worn by the initiates. Also, the researcher observed the types of dipo dress fashion on how initiates' bodies were adorned with various items. This helped the researcher to identify the different kinds of materials that characterised the trends in Dipo dress fashion in contemporary times.

Generally, the researcher used observation guides, which are in two folds; visualising old and new photographic images and visualising initiates in dipo dress fashions. However, details of these observation guides are found in appendix 'B'

### **3.5.3 Photographs**

The photographers used cameras of digital and analogue formats to take photographs as the most important and suitable data collection instrument for the study.

Cameras captured different postures and appearances of initiates dressed in various Dipo dress fashions dating from 1950- 2019 determine contemporary trends. The photographers showed group pictures of Yomoyo, Priest and initiates.

#### **3.5.4 Document review**

The study required a document review, as data collection instrument to review textual information from authors that were identified by the researcher. It was designed to examine the contexts and contents of critiques labelled against Dipo dress fashion.

The nature of these instruments (interview, observation, photography, document view) demanded different approaches in collecting data that were duly followed with different levels of accuracy.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

#### **3.6.1 Semi-structured Interview**

In this study, semi-structured interview type was used to probe deeper and to ask specific organised and unorganised questions necessary to guide the interview to give responses from traditional rulers/people knowledgeable or in touch with the Dipo custom and fashion designers. This structure of interview helped the researcher to responses to the cultural values and contemporary relevance of Dipo dress fashion practices. During the interview a laptop, installed with audio recorder software was used to record conversations that transpired between the researcher and respondents. Whiles audio-taping conversations, the researcher alongside, wrote brief notes with a pen and a small notebook to highlight important points in case the recorder malfunctions. Again, the researcher asked the respondents to clarify and explain certain information useful to the study. With the study conducted with the traditional rulers/people knowledgeable or in

touch with the Dipo custom, the participants interviewed were three (3). The first day of the interview was on Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019 with the first (1<sup>st</sup>) respondent which lasted for 1 hour, 22 minutes. In the second day of the interview, that was Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019, two participants were interviewed. The interview with the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) respondent of the study lasted for 1 hour, 35 minutes while the interview with the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) respondent lasted for an hour and 2 minutes.

With respect to the fashion designers, interviews were done through electronic mail messenger with Afro mod trends and on whatsapp messenger with Gavachy because they were not available for a face to face interview sessions with the researcher. On Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Afro mod trends was sent an interview guide questions of the study and responded on Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2019. Also, the interview guide questions sent to Gavachy on Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019, was responded on Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

### **3.6.2 Observations**

The non-participant observation instrument was employed in order to differentiate items of various Dipo dress fashion that were characterised as contemporary trends. In a more personal sense, observation helped the researcher to define the links between the cultural values that guides Dipo dress fashion and to determine the sequence of changes in contemporary practice to establish facts about its relevance in Ghana today. The observation took the form of visualising old and new photographic images collected from respondents as data for the study. This helped to ascertain their dynamics (images that describe the major stages in dipo dress fashion yet different from one initiate to another), similarities (the same dipo dress fashion trending from 1950 to present and accompanied items used as regalia) and authenticity (how different a particular period or

stage of Dipo dress fashion distinct from one another). The Second observation was done on the dress fashions to identify the kinds of dressing materials used, how various dressing materials have been arranged or wrapped on initiates body and the pattern of dressing that characterises a particular Dipo dress fashion.

### **3.6.3 Photographs**

The photographers used digital and analogue cameras to take photographs during the Dipo ceremony in order to capture the Dipo girls in their Dipo dress fashion/regalia during the ceremony. Again, photographic images that were tendered in by respondents upon the researcher's request were scanned digitally to keep them in digital formats to help the researcher to have enough time to analyse them one after another upon one display on the laptop screen/monitor. The photographs were examined by comparing the various images with each other periodically to group them into similar dress fashions and further under their respective major stages in Dipo dress fashion. Again, the images were sorted into the various trends under each stage to analyse changes that have occurred in Dipo dress fashion between indigenous and contemporary times in order to establish facts about new practices.

### **3.6.4 Documents Review**

Documents of various forms were sought from the internet, libraries, newspapers, magazines and journals to identify comments from authors which the researcher categorised as critiques against Dipo dress fashion. The researcher cited authors appropriately, being conscious of plagiarism of information. The documents were examined by checking the contents of information primarily on the Dipo rite and further into Dipo dress fashion or regalia for its usefulness in the study.

The procedures for analysing the data are presented in the following sub-heading-  
Data Analysis Plan

### **3.7 Data Analysis plan**

Data analysis plan is a “detailed outline of procedure(s) for conducting an analysis on data” (Jablonski & Guagliardo, 2016). In line with the research designs, that is narrative inquiry, descriptive and document review, data collected for the study were analysed using thematic, descriptive, and textual analytical tools respectively, in answering research questions and forming in-depth knowledge to reveal results and for discussions. The thematic analysis was used to group various responses from Traditional rulers/People knowledgeable or in touch with the Dipo custom and Fashion designers into headings that captured each respondents’ contributions to the study. These responses helped to identify the cultural values that guide Dipo dress fashion and its contemporary relevance that are practiced in Ghana. Furthermore, the descriptive tool was used in detail explanation of the various dress fashions that were used by the Dipo girls under the major Dipo dress fashion stages with references from the photographic images that were shown in figures and from the researcher’s observations in order to establish the trends in contemporary times. Lastly, textual analysis was employed in the study to examine the contexts and contents of critiques against Dipo dress fashion that were sought from authors’ comments. The researcher identified key words, expressions and phrases from each comment that connoted critiques. The researcher then analysed such critiques by critically reviewing and examining the various texts.

### **3.8 Trustworthiness and Authenticity**

Trustworthiness is about accuracy and confidence in how well data by participants are addressed (Polit & Becks, 2012 cited by Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utriainen,

& Kyngas, 2014, p. 3). Following the statement above, the respondents who were in touch with the dipo custom with regards to the study were trusted and well-known persons in the Krobo-Odumase community who had direct and continuous engagement with dipo rite for a minimum of ten (10) years. Their various responses to interview questions were consistent with one another despite different ways of driving their points. Likewise, the fashion designers interviewed were found to be “authentic” in producing their own versions of dipo dresses; this made them qualified enough as an authentic people to consult for fashion knowledge on dipo dress. Moreover, the trustworthiness of the study is partly based on the need to support respondents’ claim with images presented in the study, to show the patterns or trends in dipo dress fashion. Also, these images on dipo were sourced directly from the immediate happenings of the rite without any editing to distort or remove original content of the reality during the time periods of capture. Notwithstanding, the appearance of some of the images were enhanced using computer software programme; microsoft office picture manager with tools such as brightness, contrast, colour, crop to edit for clear and high picture quality.

Because these information are authentic and directly obtained from the right persons and sources, ethical considerations served as essential element for the study.

### **3.9 Ethical consideration**

The researcher first introduced himself verbally and showed a valid student identification card to the respondents as a student from the University of Education, Winneba. Later the researcher asked permission from the respondents by way of a consent form before taking photographs or audio recording their responses as can be found in appendix ‘C’. Photographic images were acquired directly from respondents who willingly tendered to the researcher. Also Interviews that were done through email and

WhatsApp chats were kept privately and secured from third parties. The relevance of the study focuses more on the information that would be analysed and discussed to unleash meanings and understanding in answering research questions.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Overview

The chapter focuses on the analysis plan outlined in Chapter Three of this thesis and each research question addresses the field data. It employs qualitative analytical tools such as descriptive, textual and thematic analysis throughout the study. It starts with the investigation into the major Dipo dress fashion trends of the Krobo people from 1950 to 2019, examination of the contexts and contents of critiques against Dipo dress fashion and ascertaining the cultural values and contemporary relevance of Dipo dress fashion practice.

#### 4.1 Major Dipo dress fashion trends from 1950 to 2019

Dipo occupies a special place in the hearts and minds of the Krobo people. Of all the rituals that Krobo females experience, none is accorded significance than that of Dipo (Adjaye, 1999). According to Krobo tradition, it is Dipo initiation that transforms a girl into the status of womanhood and makes her worthy in the society which is more than just a celebration of first menstruation of a Krobo girl (Oppong, n.d, p.34). According to Adjaye (1999, p.11):

Dipo is constituted as an ordered sequence of grouped activities which uniquely enhance ritual efficacy and collectively leads up to a heightened of ritual performance at the river side for cleaning the initiates, with the priest to be confirmed as a Dipo girl and at the sacred groove for initiates to be verified as virgins.

The main Dipo practice is stationed in four major stages with spectacular costuming. They are the tying of string (*sɔni*), cleansing initiation (wearing of red loin cloth), victory initiation (wearing of white loin cloth) and the dress ups (*Newuom* and *kawɔ*). These stages are accorded as major Dipo dress fashions because the purposes to be achieved in each stage of the Dipo rite are linked to the dipo dress fashion which an

initiate must wear. However, if these dress fashions are not worn by an initiate she is not recognised as a Dipo girl and therefore allowed to forfeit the initiation rite. The first stage is the tying of the string, where *sɔni* is tied round the neck of a girl as seen in Figure 1. This is to mark the girl for the Dipo rite and to begin the initiation processes. The second stage is called cleansing initiation, which involves the wearing of red loin clothe before an initiate is led to the river for a bath to remove all bad omens and to demonstrate her skill in washing dirty cloths. Also, Victory initiation is the third stage of the Dipo dress fashion which is characterised by the wearing of white loin cloth by initiates. The wearing of the white loin cloth is to prove and justify the initiates as Dipo candidates before becoming legitimate Krobo women. Lastly, the dress up stage is the climax of becoming a full Krobo woman. This stage is in two folds: the first type is *Newuom*, where initiates are dressed in wax print loin cloths and the second type is *Kawɔ* where initiates dress up mostly in *Kente* or other expensive cloths complemented with beads as Krobo women.

Muttenz (2005) identified that the first three major stages that is the tying of string, cleansing and victory initiations respectively, were the foremost of the Dipo rite in the classical times until 1897 when the dress up stage was introduced as the first influence on Dipo dress fashion. Since then, *Newuom* and *kawɔ* dipo dress fashions, altogether, have been accustomed as the fourth stage in the Dipo rite, which is still being observed by the Krobo people in contemporary times. However, Shaibu (personal communication, March 5, 2019) emphasised that the Dipo dress fashions are indicators that the initiates are very important personalities in the Krobo community while going through the Dipo rite.

Traditionally, fashion has been viewed in opposition to tradition: the two concepts are inherently conflicting. While tradition is associated with non-Western dress, which is unchanging, Western dress is fashion perceived with the ability to transform constantly

and project individuality (Rovine, 2009, as cited by Musso, 2012). Therefore, western dresses mostly show movement in direction of fashion as trends.

In this study, the major stages of Dipo dress fashions, with their respective dress fashions identified, are presented and appreciated with in-depth discussions, supported by Figures (images) to establish dipo dress fashion trends in contemporary times.

#### **4.1.1 Tying of string**

The ‘Kpawomi’ ceremony is to mark a girl as an initiate or *Dipo -yo* (Dipo -girl) (Affum, 2009 p. 68, 69 and Adjaye, 1999, p. 13). During this ceremony, string of waist beads or regular beads which Krobo females commonly wear, symbolic as feminine beauty is removed and replaced by a string called *glo* with a bead known as *le*. The action represents the first step in stripping the Dipo initiates of their regular cloths to be reduced to nothingness and later be made important by the tying of *sɔni*. *Le* serves as an official identification tag, symbolic and a ritual transformation key for the Dipo -yo and for the ceremony which is performed by a senior old lady (*yomoyo*). The tying of the string is significant because it is believed to allow the ancestors and the spirits of the gods to identify the Dipo -yo so that when the family of the initiate prays, the spirits of the gods and ancestors would grant her favour, protection, blessings and fertility for her future motherhood and throughout the ceremony. It also means that when the regular beads is removed and replaced with the *glo* the girl has been accepted as a Dipo -yo so she can go home, prepare and come back the following day. Though the girl has begun the process of becoming a Krobo woman, she does not start camping immediately at the Dipo house.

According to Adjaye (1999, p.12), following the removal of regular beads came the *sɔni muom* (the tying of *sɔni*), a raffia-type fibre (of date palm) which introduces the Dipo rite in the community when a string is tied round the neck of *Dipo -yo* called *sɔni*

during the eve of the Dipo ceremony. Before the *Dipo-yi* receive the *sɔni muom*, they queue up wearing two yards pieces of wax print cloth which is tied from the chest and extends above the knee. A *Dipo-yo* is called out from a queue of *Dipo-yi* to be tied with *sɔni* by a '*yomoyo*'. The *yomoyo* and the girl sit opposite to each other on a stool; the *yomoyo* then ties the string (*sɔni*) round the neck of the Dipo girl. The researcher deduced that the setting and the atmosphere created as the Dipo girl submits to be tied with *sɔni* is an indigenous Ghanaian way to project respect and honour between the elderly and the younger ones.

The researcher observes that the *yomoyo* also dresses specifically during this stage of the Dipo rite in a two yards piece of African wax print cloth, tied from the chest to cover from the breast, abdomen towards the feet and covers the head with a piece of white fabric which shows the only distinction between the *yomoyo* and initiates dress fashions at this stage as represented in Figure 1. According to Baidoo (personal communication, March 6, 2019), the action of tying the *sɔni* around the neck of the *Dipo -yo* which can also be done by a priest or priestess, particularly, represents an official recruitment session of the *Dipo -yo* into the Dipo rite. This indicates the first marking of an initiate which may not be removed until the final day of the Dipo rite. The researcher observed that during the time for the Dipo girls to be adorned with the red loin cloth, *sɔni* is untied and never was there the case that an initiate worn *sɔni* till the dress up stage. In that moment of Dipo rite, anyone who identifies a girl in *sɔni* dress code must recognise and give her the necessary respect and honour. However, such a girl is unique (virgin) among other female Krobo people in the society and she is not allowed to run errands (Nanegbe, 2016 and Boakye, 2010). The researcher observed that at this stage of the Dipo rite, the girls recruited for initiation are not stripped naked in public except that their shoulders were not covered in order for *sɔni* to be seen. The researcher observed that, the plant (date

palm), from which *sɔni* is gotten from, is not harmful to the health of *Dipo-yo*. This also signifies that the material would not be replaced in contemporary times with any other item. It is therefore important to note that *sɔni* is the only item used in Dipo rite to verify an initiate for the first time under the Krobo cultural conditions to be accepted for initiation. It would also be difficult for any girl to pass to the next stage of the Dipo rite (cleansing initiation) without wearing *sɔni* by the hands of a *yomoyo*. In this first stage of Dipo rite, Kumetey (2009, p.24) responds that the two major phenomena that is the stripping of the girls and the tying of *sɔni* is meant to “inspect the chastity of the *Dipo-yo*” by the *yomoyo*. However, it is believed that something bad will happen to a girl who is pregnant but going through the rite and also points that classical punishment of banning such girls are no longer enforced in contemporary times. On the contrary, if a pregnant girl passes this stage of the Dipo rite undetected, then the integrity of a *yomoyo* is questionable.

Because immorality is not an encouraged practice as far as Dipo is concerned, the initiates are further introduced to a thorough review in the next stage of the rite which begins the actual rite in red fabrics.



Figure 1. An elderly woman putting a palm string called *sɔni* round the neck of girl to be marked as a Dipo -yo to start the rite. (Source: courtesy Shaibu photos, 2008).

#### 4.1.2 *Cleansing initiation*

In this stage of the Dipo rite, Baidoo (personal communication, March 6, 2019) responded that the older generations, did not have pants so *suboe* served as their underwear. This traditional underwear was worn by tightening a long strap of *suboe* between the two legs so that air does not pass through to avoid fractulating frequently. In contemporary times, *suboe* is not used as everyday underwear but for perpetuating traditional values. However, the people of Krobo still inculcate this practice in Dipo rite. In Dipo dress fashion, a clone of *suboe* is represented in contemporary Dipo rite as a very large red loin cloth which is strapped and affixed to waist string, left hanging in both front and back of each Dipo girl to cover their genital organs and buttocks (Emefa & Selase, 2014; Adjaye, 1999; Ostrow, 2011; Boakye, 2010).

