KNOWLEDGE CREATION AND KNOWLEDGE FLOW WITHIN GHANA'S KENTE INDUSTRY: A SOCIAL CAPITAL PERSPECTIVE

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Systematic knowledge flow and knowledge sharing practices have existed in African societies for ages. In the old days and even now to some extent, knowledge sharing among individuals was done orally through and face-to-face interactions or personal contacts. In many ways, 'it is social networks that capture local knowledge and circulate it within the communities' (Moyi 2003, p.233). In this study, I sought to understand how traditional and new knowledge about Kente (a popular handwoven textile in Ghana) flows, and how this knowledge flow results in the creation of new knowledge. Kente weaving can be said to be a knowledge-intensive art involving different categories of people performing different functions. All these people have expert knowledge and play specialised roles in Kente weaving. An understanding of knowledge flow among people in contemporary information society is important in understanding knowledge creation in general and also in understanding the function of traditional social networks in our digital society. This study also sought to understand the impact of Chinese-origin Kente on Kente-related knowledge.

I employed the social capital theory as the theoretical framework for this research and used social constructionism as the research paradigm. I used a multiple case study as my research design, wherein each case consists of a set of participants who have expert knowledge about Kente from a specific perspective, and play different roles in the Kente-weaving value chain. Across three embedded case studies, I studied knowledge flow among Kente weavers, sellers, fashion designers, consumers, tailors, and also Ghanaians in the expatriate Ghanaian community in Australia. Semi-structured interviews with all entities in the Kente-weaving chain from weavers to consumers were used to gather data. I also used data from the Kente Master Website and a Facebook page.

The findings of my study suggest that elements of social relations and social structure constitute social capital, which facilitates the flow of Kente-related knowledge. Knowledge about Kente flows from the family, mostly from the elders in the family. It is part of the socialisation process of individuals in the community and tied up with their identity as Ghanaians. Some formal education, apprenticeships, social interactions and tourism helped in transferring knowledge about Kente to young people in the community and other people in Ghana and abroad. However, where there is a competition among actors involved in the same economic activities, elements of social structures such as friendship and community do not facilitate access to a resource. Additionally, I found that although the advent of the Chinese-origin Kente has distorted Kente-related knowledge, the social and cultural value of the original woven Kente is not affected because of them; these printed or machine-woven (rather than hand woven) Kente knockoffs originating from China also play a role in helping more people display their Ghanaian identity and increase their sense of belonging. Counterintuitively, many in the traditional Kente industry who are annoyed or even amused with these knockoffs, also consider their circulation in society as good publicity for the authentic but more expensive Kente textiles.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I have provided an introduction, which narrates the origin of Kente, and some of the meanings contained in Kente and the philosophy behind Kente. I have also provided a background to this study, which captures how Kente has been used in the lives of Ghanaians and Africans in the diaspora. I have situated traditional Kente weaving and the community knowledge about Kente within the context of knowledge systems and knowledge sharing in contemporary literature. This chapter also contains the problem statement, the objectives and research questions of this study, and a summary of the research design used. Additionally, I have presented the significance of the study and its contribution to the literature, as well as the delimitations.

1.1 Background

First, let me introduce you to a song that every Ghanaian child learns in school. It is called the Bonwire Kente Song, *Akyinkyinakyinkyin ama mahu nneɛma,* and is written by Dr. Ephraim Amu[1]

Akyinkyinakyinkyin ama mahu nneɛma,	Roaming about has made me observe things,
Akyinkyinakyinkyin ama mate nsɛmma,	Roaming about has made me hear of stories,
Asante Bonwire Kente nwene deɛ,	As for Asante Bonwire Kente weaving,
Manhu bi da o,	I've never seen some before
Asante Bonwire Kente nwene deɛ,	As for Asante Bonwire Kente weaving,
Manhu bi da o,	I've never seen some before
Kwame nim adeɛ yɔ	
Ne kente nwono na abɔ me gye	

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[1] Amu, E. (1932). *Twenty-five African Songs in the Twi Language: Music and words by E. Amu*. London: Sheldon Press.

Ne nsa; ne nan, n'asadua saa nie:	Kwame knows his craft His expert Kente
Kro, kro, krohikro,	weaving, amazes me.
Hi, hi, hi, hi,	His hands; his feet, the loom sound thus:
Krohikro hi krokrokro,	Kro, kro, krohikro,
Hi, hi, hi, hi,	Hi, hi, hi, hi,
Krohikro,	Krohikro hi krokrokro,
Na ɛyɛ me dɛ o,	Hi, hi, hi, hi,
Na ɛyɛ me dɛ o,	Krohikro,
Na abɔ me gye koraa,	I'm delighted by it,
Na ɛyɛ me dɛ o,	I'm delighted by it
Na abɔ me gye koraa.	It makes me go so crazy.
	I'm delighted by it
	It makes me go so crazy.

I was taught the above is a song in lower primary school in Ejisu, in the Ashanti region part of Ghana in 1995. The song was part of a cultural studies curriculum, which was taught to students from the various ethnic groups in Ghana as part of their cultural education. I did not understand what the song meant until my High School days when I read about the composer of the song, Dr Ephraim Amu who was one of the famous composers in Ghana. This is a song in praise of the Bonwire Kente cloth and of Kente weaving. Although Dr Ephraim Amu was not a native of the Asante tribe or from Bonwire where one school of thought claims Kente weaving originated (see Sabutey 2009), through this song, he showed his appreciation and acknowledged that Bonwire Kente is the best and most valuable of all the woven cloths. I still remember a story my grandmother told me about how two men from Bonwire learnt Kente weaving from *Kweku Ananse*, or folktale character that often takes the form of a spider. At the time,

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I had not set eyes on Kente cloth physically although I had seen pictures of Kente in books. The first time I saw the Kente cloth was during a burial of an old woman in my town. They had used the cloth to decorate the room where she had been laid-in-state and it was used to cover the casket in which they were going to bury her. My second encounter was also at a funeral, and this made me associate Kente with the dead. In those days, I did not know there were varieties of Kente because those I had seen were all of the same colours and patterns. At the same time, I did not know that there was social knowledge and philosophies associated with the colours and patterns in the cloth but I liked Kente for its aesthetics.

One day, my grandmother was attending a festival in a town next to ours and asked my mother to bring out her *nwentoma* (woven cloth) from her trunk for her to use for the festival. When my mother brought it out, I said this looks like Kente for it had patterns and colours similar to the Kente I had seen. My grandmother told me *nwentoma* is another name for Kente. Then I asked why hers looked different from what I had seen earlier. It was then my grandmother educated me on Kente and the meaning of each colour and pattern. She told me the earlier ones I had seen are for burial and are not used for joyful occasions. She also told me those I had seen earlier had a pattern called '*owuo sei fie*' meaning 'death destroys families'. She said that those Kente are used for burial because in the culture of the Asantes the dead must be respected and honoured, so as a sign of honour and respect they decorate the dead with Kente before the person is buried. However, they do not bury the dead with the Kente for it is normally removed at the cemetery and used for future burials. She further explained that the colours, which were black, gold and red had meanings and she gave the meaning as follows: the black and red all represent mourning while the gold represents royalty, fertility, or wealth. Back then, I could not make any connection between that old woman and the cloth used

in her funeral but if it were to be now I would have said that the old woman was wealthy or had a lot of children.

I then asked my grandmother the name of her Kente cloth and why it is kept in that particular trunk. Her response was that Kente is an expensive cloth and it is not an 'everyday cloth'. For that reason, she uses it once in a while only, especially on important occasions and festivals. She then told me the name of her Kente was *Sika Futoro* (gold dust). She said the patterns and colours, which were gold, woven with small black strips, signify wealth and prestige. She told me about the importance of Kente cloth in marriage ceremonies; it is an honour for a bride to receive Kente as part of the items a bridegroom offers as a 'bride price'. She further explained to me that there are some other patterns or design of Kente that are reserved for the *Asantehene* (Asante King). As a sign of reverence, the weavers do not weave those types for individuals and even if an individual requests it, it should be after the *Asantehene* had first worn it in public. To her, it was a way of showing reverence to the king.

Fast forward to now, and I can say that Kente is now very common in my community. In my youth hardly would I see a young lady wearing Kente cloth but now it is their preferred cloth for marriage ceremonies, graduations / congregations, matriculations, etc. Also now there are a lot of items that are made with Kente cloth including earrings, sneakers, bags, purse, sandals, etc. I even have a tie made with a piece of Kente cloth, which a friend of mine gave me as a gift when we were in Senior High School. Because of its colourful nature and its sentimental value, I have kept this tie till today. With the advent of technology, there are also a lot of videos on Kente weaving on YouTube, alongside guides to patterns, colours and their meanings etc., but they all lack the magic and mystery that surrounded the Kente cloth during my childhood.

This narrative sets the tone for my study, which seeks to understand how knowledge flow facilitates knowledge creation. It also seeks to understand how social elements facilitate knowledge flow. I seek to address these questions using the social capital theory (Coleman 1990). If seen thorough this theoretical lens, my grandmother would be what Zhuge (2006) refers to as a node through whom knowledge has been passed on to me. My grandmother and by extension my family has been a form of social capital to me (see Coleman 1990; Putnam 1995). As asserted by Coleman, Social Capital consists of some aspect of a social structure that facilitates certain actions of individuals who are within the structure (Coleman 1990, p. 302).

I have considered the Kente weavers, sellers, users and all the other people involved in the Kente production, distribution and usage to be in a social relation and forming a social structure in one way or another, for Kente brings together the people involved in the production, distribution and usage within a networked social structure. These people create and maintain social relationships, whether in the form of family, friendship, or a clan etc. However, the nature of the network amongst these people can differ; while some can be strong, others can be weak (see Coleman 1990). Some may live in distant locations and they might not have seen each other face-to-face (see Putnam, 2002).

In the next section, I have presented a detailed background on the history of Kente and Kente weaving, and how people gain knowledge about Kente. I have also situated this study within the traditional knowledge systems in Africa alongside the contemporary literature on knowledge sharing in order to show how knowledge embedded in traditional communities flows globally and through modern technologies. I have done this because Kente weaving is a traditional knowledge-intensive trade, which is based on a lot of knowledge that people have accumulated over the years.

Furthermore, the advent of new media and the advancements in technology have revolutionised the flow of knowledge about Kente, and hence, the need to situate the study in the contemporary literature on knowledge sharing.

1.2 Kente and its role in Ghanaian society

Before colonisation of Africa and the subsequent introduction of foreign culture and modern or scientific knowledge, African people had their own beliefs, practices, known-how, skills, ideas, etc. which they had accumulated as a result of their interaction with their local ecosystems. This knowledge cuts across fabric production or weaving. What is now referred to as traditional knowledge is still prevalent in most African societies despite the advancement in science and technology. A notable example is Kente weaving which is still predominant among the Asante and Ewe people of Ghana. Kente is a type of cloth which is normally hand woven on a loom using yarns, silk, etc. whose patterns are normally of geometric shapes, and bold designs.

There have been conflicting accounts of the origin of Kente weaving. One school of thought claims that Kente was invented in the 17th century AD by two men from the Asante tribe in a town called Bonwire of modern day Ghana. Oral tradition and some researchers have it that these men observed and imitated a spider that was weaving a web in the forest. From there, these men came home and decided to practice their observation using the fibre or threads made from the Raffia palm tree and this resulted in the popular Kente cloth. Initially, there were a few set patterns, colours and geometric designs in Kente, but it has since developed with varieties of colours, geometric designs and patterns.

The other school of thought, which seems to counter this claim about the origins of Kente, is that it originated from the Volta region of present day Ghana amongst the

Ewes (a tribe/ethnic group) who and then taught it to the Asantes (Dotse 2015). Dotse however, acknowledges that it was the Asantes who popularised Kente weaving, christened the woven cloth as Kente and designed more colourful types with different geometric patterns. This conflicting account might result from the prevalence of oral histories rather than written documentation in the old days. It might also be as a result of political tension between the two tribes (Dotse 2015). In either account, it is clear that whatever the origins of Kente, Ghanaian society highly values the cloth and hence, there are several mythologies surrounding the cloth within each community.

Kente weaving and Kente cloth is still popular in Ghana, especially among the Asantes. It has also been adopted by some African- Americans and other individuals in the Western world. Kente cloth is regarded for its aesthetics beauty and qualities, and has become the ceremonial cloth among most people in Ghana. It is used during occasions like naming ceremony, marriage ceremony, festivals and other traditional occasions although it was only used by the Asantehene (Asante King) as his ceremonial cloth in the early days of its invention. Kente cloth has also been worn by the presidents of Ghana to national and international events and they have given the same as a gift to other visiting presidents from other countries. For example, the first president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah used and contributed to the global awareness of the Kente cloth. Kwame Nkrumah and his entourage wore Kente cloth when they visited Washington, D.C. in1958 and in 1960 and gave Kente cloth to African- American W.E.B. Du Bois when he visited Ghana (Sabutey 2009). Again, when President Clinton visited Ghana in 1998, the then president of Ghana, J.J. Rawlings wore Kente cloth and gave it to President Clinton as a gift to wear. The Tanzanian head of state, Julius Nyerere also wore Kente on *occasion* (Schramm 2010).

In the 1960s when Ghana gained a republic status, Kwame Nkrumah the then President introduced an initiative where organizations were to give Kente strips to their clients especially foreigners in order to showcase that Ghana is an independent and a republic country. This initiative also contributed to the flow of Kente-related knowledge to the international front (Adler & Barnard 1995). Over the years Kente has also become part of the African-American culture. Ross for example writes that:

> 'Its (Kente's) initial associations with royalty, wealth, and status were enlisted to help defeat notions of 'primitive' African cultures as the source for slaves. As Kente rose to prominence with Nkrumah's independence initiatives, it became allied with the Pan African and Black Nationalist ideologies of the time and helped promote ideas of 'Black power,' 'Black pride,' and Black is beautiful. As understanding of the cloth increased, it became a premier symbol of African heritage and a tangible link with the African continent and its history' (Ross 1998, p. 187).

Kente has become an integral part of the Kwanzaa festival, which is an African-American holiday initiated by Maulana Ron Karenga (Schramm 2010). Festivals and events such as the PANAFEST and Emancipation day, which have a Pan-African stance, have also seen Kente playing an integral role. Many of the attendees of these events wear or use an artefact made with Kente (Schramm 2010).

Kente weaving and other activities surrounding it have evolved over the years. As indicated earlier, the initial ones were made with black and white threads made from raffia tree; however, as time went by, the weavers started using dyes made from bark of trees, roots, herbs, etc. to dye the threads to produce different colours. Currently, they use a huge variety of patterns, designs, threads, and colours. Apart from the

aesthetic qualities of the Kente cloth, each pattern, design, colour and symbol found therein have meanings that relate to the history, beliefs, philosophies, life events, proverbs and maxims of the people of Asante.

In recent times, some patterns have emerged which have been associated with some key individuals in Ghana. An example is a pattern called 'Kuffour Apagya Ghana' which literally means Kuffour has revived Ghana's economy. Kuffour (John Agyekum Kuffour) is a former president of Ghana and the weavers believe that he contributed immensely to the socio-economic development of Ghana, thus the pattern '*Kuffour Apagya Ghana*'. At the same time the tools, materials and equipment like loom and threads have also evolved. Different kinds of threads made from yarns, silk, cotton, etc. are used in these days while there have been some modern types of looms although most weavers still use the old technology.

Kente has become very popular among young men and women in Ghana and also among Africans in the diaspora. Now it not uncommon to see many young people wearing Kente for what they consider an important occasion. Furthermore, artefacts made with Kente have also become trendy among youth. Nowadays, there are contemporary artefacts such as Kente ties, Kente shoes, Kente earrings, Kente bags, etc. At the same time, with the emergence of social medial platforms, there are several sites that disseminate knowledge about Kente. There are some videos on Youtube about Kente weaving, and there are blogs, Instagram pages, and Facebook groups that disseminate knowledge about Kente. Online retail shops selling Kente and artefacts made with Kente have also emerged. A typical example is Kente Master, which sells Kente stoles to African students in the diaspora.

Additionally, in recent times some companies in China have taken advantage of the growth in popularity of Kente and have started producing imitated factory-spun and

printed versions by copying the patterns, which they sell cheaply in the Ghanaian market and also in the US market (Boateng 2014). These versions are normally cheaper than and of less quality than the hand-woven Kente from Ghana. Some people have raised copyright issues about this trend; however, like with much traditional knowledge and products, patent of the Kente patterns by the Government of Ghana has not been recognised internationally (see Boateng 2014). This has contributed to the free flow of Kente-related knowledge across the globe.

Learning Kente weaving involves first, learning the meanings and philosophies behind the patterns, designs, symbols and colours that are used in the Kente cloth. Although, weavers have the liberty to innovate, the innovation must be consistent with the belief and practices of the people. Any piece of Kente woven by a craftsman is evaluated by the society/ community for its communicative function or societal conventions and any piece of work that falls short of these is rejected by Ghanaian society (Sabutey 2009). Kente weaving is regarded as a male dominated craft, especially among the Asantes because of the belief that women who engage in Kente weaving become barren; as childbearing is a mark of womanhood among the Asantes, it was a taboo for a women to weave Kente. Nevertheless, they had a key role in Kente, which was to prepare the dyes that are used to produce the different colours of threads for the weaving and also sell the finished product on the market. However, some recent studies have shown that there are some women who weave Kente (Sabutey 2009). Although men dominate Kente weaving and also design the patterns and symbols, it is the women who own the copyright for most of the designs (Boateng 2007).

All this constitutes a body of knowledge, which has implications for traditional knowledge systems. As Rattray (1927) puts it, Kente weaving and weavers constitute a body of knowledge which must be critically studied and fostered. Similarly, Sabutey

(2009) noted the artistic and aesthetic knowledge inherent in Kente has the potential of improving teaching and learning in Schools, Colleges and Universities. In spite of this, little effort has been made to understand traditional knowledge in Ghana; specifically, how such knowledge is created, acquired and flows within Ghana and across the globe. Thus, this study seeks to understand how Kente-related knowledge flows and how it results in the creation of new Kente-related knowledge.

1.3 Overview of traditional knowledges

The concepts traditional knowledge, local knowledge and indigenous knowledge are normally difficult to define and differentiate. Jane Anderson notes that this problem arises out of political issues surrounding them (Anderson 2010). I do not intend to join this debate because doing so will shift the focus of this study. I have therefore decided to use the term traditional knowledge over local knowledge and indigenous knowledge to capture knowledge that is distinct from contemporary or modern knowledge.

Traditional knowledge is an integral part of the lives of individuals in many cultures and also essential for several economies across the world. It has evolved over the years and has been applied to solve problems in most communities. It has been variously defined; Grenier (1998) defines traditional knowledge as the know-hows, experiences and skills which people of a particular culture or society hold about their society and environment in general which enable them to make good use of the resources in their environment. It is mostly handed down orally from generation to generation but each generation is able to modify and adapt such knowledge dynamically to suit their current environment. Semeli and Kincheloe (1999) defined traditional knowledge as the skills, ideas and known-how peculiar to a particular group of people, which they have gathered from their encounters with their environment. Such knowledge is normally transferred from one generation to the other. Although there is

no ironclad definition for traditional knowledge, they have similarities; it includes a body of knowledge held by individuals, families, communities, and other social relations normally acquired by the community through their interactions with the environment, experience, observations, and sometimes experiments. It is a unique, traditional, local knowledge existing within and developed around the specific conditions, traditional to a particular geographic area. Traditional knowledge 'is about the common sense ideas and cultural knowledge of local people concerning day-to-day life' (Dei 2000, p.5). Tella (2007) distinguished traditional knowledge from scientific knowledge with the following characteristics:

- It is approached holistically,

- it is communicated orally,

- it is often taught through demonstrations, experiments and observations, and

- it is explained with social values and sometimes has spiritual interpretations.

According to the UNESCO, traditional knowledge has the following features:

- It is created within communities,

- it is not methodologically documented,

- it serves as a premise for decision making ,

- it is not static and is based on experimentation and adaptation,

- it is transmitted orally and exist within rural communities, and

- is   geographic-specific   and   culturally-situated (www.unesco.org/most/bpikpub.htm).

From the above, it can be seen that traditional knowledge has both material and spiritual aspects. Traditional people have knowledge about the various things concerning their lives and they use such knowledge to manage their lives. It has helped traditional communities in decision-making regarding the socialisation and education of people.

There are several advantages of traditional knowledge: it is easily accessible and available in most traditional communities, families and social relations. It is socially desirable and easy for the traditional people to relate to and use it to solve problems. Traditional knowledge is a low-risk knowledge especially for the traditional people and it is affordable (Sithole 2007). Tella (2007, p.186) identified the importance of traditional knowledge as follows:

- 'It provides problem-solving strategies for communities,
- it contributes significantly to global development knowledge,
- it is relevant for the development process, and
- it is an under-utilised resource in the development process'.

Traditional knowledge creation, sharing, storage and usage are influenced by gender, age, social stratifications, and traditional divisions of labour; for example, Kente weaving in Ghana is a male-dominated craft, and women are hardly allowed to weave Kente. On the other hand, women gather the natural materials and prepare the dyes that are used to colour the threads, possibly because the process is closer to women's traditional labour such as cooking. Hence, the knowledge and skills needed for the production of Kente are distributed between men and women.

Documenting traditional knowledge is sometimes difficult as it is rooted in the beliefs, practices and culture of the community and the experiences of the knowledge holder. This sometimes makes it difficult to transfer the knowledge. Issues such as language barrier and values sometimes become barriers to traditional knowledge sharing also. It is normally shared during socialisation, families, personal contact, oral communication, artefacts, stories, folklores, festivals, proverbs, maxims, poetry, drama, etc. (Sithole 2007). It is also normally shared through demonstrations and apprenticeships. Due to these, traditional knowledge can be easily lost, especially

when the knowledge in question exists only within a particular family or few individuals in the community. Thus, it has become expedient to capture and preserve traditional knowledge in different formats such as audio-visual, electronic text, or electronic databases that can be accessible across the globe (Chisenga 2000). Additionally, since traditional knowledge usually exists in the native language of the community, efforts must be made to translate them into international languages so that people of other cultures can make use and benefit from it. Furthermore, creation of a national, regional and international archive is often a means of storing traditional knowledge. In recent times some governments in Africa have been setting up centres (example, Centre in Indigenous Knowledge Systems (CIKS) South Africa) that research into traditional knowledges. Documenting traditional knowledge can serve as an antidote to 'knowledge piracy' and will financially sustain individuals, families or communities that own and hold the knowledge although it may require a national legal framework and policies that will extract, store and disseminate this knowledge (Sithole 2007). Documenting traditional knowledge can also help to authenticate such knowledge and document its advancement with time, for traditional knowledge evolves over time. Though technically feasible, documentation of traditional knowledge can be expensive, labour intensive, arduous and sometimes such projects might even be unsuccessful (Sithole 2007) but determination and perseverance can help in this regard. On the acquisition of traditional knowledge, it has been noted that due to the tacit nature of traditional knowledge, acquisition is normally done through observation, learning-by-doing, experiences, listening, and trial-and-error.

Protecting traditional knowledge has also been a major concern for many researchers, governments, civil society institutions, etc. Before Western democracy was introduced to Ghana and many other countries in Africa, customary practices were

means by which cultural artefacts were protected. Even in recent times, such laws still exist. Cultural artefacts, crafts, and knowledge related to them were properties of communities rather than of individuals. Individuals were given the responsibility to control and manage this knowledge (Kawooya 2013). In the case of Kente, the *Asantehene* who is the overlord of the Asantes was and is still regarded as the custodian of Kente knowledge. The Asantehene thus appoints a chief who is in charge of Kente, referred to in local parlance as *Kentehene* (Chief of Kente). In Asante's culture, Kente is regarded as a property of all Asantes although it is produced mainly in Bonwire. At the community level some people believe Kente is the property of Bonwire although there are some other towns in the Asante ethnic area that also weave Kente (Patrick 2005).

In recent times, the government of Ghana has attempted to enact intellectual property rights laws to protect traditional knowledge and cultural artefacts like Kente. However, this attempt has been opposed by some people including researchers like Boatema Boateng who argue that such laws make traditional knowledge and artefacts like Kente a state property rather than of individuals and communities that produce them (Boateng 2014). A similar concern has been raised in South Africa with their current intellectual property law that was amended to include the property of traditional knowledge (Kawooya 2013). Some other researchers believe granting individuals intellectual property rights to traditional knowledge and artefacts will hinder the free flow of such knowledge and the continued production of such artefacts (Gibson 2004). On the international front, these laws have not been given recognition and this has partly contributed to the copying or imitation of such knowledge and artefacts. Boatema Boateng points to the imitation and circulation of cheap Kente knock-offs by some Chinese companies that sell the product in Ghana and in international markets. This is

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really affecting the patronage of the original or the hand-woven cloth, which are not as cheap. However most Ghanaians do not accord the same prestige to the imitated cloth from China (Boateng 2014).

1.4 Focus of this research

The extant literature shows that in traditional African societies, knowledge is created within communities, becomes a property of the society, and sharing is restricted to members of the community. Individuals who are not members of the community generally do not have access to knowledge that is exclusive to a particular community or ethnic group (King et al. 2007; Moyi 2003; Macharia 1998). The literature also points to the fact that face-to-face communication has been the preferred mode of knowledge sharing in collective societies like Ghana and in some traditional African societies and relationship among individuals determines who they share knowledge with; people share with those they have strong ties with and hardly share with those they do not know (Alemna & Sam 2006; Wilson 1987). For example, Kente-related knowledge was often shared among people within families and also with people in the community (Sabutey 2009), whereas Ghanaian people who had received a formal Western education that is largely individualistic rarely shared that knowledge with others (King et al. 2007). However, some recent studies have shown that there is a growing number of Africans like those from Ghana that have embraced social technologies like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Wikipedia, Youtube etc. for communication, learning, and for business activities (Apeanti & Danso 2015; Mingle & Adams 2015). There are some individuals and organisations that have now created blogs, Facebook accounts, Youtube videos and Twitter accounts that contain Kente-related knowledge. These activities have been facilitating knowledge flow of Kente-related knowledge. Consequently, this research seeks to address the following research questions:

(1) What facilitates the flow of traditional Kente-related knowledge?

(2) How does knowledge flow facilitate the creation of new Kente-related knowledge?

(3) How has the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente impacted Kente-related knowledge?

In order to understand the social relations and the social structures that facilitate knowledge flow, this research uses social capital theory as the conceptual framework. According to the social capital theory, social structure and elements of social relations constitute social capital, which facilitate the performance of an action (Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1990; Putnam 1995). I therefore, seek to understand how social relations facilitate knowledge flow and how knowledge flow facilitates the creation of new knowledge about Kente in the Bonwire Kente weaving village and globally.

1.5 Significance and justification for this research

My study seeks to understand how knowledge flow among people facilitates the creation of new knowledge. Knowledge creation and sharing has existed in African societies for ages. My study seeks understand how this knowledge flow facilitates the creation and sharing of new knowledge about Kente, and what kind of social capital and social networks facilitate this process. An understanding of this knowledge flow in our contemporary information society is important in understanding knowledge creation in general and also in understanding the function of traditional social networks in our digital society. My study has the potential of offering a new perspective about knowledge creation and knowledge flow in communities. My study also has the potential of contributing to our knowledge about how this traditional craft has evolved in our contemporary global world.

My study will inform African scholars and researchers from several areas, especially as it combines research on Kente with research on knowledge management. Cultural institutions such as the Bonwire Kente Centre may also benefit from my study because it will provide a contemporary snapshot of the meaning of Kente, why people use Kente and how people create and share their experiences, ideas, skills and knowledge about Kente in the community and the will be valuable to tourist who may visit the museum.

Last but not least, Kente weavers and designers may take inspiration from my study to design Kente that meets contemporary users' needs based on individuals' experience with Kente and their knowledge about Kente.

1.6 Definitions and explanations of terms used in this study

Asante: It is an ethnic group in Ghana. It can also be the name of a person.

Otumfour Asantehene: It is the title for the King of Asante kingdom.

Bonwire: It is a town in the Ashanti Region of Ghana where Kente originated.

Kente: Kente is a type of cloth, which is normally hand woven in small long strips on a loom, using yarns, dyed silk, etc. whose patterns are normally of geometric shapes, and bold designs.

Kente Master: It is a social enterprise company in Ghana that sells Kente stoles and other Kente-related products especially to the foreign market, through a website where they take custom orders.

 Knowledge Flow: Knowledge flow has been defined as 'how knowledge flows through the activities performed by a community according to the kinds of knowledge and knowledge sources involved in the activities, and the mechanisms used by the

people involved in the activity to obtain or share that knowledge and so forth' (Rodríguez-Elias, Martínez-García, Vizcaíno & Favela, 2006, p.217).

Social Capital: Social Capital 'is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structure and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure' (Coleman, 1990, p. 302).

Social Technologies: In this thesis, the term "social technologies" refers to Internet-based and mobile-based applications that allow social interactions, and creation and dissemination of content. Social technologies are identified as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, Wikis, Blogs, and LinkedIn.

Traditional African Knowledge Management System: It the system where communities are custodians of knowledge and knowledge creation and sharing is through social groups such as clans, ethnic group. Knowledge creation and sharing is hierarchical; knowledge is created and flows from the heads or elders of clans, ethnic associations, market women's association etc.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented the introduction to the study, background of the study, research problem and questions, and provided some definitions and explanations for the terms used in this thesis. In this chapter, I present a review of literature related to my study. In the first section of this chapter, I have captured an overview of Kente-related knowledge. I have reviewed literature on Kente production by looking at the main tools and materials used and the approaches to weaving. I have also captured the symbolic meanings and significance of Kente in the cultural, social, religious and political life. Additionally, I have reviewed literature on the use of Kente in the global world and how knowledge about Kente flows in the global world. Kente in the marketing space and intellectual property issues about Kente are also discussed in this section.

Next, I briefly review literature on knowledge management because of its relationship with knowledge flow. Following this section, I review literature on knowledge flow: channels of knowledge flow, facilitating factors for knowledge flow and barriers to it. The section also covers how knowledge flow is associated with knowledge creation. In the final section, I review some theories that have been used in knowledge sharing studies and also apply to knowledge flow. This chapter also contains the conceptual framework of my study, which is framed around the theory of social capital.

2.1 An overview of Kente and Kente-related knowledge

In this section, I look at the various materials and tools used in Kente productions and the various types of weaves. I also explore the meaning of each of the colours of yarns

used in Kente weaving. The consumerism aspect of Kente is also captured in this section. Furthermore, the section includes literature on the symbolic meanings of Kente. It looks at the cultural, social, religions and political significance of Kente. I also explore in this section the contemporary use of Kente and how the global world uses Kente.   Last but not least, this section captures the intellectual property issues surrounding Kente.

2.1.1 Production of Kente

Kente weaving involves a number of processes, materials, tools and equipment. The tools and equipment used for Kente weaving are produced either by the weavers themselves or by other craftsmen who have expertise in making the tools. The common tools used for Kente weaving include the loom (*Kofi nsadua*), heddles (*asatia, asanan or asasia*), pulleys (*awideɛ*), spools (*donowa*), shuttles (*kurokurowa*), bobbins (*awua*), reeds, beaters (*kyeree*) and sword stick (*tabono*) (Sabutey 2009). Photos of these tools are shown in Figures 2.1 to 2.6.

The loom is the main tool for Kente weaving. The shape of the loom differs from community to community in Ghana. The main function of the loom is to grip the warp threads to enable the 'weaving-together' of the yarns or threads. Shown in Figure 2.1 is a man weaving on a wooden loom.
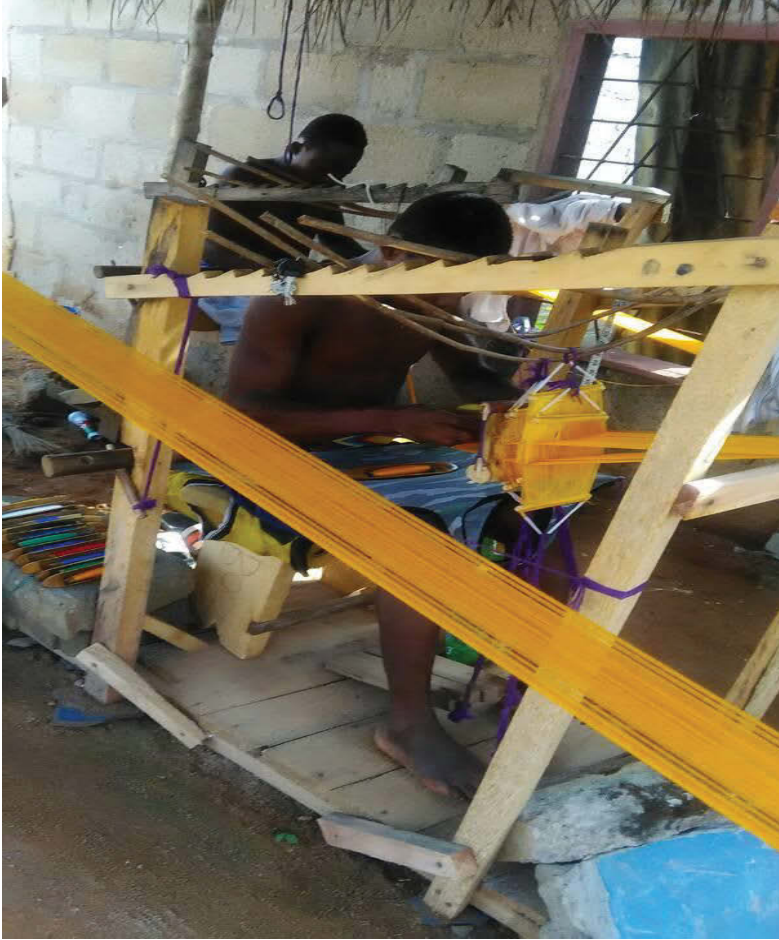
Figure 2.1: Men sitting at wooden looms
Source: Author

The heddle is a key part of a Kente weaving loom. The heddle separates the

warp threads that are used for the weaving. It has an eye through which the warp

threads pass. Figure 2.2 shows a heddle.

Figure 2.2: Heddle
Source: Author

The pulley is a wheel with a rope that connects the heddle to make it easier to lift. Figure 2.3 shows a pulley used in Kente weaving – notice the decorative carving, which can differ from loom to loom.

Figure 2.3: Pulley
Source: Author

The shuttle 'is a boat-like wooden device with a cavity in one side of it. Inside the cavity is a wooden or metal rod for holding the bobbin or spool. The shuttle has an eye through which the weft yarns pass' (Kpogo 2012, p. 54). Figure 2.4 shows shuttles.