The symbolism of the strapping of *suboe* between the classical and contemporary time periods shows some disparities in the roles it served for the older and younger generations. The researcher observed that, *suboe* was an everyday practice for the older Krobo people in the classical times. Therefore, it was strapped so well to prevent disgrace, unlike current generation of Krobo indigenes who strap it as a dress fashion for the purpose of Dipo rite. Amazingly, the length of the red loin cloth is very important when strapping for the initiates to easily move backwards or forward to get a dry area when soiled with menses (Shaibu, personal communication, March 5, 2019). According to Abbey (2016, p.4), before strapping the loin cloth, Dipo girls usually receive a single band of carnelian beads or white bead called *glo* and a piece of red loin cloth for ritual mothers (*yomoyo* or priestess) to dress them. The beads served as a holder which facilitates the wearing of the red loin cloth (*suboe*) for Dipo girls during the Dipo rite (Baidoo, personal communication, March 6, 2019).

The researcher disagrees with the claim of beads as a holder because it can be observed that in Figure 2 of this report, twisted cotton yarn strings have been used by initiates to hold red loins at the waist with a knot. This gives the impression that bead used as *suboe* holder, is a classical practice. Therefore, the cotton yarn string used in place of beads is a contemporary practice. This establishes the first (1<sup>st</sup>) trend in Dipo dress fashion. Again, olden day *suboe* was characterised by a plain red cotton fabric, though still used by some few Dipo girls, contemporary ones can either be a product of linen, silk or any regenerated fabrics with some sort of printed designs on them and started in the 2000, till date, as shown in Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 based on initiates' preferences. Although the originality of the *suboe* cannot be clearly traced, this textile product can be bought from the market in either plain red or red dominated design of a cloth which characterises reasons for different *suboe* used by initiates from the Figures below.

However, they are all accepted and can be used by initiate for the rite. The symbolism of the red loin cloth represents positive influences such as menstruation, fertility, a disguiser of menses and driving away of evil spirits (Beckwith & Fisher, 2002 as cited by Abbey, 2016, p.4), while negative influence is a representation of a *Dipo* -*yo* being reduced to nothingness (Avotri, 2009, p.82, 164 and Adjaye, 1999, p.13). To the researcher when a *Dipo* girl is dressed in the red loin cloth it is a key indicator of a *Dipo* dress fashion.

One of the utmost changes that have been embraced by the people of Krobo in this stage of *Dipo* dress fashion is the popular use of wax print fabric as cover cloth over *suboe* and initiates exposed breasts. This represents the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) trend of *suboe* dress fashion in this stage of *Dipo*. This style of dressing has become prevalent as *Dipo* rite has assumed some flexibility (B. Kofi, personal communication, March 6, 2019) which suggest that contemporary *Dipo* dress fashion is distinguished by classical *Dipo* dress fashion with the use of cover cloth by *Dipo* girls. Meanwhile they are used altogether depending on initiates' preferences (Shaibu, personal communication, March 5, 2019). The researcher observed that some few *Dipo* girls dressed in only *suboe* with the majority choosing *suboe* with wax print cover cloth. This tags as a reminder to *Dipo* initiators that the exposure of the initiates' body is gradually fading out. According to Baidoo (personal communication, March 6, 2019), when the initiates are confined in the *Dipo* house going through the *Dipo* doctrines, they wear *suboe* and put the wax print cloth around their chest (Figure 4) which also started in the 2000, it indicates the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) trend in *suboe* dresses. But the moment they are sent out to prove the world of their virginity, the cloth is wrapped around the waist and the breast shows (Figure 3 and 5). According to Shaibu (personal communication, March 5, 2019), it was a way the girls were being examined along the line by the elderly women to detect unusual body changes if an initiate was

pregnant. But sometimes those with bigger breasts were made to cover them throughout the rite.

In Figure 5, the initiate in view has wrapped over the *suboe* she wore with a white fabric which was only seen in the year 2012; till then, have not been observed in the years after. This type of *suboe* dress fashion, though, it is the first of its kind to be noticed on a Dipo girl, it represents the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) trend of *suboe* dress fashion. Also, in some exceptions, when a Dipo girl is a twin with a male brother, he does not wear the *suboe* cloth, instead, a wax-print cloth and white cloth (Emefa & Selase, 2014; Boakye, 2010). The researcher believes that this transformation in Dipo dress fashion practices is inherent with modernity. Nonetheless, traditional purposes of this rite which seeks to cleanse and purify the ritual subjects (Dipo girls), their past state, along with imperfections and impurities are associated with ritual potency (Adjaye 1999). However, they are still intact in contemporary times since the *suboe* type of Dipo dress fashion is used when the initiates are going for a bath in the river.

In that light, successful initiates are promoted to the next stage to be proven victorious by visiting the sacred grove for test and approval as virgins.



Figure 2. Three younger initiates with a string tied at their waste and red loincloth printed cloth hung on it touching the ground. Each carry calabash containing sponge fibres and hold a walking stick. (Source: courtesy Shaibu photos, 2012).



Figure 3. An initiate wears red loincloth printed cloth dipo dress fashion hung at the shin level after the knee and towards the feet. She carries calabash, has some part of the hair shaved and holds a walking stick. She uses wax print cloth over the loincloth with bare breast (Source: courtesy Cita photos, 2006).

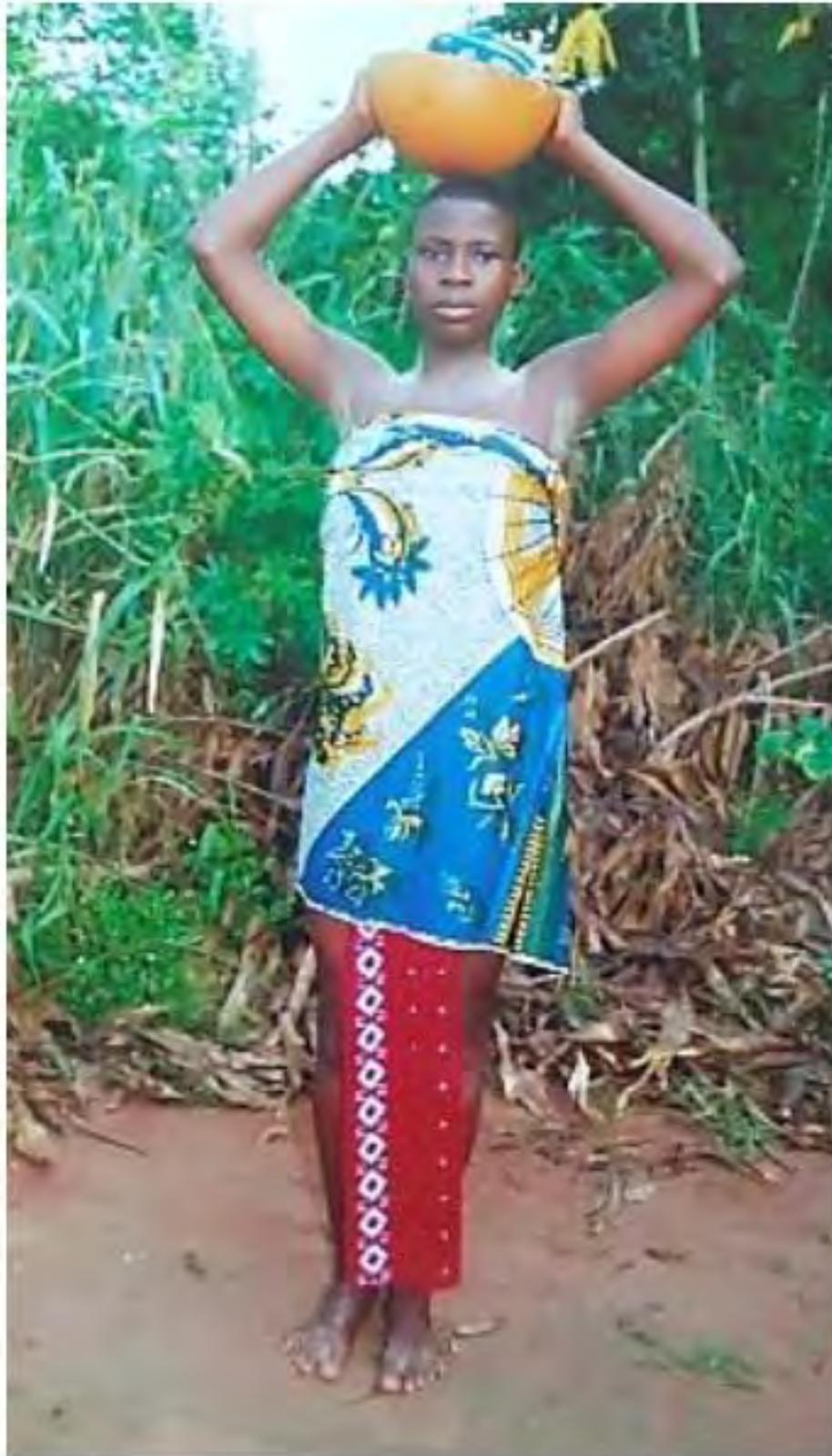


Figure 4. An initiate wears red loincloth printed cloth dress fashion hung towards the feet. She carries calabash and has covered the loincloth with a wax print cloth covering the breast towards the knee. (Source: courtesy cita photos, 2014).



Figure 5. An initiate wears red loin printed cloth dress fashion hung at the shin level She uses white fabric over the loin cloth with bare breast (Source: courtesy Shaibu photos, 2012).

#### **4.1.3 Victory initiation**

In 1897, before Nene Emmanuel Mate Kole was newly enstooled as the Manya paramount chief, the victory initiation stage of the Dipo rite was the peak of the celebration among Krobo people (MuttENZ, 2005). This stage introduced the Dipo girls to the Nana Kloweki Shrine and the climbing of the sacred stone (Sackey, 2001). Before the initiates are introduced to Nana Kloweki, and to visit the sacred stone, they are dressed in a white loin cloth just as *suboe* of the cleansing initiation (MuttENZ, 2005). This time, the initiates are dressed in white loin cloth with a band made of yellow raffia (dyed) and two black beads tied, characterised by fluffiness or a knot at the ends. It is tied to the left arms of the initiates which identifies as the first (1<sup>st</sup>) trend in victory dress fashion in Dipo rite. It was practiced before the 1950 then 1990, 2000 and still worn in the present times. The raffia band is used symbolically as a marker to identify initiates who are currently

going through the Dipo rite to segregate fake ones. The researcher observed that the raffia band as an item used in Dipo dress fashion has not been replaced since classical times because the Krobo people, want to portray indigenouness in contemporary times.

Next, a piece of white fabric is used to cover the chest of some initiates who supposedly have bigger breasts, for those who shy to expose their chest publicly (B. Kofi, personal communication, March 6, 2019) and others who characterise it as decent dressing because they would be paraded on the street (Sackey, 2001, p.69 and Boakye, 2010, p.45). This type of victory dress fashion becomes the second trend (2<sup>nd</sup>) in dipo dress fashion at this stage of the rite. Although critics have continued to express bitterly with the breast exposure in contemporary times, the researcher observed that majority of the initiates took to leave their breast bare in order to experience the rite the classical way. The breast exposure was practiced before 1980 then being practiced in the 2000, 2014, and 2018 till date. This claim is supported by Shaibu (personal communication, March 5, 2019) to wit that ‘the breast exposures have not slowed down at all’ in contemporary times.

Furthermore, “sponge raffia fibres and strips of white fabrics are hung crisscross around the neck and the shoulders of the Dipo girls” (Kumetey, 2009, p.25) which is believed as a sign of fertility, purity, holiness and remembrance (B. Kofi, personal communication, March 6, 2019). These items replaced the classical practice of goat intestines that was purposed to secure endurance on the initiates because of its smell (Baidoo, personal communication, March 6, 2019). The researcher believes the raffia and white fabric strips that replaced goat intestines is/was the best transformation of all times on Dipo dress fashion and the health of initiates.

In another development, the researcher observed that the white loin cloths are either hung under waist beads as shown in Figures 6, 8 and 9 or over waist beads in Figure

7 of the Dipo girls. Because people of Krobo cherish beads, the older initiates are decorated with heavy accumulation of old and new beads which tend to weigh them (as shown in Figure 8) while younger initiates have fewer beads to carry (Figure 7). According to the researcher, this section of the Dipo dress fashion practice is the most hyped among the initiation rites. Because it marks the last test to approve an initiate as a Krobo woman and a way clans/ families would be verified as befit their status in the society with beads. This signifies the pride of the Krobo people and personally being justified as wealthy (Ostrow, 2011).

Beads such as *hungua* or *hunua* beads are tied around the waist which represents the fecundity of initiates neck; Smaller beads like the *powa* and *huazi* (striped beads) around their knees, *zagba*, *huadziatɔ* or *skɔbɛkɛ* around their legs and *koli* around their wrists and necks (Avotri, 2009; Adjaye, 1999; Affum, 2009; Boakye, 2010) which complement *Krala* (the white loin cloth) meaning asking of fate (B. Kofi, personal communication, March 6, 2019). This happens when an initiate is mandated to sit on the sacred stone (Avotri, 2009) to prove her innocence as a virgin, hence victorious. The researcher observed that the colour of beads dominant among initiates for Dipo dress fashion were blue and yellow while beads of colours white, and red/wine were rarely used/seen on most initiates. This give indication that beads of colours white, and red/wine are very expensive and could be afforded by some few families/ initiates.

According to Abbey (2016, p.19), blue beads called *Koli* means something valuable, Yellow beads called '*Bordom*' signified maturity and prosperity is said to possess magical powers while white beads signified respect for the gods and ancestors for priest and priestesses. In contemporary times beads used for Dipo dress fashion are counting in varieties of new colours and designs such as, green, violet, and old beads such as blue and yellow to make aesthetic combinations. Apart from the *krala* being used as a

loin cloth, again, it is cut into square shapes (white cape), wet with water and placed on initiates' heads (Huber, 1963 as cited by Boakye, 2010, p.47; Adjaye, 1999) which signifies victory and it is kept not to fall (B. Kofi, personal communication, March 6, 2019). In example, an initiate placed her hands firmly on the white cape to keep it in position as shown in Figure 6 as the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) trend of the victory dress fashion. This practice which started in the early 2000s, then evident in 2017 is currently in practice. The researcher confirms with Huber (1963) as cited by Boakye, (2010, p.57) that the purpose to be achieved with the goat fat, as a classical Dipo practice, but replaced with the white cape, is still intact in contemporary times when verified under the conditions of Dipo cultural values. Next, the white cape is replaced with a conical hat called *Dipo bee* as the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) trend of victory dipo dress fashion. The *Dipo bee* which is an olden day practice before the 1950 was used in the 1980, 1990, 2012 and 2014 is sacred to the people of Krobo, used once in a life time of a Dipo girl. The Okomo (head of the jemele) and head priest, who takes the name of Nana Kloweki even though he is a male, also use the conical hat (Shaibu, personal communication 6, March 5, 2019).

The researcher observed that when the Dipo girls are about to be crowned with *Dipo bee*, they sit on the floor in queues and spread their legs parallel. Then the ritual leader (priest or priestess or *yomoyo*) repeats the action of bringing down the *Dipo bee* to the floor and then lifted up to touch the Dipo girls' head. The action is repeated two times after which the last count as three; the hat is placed on each girl's head (Adjaye, 1999; Kumetey, 2009). In my opinion, *Dipo bee* is probably classified as an important woven hat because it is not just used by Dipo girls only but also by the *Okomo* and Nana Kloweki as the most powerful and important personalities in the Krobo communities. Due to the status accorded *Dipo bee* by the Krobo people, it is used as a sign that one had really been through the Dipo rite. Also, the year 2012 marked a fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) trend in victory dipo dress

fashion as an initiate disguises the woven hat from view with a piece of white fabric as seen in Figure 10, it meant that *Dipo bee* could not be worn “*anyhow*”. The researcher observed that only the qualified Dipo girls from the sacred stone visit wore *Dipo bee* or woven hat. The characteristic of the *Dipo bee* tied with a long white fabric strips is to make sure it holds firm and fits perfectly on initiates’ head and therefore must not be removed because it followed a ritual practice before it was put on initiates’ head. Baidoo (personal communication, March 6, 2019) confirms *Dipo bee* symbolically crowns the Dipo girls as well as shields their skull. The researcher juxtaposes *Dipo bee* with the crown of Queen Nefertiti of the old Egyptian kingdom and realised that the conical shape of this *Dipo bee* have similarities in height and status in their respective societies. The researcher observed that Figure 11 shows an unusual dress code of a Dipo girl in white loin fabric with African wax print cloth as cover cloth. The researcher realised that this dress code did not connote any known Dipo dress fashion as far as Dipo rite is concerned. Meanwhile, its resemblance can be traced from the cleansing initiation stage where initiates use wax print cloths as a cover cloth over red loin fabrics. It can also be deduced that, perhaps, the initiate does not have enough beads to be used for the rite hence sought for the wax print cloth. In that instance, the initiate’s family may be classified as poor because the people of Krobo deem it that possession of plenty beads signify wealth.

Now that the dipo initiates have been justified victorious, they are prepared to be inaugurated to the public to prove that their effort in maintaining chastity is worth celebrating and now upgraded to womanhood by the dress fashion they show.



Figure 6. An initiate adorned with white fabric as loincloth and breast coverage. She shows many and varieties of beads at her waist, arms wrist, and neck, across the shoulders and knee. White fabric strips and spongy fibres run crisscross while holding a stick with leaf in the mouth (Source: courtesy Cita photos, 2017).



Figure 7. An initiate adorned with white fabric as loin cloth with bare breast. She wears few beads at her waist, arms, neck and knee which is complemented with conical woven straw hat. (Source: courtesy Cita photos, 1980s).



Figure 8. An initiate adorned with white fabric as loin cloth with bare breast. She wears many, varieties of beads at the waist, arms and neck complemented with conical woven straw hat, and a yellow band tied to the left arm (Source: courtesy Cita photos, 1990s).



Figure 9. Two initiates adorned with white fabric as loin cloth with bare breast. They wear beads at their waist, arms, neck, wrist and knee complemented with conical woven straw hat tied with a strip of white fabric (Source: courtesy Cita photos, 2014).



Figure 10. An initiate wears a conical woven straw hat covered with white fabric  
(Source: courtesy Shaibu photos, 2012).



Figure 11. An initiate adorned with white fabric as loin cloth wrapped over with African wax print cloth and bare breast. (Source: courtesy Cita photos, 2018).

#### 4.1.4 *Dress-up*

The interferences by the Ghanaian colonial masters and particularly the Basel missionaries' increased demands for an end to some traditional religious practices of the Krobo people resulted in a ban on Dipo (Wilson 1991, p.65 as cited by Steegstra, 2005, p.23). Although certain changes on Dipo dress fashion were strictly demanded by these foreigners, the researcher believes the demand to end Dipo was a result of the fetishism alleged to be associated with the Dipo practice. However, the missionaries realised that the implications of fetishism were destruction to humanity because Dipo girls were previously confounded for months from formal education which is against the constitutional right to basic free education. This demand by the “Basel missionaries finally ensued as the chief at the time, named Sir Emmanuel Mate-Kole, wanted to meet the demands of the people of Krobo as well as the pressure from the Basel missionaries” (Abbey, 2016, p. 2, 3). He therefore introduced an alternative ceremony in the Dipo rite, in a revised form called *Bobum* literally meaning dressing up.

In contemporary times, the yearning for some changes in Dipo dress fashion is still persisting and much stronger in contemporary times because of how teenagers are now exposed to other cultures through the internet. The *bobum* practice was a cover-up for the abolished Dipo such as the performance of rituals. Since then, the *bobum* practice has been accepted by Krobo people and has transcended to being the final stage and the climax of the Dipo rite that is dressing up and outdoor of newly promoted Krobo women. The dressing up now comprises *Newuom* and *Kawɔ*. The researcher affirms that the changes in Dipo dress fashion are dictated by the Dipo initiators of the various Krobo societies. This is confirmed by Baidoo (personal communication, March 6, 2019) that it is the king and his traditional council who effect such major changes in Dipo.

According to Affum (2009, p. 91) “Dipo ceremony becomes significant for families of the initiates to show how wealthy they are” by offering an opportunity for successful initiates who have passed the test of the sacred stone to be richly decorated in many ornaments such as pile of beads and jewellerys. These “ornaments are hanged around initiate’s neck, arms and waist etc such that if there are enough beads, the nakedness of the initiate’s chest and pubic area are covered” (Affum, 2009, p. 76). The researcher observed that, among all the major stages of the Dipo dress fashion, it is this dress up stage which is largely imitated by most Ghanaians.

As part of the outdoor of the initiates, rich Dipo girls displayed assorted necklaces comprising beads and gold chains. In the indigenous times, when beads and gold chains were not too common, pieces of cut bamboo sticks were arranged with a string and was used as necklaces as shown in Figure 18. In contemporary times, bamboo necklaces, as a Dipo dress fashion item, have faded into oblivion, replaced with jewellerys and beads. Also, textiles product of colourful and expensive *Kente* and African wax prints cloths were the most used fabrics during this stage of Dipo dress fashion. The researcher observed that African wax print cloths dominated in use by initiates during the first dress up called *Newuom* whiles *Kente* dominated in use by initiates for the second dress up known as *Kawɔ*.

In the first dress up of the Dipo rite that is *Newuom*, literally meaning wearing things or wearing many cloths, African wax print fabrics were used as loin cloths which hanged from waist beads at different positions around initiates’ body covering the thighs, groin, hips and buttocks, draping lengthwise towards the feet of the Dipo girl as shown in Figures 12, 13,14,15,16 and 17. Before the early 1980s and 1986 to present day Ghana, the dress up shown in Figures 12, 13, 14 and 16 by the initiates represents the first (1<sup>st</sup>) trend in *newuom* dipo dress fashion with intiates either baldhead, or traditional head gear

or wig as complemented hairstyles. Furthermore, initiates who had plenty beads to display wore some over the wax loin cloths around the waist as shown in Figures 13 and 16, while those without enough beads tie another wax print cloth or any other cloth (mostly *Kente*) around the waist as shown in Figures 12 and 13. An indication from some of the Figures informs that initiates who wore the same wax print loins cloths mostly belonged to the same family or clan.

Also, the researcher observed that the different colours of African wax print loin cloths were aesthetically harmonious as different colours of the wax print cloths were worn by the initiates. Although these wax print cloths had different motif designs and arrangement styles, they connoted some Ghanaian traditional symbolisms such as: *Obaapa*, *Twa-benkum*, *Nsubra*, *Efie-abosia* (Figure 14), *Akonfem* (Figure 3) etc; abstract designs from cloth brands such as; *Hi-target*, *Vlisco* etc; western imported textile prints from Holland which did not have any connection with the ceremony because the dress up stage was not the idea of Dipo initiators' but the Christian missionaries. However, parents sorted for these new and expensive brands of wax print cloths for their daughters (initiates) to be elegantly adorned (Abbey, 2016), since the elaborateness of an initiate's outdoor regalia gave indication of how humble and respectful, she was (Adjaye, 1999; Glozah & Lawani, 2014). The researcher analysed the effort of parents with the elaborate of the Dipo girls; suggesting that the Dipo girls received the best of upbringing while they maintained good behavioural practices hence attracted such honour from parents. Although breast exposure is believed to have started in the 2000, in 2013, it was practiced and recorded as the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) trend under *newuom* dipo dress fashion. This is shown in Figure 17 where an initiate covers her chest with a wax print fabric. This type of *newuom* dipo dress fashion comes as preference over the first trend of *newuom* dress fashion.

In another development, one important item that verified and marked the initiates as Krobo women is the white yarn band which is characterised by fluffy ends which was tied around the left arms of initiates to replace yellow dye raffia at this stage of the Dipo dress fashion (B. Kofi, personal communicational, March 6, 2019). Generally, the evolution in Dipo rite that introduced *bubom* opened the door for western infiltrations such as hairstyles, footwears and dress accessories into the Dipo dress fashion. It was observed in the year 2012 that an initiate wore a Nigerian headgear style, as (*Alata*) shown in Figure 15. This indicates the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) trend of *newuom* dress fashion which characterises a spectacular influence of Nigerian headgear style with a wrapper fabric.

From Figure 18, it can be observed that the footwear worn by the initiate is a rubber slipper (Ghanaian bathroom slippers) popularly called *kyalewote* which was probably trending in the latter years of 20<sup>th</sup> century during Dipo ceremonies. Also, in the beginning years of 21<sup>st</sup> century, initiates wore leather slippers to complement the dress ups (*Newuom* and *Kawɔ*) in Figures 14, 16 and 20. This century also attributed the introduction of some dress accessories such as purse, dressing bags; rings bracelets used by initiates to complement the Dipo dress up styles evident in Figures 16, 17, 19 and 20. It should be noted that this stage of dipo still allows initiates to be examined even though they are inaugurated as women. But the final affirmation comes when they are fully dressed in two pieces of cloth which they celebrate in the second day of the dress up.



Figure 12. An initiate dressed in the first Dipo outdoor dress up style thus wax print loin cloth hung on waist beads. (Source: courtesy Shaibu photos, 1980s).



Figure 13. Priest dressed in all white fabric wearing conical straw woven hat seated in the middle and surrounded by initiates in their final ceremony regalia (Source: courtesy Chief Priest, 1986).





Figure 14. Two initiates (teenager and pre-schooler) dressed in their final ceremony regalia (Source: courtesy Chief Priest, 2000s).



Figure 15. An initiate dressed in the first Dipo outdoor dress up thus wax print loincloth hung on waist beads, wears 'Alata' head gear with bare chest (Source: courtesy Shaibu photos, 2012).



Figure 16. An initiate dressed in the first Dipo outdoor dress up thus wax print loin cloth hung on waist beads and have hair cut very low with breast exposed (Source: courtesy Cita photos, 2013).



Figure 17. An initiate dressed in the first Dipo outdoor dress up thus wax print loin cloth hung on waist beads, traditional head gear and breast covered (Source: courtesy Cita photos, 2013).

The dress up of wax print loin cloth described above is called *Newuom*. This dress up is the first outdoorizing after the initiation rites, followed by *Kawɔ* (B. Kofi, personal communication, March 6, 2019). *Kawɔ* is the second type of Dipo dress fashion which means heavy cloth or wearing *Kente* cloth introduced as a type of *bobum* dipo dress fashion. This particular kind of dress up is different from *Newuom* in the sense that the dresses worn by initiates are puffed out by the many waist beads that the Dipo girls wear with *Kente* cloth covering over those beads at the stomach to signify fertility and their Krobo identity (Priest Okumo, personal communication, November 7, 2011 as cited by Ostrow, 2011, p. 15). The first (1<sup>st</sup>) trend of *Kawɔ* dipo dress fashion is shown in Figure 18 which example as a classical Dipo dress fashion. This type of *bobum* dipo dress fashion is either complemented by traditional wig or traditional headgear which depicts a Dipo girl in her womanhood which this study recorded its use in the years 1970, 2000 and 2008.

*Kente* is the most cherished woven cloth used by most initiates during this stage of *Bobum*, however, *Kente* cloths which were in display characterised different Akan names like: *abusua ye dom*, (Figure 18), *Atsem* (Figure 20), *Kyeretwie*, showing different woven design patterns of old and new ones and it is the most sought after cloth ideal for *kawɔ* dress up. The *kawɔ* dipo dress fashion is significant because it proves that the Dipo girls are now women and have the opportunity to be seen in two-yard pieces of cloths that is, one piece of cloth tied from the waist to the feet, then the other piece of cloth from the chest towards the knee (Baidoo, personal communication, March 6, 2019). According to (Boakye, 2010; Kumetey, 2009), this was the first time the Dipo girls were fully dressed after the ceremony was performed and did not expose their breasts while performing the Klama dance. In the 2000s, modernity became influential in Dipo; initiates now resort to using foreign (imported) fabrics which characterized as the second

(2<sup>nd</sup>) type of *kawɔ* dipo dress fashion. This is shown in Figures 19 and in 2008, with some initiates as shown in Figure 20. Figure 20 gives reasons to believe that *kawɔ* dipo dress fashion of first (1<sup>st</sup>) and second (2<sup>nd</sup>) trends are used altogether in contemporary times depending on the preference of the initiate. In addition, Figure 21 displays the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) trend of *kawɔ* dipo dress fashion which introduces the marrying of Dipo culture and Islamic culture. The emphasis portrays the family background of the Dipo girl which is the first of its kind recorded in the year 2012.

The researcher realized that Dipo critics never referred to *kawɔ* dress up in their critique in dipo dress fashion; likewise Krobo women who were dressed in this type of Dipo dress fashion frequently took and kept photographs for future reference to the Dipo rite.

The study shows that there have been some major changes within the stages of Dipo dress fashion practices. The researcher believes these changes took place in dispensations as far the world is still in revolution from the classical times to today's contemporary era.



Figure 18. An initiate dressed in the second Dipo outdoor dress up in two pieces of *Kente* cloth and traditional head gear and other dress accessories (Source: courtesy Cita photos, 1970).



Figure 19. An initiate dressed in the second Dipo outdoor dress up in a foreign cloth and traditional head gear and other dress accessories (Source: courtesy Cita photos, 2000s).



Figure 20. A section of initiates at a durbar dressed in the second Dipo outdoor dress up in two pieces of various local and foreign cloths with some initiates either in traditional head gear and wigs and other dress accessories (Source: courtesy Cita photos, 2008).



Figure 21. An initiate dressed in the second Dipo outdoor dress up in two pieces of foreign cloth and wears Islamic veil style (mayafi) instead of the traditional head gear (Source: courtesy Cita photos, 2012).

#### **4.1.5 The revolutions and trends in Dipo dress fashion of the Krobo people in Ghana**

The Dipo rite of the people of Krobo is an unstable culture because it has experienced frequent influences and cultural shifts which reprehend the originality of some Dipo dress fashion practices. This affected some classical Dipo dress fashion practices such as goat intestines used as necklace and goat fat as cape. Therefore initiators (custodians) of the Dipo rite had no choice of maintaining this archaic culture because the Krobo people, as Ghanaians, were under British colonial rule which also gave way to Christian missionary infiltrations. The option for Dipo initiators (custodians) then became the possibility of perpetuating this Krobo tradition throughout generations. Dipo initiators therefore liaised with the foreigners to make changes in some Dipo dress fashion practices. The first major change which struck Dipo dress fashion was the introduction of the dress up or *Bobum*. *Bobum* has since been fused successfully with the initiation stages as the final ceremony of the Dipo rite and the last Dipo dress fashion in contemporary times. In the latter years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Christians, gender advocates and human right activists continued the critique on some Dipo dress fashion practices in contemporary times. The revolutionary agenda is that Dipo dress fashion is indecent, dehumanises womanhood and infringes on human right to freedom. Because this agenda had no place in democratic environment, the classical practice of Dipo dress fashion shifted trends from the barring of breast to covering of the breast. Dipo initiators till now have constantly taken decisions to reorganise Dipo rite to suit contemporary demands of critics and some Dipo initiates. Also, raffia and strips of calico as dress fashion items replaced goat intestines likewise cut square shape of calico used as cape replaced goat fat.

The photographic data collected in this study, showed evidences that in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Dipo dress fashion assumed a new leaf throughout the initiation and dress up stages of the Dipo rite. The revolution characterised a blend of different African and western cultural infiltrations into the Dipo dress fashion. For example, in the initiation stages, classical dress fashion revealed much nakedness of the Dipo girls from the upper part of their body and hips; with the exception of the loin cloths which covered the buttocks and genital areas (as shown in Figure 2 and Figure 6). The current trends have been mechanised to suit the preference of critics as Figures 3, 4 and Figure 10 shows initiates' wrap wax print cloths over loin cloths to hide the hips, buttocks, genital areas and breast. It should be noted that both classical and contemporary Dipo dress fashion are practiced together based on each initiates' preference. But for some few initiates, being allowed to cover the breast is the only way Dipo initiators intend to ensure the continuity of the Dipo rite. The researcher believes Dipo is assuming more flexibility to have new dress fashion styles than Dipo initiators can control.

Lastly, the inception of Dipo dress up (*Newuom* and *Kawɔ*) paved way to the influx of western influences on Dipo dress fashion such that industrially produced white fluffy cotton yarns replaced locally dyed yellow raffia as arm bands, as shown in visual analysis with Figures 12 and 14. Also initiates now introduced metal ornaments (bracelets, earrings, rings and necklaces), carried dressing bags, purses and wear slippers to complement their Dipo dress fashion. Furthermore, hair dressing and head gear styles such as shaving hair, traditional head gear and traditional wigs of the classical times were still practiced by initiates in contemporary times alongside modern wigs which showed differences between. In recent times, influences from other African and religious cultures such as Nigerian traditional headgear style (*Alata style*) and Islamic headgear style (veil

of Muslim women; *Mayafi*) featured as new trends in Dipo dress fashion in contemporary Ghana.