Figure 2.4: Shuttle
Source: Author

The bobbins used in Kente weaving are sticks, normally wooden, that hold the threads or yarns used for the weaving. Figure 2.5 is a sample of bobbins with yarns used in Kente weaving.

Figure 2.5: Bobbins with threads
Source: Author

The reed used in Kente weaving is normally made with wood and strips of raffia palm threads. It is used to create spaces between the warp threads. Figure 2.6 shows a reed.

Figure 2.6: Reed
Source: Author

The main raw materials used for Kente weaving are yarn, wax, starch, dyes and salt. When Kente weaving was first developed, all the raw materials were produced locally. As indicated earlier, Kente weaving is customarily reserved for men. The role of women was to produce the raw materials, dye the yarn, and also sell the Kente. The women generally made the dyes from the bark and the roots of trees, and also from other plant and mineral resources. The women also spun yarn from the roots of trees and the leaves of the raffia palm. The dyes were used to colour the yarn. Over time and as demand for Kente increased, different-coloured yarns were imported from India,

Japan and China (Sabutey 2009). Thus dyes made from the bark and root of trees were no longer used to dye the yarns. The locally produced yarns from raffia and root of trees were also not used in Kente weaving, and this type of yarn production skill is already disappearing. Currently, different kinds of yarns are used for Kente weaving, including silk, cotton, and rayon. Figures 2.7 to 2.8 show some of the materials used for Kente weaving. Each of the colours of yarn used for Kente weaving has a meaning.

Figure 2.7: Rayon yarn
Source: Author

Figure 2.8: Stretched yarn of different colours
Source: Sabutey (2009)

Kente weaving involves interlacing a set of warps across each other vertically and horizontally. This process results in a pattern. These patterns are intentionally created by the weavers to communicate a particular message – there are moral, political, social and religious philosophies behind these patterns (Boateng 2015).

There are also different types of weaving: single weave (*ahwipan*), double weave (*ahwiprenu*) and triple weave (*Adwini si adwini so*). The single weave has a very simple design or pattern and is normally woven using one colour of thread. However, some weavers use different colours of threads make the cloth colourful. The double weave has a variety of patterns. It is normally woven using a variety of colours of warp threads. The triple weave involves a combination of multiple patterns. It is perceived as the most difficult pattern to weave. Multiple colours of warp threads are used in the weave (Sabutey 2009). Figures 2.9 to 2.11 show the different levels of weaving.

Figure 2.9: Single weave
Source: Sabutey (2009)

Figure 2.10: Double weave
Source: Sabutey (2009)

Figure 2.11: Triple weave
Source: Sabutey (2009)

2.1.2 Kente in the marketing space

The marketing of Kente has evolved over the years. Until recently, someone who needed Kente had to visit the Bonwire Kente weaving village and buy directly from a weaver. As time went by, women within the community and its surrounding towns became the sellers and distributers of Kente. They became vendors who carried the cloth from one town to the other. These vendors still play an important role in the selling and distribution of Kente across Ghana. They have also played a central role in the flow of Kente-related knowledge. Some of the women have also opened Kente shops in Bonwire where some customers go to buy the cloth and other Kente artefacts.

Currently, there are many Kente shops in almost all the regions of Ghana and the major markets in Ghana. These sellers contribute to the flow of Kente-related knowledge through their bargaining and negotiations. It is important to point out that bargaining and negotiation are common trading practices in Ghana, especially in the traditional trade settings. Yamaguchi and Yartey (2013) observed in their study on weaving in the virtual and real noticed that many Kente sellers in the Bonwire and other

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communities in Ghana use the bargaining and negotiation process to tell the prospective buyers of the different kinds of patterns and their meaning. According to Yamaguchi and Yartey (2013), 'it [bargaining] is a way for people to converse, tell their story, talk about the quality, and eventually reach an agreement that makes both the buyer and seller happy' (Yamaguchi & Yartey 2013).

The advent of digital and social media technologies, as well as globalisation, is revolutionising Kente marketing. There are now websites from which people can buy Kente. These websites do create the opportunity for bargaining and negotiation where Kente-related knowledge flows through the process. The websites normally provide some information about Kente, such as its history and the meanings of some of the patterns and colours.

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat have all been used to market Kente. Similarly, mobile applications like WhatsApp and Viber are used to sell Kente. Some buyers order Kente via these platforms. These technologies have also been used to promote Kente (Asmah, Gyasi & Daitey 2015). These technologies and new trends are facilitating the flow of Kente-related knowledge across the globe. Figures 2.12 and 2.13 are screenshots of some electronic commerce websites and Facebook pages displaying Kente cloth and Kente artefacts to prospective buyers.
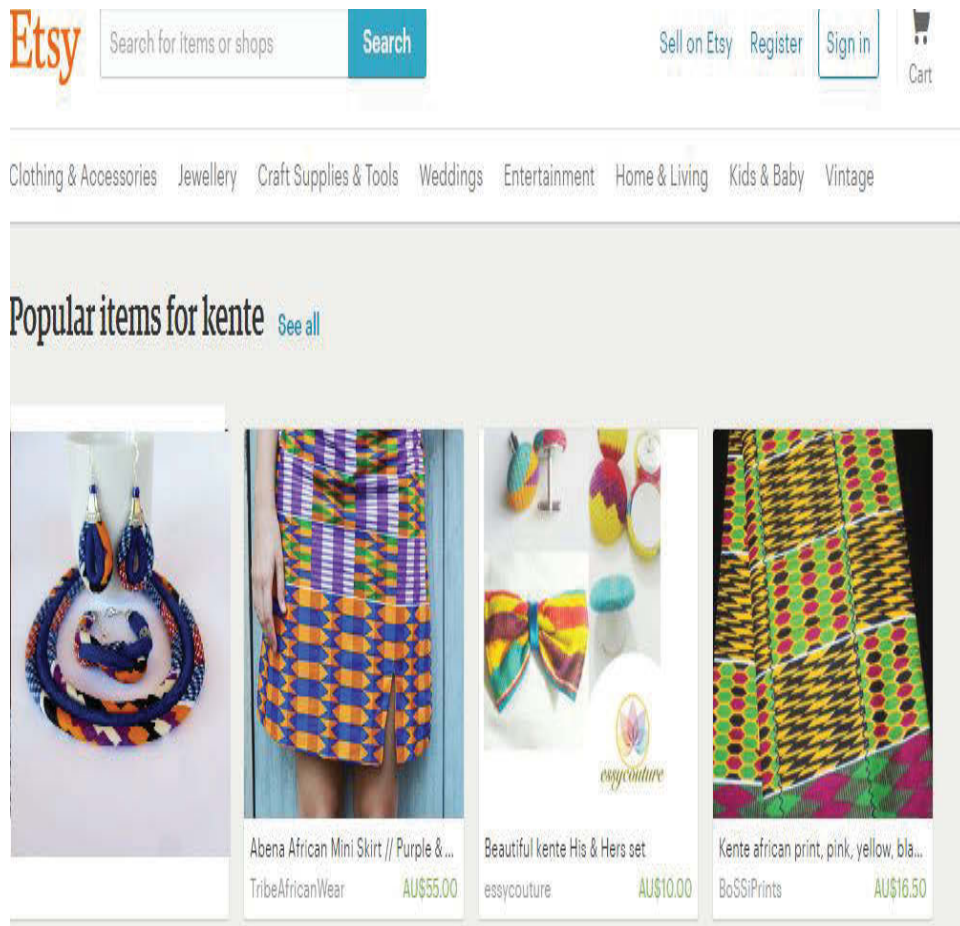
Figure 2.12: A website that sells imitation Kente and Kente artefacts
Source: Screen capture by author

Figure 2.13: A website that sells authentic and imitation Kente and Kente artefacts
Source: Screen capture by author

The development of tourism has also contributed to the marketing and commercialisation of Kente in Ghana. There are some Kente weaving centres in

Bonwire and its surrounding towns that attracted some tourists. Many of these tourists learn about the history of Kente and how Kente is woven (Asmah, Gyasi and Daitey 2015). They sometimes buy Kente and Kente artefacts on their visits. All these factors are contributing to the flow of Kente-related knowledge.

In the past decade, Kente Festivals have been introduced in the Ashanti region where Bonwire is located and in the Volta region of Ghana where there are also Kente weaving villages. The festivals normally attract some foreigners and the platform is used to tell people about the history of Kente and the emerging threats for Kente, and their implications for Kente-related knowledge.

2.1.3 The symbolic meaning of Kente

Clothing has several uses and plays various roles in the lives of individuals, families, and communities. Like much clothing, Kente can indicate membership in a group or dissociation from a group (Durham 1999). The kind of clothing an individual wears communicates different messages about the person. Individuals and communities have used clothing to create their identity. In Ghana and most communities in Africa, most tribes have certain clothes that are unique to them. Individuals may also use variations of this clothing to create and communicate their own unique identities. The kind of clothing an individual or a group of people wear communicates their social belonging and identity. For example, in the three northern regions of Ghana (Upper East, Upper West and Northern Regions), the chiefs and the indigenous people normally wear smocks for special occasions and events, while in Southern Ghana, the chiefs and the indigenous people wear Kente cloth. This cloth identifies the people individually and as tribes. Even when it comes to Kente, the colour and patterns are means by which society and individuals construct their identity. As noted in the introduction, there are

two ethnic groups in Ghana who weave Kente: the Asante and the Ewe. The Asante Kente is bright coloured and geometric shaped while the Ewe's normally has pictorial symbols and often shows tweed effects (Adler & Barnard 1995). The kind of Kente (in terms of colour and patterns) an individual wears partly tells the tribe where the person belongs. I have on several occasions heard and seen people trying to identify others in traditional ceremonies through the colours and patterns of Kente they wear. This does not surprise me because, as noted by Wayne and Lewinski, the identity, life, history and development of people can be ascertained through clothing (Wayne & Lewinski 1991).

Kente was and is still the official dress of the *Asantehene,* and the chiefs and queens of the Asantes. From this perspective, Kente is used to express an individual's role in society. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, championed the use of Kente in Ghana to the extent that it created Ghana's identity as an independent nation. Kente thus went beyond being the Asantes' identity to become the identity of Ghana (Magee 2005). Aside from these, individuals use Kente to consciously or unconsciously construct their gender, status, political affiliations and even emotional states, among other things. There are some designs and patterns that are feminine; thus women use those. When a man wears those designs, people will ask why he has worn women's designs, and these men are sometimes ridiculed. Crane (2000) alluded to how clothing has been used over the years to construct and alter gender. In her book *Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing*, she mentioned how men and women use clothing to communicate their gender roles or how they want others to recognise them, for 'clothes are used to make statements about social class and social identity, but their principal messages are about the ways in which women and men perceive their gender roles or are expected to perceive them' (Crane 2000,

p.16). The kind of Kente an individual wears expresses the social status of that person. Individuals of a higher social class normally wear hand-woven Kente rather than the imitation Kente, which are normally machine woven or printed and produced outside Ghana. They do not see the same value in the imitation cloth, even when using it as casual wear to represent identity and trends rather than wearing it for traditional celebratory purposes. People also select and wear Kente to express their political affiliation. For example, a member of the New Patriotic Party, a political party in Ghana, is likely to wear Kente that is red, blue and white rather than black, red, white and green, which are the colours of their arch-rivals, the National Democratic Congress. Also, they are likely to buy patterns and designs such as *Kuffour Apagya Ghana* and *Alan Cash,* which are associated with the party. As indicated earlier, the pattern of Kente an individual wears can also express the person's emotional state. For example, the *Asantehene* will wear the Kente pattern called *owuo sei fie*, meaning 'death destroys families', to a funeral rather to the *Akwasideɛ* festival. In the same vein, he will wear *sika futoro*, which is literally translated as 'gold dust', to the *Akwasideɛ* festival and not to a funeral.

Globally, Kente seems to have become a symbol of African identity and also Pan-Africanism. In the United States, many Black Nationalist movements used the Kente cloth to symbolise their African heritage. In those days, Kente was tied to the mantras 'Black Power' and 'Black is Beautiful' (Vegas 2009; OMCA History Department 2001). Many African-Americans wear it during holidays and events like Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Black History Month and the Kwanzaa festival. Also in many Christian denominations with Black congregations, the clergy are encouraged to wear Kente in public and in private to express their African heritage and Christian faith (Vegas 2009). These examples show the means by which these African-Americans use

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the Kente cloth to construct their social identity as people of African origin. Although many Black Nationalist movements now denounce and disassociate from Kente as the symbol of their movement, Kente still remains popular and symbolic in the lives of many African-Americans.

These examples show that Kente is a source of social identity and that this social identity facilitates the flow of Kente-related knowledge among people.

2.1.4 Kente in the cultural, social, religious and political life of Ghana

Kente is part of Ghanaian culture. It constitutes a visual representation of the history, philosophy, ethics, oral literature, religious beliefs, social values, political thoughts and the aesthetics principles of the Ghanaian people.

-- Daasebrɛ *Oti Boateng*

I came across the above statement quite a while ago in a compendium of works of Daasebrɛ Prof. (Emeritus) Oti Boateng, the paramount chief of New Juaben, Ghana. This statement triggered my curiosity and I set out to explore the significance of Kente in the cultural, social, religious, philosophical and political life of the people of Ghana and of other Africans in the diaspora. I started by asking my mother what she knows about Kente, when she first had Kente, and what Kente meant to her. From what my mother told me and in my interaction with others and from reading some blogs, it appears to me I am satisfying my curiosity. My mother took delight in, and had much affection for the Kente cloth but never accepted it as a gift or bought any for herself until 2010. I will come back to her reason for this decision in the subsequent paragraphs. She told me that Kente has always played a symbolic role in the life of the Asantes. She further mentioned that it is linked to the life cycle of the Asantes, from birth to death,

although its use was at first restricted to the Asante monarchy. In baby naming ceremonies, the mother and the child are normally given Kente by the father, family members, and loved ones to express their joy and happiness. Since fertility and childbirth is very important and cherished in the Asante culture, these people normally show their appreciation by giving the mother and the child the adorable Kente cloth. My mother further said that, during puberty rites and *soul washing*, a symbolic religious rite, the individuals involved are given Kente. She indicated that girls who reach puberty are initiated into womanhood, and as a sign of gratitude, parents offer their daughters Kente. During marriage ceremonies, she said, family and friends wear Kente to express their joyful mood and the couple also wear the same pattern. My girlfriend corroborated this when I asked her what she knows about Kente. She told me that Kente is worn during marriage ceremonies. She said she could not wait to wear and receive Kente during our marriage ceremony because she is so emotionally attached to the Kente cloth. She further stated that wearing Kente cloth makes the person a king or a queen because Kente is associated with royalty. I was able to relate to her feelings and desire to wear a Kente cloth when I saw a photo of my former course-mate and colleague who shared her marriage ceremony photos with me on Facebook (see Figure 2.14). In the photo are my former colleague and her husband on the day of their marriage ceremony. They indeed look like royalty. The woman's outfit is similar to that of the Asante queens. Although I do not know the exact name for this Kente cloth I believe this one was carefully selected for the occasion.

Figure 2.14: Monica and her husband
Source: www.facebook.com/photo/Adwoa Mensah (used with permission)

I found this sentiment echoed by a Ghanaian columnist:

> "its [Kente's] cultural symbolism intrigued me. I watched with a childhood
> curiosity many cultural events where Kings and Queens, Chiefs and Queen
> mothers displayed their Kente cloths and dresses elegantly. I was elated when I
> first wore a Kente cloth at my First Speech Day at Saint Augustine's College. I
> made sure that I took a picture by the best photographer who came to the school

on such occasions and on weekends. I have cherished this picture since and its significance and emotions have not weaned a bit for almost 40 years."

- Osei-Kwabena 2005

These and many other examples show how emotionally attached people are to Kente cloth. In her article titled *Adinkra and Kente Cloth in History, Law, and Life* Prof. Boatema Boateng also expressed her affection for Kente and its significance in the life of Ghanaians. She indicated that despite owning a complete set of Kente for women, she has not worn Kente yet because she has yet to experience an event significant enough to befit the wearing of the venerable Kente cloth. In her words, she sees Kente as the 'Oscar de la Renta – the equivalent of red carpet attire' (Boateng 2014, p. 3); however, there are a limited number of such events in her line of duty and occupation. She is among the few of her family members who have never worn Kente despite her affection for the cloth. To her, Kente is a symbolic cloth, precious, and meant to be preserved, and like many Ghanaian women, she has decided to keep hers and hand it over to the younger women in her family when she dies. Among some African-Americans, Kente is cherished for this and other reasons. Most students of African origin wear Kente at their graduation ceremonies. In an interview with Donnette Dunbar of the Los Angeles Times, Rosie Lee Hooks, who is very passionate about Kente cloth, is quoted as saying 'it makes me feel stronger…I've been wearing Kente for 20 years…when I went to Ghana and saw it and realized that my people's history has been written in these cloths' (Dunbar 1991).

To return to my mother's story, she said that Kente is very prestigious in the life of Asantes and most Ghanaians. In her words, 'if you wear the quality one from Bonwire on special events, everybody will be admiring you'. She said that whenever she wears her Kente, she can feel her soul is happy within her. When I asked why she feels that

way, she replied by saying 'don't you know that there is *sunsum* [the Twi word for spirit] in Kente?' For this reason, my mother said she wears quality handwoven Kente, especially that from Bonwire, for important occasions. In the Twi language, if someone says there is spirit in something, that person might be saying that the thing is sacred and that the spirit is a good one. In this example, my mother might be referring to a good spirit. My mother's words drew my attention to an article I read where the author noted that there are some imitations of Kente cloth which are relatively cheaper, and she said her sister will only wear that type on ordinary occasions though she does not seem to make any distinction between the hand woven kind and the imitation (Boateng 2014). To me the symbolism of Kente lies in the origin of the cloth, for like many Ghanaians, I feel that Kente produced elsewhere does not have the same status as that produced in Ghana. Although there are many textiles of Ghanaian origin that have been imitated by other countries, this distinction in their status is rarely noted. This tells me that Kente is not an ordinary cloth. From my readings on some blogs, I have noted that despite this, Kente has become a symbol of identity for some African-Americans, who make no distinction between the hand-woven Kente from Ghana and the imitations from elsewhere. Again, unlike many Asantes and some other Ghanaians, they wear Kente on any day or any occasion; this has made Kente just like one of the ordinary cloths instead of a celebratory one. This is an interesting phenomenon worth thinking about. When one is in Ghana, where people know the difference between the original and the imitations, the value of the original is recognised, whereas in the United States and other Western countries, any African-patterned cloth worn by any ethnic African is understood to be Kente. In many ways, the word Kente has taken on its own powerful meaning in their minds, and the symbolism of the Kente designs that have specific meaning in Ghana have morphed into a collective identity of African-American pride,

irrespective of the design or the origin of the African-looking cloth. Many African-Americans have never been to Ghana, or to Africa, but consider Kente a traditional design and may not even know the difference between handmade and imitation Kente. The value of the cloth, for them, is simply what it says to their Western environment, that they are proud of their African heritage.

Now I return to my mother's main reason for not accepting Kente as a gift nor buying Kente until 2010. She said that while growing up she thought Kente was for kings and queens and for burial ceremonies. This notion instilled in her a fear of wearing Kente. She said she remembers her father had a number of Kente pieces in a trunk and he would only bring them out when someone was dead and they would use them to decorate the room where the person lay in state. This statement struck me because I had made a similar observation whilst growing up but that did not put any fear in me about wearing Kente cloth. As I have indicated earlier, the Asantes believe that the dead must be respected and honoured, and for this reason they decorate the dead with Kente, which shows honour.

Kente is also used in life affirming events, such as festivals. The Asantes and most tribes in Ghana have festivals to commemorate life events, and history. During the festival period, the *Asantehene*, chiefs, queen mothers, family heads, wear Kente cloth to express their joy. Apart from traditional festivals like this, some people also wear Kente during Christmas and Easter. During Christmas and Easter, many worshippers, especially the elderly and the rich, will put on their Kente cloth to express their joy and happiness.

Due to its prestige, Kente also shows the social status of the user. Just as my mother told me, not everybody can buy or own Kente, so anyone who wears Kente is perceived to be rich or of high social status. Boateng also emphasised the

communicative power of Kente, and of how it communicates the bearer's identity, social status and even emotional state normally through the colour, style and adornment (Boateng 2011).

This might explain why it is the custom of the Asante that no one should wear the same Kente as the *Asantehene* in any gathering. The *Asantehene* is regarded as the leader, first gentleman, the highest authority and highest in social status, thus no one should equate himself or herself to him. The statement by Boateng makes me wonder if Kente can be considered a document, just as Narayan (2015) recounted that memories of her visit to the Ajanta cave complex in the western state of Maharashtra in India, which has paintings on the walls and ceilings, stone sculptures and complex architectural features, made her revisit her understanding and conceptualisation of a document. She noted that in each of the paintings she saw visual representations of stories her grandmother had told her in her childhood about the Buddhist Jataka Tales, Arabian Nights, Aesop's Fables, the Hindu Ocean of Stories, the Sanskrit Panchatantra and the Hitopadesa. Reflecting on these she concluded that the paintings are indeed documents as they serve as evidence of her cultural heritage and a source of information about the history of her ancestors (Narayan 2015). Following this observation and theory of documentation, Kente too can be considered a document: a label, a metaphor and a document that carries meaning, symbolism and history; it is even portable and its meaning has fixity.

Many patterns and designs of Kente are also used to communicate social teachings, values and how one ought to live in a community. A typical example is the Kente cloth called *wofro dua pa a na yɛ pea wo*, which literally translates to 'one who climbs a tree worth climbing gets the help deserved'. This cloth asserts that any individual with good intentions who has made an effort to accomplish a good cause

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must be supported. It also encourages individuals to pursue a worthy cause in order to have others' support. Another example of a Kente cloth is called *abusua yɛ'dom* which literally means 'family is a force'. Looking at how the Asantes cherish family and the need for communal living, this pattern might have been designed to promote an extended family system, which is under siege in modern Ghanaian society. It communicates the need for people to cherish and be part of a family. This cloth suggests that the family can offer protection and security for individual members and thus that one must associate oneself with one's family.

Kente has also played a role in religion, both the traditional Asante religion and Christianity. Just as some religious denominations use a specific cloth to create an identity and to make a public statement (Leeds-Hurwitz 1993), the Asantes use Kente to revere and adore the Tano deity *Twumpuduo* (Busia 1998). The importance attached to a spiritual being, like to human beings, determines the kind of Kente used in its veneration. More expensive and higher-quality Kente cloth is normally acquired for the veneration of an important deity (Darish 1988). Furthermore, the manner in which Kente is woven or produced gives it a religious connotation. For example, according to some oral traditions about Kente weaving it is taboo for a woman to get close to a loom when she is menstruating. In some traditions, the male weavers are even forbidden to talk to a woman during her menstrual period. Asante taboos are often linked to a deity; an Asante who breaks a taboo will offer sacrifices to the deity to which the taboo is linked in order to avoid that deity's wrath and to purify himself or herself. The fact that Kente is associated with such strict taboos and the spiritual associations of taboos give Kente a religious connotation. In Ghanaian Christianity, the use and the role of Kente is different. Unlike in the Asante traditional religion where Kente is used to venerate a god or deity, in Christianity Kente is worn by the worshippers and priests or pastors

and used as decoration on the altar and pulpit. Some pastors wear stoles made of Kente, while worshippers wear Kente cloth to worship, especially on festive or joyous occasions. Similarly, choir robes, alter cloths, normally incorporate Kente cloth. Stoles and other items made with Kente and used in Christian worship may have an inscription in them, such as CHRIST THE KING or JESUS IS LORD. Others may have Christian Arts and symbols in them. Even in the United States, some black-dominated churches or denominations demand that their ministers wear Kente in both private and public to convey their religious faith and ethnic unity (Leeds-Hurwitz 1993).

Kente cloth can also make political statements. It has been linked to the political power and authority of the *Asantehene*. It is his official attire for public functions, especially traditional ones. When the *Asantehene* visited the pope at the Vatican and Queen Elizabeth in England, he wore Kente cloth. This might be one of the reasons Kente use was restricted to the Asante monarch. Even now that the restrictions have been relaxed due to economic factors and permission granted to some lesser chiefs, a lesser-ranked chief can be punished for wearing the same Kente as the *Asantehene* at a gathering (Boateng 2014). It may be interpreted as a sign of arrogance and disrespect to the king. Some of the patterns used in Kente may indicate the territorial power of a chief while others may depict the need for a chief or king to use his political power wisely and with prudence. For example, the Kente pattern called *obaakofoɔ mmu man*, which literally means 'one person does not govern a nation', connotes democratic governance. It communicates that governance is a collective effort and that political leaders must accommodate others' ideas in order to govern well. It also shows that every member of a community must partake in nation building.

The Asantes also used Kente to communicate and remember their military prowess. An example is the *akyempem,* which literally means 'thousand shields'.

During the pre-colonial and colonial era, the Asantes engaged in many battles with other tribes and the colonisers, such as the British. Oral tradition had it that the Asante kingdom had a well-organised army with a shield bearer who was called the *Akyempemhene*. This cloth was made to commemorate these events and to reemphasise the strength of the Asante kingdom, although in modern Ghana it might not be military strength. During the struggle for Ghana's independence, Kwame Nkrumah, later the first president of independent Ghana, used Kente to make political statements. Nkrumah was imprisoned during the struggle so when he was released from prison he wore a Kente cloth called ɛ*maa da*, which literally means 'it has never happened before' to stress that the events leading to his imprisonment and release were historic. Again, when it was announced by the British government that Ghana was now an independent country, he wore a Kente cloth called *adwene asa*, meaning 'he has done his best' or 'he has exhausted all his efforts and ideas'. In his era as a president of Ghana, Nkrumah and his Pan-African movement made use of Kente to communicate African unity and the liberation of Africa (Sabutey 2009). During Ghana's Independence Day celebrations in 2007, on the 50th anniversary of Ghana's independence, the then President of Ghana, John Agyekum Kuffour was criticised by many Ghanaians for wearing a Western suit instead of Kente to the celebration. In the United States, Kente has famously been used to communicate the capabilities of black people. It has been a smart way to make a political statement. Although this notion of making a political statement with Kente is fading away, the Black Nationalist group in the United States used Kente to command respect and ward off any racial threat. It was a symbol of many black power movements Leeds-Hurwitz (1993) recounted how a District of Columbia Superior Court Judge, Robert M. Scot, refused a lawyer, John T. Harvey III, permission to wear a Kente tie before a jury, on the basis that Kente is linked to an African-

American identity and might cause the predominantly black jury to favour the African-American client.

From the narrative above it is safe to conclude that the Asante Kente cloth is not merely an ordinary cloth but a representation of the philosophy, ethics, oral literature, religious beliefs, social values, political thoughts and aesthetic principles of the Ghanaian people (Boateng 2015).

2.1.5 Kente in the global and modern world

As indicated earlier, Kente was originally reserved for the *Asantehene*, chiefs and queens in the Asante Kingdom as well the Ewe people of Ghana. Currently, Kente is used by many people in Ghana, and across the borders of Ghana. It has become trendy among many groups of young peopl in Ghana and some Africans in the diaspora. In this section I explore the meaning of Kente in the global and modern world and how people now use Kente.

Ever since Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana wore Kente to the United Nations for a meeting, Kente has been a globally recognisable cloth. Kente has been adopted by African-Americans as a symbol of their African heritage. As Antoinette M. Hays, the President of Regis College puts it, 'Kente has become a universal symbol of African and African-American pride' (Hays 2016).

In the 1970s and 1980s, Kente was used by many in the black activist movements in the United States as their symbol. It also became part of the pop culture in the United States. African-Americans like Muhammad Ali and Jesse Jackson have used the Kente cloth. Apart from Kente been symbolising the African heritage of African-Americans, Kente has also been used by some African Americans to make political statements (Ross 1998). Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana, is one

of the people who made use of the symbolic aspect of Kente in the political arena as I indicated earlier (see section 1.1). Among African-Americans, Kente is also seen as a symbol of the challenges and prospects of the black race in America. As one blogger called notes, 'today as African-Americans wear Kente cloth, they do so for inspiration, to honour, to celebrate, to connect, and to reflect on our collective heritage and communal struggles and successes' (Powell 2014).

In the lives of Asantes and Ghanaians in general, Kente is used as a symbolic material in rite-of-passage ceremonies. As I indicated earlier (section 2.1.4), for many Ghanaians Kente is associated with the life cycle from birth to death. Kente is also presented as a valuable gift to someone who has reached a pinnacle in his or her field of endeavour. This symbolic use or value of Kente is also found among African-Americans. A common example is the use of Kente stoles for graduation. It has become a norm in many colleges and universities for African-American graduates to use Kente stoles during their graduation ceremonies. Antoinette Hays' speech during the 2016 Kente Stole ceremony address in Regis College in the United States, highlight this:

> 'Your particular stole, reflecting Regis colours of red and gold, prominently displays a key, presumably the symbol of knowledge. Knowledge is the key to life, and ceremonies this week are all a rite of passage for you and your classmates to say that you have attained a level of knowledge worth celebrating and honouring. Your stole also portrays a well-founded and sturdy building; one can build a whole life on the foundation of a good education'. (Hays 2016)

Some colleges and universities in the USA have even established a special 'Kente ceremony' for their African-American graduates. The phrase *donning of Kente stole* has become common among African-Americans in many colleges and

universities. The use of a Kente stole is very common in universities such as the University of Pennsylvania, West Chester University and Regis College, just to mention a few. The universities and colleges present the Kente stoles to the students to honour them for their educational accomplishments. Powell writes that the first *Donning of the Kente Ceremony* was held at Virginia Tech on the eve of Spring commencement in 1995, as an African-American celebration of achievement sponsored by Virginia Tech's Black Organizations Council. Ronald Giddings was the founder of the *Donning of the Kente Ceremony* at Virginia Tech. It is a unique way to honour and recognise African-American graduates (Powell 2014). Figure 2.27 shows two graduates with Kente stoles. Anne Bromley echoed that Kente is used to honour people who have distinguished themselves in their academic endeavour, writing, 'as they walk down the lawn May 18, the Kente stole draped over their black-robed shoulders represents a mark of distinction' (Bromley 2008).

Kente has also been recognised recently as a symbol of inclusion in some universities and colleges in the United States. It is used to integrate black students into the white-dominated universities, and as a way of recognising their achievements. Professor Michelle Cromwell, an Associate Professor of Politics and Social Justice at the Regis College in the United States notes that 'most academic Kente ceremonies traditionally celebrate the accomplishments of Black students and an expression of African-American pride. For Regis, the Kente is worn as a symbol of inclusion and a celebration of academic accomplishment in our richly diverse community' (Cromwell 2016).

Apart from its use in educational institutions, Kente is also common in some religious denominations in the United States. It is not uncommon to see many worshippers at the First African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States

wearing Kente (Ross 1998). This is also common in Ghana. As I indicated earlier, many Christians wore Kente to church on Sundays and especially on joyful days. Kente is also an integral part of the Kwanzaa festival celebration in the United States, just like in Ghana. Furthermore, Kente has been integrated into the pop culture of the African-Americans, for 'It's part of a larger movement, a new generation that has discovered an appreciation of African culture--its music and art, says Abena Busia, an associate English professor at Rutgers University in New Jersey, who was born in Ghana' (Powell 2014). Media personalities like Jesse Jackson, Spike Lee and Arsenio Hall have all used Kente in their stage performances.

The uses of Kente have also changed over the years. Kente was initially worn as a cloth by both men and women (especially the elderly); however, in recent times there have been different and varied uses of Kente. Fashion designers in and across the borders of Ghana are producing various artefacts made with Kente. This might have attracted different categories of users, especially young men and women. In this modern era, it is not uncommon to find artefacts including shoes, ties, stoles, bags, earrings and necklaces that are made with Kente. Kente is also worn by both brides and grooms at weddings. Or Furthermore, Kente is also used to make wedding gowns for women and wedding suits for men

As Kente enters the global arena and is being used to produce various artefacts, many traditionalists in Ghana are worried about whether Kente will continue to maintain it cultural value and significance in the lives of Ghanaians. However, Cromwell (2016), believes that Kente will retain its symbolic value and its significance no matter what transformation it may go through:

The Kente was developed by the Asante people of Ghana who associated

the cloth with a marker of class, royal status, regional origin, or patriotism.

Despite the Kente cloth's transformations it remains a symbol of pride that authenticates the wearers' experiences. Through its travels, the Kente has absorbed the power and ability to change its meaning while retaining its solemn identity. As a result, its meaning is embedded in its use. Whether it is given as a traditional gift, worn by an Ewe chief, donned at a wedding, church ceremony, or graduation, the Kente communicates identity, community, and pride. It is seen as a symbol of unity as opposed to one of appropriation (Cromwell 2016).

2.1.6 Kente and intellectual property

In my quest to find literature on Kente-related knowledge, I came across some news articles on some news portals on the Internet. One such article was published by Deutsche Welle on 17 April, 2015. The article pointed out that the Ghana Standards Authority was concerned about how some traditional Kente weavers are losing their livelihoods due to the invasion of cheap printed versions of Kente, mostly from China. Officials of the Ghana Standards Authority have on several occasions' raided shops and some popular markets, like the Makola market in Accra, the capital of Ghana, to seize the fake Kente that is on the market. In another article published on the Government of Ghana's website, Fafa Agbenotor described the growth of counterfeit textiles, including Kente, on the Ghanaian market and how that is forcing many Kente weavers out of business. Kente designs and patterns and other popular designs created by the Ghanaian owned textile firm Akosombo Textile limited are copied and sent to textile manufacturers in China, which then produce counterfeit versions to be sold usually at a cheaper price to users or customers in Ghana and abroad. Manufacturers not only in China but also in Ghana and some other African countries produce these imitations, but

it appears that the Chinese version, which is cheapest, has dominated the market and thus has attracted much attention.

After reading these articles, I asked myself if there are no laws in Ghana protecting individuals and firms that create these designs. In my quest to answer this question, I read the various Acts in Ghana that deal with intellectual property rights. I noted that as far back as 1973, a law was passed to protect local textile producers and designers against imitation of their designs. However, there was a clause in the Act that prevented those registering cloth designs from owning the designs of traditional fabric like Kente (Government of Ghana, 1973). In 1985, this law was revised and a copyright law was passed to include the protection of folklore. In 2005, the copyright was revised again and the protection of folklore was maintained. Folklore was interpreted to include Kente and other traditional culture artefacts. It is interpreted in the Acts as:

> Literary, artistic and scientific expressions belonging to the cultural heritage of Ghana which are created, preserved and developed by ethnic communities of Ghana or by an unidentified Ghanaian author, and includes Kente and adinkra designs, where the author of the designs are not known, and any similar work.