Notwithstanding, dipo rite is considered as one of the faces or renowned Ghanaian cultures that is uniquely practiced. Unfortunately, it has been carried negatively with regards to some dress fashion practices of which some authors have pronounced bitterly. Therefore, yearning for change in practice in some aspects of the rite has led to several critical review or examination.

## **4.2 Critiques on Dipo dress fashion**

Dipo rites and its accompanied dress fashion practices have been the concern of so many people. These concerns represent issues on human rights, doctrinal difference and mythical beliefs which have created cultural clash between Christians and Dipo initiators. Due to the level this Krobo culture has thrived in contemporary Ghana, it became appropriate for the researcher to seek videos, audios and text document of authors whose comments were related to the issues on Dipo dress fashion. These comments characterised as judgmental and non-judgmental of Dipo dress fashion practices and matched the criterion of selecting, grouping and examining under the context and content of critique based on authors' views. Furthermore, the researcher discussed and analysed authors' comments by unfolding the subject matter in order to understand the various make up elements to link the contents and contexts of a critique based on the researcher's observations and conclusions on the subject matter. The researcher identified fifteen critiques on Dipo dress fashion which are presented in this study.

### **4.2.1 *Textual analysis on Critiques against Dipo dress fashion***

First and foremost, although “the initiators of Dipo may have included the baring of breasts for purposeful and significant reasons modern society regards it as indecent

and obsolete” (Sackey, 2009, p. 285). The statement describes that humans have existed since time immemorial and have lived through different generations, dispensations and revolutions while existing on the earth. This reality still lingers as the old and young generations create a generational gap between initiators and initiates of the Dipo rite, based on each generations’ perceptions, beliefs, experiences and practices in the contemporary times. Meanwhile, Dipo initiators have lived with the traditional norms of Dipo rite since its inception, continually, until western ideologies and practices transformed this Krobo culture, especially on breast covering. On the other hand, current Dipo initiates and critics of Dipo believe that some traditional Dipo practices such as barring of breast needed to be revoked because it does not fit into modern values. Unfortunately, this decision to dictate a different direction in Dipo dress fashion is in the powers of the traditional council of the Manya Krobo, who are the current initiators (custodians) of the Dipo rite. In confirmation to the above, the author stated that “the initiators of Dipo may have included the baring of breasts for purposeful and significant reasons” in achieving a wholesome personality of a Dipo-yi as a cultural demand. The researcher believes Dipo initiators who instituted this concept of transition have generally been misunderstood and misinterpreted, more especially by Dipo critics who put breast exposure to extinction in contemporary times. The author admitted that Dipo dress fashion of breast exposure is significant under the Krobo cultural conditions but modern society regards it as an intentional way Dipo initiators are acquainting Dipo girls with indecent dress attitudes. Again, Dipo dress fashion practice of exposing initiates breast is regarded obsolete in modern society probably due to the fact that initiates are demanding for breast covering in contemporary times or the breast exposure attracted lustful men rather than detecting pregnancy or sexual misconduct. According to the researcher, the stance by modern people on Dipo rite as indecent and obsolete must be boycotted because

it carries European agenda which tends to devalue the African traditional culture to impose western ideologies on Africans. On the other hand, the concept of modernity is worthwhile if Dipo dress fashion of breast exposure reflects evidences of social vices in the Krobo communities.

Christians argue that Dipo Rite is not too bad, but just that the dressing of the initiates is outmoded and therefore needs some modifications (Hudson, 1986; Schroeder & Danquah, 2000 as cited by Emeffa and Selase, 2014, p.136). The general perception of people about Dipo dress fashion is between the Christians and Krobo people. Based on traditional values of dressing which strikes a significant balance in contemporary times. Christians are of the view that Dipo dress fashion in contemporary Ghana needs an improvement and modification on what they describe as indecency of Dipo girls. The various Christian Bodies in Ghana (the Orthodox, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches), all stand against some Dipo dress fashion practices, especially the baring of initiate's breast. Meanwhile, some orthodox churches have been flexible on the Dipo rite despite instituting an initiation program in place. These orthodox churches allowed their Krobo female church members to go through the Dipo rite by covering the breast and resisting the presumed fetishism associated with the ceremony. The researcher believes it is a crafty way of evangelising Krobo people into Christianity yet making them believe they still have a place in their traditional culture. Unlike the orthodox churches, the Pentecostals and the Charismatic churches detest every bit of the Dipo rite, to the fact that whether you participate partially or fully (by covering the breast and resisting the presumed fetishism) you are still paying homage to the gods or deities which deviates the Christian commandments of serving only God as supreme. The researcher examined the analogy between the Christian bodies and concluded that the orthodox churches are flexible on the Dipo rite hence ideally preferred by the Krobo people. But the Pentecostals

and Charismatic churches are very strict on the rite hence its extinction or banning is a priority. From the times of Johannes Zimmerman, the missionary of Basel missions, to present Christian societies, the recommendations expressed by Christian Dipo critics are that some Dipo dress fashion practices are outmoded in contemporary times because they are no longer serving the intended purposes of which Dipo girls were mandated to comply. Since modern values are dominating the developments in the Ghanaian societies. The researcher deduced that it is the concern of Christians that some Dipo dress fashion should require some modification of breast covering over the formal practice of breast exposure. But in reality, this is not nearing change in some Krobo communities because it is found to Dipo initiators that Christianity is rigging them of their cultural heritage.

According to “*Manye Nartekie*, the exposure of the breast put the Dipo girls at risk because some lustful men took advantage of these girls after the initiation” (Modern Ghana, 2007, para. 3). The Krobo people like any other ethnic group in Ghana, have lived alone in their various communities of settlements; the incidence of social vices were one in a million in the classical times. But immediately Europeans infiltrated their lands, coupled with the influx of population growth, trading and cross-cultural marriages, the rate of crime increased. The *Manye Nartekie*, realising the changes between these time periods (classical and contemporary times), publicly expressed her concern regarding Dipo dress fashion of breast exposure. This decision was based on the fact that lustful men took advantage (sexual pleasure) of innocent Dipo initiates who had now become Krobo women. And with that status as a Krobo woman, indulging in sexual acts that does not attract punishment on the girl and man involved. The *Manye Nartekie* in contemporary Ghana can be referred as one of the initiators (custodians) of Dipo rite and a powerful queen mother in Kroboland. Therefore, she has the chieftaincy authority to influence and enforce decisions on Dipo rite and its associate dress fashion practices, of

which any comments or responses related to that means an authentic information. The *Manye nartekie*, with her status as a queen mother, is believed to have first class experiences on Dipo rite. Therefore, as a *yomoyo* and an old initiate of the Dipo rite, she experienced the classical Dipo dress fashion practices (breast exposure, goat intestines hanged round the neck etc) which makes her stance on breast exposure a delicate reference to ban or modify this practice in contemporary times. The researcher is of the view that the statement by *Manye Nartekie* slacks the idea of perpetuating the Dipo rite; however, her stance on Dipo dress fashion needs to be scrutinised to ascertain its importance in contemporary times. On the contrary, the statement by the traditional ruler is a good advocacy to curb lustful men taking advantage of the Dipo girls. The researcher analyses that when the Dipo girls are paraded publicly during the Dipo rite, while their breasts are exposed, men feel attracted to these Dipo girls. After the ceremony, these men express these feelings with the intentions of having sexual pleasures with the Dipo girls. Unfortunately, such innocent Dipo girls who are now Krobo women fall prey to the lust of these men who noticed them during the rite.

“The missionaries saw the exposure of the body and breasts of the Dipo girls as evidence of the sensuality of *the Negro* because successful initiates were richly ornamented with beautiful beads around their hips and presented to the public” (Nyarko, 2009, p.11). From the statement above, it can be concluded that the perception of the missionaries towards the Dipo girls was an unfriendly one. In my opinion, the missionaries carved their own (wrong) interpretation to initiates exposing their bodies and breasts to mean sensuality, which instead, is symbolical and a cultural demand in Dipo dress fashion practice. The missionaries falsely accused Africans (*Negros*) to be indulging in such practices as a way of soliciting sexual pleasure. The missionaries, mostly Europeans (whites), convinced of their lies (false interpretation of the African

culture) on the black race, coined evidence that how the initiates had displayed beads on their body in public is a way of pleading for sexual gratification. The researcher believes that because the missionaries are aimed to supposedly evangelise people into Christianity (their belief and doctrinal system); the people of Krobo were targeted as victims. But these missionaries realised that some Christian beliefs and doctrinal practices were not compatible with the some Dipo dress fashion practices, making influences on the Krobo people very difficult. However, the missionaries sought to tarnish the image of the Dipo rite by misleading the essence of the breast exposure in order to indoctrinate the Krobo people. The researcher found that Dipo rite is performed in four major stages that is the cleansing initiation, victory initiation and two different dress ups (*Newuom* and *Kawɔ*). Meanwhile the author's descriptions focused on the dress up stage; attributing that it is how Africans show their sexual desires. To the Krobo people, exposing their breast is a sign of womanhood and a way the Dipo girls were being examined for signs of pregnancy or sexual immorality. Again, the missionaries described that "initiates were richly ornamented with beautiful beads around their hips and paraded in public". The people of Krobo are widely known to cherish beads therefore its assortment on an initiate in public symbolises the wealth of the family and a way of showing off. Also, initiators create evidence by the initiates with the Krobo community that the Dipo girls have been successful throughout the initiations stages to now assume womanhood. The researcher believes the statement presented by the author raises an act of racism (offensive) as the word *Negro* deforms the values of the Dipo rite hence the people of Krobo are making sexual slaves of themselves.

The Dipo girls traditionally called Dipo -yi are dressed in beautiful cloth only from the waist to the knee level. The upper part of the body is exposed festooned with colourful and assorted beads. The exposure of their breasts for everyone to see signifies that, they are transforming into adulthood, after which no one will see them again. You see, as demons or satanic forces also enjoyed beautiful

things, don't you think demons can invade into our women as they exposed their bodies and make them promiscuous (News Ghana, 2015, para. 5).

The description given in the statement above is either the victory initiation dipo dress fashion or *Newuom* dipo dress fashion which have mystical beliefs surrounding the promiscuity people are linking to female Krobo indigenes. However, the author is uncertain about the issues alleged to Krobo women; because they have publicly exposed their breast as culture demanded. The researcher deduced that as Dipo initiates are dressed in beautiful cloth only from the waist to the knee level, it means that the Dipo girls are modestly/decently dressed and immodestly/indecently dressed with their breast exposed on the upper part of their body. Excerpt the hanging beads from the neck that disguised the breast partially naked. The differences opined by the researcher that the upper part of the initiate's body indecent dressed and lower part of the body decently dressed, is traditionally acceptable and symbolic as a Dipo dress fashion practice. In confirmation, the author expressed that breast exposure in public signifies transformation of Dipo girls into adulthood, after which no one will see them again. In contemporary sense, if there should be a comparative analysis between the Dipo dress fashions as expressed by the author with a prescribed school uniform, Dipo dress fashion is matched as indecent in modern societies. Despite the fact that Dipo dress fashion has been leveraged from modern dress values of indecency, by the cultural symbolisms of the Krobo people, the author insist on questioning whether dipo dress fashion has a mystical results on the Krobo women. The researcher viewed such mystical stories as irrational.

“But do you not think that the Dipo rite that allowed our women to expose their naked bodies to the communities, the gods could probably account for the promiscuity people are linking to the Krobo women” (Obu, 2015, para. 8)? In instituting the Dipo rite, one of the modalities spelt out by the Dipo initiators on Dipo dress fashion, is for

initiates to expose their naked bodies in public for purposeful reasons such as examining the girls for pregnancy. Meanwhile, Dipo critics think otherwise, alleging that the Dipo girls are promiscuous. Therefore, the author is in a dilemma and rhetorically questioning who or what may have caused the alleged promiscuity in Krobo women? The researcher bemoaned that this embarrassment on Dipo rite by Dipo critics is propaganda against the nakedness associated with Dipo dress fashion practices. In answering the first question, the author again asked; could it be the gods of the Krobo land infecting Krobo women with promiscuity? The demand of the author's second question sought to make known how the people of Krobo revere their gods/ ancestors and their evil spiritual powers that could descend on a mortal being. But the reality is that Dipo dress fashion has accumulated more questioning than any other initiation rite in Ghana. Therefore, the author is baffled by instigating whether the true purpose of women exposing their naked bodies in Dipo rite is truly worthy in contemporary times? According to Dipo initiators, there is no intent of promiscuity for Dipo girls by exposing their naked bodies in public. However, it is inconsiderate of Dipo critics linking Krobo women to promiscuity hence the author left the answer of the statement to the reader's discretion.

Johannes Zimmermann in a report described the Shai and Krobo Dipo girls he saw in a market almost naked but for the many glass beads and other jewellery they wore. He calls them 'a kind of female Nazarenes whose nakedness however doesn't match with their oaths of chastity (Steegestra, 2002, p. 211).

The writer in this context is Johannes Zimmermann who had a personal experience with the Krobo group who lived in the Shai areas. Zimmermann realised that the Shai just like the Krobo group and the Nazarenes of Israel, in a cross-cultural analysis, have similar purpose in female empowerment but it is all hypocrisy. Johannes Zimmerman was a missionary who happened to be stationed in Africa, specifically Ghana, among the Shai, who also practice dipo to share the doctrines of his Christian

faith. He stayed with the Dangbe people for some years writing his experiences with them. Johannes Zimmermann stayed longer with the Shai group. He found out that the Dipo rite matched contrary to the doctrines of his faith. However, in writing, Zimmerman critiqued the way the Dipo girls dressed and the traditional doctrines that permitted this practice. For him, his doctrinal faith on modest dressing regards Dipo dress fashion practice as indecent and highly provocative. When He saw the Dipo girls partially naked with the exception that the beads they wore covered a lot more of their body. During the Dipo rite, assorted beads and other jewellerys are hanged round initiates' neck which rest and cover the chest areas hence disguising the breast. In another development, Zimmerman thought of Nazarenes, and reflected their attitude of rebellion towards Jesus Christ from biblical references, following the laws of Moses. Meanwhile this analogy of the Law of Moses describes reference to Jesus Christ. But in reality, the Nazarenes (jewa) detest him. Zimmerman likened these Israelis (Nazarenes) to the Shai; apparently, their cultures are different but for some reasons, they are similar. Because Zimmerman believes the morality to be achieved by the Dipo girls during and after the Dipo rite does not correlate the Dipo dress fashion practices they show by it in reality.

Reverend Ministers, Priests and Pastors at public gatherings regarding the nudity of Dipo regularly reported in newspapers that, the nude girls will present a negative, primitive image of Ghanaians and if care is not taken, this can lead to rape and immoral behaviour Hudson (1998) and Schroeder & Danquah (2000) as cited by Emefa and Selase (2014, p.136).

In Ghana, the clergy regularly rebuts information published by newspaper companies on the nudity of the Dipo girls. These newspapers are distributed across the country and so with the information they carry on Dipo nudity. The newspapers however transcend information visually and permanently that are personally kept as library by readers. These images on Dipo nudity tend to arouse sexual desires in men when they see it; they get adrenaline uncontrollably and are tempted to rape. Due to this, the Christian

communities in Ghana regard Dipo as an abominable tradition of fetishism and unchaste culture. The consequences of inserting these naked images in newspapers tend to be a substitute for pornographic materials which unknowingly breeds immoral behaviour in men. Because clergymen are influential and highly instituted personalities in the Ghanaian communities, any comment from them attracts so much publicity from journalists. Publishers therefore quote clergymen on various issues on Dipo rite of which some comments relate that some Dipo dress fashions are old practices and have faded out in contemporary times. The clergy cautioned that the contemporary Dipo dress fashion of breast covering over the primitive practice of breast exposure should be guarded strictly, less it abruptly misleads people to indulge in rape and other immoral activities which will present Ghanaians as uncultured, uncivilised and abusers of human rights.

Some initiates evaluated some of the stages in Dipo rites as embarrassing and a form of ridicule in modern times because they were forced to undergo the ceremony. Some initiates reported different psychological challenges as photographs of their exposed bodies were used for souvenirs. Few other initiates left the community because men have seen their naked bodies (Abbey, 2016, p. 5).