In 2003, a similar Act, called the Geographic Indications Act 659, was passed to protect traditional handicrafts like Kente (Government of Ghana, 2003). However, Boateng (2014) noted that in practice, these two laws are not recognised in the global regulatory arena and this is a challenge for the Ghanain Kente industry. The intellectual property rights in the global regulatory arena are created to protect modern businesses, which makes it difficult to protect traditional knowledge and cultural artefacts like Kente. Cultural artefacts like Kente lack the feature of novelty, which is a key requirement. Boateng also raised concerns about the two laws passed by the Ghana Government to

protect cultural artefacts including Kente (Government of Ghana, 2003). According to her, the laws make Kente a property of the state or the community in which Kente originates and grants ownership to only a few Kente designers who can prove that they created particular designs. However, in reality, it might be difficult for individuals to claim ownership or authorship of Kente patterns given that many of the Kente patterns were inherited from past generations and that in the early days such knowledge was the property of the Bonwire community and the Asante Kingdom (Boateng 2007). Besides, cultural artefacts and the creation of traditional knowledge have been a collective effort of members of a community and families rather than an individual's effort. This form of ownership is similar to that of the Aboriginals in Australia, wherein Aboriginal customs promote the communal ownership of cultural artefacts, although some individuals may own some specific heritage (Frankel & Janke 1998).

Kumapley, a Ghanaian intellectual property lawyer, also acknowledged the difficulty Ghana faces in using patent rights to protect Kente against appropriation. In an interview with Daily Graphic, a Ghanaian newspaper, on 25 August 2012, she raised the following questions:

> [...], do we want to protect the way Kente is made or the apparatus
> used to weave Kente? Do we want to protect the word "Kente" so that
> it is used only in relation to the fabric we all know as "Kente"? Do we
> want to protect the various Kente designs or do we want to make the
> word "Kente" synonymous with Ghana?

She further indicated that as per Ghana's law on patents, neither Kente, nor the process involved, or the equipment used for Kente weaving can be patented. She noted that one of the requirements for the granting of a patent is that the object or the process to be patented must be new. However, the Kente design and the apparatus used for Kente

weaving are already in the public domain; this makes it impossible for them to be patented. Kumapley suggested that the possible means of protecting Kente are via trademark or geographical indications. Although Ghana has passed the Geographical Indications Act, its enforcement still remains a challenge. Kumapley further suggests that Ghana needs to identify the countries in which it wants to obtain intellectual property rights for Kente. Although protecting Kente might be difficult, it is generally agreed that it must be done in order to protect and sustain the knowledge about Kente. Failure to protect the authentic Kente might have dire consequences on the cultural significance of Kente, because people might just use imitations for their aesthetic features and the embedded meanings will be lost over time.

Apart from the legal means used to protect Kente and other Ghanaian fabrics against appropriation, the Government of Ghana, through the Ministry of Trade and other stakeholders have formed a task force to clump down on piracy of Ghanaian fabrics. The Government of Ghana and other stakeholders in the industry have also tried to use technology to protect Ghanaian fabrics against piracy or counterfeiting. For example, a Ghanaian technology firm called mPedigree, in collaboration with Premium African Textiles, have created a new system named GoldKeys technology to enable consumers and sellers to detect counterfeit fabrics. In spite of these efforts, the appropriation of Ghanaian fabrics is still on the ascendency. Consumers still purchase the counterfeit versions, which are cheaper than the original version. Appropriation of traditional fabric and knowledge is not peculiar to Ghana; in Australia, for example, some firms and individuals have copied indigenous crafts and sold them in the Australian market and overseas (Fowler 2004). The difference between Ghana's situation and that of Australia is that Australian intellectual property right laws are

strictly applied and those who infringe upon them are made to pay huge fines (Fowler 2004).

2.1.7 Cultural Artefacts and Authenticity Issues

Authenticity is an important theme for both modern products and traditional artefacts. However, there are several different ways to understand the concept of authenticity (McKercher & Du Cros 2002). Triling (1972) highlights the vagueness of the concept of authenticity. Similarly, Golomb (1995) noted that the term *authenticity* is used in many different contexts and their complex nature derived from its philosophical origin creates difficulties in defining the meaning of this notion. An attempt to conceptualise authenticity goes back to the philosophical, psychological, sociological and spiritual discourses developed by many researchers (Hodgson 2007). The common themes in the authenticity discourse as noted by Hodgson (2007) include: identity (Kierkegaard 1985), authentic means of life in relation to authentic existence, individuality and existential authenticity (Sartre 1992).

According to Trilling (1972), the term *authenticity* has been used to determine the originality of art objects by verifying that the works of art 'are what they appear to be or are claimed to be, and therefore worth the price that is asked for them – or, if this has already been paid, worth the admiration they are being given' (p. 93). Bruner (1994) defined the concept of authenticity using the words 'verisimilitude, originality and authority' (p. 401). From these definitions, the authenticity of an art means that the art is novel, genuine and original and truly represents what the art claims to be.

Trilling (1972) noted that a central criteria for judging the authenticity of a cultural object are: attributed to making by 'hand', 'uses natural materials' and is 'made by a local traditional artist'. For Taylor (2001), the question of provenance is important in

considering an object an authentic element. Taylor identified authenticity and cultural integrity as essential elements in ensuring that intellectual and cultural property rights are attributed to particular clans and groups are respected and protected. Therefore, appropriate cultural context, spiritual beliefs, history, ceremony and art must all be clearly attributed to them to prevent cultural exploitation. Robertson-Friend (2004) distinguished between 'authenticity' and 'products' when he identified the key elements of authenticity as the source of material and the approval given by the appropriate repository for the material to be shared. Cultural products, such as festivals, rituals and clothes are often described as authentic or inauthentic, depending on whether or not they are made or promulgated by local people according to tradition (Sharpley 1994, p. 130). In this sense, authentic artefacts have features of the culture and its traditional origin (Zerubbavel 1995). Ingemann (2012) argues that the authenticity of an object is determined not by the object itself, but by the way in which it is experienced. In other words, an authentic experience is as important as the originality of the object.

Fjellman (1992) noted how modern technology has changed appropriated objects to look more authentic. Cohen (1988) proposed the concept of 'emerging authenticity' to describe this trend. It describes authenticity as 'negotiable', so that 'a cultural product or its characteristics, at the same time is generally regarded as inauthentic or invented, may eventually be recognized as authentic in general' (p. 279–280).

From these discussions, it is clear that the issue of authenticity is important in discussing Kente-related knowledge flow since Kente is a cultural artefact and there have been imitations of Kente in recent times (see Boateng 2014).

2.2 The knowledge management framework as it applies to Kente

The issue of what constitutes knowledge has been debated over the years; some scholars, such as Curado & Bontis (2011), believe it is not easy to evaluate and quantify or manage knowledge. In spite of this, over the years, knowledge management has emerged as a discipline, and a multi-disciplinary one at that (Witherspoon et al. 2013). In a business context, knowledge management has been discussed in the light of how an organisation can utilise its knowledge resources to achieve competitive advantages, become innovative, improve performance and work with the dynamics in the marketplace (Lewin, Massini & Peeters 2011; Chen & Fong 2015).

Although knowledge management has been treated from different perspectives, there appears to be a consensus that knowledge management is a process. For example, Alavi and Leinder (2001) defined knowledge management as the creation, acquisition, sharing and usage of knowledge to improve performance. Herwig et al. (2015) described knowledge management as a process involving the generation, storage, transfer and utilisation of knowledge in an organisation. Similarly, Nielsen (2006) discussed knowledge management as a process and an eight-pronged activity involving creating, acquiring, capturing, assembling, sharing, integrating, leveraging and exploiting. A critical interrogation of these eight processes suggests that it is an extension of the four processes dominant in the knowledge management literature; namely, knowledge creation, storage, sharing and application. Knowledge management also involves the management of these processes, tools, systems and people who play different roles in these processes.

 Knowledge creation and acquisition can be treated as one process (Davenport & Prusak 2000). Massingham (2014) explained knowledge management as a process involving the management of knowledge diffusion and the systems that support the flow from a

knowledge holder to a knowledge seeker. Similarly, Ogiela (2015) defined knowledge management as the application of systems and tools to manage knowledge, and the sharing, storing and application of knowledge to develop an organisation.

In the subsequent paragraphs, I briefly discuss these processes; knowledge flow and knowledge creation are discussed in detail in Section 2.2.1 of this chapter since they are the focus of this study.

Knowledge creation involves the development of new knowledge. This may entail the reconfiguration of existing knowledge, the acquisition of external knowledge, research or knowledge that emerges from experience (Davenport & Prusak 2000; Nielsen 2006; Calvo-Mora, Navarro-García and Periañez-Cristobal 2015). Knowledge can be generated through social and cognitive processes (Massingham 2014), through human and systems interactions, human learning etc. Knowledge at this stage is more tacit than explicit and it is normally unique to the creator or the holder. Knowledge acquisition results in learning, which triggers the acquisition of new beliefs, changes in behaviour and worldviews (Leal-Rodríguez et al. 2014).

The second stage of the process is knowledge storage. At this stage, the generated knowledge is organised and stored in a different format and on different media for use and sharing among individuals and groups. Some organisations develop knowledge management systems to store knowledge to serve as the 'memory' of the organisation (Johannsen 2000). Zaim, Bayyurt, Tarim, Zaim and Guc (2013) and identify documents, organisational procedures, and codified human knowledge in some form of organisational memory as some of the means of storing knowledge. Tacit knowledge exists in the human mind, making it difficult to codify, store and transfer. Storing this kind of knowledge will require organisations to retain employees who possess it or to encourage its sharing with other employees.

Knowledge sharing is the next stage after knowledge storage. This activity normally occurs between individuals. It can be an informal or a formal activity. It is a dialogic activity that involves the sharing of knowledge between or among people. According to Liyanage et al. (2009), knowledge sharing involves the demand and supply of new knowledge. This suggests that technically the term *knowledge sharing* is used to capture the concepts of both knowledge seeking and knowledge sharing. However, it appears that the literature has concentrated more on sharing than on seeking. Calvo-Mora, Navarro-García and Periañez-Cristobal (2015) asserted that the quickest way of creating knowledge is through acquisition; however, knowledge seekers must be diligent in choosing where to source knowledge. In this view, it is important for the knowledge seeker to have criteria for selecting the knowledge source. That is, how individuals seek knowledge is something that needs critical attention. However, it appears that this aspect of knowledge sharing has received little attention from scholars.

Knowledge application is the last stage of the knowledge management process. Some scholars (Liyanage et al. 2009) believe that it is the most important aspect of the knowledge management process; it is at this stage that knowledge recipients and holders use their knowledge to solve problems, develop new products and services and create a competitive advantage for an organisation. This process focuses on value creation (Massingham 2014). The success of this stage depends on the absorptive capacity of the knowledge holder, the culture of the organisation in which the knowledge holder works and the willingness of the knowledge holder to utilise the knowledge (Zahra & George 2002; Boateng & Narteh 2015).

Although knowledge management has received much attention from scholars and practitioners, it has also received some criticism. Contrary to the notion that

knowledge can be managed through knowledge creation, storage, sharing and application (Davenport et al. 1998; Nielsen 2006; Herwig 2015), Ray and Clegg (2005) argued that knowledge intrinsically belongs to the holder and therefore cannot be managed. They further argued that the idea that knowledge can be annexed, stored and shared is totally false. However, other evidence from the literature renders this argument inconsistent. For example, Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) model provides evidence that knowledge can be codified and converted from one form to the other, and from one person to another. Ray and Clegg's (2005) argument might have resulted from a lack of appreciation that knowledge can exist in two forms: explicit and tacit. There is evidence that suggests that explicit knowledge is codifiable and can be stored and shared easily (Liyanage et al. 2009). Tacit knowledge is difficult to codify and share, but it is possible to share it through mentoring, apprenticeship and coaching (Lefika & Mearns 2015).

Another criticism is that it is difficult to manage knowledge and knowledge management demands understanding the challenges associated with knowledge; this makes it difficult for knowledge management to result in value creation, competitive advantage and innovation (Storey & Barnett 2000; Andreeva & Kianto 2012). A cursory look into the extant literature shows that this argument is not correct. There are some empirical studies (Dhanaraj & Parkhe 2006; Ritala et al. 2015) that suggest that knowledge management results in innovation, competitive advantage and value creation. Besides, knowledge has been viewed as the most important resource of an organisation, though it is intangible (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995).

2.2.1 An overview of knowledge flow

Knowledge flow has been defined as the process by which knowledge flows through the activities performed by a community according to the kinds of knowledge and

knowledge sources involved in the activities, the mechanisms used by the people involved in the activity to obtain or share that knowledge and so forth. (Rodríguez-Elias, Martínez-García, Vizcaíno & Favela 2006, p. 217)

Knowledge flow is the transfer of knowledge possessed by an individual to another person or a group of people (the recipients). It may also involve the transfer of knowledge through a knowledge-processing system (Zhuge 2002). Xiaoggang and Mingshu (2005), on the other hand, looked at knowledge flow from a strategic point of view. They view knowledge flow as a strategic decision to pass on and classify knowledge among different groups of people. From this definition, it can be said that people plan and transfer their knowledge to others. However, from Rodríguez-Elias et al.'s (2006) and Zhuge's (2002) perspectives, knowledge flow can occur involuntarily. This seems to suggest that within communities, individuals may plan to transfer their knowledge to others or the transfer may occur unconsciously.

Zhuge (2006) presented the concept of nodes in the definition of knowledge flow. He explained that knowledge flow is the transfer of knowledge from a node to another in accordance with certain principles. He defined a knowledge node as an individual, a process, or a knowledge portal. According to Zhuge, communication tools such as the Internet serve as a conduit for knowledge flow among the nodes. From this perspective, social media can be seen as a medium for knowledge flow, as many people transfer knowledge consciously or unconsciously via social media. In the context of this study a Kente weaver can be a node, and sellers, users, tailors and designers, among others, can also be considered nodes since they are people who pass on knowledge about Kente to others. Any of these people in the Kente weaving chain can be a sender/transferor or recipient of the knowledge. Zhuge further noted that knowledge flow begins with a node and ends with a node. A node can create, learn or transmit

knowledge. Thus, it can be said that knowledge flow has the potential to facilitate knowledge creation. I have therefore decided to explore in how knowledge flow facilitates knowledge creation in communities. Knowledge flow is basically driven by the communication processes, and the tools for knowledge flow can be stored and shared as the knowledge moves from one node to another (Jeff et al. 2011). The basic aim of knowledge flow is to facilitate the transfer of ideas, know-how, and expertise from one individual to another and from one place to another (Nissen 2002). This suggests that knowledge flow can occur at different levels and across different distances (Nonaka 1994). Thus knowledge flow can be seen as a collective or as an individual effort. An individual in a community can facilitate knowledge flow, or the members of the community can do so. Rodríguez, Martínez, Favela, Vizcaíno and Piattini (2004) noted that in order to offer support to the knowledge flow community, it is imperative to ascertain the exact issues surrounding knowledge flow dynamics in the flow process and the task performed by each member of the community. They also noted the need to identify the social, cultural and technological issues that can either facilitate or hinder knowledge flow. Hence, this study will take into consideration the socio-cultural and technological issues when analysing how knowledge about Kente flows in communities.

2.2.2 Knowledge flow in traditional African societies

In the preceding section, I explored knowledge flow in the contemporary literature. Knowledge flow has, however, existed in most societies in Africa. Since this study partly focuses on knowledge flow in traditional communities, I devote this section to discuss how knowledge flows in traditional African societies.

Systematic knowledge sharing practices have existed in African societies for ages. Previously, and even now to some extent, knowledge sharing among individuals

was done orally through face-to-face interactions (Alemna & Sam 2006). Communities were the custodians of knowledge, and knowledge could flow easily only through social networks. Individuals had to join a group such as a market womens association, ethics unions, social clubs, or other social-class groups in order to gain access to the ideas, skills and expertise of the group (Wilson 1987). In other words, knowledge sharing was through human social networks. 'It is social networks that capture local knowledge and circulate it within the communities' (Moyi 2003, p. 233). Knowledge sharing was purely informal; it was shared orally through storytelling, *anwensεm* (poetry), and drama, or play. Even in small businesses in communities in Africa, social networks have played a role in the dissemination of expertise, skills and market information (Macharia 1998). Since social networks were the basis for knowledge flow, it can be inferred that they were also a barrier to knowledge flow since individuals outside the network or group could not have access to the knowledge that existed within a particular network (Wilson 1987).

Some recent studies have shown that knowledge sharing in some African communities and organisations is through social networks and that oral communication remains the preferred mode of sharing. King, Kruger and Pretorius (2007), for example, studied knowledge sharing among some employees within organisations in South Africa and noted that the employees, both Black and White, who studied in schools that are situated in, and predominantly made up of, people from Western cultures hardly ever share their knowledge with colleagues, while the employees from schools or communities that are largely made up of traditional people easily share knowledge with people they could identify with: people with a similar ethnic background. That is, individuals from collective societies are always willing to share their knowledge but only with people within their own networks. This attitude is not far from what existed

in past decades in traditional African societies, where knowledge sharing was through ethnic unions, associations and similar groups. (Wilson 1987). In a collective society, individuals consider knowledge the community's property and therefore members of the community strive to create and share knowledge amongst themselves (Yoo & Torrey 2002). In this context, an individual's interest becomes subordinate to that of society and this affect an individual's creativity and innovation. Indeed, knowledge sharing, be it in a society or an organisation, is influenced by personal relationships. It has been noted that individuals with stronger ties share knowledge among themselves more than with people with whom they have weaker ties. Members of collective communities hardly ever share knowledge with people they consider to be 'outsiders' or strangers (Shin et al. 2007).

2.2.3 Facilitating knowledge flow

Lin, Wu and Tsai (2013) noted that knowledge flow involves the type of knowledge that has been transferred, the source, the receiver and the context within which knowledge flows.

Knowledge has been identified as existing in two forms: tacit and explicit. As asserted by Nonaka (1994), tacit knowledge is by its nature difficult to communicate, making it difficult for tacit knowledge to flow easily. This form of knowledge is embedded in actions and performances. Such knowledge is intrinsically woven into the context, people, and their actions, and artefacts, such knowledge is hard to transfer through oral and written means, but it may be transferred through socialisation or interactions among people (Nonaka 1994). In a virtual community, for example, people share or transfer tacit knowledge through image sharing and exchange. At the same time, social technologies, this the Internet, oral communication and written documents or the Internet and oral and written documents are used to spread Kente-related

knowledge that exists in explicit form. For example, the meanings of most of the Kente patterns and knowledge contained in them can be found in books and on the Internet (Boateng 2014). No matter the form it exists in, Kente-related knowledge can flow only when contextual information is taken into account. As Alavi and Leidner (2001) put it, for a recipient to effectively reuse knowledge, the context of the knowledge (tacit or explicit) must be taken into consideration. Furthermore, the intended recipient of the knowledge must be willing able to partake in the ongoing knowledge creation and flow activities (Grant 1996). In all these contexts, the relationships that exist between people cannot be ignored. It enhances the knowledge flow activities. Long-term relationships between two or more parties are central to knowledge (see for example, He, Ghobadian & Gallear 2013). Additionally, mutual trust among the parties is important for facilitating knowledge flow among the individuals. Trust cultivates cooperation and helps people to interact and communicate with each other. People become receptive to other people when trust exists in social relations, and this can facilitate the flow of knowledge (Jean, Sinkovics & Hiebaum 2014).

From these points, it can be inferred that social capital can facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge, since social relations and trust form the foundation of the social capital theory (see Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1990; Putnam 1995).

2.2.4 Knowledge flow and knowledge creation

In this section, I analyse how knowledge flow can result in knowledge creation. Knowledge creation, according to Nahapiet and Goshal (1998), can occur in two ways: through incremental change, and through developments from existing knowledge. From this, we can infer that the creation of new Kente-related knowledge can also occur in these ways. For example, Kente weavers can create totally new patterns of Kente or they can combine existing patterns to create new patterns. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998)

noted that knowledge can be created through combination and exchange. Combination has been defined as the 'process of systemizing concepts into a knowledge system. This mode of knowledge conversion involves combining different bodies of explicit knowledge' (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995, p. 67). For such a combination to occur, the resources that individuals have must be exchanged (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998). The exchange of resources, like the combinations, also results in the creation of new knowledge (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998). That is, people's engaging in an exchange of resources like Kente and the raw materials used in the production of Kente might result in an exchange of explicit knowledge, which might result in the creation of new Kente-related knowledge.

Following from the above, I can say that social interaction which results in knowledge flow also facilitates the creation of new knowledge. This view is in line with Jakubik who wrote: 'knowledge develops through these interactions, and therefore the process of knowledge creation is best understood by focusing on these micro-level interactions between individuals' (Jakubik 2008, p. 6). Scharmer (2001, p. 247) argued that 'knowledge creation is an intensely human, messy process of imagination, invention and learning from mistakes, embedded in a web of human relationships'. Hence, as knowledge flows among Kente weavers, sellers, tailors, users, and as these people interact with each other, the outcome will be the creation of new knowledge. From this, the central role of social capital in knowledge creation becomes evident. Knowledge creation is facilitated in this case as a result of social relations and continued interactions among these people in the Kente value chain. This view is parallel to the social constructionism paradigm (Berger & Luckmann 1966), which posits that knowledge is socially constructed through interactions among people within a particular context. Knowledge creation involves and requires interactions and

synergetic relationships amongst people. This interaction can be face-to-face or virtual; the important thing is the need for a common space where such interaction will occur (see Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995). People have different skills, perspectives and opinions, and thus their interactions are capable of resulting in the creation of new knowledge (Hackman 2004). For example, Kente weavers, sellers, tailors, and users have different knowledge bases and perspectives about Kente, hence when these people interact, they are likely to learn from each other and at the same time create new knowledge, be it in the form of new patterns of Kente, or how to wear Kente cloth. As Wei Choo asserted: 'knowledge creation is achieved through a recognition of the synergistic relationship between tacit and explicit knowledge in the organization, and through the design of social processes that create new knowledge by converting tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge' (Choo 1996, p. 334).

2.2.5 Knowledge flow and knowledge distortion

Knowledge flow among individuals and within communities has the potential of distorting knowledge. A cursory look at the knowledge management literature shows that not much research has been done on knowledge distortion. Thus, in discussing knowledge distortion, I have relied on the information distortion literature. The extant literature shows that information is distorted as it flows within networks (Mancilla and Sepúlveda, 2017; O'Reilly 1978). Information distortion has been defined severally: O'Reilly, for example, defines information distortion as the "incorrect reproduction of objectively correct information... [and] can result from either conscious or deliberate alteration or unconscious manipulation" (O'Reilly 1978, p. 175). Similarly, Huber and Daft (1987) defined information distortion as the modification of information due to an information sender's or receiver's limited understanding of the information. Following on from these, I define knowledge distortion as the intentional or unintentional

modification of Kente-related knowledge due to limited knowledge of the Asante's culture or "an authentic Kente". In Ghana and especially in the Bonwire Kente weaving community, many consumers have knowledge about authentic Kente. Similarly, many people have knowledge of the cultural, religious, social and political significance of Kente (Boateng 2015). Furthermore, some people have knowledge of Kente production. The authentic Kente is hand-woven. However, in the last decade, there has been the emergence of Chinese- origin Kente which is machine- woven. Although the machine-woven Kente mostly produced in China has a resemblance to the hand-woven Kente, a quick look at the two shows that there is a distinction between them in terms of the texture and the materials used (Boateng 2014). Kente-related knowledge distortion can affect Kente users' decision of choice and usage of Kente. As noted by Russo, Carlson, Meloy, and Yong (2008) consumers' knowledge of a product influence their buying and usage decisions.

2.3 Theories considered for this study

Several theories have been used in knowledge sharing studies, including the theory of reasoned action and the social exchange theory (Wang & Noe 2010). However, the theories that were initially considered for this study were the community of practice (CoP) theory, commitment-trust theory, social cognitive theory and the theory of culture, because their assumptions are consistent with the social constructionism paradigm I have employed in this research. In the end I chose the social capital theory over the theories below because the main thrust of the social capital theory is how social relations or social structures facilitate or block actions or knowledge amongst people. This theory therefore is consistent with the main focus of this study. The theories I

discuss in this section, although they have the potential to answer some of my research questions, do not focus on how social structures facilitate the performance of actions.

2.3.1 Theories of culture

Culture is a popular theory but there is no consensus on what it is; that is, there is no commonly acknowledged definition of culture. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) wrote that culture constitutes a set of features and outcomes of human societies that are transferrable from one generation to another through social means but not through genetics. Culture can be defined as identities or features that distinguish one group of people from another (Hofstede 1980). In other words, it is the way a group of people live. Tayeb (2001) asserted that individuals who interact constantly and form a relationship over a period of time create their own culture. As earlier noted by Hofstede (1980), every person is normally influenced by three kinds of culture: national culture, occupational culture and corporate culture. National culture can be simply defined as the way members of a particular country behave, while corporate culture consists of values, practices, attitudes and shared beliefs that identify and bind organisations and their members in their day-to-day activities.

These cultures partly define how an individual behaves. Additionally, individuals with the same cultural background tend to exhibit similar behavioural patterns. Their social life and association with other people also affect their decisions. Jandt (2012) posited that culture represents an overall aggregate of a group's thoughts, experiences and behavioural patterns. Cultural theory explains how individuals see and react to the environment or the world they find themselves in. The basis of cultural theory is Mary Douglas's grid-group typology (Douglas 1978; Thompson et al. 1990). Douglas (1978) noted that the variance in social involvement is determined by what she termed 'group and grid'. As she explained,

The group itself is defined in terms of the claims it makes over its constituent members, the boundary it draws around them, the rights it confers on them to use its name and other protections, and the levies and constraints it applies. (Douglas 1978, p. 8)

The term *grid* refers to rules that regulate the behaviours of members of the group as they interact among themselves (Douglas 1978). This suggests that individuals from the same cultural background will have similar features and behave similarly. Hofstede (1994) categorised the features that identify people from the same culture into four types: values, symbols, rituals and heroes. Symbols refer to the means through which members communicate. These may include verbal and nonverbal cues and are linked to the language the members speak.   Rituals are certain social or religious activities that members of a culture consistently perform. Values are what members of a culture believe about what is right or wrong, good or bad. People who engage in activities that are perceived in the culture as bad are considered deviant and can be punished. On the other hand, good values are promoted and people are sometimes rewarded for engaging in good activities. Heroes are the real human beings or mythical people who are seen as role models in the culture (Rushing & Frentz 1978).

Values have been applied to or values have been used in describing organisations, institutions, cultural groups, societies, and individuals. They have also been used to track changes over time, and to justify the attitudes and behaviours of people (Schwartz 2012). They surpasss pecific situations and serve as a blueprint for the selection and examination of attitudes and behaviours (Schwartz 1992). However, predicting individuals' behaviour on the basis of values is difficult because of the complexity and breadth of culture (Imm, Anne & Soutar 2007). Nevertheless, values have been found to be a perfect predictor of consumers' behaviour and attitudes and

individuals' decision-making (Kaul 2007; Schwartz & Bardi 2001; Bardi & Schwartz 2003).

Hofstede (1980) classified national cultural values into four dimensions: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity versus feminity Power distance is the degree to which 'vulnerable' members of a country or organisation accept unequal power distribution (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005); that is, the degree to which the less powerful accept their fate of being powerless. Uncertainty avoidance occurs when individuals from the same culture feel threatened by the uncertainty of an event or an action (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005); that is, they trust that the event will happen. Individualism is the case in which an individual's interest takes precedence over that of the other members of the culture. The social ties among members of such a culture tend to be weak. Collectivism, on the other hand, is the case in which members of a culture perceive themselves to be part of a 'society' from birth to death (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005). In such cultures, members show support and loyalty towards each other. There are usually strong social ties and bonds among members. Members are willing to sacrify self-interest for the general good. Masculine and feminine culture reflects and defines the role of gender in society. This is the sex role of the members of the culture (Hofstede 2001). In looking at my research data, I have looked at how some of these cultural values explain knowledge sharing among individuals (see section 2.3.2).

Social and cultural aspects have been noted as playing a role in an individual's decision making. In other disciplines, like consumer behaviour, socio-cultural factors have been identified as a either facilitating or impeding consumers' choice of products. Similarly, in the field of knowledge management, socio-cultural factors have been noted as affecting knowledge sharing. Many studies have shown that these dimensions

of culture and their components have an influence on individuals' attitudes toward knowledge sharing and even technology. Lee and Wohn (2012) asserted that differences in culture could affect people's knowledge sharing attitude and behaviour. In diverse cultures, individuals are normally reluctant to share knowledge (Saunders, Van Slyke & Vogel 2004).

Many studies have investigated the effect of culture on knowledge sharing at two different levels: organisational and individual. Several cultural elements have been found to influence knowledge sharing. Most of the factors are common to the individual and to the organisational level, the exception being factors that are organisation-specific, such as organisational climate, organisational structure and organisational norms. These factors either facilitate or impede knowledge sharing. They include age, gender, educational level, rank in the organisation, loss of power, organisational climate, organisational structure, fear, uncertainty, social ties, relational ties, emotional intelligence, reluctance to share and reward (Kathiravelu, Mansor & Ramayah 2014; Rivera-Vazquez, Fournier & Flores 2009; Zhang, de Pablos & Xu 2014).

Hwang (2012) investigated students' attitudes toward knowledge sharing by electronic mail (email) in an online learning context where students with different cultural backgrounds were sampled from different universities in the United States. The study found that social norms and collective culture were some of the cultural elements that affect attitudes towards knowledge sharing by email; they influence students' attitudes positively. This is not surprising, as individuals with collective culture orientations exhibit 'caring and sharing' behaviours (Hofstede, 1980). Members of the group shape their attitudes and behaviours. Similarly, Zhang, de Pablos and Xu (2014) in their study found the role of culture in knowledge sharing in a virtual learning environment. They noted that individuals with high collectivism orientation engage in

more knowledge sharing than those with low collectivism values. Also, they noted that cultural values such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and Confucian dynamism control the impact of rewards on knowledge sharing. Despite the fact that the study selected the respondents from only three cultures, the results are still significant, since the evidence comes from different cultural perspectives.

This literature review indicates that culture-based theories can explain how Kente-related knowledge flows. The communal culture of Africans is a source of strength for people who want to know how Kente is woven. This same culture can deny other people within the Bonwire Kente weaving village access to the Kente weaving knowledge. For example, in the culture of the people of Bonwire, women are not permitted to weave Kente; hence such knowledge is not transferred to women.

In spite of the potential of the theory to explain knowledge flow, I find it inadequate to explain how social relations facilitate knowledge flow and knowledge creation; hence, my decision not to use culture as the main focus of this study.

2.3.2 Cultural values and knowledge flow

Cultural values partly define how an individual behaves. Additionally, individuals with the same cultural background tend to exhibit similar behavioural patterns. Their social life and association with other people also affect their decisions. Cultural values are inherent in individuals and influence the social, economic, personal and political behaviour of members of the culture (Weaver 1997). It can be argued that these values have implications for Kente-related knowledge flow, since knowledge flow can be associated with individuals' political, social, economic and personal behaviour. Furthermore, Hall and Hall's (1990) definition of culture seems to imply knowledge flow; they defined it as 'a system of values and norms that are shared among a group of people and that when taken together constitute a design of living'. Several studies

have investigated the role of culture in knowledge sharing, with most of them employing Hofstede's (1980) framework (Boateng & Agyemang 2014). Other studies have investigated knowledge sharing from organisational culture perspectives. They have found organisational cultural values, such as organisational structure, organisational climate, vision and mission, to be key determinants of knowledge sharing (Jain, Sandhu & Goh 2015).

In the next paragraphs, I explore some of the cultural values that have been used to explain or have the potential to explain knowledge flow among individuals and may be relevant to this study.

2.3.2.1 Power distance and knowledge flow

Power distance is 'the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally' (De Mooij & Hofstede 2010, p.89). Power distance measures people's perceptions of inequality. Power distance can be large or small (Hofstede, 2001). In countries or societies with small power distance, individuals within different social categories interact easily and this facilitates information flow among the people. For example, in organisations where the power distance is low, employees are able to take interest in each other including their superiors and this creates an avenue for knowledge exchange among the employees (Rivera-Vazquez, Ortiz-Fournier & Flores 2009). On the other hand, in large power distance cultures, there is an existence of hierarchy and members must respect the hierarchy. Furthermore, there is a prevalence of inequality and people tend to accept that and those who have power enjoy certain privileges. This culture value can impede knowledge flow especially from those at the bottom of the hierarchy to those at the top. Again, inflow flow tends to be one way; from top of the hierarchy to the bottom. For example, Boateng and Agyemang (2015) noted that people from a small power distance cultures share

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knowledge more than those from a large power distance. Low power distance encourages members of a social group to participate in decision making which in a way facilitate knowledge exchange among the people.

2.3.2.2 Individualism versus collectivism and knowledge flow

Individualism versus collectivism is one of the key dimensions of Hofstede's cultural values theory. Individualism describes the degree to which an individual puts his or her personal goals above those of the larger group of people, for example, a community. People from individualistic cultures have an independent orientation; that is, they believe in self-sufficiency and self-reliance whilst people from a collectivist culture believe in communal living and interdependence (Ardichvili, Maurer, Li, Wentling & Stuedemann 2006).

On the other hand, people with collectivist cultural values prioritise the goals of the larger social group over that of the individuals (Hofstede 2001). In other words, while individuals' interest takes precedence in an individualistic culture, collective interest is a priority in a collective society. According to Hofstede (2001) cited in Podrug, Pavicic, Bratiae (2006, p.4), individualist culture is 'a society in which the ties between individuals are loose – everybody is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family only while collectivism stands for a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty'. Several studies have shown that these dimensions of culture have an effect on individuals' attitudes toward knowledge sharing and even technology. Lee and Wohn (2012) asserted that differences in culture can affect people's knowledge sharing attitude and behaviour. In diverse cultures individuals are normally reluctant to share knowledge

(Saunders, Van Slyke & Vogel 2004). Hwang (2012) investigated students' attitudes toward knowledge sharing by electronic mail (email) in an online learning context where students with different culture background were sampled from different universities in the north of the United States. The study found social norm and collective culture and some of the cultural elements that affect attitudes towards knowledge sharing by email; they influence students' attitudes positively. This is not surprising as individuals with collective culture orientations exhibit 'caring' and sharing behaviours (Hofstede, 1980). Members of the group shape their attitudes and behaviours. Similarly, Zhang, de Pablos and Xu (2014) in their study found the role of culture in knowledge sharing in a virtual learning environment. They noted that individuals with high collectivist orientation engage in more knowledge sharing than those within low collectivist values. Again, they noted that culture values such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and Confucian dynamism control the impact of rewards on Knowledge Sharing. Despite the fact that the study selected respondents from only three cultures, the results are still significant since it provides evidence from different cultural perspectives. Similarly, Ardichivili et al. (2006) note that in collective cultures, people have the tendency to share knowledge with people within their group than those outside the group and they do not normally trust people outside their group when it comes to knowledge sharing.

2.3.2.3 Uncertainty avoidance and knowledge flow

Uncertainty avoidance has been defined as 'the extent to which people feel threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity and try to avoid these situations' (De Mooij & Hofstede 2010, p.90). It measures the degree to which individuals from a particular society or people belonging to a social group are threatened by an indecisive situation. People with high uncertainty avoidance normally worry about security in life and job and may

hardly share their knowledge with others (Boateng & Agyemang 2015). Again, an earlier study by Thongprasert and Cross (2008) shows that uncertainty avoidance impeded knowledge sharing among Thai students in Australia. They noted that the students were reluctant to contribute to an online discussion board due to their fear of others outperforming them. On the other hand, people with low uncertainty avoidance share knowledge freely and easily. For example, Hauke (2006) found that individuals with low uncertainty avoidance create informal networks, which serve as a conduit for knowledge flow among people. Similarly, Siakas and Georgiadou (2006) postulated that individuals with low uncertainty avoidance have trust in others and thus interact with people easily. In their view, this promotes knowledge sharing.

2.3.2.4 Masculinity versus feminism and knowledge flow

The masculinity/femininity cultural value is defined as 'The dominant values in a masculine society are achievement and success; the dominant values in a feminine society are caring for others and quality of life' (De Mooij, & Hofstede 2010, p.89). This dimension of cultural value by Hofstede measures the degree to which the roles of men take precedence to those of women. People from masculine cultures promote individual achievement and are attached to their success while people from feminine cultures are normally oriented towards group success, corporation and negotiations. These features of a feminine culture value are central to knowledge sharing. For example, Boateng and Agyemang (2015) noted that employees within public sectors organisations that show traits of feminist cultural value normally share their knowledge with others. On the other hand, in societies or organisations with high scores of masculine culture values, people tend to hoard their knowledge. For example, Siakas and Georgiadou (2006) noted that because of lack of trust, and high competition in masculine cultures, people from such cultures normally hoard their knowledge.

Similarly, in an earlier study, Ford and Chan (2003) noted that in masculine cultures employees hardly share their knowledge with others because of the perceived competition among them.

2.3.3 Volunteering and knowledge flow

The concepts of community service and volunteering are central values in many cultures. However, the way these values are initiated and applied in the lives of members of the culture differs from culture to culture. In most cultures, for example in American, European, and Australian cultures, volunteerism is one way members render community service and promote the greater common good (Schwartz 2006). Volunteerism is a cultural value that most people in these cultures uphold. Generally, volunteerism means an individual offering, out of free will, services that promote the general good or benefit a group of people, community, organisation or even an individual. Some scholars have argued that for a service to be considered volunteering, it should be voluntary; beneficial to people, to an organisation or to a community; not rewarded; and occur within a context (Dekker & Halman 2003); this context may be formal or informal (International Labour Organization, 2008). Volunteers provide services in countless sectors and areas of society including healthcare, education, agriculture, human rights and security. With the advent of information and communication technology, especially social technologies, volunteers render services not only in real space but in virtual spaces and real time as well (Jurich 2001). Volunteers normally have varied skills and therefore the services they render help beneficiaries to make informed decisions (Greer, Stewart, Wilson & Donnelly 2014).

Although it sounds contradictory, volunteering values are more common in individualistic societies than in collective societies or communitarian cultures

(Kemmelmeier et al. 2006). Individuals, especially those from individualistic cultures recognised the value of volunteering to engage in pro-social activities or undertake social responsibilities (Zhuang 2010) such as knowledge sharing. Volunteers donate their time, knowledge and skills to assist people, groups, societies, organisations or institutions (Zhuang 2010). To some extent, knowledge flow can be linked to volunteerism. A statement by Pauline Tweedie, an international intern at NetTCorps Canada seems to provide a strong basis for this argument:

> The Vietnamese weren't the only ones who learned something that day. I learned that although there may be many obstacles in our path, with some hard work and determination we can overcome them. My co-workers had overcome enormous hardships during their lives to get where they were and still had many hurdles ahead. The best resource I could possibly give them was knowledge so that they could help themselves and other Vietnamese. (Jurich 2001)

Similarly, Agarwal and Prasad (1997) noted that people's blogging behaviour is influenced by volunteerism but the blogging diminishes with the passage of time. Again, Chen, Lai and Ho (2015) found in their longitudinal study that as teachers' voluntary habit of using teaching blogs increases, their future blogging becomes spontaneous. This shows that bloggers' knowledge sharing behaviour is affected by the value of volunteerism. There are people who have created social media accounts to spread Kente-related knowledge. It is not uncommon to find Kente-related knowledge in blogs and on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube, among other online places. Although some of these accounts are linked to business activities, there are others that have no business intention but just spread their knowledge about Kente. They seek to educate people on Kente, the knowledge contained therein, and its cultural significance.

2.3.4 Egalitarianism and knowledge flow

An egalitarian society is one in which the members of the society promote equal access to opportunities and provide equal rights to individuals (Meyer 1986). This includes equal distribution of wealth in societies, equal rights for members of society and other

resources (Castelli & Tomelleri 2008; Schwartz 2006). The value is seen as a social security that helps to decrease inequality in income and to overcome poverty (Papava 1993), including information poverty. Egalitarianism is a cultural value common in Westernised societies such as Australia, Europe and America (Castelli & Tomelleri 2008; Frank, Meyer & Miyahara 1995). This value influences many to fight against racial discrimination, and support gender equality. (Charles & Bradley 2002). Egalitarian values are argued to be a powerful force driving pro-social behaviour and helping members of a society to co-exist (Fehr & Fischbacher 2003). Individuals with egalitarian values are committed to seeking social justice, equality, responsibility and honesty, for the benefit of other people (Sagiv & Schwartz 2007). Egalitarianism influences individuals to see each other as equal and to seek the welfare of others (Schwartz 2006). Egalitarian values regulate individuals' behaviour and influence individuals to engage in pro-social activities (Castelli & Tomelleri 2008).

2.3.5 Subjective norm and knowledge flow

Ajzen (1991) defined *subjective norm* as 'the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behaviour' (p. 188); that is, as the influence of others on the decision making and behaviours of an individual (Kim, Ham, Yang & Choi 2013). In other words, subjective norm indicates the influence of an external force on an individual's act of commission or omission. People sometimes depend on subjective norms to gain understanding of and react to social situations (Cialdini 2001). The social learning theory stresses the effect of peers and that individuals' behaviour is affected by social pressure from colleagues within group contexts (Evans & Raines 1990). It can be inferred from this that bloggers' knowledge sharing is influenced by subjective norms. Most often in a social context, people change their behaviour to match that of others by mimicking the others' behaviours (Cialdini & Goldstein 2004). For the purposes of

social approval, bloggers mimic the behaviours of others who share their knowledge online. This might be a way of improving their *affinity blogging* (Chartrand & Bargh 1999). Lakin and Chartrand (2003) postulated that the role of behavioural mimicry might be increased in the context within which the goal is triggered. They concluded that whether an individual is conscious or unconscious of the goal, the need for affiliation influences the individual to emulate the behaviours of others in the context. However, in a more conscious manner, people try to copy the behaviour of others in order to enhance their self-esteem (Cialdini & Goldstein 2004). That is, in the context of blogging it can be argued that consciously or unconsciously, bloggers' knowledge sharing behaviour is influenced by the need for social approval and behaviour mimicry. Several studies have shown the role of subjective norm in individuals' behaviours. For example, Wolf, Weibenberger, Wehner and Kabst (2015) found that management's expectations strongly influence controllers' or administrators' behaviour. Similarly, some studies (for example, Sandve & Ogaard 2014) have shown that ethical obligation and subjective norms influence people to engage in socially responsible behaviour. It is not surprising then that studies have found that social norms do influence people's knowledge sharing behaviour. Ho, Ting, Bau and Wei (2011) noted that peer influence affects individuals in an online community so that they share news articles. In addition, in a longitudinal study, Wu and Du (2012) noted that teachers' intentions and actual usage of blogs for teaching is influenced by volunteerism and habit. Similarly, other studies have found a positive relationship between subjective norm and knowledge sharing (Jolaee, Md Nor, Khani & Md Yusoff 2014; Huang, Chang & Lou 2015). Conversely, Hsu and Lin (2008) found that subjective norm has no influence on knowledge sharing intentions but interestingly reported that some bloggers engage in blogging because of community identification. Meanwhile, the need for social

behaviour has been identified as a key component of subject norm resulting in individuals' mimicry behaviour. From the literature, it seems that the role of individuals' mimicry behaviour and the need for social approval in knowledge sharing has not been well understood.

2.4 Social Cognitive Theory

The fundamental premise of the social cognitive theory is that an individual's actions are a result of three mutually interactive factors: the individual's external environment, individual behaviours, and cognitive and personal factors. These factors bi-conditionally influence each other to cause people's actions; however, the effects do not occur at the same time nor with equal strength (Bandura 1986). For example, the effect of individual's external environment on behaviour might not be the same as the effect of behaviour on the person's external environment. This suggests that while the social environment shapes peoples' actions and inactions, their actions and inactions can also shape the social environment. The theory further posits that a person's new knowledge acquisition is related to observing others within the context of social environment, social interactions, and experience, (Bandura 1997). Observational learning involves four processes: attention, retention, reproduction and motivational process activities (Bandura 1986). The motivational activities include incentives or rewards, which influence a person to perform a learned behaviour. The motivation activities may be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation factors may include the enjoyment, and reputationthat result from performing the learned behaviour, as well as knowledge and self-efficacy, while the extrinsic motivations may include rewards such as financial rewards and reciprocal benefits (Lin 2007). The motivation can also be a negative one, such as avoiding punishment (Bandura 1986). Attention process activities involve selecting specific behaviours from the social environment to observe and gather

information about it. The attention process activities might be influenced by the significance and distinctiveness of the behaviour, the effect of such behaviour on the individual (Bandura 1977). Retention process activities involve storing, memorising and rehearsing the learned behaviour. Connecting words describing the learned behaviour with photos of it enables the individual to remember what has been learned. In these activities people make meaning of the learned behaviour, although the meanings made may differ from person to person (Bandura 1977). Reproduction process activities involve carrying out or re-enacting the learned behaviour and obtaining feedback about the success or otherwise of the re-enacted behaviour (Badura 1977). People must have the ability or the capacity to put the learned behaviour into practice. People's abilities differ; thus even when two people observe the same behaviour, the re-enacted behaviour may differ from person to person (Bandura 1977).

2.5 Theoretical Framework for this study

This section captures the theoretical framework that I chose as the basis of this study after having considered the ones described above. In this section, I introduce James Coleman's Theory of Social Capital, which forms the theoretical foundation of this study. Next, I conceptualise social capital based on Coleman's theorisation of social capital. I examine how social structures and social relations facilitate the flow and creation of new knowledge.

2.5.1 Social Capital: its meaning and origins

Social capital has been defined and approached differently by different researchers. As a result, there exist different conceptualisations of social capital in the literature (Fulkerson & Thompson 2008). Hanifan is recognised as the first scholar to have used the term social capital. He defined social capital as 'goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make

a social unit, the rural community' (Hanifan 1916, p.130). From this definition, it can be noted that social structure and its elements, such as the family and community, are central to the concept of social capital. It can also be observed that social relations, exchanges and social interactions have also been at the loci of the definition of social capital. Hanifan's allusion to 'mutual sympathy and social intercourse among a group' (p.130) indicates a flow of information and knowledge, since people's interactions result in knowledge exchange (Huvila et al. 2010; Tsai & Ghoshal 1998).

Bourdieu, on the other hand, defined social capital as 'the sum of the actual and potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition' (Bourdieu 1986, p. 249). Bourdieu's definition shows some similarities with Hanifan's they both point to social networks as a resource or capital; however, Bourdieu uses the term *social capital* to explain economic inequalities and focuses more on institutionalised networks than on 'informal relations'. Bourdieu theorised social capital as a form of resource, like symbolic, economic and cultural capital (see Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu 2002). *Symbolic capital* is defined in terms of an individual's social, economic and culture capital. In other words, it represents the amount of cultural, economic and social capital one possesses (Bourdieu, 2002). *Economic capital*, according to Bourdieu, refers to the degree to which a person can exchange resources for economic benefits (Bourdieu 1986). Bourdieu's *cultural capital* consists of three subcategories: institutionalised, objectified and embodied (Bourdieu 1986). *Institutionalised cultural capital* is made up of recognitions that come from an institution such as one's academic credentials. For example, a master Kente weaver represents the person's institutionalised cultural capital. *Embodied cultural capital*, or what Bourdieu also calls *habitus*, is made up of features a person has acquired, both those that the person acquired consciously and

those inherited from family, usually through socialisation. According to Jenkins (1992), this represents a structural determinism but Vitolas refuted this claim. He wrote that ;

> "although it [habitus] tends to be durable, it reflects the limits of the objective structure in which classes have developed historically; at the same time, it is creative and inventive. The practices it generates do not have the regularity expected of a deterministic principle; it tells us instead that it is only probable that they will resemble—in different degrees— the expected expression of actors' objective reality". (Vitolas 2011, p. 64)

Objectified cultural capital involves physical objects that an individual or a group of people own (Bourdieu 1986).

Bourdieu sees social capital as like an economic capital in which individuals can invest. As he asserted, profit is the main motive for an individual to establish a wider network. Although this profit might not necessarily come in economic terms, according to Bourdieu (1986), it can be reduced to economic gains. This position has, however, been criticised by some scholars. Alexander (1996), for example, criticised Bourdieu's view that economic capital is the source of other types of capital such as social capital. This, according to Fischer, has given economists the leeway to 'colonize sociologists' topics' (Fischer 2005, p. 157). In some other scholars' view, Bourdieu's perspective of social capital is more context-specific, a result of the contingency among symbolic, economic and cultural capital (Savage, Warde & Devine 2005). Bourdieu's perspectives of social capital point to social structure as an integral part of social capital because social structure has been conceptualised via networks (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998); however, Bourdieu's focus is more on institutionalised networks than informal networks such as Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998)'s conceptualisation focuses on.

Although information and knowledge flow is not a central theme in Bourdieu's social capital theory, information flow must not be ignored because institutional networks can be an information channel for people and information channels are considered by Coleman to constitute a social capital (Coleman 1990).

One scholar who is recognised as having popularised social capital in the contemporary literature is James Coleman. Unlike Bourdieu, Coleman focuses on social relations and how social relations can facilitate individuals' attainment of their goals. Social relations enable people to access information easily; this makes them a social capital for individuals (Coleman 1990, 1988). Thus, social capital can facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge. People can access Kente-related knowledge through their social relations. From Coleman's perspective, social capital is an outcome of activities; Bourdieu, in contrast, sees it as an investment people make. Coleman wrote that 'most forms of social capital are created or destroyed as a by-product of other activities' (Coleman 1988, p. S118). From the perspective of Coleman, social capital is inherent in structural relations and among people.

Another scholar who has popularised the social capital theory is Robert Putnam. His theory is based on Coleman's perspective on social capital, but unlike Coleman, Putnam focuses on how social capital promotes civic engagement. Trust is a central social element of Putnam's theorisation of social capital. Putnam defined social capital as the 'features of social organizations, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate actions and cooperation for mutual benefit' (Putnam 1993, p. 35). Later, in 2001, he revised this definition, which positions social capital in the communitarian perspective, to include benefits that individuals enjoy from their social relations. Putnam defined social capital as the 'connections among individual social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' (Putnam 2001, p. 19). Social

capital is inherent in nations, communities and groups (Putnam, Leonardi & Nanetti 1993). Such communities produce people who value volunteering because of the norm of reciprocity that exists among the network of people in the community (Putnam 2000). This view, according to some researchers, makes social capital a redundant theory. As Portes asserted, 'equating social capital with the resources acquired through it can easily lead to tautological statements' (Portes 1998, p.5). The social network is key in the formation of social capital. Social networks and norms are tools that drive people to engage in community activities or contribute to the solving of problems in a community. Continuous and consistent face-to-face interactions create a bond and trust among people, which facilitates civil engagement. Trust is seen as the 'soul' of social capital as it enhances mutual exchange (Putnam 1995). Woolcock (2001), however, sees trust as a result of social capital.

Social capital can take different forms: bonding, bridging and linking (Woolcock 2001; Putnam 2000). *Bonding social capital* involves 'people who are like one another in important respects' (Putnam & Goss 2002, p. 11). It involves connections among people who are closely related, such as those in the family, relatives, and other kin. Woolcock and Sweetser wrote that 'bonding social capital refers to connections to people like you [family, relatives, kinship]' (Woolcock & Sweetser 2002, p. 26). This perspective was part of the foundation of Coleman's social capital theory. Coleman (1990) highlighted the rich intangible resources within the family, community, and neighbourhood that help human development and assist members in performing certain functions. Bonding social capital exists in strong social ties or networks, and '[i]t is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity' (Putnam 2000, p. 22). *Bridging social capital*, on the other hand, refers to the benefits inherent in connections between people who are unrelated in terms of

blood, race, ethnicity or socio-economic status (Szreter &Woolcock, 2004). Bridging social capital 'generate[s] broader identities and reciprocity' (Putnam 2000, p. 23). It results from overlapping networks that cross boundaries. It is parallel to Coleman's concept of closure (see Coleman 1900). It is linked to people in a close network. However, Coleman believes that the absence of closure depreciates social capital in a social relation. These two perspectives are parallel to Granovetter's (1973) theory about strong ties and weak ties. *Linking social capital* 'pertains to connections with people in power, whether they are in politically or financially influential positions' (Woolcock & Sweetser 2002, p. 26). It deals with people's relationships with other powerful and influential people outside their communities (Harrisona, Montgomery & Bliss 2016). Linking social capital helps individuals to access resources, including information, from an external entity. It has been linked to structural capital because it reflects relationships and linkages that connect many groups and facilitates the execution of actions (Woolcock 1998).

Since these perspectives offer different forms of information, I consider them important in this study since they are capable of facilitating the flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge. The bonding perspective can facilitate knowledge flow within the communities of practice, families and among friends, and can promote social interactions, which is important for the creation of new knowledge. The bridging perspective can also facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge beyond the Bonwire Kente weaving village and even around the world.

Altruism and discretionary activities by people in a community have also been associated with social capital (Putnam 2000). Portes and Landolt (2000) also share this view. They asserted that social capital resources originate from two sources: altruistic

and instrumental resource exchange (Portes & Landolt 2000). Altruistic sources make resources available to members of the network because of moral responsibilities and the need to maintain unity and camaraderie. Instrumental resources exchange, on the other hand, focuses on reciprocity in exchange relationships among members (Portes & Landolt 2000). That is, members expect a payback for whatever resource they share with others. The notion of exchange and interaction may entail the flow and creation of new knowledge, as I have indicated earlier.

Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) identified three dimensions of social capital: structural, cognitive and relational. *Structural capital* is the sum patterns of network among individuals in a group or community. It reveals itself in interaction ties (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998). It is embedded in the procedures, systems and tools used by the individuals in a network and embedded in sustained relationships with individuals. It helps people to learn and share knowledge across a network. The structural capital also suggests that social interactions form part of social capital. Social interactions help people to access information and other resources and processes (Tsai & Ghoshal 1998). *Cognitive social capital* is defined via shared language and narratives, which affect individuals' perceptions of the meanings and reality in relationships. It is the complete understanding of the behavioural and thought patterns among individuals. It is accumulated through interactions among members in an environment, be it physical or virtual. It promotes the exchange of knowledge and creation of new knowledge (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998). The *relational* dimension of social capital has been defined as resources inherent in relationships, such as trust and trustworthiness. It also includes norms, obligations and identification that help people to access help from their social relations. Trustworthy relationships enable members in the relationship to help each other (Tsai & Ghoshal 1998). This may include sharing

of knowledge (Widen-Wulff & Ginman 2004). Some other researchers in the information science and related fields have also conceptualised social capital to include a content dimension (Huvila et al. 2010; Widen-Wulff & Ginman 2004). The content perspective is 'defined as shared goals, common experience, language and knowledge' (Huvila et al. 2010, p. 298). The content dimension of social capital enhances information and knowledge exchange between people (Huotari 2000). Social capital thus facilitates the flow of knowledge and information among people in social relationships.

From the various definitions and conceptualisations of the social capital theory, it can be said that 'its source lies in the structure and content of the actor's social relations. Its effects flow from the information, influence, and solidarity that it makes available to the actor' (Adler & Kwon 2002, p. 23). Social structure and social relations and their elements can therefore facilitate the flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge within communities and across the globe.

2.5.2 Perspectives on social capital

Social capital, according to James Coleman, 'is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure. (Coleman 1990, p. 302) Social capital is also based on social relations (Coleman 1988). That is, social structure and social relations and their elements form the bedrock of social capital and thus enable individuals to achieve goals that would have not been possible without it (Coleman 1990; Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998). Social capital helps people to access knowledge and is also important for the development of human and intellectual capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998;

Coleman 1990; Burt 1997). From this view, social capital manifests itself in two ways: antecedent form and outcome form. However, in its antecedent form social capital takes the forms of social structure and its elements while in its outcome form it facilities the attainment of 'impossible goals' (Miles 2012). Although this has been criticised as being a tautology (Portes 1998), others believe that social capital is not manifesting itself in the same way in both the antecedent and outcome forms (Lin 2001). It is also important to point out that social structure and social relations that constitute social capital may also deny people access to some resources (Coleman 1990; Portes & Landolt 1996). That is, the outcome form of social capital may not always be positive (Portes 1998).

Social structure is normally defined via network structures and the attributes of the network ties among people (Huvila et al. 2010; Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Granovetter 1985); however, it goes beyond that. It includes social institutions and communities (Musolf 2003). Social institutions like family, friends and appropriable organisations have been at the centre of the study of social capital over the years (Coleman 1990; Putnam 1995; Putnam 2000). These institutions are inherent to social capital, and facilitate human capital development and flow of knowledge (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Coleman 1988). Social institutions like the family are the first place of socialisation, where norms and knowledge are passed on to others within the family (Fukuyama 1995). Communities, including Community of Practice, and family, friendship and appropriable organisations also enhance social interactions and exchange which are vital to knowledge flow and new knowledge creation (Lave & Wenger 1991; Coleman 1990). Coleman asserted: 'social capital, in turn, is created when the relations among persons change in ways that facilitate action' (Coleman 1990, p. 304). Continuous interaction among the members in a social relationship creates a

social network within which knowledge can be accessed and resources mobilised via the ties within the network (Burt 1997). Furthermore, continuous interactions among members indicate the creation of new knowledge, since exchange and combination results in the creation of new knowledge (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Grant 1996). The family, friendship, community and appropriable organisations provide members with access to the connections and networks through which they can have access to knowledge and vital information (Alemna & Sam 2006; Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Coleman 1990). These institutions thus become essential to understanding how social capital facilitates the flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge.

Social relations and its elements are also central to Coleman's theorisation of social capital (Coleman 1988). Social relational capital is defined via social identity, trustworthiness and its potential as a source of information (Huvila et al. 2010; Coleman 1988). 'Social relations promulgate information flow' (Sorenson & Singh 2007), and hence it can also be said that social relations facilitate the flow and creation of Kente-related knowledge. Social relations have several attributes, including social identity (Kane 2004; Tajfel & Turner 1986). Social identity improves collective actions and concerns for each person in a social relationship (Mu, Peng & Love 2008), thus resulting in exchange and opportunity to access support (Salifu, Francesconi & Kolavalli 2010). This means that not only does social identity constitute social capital that can facilitate the flow and creation of new knowledge but it can also become a barrier for same (Mu et al. 2008). In this case, social identity constitutes a kind of social capital which can facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge or can be a barrier to the flow of Kente-related knowledge.

Coleman (1988) also sees trustworthiness of social relations as constituting social capital. It binds people together and enhances exchange among people in social

relationships (Coleman 1988). Trustworthiness affects individuals' attitudes towards collective actions (Venkatesh & Davis 2000) and makes people in a social relationship show concern for each other and take each other's interest to heart (Cho & Lee 2011). The exchange among people, which is facilitated by trustworthiness, as noted by Coleman (1998), may include exchange of information and knowledge. It also promotes social interactions among individuals within the exchange relationships (see Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998). This suggests that trustworthiness is essential for the flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge.

Coleman (1988) also mentioned information channels and networks as constituting social capital. The information potential embedded in social relations makes them social capital (Coleman 1990). Information enables people to take decisions and take actions. However, acquiring information is sometimes costly, and therefore, people rely on their social relations for information (Coleman 1990, 1988). Many studies in the information behaviour literature have shown that people rely on their social relations for information (for example, Hershberger 2003). Information channels in this context include social technologies, since the social and the technical are theorised to be 'ontologically inseparable from the start' (Introna 2007, p.1). Introna asserted that:

"it would not be incorrect to say that our existence has now become so entangled with the things surrounding us (if it even makes sense to use the notion of 'surround') that it is no longer possible to say, in any definitive way, where we end and they begin, and vice versa...We are the beings that we are through our entanglements with things – we are thoroughly hybrid beings, cyborgs through and through". (Introna 2009, p. 26) That is, social technologies are situated within social relations but also exist through the materiality of the networks. They build bridges and connect people far and near.

They facilitate interactions among people, are a rich source of information and facilitate the achievement of goals (Huvila, Holmberg, Ek & Widen-Wulff 2010). This implies that social technologies can facilitate the flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge.

The public goods aspect of social capital has also been highlighted by Coleman (1988). Unlike physical capital and human capital, for which the person who invests in them enjoys and can claim ownership of the benefits, the benefits ensuing from social capital benefits members within the social structure and social relations (Adler & Kwon 2002; Coleman 1988). However, the amount of benefits that members within the social structure and social relation can enjoy may differ and may depend on the 'positions' of members within the social structure (Coleman 1990) and the strength of ties among the members within the social relations (Luo & Zhong 2015; Granovetter 1973).

Like other theories of social capital, Coleman's has received criticism from scholars. Portes (1998) for example contended that Coleman did not adequately capture the source of social capital, bearers of social capital, or resources that constitute social capital in theorising social capital. Critics have also argued that 'social capital is context-dependent and therefore context-specific. Since context conditions use *value* and *liquidity* of social capital, every attempt to fix social capital into integrative functions as in Coleman's formulation is severely limited in scope' (Foley & Edwards 1999 cited in Tzanakis 2013, p. 5). In other words, social capital is context-based and is a social resource, which is neither equitable nor evenly shared (Tzanakis 2013). Field also pointed out that, like Bourdieu, Coleman does not take the role of *affect* in social relations into consideration. Field wrote that 'neither pays much heed to affect, to the fact that people like, love or loathe one another – and therefore associate together or avoid each other – for reasons that lie outside the domain of rational calculation' (Field

2008, p. 31). Additionally, some scholars have criticised the social capital theory for promoting discrimination and inequality. Schucksmith (2000), in his study of social capital in rural communities in the United Kingdom noted that the notion of social capital promotes inequalities by excluding people from access to local resources through their social networks.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, Coleman's social capital theory has been the foundation upon which many scholars have theorised about social capital (Putnam 2000; Putnam 1995; Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Fulkerson & Thompson 2008). Coleman's theory of social capital has been the popular social capital theory for understanding knowledge flow and knowledge creation (Zhou, Zhang, Sheng, Xie & Bao 2014; Mu et al .2008; Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998). Hence, Coleman's social capital theory forms the theoretical underpinning of this study. I have employed this theory to explain how social relations and social structures facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge among people in traditional communities and globally. I have also employed the theory to explain how Kente-related knowledge flow facilitates knowledge creation.

2.5.3 Social capital as a resource

Following Coleman's perspectives of social capital (Coleman 1990; 1989), in this study social capital is considered a resource situated in social structures and social relations that can facilitate the flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge. Social structure in this study consists of social structural elements, such as social institutions, which involve the family, friendship, towns, communities of practice and appropriable institutions. Social relations, on the other hand, consist of social elements such as social identity, which is associated with social interactions (Mu et al. 2008; Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998). This study also considers social technologies an element of social

relations, and hence they constitute a form of social capital in themselves. This is an extension of Putnam's (2002) and Lin's (1999) idea of the Internet constituting social capital in itself. Besides, social technologies connect people together to form a network and also consist of a network of people with inherent social capital (Lin 1999).

Since trustworthiness is fundamental to every social relationship and also constitutes a form of social capital (Coleman 1988), it is theorised in this study that trustworthiness can facilitate or become a barrier to the flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge. Social structures, social relations and their elements constituting social capital are not exclusive to each other and can reinforce each other for the flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge. For instance, a shared social identity can bring people together to form a community of practice, which then becomes a basis for trustworthiness among the people and this promotes exchange and interactions among the people, which is essential for the flow and creation of new knowledge (Liu 2007; Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Lave & Wenger 1991). Again, social interactions are part of social structure like family, friends, communities/towns and appropriable organisations (Coleman 1990; Musolf 2003) and these are essential for knowledge flow and the creation of new knowledge (Huvila et al.2010).

It is also important to acknowledge that these elements of social structure and social relations constituting social capital might not always facilitate the flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge, because the outcome form of social capital is not necessarily always positive (Portes & Landolt 1996; Coleman 1990).

2.5.4 Social structures and social capital

Social structure has been conceptualised variously. Many scholars have conceptualised social structure in the social capital and knowledge-sharing literature as consisting of networks (Inkpen & Tsang 2005; Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998), with few others focusing

on other aspects of social structure, such as institutions, groups and places like the library (see for example, Hillenbrand 2005). This is probably because social networks affect the flow of knowledge and the kind of information an individual can access (Granovetter 2005). According to Coleman's (1990) theory of social capital, social structure extends beyond networks. It includes institutions, organisations, family, friendship, communities and social relations. This view is consistent with the theorisation of social structure in the sociology literature. Musolf (2003), for example, writes that:

> "Structure refers to the innumerable social facts over which the individual, *qua* individual, does not have much control and which he or she cannot escape. Race, class, sex, ideology, institutions, organizational hierarchy, groups, geographical location, period of history, mode of production, generational cohort, family, culture, roles and rules are all examples of social facts, the structural dimension of social life. We are born into situations that have existed before us and that will exist after we are gone. In general, structure refers to social arrangements, social relations".

> (Musolf 2003, p.1)

2.5.4.1 Social capital in network configuration and network ties

Social capital is embedded in social networks, and the structures or configurations of the social networks affect members' access to the social capital embedded therein (Inkpen & Tsang 2005; Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998). These networks also have implications for the flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge. That is, social networks and how such networks are configured can affect the flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge. This is premised on the assertion that social network features such as 'density, connectivity and hierarchy are all features associated with flexibility

and ease of information flow and exchange through their impact on the level of contact or accessibility they provide to the network members' (Krackhardt 1989 cited in Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998). The density of the social network can promote bonding and social interactions, which is important for the creation of new Kente-related knowledge. The connectivity feature can also facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge. It can also help the Kente-related knowledge to flow within and across a particular boundary; for example, from the Bonwire Kente weaving village to the global world. Again, the hierarchical feature of a social network can affect the direction of flow of Kente-related knowledge. In this case, Kente-related knowledge is likely to flow from experts to the novice in the network. Again, conserving the relationships among the members in the social networks is also important for the flow of Kente-related knowledge. The strength of ties among members within a social network has also been noted as affecting the creation, maintenance and destruction of social capital. Coleman, for example, believes that social networks are very significant in the creation and maintenance of social capital (Coleman 1990). Other scholars have expressed a similar view. Woolcock (2002) and Szreter and Woolcock (2004), for example, point out that the ability of an actor within a network to accrue benefits from the network depends not only on the number of connections the person has but also on the actor's ability to interact with others. 'Embedded ties', for example, have been found to be more effective and efficient for access to vital information than 'arm's length ties' (Uzzi 1996). These concepts are synonymous to Granovetter's (1985) concept of *strong ties* and *weak ties* within a network. As noted by Granovetter, new information flows to people via weak ties rather than strong ties, since close friends (with strong ties) tend to move in the same direction or in a circle. In this case, they are likely to have access to similar kinds of information. In contrast, acquaintances (with weak ties) know other individuals who

might be a source of new information (Granovetter 1985). Following from this, it can be said that while strong ties among people, such as those in the family, communities (for example, a community of practice) and friendship can help people access vital Kente-related knowledge, weak ties, such as those existing between, for example, a Kente weaver and a customer can be a source of new Kente-related knowledge. There are some empirical studies that suggest that social networks affect the flow and creation of new knowledge. Luo and Zhong (2015) in their study on knowledge sharing in tourist blogs, for example, classified social ties among tourists on social network sites into three categories: strong, middling and weak ties. They noted that the sharing of knowledge between the tourists on a social network site is based on extant relationships among the tourists. Those with strong ties share ideas, information and stories at least three times a week. This group of people Rarely shared knowledge with people with whom they did not have any social ties. Similarly, tourists with middling ties were found to share experiences and travel information at least once or twice a week, but these people did not share some ideas with people with whom they were not friends. Also, those tourists with weak ties were sharing experiences and travel information one to three times a month. This group of tourists lacked intimacy and so they shared hardly any ideas they considered private. Nevertheless, when they did share information with people with whom they had weak ties, it was vital information rather than personal chit-chat (Luo & Zhing 2005). From these results, it can be said that social ties are central to Kente-related knowledge flow and the creation of new Kente-related knowledge. The stability of a social network has also been shown to impact on the creation or destruction of social capital (Coleman 1990). Coleman wrote that 'every form of social capital, with the exception of that deriving from formal organizations with structures based positions depends on stability' (Coleman 1990, p. 320). This position has been

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supported by other researchers such as Markowitz et al. (2001) and Gail (2006). Gail (2006), for example, noted that residential stability promotes the growth of social capital by boosting the relationships among the members in the community. In contrast, residential mobility can destroy social capital since the mobility impedes the building of social networks, which are sources of social capital (Sampson, Jeffrey, Morenoff & Earls 1999; Coleman 1990). However, there is an empirical literature that seems to suggest that mobility not only impedes the creation of social capital but promotes the creation of it as well, particularly with regards to access to knowledge (Oettl & Agrawal 2008; Brennenraedts, Bekkers &Verspagen 2006). Oettl and Agrawal (2008) studied how labour mobility across a country's borders facilitates the flow of knowledge and noted that labour mobility facilitates the knowledge flow to even unintended market mechanisms (institutionalised social structure). Brennenraedts et al. (2006) also identified the mobility of people as a channel through which knowledge flows among people. It can thus be said that, while mobility destroys existing social networks which constitute a social capital, it also creates social capital via the formation of a new social network consisting of a new set of members. This 'new social network' becomes a source of social capital for these members who previously did not have access to the social capital contained in this social network. This new social network becomes a channel through which the members gain access to new knowledge. An example from this study could be if a Kente weaver moved from a Kente weaving village to another town and shared his Kente-related knowledge with the members of that town who had not had access to the Kente-related knowledge.