The statement above inform that after some Dipo initiates had examined the conditions on Dipo dress fashion practice that permitted their bodies to be exposed publicly, they concluded that it posed psychological challenges on their health because they were forced to perform the Dipo rite. The greatest part of this trauma is experienced when a person sees photographs of herself dressed during the dipo rite. During this time, recruitment of the Dipo girls is done by their families or relatives. These recruits (Dipo girls) become the direct beneficiaries of the ceremony; they are therefore the Dipo initiates. Henceforth initiates are to comply with the rules and guidelines of the Dipo rite including classical and modern practices of the Dipo dress fashion as culture demands. The researcher believes that modern values on Dipo breast covering, raises more obscurity on traditional Dipo dress fashion of breast exposure, making Dipo breast

exposure unfit in contemporary Ghana. Therefore, it becomes so embarrassing and a form of ridicule for school going initiates to contending harshly and resistive to their own culture (Dipo rite). But with their relatives luring and threatening them, they comply to perform the Dipo rite. Years after the Dipo initiate had performed the Dipo rite; photographs of their exposed bodies are seen used for souvenirs. This breaks the initiates into pains (mental and emotional distress) gingering them to questioning, scrutinising and assessing some stages and practices of the Dipo rite. However, years after the rite had been performed; photographs of their exposed bodies are used for souvenirs. The researcher identified that images of initiates were used for commercial activities without their consent. These breach the professional ethics of work and an abuse of fundamental human rights which is a criminal offense. To the initiates, there is no compensation to quench the embarrassment and the ridicule experienced, because men had seen their naked bodies. As a result of that the initiates flee or migrate from their communities to elsewhere to avoid revealing their past state; hence not seeing those men who saw their naked bodies again is the only therapy to cure the psycho.

An initiate tore up her pictures. This action is not just the result of embarrassment as a result of being exposed but the possibility of having others view the pictures in future. The advocacy for initiates to cover up a lot more during initiation might help address this issue (Boakye 2010, p. 92).

The comment by the author accounts that an initiate's hasty tear up of her own pictures was the best way to avoid future embarrassment because some Dipo dress fashion practices allowed their breast to be exposed in public. Meanwhile, the initiate's action could have been avoided if Dipo initiates were dressed to cover a lot more of their bodies during the Dipo rite. In my opinion Dipo dress fashion as expressed by the author shows disparity by the initiates who go through the Dipo rite. These issues have been on discussions by critics on several occasions. As a result of that initiates who are affected

by the Dipo rite and its associate dress fashion practices could not hold the emotional and psychological trauma therefore reacted physically by tearing up their own pictures. The researcher advocates that the exposure of the initiate's body is inherent with Dipo cultural values after observing several images of different initiates. Therefore the initiates could have kept her pictures more privately for posterity but some video and photograph recordable technologies such as cameras; phones etc are so sophisticated to make such Dipo images go viral. Therefore, the author also advocates that it is appropriate to cover sensitive parts of the body since softcopy images can be encrypted to prevent easy discarding and cannot be torn up

I disagree with the binary approach, which puts modernity and tradition as antithesis namely: modernity equals rationality and tradition equals continuity (irrationality), some aspects of our behaviour indeed tend to endorse this Eurocentric view of tradition. For example, the nudity associated with Dipo has been abolished so that the breasts are now covered (Sackey, 2009, p. 285).

Most African traditional practices are characterised by rigidity and has persisted for a long time of which classical Dipo dress fashion is part. However, some influences from religious groups and western culture have come to change some aspect of this African traditional cultures likewise Dipo rite making some Dipo dress fashion practices assume a new trend in contemporary Ghana. The reality is that; modernity and African traditions are not the same but they correlate with each other based on one's experiences. These two cultures therefore become hypnotic in an initiate's life which are very difficult to separate. Because of that repetitive critiques have been raised on Dipo dress fashion of breast exposure, therefore gradually bringing this tradition practice to total abolishment to make way for covering initiates breast of Dipo dress fashion. The debate expressed by the author that modernity is reasonable and tradition unreasonable demeans the truth about the African culture. It should be stated emphatically that the aspect of our behaviour that endorses modernity does so to enhance traditional cultural decay such that Dipo rite

and its associate dress fashion practices are perpetuated in contemporary times. Therefore, it affords the Krobo indigenes and other cultures to appreciate and control excessive modern values in our societies because what would the Africans become if they lose all their cultural identity in contemporary times.

In an editorial of the weekly newspaper People and Places (P&P - October 8-14, 1998), the dressing of some Ghanaian women was characterised as going against Ghanaian traditions as ‘no serious man would take such a woman as a wife’. It is a shame to see our women semi-naked in their dressing with their breast and abdomen showing (Emefa and Selase, 2014, p. 139).

In the Ghanaian culture, one of the marriage criteria for men is modest dressing of their partners which attributes to an individual as a well cultured person. Therefore, it is a shame for such a man to marry a woman who dresses shabbily with the breast and abdomen exposed. Traditionally, the Ghanaian woman is presumed as modestly dressed when she wears Kaba (to cover the chest and abdomen), slit (to cover from the waist down to the feet) and then cover cloth. However, the consequences of a woman’s immodesty or indecent dressing in the African culture can make her unmarried for a long time. But in contemporary times, in that case, are shabbily dressed women attracted by men? Among some Ghanaian cultures, it is mostly the Dipo rite which allows initiates to be half-naked, contrary to the Ghanaian concept of decency. More importantly, the researcher observed that Dipo dress fashion of breast and abdomen exposure is presumed as indecent. Instead, it is symbolical to the Krobo people. However, it is incomparable with western indecent dress fashion which has no cultural symbolism but provocative character. The author henceforth entreats men that Dipo rite cannot be an ideal culture to select a wife which is vividly contradicting with the purpose of the Dipo rite. The researcher advised that it is better for a ‘responsible man’ seeking a Krobo woman as life partner, based his criteria of selection on respect, hardworking and intelligence rather than focusing on her Dipo dressing.

Again, in an interview Professor Nketiah granted to the 'The Standard' a Ghanaian newspaper, in 1998, he argues that 'beads around the waist of a Ghanaian woman give a feminine shape to the figure' therefore if they are removed and replaced by a string with a single bead, the action first represents the first step of stripping the girls and it continues and in fact escalates with the shaving of the lower part of the head and reaffirmed by the wearing of the loin cloth as the only item of clothing makes the initiates to be reduced to nothing' (Emefa and Selase, 2014, p.136).

From the statement above, it can be described that regular beads used around women's waist is significant because beads are used generally by women of various cultures which is believed to building a perfect and curvy figure of the females' body when growing up from infancy. But immediately the beads are used in context of Dipo dress fashion, it starts the processes of dehumanising the initiate then subsequently making her unworthy when the loin cloths are worn. On the contrary, the people of Krobo cherish beads and use it as a cultural mark in Dipo on initiates for beautification and exhibition of their family wealth. In my observation beads used by the Krobo people have not slowed down, it is still second most used item to fabrics in Dipo dress fashion; even among Ghanaians, beads are used largely to complement cloths in dressing. According to Professor Nketiah, Dipo is not worthy a cultural practice in Ghana because it is a way of dishonouring the human personality when initiates wore loin cloths and beads and hair shaved. The researcher confirms professor Nketiah's comments on Dipo hairstyles with the adage that "the glory of a woman is the hair"; so why shave an initiate's hair? The researcher later criticises professor Nketiah's comment that it is a wrong interpretation of the Dipo dress fashion because it is symbolic to the Krobo people and still relevant in practice in contemporary times.

Dipo puberty rite is a bizarre cultural practice showing images of bare chest Dipo girls (Obiorah, 2018, para. 3). The writer is believed to have had experiences with different African cultures with common values but diverse in practices. However, the

author termed Dipo culture as bizarre. This means that Dipo rite is a strange culture which does not fit into the African standard of cultural values and practices hence a rejected and unrecognised culture. Because the practice involved the barring of initiate's chest as a Dipo dress fashion practice. It is obvious that the author is not interested in the Dipo rite; perhaps, he is not a Krobo and does not share in their values. The researcher observed that Non-Krobo people mostly contributed to the critiques on Dipo dress fashion giving evidence with the author. Also, it seems Dipo rite is quite a new experience for the author so his first exploration or encounter gives an impression that the bare chest as a Dipo dress fashion practice is unconventional. The researcher suggests that the author has been biased with his conclusion on the Dipo rite which means that an in-depth knowledge into the rite would convert into appreciating Dipo dress fashion.

These Otufo (Dipo) girls are dressed with beads and abundant trinkets only. On their heads, they wear a kind of hat without brim. Looking at this exceedingly great misery of the poor black youth, I sighed by myself: Lord, have mercy on this poor race! This custom is a mighty obstacle to the gospel (Muttenez, 2005, p. 109).

The writer in this context reports his sorrowful encounter when he saw the innocent Otufo-girls (black youth) performing the Dipo rite (great misery) and wore some dipo dress fashion items such as beads, trinkets and Dipo-bee (conical woven straw hat). He realised the Otufo-girls had been brainwashed with superstitious beliefs (strange sickness will fall them) as a threat to accept performing the Dipo rite. The writer describes it as a misery on the black youth. The Dipo girls and their families depended totally on the Dipo rite for their integrity within the community. Therefore, it was so easy for the Krobo people to reject the gospel (good news about Jesus Christ) and any other culture that intended to sway them from the Dipo rite and its dress fashion practices. Hence the writer interceded in a prayer; Lord, have mercy on this poor race! The researcher concludes that the comment by the author, gives a clue that perhaps, Christians are the

oldest critics of Dipo rite. It is likely the religious battle between Dipo initiators and Christians would persist for a long time. Because, Dipo rite ceremony is still ongoing as the gospel is being preached in Krobo communities.

#### ***4.2.3 Textual analytical results on critiques of Dipo dress fashion***

The analysis presented on the comments from various authors, showed a significant domination of Non-Krobo people which suggests that Krobo indigenes in general are not documenting/publishing on their history, cultural practice and issues related to Dipo rite. Meanwhile, it is some stake holders of the Dipo rite who give chance to researchers and journalists to be interviewed on matters related to Dipo dress fashion. The critics presented in the various comments were dominated by Christians and some few modernists with the exception of the Manye Nartekie, a female Krobo who commented on the current state of the Dipo dress fashion.

The researcher identified that, breast exposure of initiates topped as the frequent critique on Dipo rite practices followed by the frequently used items such as ‘beads’/ ‘jewelleries’, ‘trinkets’, ‘woven hat’ and ‘loin cloths’ as well as ‘shaved hair of initiates’ which aroused Christians and modernists to express their views on Dipo dress fashion. The researcher believes words, phrases and expressions such ‘indecent’, ‘obsolete’, ‘outmoded’, ‘modifications’, ‘risk’, ‘evidence of the sensuality’, ‘demons or satanic forces enjoying beautiful things’, ‘promiscuous or promiscuity’, ‘nakedness doesn't match with their oaths of chastity’, ‘negative’ and ‘primitive image of Ghanaians’, ‘rape’ and ‘immoral behaviour’, ‘embarrassing’, ‘ridicule’, ‘psychological challenges’ and ‘tore up pictures’, ‘nudity associated with Dipo’, ‘no serious man would take such a woman as a wife’, ‘reduced to nothing’, ‘bizarre cultural practice’ and ‘exceedingly great misery’, all posed as elements that revealed critiques on Dipo dress fashion from various

authorities. Nonetheless, these afore-mentioned results from the contents analysed are uniquely discussed under certain contexts of critique.

#### ***4.2.4 Context and content of critiques against Dipo dress fashion***

##### *Religious differences*

Dipo dress fashion is ultimately a Krobo traditional concept in dipo rite. Unfortunately, this practice has been linked to sexual gratification, fetishism among others, by the Christian community. This puts some differences between the traditional and Christian ideologies regarding cultural values of dressing. A major example is that Christians say nakedness is immodest but custodians of the dipo rite believe it is a cultural symbolism to modesty. This issue has defined traditional dipo dress fashions as archaic/old fashioned in contemporary times. Again, the belief system of the Krobo tradition and Christian religion are barriers against each other. Among the Krobo people, the dipo dress fashion practices of breast exposure is on request by the Christian community to be abolished because it is a stumbling block against the Gospel.

##### *Generational gap*

In contemporary era, a particular trend in Dipo dress fashion is determined by generational gap. Younger generations of initiates have fiercely objected to the exposure of bodies in Dipo rite. The contention resulted from the facts that old Dipo dress fashion practices are archaic or classical and does not fit in modern times. This assumes rightfully that Dipo rite was just a societal interest for the older generation but has now reached global interest with several adjustments in practices to accommodate the younger generations in contemporary Ghana in order to perpetuate the culture.

##### *Cultural differences*

The dynamism in African traditional culture and its practices shows differences in transition. Between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, the dynamism in traditional culture is

undoubtedly outweighed by modern/western cultural values. In that instance, Dipo dress fashion practice of breast exposure as a traditional cultural symbolism have been misunderstood in the context of modern/ western culture. Also, the influences on Dipo rite have revealed realities of uncalled-for dress fashion practice of breast exposure, which compared with other African cultures is an unusual culture. Also, the major steer of influence on the traditional practice is modernity which alters breast exposure associated with traditional trends of Dipo dress fashion to assume new trends in modesty (breast coverage).

### *Social perversion*

The behavioural pattern in expectation of Krobo women is traditionally believed to be within the Dipo ceremony. Unfortunately, in contemporary times, Dipo is not heightened as an ideal culture because Dipo dress fashion practice of breast exposure has taken a wrong turn on the Krobo people, posing health risks (psychological trauma), initiates regret performing Dipo rite and Dipo girls become victims of rapists or lustful men. However, this affirms the fact that the morality to be achieved in Dipo does not correlate the purpose of the rite. Furthermore, the world has been revolutionised with human right reforms advancing globally in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Due to constitutional guidance in current political dispensations, automatically, traditional rule and customs are undesirable at a point in time, henced Dipo rite being refurbished. Therefore, as part of the new face in Dipo rite, Dipo dress fashion items such as beads, trinkets and Dipo-bee are regarded to portray great misery of Dipo initiates because, it is believed to have shifted the Ghanaian concept of beauty. Also, Dipo dress fashion is a means of dehumanizing initiates; consequently, Non-Krobo men especially, reject Krobo women whose breast and abdomen were exposed during the Dipo rite because it is against the Ghanaian, Christian and western concept of decent/modest dressing.

### *Mystical beliefs*

Dipo dress fashion practices have become a laughing stalk. Being that spiritism is believed to be attached to the rite due to libations and animal slaughtering associated with the practice. Therefore, it is alleged that Dipo rite practice of exposing naked bodies attracts gods who make Dipo girls promiscuous after the rite. Apparently, these issues are propaganda because to the Krobo people, indeed spirits (ancestors) are invoked but they do not possess initiates with promiscuity.

The critiques rising against Dipo dress fashion tell a lot about the current state of the purpose of the dipo rite and the credibility of the supposed Dipo girls being transformed into women. Therefore, the researcher found it necessary to ascertain the cultural values guiding Dipo dress fashion and whether it is contemporarily relevant in practice in Ghana.

#### **4.3 Cultural values and contemporary relevance of Dipo dress fashion**

The respondents presented in this study are seasoned people who have experienced Dipo for more than a decade and as such are in touch with the Dipo custom. These respondents were very much needed to tell the truth about the cultural values and relevance of Dipo dress fashion in contemporary Ghana. This meant that, the researcher probed the respondents on the cultural values guiding Dipo dress fashion. If there are indeed such cultural values, then how have they been transformed and with what possible effects in contemporary times? The conclusion on these responses will inform the researcher if these cultural values are still the same ones that exist today or some of the practices surrounding these values have been changed. This will offer the opportunity to ascertain the relevance of Dipo dress fashion practices and the variables that attributes such Dipo dress fashion in contemporary Ghana.

### **4.3.1 People in touch with the Dipo custom**

#### **4.3.1.1 Respondent 1**

The first Dipo cultural value according to the respondent is being clean that is no pregnancy (Shaibu, personal communication, March 5, 2019). Using this cultural value as a guide by Dipo initiators on Dipo initiates, Dipo dress fashion tends to verify the cultural value of creating an identity of a Dipo girl which is accustomed to only female Krobo people. This cultural value of identity references Dipo dress fashion trends that represents the major stages of the Dipo rite as tying of *sɔni* (adorned with a raffia-like chain), cleansing initiation (red loin cloth), victory initiation (white loin cloth) and dress up (*Newuom* and *kawɔ*). When a Krobo girl is in any of these dipo dress fashion, quickly she is identified as a Dipo girl and accorded the necessary respect and honour as Krobo custom demands (Shaibu, personal communication, March 5, 2019). The respondent evaluated these cultural values (being clean and identified) that guides Dipo dress fashion and found no element of transformation on them to the fact that these cultural values are still pillared in contemporary times, only that some practices like goat intestines used as necklaces are now replaced with raffia fibres and white fabric strips which still fulfills the aim of the initiators.