2.5.4.2 Social capital in social institutions

Social institutions are a component of social structure (Mihăilescu 2003; Musolf 2003), which is a key aspect of social capital (Coleman 1990; Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Tsai

& Nahapiet 1998). Social institutions are 'relations that regulate the life and the activity of the individuals' (Prodanciuc 2012, p. 240). Social institutions may be formal or informal. The fundamental components of social institutions that the social capital theory has focused on are the family, friends, groups and communities (Putnam 1995; Coleman 1990). Many people rely on their families, friends and other associations to access some resources easily. As asserted by Woolcock and Narayan 'the basic idea of social capital is that a person's family, friends, and associates constitute an important asset, one that can be called on in a crisis, enjoyed for its own sake, and leveraged for material gain' (Woolcock & Narayan 2000, p. 3). Family and friends normally show affection and companionship and offer help to each other. One of the fundamental elements of the social capital theory is trust (Putnam 1995; Coleman 1990). However, the ability to trust others is partly informed by an individual's family life and the way the individual was raised (Bubolz 2000). The family is the first place for socialisation and a place of human development; oral traditions and knowledge are passed on from one generation to the other in the family. Many people also rely on their friends and acquaintances for vital information (Granovetter 1985). Even when voluntary organisations are formed to pursue a particular agenda, they in turn become a form of social capital for the members of the group to take other actions that suit their interests (Coleman 1990) and may even serve as a source of vital information for the members of the group. Social institutions promote social interactions, cooperation and exchange

of resources (Putnam 1995). Yusuf (2012) studied the information-seeking behaviour of women artisans in Offa in Nigeria and noted that these women rely on their family and friends for information relating to their occupations, due to their inability to read. Extending this view, it can be said that family and friends can facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge among people.

2.5.4.3 Social capital in social interactions

Social interactions are an essential element of the social capital theory in terms of knowledge creation and knowledge flow (Tsai & Ghoshal 1998). Face-to-face interactions and more recently, online interactions, have been the means by which people exchange knowledge and create new knowledge (Panahi, Watson & Partridge 2012; Polanyi 1966). As observed by Tsai and Ghoshal 'frequent and close social interactions permit actors to know one another, to share important information, and to create a common point of view' (Tsai & Ghoshal 1998, p. 465). Frequent interactions amongst people also build mutual trust between them, which is a key element of the social capital theory (Putnam 1995). Furthermore, social interactions help people to build strong ties, which is important for resource exchange, including knowledge exchange (Tsai & Ghoshal 1998). Knowledge becomes accessible to people through social interactions (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998), and through social interactions people learn from each other (Haldin-Herrgard 2000, p. 368). Through both formal and informal interactions, people establish relationships and begin to exchange basic information, and with time they begin to exchange valuable and strategic information (Li, Ye & Sheu 2014). In this view, social interactions can falicitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge. As Kente weavers, sellers, buyers, tailors and fashion designers interact with each other, they may exchange ideas and share Kente-related knowledge.

Social interactions may be a channel through which Kente weavers may exchange their expertise and experiences with each other. Some researchers have also associated social interactions on social technology platforms with knowledge flow. Wahlroos (2010), for instance, noted that the advent of social technologies has improved the flow of tacit knowledge by serving as an avenue for social interactions and instant and live conversations, and enabling collaborations among people. Similarly, Marwick (2001) asserted that social technologies like online discussion platforms and real-time online interactions enhance the flow of knowledge among people. These social technologies are also channels through which new knowledge is created (Yates & Paquette 2011). Chiu, Hsu and Wang (2006) also emphasised the role of social interaction bonds in individuals' willingness to share their knowledge in a virtual community. They believe that fostering social interactions and strengthening social relationships among community members can help sustain knowledge sharing among the members of the community. They also pointed out the role of reciprocity in sustaining knowledge exchange among members in a virtual community. The on-going contribution of knowledge by each member of the community is seen as a way of sustaining the community. When some community members fail to contribute knowledge to the community, the community will eventually become defunct, as those who contribute regularly might also stop. Kente-related knowledge flow and creation could thus be facilitated via social technologies. Knowledge creation results from human interactions and these interactions may produce multiple knowledges, which, with time, can become a social norm (Berger & Luckmann 1991). Kente-related knowledge flow and creation thus involves human interactions, both face-to-face and online, such as on social media. Knowledge creation and flow is a social phenomenon. Individuals share their subjective expertise, experiences and ideas rather than objective ideas or knowledge. Individuals

engage in conversations using different terms, language, symbols and acronyms and have different experiences and ideas that they express. Social interactions provide an avenue for people to create, negotiate, sustain and alter the meanings of the realities of the world they live in (Berger & Luckmann 1991). When ordinary people interact with each other, each time they meet, they are each creating a new understanding (Berger & Luckmann 1991). This type of social interaction is also important for the flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge.

2.5.4.4 Social capital within a Community of Practice (CoP)

Community has been an integral part of the study of social capital (Putnam 1995; Coleman 1990). In this study I identified community of practice (CoP) as constituting social capital that is capable of facilitating the flow of and creation of new Kente-related knowledge. CoPs have been defined as 'groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis' (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder 2002, p. 4). Similarly, Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 98) defined a community of practice as 'a set of relations among persons, activity and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice'. A Community of Practice (CoP) does not necessarily mean an identifiable group or co-presence of participants; members can live miles apart and might not know each other personally (Nicolini 2012).

Wenger (2004) identified three basic features of a CoP: domain, community and practice. The domain is the object of interest. It is this object of interest that binds the members of the community together. Members create and share knowledge, ideas, experiences, about this object of interest. The second feature, community, according to

Wenger, involves people who build and maintain relationships with each other, which helps them share knowledge with each other. The community's activities are centred on the domain. The community holds knowledge the community members create and shares knowledge about the domain amongst themselves (Wenger 2004; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). The third feature, practice, is the means through which the tasks in the domain are performed, such as knowledge and problem flow (Wenger 2004). These practices of creating and flow of knowledge, experiences and expertise are part of the means of building the community (Wenger 2000).

In this context, the object of interest is Kente. Kente brings weavers, sellers, tailors, fashion designers and users together to form a community. These people have different experiences, knowledge and expertise and interests, and they share with each other as they interact. According to Echeverri and Skålén (2011), interactions and the exchange of ideas among people are the means by which new knowledge is created. Extending this view, new Kente-related knowledge can be created as knowledge flows among weavers, sellers, tailors, fashion designers and users even as they interact with each other. CoP promotes development of ties and social interactions. 'Social assets' embedded in a CoP, such as identification, trust, values and norms, create an enabling environment for ongoing knowledge exchange among people who participate in a virtual community (Wellman & Wortley 1990). These same social assets are at the loci of the social capital theory (Coleman 1990; Putnam 1995).

CoP 'implies participation in an activity system about which participants share understanding concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for the community' (Lave & Wenger 1991, p122). This suggests that individual members of the community make different meanings or have different understandings of the practices they participate in within community. It also means that social relations

and structures facilitate or impede learning or acquisition of knowledge, and have a role in the flow, reproduction and dynamism in knowledge in a CoP (Nicolini 2012). A community of practice is an intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge. It normally focuses on creating new knowledge and the flow of same to improve the professional practices or areas of interest (Cambridge, Kaplan & Suter 2005). Members of the community learn from each other, learn collectively, and have the opportunity to improve their personal skills and abilities, as well as develop professionally (Lave & Wenger 1991). This view is consistent with Coleman's (1988) view that individuals access help from their social relations and communities for their personal development.

Learning within a community involves competences (Wenger 2000). For members to show that they 'know' or are knowledgeable, they must exhibit their competence within the community (Wenger 2000). Competences in community are defined by four elements: mutuality, joint enterprise, shared repertoire and shared histories of learning (Wenger 1998 & 2000).

1. *Mutuality* is the practice which 'resides in a community of people and relations of mutual engagement by which they can do whatever they do' (Wenger 1998, p. 73). Mutual engagement requires that members know each other and interact effectively and efficiently so that members can seek help from each other. It will also require that members trust each other in order to contribute their knowledge, expertise and experiences to the community (Wenger 2000).

2. *Joint enterprise* is the agreed-upon aspects of the community (Nicolini 2012): 'the enterprise is joint not in that everybody believes the same things or agrees with everything but in that it is communally negotiated' (Wenger 1998, p. 78). Building competence in community requires that members keep learning as the focal point and maintain a spirit of inquiry (Wenger 2000).

3. *Shared repertoire* is the resources shared by the members of the community (Wenger 2000). It 'reflects a history of mutual engagement and remains inherently ambiguous' (Wenger 1998, p. 83). Members of the community must be conscious of the existing resources in the community in order to build their competences (Wenger 2000). It is the foundation of unity and consistency in a community (Nicolini 2012).

4. *Shared history of learning* is where 'learning is the engine of practice and practice is the history of that learning' (Wenger 1998, p. 96). The concepts, vocabularies and tools are embedded in the history and viewpoints of a community. Vocabularies and tools help members to help each other to discover new ideas and possibilities and have several perspectives on their resources, which can be used to promote the community (Wenger 2000).

These elements are also fundamental to the existence of social capital in social structures. As noted by Coleman (1988), social capital is developed and sustained through mutuality and shared reciprocity. This implies that as Kente-related knowledge flows within a community which serves a social context, the Kente weavers, sellers, buyers, tailors, fashion designers and users who interact with each other will seek such knowledge, create new knowledge and share the knowledge among themselves. The existence of social capital in a community of practice can also be inferred from Adler and Kwon's definition of social capital. They defined social capital as 'the goodwill available to individuals or groups. Its source lies in the structure and content of the actor's social relations. Its effects flow from the information, influence, and solidarity it makes available to the actor' (Adler & Kwon 2002, p. 23).

2.5.5 Social relations and social capital

Social relations have been defined in the social capital literature in terms of trust, trustworthiness, identification, reciprocity and norms (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Tsai & Ghoshal 1998). Social identity and social technologies also form part of the relational dimension of the social capital theory (Brooks et al. 2014; Elison et al. 2014; Huvila et al. 2010). Many studies include social identity as well as social technologies in the conceptualisation of the relational dimension of social capital (Brooks et al. 2014; Elison et al. 2014; Tzanakis 2013). In this study I define social relations via social identity, trustworthiness and social technologies.

2.5.5.1 Trust and social capital

Trust is a central component of the social capital theory (Putnam 1995; Coleman 1990). Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) contend that 'trust is a party's expectation of fulfilling its specific obligations and willingness to accept possible damage the transaction, irrespective of its ability to control the other party' (p.712). Trust has been found to be a function of shared values, relationship benefits, relationship termination cost, communication and opportunistic behaviour (Morgan & Hunt 1994). The relationship benefits in this context are the value that the knowledge sharer and seeker obtain by engaging in Kente-related knowledge exchange, while the relationship termination cost can be considered the losses incurred in terminating a Kente–related knowledge exchange relationship. Shared values are the credo common to both parties involved in the Kente-related knowledge exchange. That is, the parties' perceptions of what constitutes right or wrong can affect their continued exchange of Kente-related knowledge. Trust is key in every relationship; it promotes collaboration and consistent interaction among the parties in the relationship (Wu, Weng & Huang 2012) and facilitates collective action (Putnam 1995; Coleman 1990). This suggests that trust can

facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge and the creation of new Kente-related knowledge. Trust among individuals in the Kente production chain promotes cooperation and interactions among these individuals; these factors are vital for knowledge flow and knowledge creation. As noted by Tsai and Ghoshal (1998) 'when two parties begin to trust each other, they become more willing to share their resources without worrying that they will be taken advantage of by the other party' (p. 467). The role of trust in knowledge flow among people has been studied from different perspectives. Hsu et al. (2007), for example, in their study of the trust in virtual communities examined trust from three perspectives: identification-based trust, economy-based trust, and knowledge-based trust. Identification-based trust refers to 'members' trust due to the emotional interaction among members' (Hsu et al. 2007, p.160). Knowledge-based trust, which they also termed information-based trust, 'is defined as members' trust toward virtual communities due to sound privacy and technology mechanisms' (Hsu et al. 2007, p. 160). Economy-based trust refers to 'members' trust toward virtual communities due to decreased costs and increased benefits in time, knowledge, and advantage' (Hsu et al. 2007, p.157). They concluded that identification-based trust promoted knowledge flow and social interactions. These aspects of trust and their role in knowledge sharing have implications for this study. For example, identification-based trust can bring Kente weavers together to interact and exchange Kente-related related knowledge due to the emotional bond between them. According to McAllister (1995), individuals in social relationships 'make emotional investments' which make them show an authentic care and concern for each other. This promotes collaboration and decreases selfish intentions (Hashmi & Tan 2015). Additionally, economy-based trust can facilitate Kente-related knowledge, and interactions among Kente weavers, sellers and buyers, especially knowing that such

knowledge exchange will bring some economic benefits or other advantages to them. Chai and Kim (2010), for instance, provide some empirical evidence in this regard. They studied the role of economy-based trust in knowledge sharing in blogs. The study used a survey design involving 485 participants. It was noted that the individual bloggers' knowledge-sharing activities are associated with economy-based trust. That is, if the bloggers are certain that they can obtain economic gains from blogging, they will share more knowledge in their blogs.

2.5.5.2 Trustworthiness and social capital

Trustworthiness is an essential element of the social capital theory (Coleman 1990). However, the social capital theory literature has not specifically defined trustworthiness. This study defines trustworthiness based on Mayer, Davis and Schoorman's (1995) conceptualisation of trustworthiness. The original conceptualisation was done in organisational settings to understand trust between a trustor and a trustee. They asserted that trustworthiness is a feature of a trustee. Trustworthiness is defined in terms of ability, benevolence and integrity.

Ability is a cluster of skills, competencies and features that help an individual to perform well in a particular domain (Mayer et al. 1995). People who want to share or acquire knowledge must have the required skills. For example, teaching someone to weave Kente requires that the person knows how to weave, and can understand a demonstration of how Kente is woven. The trustee's 'benevolence is the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor, aside from an egocentric profit motive' (Mayer et al. 1995, p. 718). Benevolence is based on the degree to which a trustee is willing to build a mutual and fulfilling interaction with the trustor rather than pursuing their own selfish interest (Kharouf, Lund & Sekhon 2014). Benevolent people

tend to help other people and share whatever resources they have with others (Mayer et al.1995). This implies that people will not hesitate to share with others the knowledge they have about Kente. Integrity 'involves the trustor's perception that the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable' (Mayer et al. 1995, p. 719). People with integrity are honest and keep their promises; these qualities are important in establishing and maintaining social relationships (Dasgupta 1998). Integrity is also a basis for continuity in social exchange relationships (Coleman 1988).

Trustworthiness suggests that 'obligations will be repaid, and the actual extent of obligations held' (Coleman 1988, S102). It promotes cooperation among people, meaning it facilitates exchange and interactions (Tsai & Ghoshal 1998). The exchange of resources may include sharing knowledge. The interactions among the people can also facilitate the creation of new knowledge (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998). Trustworthiness instils confidence in knowledge sharers that knowledge shared will be used properly and that the recipients of such knowledge will reciprocate (Ranucci & Souder 2015; Casimir, Lee & Loon 2012). Trustworthiness is particularly essential for the flow of tacit knowledge in that it reduces the knowledge sharer's fear that the recipient of such knowledge will not reciprocate (Lee & Choi 2003). Levin and Cross (2004) noted that due to the difficulties involved in codifying tacit knowledge, recipients of such knowledge rely on the credibility of the source of such knowledge.

2.5.5.3 Obligations and norms of reciprocity and social capital

The obligations and norms of reciprocity are also elements of the social capital theory (Putnam 2000; Coleman 1990) that can facilitate knowledge flow. An obligation to repay benefits received from others is important for an ongoing social exchange. When individuals in an exchange relationship fulfil their obligations to each other, they keep and sustain the exchange relationship (Coleman 1990). For instance, if a Kente weaver

acquires an idea or knowledge from another Kente weaver, he may feel obliged to return this favour to the weaver, or pay it forward to another member in the community. Obligations to repay a favour hinge on two elements according to Coleman: trustworthiness of the social environment 'which means that obligations will be repaid, and the actual extent of obligations held' (Coleman 1988, p. 102). These two elements are also important for human interaction and exchange (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998), and hence capable of facilitating Kente-related flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge. The obligation to return a favour can be linked to a norm of reciprocity, for by obliging to return a favour, an individual reciprocates the favour received from the other person. Reciprocal acts are acts that people perform to help others 'without negotiation of terms and without knowledge of whether or when the other will reciprocate' (Molm, Takahashi & Peterson 2000, p. 1396). Norms of reciprocity promote exchange among a group of people, and each person has a moral obligation to return favours received from other members. Again, people who obtain favours from others are disposed to return such favours in order to promote and sustain the ongoing exchange (Wasko & Faraj 2005; Kolm 2000). Therefore, people who receive knowledge from others may also share their knowledge with others even when they do not have a positive attitude towards knowledge sharing (Cho, Chen & Chung 2010). Norms of reciprocity may thus play a role in the flow of Kente-related knowledge. People who might have been taught Kente weaving or how to sew the Kente strips may have the moral obligation to also pass on such knowledge to others. There is some empirical evidence that suggests that reciprocity can facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge. Schulz (2001), for example, noted that receiving knowledge from others encourages knowledge flow in both horizontal and vertical direction from the person who first shared his or her knowledge. However, when knowledge sharers are not

certain that they will receive a favourable response from a knowledge recipient in the future when they also need their help, they may hesitate to share their knowledge (Hsu & Chang 2014).

2.5.5.4 Social identity and social capital

Social identity is a feature of social relations (Tzanakis 2013) and therefore core to the social capital theory. Social identity can be defined as an individual's knowledge of belonging or having an association with a particular social group (Tahfel 1972). Hogg (2006) cited in Miles (2012, p. 289) defined a group as

more than two people who: (a) identify and evaluate themselves in the same way, (b) have the same definition of who they are and attributes they have and (c) follow the same patterns for how they interact with others who are not in their group.

Tajfel and Turner (1986) expand social identity to include aspects of a person's self-image that can be obtained from groupings to which the person believes they belong. This means that social identity is a broad concept and is linked to social groupings. Social identity can include ethnic identity, tribe, clan, nationality, race, gender, lineage, social status, political affiliation, professional groups, alumina groups, sports teams and fans groups, among others. These social identities can facilitate the performance of either individual or collective action. Salifu, Francesconi and Kolavalli (2010) provide evidence from Ghana on how ethnicity, religion, gender, tribe and family-based relations inform rural farmers' decisions to participate in farmer-based organisations (FBOs) and agricultural cooperatives. These cooperatives help members access financial support, tools and equipment, build members' capacity, and improve the living conditions of members. Adongo, Okoboi and Mwaura (2013) also provide a similar account from Uganda. These groups also help members to have access market, credit information and other vital information. This implies that social identity is one

of the features of social relations that brings people together to interact and offer each other support. Social identity can thus be said to be inherent to social capital and facilitate the flow and creation of new knowledge (Mu et al. 2008). Social identity may also deny some people access to knowledge. For example, an individual's gender identity as male may serve as social capital for the person to acquire Kente-weaving knowledge while women's gender identity may deny them access to Kente-weaving knowledge (Sabutey 2009). Social identity can also enhance knowledge creation because it 'makes expectations and interactions more manageable' (Karreman & Alvesson 2004, p. 153). Through social interactions people exchange knowledge and create new knowledge as well. Continuous and close social interactions help people to know each other, share relevant information, and create a 'common point of view' (Tsai & Ghoshal 1998, p. 465). New Kente-related knowledge can thus be created through social identity, which makes it possible for people to interact and exchange knowledge.

2.5.5.5 Social technologies and social capital

Social capital has been studied in communities and families, and among friends and organisations (Putnam 1995; Coleman 1990). Coleman (1988), however, advised that social capital studies should move away from family and community contexts to an informal context with voluntary, impulsive and unstructured social groupings where people generate social capital. The uptake of social technologies serve as a response to Coleman's call, as numerous studies have shown how people create networks, build relationships and create and share content (Williams, Ducheneaut, Xiong, Zhang, Yee & Nickell 2006; Huvila et al., 2014). Social technologies now form an integral part of social relations (Introna 2007).

The term *social technologies* refer to 'a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, and that allow

the creation and exchange of user generated content' (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010 p. 61). Web 2.0 is a concept used to describe the various web applications that enable individuals to create and share content. The technology allows individuals to co-create content while also accessing content (Narayan 2013). The technology allows dialogic communication and collaboration among users. There are several classifications of social technologies. Panahi (2014), for example, identified blogs, wikis, podcasts/vodcasts, social network sites (SNS), social bookmarking, tagging, folksonomies and multimedia sharing as the major categories of social technologies.

The peculiar nature of social technologies has made them a virtual and real place where individuals gather consciously or unconsciously (Narayan 2013, p. 33). These social technologies have complemented the conventional sources of information and knowledge, such as the television (Narayan 2013) books, family, friends and communities. Social technology platforms have been conceptualised as an information space and a place for information (Narayan 2013). As an information space, social technologies allow users to assume two roles: information consumers and producers. Users generate content while also consuming others' content. In fact, social technologies can enhance Kente-related knowledge flow and creation. For example, people use YouTube to create and share content online, while others debate and engage colleagues in a discussion on social technology platforms like blogs. At the same time, social network sites have become active platforms for current and trending information and people use wikis to document life experiences and store and update knowledge (Sigala & Chalkiti 2014). As a place for information, social technologies bring together individuals from different geographic locations to a common platform where they connect and interact with each other and share experiences, ideas and information (Narayan 2013). Social technologies promote interpersonal relationships and

interactions, which results in the creation and sharing of knowledge. They help people to easily access knowledge in a cost-effective manner (Davison et al. 2013), thus constituting a social capital (Coleman 1990).

Social technologies have created a new world with a new form of socialisation. Individuals are now able to build networks easily without necessarily meeting face-to-face. This kind of network is voluntary and impulsive and makes it possible for individuals to access resources even beyond their immediate geographic boundaries (Malaby 2006). Ellison, Vitak, Gray and Lampe (2014) associate the number of friends people have on Facebook with a form of *bridging social capital*. Active users and those who engage in information exchange on Facebook gain social capital in terms of access to information and also through gaining people's trust and gratitude. Furthermore, Brooks, Hogan, Ellison, Lampe and Vitak note that 'individuals who consider Facebook as a site for information seeking also tend to report it as a site for more general social capital, both the emotional and inclusive bonding capital and the more instrumental and broad *bridging social capital*' (Brooks et al. 2014, p. 10). Social technologies have improved the flow of tacit knowledge also. For example, Kente weaving related knowledge is hard to codify and transfer to other people. However, in recent times, there are so many videos on YouTube on how Kente is woven that show and tell how it is done, purely through demonstration, just as in real life. Thus, social technologies are contributing to the flow of Kente-related knowledge. Social technologies facilitate the flow of tacit knowledge through interactions and socialisation through these technologies (Orzano et al. 2008).

2.6 Summary and restatement of research question

The literature on social capital theory indicates that there is no ironclad definition of social capital. While Bourdieu addresses social capital from a capital investment

perspective, Coleman focuses on how social relations facilitate an individual's actions. Putnam, on the other hand, focuses on civic engagement. In spite of this, some scholars agree that social structure and social relations form the basis of social capital (Coleman 1990; Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Tsai & Ghoshal 1998). Following this perspective, I conceptualised social capital as a resource inherent in social structure and social relations with the potential to facilitate the flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge.

Knowledge sharing is one area of knowledge management that has received much attention from researchers and practitioners. Earlier studies have investigated how people share knowledge in organisations, societies, and schools. My study seeks to understand how people create and share knowledge about Kente, which constitutes a body of knowledge. Some studies (Molnar & Lamount 2002; Magee 2005; Boateng 2011) have shown that some individuals shape their individual, ethnic and national identity and ancestral background using Kente. Therefore, I will also study how people use Kente to articulate and communicate their individual and collective identity. As indicated in Chapter One of this study, the main research questions are as follows:

(1) What kind of social relations and structures facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge?

(2) How does knowledge flow facilitate the creation of new Kente-related knowledge?

(3) How has the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente impacted on Kente-related knowledge?

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the research design of my study and how it ties into my chosen methodology. The methodology I have used is a multiple case study, and the main components of the research design I used are as follows: defining the cases, selection of participants, selection of data sources, data gathering procedures, and thematic and content analysis of data. Within the 'defining the cases' section, I give a brief description of the three cases I am studying: Bonwire, the Kente weaving village, the Kente Master website and the Ghanaian community in Australia. I identify the key features and the multiple flows of Kente-related knowledge and I indicate which I am investigating in this study. Within the 'selection of participants' section, I define the target populations, state the number of participants and how I selected them and provide justifications for my decisions. Furthermore, I indicate the various sources of data I have drawn upon in this study – I have used interview data from the Bonwire Kente weaving village, Kente Master, Facebook, YouTube, blogs and online news portals. I have also drawn on secondary data from blogs, news portals and Facebook to complement the interviews in addressing my research question 3, which seeks to explore how the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente has impacted on Kente-related knowledge. I used data from the interviews to answer the research questions 1 and 2, which seek to understand how social structures and social relations facilitate the flow and creation of new Kente-related knowledge. I also provide details about how I conducted the interviews and how I recorded the interviews. In the latter part of this chapter, I match the research questions to the corresponding interview questions used. Finally, I describe how I ensured the trustworthiness of the results and detail the ethical considerations and methodological limitations.

3.1 Research approach chosen for this study: The qualitative approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach. This approach enables researchers to 'understand the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world' (Merriam 2009, p. 13). It also helps researchers to understand social life (Creswell 2003). Since the purpose of this study is to understand how knowledge flow facilitates knowledge creation and sharing, and how people communicate their identity using Kente, I see this approach as appropriate. Furthermore, this approach gave me a detailed understanding of how knowledge flow facilitates both knowledge creation and sharing about Kente. Again, this study addresses 'why' and 'how' questions (see section 1.4), which are generally the focus of qualitative research approach (Creswell 2003). Additionally, as recommended by Creswell (2003), qualitative research approach is appropriate for studies that seek to explore an issue or a phenomenon. Since the purpose of this study includes exploring how knowledge flow facilitates knowledge creation and sharing about Kente, I found the qualitative research approach to be appropriate for addressing the research questions. Creswell also recommended that the qualitative research approach be used for studies whose focus is to understand the contexts or settings within which the research participants express their opinions or experiences. In my study, understanding the context is key to addressing the research questions and interpreting the results. As I have indicated earlier, my study is partly situated in the Bonwire Kente weaving village, a traditional community. As in many traditional communities in Ghana, knowledge creation there is a communal activity, and groups, families and friends are the main channels through which such knowledge flows. Additionally, knowledge created in a traditional community is normally owned by the community. This context will also be taken into account when interpreting the findings of the study.

3.2 Research Design chosen for this study: Case study

As indicated already, several research methods could be used in this study but I wanted to use a method appropriate for answering my research questions. Deciding on which method to use, I relied on Yin's (2014) advice on when to use each of the research methods available to researchers in carrying out a research study. According to him, the following three criteria should be considered when selecting a research method for a study: 'the type of research question posed, the extent of control a researcher has over actual behavioural events, and the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to entirely historical events' (Yin 2014, p. 9). Regarding the first criterion or condition, Yin asserted that research questions can be grouped into 'who, what, where, how and why questions' (p. 10). He further stated that of these groupings, how and why questions are explanatory in nature and therefore can be addressed using a case study research design. The basis for his advice is that such questions deal with operational relationships, which must be discovered over time instead of as a mere occurrence. My research questions fall under the 'why' and 'how', and 'what' categories of questions. My second and third research questions – How does knowledge flow facilitate the creation of new Kente-related knowledge? and How has the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente impacted on Kente-related knowledge? – both fall into the 'how' category. Thus, my decision to use a case study research design to address these questions is justified.

My first research question is: What kind of social relations and structures facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge? Although 'what' questions are normally best answered with the survey method, Yin advises that if the 'what' question is exploratory in nature, the case study research design can be used to address it (Yin

2014). Since the 'what' research question in my study is exploratory in nature, I see case study as an appropriate method for addressing my first research question.

Yin's second condition for selecting a research method is the extent of control over behavioural events; he stated that researchers can use the case study design when investigating contemporary issues and when the researcher has no control over the relevant behaviours. I believe my study meets this criterion because knowledge sharing about Kente and how people use Kente to create their identity are contemporary issues, and besides I have no control over how people create and share knowledge about Kente and how they use Kente to communicate their identity; I can only try to study and understand them, not influence them in any way. Additionally, my justification for using the case study research design is based on Yin and Davis's (2007) advice that case study should be used when a researcher wants to understand real-world situations. How people create and share knowledge about Kente and how they communicate their identity using Kente are real-world situations rather than hypothetical situations, and hence my decision to use the case study design is justified. Additionally, case study has been employed in this study because it encourages the collection of different forms of data from different sources.

In selecting the cases, I also relied on the views of Merriam (1998) who contributed to the development of the case study research design. According to Merriam (1998), a case study is 'selected for its uniqueness, for what it can reveal about a phenomenon, knowledge we would not otherwise have access to' (p. 33). Following Merriam's suggestions, I selected the case study design also because of the uniqueness of the three cases: Bonwire is famous for Kente weaving, while Kente Master is a social impact enterprise business selling Kente stoles to Ghanaians and African-Americans in the United States mainly through a website that takes custom orders. The Ghanaian

community in Australia case represents a group of Kente users outside Ghana whose usage of Kente brings another perspective to this study; thus these three cases fall on the two ends of the continuum of production and consumption. The cases have multiple flows of Kente-related knowledge among people who are weavers, tailors, sellers, Kente artefact designers and Kente users. The people are the key individuals involved in the production and use of Kente, and therefore these cases contain rich data that I can explore to address my research questions. The Kente Master case in particular presents an opportunity for me to understand how Kente-related knowledge flows to the global world, as Kente Master has many non-Ghanaian customers. As stated in chapter one of this study, although a plethora of studies exist on Kente, little has been researched on how social structures and social relations facilitate the flow and creation of Kente-related knowledge and how the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente is affecting Kente-related knowledge. Therefore, this study expands our understanding of how knowledge about Kente is created and flows in communities and across the globe.

After selecting the case study design, I had to decide on the kind of case study design to use: whether to use a single case or multiple cases. I chose a multiple case study over a single case study because some earlier studies (for example, Eisenhardt 1989) have criticised a single case study for its information bias. One way of dealing with this bias is to employ a multiple case study (Leonard-Barton 1990; Yin 2014). Again, as asserted by Yin, multiple case studies provide a basis for comparison and make the interpretation of the result more robust (Yin 2014). Following this advice, I decided to study three cases. Selecting a multiple case study also let me keep in mind the 'multiple reality' of how knowledge flows facilitate the creation and flow of knowledge about Kente and how the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente is affecting Kente-related knowledge. The three cases I selected were the Bonwire Kente weaving

village, Kente Master and the Ghanaian community in Australia. I have defined these three cases in section 3.5.

According to Yin (2014), a multiple case study should involve at least two cases. Thus, my decision to study three cases is justified. Within the case of the Bonwire Kente weaving village, I studied a multiple knowledge flow among Kente weavers, sellers, fashion designers, buyers and tailors. In the case of Kente Master, which is my second case, I interviewed the CEO of the company and the stole designers. Although three people own the company, only one person participated in the study. The other two opted out for personal reasons. None of the customers of Kente Master agreed to participate in the study; however, I was allowed to use some of their posts about Kente from the Kente Master Facebook fan page. Within this case too, I was looking for how knowledge flows among this category of people and facilitates knowledge creation and sharing. I also looked at how the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente is affecting Kente-related knowledge.

With regard to my third case, which is the Ghanaian community in Australia, I studied how knowledge flows among people and how the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente is affecting Kente-related knowledge.

3.3 Defining the cases studied

This section identifies the three cases I studied: the Bonwire Kente weaving village, Kente Master and the Ghanaian community in Australia. I describe the three cases and provide justifications for why I selected these cases.

3.3.1 Bonwire Kente Weaving Village

Bonwire is a village in the Ashanti region of Ghana and is believed to be where Kente originated. Bonwire is a centre for Kente weaving and the place has, over the years, attracted tourists from within and outside Ghana. Weavers, designers of Kente products,

tailors and apprentices, distributors and sellers, buyers and users are key constituents of the Bonwire Kente weaving village case. I will therefore ascertain how knowledge flows among these categories of people and beyond, and how they facilitate knowledge creation and sharing. I will also look for the kind of social relations and social structures that facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge.

3.3.2 Kente Master

Kente Master is an African fabric firm whose aim is to promote African culture and values, youth entrepreneurship and self-empowerment. The firm sells what they refer to as authentic Kente graduation stoles mainly to the US market. This case consists of one of the owners of the company (Kente Master), Kente weavers, stole designers, buyers and users. I also work with the contents of the Kente Master website and Facebook page.

3.3.3 Ghanaian Community in Australia

This community comprises Ghanaians and Ghanaian-Australians who reside in Australia. Many of the members of this community were born in Ghana and migrated to Australia. Some of them came to Australia to study and decided to stay after their studies. There are others who were born in Australia. Participants from this case are mainly users of Kente.

3.4 Selection of Participants

The participants in this study are people who are associated with Kente. Since this was too broad to be studied, I decided to focus on the people of the Bonwire community in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Although there are several places in Ghana where Kente is woven, I am investigating Bonwire since it is considered the place of origin of Kente and it has attracted many tourists over the years. Within the Bonwire Kente weaving village case, I investigated how knowledge flows among Kente weavers, sellers,

fashion designers, users and tailors and tailor to facilitate knowledge creation. I also sought their views on how the prevalence of the Chinese-origin Kente has affected Kente-related knowledge. I have chosen these categories of people involved in the case because they are the key categories of people when it comes to Kente weaving and selling. The users of Kente have expert knowledge about Kente in terms of when to use it, how to use it and even how to preserve and maintain the cloth. Although there are associations of Kente weavers and Kente sellers, their numbers do not represent all those who weave and sell Kente, since some people are not members of the associations. I have decided to exclude other communities in Ghana where Kente is woven because they do not offer as rich and complex an environment for data as the Bonwire community does. Other factors in my decision are the limited time I have to complete this study and the financial cost involved in extending the study to these communities. My second case is Kente Master. Kente Master is a firm that sells Kente stoles mainly to African-Americans and expatriate Africans in the United States. It also sells artefacts made with Kente to the Ghanaian market. The buyers normally buy these stoles to wear during their graduation ceremonies. Once ordered, Kente Master contracts Kente weavers from Ghana to weave the stoles for them. Within this case, I interviewed one of the owners of the firm, and a buyer and user who is a weaver and stole designer. My third case is the Ghanaian community in Australia. From this case, I studied users of Kente. The participants from this community use Kente and Kente artefacts.

I decided to select these people because they are identified with the Kente cloth and have knowledge about the cloth because of their involvement in the production and usage of the cloth.

After settling on these categories of people, I needed to decide on the number of participants. In doing so, I relied on the extant literature (for example, Yin 2014; Creswell 2007). These studies have suggested that qualitative studies and case studies in particular do not require a large number of participants. With regard to the Bonwire Kente weaving village case, I interviewed three Kente weavers, three Kente sellers, a fashion designer who uses Kente, a buyer/user of the products from this designer, three Kente tailors and three users of Kente. In the case of Kente Master, a web company which is my second case, I interviewed the CEO of the firm and one Kente stole designer. Similarly, in the Ghanaian community in Australia case, I interviewed nine (9) participants. That makes twenty-four (24) participants in all among the three cases; I believe this number has yielded sufficient data to answer my research questions, for as observed by Mason (2010) most PhD studies that have employed a qualitative approach have recruited between ten and thirty participants and still have significant data.

After selecting the participants, my next task was to contact them. Gaining access to the cases was not easy. I relied on a broad network of personal, professional and academic contacts including friends, colleagues, family and relatives in order to recruit my participants, especially the Kente weavers and the CEO of the Kente Master website. According to Creswell (2007), in situations where a researcher is finding it difficult to access a case, the researcher can rely on a gatekeeper, in other words, an individual who might or might not be a member of the case being studied but whose relationship with the individuals within the case makes it easier for the researcher to access the case. Thus, my decision to rely on friends and family (within the bounds of my ethical clearance) to access my participants is justified.

After obtaining the contact details, I then contacted the individual weavers within the Bonwire Kente weaving village to discuss my research with them and invite them to participate. Gilchrist (1992) advised that researchers should rely on key informants when participants in a study are not easily accessible. The key informants are participants in the study with whom a researcher starts data collection because such people are easily accessible and can lead the researcher to other participants in the study. In this study, I consider the Kente weavers key informants, for once I contacted a few of them, it was easy to reach the Kente sellers, apprentices, users, fashion designers and other participants in this study. After that, I asked them for the contact details of the Kente sellers and fashion designers and contacted those people as well. I asked the Kente weavers, sellers and fashion designers for the contact details of the Kente users, since most of the sellers keep the contact details of their customers. I assured them that these contacts would only be used for research and not for any commercial or competitive purposes. I relied on the users I could reach initially to get the contact details of other users. With regard to the Kente Master website, I started my data collection with the CEO of Kente Master, who was the key informant within the Kente Master case because he could help me get in contact with the other participants. In the case of the Ghanaian Community in Australia case, I recruited my participants using a contact within the Ghanaian church in Sydney, although not all participants were members of the church. After obtaining permission from the pastor of the church, I went to the church premises and interviewed two users of Kente. They also directed me to other Ghanaians outside the church who use Kente and I interviewed them as well.

In summary, I used gatekeepers and key informants through the *snowball sampling technique* to contact my participants since many of them are interconnected.

Tracy (2013) noted that in snowball sampling the researcher uses criteria to initially select participants who fit the study's objective. These participants then suggest other participants who fit the study's criteria. She recommended this sampling approach for studies for which participants are difficult identify and reach. Since my participants were difficult to reach in that they belonged to a domain completely removed from my own, I used the snowball sampling approach to select the participants.

The next stage was to ask those willing to participate in the study to sign the informed consent form and send to me via email, or read it to them before their interview and ask them for verbal consent which was documented in the interview recording.

3.5 Data Sources

Yin (2014) recommended six data sources for the case study research design: documents, archival records, direct observation, participant-observation, interviews and physical artefacts. For this study I decided to use archival records and interviews. Specifically, I have used archival records from the Facebook account of Kente Master, which contains large volumes of data about Kente. From the Facebook account, I analysed the data available from May 2015 to May 2017 (the time the research was conducted) as the Facebook account was set up in May 2015.

For the interviews, I decided to use the semi-structured interview method. Since the semi-structured interviews helped me prepare a structure for the interview prior to conducting it, with this method I could make sure to ask questions that relate to my research question. Furthermore, this choice meant that my participants had the freedom to express their opinions using their own words and concepts (Creswell 2007). Semi-structured interviews are noted for providing reliable, comparable and rich data for qualitative research (Yin 2014), and hence my

decision to use this method of data collection. I chose this method of data collection because, as asserted by Seidman (1998), 'at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience' (p. 3). The semi-structured interview had highly open questions such as 'How do you feel when you or others wear traditional Kente?' that were designed to elicit a detailed qualitative answer (See appendix 1). In table 1, I match the research questions to the corresponding interview questions.

Table 1: Research objectives matched to interview guidelines for semi-structured interviews

Research Objective	Interview Questions
1. To understand how knowledge flow facilitates the creation of new Kente-related knowledge.	1. What does Kente mean to you? 2. How do you feel when you or others wear traditional Kente? 3. How do you feel when you or others wear modern products such as Kente ties or earrings or shoes? 4. What normally comes to your mind when you see people wearing Kente? 5. How did you first learn about Kente and who were the important people involved? 6. What do you think about new patterns/designs of Kente?
2. What kind of social relations and social structures facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge?	1. How have you shared what you know? Why have you taken this approach? 2. How has the weaving/selling/designs process changed over time? 3. How do you think it will change in the future? 4. Have you also taught others how to weave Kente? If yes, who are these people?
3. How has the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente impacted on Kente related knowledge?	1. How do you feel about the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente? (What do you

	think about the Chinese-origin Kente and does it have any impact on you?)
	2. How has the Chinese version of Kente affected your life/ people's life/Ghanaian culture?
	3. What have you learnt from the emergence of the Chinese-origin Kente/ version of Kente?
	4. How do you feel when you wear /you see people wearing the Chinese-origin Kente?

3.6 Protocol for the interviews

The interviews with people in in Australia were conducted in person, and the interviews with people based in Ghana were conducted on Skype; in situations where participants did not have access to Skype, the interviews were conducted over the phone. Once the participants agreed to participate in the study, I asked them for their Skype ID or phone number and scheduled appointments with them. Although Skype/mobile phone interviews might not be the same as face-to-face interviews in terms of experiences and although participants in Skype/mobile phone interviews tend to drop out of the conversation, I built a mutual trust with the participants in other to sustain their interest in the interview. According to Bryman (2012), the likelihood of research participants dropping out of interviews is high when interviews are done on phone or Skype rather than face-to-face, but by instilling trust and confidence in the participants, the researcher is able to reduce this tendency. In addition, using Skype/ mobile phone for the interviews made it

possible for me to call the participants back (those who had agreed to a follow-up if needed) for further information (Bryman 2012; Berg 2009) when needed. Both methods had their advantages and disadvantages; whilst the Skype interviews enabled me to also observe their facial expressions and other actions related to their answers, the phone interviews reduced my influence on participants by offering them *instant anonymity* (Berg 2009) so they were free to speak their mind.

Prior to conducting the interviews, I restated to my participants the purpose of the study, the perceived risks involved in the study and the steps was taken to mitigate these risks. This information was also contained in the information sheet and the consent forms I sent to them. I then made sure the participants were in a relaxed mood and made some conversation with them about how they were doing and volunteered some information about myself (to make them feel at ease) before I asked the main interview questions. Being in a relaxed mood helped the participants to ponder the questions carefully before answering them.

Each interview took no more than 60 minutes, as stated on the information sheet. However, if I needed any clarification, I did contact them again, and that took no more than 20 minutes. With their permission and as per the information on the consent form, I recorded the interviews using a digital recorder. The recorded interviews were later transcribed for the data analysis. I also used pen and paper to make notes which I later used for the analysis and interpretation of the data.

3.7 Data Analysis

Before the analysis, all the interviews were transcribed as text and pseudonyms were assigned to the participants. This was to distinguish the participants from one another, and also to protect their privacy. I then employed the thematic analysis technique to analyse the data. The thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis

method for 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic' (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 79). This technique also involves an analysis and classification of data to show themes (patterns) in the data and how the themes are interrelated (Boyatzis 1998). According to Namey, Guest, Thairu and Johnson (2008), 'thematic analysis moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas. Codes developed for ideas or themes are then applied or linked to raw data as summary markers for later analysis, which may include comparing the relative frequencies of themes or topics within a data set, looking for code co-occurrence, or graphically displaying code relationships' (p. 138). This technique allows a researcher to interpret diverse data and subjects (Boyatzis 1998). I used this technique to identify themes based on the social capital theory and show the relationships among the themes and how these themes are associated with the social capital theory.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis helps in identifying, analysing and presenting patterns within data. The thematic analysis technique helped me to organise the findings into themes for easy reporting. The themes were derived from the conceptual framework. I read all the transcripts to familiarise myself with the responses. I then read them again, this time highlighting the emerging concepts and making notes on the hard copies of the transcript to summarise the findings. After this stage, I used *Nvivo* (ver.10) to create the codes and the matched data to identify patterns and link the themes. The *Nvivo* helped me create the themes easily and identified the number of times a particular theme emerged. I discarded some codes automatically generated by *Nvivo*, such as

Asante, Asantehene, Bonwire and Kente, as these automated codes were not meaningful in the context of this study. In addressing my research questions, I analysed the data across the three cases. This was to help me compare and contrast the themes emerging from each case. Again, there was not much difference among the themes that emerged from each case.

3.8 Ensuring Quality: Trustworthiness

Ensuring the quality and authenticity of the research and findings is fundamental in every research. Thus, I have employed several mechanisms to ensure the quality and authenticity of this study. Various suggestions have been made as to how quality can be ensured in qualitative research. Yin (2014), for example, offered four principles that can help ensure the validity and reliability of the research process and findings. These four principles are as follows:

1. Using multiple sources of data,

2. Creating a case study database,

3. Maintaining a chain of evidence, and

4. Exercising care when using data from electronic sources

(Yin 2014, pp. 118–130)

Credibility, refers to the congruence between the realities of the participants in a study and the researcher's reconstruction of these realities (Guba 1981; Guba & Lincoln 1989). To ensure the credibility of this study, I relied on the works of Guba (1981), Guba and Lincoln (1989), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Shenton (2004). The procedures described in the following were used to ensure the credibility of this study.

I tried to reduce the potential distortion of self-reporting by the participants due to privacy and confidentiality. To do this, I assured the participants that their identity would not be revealed. I also indicated to them that they could feel free to talk, without

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worrying about trade secrets because I was not in the Kente trade in any manner, and would not use such information to gain any competitive advantage over them, and that the study was mainly for academic purposes. This assurance was made in the consent form and the information sheet, but I restated it before conducting the interviews. Following from this assurance, those participants who did not want their names to be mentioned in this study and any publication have been de-identified. I used pseudonyms for the participants but I did not do the same for Kente Master because the CEO informed me that I was free to mention his name in any publication if it warranted it. I also did not de-identify the name of the Bonwire Kente weaving village because the place is famous for Kente weaving and the mere mention of the name of the town in any publication was not going to put the community at risk; in that sense, it was a big enough community of Kente weaving that even though I had twenty participants associated with the town, it is not possible to identify my participants through the data.

Furthermore, I indicated to the participants that they were not obliged to participate in the study and that they could opt out of the study at any point in time. I also mentioned to them that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions I asked them, and this interview was mainly about their personal views. I also sent a copy of their interview transcript to those participants who requested it in order to verify that it truly represented their thoughts, and none of them made any corrections. In transcribing and using the data, I quoted my participants verbatim. In order to ensure that the interview questions were in line with the research questions, the interview protocol and interview questions were piloted initially with several people – the pilot data is not reported here.

Shenton (2004) recommended that to ensure credibility in qualitative studies, researchers should employ well-established research methods. In this study, I used a case study research design, which is one of the most-used research designs in qualitative studies (Yin, 2014). I followed all procedures for using a case study research as proposed by Yin. Additionally, the data collection methods I used, interviews alongside social media data (documentary evidence), are well established methods of data collection in qualitative research. In addition, I used a thematic analysis technique to analyse my data, a method that has also been widely used in qualitative studies.

Shenton (2004) notes that being familiar with the context of the study and the participants' culture helps the researcher to ensure credibility because it ensures that the researcher interprets the findings within the appropriate context. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also proposed 'prolonged engagement' between the researcher and the participants to build a trusting relationship. According to them, such an engagement enables the participants to share their views without any suspicions. Since I am Ghanaian, and an Asante, I am familiar with the culture of my participants. This made it easier for me to negotiate and build a trusting relationship with my participants during the interviews. I was also able to understand all that they said during the interview. Additionally, my participants were very willing to participate in the study and many of them told me I should not hesitate to contact them again if I needed any clarification or more information. So when it became necessary for me to collect additional data I went back to interview them. Additionally, being familiar with the participants' culture, as well as with the background of the Kente cloth, helped me ensure the credibility of the results.

The other trustworthiness issue I will address here is transferability of the findings of this study. Transferability, which is analogous to external validity or generalisability of the research findings, refers to the degree to which the research findings can be applied to other contexts similar to that of the current research (Guba 1981). In most quantitative research that uses representative and random sampling, statistical techniques are used to ensure the external validity of results (Guba 1981; Merriam 1998). However, some researchers (for example, Erlandson et al. 1993) have criticised that in practice, generalisability is not always possible and findings should be interpreted within their context. Some scholars (Lincoln & Guba 1985) believe that to ensure transferability of research findings, the researcher should provide readers with enough contextual information to help them transfer research results to other contexts. Following this advice, I have also provided detailed contextual information about the three cases I am investigating (see sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.2).

Confirmability corresponds to the concept of objectivity in positivist research (Patton 1990), and deals with the extent to which the findings and the interpretations of the study represent the views of the participants and are free from the researcher's bias (Guba 1981). It concerns the degree to which the data gathered is situated within the context of the study (Guba and Lincoln 1989). In this study, I have ensured confirmability by quoting verbatim, using text from the transcribed data to buttress all the statements and findings of this study. I have also provided detailed information about the methodology to enable readers to scrutinise the findings of the study.

Last but not least, I have addressed the dependability of the research, which is parallel to the reliability in a positivist study. Dependability refers to the extent to which results similar to the current study would be obtained if another researcher follows the

same procedure I used to conduct the study (Guba 1981). It is the degree to which an 'external' researcher can evaluate the procedures used by the researcher to collect and analyse the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that dependability and credibility are closely related. According to them, by ensuring the credibility of the research, a researcher also ensures its dependability. In this study, I have ensured the dependability of the results by providing an in-depth description of how the findings of this study were arrived at (Chapter 3). The interview guide used has also been appended to this study. I also documented all the changes that were made to the methodology. My observations and encounters during the conduct of this study have been recorded and are appended to this study.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Upholding the highest ethical standard in research is critical. It is one way of establishing the dependability and truthfulness of the results. Several ethical issues pervade qualitative research, including participants' informed consent, plagiarism, data integrity, confidentiality, privacy and anonymity (King, 2004a; Morgan & Symon, 2004). Before I began the data collection, I applied to the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) for ethics approval and obtained Low-Risk Human Ethical Clearance ETH17-1334 (see Appendix 2). I have paid particular attention to all the ethical guidelines that guide scientific inquiry at UTS and in Australia in general.

Since the study might involve some of the participants disclosing their trade secrets and intellectual property, I clearly indicated the objectives of my study to the participants and stated the reasons why I am conducting the study, as detailed on the information sheet (see Appendix 3). Before I started the interviews, I asked the participants to review the contents of the information sheet. No participant was forced

to participate in the study. I allowed the participants to opt out of the study at any time they wished to do so. The names of the participants have been removed and replaced with pseudonyms in the final analysis. I made sure that the language I used during the interviews was not disrespectful or contrary to the values and norms of the participants. I have made sure that the data I have collected remains confidential and have also maintained the integrity of the data. I have ensured that the data gathered is used only for the purposes of this research. It will not be made available to any third party for financial gain. The results have been presented devoid of unbiased language. I have ensured accuracy and been truthful in interpreting the findings of this study. The results of the study will not be used to the disadvantage of any group of people.

3.10 Limitations

The main limitation of this study is that the study was about a Ghanaian cloth but was mainly conducted in Australia – the interviews with Ghanaians living in Ghana were conducted through phone and video conferencing, whilst the interviews with Ghanaians living in Australia were conducted in person. That said, the study is not an ethnography study that involves daily observations, or a study that uses practice theory that involves observations of practice. The study looked at people's cognitive and affective processes involved in the flow of Kente-related knowledge and the creation of new knowledge, which are things that cannot be observed in person, but can only be investigated through a multi-pronged study of several cases, as detailed in this chapter.

3.11 Delimitations

This study focuses on how knowledge flow facilitates knowledge creation in communities. I studying this in the context of the actual cloth itself and its manufacture. Hence, I have decided to focus on Bonwire (where the cloth is manufactured), Kente

Master (the portal through which the cloth is sold overseas), and Ghanaians in Australia (who are consumers of the Kente cloth). Bonwire is the most popular place for Kente weaving, and therefore, offers me the opportunity to understand how knowledge flows in traditional communities. Additionally, the culture of Bonwire can be said to be a microcosm of the Ghanaian culture (in terms of the use of Kente) since Bonwire is part of the Asante kingdom and for that matter of the Akans, which is the largest tribe in Ghana. Furthermore, Kente weaving and its usage is similar among the various communities in Ghana.

Kente Master, on the other hand, presented me with the opportunity to understand how knowledge about Kente flows and results in knowledge creation in the contemporary world. It also offered me the opportunity to understand how people use Kente to create identity in the contemporary world.

Finally, interviewing Ghanaian expats in Australia through the Ghanaian Church offered me the opportunity to understand the views and values of those who are far away from Ghana, but still keep ties with its culture, especially by wearing the Kente cloth for special occasions.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from my study. I present the analysis and the findings.

4.1 Background of Cases

4.1.1 Case one: Bonwire Kente weaving village

Bonwire is a town in the Ashanti region of Ghana. It is located 18km from Kumasi on the Kumasi-Mampong Road. It is one of the more popular towns with tourists and is in the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality and Ashanti region of Ghana. According to the Ghana Statistical Service's 2010 Population and Housing Census, the community had a total population of 5983. Out of this number 2,799 were males and 3,184 were females. The community has two systems of governance: a traditional system, where the chief of the town is the ruler and custodian of the land, and a political system where the Municipal Chief Executive is the political head and reports directly to the Ashanti Regional Minister. The chief of Bonwire and its people owe allegiance to the Asante kingdom, of which the Asantehene is the ruler and leader. The Asante kingdom is the only surviving kingdom in Ghana, and exists alongside the democratic structure of the country. The Asante kingdom was established in the early 18th century with Kumasi as its capital. Kumasi remains the capital of the Asantes in the modern day Ghana. According to Boatema Boateng, in the early days of the kingdom, the overlord, the Asantehene, brought together artisans who worked with clothing, wood, gold and brass to Kumasi, to manufacture the goods needed for the regalia for the king. These arts were patronised and developed by the king, and the artisans 'were rewarded with a system of royal patronage that added distinction to their art while linking that art to

Asante even when it did not originate in Asante' (Boateng 2014, p. 4). This might explain why some people believe that Kente did not originate in Bonwire in the Asante kingdom (see Dotse 2015). Nonetheless, the Bonwire Kente, like many other crafts associated with the kingdom, has enjoyed and continues to enjoy political power (Boateng 2014). The Asante kingdom was defeated by the British and became part of the British colony of Gold Coast, which is now Ghana. In spite of this, the kingdom was still powerful and influential in the colony; thus Asante culture spread to other parts of the colony especially where the Asantes exercised control (Rathbone 2000) and it is still dominant in modern day Ghana. Bonwire as a community has Twi as its native language, although many are literate in the English language, which is the official language of Ghana. Like all the communities in the Asante kingdom, they celebrate festivals such as Akwasidae, Awukudae, Fofie and other holy days on the traditional calendar of the Asantes, and also recently the Kente festival.

4.1.2 Case two: Kente Master Website

Kente Master is a social enterprise company that promotes African culture, economic self-empowerment and entrepreneurship. Kente Master has an exclusive portfolio of premium Kente graduation stoles. They sell Kente stoles customised for their clients, and other Kente artefacts. They have trade relationships and associations with most Kente-weaving associations in Ghana, who still use the traditional ways of weaving Kente. Kente Master also declares that it is committed to the economic empowerment of communities that create Kente. Peter Akanko and Rafiat Kasumu are the founders of this social enterprise. In this study, I interviewed only Peter Akanko who was willing to partake in the study. Where Rafiat Kusumu is quoted, it is generally from one of her Facebook posts on the company page.

4.1.3 Case 3: Ghanaian Community in Australia

For this section of the study, people of Ghanaian origin living in Sydney, Australia, were interviewed. They were recruited through the very vibrant Ghanaian Church in Sydney with permission from the pastor. This community includes Ghanaians and Ghanaian-Australians who reside in Australia. According to the 2011 census, there were 3866 Ghana-born people in Australia. This represents a 39.6 per cent increase from the 2006 Census. Furthermore, the census report shows that many (1969) of them live in New South Wales, while 666 live in Victoria; 435 live in Western Australia; 359 live in Queensland and a few (26) live in Tasmania. Additionally, age distribution from the census report indicates that 41.1 per cent were 25–44 years of age, 30.4 per cent were 45–64, 13.5 per cent were 15–24, 12.4 per cent were aged 0–14 years and 2.6 per cent were 65 years old or over. The languages spoken were Akan (Twi), Ewe and English (Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2015). Participants from this case are mainly users of Kente. For this case, I interviewed 3 women and 6 men. At the time of the interviews, seven of them had lived in Australia for more than 15 years while two of them had been in Australia for two years.

4.2 Social Structure and Kente-related knowledge flow

The findings of this study show that elements of social structure, such family, friends, formal education, apprenticeship, socialisation, social interactions, tourism and the community have all facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge to varying degrees.

4.2.1 The family

Kente-related knowledge flow is a family affair. Kente weaving is a hereditary profession for many men in the families in the Bonwire Kente weaving village. Generally, Kente-related knowledge is passed on from generation to generation. The older generation ensures that the younger generation learns everything about Kente: the

history, the skills in weaving strips of Kente and in sewing strips together. Normally, the elder men in the family, such as uncles, brothers, fathers and grandfathers, pass on Kente-related knowledge to the younger generation. During the interviews, all 14 participants admitted that their knowledge about Kente as far as the history and skills in weaving, sewing and selling are concerned was mainly obtained through their fathers, uncles and grandfathers.

My interview with Kwabena, a weaver, like interviews with other weavers, revealed the role of the family in Kente-related knowledge flow. Kwabena had this to say:

Somebody taught me [Kente weaving]*, I studied under someone for six months. The person is called Mr. Addai who is my uncle. I schooled in Bonwire, I learned the history about Kente from schools, but for the weaving, Mr. Addai taught me everything, even the history.*

– Kwabena, a Kente weaver.

As we see, Kwabena's family, through the uncle, has passed on knowledge about the history to Kwabena. That is, the family has preserved and retained Kente history knowledge by passing it on from one generation to the next. An interview with Agyeman, a Kente weaver, support for the role of the family in Kente-related knowledge flow. He attributes his knowledge of Kente to the family. This is how he narrated it:

It appears that in every family in this community there is at least one person who knows something about Kente so I learned the history from my family.

– Agyeman, a Kente weaver.

That is, Kente-related knowledge is embedded in families in the Bonwire Kente weaving village, and being a member of a family in Bonwire facilitates access to such knowledge. Agyeman also attributed his knowledge about Kente weaving to his family. This is what he said:

My name is Agyeman; I am from this community, Bonwire. My parents are also from Bonwire. Growing up in my family, I saw one of my grandfathers who used to weave Kente and I would always go and stand by him when he is weaving; this is when I was young. My grandfather would ask me to observe how he was weaving the cloth. Sometime later, he taught me how to fold and separate the yarns that are used for the weaving. Within three months I had become perfect in folding and separating the yarns. After this, he taught me how the yarns and threads are arranged in the loom and finally how Kente is woven. The first design he taught me was the single weave. This is very simple, as its weaving does not involve any design. Even with this, it took me some time to master it. So when my grandfather noted that I had mastered the single weave, he began to teach me the complex weaves like the double and triple. With this type, it took me two to three weeks before I could master the weave.

– Agyeman, a Kente weaver.

From this statement, what I understood was that he believed that as a native of the Bonwire Kente weaving village, he has enough knowledge about Kente. In Agyeman's case, I can infer that although the young males in the family take a keen interest in learning Kente weaving, the elders make a conscious effort to pass on Kente weaving

knowledge to them. I can also infer that learning Kente weaving involves observing and practising.

Another participant, named Akwasi, a professional tailor who sews the Kente strips together, not only has knowledge about the sewing of Kente strips, but also knows how to weave and sell Kente. Furthermore, he had knowledge of how Kente can be maintained to last longer. He told me that his brothers were Kente weavers, so, at the age of nine, he started observing his brothers as they were weaving Kente. Participating in the weaving activities has helped Akwasi to acquire Kente weaving knowledge. These are the words of Akwasi:

> *My brothers were Kente weavers so, at the age of nine, I started paying attention to the way my brothers were weaving Kente. There are times I will go and help them separate and fold the yarns for them. I have also learned how to weave Kente, normally by observing how they were weaving the Kente. However, there are two people who specifically taught me Kente weaving, one was my friend and the other was my brother-in-law.*

> – Akwasi, a Kente tailor

In Akwasi's case, I noticed that the transmission of Kente weaving is a collective effort by family relations. The role of the family intersects with that of friends. That is, the social capital embedded in the family and in the friends reinforce each other to facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge.

Ama, a woman who is a Kente seller, also indicated the role of the family in the flow of Kente-related knowledge. She told me that she did not intentionally learn anything about Kente but rather inherited the knowledge. Ama had this to say:

I will say that I was born into it [i.e. I inherited it from the family] I did not intentionally learn about anything about Kente. My brothers were Kente weavers, sellers so I watched them engaging in these activities, I also found myself selling Kente. I will say that my brothers and my family, in general, have been the key people I acquired my knowledge about Kente from.

– Ama, a Kente seller

In Ama's case, the family and their socialisation process has facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge. This shows that the family is the first of place of socialisation in the context of the flow of Kente-related knowledge.

Maame Yaa's story also confirms the importance of the family in the flow of Kente-related knowledge. Maame Yaa, a Kente seller, has learnt a lot about Kente-related knowledge from her brothers and father. Maame Yaa captured it this way:

Kente weaving has been the profession of my elder brothers, so normally when I finish at school, I will go and sit beside them and observe what they are doing. However, my father is the one who helped me to know more about Kente, he taught me most of the knowledge I have about Kente.

– Maame Yaa, a Kente seller

According to this view, Kente-related knowledge flows through professional practice by the members of the family. Kente weaving and selling is usually a family business, and as such, younger people in the family acquire knowledge about Kente by participating in the family's profession. Passing on the knowledge to the younger generation is a practice, as indicated by three of the interviewees.

Another interviewee, Kwame, like many other participants in this study, acquired his knowledge about Kente mostly from the family. This is what Kwame told me:

Oh, it was the profession of my father/ It was my father's profession so I started following and observing him when I was young.

– Kwame, a Kente tailor

The role of the family in Kente-related knowledge flow also emerged when I interviewed Asantewaa, a lady who is a Kente user. She described how as a child she listened to her father as he told her stories about Kente. This user has learnt much of the history of Kente from her father. This is how Asantewaa summarised it:

So I did not intentionally learn anything about Kente. But let me add that my mother and grandmother told me the history behind Kente.

– Asantewaa, a Kente user

Owusuaa is a user of artefacts made from Kente. She is not a native of the Bonwire Kente weaving village. She also tells me that she acquired Kente-related knowledge from her mother. She said that:

Ahm, I will say like, it is not something that I will say I learned. I will say everyone growing in Ghana or Ashanti region will know about Kente. When I was young and staying with my mom, I heard her on some occasions talking about Kente so I will say I got my knowledge about Kente from my mom.

– Owusuaa, a Kente user

From the views shared by Asantewaa and Owusuaa, I can infer that the female role in Kente-related knowledge had been to pass on knowledge about Kente history and the socio-cultural significance of Kente to young girls in the family.

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These narratives confirm Coleman's (1998) proposition that the family constitutes a form of social capital that facilitates individual and collective actions. The flow of Kente-related knowledge in this context is consistent with Rodríguez-Elias et al.'s (2006) view of knowledge flow. According to them, knowledge flows through the performance of activities and the mechanisms employed by the people involved. In this case, Kente-related knowledge flows through the performance of activities such as weaving, selling and sewing.

Similarly, in the case of the Kente Master website, the family's role in the flow of Kente-related knowledge was evident during the analysis, especially knowledge of Kente weaving, which is embedded in families. Thus, many men in the family learn Kente weaving from the family. In other words, Kente weaving knowledge flows from the family. Normally, the young men in the family learn from their elder brothers through observation and hands-on practice. From this, it seems that older family members, especially grandmothers, play a major role in passing on knowledge about the socio-cultural significance of Kente to their grandchildren.

4.2. 2 Formal education

Formal education has also contributed to the flow of Kente-related knowledge. While some of the participants learnt about the history of Kente in the classroom, others have also learnt about Kente from visits to the Bonwire Kente weaving village. Some of the participants in this study told me during the interview that they learnt about Kente through formal education.

For instance, Kwabena, who is a Kente weaver, mentioned to me that he learnt some of the history of Kente from school. He said that he had his basic formal education in the Bonwire Kente weaving village so many of his teachers would sometimes tell

them the history in the course of teaching, especially in a cultural studies class. This is how Kwabena captured it:

I schooled in Bonwire, I learned the history about Kente from schools

but for the weaving, Mr. Addai taught me.

– Kwabena, a Kente weaver

Similarly, Afia, who is a fashion designer, (she uses Kente to produce Kente artefacts such as necklaces and earrings) had acquired Kente-related knowledge from her basic school education. She said that:

When I was in primary school, there was a subject called cultural

studies and on this subject, we were taught about Ghanaian textiles,

food, dance, song, norms, etc. It was then that I learned about Kente

for the first time.

– Afia, a designer of Kente artefacts

In a similar vein, Asante, a Kente seller, shared his knowledge with some students and researchers visiting the Bonwire Kente-weaving village who asked him about the history of Kente. Asante had this to say:

Yes, I have shared with some people especially students who come to

Bonwire to conduct research about Kente. When they come here, they

interview me just as you are doing, so mostly it is through that I have

shared what I know about Kente. However those from this community, I

seldom need to share my knowledge with them because as I said almost

everybody in this community already has knowledge about Kente. I have

also taught some men how to wear Kente. There is a proper way for the

men to wear Kente so I have decided to educate them, especially the

young men, on how to wear it.

From all these three interviewees, I can say that formal education to some extent has contributed to the flow of Kente history knowledge. It has not, however, helped much in terms of the flow of other knowledge about Kente, such as how to weave or join the Kente strips or selling knowledge, although some efforts have been made. Findings from the Kente Master case also show that formal education has been a channel through which some individuals have acquired Kente-related knowledge. One of my participants, Peter Akanko, acknowledged that it was through formal education that he developed an interest in knowing more about Kente even though he had heard about Kente before this period. Peter Akanko told me that:

> *Even though I might have heard about and seen Kente around growing up, my real first encounter was in 2012 when I was taking part in a summer programme called International Development Institute Programme and this was organised by the Technology Consultancy centre in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania and they brought students from the university and I was a participant and we were taken to the Kente village and then we were told about the history of Kente, its cultural significance, and we were given Kente stoles . Mr. Eric at Adawonmase visitors' Centre helped me to know more about Kente. I did not know him until the programme. It was during the program that I got to know him and after the programme, I went to visit him a number of times and learned about Kente, started asking more questions about Kente orally and I started developing a business model around it.*

– Peter Akanko, CEO of Kente Master

Formal education creates the platform for individuals who are not from the Bonwire community village come in contact with Kente and acquire Kente-selling knowledge and knowledge about its history. It creates opportunities for sellers to identify weavers and interact with each other through Kente knowledge flows.

Rafiat Kasumu corroborates the role of formal education in the flow of Kente-related knowledge in her personal blog. She has a key position in the Kente Master company. She had this to say in an interview published on Kente Master's website:

> *Kente Master started as an idea amongst a group of my peers and me who participated in University of Pennsylvania's joint International Development Summer Institute (IDSI) with KNUST in Ghana. While I was an undergrad, I was fortunate enough to be one of 15 UPenn students selected to go. There, I was placed in a small group of students who worked directly with local Kente weaving associations daily to help scale their businesses and practices. It was a life changing experience! Thanks to it, I fell in love with Ghana's culture and history.*
>
> – Rafiat Kasumu, founder of Kente Master, on her personal blog

Just like in Peter Akanko's case, for Rafiat Kasumu education helps individuals to encounter, interact with and acquire knowledge from other individuals within Kente weaving communities. That is, formal education helps in the development and access to social capital.

Furthermore, I identified the role of formal education in Kente-related knowledge flow also in the Ghanaian community in Australia. Many of the participants who had their primary school education in Ghana told me that they learnt about Kente in primary school. Many of them said that it was part of the cultural and social studies curricula.

They were taught the history of Kente and the cultural significance of Kente. Only one participant told me he learnt Kente weaving in addition to the history and the cultural significance. The following are some of the comments from the participants that illustrate this:

> *I first learned about Kente when I was young, I do not remember the exact age but it was when I was in primary school. I was part of our social studies curriculum so I learnt the history about Kente in school.*
>
> <div align="right">– Esi, a Kente user in Australia</div>

Similarly, Kofi, who is a Kente user in Australia, had this to say:

> *I first heard about Kente when I was in primary school. I read the history of Kente from a book. It was part of the contents of one of the cultural studies textbooks we used in primary but let me add that before that my parents, grandparents and siblings have been talking about Kente and they had been wearing Kente because I did not know its importance until I grew up. I also heard the history of Kente and its importance from friends. I remember they told me that Kente originated from Bonwire, a town in the Ashanti region of Ghana. They also told me Kente is used during occasions like marriage ceremony.*
>
> <div align="right">– Kofi, a Kente user in Australia</div>

Here we see that formal education has contributed to the flow of Kente-related knowledge apart from what the family transmits to its members. The view shared by

Amankwa corroborates what Esi and Kofi said. He also acknowledged the role of formal education in the flow of Kente-related knowledge:

> *I will say that I acquired knowledge about Kente in school.*
> *Kente weaving was part of our curriculum. I remember there*
> *was a subject named Arts and Crafts, and that is where we were*
> *taught. Again, during my secondary school education, I went*
> *for an excursion at Bonwire and the weavers told me a lot about*
> *Kente and Kente weaving.*

– Amankwa, a Kente user in Australia

In this case Kente is seen as arts and crafts. This view is consistent with what Dr Ephraim Ammu, the composer of the Kente song, acknowledges in the song. That is, with regard to this participant, it was not only Kente weaving knowledge that was transmitted to him but also the creativity that is associated with Kente and Kente weaving. From these extracts, it is clear that to some extent, formal education in Ghana has facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge, especially knowledge about the history of Kente and its socio-cultural significance.