The respondent admitted that altering these cultural values would be difficult because Ghanaians at large are patronising Krobo beads in contemporary times, especially the youth, whether artificial or natural sources of beads (Shaibu, personal communication, March 5, 2019). This makes Dipo dress fashion stand as one of the major tools in Ghana's cultural development. This revelation by the respondent follows the truth that in pageantry, Non-Krobo people opt to dress imitating Dipo dress fashion because it has now become a national interest since it attracts both local and foreign tourists. As earlier mentioned by the respondent of 'No transformation' of dipo cultural values,

further communication revealed that ‘not even those who are trying to cover their breast’ have changed the classical Dipo dress fashion practice in contemporary times (Shaibu, personal communication, March 5, 2019). Therefore, the respondent bemoaned that transformations of these cultural values are possible if the attitude of men-folks is to seek pleasure with the Dipo girls (Shaibu, personal communication, March 5, 2019).

The researcher in his observations concluded that Dipo rite is not for the masculine gender but they played official roles as priests and a twin brother to an initiate compared to the feminine side who dominates the Dipo rite as Dipo girls and *yomoyo* etc. However, the respondent believes male Krobo people are persons to effect changes in the Dipo cultural values (Shaibu, personal communication, March 5, 2019), just as Sir Emmanuel Mate-Kole did with the introduction of *Bobum*. To the male Krobo people, the exposure of the initiates’ body (breast) by critics is a sign of promiscuity; instead, it is a cultural examination exercise to assess dipo cultural value of cleanliness (being clean).

Also, the respondent, with his level of expertise as a local custodian, personally assessed Dipo dress fashion practices in contemporary times and concluded that Dipo cultural values have not been affected in anyway and would not in the nearest future despite the Christians attack on Dipo (Shaibu, personal communication, March 5, 2019). Somehow, the uncertainty that Dipo dress fashion practices are decent or indecent has created frictions between Dipo custodians and Christians, with both claiming to have the appropriate practice to make a good Dipo rite in contemporary times. The respondent therefore rhetoricted that what transformation does Christians want to see? Dipo being abolished then what happens? So Krobo indigenes have become Europeans? Legitimately, the people of Krobo by nature are conservative and when they think something is theirs, they do not care about how Christians would want to snatch away

(Shaibu, personal communication, March 5, 2019). The questions uttered by the respondent, have some sort of resiliency on Dipo dress fashion. This raises ululate on the relevance of Dipo cultural value of identity with the Krobo people, precluding Christians and other cultures in contemporary Ghana. However, as Dipo cultural values (cleanliness and identity) are still unchanged; so is the purpose of Dipo dress fashion. The cultural value of identity examples imporatantly in contemporary times when a girl who has just graduated from Dipo is still seen in one piece of wax print cloth in the community with beads around the knee and arm and either one or two necklaces. Also when a Krobo girl is getting married, she wishes to brand herself in dipo dress fashion, normally in *kawo* dress up.

#### **4.3.1.2 Respondent 2**

According to this respondent, ‘marking’ Dipo girls is a cultural value in Dipo dress fashion which involves plaiting their hair (Olden days young girls have a particular hair plait called ‘smuggling’ that is small girl), putting on *soni* to start the Dipo rite and leg bungle as the last marker to deter kidnappers and then sneaking out of a Dipo girl (Baidoo, personal communication, March 8, 2019). This form of Dipo dress fashion is of the classical Dipo times which has now assumed some changes in contemporary Ghana. The hair plaiting of Dipo girls in the olden days is very rare in contemporary times because initiates’ hair are now shaved along with the processes in the Dipo cleansing and victory initiation stages. The Dipo girls during the dress up stages also wear traditional head gears and traditional wigs but in contemporary dipo dress fashion, the leg bungles are found to be indisposed.

Apart from the Dipo cultural value of marking, Dipo dress fashion is designed to test for the cultural value of cleanliness (test for virginity) by simply observing the initiate with the naked eye (Baidoo, personal communication, March 8, 2019). Under this test,

the initiate ties two yards of cloth below the waist showing the umbilical cord and breast to determine whether she is a virgin or not (Baidoo, personal communication, March 8, 2019). This test reckons the red loins cloth (*Suboe* which serves as underwear to avoid frequent fractulations and to control menses) and the white loin cloth which is complemented with woven hat, beads, raffia and white strip of calico (formerly goat intestines). The researcher believes that it is this Dipo cultural value of cleanliness that several debates, critiques have befallen Dipo dress fashion, raising obscenity with Krobo women by Dipo critics.

Furthermore, the respondent narrated that the Dipo cultural value of identity distinguishes Dipo girls from Krobo women and vice versa (Baidoo, personal communication, March 8, 2019). As the Krobo culture demands, girls who have not performed Dipo are not allowed to use cover cloths until they are accepted through this cultural value of identity to become Krobo women (performed Dipo successfully) before permitted to dress in two pieces of cloth (for Kaba and slit), cover cloth then head gear. Dipo dress fashion of loin cloths are used to identify Dipo girls whiles *Newuom* and *kawo* dress ups is to identify Krobo women. The Dipo cultural values (marking, cleansing and identity of Dipo) shared by the respondent from the discussions above have not seen any transformation in contemporary times.

In appreciating these cultural values in contemporary Ghana, the respondent revealed that elderly Krobo women still transfer the same decent height of traditional dressing acquired in Dipo rite to the modern dresses they wear (Baidoo, personal communication, March 8, 2019). Ironically, the respondent admitted that the youth now exhibit indecent dress attitudes immediately after their confirmation as Krobo women; this is disgraceful (Baidoo, personal communication, March 8, 2019). In my opinion, this level of hypocrisy is a result of modern dress fashion trends causing in-appropriation in

Krobo women (youth), deluding them psychologically to believe that Dipo dress fashion is archaic. In order to curb this culture, the respondent reveals that Dipo dress fashion has now been recognised and accommodated in contemporary times with an occasional dressing in churches during programs dubbed traditional dressing day (Baidoo, personal communication, March 8, 2019).

#### **4.3.1.3 Respondent 3**

This respondent reveals that the cultural value guiding Dipo dress fashion in contemporary times is characterised by strictness and discipline in following classical Dipo doctrines. Despite modern values becoming prevalent in contemporary times, people still practice classical Dipo. This evidence is realised in a cultural value of ‘marking’ an initiate when she is seen with *soni* around her neck, meaning she is due for the Dipo rite (K. Cita, personal communication, March 6, 2019). According to the respondent, the cultural value of marking is preceded by the cultural value of continuity or perpetuation which reveals the red loin cloth and bare breast as a dress fashion adorned with a Dipo girl to disguise the flow of blood and to signify the time for Dipo every year (K. Cita, personal communication, March 6, 2019).

Also, the cultural value of perpetuation/ continuity is revealed when a Dipo girl changes into the white loin dipo dress fashion to connote asking of fate (*Abisa*). The researcher believes this cultural value of continuity is similar to the cultural value of identity but their differences lie with the symbolic meanings of the red and white loins dress fashions used in the Dipo rite to express ancient practices of Dipo dress fashion, which is still persisting in contemporary times.

In another development, the respondent revealed that the cultural value of identity in Dipo dress fashion depicts Dipo girls being elevated to the rank of Krobo

women when they are festooned with *Newuom* (wax print loin cloth) dipo dress fashion and *kawɔ* dipo dress fashion (initiates in two pieces of cloth) as the final stages of the Dipo rite (K. Cita, personal communication, March 6, 2019). At that point, the Dipo girls have been successful throughout the initiation stages of the Dipo rite to the dress up stages, passing the entire test they were subjected to.

Despite the fact that these cultural values still guide the Dipo dress fashion in the contemporary times, just as the classical times, modern education and Christianity have resulted to making Dipo dress fashion more appealing to the Christian concept of decent dressing. Because the respondent revealed that some Dipo girls shy being naked in public, they objected to the breast exposure associated with some of the Dipo dress fashion practices (K. Cita, personal communication, March 6, 2019). Sometimes, it brings disagreement between the initiates and their relatives. These precedents tend to inform Dipo initiators to make breast exposure of the Dipo girls optional to the initiates and family choice in contemporary decisions on Dipo dress fashion. This idea fast tracks the cultural value of perpetuation/ continuity as initiates are salvaged through new reforms in Dipo dress fashion to reassure the Krobo people that Dipo rite is a custom to be complied by every female Krobo.

During the eve of Dipo rite, in contemporary times, the pride Krobo people tag Dipo dress fashion, becomes more relevant than just one member of the family going through the Dipo rite. Some family members of the initiate therefore seize the opportunity to be adorned in *Newuom* or *kawɔ* dress ups. In contemporary Ghana, Dipo rite among other initiation rites such as *bragro* of the Ashantis', have become so popular across the country. However Dipo dress fashion has become one of the selective few costumes that are used by cultural troupes during cultural programs. But for the many critiques of indecency and myths surrounding some Dipo dress fashion practices, the respondent

admits that it is only the *kawɔ* dress up that most Ghanaians are comfortable in wearing. Because it covers a lot more of a woman's body than the loin cloths (K. Cita, personal communication, March 6, 2019).

The revelation from people in touch with the Dipo custom on the cultural values on Dipo and some relevance of Dipo dress fashion practice has indigenous narratives than professional information. However, the researcher followed suit on some fashion designers for the professional perspective with regards to the study.

#### **4.3.2 Fashion designers**

The fashion designers presented in this study have worked with the concept of Dipo rite. Though these fashion designers may have similar ideas on Dipo dressing, they present hybrid designs of Dipo dress fashion in contemporary times. However, in this report, the active involvements of the fashion designers were necessary to render data collated and presented valid under professional and academic statuses. The data collected from the fashion designers reflects the relevancies of Dipo dress fashion in contemporary Ghana. These relevancies revealed by the fashion designers were guided by how Dipo dress fashion have influenced the creativity of their designs, and how they would render Dipo dress fashion trends as a desirable and valuable quality in contemporary Ghana. The researcher however identified Gavachy and Afro mod trends as the fashion brand/designers with requisite knowledge in Dipo rite and dress fashion designs on Dipo ideal for the study.

##### **4.3.2.1 Gavachy**

Gavachy clothing on Dipo dress fashion is a fashion style that uses plain colours from *wooden* fabrics such as blue, brown, red etc and a woven strap of *Kente* to show contrast with the various colours of *wooden* fabrics used by the fashion designer in

designing a Dipo dress. The choice of *Kente* and *wooden* fabrics accentuates how traditional and modern Ghanaian textiles have domesticated the fashion industry to ensuring a gradual development in the local clothing and textiles industries. According to Abbey (Personal communication may 19, 2019), in designing Dipo skirt or Dipo jumper, two different straps of wooden fabrics are colour blocked with a strap of woven Kente. The woven strap of Kente is sewn longitudinal together with the wooden fabrics such that the strap of woven Kente is positioned in the middle of the Dipo skirt or Dipo jumper while the wooden fabrics are juxtaposed left and right of the woven Kente strap to make the design of the dress. The fashion designer intentionally positions the woven Kente strap longitudinal to overlap the actual length of the Dipo dress some inches high. It is emphatic that the style/ technique by the fashion designer can be linked to the red and white loin cloths that are used by the Dipo girls during the Dipo rite. Therefore, similarities are shown by the height of the fashion designers Dipo skirt (Figure 23 and 24) and the Dipo loin cloths (Figures 3, 4,6,7,8 etc) which hangs from the waist of initiates and extends from the knee towards the feet, sometimes with the wax print cloth wrapped around initiate's waist.

Also, in Figure 22, the fashion designers Dipo jumper shows two thin strips of Kente sewn to the left sleeve like a football captain's band, linking to the concept of Dipo dress fashion when initiates tie beads, raffia or arm bands as an identifier or marker for the Dipo rite. To the fashion designer, the two thin strips of Kente sewn to the left sleeve is a product signature on Dipo jumpers which identifies Gavachy brand as originators of this style or technique of Dipo dress fashion. Again, Krobo people's taste for Kente during Dipo dress up is comparable to the fashion designer's frequent and consistent use of the woven Kente straps in designing the Dipo jumpers and skirts.

According to the researcher, apart from the similarities identified with Gavachy Dipo dresses and Dipo dress fashion, they show differences in appearance. Firstly, Gavachy Dipo dresses do not show any sort of breast exposure, providing a non-provocative or decent dress for customers. This new trend in Dipo dress fashion is one of a kind that answers the request of Christians and Dipo critics alike on indecency. Meanwhile these styles of Dipo dresses by the fashion designer are more of European concept than a traditional concept because it does not fit as a replacement to classical Dipo dress fashions. Nonetheless, it is appropriate as a casual or an occasional wear for outings. Admitting to this claim, the fashion designer responded that classical Dipo dress fashion only influences his creativity on how Dipo dress fashions can be changed to contemporary decent way of dressing to suit all cultures (Abbey Hart Personal communication May 19, 2019).

Furthermore, the researcher is of the opinion that Dipo dress fashions are neither decent nor indecent given the stance of Christians and Dipo initiators. But Abbey (Personal communication May 19, 2019) discloses that Dipo dresses are only recognized as indecent based on religious context but in fashion, it is accepted because there are some fashion designers who design dresses for models who go nude in public (Abbey Hart Personal communication May 19, 2019). Lastly, the classical Dipo dress fashion (white loin and wax print loin cloths) have the highest compliment with beads to disguise the chest or bare breast of initiates which Dipo critics recognize as the sensuality of the Dipo girls.

As a replacement to beads used by initiates, in Gavachy brand of Dipo dresses, the fashion designer used a long strap of *Kente* to randomly but creatively wrapped around the model's neck and chest decently as shown in Figure 24. The symbolism of beads in Dipo dress fashion craves different meanings with the Krobo people and fashion

designers in contemporary times. To the Krobo people, the quantity of piled beads on initiates exhibits a person's wealth but for fashion designers, it is a style of dressing.

Another point also portrays that when fabrics are used to cover the breast as shown in Figure 24, the people of Krobo recognize it as a rebellion and alteration or influence on Dipo cultural values. But fashion designers recognize it as a new trend in Dipo dress fashion. Briefly, Gavachy Dipo dress (skirt or jumper) is very important as a suitable outfit for the masculine and feminine genders who desire a hybrid of Dipo dress fashion in contemporary times (Abbey Hart Personal communication, June 4, 2019).

Because the validity of information under the professional status has to be justified appropriately, gender equality was necessary to capture salient information from the feminine side. Therefore, fashion designer Yomekpe, of Afro mod trends was interviewed.

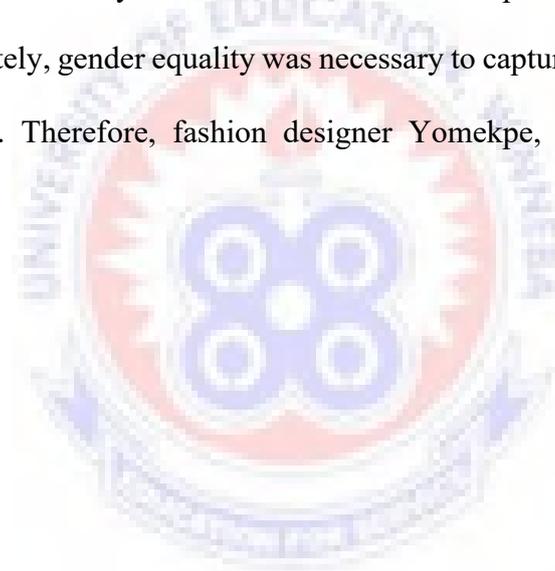




Figure 22. A male model in pose dressed in Gavachy Dipo jumper shirt (source: by courtesy Gavachy instagram page. Retrieved, 2019).



Figure 23. Two models (male left and female right in the picture plane) in a pose dressed in Gavachy Dipo jumper and skirt respectively (Source: courtesy Gavachy instagram page. Retrieved, 2019).



Figure 24. A female model dressed in Dipo skirt complemented with a long strip of Kente wrapped around the neck and chest. (Source: courtesy Gavachy instagram page. Retrieved, 2019).