4.2.3 Socialisation

Socialisation, which is a means by which individuals learn the norms, values, social skills and identity relevant to their society (Fukuyama, 1995), was an important avenue for knowledge flow about Kente weaving. Socialisation occurs both at the family level and at the community level. The knowledge about Kente weaving is embedded in most families; it is one of the social skills that male children in most families in the Bonwire Kente weaving village acquire. Similarly, as Kente weaving is community knowledge to those growing up in the Bonwire Kente weaving village, they are socialised with the

weavers, and therefore absorb this knowledge over time anyway. As one participant says:

> *I think once someone is born into the community the person will naturally learn about Kente…also, let me say that in this community almost every family knows how to weave Kente.*

> – Ofosu, a Kente tailor

From this, it can be observed that the environment a person finds himself or herself in helps the person to acquire knowledge embedded in the environment. That is, the learned behaviours one acquires are an asset for the individual. The way and the environment in which a person is brought up is a social capital for such a person to acquire Kente-related knowledge.

Acknowledging how infused Kente and its weaving is to the everyday life of the community, one participant, named Marfo, who is a Kente user said that one gets to learn through merely living in the society without having being taught consciously. This is how he put it:

> *Kente is a valuable property that has been handed over to us by our forefathers, so if you are a child growing in this community, no one will teach you explicitly, but you will learn everything about Kente through your interactions with your friends and brothers.*

> – Marfo, a Kente user

In this statement, Marfo indicated that he believes acquiring Kente-related knowledge is part of his socialisation. He said that his forefathers value Kente and therefore handed it over to them. By being born into the family and the Bonwire Kente weaving village he acquired that knowledge just through immersion.

Owusuaa who is a user of Kente artefacts, when asked about this, also shared a similar opinion:

> *Not really, because to me, I think it is not something I need to sit people down and teach them, I think once someone is born into the community the person will naturally learn about Kente. May be when I give birth, I will share with my children what Kente is about because they might not have the privilege to learn from the community because I am overseas now.*

<div align="right">

– Owusuaa, a Kente user

</div>

In Owusuaa's statement, she acknowledged Kente-related knowledge as part of the cultural knowledge that one has to acquire and pass on to the younger ones. Ofosu also pointed out that Kente is embedded in families and the Bonwire community's lives, so that if a child is born into a family in Bonwire, or is a person growing up in the community, he or she acquires the knowledge:

Once you are born in Bonwire, you are born into Kente weaving and you acquire the knowledge.

<div align="right">

– Ofosu, a Kente tailor

</div>

Likewise, the results from the Kente Master case revealed that Kente-related knowledge is acquired as part of the skills, values, and norms that many individuals learn in the Adanwomase town and from their respective families. Such knowledge is inherited, according to Oppong, one of the participants in this study. He said that the Kente weaving is generational so every generation tries to make sure that the next generation acquires such knowledge. In Oppong's words:

> *Kente weaving is generational; it is handed over to generations, so I am also trying to hand over the experience I have acquired to the*

younger generation. Kente is a traditional cloth, which I believe will never pass away… almost every person in the town learn from within the family, if I am not exaggerating, I will say there is at least one Kente weaver in every family

– Oppong, a Kente weaver

From this, I can infer that Kente weaving knowledge is transferred from one generation to the other. Elderly males within families ensure that they pass on Kente weaving knowledge to the younger generation. Unlike in the Bonwire Kente weaving village and the Kente Master cases, I did not identify the role of socialisation in Kente-related knowledge flow in the Ghanaian community in Australia case study, although several participants wore Kente to church.

4.2.4 Apprenticeship

Some participants said that they acquired and passed on specialised Kente-related knowledge through apprenticeships. One participant, named Obeng, who is a Kente weaver, recounted how he learnt Kente weaving as an apprentice. This participant told me that he went into an agreement with a master weaver, after his aunt, who the master weaver trusted, introduced him. Obeng said that:

I learn Kente weaving from somebody in the Volta region; I made an agreement with the person for two years, I did not know the person. Initially, I was studied by the 'master' to ascertain if I am interested in learning Kente weaving before the agreement was signed. So within six months, I have become an expert to some extent. I learned the weaving for two years after which I worked for my master free of charge *for some time to show my appreciation.*

– Obeng, a Kente weaver

It is important for me to point out here that the Volta region is far from the Ashanti region where Bonwire is located. Furthermore, the people of the Volta region are a different ethnic group (Ewe) from those of the Ashanti region where Bonwire is located. These two ethnic groups have been the main ethnic groups in Ghana who weave Kente. As pointed out by Sabutey (2009), the Ewe Kente is different from that of Bonwire in terms of patterns and designs. However, because of the popularity of the Bonwire Kente, many weavers in the Volta region have learnt the patterns that are normally woven in the Bonwire community or in the Ashanti region. This weaver could have learnt the weaving in the Bonwire Kente weaving village; he might have gone to the Volta region to learn to weave because he could identify with the ethnic group there. His choice indicates that apart from being in the social and cultural environment, a person also needs to engage in deliberate practice and apprenticeships in order to be a master weaver and pass knowledge on to others. Obeng, now a master weaver himself, has subsequently taught Kente weaving to other young people from other communities through apprenticeships. He told me that the acquisition of weaving knowledge is mainly through observing the master weaver and practising later:

> *Yes, I have taught some people. There are people who come as an apprentice to learn the sewing from me, so that is how I have shared what I know…I teach the person the basics in weaving first; for example how to fold the thread and then the person will be observing what I am doing and later I will ask the person to repeat and practise what I observed.*
>
> – Obeng, a Kente weaver

From this extract from my interview with Obeng, I can infer that Kente-related knowledge flow is an unending process. Individuals who acquire such knowledge

deliberately or unconsciously pass on the knowledge to others. In the first case, apprenticeship is one mode of transmitting such knowledge. In the latter case, socialisation has been the mode of transmission.

Kwabena is a Kente weaver and he told me that he had, at the time of our interview, an apprentice learning Kente weaving from him. He teaches his apprentice not only how to weave but also how to sew the Kente strips together to produce the desired patterns.

> *Yes, I have taught some people. There are people who come as an*
>
> *apprentice to learn Kente weaving and I teach them the sewing also*
>
> *so that is how I have shared what I know.*

> – Kwabena, a Kente weaver

Through apprenticeships, Kwabena has transferred his knowledge about Kente to the apprentices who are learning Kente weaving. In this case, the flow of Kente-related knowledge requires the active participation of both the knowledge holder and the recipient.

4.2.5 Social interactions

Social interactions among the weavers, sellers, users, designers and tailors are avenues for the flow of Kente-related knowledge. Some participants who were weavers told me that they learned new Kente designs from their fellow weavers as well as from customers who bought Kente from them. One of the weavers told me how some Kente users had suggested new designs to them. On the other hand, some customers told me that they had gone to learn about some of the Kente patterns and their meanings through talking with weavers and sellers. Some of these customers further mentioned that they had come to know the kinds of Kente colours that match a user's complexion or suit the user's intent, through interaction with other users and with sellers, fashion designers and the Kente weavers. For example, one participant who is a weaver had this to say:

Yeah, I have shared with my customers. I tell them how it feels to wear Kente…it makes the person look royal or African…So as I told you I gained the knowledge from others so if some customers come, I share what the other customers have suggested to me.

– Agyeman, a Kente weaver

Noting the flow of Kente-related knowledge through such social interactions, one participant who is a Kente seller asserted that knowledge of Kente is acquired through mere association with the people who weave and sell Kente. Asante, a seller, emphasised that:

I have some Kente weavers in my shop although they are not here to learn how to sell Kente as they weave for me, but they will also acquire skills in selling and may also open their own shop in the future.

– Asante, a Kente seller

Asante has also passed on the knowledge to his customers, especially the men, about how to wrap the Kente cloth around their body. In the cultural setting of the Asantes, there is a 'proper way' of wrapping a cloth around the body, which many young men are not familiar with. The male in figure 15 shows how men wrap the cloth around their body. Asante had this to say:

I have also taught some men how to wear Kente. There is a proper way for the men to wear Kente so I have decided to educate them, especially the young men how to wear it.

– Asante, a Kente seller

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In this case, through social interactions, Asante has educated the customers, especially the young ones, on how to maintain the cloth for it to last longer. That is, social interactions between Kente weavers and customers constitute social capital that promotes Kente-related knowledge flow.

Similarly, Akwasi, who is a tailor, told me during the interview how he acquired knowledge about sewing Kente strips through social interactions. Akwasi tells me:

> *When it comes to sewing* [sewing the strips of Kente together]*, I will say no one taught me. I did trial and error and it worked for me. This is how it happened; my father had a sewing machine so one day after I had finished weaving the Kente, I said to myself, I will try and see if I can sew it, and it worked for me. But let me add that, I have over the years observed people sewing the strips together so it was easy for me to do that.* – Akwasi, a Kente tailor

Additionally, Akwasi tells me that his knowledge has flowed to others through interactions, especially when he is asked by others to help them select Kente. For example, he told me that colours and patterns are very important in Kente selection. He noted that the colours and patterns must match the occasion the person is using the Kente for. The colours of the Kente must also match the complexion of the user. He further mentioned that many of the people involved in Kente weaving and selling, and even some users, have over the years shared such knowledge among themselves when they meet. He said that:

> *I am happy that you have asked me this question. There are different kinds of Kente; some are of good quality while others are of poor quality. In selecting the best quality, I normally check the texture of the cloth. I also consider the complexion of the person I am selecting the Kente for.*

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For example, I will not select Kente that has been designed with blue

colours for someone who is dark in complexion because it will not match

the person well.

– Akwasi, a Kente tailor

Asantewaa observed that she has also passed on to other people knowledge about the different kinds of weaves through her interactions with these people. She does this when she selects Kente for them. She said that:

There are different types and grades of Kente. We have a triple,

double and single weave. So I always prefer the triple weave, which

is the most prestigious of all the grades of Kente. It is made up of

designs throughout. It is also the most expensive but when you wear

it to any function or gathering most people show you courtesy and

respect.

– Asantewaa, a Kente user

Kwabena also tells me how Kente colours and users' skin complexion is important in Kente selection and how such knowledge flows among the people who weave, sell and use Kente. Like some other sellers and weavers, the kind of occasion a Kente user is attending partly informs the colours to select. For example, he said, a user might not wear Kente in black and red to a wedding because such colours represent mourning or sorrow. When I asked him how such knowledge, for example, emerged and how people gain such knowledge, he said that such knowledge is part of the customs and traditions of the people of Asante so as an individual grows up in the Asante community he or she will acquire such knowledge.

Apart from passing on this Kente-related knowledge to his customers, Kwabena also shares his knowledge about Kente with some Kente weavers when they meet. He

mentioned to me that some of the Kente weavers in the Bonwire Kente weaving village have formed a group so they regularly meet to share ideas especially when a new pattern emerges:

I have also shared my knowledge about Kente with other weavers, we have a group so we normally meet and share ideas, especially when there is a new design we meet and the elders name it and the rest of us will look at the design and weave the same.

– Kwabena, a Kente weaver

Ama also acknowledged how her interaction with customers has broadened her knowledge about Kente. According to her, some of the customers who come to her shop sometimes offer suggestions about the weaving and new patterns and how she can attract new customers. They tell her about their preferred colours and how to combine colours in new patterns. Ama said that:

I will also say that the customers have helped me to gain a lot of knowledge about Kente because when they come to the shop, they will usually make good suggestions in terms of designs and how I can attract more customers. They sometimes suggest even the colour combinations to me, which I also pass on to the weavers. I have also learned how the Kente can be well kept for it to last longer from the elders in this community and people who weave and use Kente.

– Ama, a Kente seller

Ama has also taught people how to sell Kente. She has done this through her interactions with some employees who sell with her. According to her, although she has not specifically taught them how to sell, the employees have learnt that through

observation and her engagement with some customers. She believes that the skills her employees are acquiring will help them in the future if they decide to open their own Kente shops. Apart from these employees, she has also shared her knowledge about Kente with people from other communities who go to the Bonwire Kente weaving village to learn about Kente. For example, she has shared the history she had heard about Kente with many people. In Ama's own words:

> *I have some people in my shop although they are not here to learn how*
>
> *to sell Kente by as they are helping me sell, they will also acquire skills*
>
> *in selling and may also open their own shop in the future.*

> – Ama, a Kente seller

Like other participants in this study, Ama has also shared her knowledge about the appropriate patterns and colours of Kente for particular events. To be easily identified and stand out as unique, she herself tries to wear a pattern that is not common. This normally attracts people's attention, and they will ask her some questions about the pattern she is wearing:

> *It depends on the event they are attending. If for example, they are*
>
> *attending a festival I tell them to wear a design that is unique in order*
>
> *for them to look unique.*

> – Ama, a Kente seller

Ama also told me about the need to pay attention to colours when selecting Kente. As indicated by the other participants, the colour of Kente an individual selects must match their complexion. Because of this, she has decided to educate the customers who buy from her.   She normally enquires about the kind of occasion they are using the Kente for, and that helps her to recommend the appropriate pattern and colours for them.

For my customers, I ask them what the occasion or the event they are using the Kente for. I also consider the colour that will fit their complexion.

– Ama, a Kente seller

Similarly, Marfo, a user, has shared his knowledge about Kente with others through his interaction with them. He shares his knowledge with weavers and Kente buyers and users. He told me that when he meets a prospective Kente buyer who does not know much about Kente, he takes the time to explain to him or her the various patterns and their names, including the threads that are used for weaving and the quality of those threads. He sometimes gives them the price range for the various patterns and quality of Kente:

Yes, I share with my colleagues and sometimes other buyers. Some buyers and users do not know much about Kente so when they come around I explain the design and the meanings to them and advise them on what design suit what occasion.

– Marfo, a Kente user

An interview with Agyeman also shows the role of social interactions in Kente-related knowledge flow. During the interview with Agyeman, he narrated how he has taught his customers how to maintain and keep Kente. For example, he mentioned that one of the things that he normally tells his customers who are not familiar with Kente is that they should not wash the cloth because the colours will fade. He tells them to hang it in an open space instead. This is what Agyeman told me:

I have shared my experience I have gained from Kente with others. For example, I share with my customers how to maintain and keep Kente

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well. There is some Kente that is not washable. So I share with them how

to maintain those kinds.

<div align="right">– Agyeman, a Kente weaver</div>

Maame Yaa also shares her knowledge about Kente with customers through interactions. She believes that since she has received her knowledge from others, it also right for her to share this knowledge with other people. Thus, she normally shares with customers who want to know certain things like the features of a quality Kente, the names of the patterns and the price range of Kente:

> *So as I told you I gained the knowledge from others so if some*
>
> *customers come I tell them what the other customers have suggested*
>
> *to me.*

<div align="right">– Maame Yaa, a Kente seller</div>

Furthermore, in her interactions with customers, Maame Yaa explains to customers the meanings of some of the Kente patterns and their appropriateness for different occasions. She observed that the Kente pattern an individual wears communicates a message about them. It may also be communicating a specific message to a particular group of people:

> *I consider if the Kente has a name. The one that they can use to*
>
> *communicate a message to people. Secondly, I consider the colours*
>
> *and the designs. I consider these because each design and colours are*
>
> *suitable for different occasion or functions. There are some designs*
>
> *you cannot wear to attend a gathering of honourable people. For*
>
> *example, there is a design called 'wo sene wo yonko a wotaa woo',*
>
> *meaning you are superior to your friend – he or she will hate you*

because you are superior – you cannot wear this cloth for a gathering

of chiefs, Kings, honourable people, because it will be an insult.

– Maame Yaa, a Kente seller

In his interactions with some customers, Asante has also educated them on the features of quality Kente. He sees the texture of Kente as a determinant of its quality. According to him, by touching the cloth one can know if the Kente is of good quality or not. I asked Asante to explain to me what the texture of a good or a bad Kente feels like. He said that the bad quality ones have a smooth texture while the good ones normally have a rough texture:

I look at the texture of the Kente. Anyone familiar with Kente can

identify a quality Kente by testing the texture of cloth. I will not be

able to give you exactly what the texture of a quality Kente is but

people who have knowledge about Kente can identity the quality just

by testing the texture.

– Asante, a Kente seller

In the same way, social interactions were a theme in the Kente Master case also, but did not appear as a theme in the Ghanaian community in Australia case. I noted that social interactions are central in the flow of Kente-related knowledge from weavers to customers and sellers. They are also the means through which Kente-related knowledge flows from sellers to customers and vice-versa. Two of the participants from the Kente Master case pointed out how, through interactions, they have exchanged Kente-related knowledge with others. Peter Akanko, for example, told me that he has been sharing the history of Kente as well as his personal experience with Kente with his customers. Peter Akanko told me:

I have not gone out to probably teach people about the history of Kente, but I have shared my experience with Kente through my business through the selling of Kente products and getting the youth of today to able to appreciate and relate with Kente through the products I make – making products which the youth of today can use – back in the days it was just the main Kente cloth people bought, especially the elderly, but the youth are not able to do that, but through making other products [from Kente] *which the youth can relate to, I have been able to let more youth come to like Kente and come to utilise Kente.*

– Peter Akanko, founder and CEO of Kente Master

I inquired about Peter Akanko's personal experience with Kente and the exact experience he has been sharing with his customers. This is what he said:

I just try to share my experience of selling Kente products so that people can identify with it. … People have contacted me several times for Kente for their weddings; I normally give the customers the option to choose the styles they want. First of all, I present them with what is available, we have a single weave, double weave, and triple weave and these are the colours. I ask them the colours they want, we have blue, we have purple, yellow and give them the opportunity to choose but I will go ahead and recommend those which are really beautiful and really stand out, and when it comes to those that are thick, so when you use them to make your dress it will make it look beautiful; I will go for the triple or double weave. It depends also on what the person can afford so some people can go for the double weave

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because the triple weave is very expensive. The customers want a combination of key things, which are the colours, so if I am recommending the triple weaves, it is because of the colours, because the double and triple weaves come out with more colours and more designs because of the thickness.

– Peter Akanko, founder and CEO of Kente Master

Peter Akanko also had the opportunity to share his experience with Kente with a group of people from World Bank who visited the Kumasi Business Incubator at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology:

I think basically it has been my customers who I normally share with, but apart from that there was a World Bank programme which came to the Kumasi Business Incubator in 2014 when I was doing my national service and I had the opportunity to share the knowledge I have with them and I have also had encounter with some friends from the States, and I had shared what I know about Kente with them.

– Peter Akanko, founder and CEO of Kente Master

Oppong, a Kente weaver, also told me that he has shared his knowledge about the kinds of Kente colours that match a particular skin complexion with many people he interacts with. He also tries to educate them on the kinds of colours that are appropriate for particular occasions. He said that:

I consider their favourite colours; I hardly consider the designs because it is the colour that makes the difference. I also consider the occasion they are attending; for example, I will not recommend a Kente made up with red and black colours unless the person is attending a funeral because in our society these colours represent mourning.

Oppong has also acquired knowledge about customers' favourite Kente colours. He noted that some foreigners who buy Kente from him prefer colours that represent their country of origin:

In fact, many people normally want specific colours. For example, when some Germans come to buy Kente, they normally choose those with colours that represent their country.

– Oppong, a Kente weaver

Findings from the social media research also show that one of the owners of Kente Master developed an interest in Kente and decided to learn more about it when she had an encounter with one of the Kente weavers in Ghana. She is a Nigerian-American. This is what she wrote:

I am a Nigerian-American who developed a love for Kente while working with Kente weavers in Kumasi, Ghana. I took this love to the next level by co-founding Kente Master which seeks to expand the international reach of Ghanaian Kente weavers……. The most profound moments of this experience were when I heard about the history of Kente from the weavers themselves. I witnessed its traditional production from thread to the final product and got to try my hand at weaving traditional Kente cloth. I was literally weaving history and this was the spark! Learning about the significance of Kente –down to the meanings of colors and patterns – really opened my eyes to how important this craft is. From that moment on, I knew I wanted to be a part of the movement to expand this craft

internationally. Not only has the significant story of Kente needed to

be spread.

– Rafiat Kasumu, on the Kente Master blog

Rafiat Kasumu, the Chief Marketing Officer for Kente Master further indicated that she realised that in America, many of the students who normally wear Kente stoles do not know the origins of Kente and how Kente is woven so she decided to share this knowledge with many of the students:

Abroad, we found that though people may wear Kente stoles at graduations, many may not know the origin or creation process of the cloth. Kente Master was created to solve this critical gap so that students at universities abroad understand this unique tradition and know that their stoles were made in Ghana.

– Rafiat Kasumu, on the Kente Master blog

Rafiat Kasumu wrote that people she has shared such knowledge with are part of the various black student groups and associations in some parts of America. This is how she summarised it:

Great question! Some of our past customers have been the black cultural centers of universities and individual student organizations that identify with the African Diaspora such as multicultural Greek Letter Organizations [fraternities and sororities], *Black Student Leagues, or African Student Associations.*

– Rafiat Kasumu, on the Kente Master blog

 In this view, Kente-related knowledge flows among college students through organised social interactions.

4.2.6 Tourism

Kente has become part of the tourism industry in Ghana. Many tourists from within Ghana and abroad visit the Bonwire Kente weaving village to observe how Kente is woven. Many of the foreign tourists try to learn the weaving as part of their tours, and some even practise the weaving when they go back to their own countries. One participant who is a weaver and works in the tourist centre in the weaving village recounted how one tourist had learnt to weave from him. He told me:

> *I teach people how to weave Kente. I have taught some who come here*
>
> *for tourism purposes.*

> – Kwabena, a Kente weaver

Similarly, Asantewaa had shared knowledge about Kente with a tourist who visited the Bonwire Kente weaving village:

> *Just as you are interviewing me, some students also come to me to*
>
> *interview me. Again when the tourists, especially the foreigners come here,*
>
> *I normally share what I know about Kente with them so I will say that these*
>
> *are some the ways I have shared my knowledge with others. – –*
>
> Asantewaa, a Kente user

The role of tourism in Kente-related knowledge flow was also evident in the Kente Master case. Tourism has also contributed to the flow of Kente-related knowledge in Ghana and in the global world. Tourism has been one of the major means through which many non-Ghanaians have come to know about Kente. Oppong told me during the interview that he manages a tourist centre in the town of Adanwomase so when the tourists go there he tells them about the history of Kente and teaches them Kente weaving. He noted that some of these tourists, especially the foreigners, have developed

an interest in the weaving, and some of them now weave Kente in their home countries. This is what he said:

> *I am not only sharing with the younger generations but also with visitors; Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians. We have a visitors' centre here of which I am the manager of the place (and also the tour guide) and I teach people how to weave Kente. I have taught so many foreigners; for example, there is a guy from Germany I have taught how to weave Kente. So this person if he finds any difficulty in weaving now, he calls me on a social network like Skype, WhatsApp, and I give him guidelines.*

– Oppong, a Kente weaver

From this, it can be noted that Kente-related knowledge flows to other countries than Ghana through tourism, for Ghanaians are proud and eager to share their knowledge of their heritage and customs, and do not hesitate to share with anyone.

4.2.7 Friendship

Kente-related knowledge flows also involve friendship groups. For example, friendship has helped one of my participants to become a master Kente weaver although he is a tailor. Friendship has also helped another interviewee to acquire Kente sewing knowledge. However, these individuals already had some knowledge about Kente, since in the Bonwire community for example, almost everyone has knowledge about Kente. I noticed from the Bonwire Kente weaving case that many men know how to weave Kente and there is at least one weaver in each household. This creates opportunity for people to acquire Kente-related knowledge from either their family members or friends. The following extract buttresses this view:

However, there are two people who specifically taught me Kente weaving, one was my friend and the other was my brother in-law.

- Akwasi, a Kente tailor

Thus it can be said that friendship facilitated knowledge flow to this tailor. Ofosu, who is also a Kente tailor, told me that although he learnt a lot about Kente from his family, it was his friend who taught him how to sew Kente strips together. Ofosu learnt sewing by observing his friend. He then practised with his friend's sewing machine when it was idle. This is what Ofosu told me:

I was born into Kente weaving. My grandfather, father, and elder brothers were all into Kente weaving so I learned the weaving from my father and brothers. However, I learned the sewing from my friend. Whenever I visit him in his workshop, I observe how he sews the strips together. When he gets up from his seat, I will just go and try my hands on them. As I told you earlier I knew how to weave so I was motivated to learn the sewing so that I could sew what I weave on my own.

– Ofosu, a Kente tailor

As seen from this extract, social capital in its bridging form of bridging has to some extent helped Ofosu to acquire Kente sewing knowledge. That is, if not for his friendship with the tailor, Ofosu would not have had the opportunity to learn Kente sewing for free. Thus, in a way, bridging social capital in the form of friendship is vital for Kente sewing knowledge flow.

4.2.8 Community

Community plays a key role in knowledge flow, as observed by Alemna and Sam (2006). In my study, I found that the Bonwire Kente weaving village has contributed to the flow of Kente-related knowledge. I noticed that since Kente was invented in the

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Bonwire Kente weaving community, Kente weaving and selling, for example, have become professions in the community. Through this profession, the community has passed on Kente-related knowledge to individuals who are either members of the community or outside of the community. Asante, who is a Kente user, underscored this point in an interview I had with her. She narrated that since she is a native of the community, she learnt many things about Kente while growing up in the community:

> *This is the profession of this community. I was born into it; that was*
>
> *the profession of my forefathers.*

> – Asantewaa, a Kente user

Marfo also told me during the interview that he knows how to weave Kente and that he learnt it from the weavers within the community. This is what Marfo said:

> *Even I know how to weave and no one taught me that, I will normally go*
>
> *and stand beside the weavers whenever they are weaving and observe*
>
> *them. Once they get up from the loom, I will also go and sit in and practise.*
>
> *But let me add that, I learned how to weave some specific designs from*
>
> *two experienced weavers in this community.*

> – Marfo, a Kente user

In this case, the social capital within the community has made it possible for Marfo to acquire Kente weaving knowledge. In addition, the accumulative experience of some master weavers in the community has become available to novice weavers as a result of the social capital situated within the community.

Likewise, Asante, who is a Kente seller, learnt Kente selling from some people in the Bonwire Kente weaving village. Asante told me that:

> *In 1947, I started following my grandfather who was a Kente weaver and*
>
> *seller. At this point, he would not allow me to learn anything about Kente*

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because he thought it would prevent me from going to school. He said that

if I become so interested in Kente, I would become a school dropout. Since

I was so determined to learn more about Kente weaving and selling I did

not mind him. There were times I would go to some other weavers in the

community to observe how they were weaving the Kente, and practise when

they leave the loom. When I grew up, I decided to open my own store and

sell Kente. When I began the business, I was weaving the Kente by myself

but as demand increased I decided to hire people to weave for me. Also, let

me say that in this community almost every family knows how to weave

Kente so I also learned a lot from my father and uncles.

– Asante, a Kente seller

From this extract, it can be observed that where the family is not willing to transmit Kente weaving knowledge, the society becomes an alternative means through which people acquire Kente weaving knowledge. In addition, the willingness and determination of people is also important for them to acquire knowledge from the community. From the analysis of the data, I found that there are two elements of social structure that have facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge; these elements are family and formal education.

4.3 Social Relations and Kente-related Knowledge Flow

There are five elements of social relations that I noted facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge. These are social identity, social status, social technologies, company website and benevolence.

4.3.1 Social identity

Kente cloth is associated with people's identity. For example, as Schramm (2010) described, African-Americans have adopted Kente to reconnect to their African

heritage. Kente thus plays an integral role in the Kwanzaa festival in the United States. This has implications for Kente-related knowledge flow also. I observed from the interviews that social identity has also facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge. Through social identity, Kente-related knowledge has entered the global world. Many Ghanaians who travel abroad and Africans in the diaspora sometimes wear Kente to show their African and Ghanaian identities overseas. As such, many people outside Ghana have come to acquire knowledge about Kente through these Ghanaians and Africans in the diaspora who want to communicate their identity via Kente. One of the participants, who is from Ghana but based in the United States, said that:

> *Kente is so very important in the history of Asantes and Ghanaians in general. It portrays the Asante and the Ghanaian culture…whenever I wear Kente; it reminds me of my culture. It showcases my African origins…. Not only was it so beautiful, but it communicated my African identity to my friends here in America. It reminded of my country Ghana. ……I tell my friends over here about it whenever they see me wearing it.*

> – Owusuaa, a Kente user

So in a way, the Kente cloth is not only worn to make the wearers feel connected to their identity as Ghanaians or Africans, but also functions as a talking point, or as a conscious cue to invoke questions that elicit stories of their identity. In relation to this, a weaver told me that:

> *The first thing that comes to mind is this person is probably attending a special occasion. There are times too when people see others wearing Kente, and they ask if the person is from Bonwire.*

It can be observed from this that Kente links people to Bonwire and is associated with special occasions. The association of users of Kente with Bonwire suggests that the place of origin of knowledge flows with the knowledge. Similarly, Kwabena mentioned that he likes wearing Kente because it communicates his identity as a native of Bonwire:

> *Oh yes, I get the same feeling, when I see people wearing those things* [referring to Kente artefacts]*, I normally say indeed you are a native of Bonwire…. I become very proud of my town Bonwire. Kente has dignified the Bonwire community and the people of Bonwire*

– Kwabena, a Kente weaver

Similarly, Ama, a Kente seller, tells me why many people use Kente. According to her, Kente is a traditional Ghanaian cloth and for that matter, an African cloth, so wearing such a cloth shows the person's identity as a Ghanaian or African. She believes that this explains why many Ghanaians value and admire Kente and consider it a valuable property that can be a family heirloom and inherited by family members. Ama also noted that for her, Kente identifies her as a native of Bonwire and she is proud of that because the people of Bonwire value Kente. Whenever she or others wear Kente, it reminds her of her roots, her hometown:

> *Oh ok, it always reminds me of my roots (where I come from, Bonwire). Kente is synonymous to Bonwire. Wherever you mention Bonwire, people will say it is a Kente community – origin of Kente. Kente is a valuable cloth; we adore Kente so much to the extent that people who wear them especially in Ghana are accorded with much respect. Normally I will also say that this person might be attending an important or a special event.*

– Ama, a Kente seller

In this view, by sharing one's identity and origin, Ama also shares knowledge about Kente which is associated with the identity (in the form of origin) of the user. Kwame, a tailor I interviewed, shared a similar view. He wears Kente to showcase his African identity. Not only that, but he also described the weaving process as African. He asserted that the weave itself is African and is about an African identity:

> *It is an African cloth; it is a hand woven cloth. It is not any printed*
>
> *fabric or machine woven fabric by the White man.*

– Kwame, a Kente tailor

Marfo also sees Kente as a symbol of African and Ghanaian identity. According to him, Kente makes Ghanaians unique and it is prestigious and valuable to Ghanaians:

> *Kente is a valuable property for Africans, and Ghanaians in*
>
> *particular; it is one of the things that has attracted tourists to Ghana.*
>
> *It is prestigious in Ghana and all over the world.* **...***Oh, and I have*
>
> *seen that a lot of people buy these items. Recently a couple came to*
>
> *this shop over to buy some of those items for their marriage ceremony*
>
> *abroad and they sent us photos and told us how proud they were when*
>
> *they wore the cloth. Once you see the photos, no one needs to tell you*
>
> *they are from Ghana.*

– Marfo, a Kente user

Marfo also indicated that Kente gives a unique identity to the Bonwire Kente weaving village and its people. Whenever he sees Kente, it reminds him of Bonwire and he becomes happy that he is a native of the community:

I become so happy for my town, I always feel like 'God has given

Bonwire a valuable gift'. It is valuable; that is why other communities

are trying to learn from us. I become so happy and sing praises to my

community Bonwire whenever I see people wearing Kente.

– Marfo, a Kente user

Another participant, named Agyeman, who is a weaver, shares a similar view. He told

how people's identity as natives of Bonwire is connected to Kente, and thus, they wear

Kente to communicate that identity:

Kente is a very popular cloth, it a very dignified cloth. It has indeed

brought glory and dignity to Bonwire. It is a valuable cloth. I see

Kente as a symbol of unity for Kente weavers because it has helped us

to build a united community. It also signifies dignity.

– Agyeman, a Kente weaver

It is also a way of displaying the culture and traditions of the people of Bonwire. For

this reason, many people prefer wearing Kente to traditional events, said Agyeman:

I become so happy when I see people wearing Kente. It makes me

appreciate the gift our forefathers gave us. Kente is a valuable gift, I

admire the person a lot. I see such people as civilised and cultured; they

know their customs and traditions.

– Agyeman, a Kente weaver

Similarly, findings from the Kente Master case revealed the need for people to exhibit

their cultural values, and their identity has led to the flow of Kente-related knowledge

in Ghana and beyond. Many people have worn Kente to communicate their identity

as an Adanwomase native, as Asante, as Ghanaian, or as Africans. Through this other

people have come to know Kente, what it represents, the history, and how it is woven. Oppong, for instance, stated that:

Kente is a virtual representation of history, philosophy, ethics and societal values, they are powerful cultural symbols and a source of pride for all Ghanaians and the whole of Africans in the diaspora. Kente chronicles the history of the Asantes and not only the Asantes but also Ghanaians in general. Even if I see people wearing Kente or any item made with Kente, I say that in fact, Ghana or Adanwomase has a valuable item (property). I feel so happy. I always say we have something we can boast of as a community.

– Oppong, a Kente weaver

Peter Akanko also told me that most of his customers have been buying and using Kente because they want to communicate their identity. He noted that as a result, some of them have gone on to read about Kente on the internet and some have watched how Kente is woven on YouTube and on some websites, including his own. Noticing this, Peter Akanko told me he has also been sharing with the customers the cultural significance of Kente and how it is linked to their identity as African-Americans. This is what Peter Akanko said:

So for my company we let our client know the cultural significance of Kente. Especially our clients who buy Kente for their graduation, we gave them cards from our company about Kente that let them know about the significance of Kente and what our company does for the weavers and what Kente means to the weavers. We are promoting the cultural significance of Kente; for example, as African-Americans who have finished school, they should see it as a source of identity

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and as a source of royalty to them. So when they see it they should value and appreciate it.