#### 4.3.2.2 *Afro mod trends*

Afro mod trends is a fashion brand that uses African concepts of clothing and textiles as sources of ideas to make new trends in dress fashion based on the theory of hybrid-modernity. Afro mod designs on Dipo dresses are among other Ghanaian borrowed cultures which are designed with a blend of African wax print fabrics and western (foreign) fabrics. According to the fashion designer, the Dipo dress as the name suggests, was designed with the idea of dipo dress fashion worn by initiates during the Dipo ceremony (A. Yomekpe, personal communication, June 8, 2019). The researcher reveals that the blend of these African and western fabrics by the fashion designer are ways of adding value to afro mod Dipo dresses in order to meet the demands of both African and European customers hence shows the unique style of the artist.

During Dipo dress up (*Newuom* and *Kawɔ*), initiates clothe themselves in African wax print cloth either as a loin cloth or pieces of cloth that covers the upper and lower part of the body. These forms of Dipo dress fashion have continued as the trend in the Dipo rite when it was first introduced as a '*Bubom*'. Therefore, the very expensive pricing and intricacy of an initiate's cloth designs means she is wealthy. This concept of showing off through Dipo dress fashion has transcended in contemporary times with initiates using foreign fabrics as shown in Figures 19 and 20, probably influencing the fashion designers' style of blending African and Western fabrics in producing afro mod Dipo dresses.

Also, the fashion designer's style of Dipo dress fashion has no relation with the symbolism of African fabric designs apart from the concept of Dipo. This seems to suggest that the same reasons why African wax print fabrics as loin cloths, does not match the essence of the dipo ceremony. Because the dress up stage offers the opportunity for Dipo initiates to exhibit their wealth, they base their choice of plenty but different fabrics

on colourful appearance, intricacy of surface designs and construction techniques. According to the fashion designer, afro mod Dipo dresses have two elongated flaps in front and back of the models as shown in Figure 25, 26 and 27, giving an avant-garde but symmetrical look made in blouse, straight dress and skirt outfits for ladies (A. Yomekpe, personal communication, June 8, 2019). The researcher observed that the front and back flaps are elongated beyond the actual length of the dresses just as Dipo loin cloths tapers from the knee longitudinal and almost touching the feet. The flaps were used by the fashion designer to create emphasis to the concept of Dipo in afro mod Dipo blouse, straight dress and skirt.

Again, in considering the Christian concept of modest dressing, which focuses on covering sensitive parts of the body (chest/breast, abdominal area, the genital area, hips/thighs etc, and the reasonable dress length), afro mod Dipo dresses reflects the same characteristics against classical Dipo dress fashion in contemporary Ghana. The fashion designer supports this claim to the fact that traditional Dipo dress fashion (loin cloths with bare chests) have gradually evolved with the initiates now covering their chests to preserve some form of decency (A. Yomekpe, personal communication, June 8, 2019). However, with such tremendous change in Dipo dress fashion, the fashion designer anchors afro mod Dipo dresses to both classical and contemporary Dipo rite. Since it is an unending source of fashion inspiration for fashion designers; having the onus to create stylish and cultural representative outfits to promote Ghanaian heritage (A. Yomekpe, personal communication, June 8, 2019).

Having expressed these thoughts, by diving more into dipo dress fashion from the professional point of view, with regards to Gavachy and Afro mod trends; the researcher will look at the cohesion of these cultural values and relevance of dipo dress fashion practice in contemporary Ghana.



Figure 25. A female model dressed in afro mod's Dipo skirt posed in a side view (Source: courtesy afro mod trends webpage, Retrieved, 2019).



Figure 26. A female model dressed in afro mod's Dipo blouse posed in a back view (Source: courtesy afro mod trends webpage. Retrieved, 2019).



Figure 27. A female model dressed in afro mod's Dipo straight-dress posed in a contrapposto (Source: courtesy afro mod trends webpage. Retrieved, 2019).

#### ***4.3.3 The relationships between cultural values and relevance of Dipo dress fashion practice in contemporary Ghana***

The revelations on the cultural values and relevance of Dipo dress fashion in contemporary times were identified among Krobo and Non-Krobo respondents presented in this study. The respondents however, shared their accumulated experiences and knowledge. According to Abbey (2016, p.38), “when Krobo girls become aware of their cultural values, it serves as the baseline to take a decision whether to go through the Dipo rite or not”. This is the evident that proves that the cultural values that guide Dipo have been sustained throughout the colonial times as Krobo girls find it relevant. This has made Krobo respondents to attest the true nature of these cultural values in contemporary times and have concluded on four (4) different cultural values that guides Dipo dress fashion, namely: marking, cleanliness, identity and continuity.

Firstly, the cultural value of marking establishes that when a girl is dressed with a piece of cloth tied to her chest then a date palm fibre as a necklace, it represents the start of Dipo rite in the Krobo communities. It indicates that the girl is special/ different from other ordinary girls therefore free from all house chores and errands. Also, it means that it is forbidden for the male counterpart to express any form of sexual desire to such a girl. Ibid expresses the same importance of a Dipo girl under the cultural value of marking that, the initiate is like a commodity that requires a cultural marking as being “a certain kind of thing” (Ibid: 64 as cited by Boakye 2010, p. 81) different from all things. Hence the Dipo girls are given such special treatment distinct from ordinary girls. The Krobo people still uphold this virtue in contemporary times, just as the classical times. This means flouting the rule of this cultural value attracts a great punishment.

Secondly, the cultural value of being clean, projects chastity in the Krobo communities as an ideal virtue of all Krobo females. According to Boakye (2010) this

cultural value was/is necessary because of the fear of teenage pregnancy. Therefore Dipo dress fashion is culturally designed to examine initiates by exposing some parts of their body (breast, umbilical cord etc) to test for pregnancy and sexual immorality. On the other side, Dipo critics describe it as an indecent or provocative way of dressing in contemporary times. But it appropriates as an inspiration to fashion designers in producing a hybrid of Dipo dress fashion, devoid of provocation/ indecency to suit Ghanaians at large.

Thirdly, the cultural value of perpetuation/continuity instigate the belief that Dipo dress fashion is an ideal culture of the people of Krobo therefore there is a need to preserve this culture throughout generations. In confirmation, Affum (2009, p. 20) agrees that 'continuity' as a factor in modern theory of human development, occurs in parallel among populations around the world. According to Boakye (2010, p.69), this development is a result of Christianity, modernisation, formal education and environmental changes which serve to encourage the continuity of the Dipo rite practices in contemporary times. In reflection, Dipo initiators ensure that Dipo initiates perform the rite following classical practices: wearing red and white loin cloth, wearing Dipo bee, beads, bare breast etc. to signify the time for Dipo. This cultural value of perpetuation also signals that, Dipo is unending, creating the opportunity for some family members of initiates to seize the opportunity to dress again in Dipo dress fashions. Again, this cultural value ensures that Krobo women transfer the same height of dipo dressing with their western dresses, such that the purpose of the rite is being realized as intended by Dipo initiators in contemporary times. To fashion designers the cultural value of perpetuation offers opportunity for the male counterpart to be adorned in a hybrid of Dipo dress fashion as a way of breaking the feminism associated with Dipo dress fashion in contemporary times.

Lastly, the cultural value of creating an identity reflects the position of initiates to be reckoned as actual Krobo indigenes through the Dipo dress fashion that is linked to the major stages of the Dipo rite thus tying of soni, cleansing initiation, victory initiation and dress up. Adjaye, 1999; Hevi-Yiboe, 2003; Nukunya, 2003 as cited by Nanegbe (2016) inform that the cultural value of identity reflects in several puberty rites by some ethnic groups in southern Ghana: Ewe, Ga, Akan etc. as a social marker. Therefore, Dipo rite puts indelible stamp on Dipo girls as Krobo women and members of the Krobo tribe (Boakye, 2010). This cultural value of identity is relevant as a national phenomenon. The reason being that Dipo dress fashion is one of the selective few costumes that are worn by cultural troupes and pageants during cultural programs. Also, the cultural value of identity craves the interest for Dipo dress fashion, attracting local and foreign tourists to experience Dipo rite. The popularity of dipo dress fashion has gradually bridged the cultural differences between Christians and Dipo initiators as churches earmark a program dubbed traditional dressing day for members to be adorned in Dipo dress fashion.

With all these revelations on dipo dress fashion, the next subject queued in this study, presents concise information with the researcher's opinion on the findings to push forth related areas for further studies.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Overview

The presentations in this chapter were based on the findings from the objectives of the study; to investigate into the major Dipo dress fashion trends of the Krobo people, to examine the contexts and contents of critiques against Dipo dress fashion and to ascertain the cultural values and contemporary relevance of Dipo dress fashion practice. The findings gathered in relation to the study are summarized with conclusions drawn and recommendations from data collected.

#### 5.1 Summary

The study dealt primarily with the Dipo rite of passage which has stood the test of time for centuries and is still being celebrated with enthusiasm in contemporary Ghana. Because some research studies have failed to address Dipo dress fashion trends and its cultural values, this study looked to *investigate* into the major Dipo dress fashion trends of the Krobo people, examined the contexts and contents of critiques against Dipo dress fashion and analysed the cultural values and contemporary relevance of Dipo dress fashion practice.

#### 5.2 Findings

1. The first results from the data gathered revealed that the major Dipo dress fashion stages are tying of strings, cleansing initiation, victory initiation and dress up which involves wearing of soni, redloin cloth, whiteloin cloth, wax print loin cloth or two pieces of kente cloth. These the major Dipo dress fashion is also the major Dipo dress fashion trends because the stages of the rite is the same purposeful reasons for wearing the various dress fashions.

2. Findings revealed that in every performance of dipo rite, from 1950- 2019, always, the tying stage starts the performance of the Dipo rite then dress up stage ends the ceremony.
3. Findings revealed that the tying of strings transform a Dipo girl from being a regular krobo girl through the removal of string of waist beads or regular beads symbolic as feminine beauty. This is replaced by a string called *glo* with a bead known as *le* then *sɔni muom*' (the tying of *sɔni*) which introduces the Dipo rite and equate the importance of the initiate equated to the traditional authorities in the community during the eve of the Dipo ceremony.
4. It was revealed that in cleansing initiation Dipo dress fashion, there are disparities between classical and contemporary *suboe* used by the initiates. Classical *suboe* was primarily cotton made then contemporary ones includes linen, silk or regenerated fabrics with some sort of designs printed on them.
5. In the cleansing initiation stages, it was revealed that initiates may either leave their chest bare or cover it. Likewise, either covers relain cloth with wax print cloth or left uncovered. As of when the breast exposure and the revealing of only redloin cloth are purposeful, initiates comply with tradition.
6. Under victory initiation Dipo dress fashion, it was revealed that there are transformations between the classical and contemporary practices. Such that breast coverage, goat fat replaced by white cape, raffia and white fabric strips replaced goat intestines.
7. Findings revealed that formerly, there were three stages of the Dipo rite before the latter introduction of the Dress-up or dressing up stage of the major Dipo dress fashion known as *Bobum*. In contemporary times, *bobum* is the final stage and the climax of the Dipo rite that is *Newuom* and *Kawɔ*. However, *bobum* emerged with

periodic infiltration of modern dress fashion items such as gold jewellerys, which replaced bamboo and cowries' necklaces that were earlier used by initiates in the colonial and postcolonial era and dressing bags, latest pair of shoes, among others, in the contemporary times.

8. It was revealed that bead is one of the most used items for Dipo dress fashion next to cloths. *Hungua* or *hunua* beads is tied around the waist, *powa* and *huazi* tied around the knees, *zagba*, *huadziato* or *skɔbɛkɛ* around the legs and *koli* around the wrists and necks. Also, the use of wax print cloth and kente cloth mostly differentiated *newuom* and *kawɔ* Dipo dress fashions. as such neither wax print cloth was used for neither *kawɔ* nor kente cloth used as loin cloth for *newuom*.
9. Findings revealed that wax print cloths worn by initiates had different motif designs and arrangement styles, which connote some Ghanaian traditional symbolisms such as: *obaapa*, *twa-benkum*, *nsubra*, *efie-abosia*, *akofem* and some cloth brands such as *hi-target*, *visco* among others.
10. It was revealed that the first major change, which struck Dipo dress fashion, was the introduction of the dress up or *bobum*. Therefore fusing successfully with the initiation stages as the final ceremony of the Dipo rite and the last Dipo dress fashion in contemporary times and making way for modern influences and changes in some Dipo practices.
11. Just like wax print cloth used for *newuom* Dipo dress fashion; it was revealed that kente is the ideal cloth used for *kawɔ* Dipo dress fashion. Kente cloth has names such as *Abusua ye dom*, *Atsem*, *Kyeretwie* among others showed different design patterns of old and new woven ones.
12. It was revealed that contemporary Dipo dress fashion in the *bobum* stage allowed initiates with Krobo and other cultural backgrounds to reveal their identity during

the ceremony. This was evident as the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) trend in *newuom* Dipo dress fashion with an initiate wearing a Nigerian headgear style (*Alata*) and *kawɔ* Dipo dress fashion as the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) trend as an initiate used a veil (mayafi headgear style) to complement the two pieces of cloth worn.

13. Under the context of cultural differences, Dipo dress fashion practice of breast exposure is culturally symbolic but it has been misunderstood in the context of modern/ western culture. This has given the assumption that Dipo rite is an unusual culture among other African cultures therefore the initiates' breasts must be covered.
14. Under the context and content of critique of Dipo dress fashion, the comments of several authorities that were examined, were largely Non-Krobos who comprised modernist, Christians, missionaries and human right activists. Revealing that the evolution in Dipo dress fashion started because of the Christians/missionaries pressure for traditional leaders to change some practices of the dipo rite during the reign of Sir Emmanuel Mate-Kole.
15. Under the context of critiques, religious differences reflected different ideologies of dipo between the orthodox and Pentecostal and charismatic churches. *Generational gap* showed differences in some practices of the dipo rite between older and younger generations of dipo initiates, under the context of *social perversion*, Dipo rite poses risks and in the context of *mystical beliefs*, it is alleged that dipo girls are promiscuous caused by spirits.
16. Dipo cultural values revealed as unchanged or transformed because the purpose to be achieved is still intact despite several influences and critiques. However, the contemporary relevance of Dipo dress fashion revealed that older krobo women

transfer the same height of Dipo dresses to modern dresses they wear, offering a continuous decent dressing that initiates needs to emulate.

### 5.3 Conclusions

1. The major stages in Dipo rite are the same as the major Dipo dress fashion stages. However, when a Dipo girl is dressed in red loin cloth, white loin cloth, wax print loin cloth or two pieces of cloth (especially *Kente*), it identifies the various stages of the Dipo ceremony which the dress fashions are associated. Therefore, it is mandatory for all Dipo girls going through the rite to oblige wearing the various dipo dress fashions at every stage of the rite. Because, the purposes to be achieved in the Dipo rite are linked to the dipo dress fashions, otherwise, the Dipo girls would have to forfeit the initiation rite.
2. The major Dipo dress fashion stage of tying of string begins the Dipo rite, while the dress up stage ends the Dipo rite. However, it determines the period for the dipo ceremony in the traditional calendar.
3. The Dipo dress fashions are indicators that the initiates are important personalities in the Krobo communities. At that time, their importance is equated to the *Okumo* or *Nana Kloweki*. Therefore, it is a punishable offence to harm any of the Dipo girls during that period.
4. The use of linen, silk or regenerated fabrics by initiates in the contemporary times does not mean *suboe* from cotton products is no longer useful. Rather, it is not used for strapping in the classical times but a symbolic material for the rite hence any red fabric is equally representational as *suboe*.
5. In the cleansing initiation Dipo dress fashion stage, initiates have the option to expose breast or body in contemporary times or not. However, by choice of the initiates, majority of the initiates decided to leave their breast bare in order to

experience the rite the classical way which reflects the true practice of the Dipo rite.

6. Among several changes in Dipo dress fashion, under victory initiation in contemporary practices, breast coverage, goat fat replaced by white cape, raffia and white fabric strips that replaced goat intestines is the best transformation of all times. This is because the health of initiates is priority in order to perpetuate the Dipo rite.
7. The revision of Dipo rite to include *bobum* was the first official change to happen in the Dipo rite as far as the Krobo people are concerned. Since then, Dipo dress fashion has become a major tool to addresses political, religious and cultural issues in Dipo politely. *Bobum* dipo dress fashion introduced the contemporary era in Dipo rite. Henceforth, indigenous Dipo materials such as bamboo and cowry necklaces and wrist bangles replaced with beads and gold jewellerys have faded to oblivion because teenagers have been exposed to other cultures through the internet. Although Dipo is still ongoing in contemporary times, these items are no longer fashionable to initiates.
8. Bead is the most cherished item used by Krobo people for Dipo dress fashion. However, the use of beads has not slowed down in contemporary times. Rather, Dipo dress fashion has contributed to the popularity of beads used by Ghanaians at large because it is produced locally in the Krobo communities and it is affordable. Alongside, African wax print cloths dominated in use by initiates during the first dress up called *Newuom* whiles *Kente* dominated in use for *Kawo*. Through Dipo, Ghanaian textile products have been advertised free offcharge.
9. African wax print cloth is used as a cover cloth for red/white loin cloth or as a loin cloth. In either ways, the connotative meaning of the designs in the wax print

cloth does not have any bearing on the Dipo rite. Because the changes that allowed the use of the wax print cloth is not a true reflection of classical dipo rite, hence whatever is not originally of the Krobo people, they do not give credence to.

10. *Bobum* stage of the major Dipo dress fashion is known as the pivot of change in dipo rite. Since the introduction of the dress up stage, Dipo dress fashion started the evolution in trends due to western influences such as hairstyles, footwears, dress accessories and foreign fabrics being displayed by initiates. However, this has contributed to the continuous existence of dipo rite in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
11. In dipo dress fashion, woven *Kente* cloth is the most cherished cloth used by initiates. Neither *kente* is originated from the Kroboland nor does its designs have connotative meaning to Dipo rite. Notwithstanding, the popular use of this woven fabric in Dipo rite shows how Krobo people promote indigenous and Ghanaian made products.
12. Dipo rite has been recorded as an eccentric marriage of Islamic and Nigerian cultures as initiates complement *Mayafi* (veil) and *Alata* headgear with Dipo dress ups. This is one of the contemporary characteristics of Dipo rite as flexible, which ensures the continuity of Dipo rite in the current generation.
13. Modern values are of the western/European concepts, while traditional values are indigenous to Africans. These two phenomena do not blend appropriately therefore; the perception of critics on Dipo breast exposure is irrational under cultural conditions.
14. Non-Krobo people have contributed largely to critiques on Dipo dress fashion. Meaning, the Krobo people are not documenting/ publishing materials on their history, cultural practice and issues on Dipo rite. However, reflecting that since the early settling of the missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century till present day Ghana,

Christians have been the oldest critics of Dipo rite. Even now, critiques on Dipo are increasing despite several documentations on the rite. Moreover, it seems to persist for a long time.

15. The Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, unlike the orthodox churches, believe the whole Dipo rite is unbiblical. Yet church Elders and members secretly perform the rite for their children. Again, the disparities that exist between younger and older generations on some practices of the Dipo rite is indispensable in the levels of experiences and modern ways of doing things. With the issues of social perversions on Dipo, it has not change the cause of breast exposure and promiscuity surrounding it. Meanwhile, this does not prove anything substantive to be linked to dipo dress fashion but a course to disgrace the Krobo people.
16. Although Dipo dress fashion has seen some changes in practices, because Dipo cultural values are unchanged/ not transformed, whether initiates' breast are exposed or covered, Dipo custodians accept both practices to achieve the purpose of Dipo rite among different initiates. In the nutshell, older Krobo women appreciate Dipo cultural values but to the Krobo youth, it is a mere ceremony, which Krobo girls are to perform.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

1. Since this study has identified that the stages of Dipo rite are also linked to the Dipo dress fashion, the researcher recommends that authors who have written books on Dipo rite should highlight the various dress fashions in association with the stages in revised copies in subsequent publications in order to add to the knowledge of readers. In addition, Dipo custodians should advice younger initiates to respect dipo dress fashion as traditional iconography of being a Krobo therefore should be worn with pride.

2. Because there have been over reliance on modern calendar, Krobo custodians in collaboration with graphic designers should come out with traditional calendar, featuring the Dipo ceremonies in major Krobo towns in Ghana with the Dipo dress fashions. In addition, make copies available to the public to publicize the dipo ceremony.
3. Public announcement and education should be aired to the public on the worth of Dipo girls to make known that the initiates are the celebrities of the Krobo communities during the Dipo rite. Therefore, they should be treated with due dignity and integrity; therefore any offender of the girls is severely punished under traditional and state mandates.
4. I recommend to Dipo custodians and Textiles companies in Ghana to collaborate in sponsorship, providing fabrics to initiates in order to put Dipo on a pinnacle of attraction.
5. Dipo custodians should continue to evaluate the Dipo rite and make some classical practices accomadating and optional to initiates in order to ensure a continuous practice of the rite for generations yet to come.
6. Because the health of the initiates is important for the continuity of the rite, as such, some classical dress items such as goat intestines and goat fat removed totally, as an improvement upon this custom, Dipo custodians should fuse clinical health screening as part of initiates' tests in contemporary times.
7. The Krobo people should be more flexible in accepting some changes of the dipo rite because it is addressing some sensitive issues on humanity. Notwithstanding, some changes are productive, making some of the practices appropriate for the culture to be accepted worldwide and among different race. Although some Dipo dress fashion items such as cowry and bamboo necklaces are not fashionable to

younger initiates, it is indigenous to the Krobo culture. I hereby recommend to younger initiates to patronize such items because there is over reliance modern jewelleryes.

8. I recommend to the Krobo traditional authorities to initiate bead festival in order to boost market and promote the bead culture in the Kroboland and to create employment. Whiles seeking sponsorship with some textiles companies in Ghana and some kente merchants to aid in sponsorship by giving out fabrics to Dipo initiates in order to display Ghanaian products for advertisement.
9. African wax prints just as kente cloths have symbolic designs of various Ghanaian proverbs. Therefore, initiates are advised to wear these cloths appropriately to convey specific messages suitable for the rite. Hence, *Yomoyo* or fashion designers should assist in this regard.
10. For the continuous importance of dipo rite in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond, Dipo custodians should accept contemporary changes that are inevitable in dipo dress fashion and plan appropriately around the purpose of the dipo rite to crave the interest of the young generations.
11. Although kente does not belong to the Krobo people, I recommend to Dipo custodians to continue embracing other cultures using dipo to show acceptance and to promote unity among other cultures.
12. Dipo custodians should continue to redefine some aspects of the Dipo rite constantly to accommodate children with half- Krobo parents and the other of different cultures to ensure their participation in the Dipo rite no matter where they are found around the world.
13. The researcher recommends to Dipo custodians that modern values come along with new trends in dipo dress fashion. Therefore, traditional and modern practices

should be promoted and rebranded to make the ceremony evergreen and accommodating.

14. Because most Krobo literates are not documenting on Dipo rite, Non-Krobo people are misinformed, having wrong perception about the Dipo rite. Therefore, Krobo scholars/ literates are advised to publish various articles on dipo to enlighten readers/public in order to avert some critiques against the dipo rite. In addition, custodians of Dipo customary practice should continue to promote and showcase appropriate dipo dress fashion practices that foster moral values and decent dressing among the Ghanaian populace.
15. The various Christian bodies should focus teachings that foster cordial relationships with the Krobo people in order to level the understanding of modern dipo practices (breast coverage) to the understanding of older initiates. Christians as well should know that the exposure of initiate's body is inherent with Dipo cultural values; therefore, an in-depth knowledge and understanding into the dipo rite would help them to better appreciate Dipo dress fashion than to critique from ignorance.
16. Dipo custodians should note that dipo rite is dynamic due to evolution in modern cultural practices. However, there is a mandate to safe guard the cultural values that guides Dipo dress fashions, less Krobo people loose their cultural heritage. This can be done by promoting and rebrand traditional and modern values and practices to make the Dipo rite evergreen and accommodating to the younger generation.

#### 5.4 Suggestions for further studies

- 1) There is the need for textiles students, fashion designers and researchers to conduct an in-depth research into the historical aspects of clothing and fashion that is a study on textile products used in Dipo dress fashion.
  - a) An in-depth study can be done on the various stages in textiles productions like fibres, yarns and fabrics that are used in Dipo dress fashion, on sources, products and cultural significance. Also, the African and foreign fabrics that are used for Dipo dress fashion can be examined on their design patterns, their traditional meanings and significance to the initiate or Dipo girl and the Dipo rite.
  - b) Under the concept of hybrid modernity, a research study can be done on the various Dipo dresses as fashion trends produced by fashion designers in contemporary Ghana.
  - c) A comparative study can be done among the various Krobo groups that is Manya and Yilo and other dangbe groups such as Shai, Osudoku, and Ningo etc. on Dipo dress fashion to ascertain their differences in styles.
- 2) More research and documentations on the Krobo culture should be done by Krobo custodians/Historians, fashion designers, art and cultural institutions and researchers to preserve the rich Krobo cultural heritage including:
  - a) A study on the trends in Dipo hairstyles/ head coverage. This will look into the history of Krobo hair styles in relation to Dipo to ascertain their origin, their symbolism and significance.
  - b) Also, a study can be done to investigate into the decision-making body on Dipo practices and their implementations to the survival of Dipo rite in contemporary Ghana.

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## **APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **Interview with Traditional leaders/ People in touch with Dipo custom**

1. What were/are the cultural values guiding Dipo dress fashion?
2. How has these cultural values been transformed by the Dipo dress fashion?
3. How has the transformation of the cultural values affected Dipo dressing in contemporary times?
4. What are the relevances of Dipo dress fashion practice to the Krobo people?
5. What variables can be used to attribute the relevance of Dipo dress fashion practice in contemporary times?

### **Interview with Fashion designer(s), seamstress(s)/tailor(s)**

1. How has Dipo dress fashion influenced the fashion industry in Ghana?
2. What has been or is the significant contribution of Dipo dress fashion to the fashion trends in Ghana?
3. How does Dipo dress fashion influence your design/the design of fashion designers?
4. How would you consider the critiques against Dipo dress fashion?
5. How would you render Dipo dress fashion trend desirable or valuable?

## **APPENDIX B: FIRST (1<sup>ST</sup>) OBSERVATION GUIDE**

### **Visualising old and new photographic images**

1. Observing photographic images to differentiate old and new images
2. Observing old images to identify any traces of indigenous materials used in Dipo dress fashion.
3. Observing new images to identify any traces of contemporary materials used in Dipo dress fashion.
4. Observing photographic images to sort them into various Dipo rite stages and its dress fashion.

## **SECOND (2<sup>ND</sup>) OBSERVATION GUIDE**

### **Visualising Initiates in Dipo dress fashion**

1. Observation of the initiates' body parts that shows either clothed or naked and the position of various dress materials/items.
2. Observation of the specific Dipo dresses under the major stages in Dipo rite.
3. Observation of the various materials used in Dipo dress fashion to differentiate classical and contemporary styles in terms of dynamics, similarities and authenticity.
4. Observations to verify the identified cultural values under Dipo dress fashion to show its contemporary relevance.

## APPENDIX C

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

#### Consent for use by Photographs

With your participation that is willingly tendering of your Dipo photographs to the researcher in the study; Krobo Dipo dress fashion trends in contemporary Ghana, your role as a participant in the study is complemented by the photographs you took during the study. I hereby seek your consent for the use of your photographs in reporting the study.

**Title of the study:** Dipo dress fashion trends in contemporary Ghana

**Purpose of the Study:** To build a documentary on dipo dress fashion trends from classical to contemporary times

#### Study Procedures:

1. Photographers used cameras to take photographs during the Dipo rite ceremony to capture initiates in dipo dress fashion to help understand and examine the differences in the trends and to analyze changes that have occurred.
2. Again photographic images tendered in by respondents upon the researcher's request will be scanned digitally to keep them in digital formats to help the researcher to have enough time to analyse. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used to achieve the purpose of the study.

**Benefits and risks:** There is no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. When the research is completed, it will help the researcher to offer the gate way to throw more light on the contemporary trends in Dipo dress fashion which has become a new phenomenon that has escaped the attention of researchers due to debates that have created several criticisms/critiques and praises from modernists and traditional believers, striking several differences that the researcher finds intriguing to examine and investigate into.

This knowledge will help the researcher finish his Masters thesis. The outcome of this study will be a reference for debaters to rethink the symbolism of the exposure of the breast of initiates and the covering of the breast. The study will serve as a source of information for fashion designers to follow the trends in the fashion industry to take effective decisions on production. Socially, Ghanaian fashion institutions and fashion designers will find the study useful in order to promote a Ghana made product influenced by the Krobo cultural beliefs and values. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in this study.

**Payments for Participation:** The researcher will give in kind to participants. However, appropriate deals will be adhered to or negotiated for participating in the study.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality:** Photographic images gathered in this research study may be published or presented in public forums; however, your name or other identifying information will not be used or revealed but kept confidential.

**Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal from the Study:** Your decision to take part in this study is voluntary. You may refuse the researcher some photographic images or withdraw from the study at any time. Your decision not to do so will not be challenged but may not be helpful to achieve the said purpose of the study.

**Questions:** You are free to ask any questions that you may have about your rights as a research participant. If any questions come up during or after the study, contact the researcher or supervisor;

Mintson Timothy (Researcher)

Tel: + 233246943648

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Dr. Osuanyi Quaicoo Essel (Supervisor)

University of Education, Winneba

School of Graduate studies

Department of Art Education,

### STATEMENT OF CONSENT BY PARTICIPANT

I have read the information about the study/it has been read and explained to me. I have had the opportunity to discuss this research study with the researcher. I have had my questions answered by him in the language I understand. The risk and benefits have been explained to me. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form after verbally consenting or signing it. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may choose to withdraw at any time. I freely agree to participate in this research study. I understand that information regarding my personal identity and disclosure will be kept confidential by the researcher.

Participant's Signature:.....

Date: ...../...../.....

Participant's Name:.....

Participant's Address; .....

.....

I, the researcher, have fully explained the relevant details of this study to the participant/guardian named above and believed that the participant has understood and has voluntarily given his/her consent/assent.

Name:.....

Date: ...../...../..... Signature:.....

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

### Consent for Respondents participating in Interview

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Please take your time to read this consent/assent form and discuss any questions you may have with the researcher. You may take your time to make your decision about participating in this study and you may discuss it with your friends or family before you make your decision.

#### **Title of the study:**

Krobo Dipo dress fashion trends in contemporary Ghana

**Purpose of the Study:** To build a documentary on dipo dress fashion trends from classical to contemporary times

#### **Study Procedures:**

1. This study involves one-on-one interview sessions which the participant will be requested to participate.
2. The interview process requires your response to a set of questions related to the purpose of the study. All interactions will be held in the language you understand, where necessary an interpreter will be assisting.
3. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used to achieve the purpose of the study.

**Benefits and risks:** There is no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. When the research is completed, it will help the researcher to offer the gate way to throw more light on the contemporary trends in Dipo dress fashion which has become a new phenomenon that has escaped the attention of researchers due to debates that have created several criticisms and praises from modernists and traditional believers, striking several differences that the researcher finds intriguing to examine and investigate into. This knowledge will help the researcher finish his Masters thesis. The outcome of this study

will be a reference for debaters to rethink the symbolism of the exposure of the breast of initiates and the covering of the breast. The study will serve as a source of information for fashion designers to follow the trends in the fashion industry to take effective decision on production. Socially, Ghanaian fashion institutions and fashion designers will find the study useful in order to promote a Ghana made product influenced by the Krobo cultural beliefs and values. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in this study; however, fatigue from participating is anticipated.

**Payments for Participation:** The researcher will give in kind to participants. However, appropriate deals will be adhered to or negotiated for participating in the study.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality:** Information gathered in this research study may be published or presented in public forums; however, your name or other identifying information will not be used or revealed but kept confidential.

**Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal from the Study:** Your decision to take part in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer some questions, not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. Your decision not to answer some questions and not to participate or to withdraw from the study will not be challenged but may not be helpful to achieve the said purpose of the study

**Questions:** You are free to ask any questions that you may have about your rights as a research participant. If any questions come up during or after the study, contact the researcher or supervisor;

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Participant's Signature:.....

Date: ...../...../.....

Participant's Name:.....

Participant's Address; .....

.....

I, the researcher, have fully explained the relevant details of this study to the participant/guardian named above and believed that the participant has understood and has voluntarily given his/her consent/assent.

Name:.....

Date: ...../...../..... Signature:.....