– Peter Akanko, CEO of Kente Master

He further stated that:

Kente is a sign of royalty and it gives us some identity as Ghanaians or Africans for probably those in the diaspora so having that experience, like having Kente and how it feels, is what I have shared through the business I do. For those living in Ghana, I dwell more on the royalty because we have that Ghanaian identity already, unlike those in the diaspora who will need to identify themselves as Africans.

– Peter Akanko, CEO of Kente Master

During the analysis of the social media data that were extracted from the Kente Master website, I noted that many Kente stole users in the United States have been using it to connect to their African heritage and also represent their African identity. For instance, customer Awuraa noted how Kente is seen as a symbol of royalty in Ghana, but among African-Americans, it is seen as a collective heritage. This is how she put it:

As the years went by, Kente became widespread beyond royalty and was used to mark important stages of life in Ghana, such as weddings and baby naming ceremonies. Today, its significance to these important passages of life has transcended both continents and cultures. Kente stoles are now, among other things, seen as wearable staples of a collective heritage in the United States.

– Awuraa, a Kente user

Another Kente stole customer, named Appiah, wrote a similar post:

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> *My Kente cloth was a special way of saying 'Say it loud, I'm black*
>
> *and I'm proud, oh and I'm educated too!'*

<div align="right">

– Appiah, a Kente user

</div>

Another customer, named Ananse, wrote a similar post:

> *The stole was one of the main items I looked forward to of all my*
>
> *graduation regalia. I saw it on all of the members of the black*
>
> *community that went before me at graduation, and I knew it*
>
> *represented a bond and a uniqueness that set us as a community apart*
>
> *from the larger Penn campus. Also, when I chose my stole I looked for*
>
> *something that was both traditional but unique, and that matched my*
>
> *outfit!*

<div align="right">

– Ananse, a Kente user

</div>

Agyeiwaa, who identified herself as a West African, wrote a statement that supports the view that her social identity has contributed to the flow of Kente-related knowledge. This is what Agyeiwaa wrote:

> *Being from West Africa, it was great to represent my region with the*
>
> *stole and also see other students who identified with the African*
>
> *diaspora. I felt like I was a part of something bigger than myself...*

<div align="right">

– Agyeiwaa, a Kente user

</div>

In a similar vein, customer Pomaa gave an indication of the role of social identity in the flow of Kente-related knowledge. She sees Kente as a symbol of the Black race and that it unites Black students:

> *My Kente stole was the last piece of academic regalia I received, but*
>
> *one of my most treasured because it united me with the Black members*
>
> *of my class and the classes before us. It's a rite of passage for Black*

<div align="center">

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</div>

Penn [University of Pennsylvania] *alums to wear Kente, as a signifier that although this chapter of our lives is closing, the family that we gained will help us see the next chapter through.*

– Pomaa, a Kente user

Also, her post indicated that she was happy to tell her peers more about Kente and what it means to her when they noticed her wearing a Kente stole and they asked her what it means, or why she was wearing it. This is her post:

As I walked around campus after leaving the Makuu Senior Celebration, a lot of my peers asked me 'what is this for?' I was proud and excited to tell them what my Kente stole meant to me. So many black students don't even make it to graduation, let alone graduate in four years. So I was happy and proud to wear my stole not only to represent my culture but also represent the community that supported me throughout my collegiate journey.

– Pomaa, a Kente user

Again, findings from the Ghanaian community in Australia also showed that Kente-related knowledge flows because of the need to represent one's social identity. The analysis of the data showed that Kente identifies the users as an Asante, Ghanaian or African. This identification role of Kente brings users together to interact and talk to each other not only about Kente but also about personal issues and brings about friendship among the users. Some of the participants told me that they have introduced Kente to their children who were born in Australia, as a way of telling them about their heritage. One of them told me that their son has Kente, and the child is now enthused about Kente. The child started reading about Kente, and since then he has become very

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interested in knowing more about Ghana and is now emotionally connected to Ghana. This is a comment from one of the participants:

Kente is Asante's identity; the colours used in the Bonwire Kente reflect the Asante colours and this makes us unique. Anytime someone dresses in Kente, it makes the person feel proud and unique among our peers. It's unfortunate I am not able to express the feelings but I will say, I feel good in Kente and I am proud of it. Kente is not just like the other African prints or any cloth. When I wear Kente, I feel very important. However, I hardly wear Kente in Australia because the occasions that fit Kente are few. I only wear Kente when a Ghanaian is getting married and that does not happen regularly. Other times that I wear Kente is when there is a gathering among Ghanaians in Australia to celebrate Ghana's Independence Day. During that event, many people wore Kente as a way of portraying our culture. We have a rich culture and I am proud of that so I have tried to teach my two children who are Australians the Asante culture. My son, for example, is very enthused about Kente. He has a Kente tie and anytime he wears it he becomes so happy. One of the Ghanaians presented it to my son as a gift on his birthday. I have kept this tie for him and I only give it to him to wear when there is a special occasion. My brother also had a Kente shirt and he passed this on to my son. Many other parents have also started sewing Kente for their children who were born in Australia. It is part of the ways to inculcate the Asante culture in the children. It also reminds the children of their heritage. I, for instance, tell them its significance in the Asante culture

and as I told you, we are royals, so I think they should know some of

these basic things about Kente. Through this, my son has developed

the habit of reading about the Asante culture and has developed an

interest in things affecting Ghana.

– Akos, a Kente user

From this extract from Akos's interview, it can be observed that knowledge about Kente and how that knowledge flows cannot be decoupled from the culture of the Asantes and the Ghanaian culture to some extent. Sarpomaa also told me Kente identifies her as a Ghanaian and an African (in Australia). She told me that Kente has become synonymous with Ghanaian identity and anytime she wears Kente many people ask her if she is a Ghanaian and where they can get a piece of Kente to buy. There are others who also ask her the name of the patterns and why she wears Kente. This is what Sarpomaa said:

I used to use Kente in Ghana and I even use Kente here in

Australia. Kente is normally worn for many occasions. Anytime

I wear Kente it makes me feel like I am home, meaning I make

me remember my heritage, that is Ghana. Kente identifies me

as an Asante. Even when I came to Australia, anytime I wear

Kente, some people ask me if I am a Ghanaian so I will say that

Kente identifies as a Ghanaian.

– Sarpomaa, a Kente user

Another participant, named Barima, told me that as a way of sharing his Ghanaian and African identities, he wears Kente, and there are times that non-Ghanaians acknowledge the aesthetic features of Kente, and he takes that opportunity to talk to such people about Kente. This is a comment from Barima:

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Kente is part of my culture, anytime I wear Kente it tells me and

others where I am coming from. I remember I wore Kente to a

bank and the manager asked me where I come from and where

he can also get Kente. I told him I am from Ghana in Africa. So

Kente identifies me as African and specifically as a Ghanaian.

There are also other Africans here in Australia who also wear

Kente and when I see them I perceive them as Ghanaians.

– Barima, a Kente user

From these observations, I will say that some people have come to know Kente via the participants' intentions to communicate their social identity, since Kente identifies the user as Asante, Ghanaian and to some extent African. In communicating this, the users end up sharing Kente knowledge with others, especially bystanders who are often attracted to the aesthetics of Kente and thus ask questions about it.

4.3.2 Social Status

Social status also emerged as one of the elements of social relations that facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge. All the participants mentioned that wearing Kente creates and enhances their social status one way or another. According to the participants, wearing Kente makes one royal and honourable. A person is even perceived as rich if he or she wears Kente. This has contributed to the adoption of Kente by many people. This has also, in effect, facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge. These users have come to know the names of the various patterns and their meanings as a result. One of the users said:

The first thing that comes to mind is prestige and dignity and it is the

reason I wear Kente for functions and festivals.

– Asantewaa, a Kente user

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A Kente weaver also told me how wearing Kente gives him a royal status and the privileges that come with it:

> *I knew that I might not be allowed to get in because the event was for dignitaries from Ghana and other countries. So I decided to wear Kente; when I got to the entrance, the security men and women did not even search me but tried to create space for me to enter as there were a lot of people at the gate who wanted to enter the stadium. When they saw my Kente they thought I was a King or one of the invited guests so they shouted, open the gate for Nana [chief] to enter.*
>
> – Agyeman, a Kente weaver

Similar to some other people interviewed, Asante sees those who wear Kente as honourable people, for when Kente was first invented, its use was restricted to the Asantehene, so even though there is no restriction on its use now, anyone who uses Kente still acquires an honourable status from this history:

> *It makes me an honourable and respected person. You know initially, it was only Otumfoɔ [Asantehene] who used to wear Kente but now everybody is allowed to wear Kente; people respect me a lot when they see me wearing Kente. Just emerging, when I wear Kente to any gathering, people show me a lot of courtesies, they see me as an important personality. Even if there is a shortage of chairs, some young men and women offer me their seats/chairs.*
>
> – Asante, a Kente seller

Another Kente tailor, named Akwasi, pointed out to me how those wearing Kente look unique among their peers. Such people feel happy and will always attract attention. People begin to ask questions, like about the kind of occasion the user might be

attending and the name of the pattern and where such a pattern can be obtained. Kente users are also perceived to be cultured, as knowing their customs and traditions. In other words, Akwasi believes that people wear Kente to communicate their status and communicate to people that they know their culture and traditions and are proud of them. Akwasi said that:

> *Kente makes me unique; whenever I wear Kente it makes me look an honourable person. I feel happy whenever I wear Kente. It attracts people's attention…. Whenever I see someone wearing Kente, I normally say he or she is cultured-civilised. Also, that person knows the customs of the Asantes because Kente is a traditional cloth.*
>
> – Akwasi, a Kente tailor

Asantewaa, a Kente user, also mentioned that she and others wear Kente because it brings them joy. She noted that wearing Kente makes her prestigious. She feels very proud of herself if she wears a Kente pattern that is not common among her peers. She said that sometimes people ask her wear she bought the Kente and the name of the pattern and she recounted :

> *As I told you earlier, we have different kinds of Kente for different occasions but if I wear Kente to a wedding or if someone wears Kente during a marriage ceremony, the person becomes so happy or even when I wear Kente to church, I become so happy especially when none of the other congregants are in Kente cloth. I feel so proud of myself, for it is prestigious. Also, I look so distinct when I wear it to a festival or even a funeral.*
>
> – Asantewaa, a Kente user

As already indicated by many participants in this study, Kente is a symbol of status and people wear Kente to communicate their status. According to Ama, the kind of Kente an individual wears communicates the person's economic status. This is what she had to say:

> *It depends on the type of Kente the person is wearing, some Kente are very expensive so if I see someone wearing the expensive kind, I always say, this person might be rich. However, I do not make the same inference from those who wear earrings made with Kente cloth because most of them are not made from the original Kente, which can be expensive.*

> – Ama, a Kente seller

Asantewaa, however, noted that in the past, many people wore Kente for others to see that they were rich, but in recent times many people, including the poor to some extent, can afford to buy Kente. The difference she noted is that the poor are not able to buy the high-quality complex patterns:

> *In the old days, we used to say that only rich people could wear Kente or people who used Kente were considered to be rich. However these days, both rich and the poor buy and use Kente. Everyone wants to be perceived as rich, no one wants to look inferior in any gathering like a wedding so even if the person does not have money, he or she will try and buy the Kente which is a bit cheaper.*

> – Asantewaa, a Kente user

Kwabena also offered a view which supports the claim that social status facilitates Kente-related knowledge flow. He asserted that whenever he wears Kente, he feels proud and distinct. He normally feels special among his peers who might not be wearing

Kente at the time. He gets the respect he seeks from people at any function he attends wearing Kente. He noted that Kente is normally worn by honourable people, so he feels so esteemed anytime he wears Kente. As such, he prefers wearing Kente to functions where there are a lot of dignitaries. He observed that in such situations he wears a pattern that is not common for such functions so many people will ask him for the name of the pattern:

> *Dignity, dignity, yeah dignity. I become very proud of my town Bonwire. Kente has dignified the Bonwire community and the people of Bonwire. … When you wear Kente to any function you will never feel ashamed. You will feel very proud; it makes you look so distinct and special. Because honourable people wear Kente, whenever I wear it I also see myself as an honourable person. Wherever people will accord you with the respects that are given to honourable people.*
>
> – Kwabena, a Kente weaver

In a similar vein, Marfo said that he feels proud when he wears Kente. He underscored the status that comes with wearing Kente. He told me that because Kente raises peoples' status many people like wearing it and receiving it as a gift. The recipients normally show great appreciation because of its value:

> *I feel so proud when I wear Kente. It is not common and easy for people to buy and use Kente so when I wear Kente, I feel so proud of myself. Can you imagine if you have presented Kente to your parents as a way for thanking them for supporting you in your studies, they will always feel proud of you and will always bless you whenever they wear the cloth? I will say Kente is prestigious and valuable like our*

gold…. I also have a Kente tie and anytime I wear it, I feel very proud

of myself. Whenever you wear these items, you look so unique.

– Marfo, a Kente user

Likewise, the need for prestige, self-esteem and royal status have contributed to the flow of Kente-related knowledge in the Kente Master case. As my participants tell me, Kente has become popular among many Ghanaians because they believe that wearing Kente makes them prestigious, makes them feel royal and boosts their self-esteem. These needs have also led many to learn to tell the difference between an authentic Kente and a fake one. Oppong, for example, said that:

Even if you take a critical look at the word Kente you can deduce

pride/ prestige from it. I feel proud when I wear Kente because I know

it is my traditional wear.

– Oppong, a Kente weaver

Peter Akanko, on the other hand, indicated the importance of royal status and self-esteem in the flow of Kente-related knowledge. He told me that he wears Kente and Kente artefacts like shoes for this reason. He said that on many occasions he has received compliments from other people and that they normally engage him in conversation to find out about the availability of the designs he wears. He also takes the opportunity to tell them more about Kente in general and the meanings of the particular pattern he might be wearing. This is how Peter Akanko captured it:

For me Kente really signifies royalty because anytime I put on Kente

I feel I am a royal, I feel proud of it to wear Kente, it is something

significant, it is not like wearing any T-shirt or any cloth, that is why

if I have any Kente I don't wear it anyhow or every day, I wear it for

or during important occasions. So it is very significant, it signifies

royalty. I feel very royal, important, but when I see others wearing Kente I feel excited. ...I feel like wow, this is nice, I am always attracted, excited, it gives me that sense of joy or amusement but when I wear it myself, I feel good, I feel royal. I get the same feeling like when I wear Kente because me myself I have a shoe made with Kente and anytime I wear it I mean when I wear it really feels different when you wear something else. When you go out you see people talking about it like wow, shoes made with Kente so having any product made with Kente makes you stand out; it makes you different and feels prestigious. You know my company is called Kente Master so when people see me wearing Kente, they go like wow, that is the Kente Master himself. Then I will take the opportunity to talk to them about Kente and its significance to them.

– Peter Akanko, CEO of Kente Master

He told me he is not the only person who wears Kente for this purpose but he believes many Ghanaians wear it for these reasons. This is what he told me:

...sure people do get it because when you observe a wedding for example, if you have seen Gifty Anti's [a Ghanaian journalist and celebrity] *wedding, if you look at the Kente they wore, you know that these people are special; nowadays when people are getting married they also want Kente because of some sort of self-esteem. If two people go for a wedding and one is wearing a Kente and the other is wearing wooden* [a form of printed cloth made with wooden stamps]*, the one with Kente will attract more attention than the other with GTP or wooden. It gives people self-esteem; that is why they go for it.*

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4.3.3 Social technologies as linking capital

The use of social technologies in promoting the sale and wearing of Kente increasingly common and adds to the flow of Kente-related knowledge. Social technologies have shaped the selling and promotion of Kente. Social technologies are helping individuals to have access to Kente-related knowledge. Kente customers and users can now access several patterns of Kente through social technologies. Similarly, they are enabling Kente sellers to share their knowledge about Kente with their customers. Kente sellers these days use social media like *WhatsApp* and *Facebook* to market Kente and educate people about the various patterns of Kente and their meanings. Social media has also helped people with design selection through social media messages between sellers, buyers, designers, tailors. The following quote illustrates this:

> *All that I do is to send the designs available to the person through WhatsApp and the customer will make his or her choice and send it to me through WhatsApp...even we have been using Facebook and Instagram to showcase Kente to the world.*
>
> – Ama, a Kente seller

Through social media platforms, customers send photos of different designs to the Kente weavers for weaving and delivery. One of the weavers also sells directly to the user:

> *Of late I receive orders from customers through WhatsApp. They normally send me photos of the designs they want.*
>
> – Kwame, a Kente tailor

The users also take photos and post them on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, for wearing Kente is a matter of pride, identity, status, and hence widely shared on social media platforms.

Yaw Mensah, a Kente user and dealer also opined that Kente sellers have devised a new approach to reaching their customers. He sees the application of social media to Kente selling as a new knowledge that Kente sellers have acquired. He noted that social media applications such as Instagram and Facebook are being used by the Kente sellers to disseminate Kente-related knowledge, and also to reach customers:

> *It has changed a lot. In the old days, most people would have to travel to Bonwire before they buy Kente, but currently, there are a lot of Kente vendors who move from town to town and city to city to sell Kente. In fact, the new media has really helped in the selling and buying of Kente. In recent times most people go Instagram, Facebook and look for their favourite designs and when they get them, they will download and send it the weavers for them to weave such designs for them. I also have a lot of designs on my phone so when a colleague needs Kente I will just WhatsApp the design to the colleague to make his or her.*

<div align="right">– Yaw Mensah, a Kente dealer and user</div>

In the view of this participant, social technologies have transformed the way Kente is traded. They have made it convenient for users to buy the cloth. As well, they have improved the sharing of Kente knowledge, especially the patterns, among sellers and buyers. The findings corroborate the idea that social technologies facilitate information sharing. Social technologies can therefore be considered a linking capital for Kente weavers, sellers and users. They help Kente sellers to reach customers who hitherto

were not reachable. On the other hand, customers who were not able to access Kente because the sellers were not accessible to them can now have access to social technologies.

4.3.4 Company website

The Kente Master website is one of the important channels through which Kente-related knowledge has flowed to the many people in Ghana and abroad. This was evident in an interview with Peter Akanko. He told me during the interview that his company has been using its website to tell people about the history of Kente and its significance in the life of people. When I visited the company's website on 11 February 2017, I found a video of some Kente weavers. The video shows the processes involved in Kente weaving. It also shows the equipment, tools and materials that are used for Kente weaving.

4.3.5 Benevolence

The literature shows that trustworthiness is central to knowledge flow (See Myer et al., 1995; Coleman 1990). Myer et al. (1995) conceptualised trustworthiness to include ability, integrity and benevolence. In this study, I found the benevolence dimension to be a facilitator of Kente-related knowledge flow.

One of the interviewees, named Obeng, told me that he has taught some young men Kente weaving without taking any money from them. Some of these people came from the Volta region while others are natives of the Bonwire Kente weaving village. According to him, none of these people paid him because in the Bonwire Kente-weaving community it has become part of their values to pass on Kente-related knowledge to others without a fee. There are times when people from other communities come to Bonwire to learn to weave and pay a small amount of money, or offer a bottle of Schnapps to the master weaver. However, in this situation, it is to show

that the apprentice is under the authority of the master weaver and that the master weaver has an obligation to teach the apprentice. For continuity's sake, master weavers in the Bonwire Kente weaving village have an obligation to pass on Kente-related knowledge to other people within the community, and others from other communities who are interested in learning Kente weaving:

> *I have also taught some people how to weave. I have taught them the basics in weaving, for, how to fold the thread. … They were people I did not know; they are not my relations or family members. They are natives from Bonwire. And also are Voltarians.*
>
> – Obeng, a Kente weaver

The role of benevolence is expressed in this extract. That is, by sharing Kente weaving with people he did not know, and by not charging them, Obeng has exhibited benevolence in his relationship with the people.

4.4 How new knowledge is created

In this section, I examine how social relations and social structures facilitate knowledge flow. I also explore how knowledge flow results in the creation of new Kente-related knowledge. However, before I present these findings, I ascertain if new Kente-related knowledge has emerged over the years.

4.4.1 New Kente-related knowledge creation

Knowledge creation has been defined as 'an intensely human, messy process of imagination, invention and learning from mistakes, embedded in a web of human relationships' (Scharmer, 2001, p. 247). According to this definition, it is clear from the findings of this study that new Kente-related knowledge has been created over the years.

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For example, Akwasi who is a Kente tailor told me there have been some changes in Kente production, selling, using the sewing of Kente strips as an example, he mentioned that new techniques have been developed to sew the strips. I asked him to explain how the new techniques differ from the older ones but he couldn't explain in words, he could only demonstrate. This suggests the tacit nature of that knowledge. As observed by Nonaka (1994), tacit knowledge is difficult to articulate and communicate. Akwasi said that even when he demonstrates the two techniques to me, I might not understand the difference unless I have some Kente sewing and weaving knowledge. This indicates the technical nature of the Kente weaving knowledge, and how experience is important in this knowledge flow:

> *There have been many changes. What I will say is there have been some new ways of sewing the strips together but I am finding it difficult to tell you, I can only demonstrate to you. Even with this you should be someone familiar with Kente production in other to understand well.*

> – Akwasi, a Kente tailor

Akwasi, however, acknowledged that the new knowledge that has emerged is not entirely new, but an improvement upon existing knowledge. He sees Kente as an art, so an individual's imagination and creativity can result in incremental knowledge. He mentioned, for instance, that a Kente weaver could just pick some patterns or designs and imagine how a combination of such existing patterns could be produced. He will then try and if it works out, it becomes a new Kente pattern and that person or the elders in the Bonwire Kente weaving village will name the pattern and it will be added to the existing canon of patterns. This narration confirms Nahapiet and Ghoshal's (1998) assertion that new knowledge is created via a combination of existing ideas:

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Our forefathers have created these designs already but Kente is an
art, so you can just look at two designs and imagine how they will look
like if they are merged. Sometimes you can look at the designs of other
ordinary fabrics and copy the designs.

– Akwasi, a Kente tailor

Similarly, Kwame noted that new knowledge about Kente emerges continually. He cited, for example, a new way of sewing the strips of Kente. However, when I asked him about this new way of sewing, he could not explain it either, but demonstrated it to me. This again suggests the tacit nature of this knowledge. Kwame said that:

There have been changes in the style or the way we sew the strips
together. In the olden days, there was only one style but now we have
other styles of sewing.

– Kwame, a Kente tailor

Yaw Mensah is also of the view that although a new idea about Kente weaving has emerged, there cannot be a radical innovation due to the traditional nature of Kente. That is, weavers cannot create an entirely new Kente pattern. He quoted one of the Kente patterns called *adwene asa* which literally translates to 'all ideas/ knowledge have been exhausted' to make his point. He said that the weavers could only add some new features to the existing ones:

I believe that all the designs have been created by our forefathers
already. What we are doing is to change the colours and add new
features to the existing ones. So I will say that we are not adding
anything new, it is just the existing designs we are modifying. That is
why among the designs, there is one called 'adwene asa' which
literally means 'all ideas/ knowledge have been exhausted'.

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Sometimes, some individuals will create a design which they might think is a new one but the elders in this community will tell us that this design is already in existence and they will prove it to them by showing them a sample.

– Yaw Mensah, a Kente user and dealer

Yaw Mensah continued:

The names you hear now are not the original names of the cloth. The sellers have given them new names to the designs in order to attract customers. Most people buy the cloth because of the names. They want to communicate certain messages so they try to choose or buy those designs that communicate the particular message they want to communicate. For example, there was this man who liked litigation so he told a weaver that he wants them to weave a Kente with the name 'when you are superior to others'; they will hate you or be jealous of you when you wear this design. Just after this name emerged, a lot of people started buying the cloth; meanwhile, the design had existed for a very long time and no one was buying it, but when the name was changed to this one most people started buying the design.

– Yaw Mensah, a Kente user and dealer

Asantewaa also noted that there have been new designs of Kente, which she sees as a modification of the old designs:

Also, there have been new designs. Now we have a lot of designs to select from. Even there have some modifications to the old designs.

– Asantewaa, a Kente user

Ama also supported the idea that new Kente-related knowledge that emerges is normally not entirely new but rather a modification of the existing knowledge. For example, she said that the patterns have been inherited from weavers' forefathers but sometimes some customers make suggestions that will help the Kente weavers modify those patterns to create new patterns out of them:

> *Most of the designs are existing designs we inherited from our forefathers. But let me add that the customers also help us to create new designs. As I said earlier, they sometimes suggest to me appropriate colour combinations and sometimes come to me with their own designs.*

> – Ama, a Kente seller

She further said that when it comes to the naming of new patterns, it is a collective effort of the Kente weavers and sellers and the elders in the Bonwire Kente weaving village. She indicated that when the design is made, the weaver (inventor) may present the design to the elders of the Bonwire weaving community to name the design, or the weaver may propose a name for the design. There are times that customers name designs after prominent people who wear the designs for public functions. She gave an example, a design that was named after Gifty Anti, a popular broadcaster in Ghana. However, the customers and the sellers are the ones who spread the names and make them popular. There are even some customers who buy designs or patterns because of the name. She said that:

> *I will say that the weavers, sellers, the elders in the community may create designs. However, the customers and the sellers are the ones who spread the names and make them popular. There are some customers who simply buy some designs because of the name.*

As Agyeman also pointed out, new ideas have been developed in Kente weaving. He noted that the earlier Kente strips were smaller than the current ones, and this is due to the techniques used. He also noted that there have been some improvements and developments in the loom design. According to Agyeman, as a result of the process of finding ways to increase the speed of weaving, looms now have gears on them, which make them weave faster. Agyeman tells me that:

> *Yes, there have been some changes. For example, in the old days the strips used to be small, however, the current strips are large. Furthermore, there have been developments in the design of the loom. In the old days, the looms did not have any gears but now they do and this has made weaving faster and less stressful. You do not need to use a lot of energy like it used to be.*
>
> – Agyeman, a Kente
>
> seller

Agyeman believes that in the future they will be able to develop new ways of weaving effectively and efficiently but they will never use machines to weave as that will make Kente lose its value:

> *Oh yes as time goes on, there might be changes. We did not imagine that we could design a loom that will make weaving so fast. But we will not rush into using a machine for weaving; it loses its value, because we believe Kente weaving is a gift from God to the Bonwire community. We will use our hands to weave as our forefathers did.*
>
> – Agyeman, a Kente weaver

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Maame Yaa also noted that sellers have acquired new knowledge in their trading activities. She said that initially, foreigners were their target market; however, in recent times sellers have noted that the young men and women in Ghana have developed a taste for Kente, so now they focus more on this category of customers:

There have been so many changes in Kente selling. At first, we were only targeting foreigners. When they come for a tour in Bonwire, we would follow them with the Kente and try to convince them to buy.

– Maame Yaa, a Kente seller

Maame Yaa also said that:

For the selling, initially we were not selling them in shops but now due to its popularity, we sell them in store.

– Maame Yaa, a Kente seller

Also, in the Kente Master case, the analysis of the interviews I had with the participants revealed that over the years there has been an emergence of new Kente-weaving knowledge. According to Oppong, Kente weavers have moved from using *earth-weavers* to using looms. The size of Kente strips has also been modified. Some weavers have developed techniques for weaving larger Kente strips. This is what Oppong told me:

There have been changes in how Kente is woven. When Kente weaving started, there was nothing like a loom (the equipment for weaving), when Kente weaving started people used to use an equipment called earth-weaver (Asase ntonma). Apart from that, we have modern and traditional weaving. Modern weave; this one has large strips of the Kente. For example, if you go the Kumasi cultural center they do the modern weave. Traditional weave; the traditional weave has small

strips. The small strip keeps the tradition of Kente. For example, if you look at the kinds of Kente that Otumfoɔ (the Asantehene) wears, it is always made up of small strips. The difference results from the kind of beater that people use. The beater determines the size of the strips.

– Oppong, a Kente weaver

Peter Akanko also acknowledged that new knowledge has been created in regard to Kente. This is what he said:

Yes because in the olden days they used to use a pliable wood until they started using looms, but since looms came there hasn't been any change but apart from that nothing has really changed. They are finding it difficult to get the thread because they get the thread from China, so if there is a shortage then they find it difficult but nothing has really changed but it is still the loom...

Yes looking at how the world is going with technological advancement, I am sure someone might probably come out with a machine which could make weaving much, much simpler but those right now, those in the village, are still sticking to the loom to weave, but hopefully if there are advanced machines which they will be able to adapt to, they will use them because using the loom, it takes a while for them to weave the Kente.

– Peter Akanko, CEO of Kente Master

Oppong also pointed out the creation of Kente artefacts such as earrings, ties, shoes and bags as new knowledge that has emerged:

In our community, if you use Kente for earrings, people admire and it is acceptable. However, using Kente for shoes became a debate in recent times because when you wear shoes made with Kente, you will step your feet on the ground and because of the way Kente is valued, many people see that as an affront.

– Oppong, a Kente weaver

The use of Kente for these artefacts, especially shoes, has generated a lot of arguments among many people in Ghana, especially those in the communities that weave Kente, as to whether Kente should be used in this manner, considering its value. Sharing his opinion on this, Oppong told me that he sees nothing wrong with that. This is what he said:

I personally believe that there is nothing wrong with that because it is a way of creating new uses of Kente and creating new opportunities and expanding our business.

– Oppong, a Kente weaver

The creation of new Kente-related knowledge has not been limited to the patterns; it has been expanded to the creation of artefacts which did not previously exist.

4.5 Social Structures and New Kente-related Knowledge Creation

This study identified social interactions and the community as elements of social structures that have contributed to the creation of new Kente-related knowledge.

4.5.1 Social Interactions

According to Maria Jakubik, 'knowledge develops through these interactions, and therefore the process of knowledge creation is best understood by focusing on these micro-level interactions between individuals' (Jakubik 2008, p. 6). In this study, I noted

the role of social interactions in the creation of new Kente-weaving knowledge as well as Kente-selling knowledge.

Asantewaa observed that the sellers have found a new channel for selling their products. She recounted how many Kente sellers would in the old days carry their products around from house to house and community to community and sell them. However, the sellers have now opened Kente shops and many prospective buyers come there to buy. She attributed this change to the feedback they get from their customers when they meet them:

> *Also in the olden days, there were no Kente shops in this community, but currently there are over fifty shops in this community. Additionally, in the olden days, it was only in Bonwire that Kente was woven but now there are other communities who have learned the weaving.*
>
> – Asantewaa, a Kente user

Asante also indicated that new Kente-related knowledge in the form of new Kente patterns has emerged through interactions with some customers. He indicated that sometimes some of the customers make suggestions of colour combinations to him that he also passes on to the weavers. Some of the customers also make their own designs out of existing fabrics and present them to the sellers so that they can be woven into Kente:

> *I will attribute the emergence of new Kente patterns or designs to modernity because some customers come with their own designs. They sometimes pick the designs from other fabrics and present them to us to weave Kente of similar patterns for them.*
>
> – Asante, a Kente seller

Agyeman also noted that Kente weavers have discovered the use of the loom gear in Kente weaving. When I asked him who discovered it, Agyeman said 'we'; Agyeman was making reference to the weavers, for the idea was collectively developed by the weavers. He also attributed the emergence of new Kente patterns to some of the new knowledge in Kente weaving. Similarly, Agyeman uses the pronoun 'we' to refer to those who create the new designs or patterns. The creation of new patterns is normally a result of the creativity of the weavers and trial and error. As some participants in this study have indicated, the new patterns are typically adaptations of existing patterns:

> *We the weavers create the new designs. We normally look at the existing designs and imagine how we can add new features to the existing ones. We normally do this by trial and error so if people see it and they appreciate it, we then go for wholesale and the design/pattern is given a name. I have even created a new design which I named 'the future is bright' because I believe since Kente was handed down to us from our forefathers we must also try and develop it by adding new designs and features to it.*
>
> – Agyeman, a Kente weaver

As part of the ways to develop Kente, the weavers, sellers and customers do not only modify the patterns, they have also renamed some of the patterns to make them attractive to customers as well as increase sales. This is how Agyeman captured it:

> *We the weavers and the Bonwire community name the cloth. Normally some of these names are names of prominent celebrities in Ghana. For example, there is a Kente called Gifty Anti, although this Kente had existed for a very long time when new features were added and this popular newscaster Gifty Anti wore it, we named the cloth after*

her. There is another one called Julia Osei Tutu which was named

after the wife of the Asantehene because she wore it to a function.

<div align="right">– Agyeman, Kente weaver</div>

Maame Yaa, a Kente seller, also affirms how interactions with customers have promoted the creation of new Kente patterns. She noted that some of the customers are creative so they are able to offer suggestions about colour combinations of the threads, which end up in a new pattern:

The customers have also helped me a lot because whenever they

come to the shop they make a good suggestion, which I also pass on

to the weavers who weave for me. For example, they can tell me that

if you combine colour A with B it will look more beautiful than this

existing one. They sometimes bring some designs as well.

<div align="right">– Maame Yaa, a Kente seller</div>

Again, Maame Yaa observed how Kente sellers' interactions with customers contribute to the development of new patterns of Kente. She noted the role of the customers in naming the patterns. She also revealed that the customers sometimes rename some of the existing patterns of Kente to match current trends in the Ghanaian society. This is how Maame Yaa succinctly summarised it:

As for the designs, they are there already. What we do is to try and

combine some existing designs and see if it will look good. So once it

is appealing and customers accept them, they become popular. When

it comes to naming, most of the designs have names already but what

happens is that the customers sometimes change the names. They

sometimes name the designs after celebrities, famous people in

Ghana. So, for example, Kuffour apagya Ghana, Fatia fata Nkrumah,

<div align="center">188</div>

Gifty Anti are all designs that have existed for a very long time. They had their original names but the customers gave them these names because of the people who popularised the designs.

– Maame Yaa, a Kente seller

Likewise, in the Kente Master case, I found that new Kente patterns have been created as a result of interactions among customers, sellers and weavers. Oppong told me that many customers have helped Kente weavers to create new Kente patterns. He also noted that some of the customers have renamed some of the patterns:

Anybody can create a new design; an invention of new designs is not limited to weavers. Customers, sellers, individuals can create their own designs and give the design to the weavers to try their hands on it; if that design is 'weavable' and if they are able to weave the design, it is then given to the person to name the design. Most of the designs have existed for a long time, for example, 'Fatia fata Nkrumah' that was woven in honour of the first lady of the Republic of Ghana. This has existed for a long time but because we in a modern era someone may want to just add a new feature to the existing design and that new pattern is perceived as a new design.

– Oppong, a Kente weaver

Knowledge creation in this context is a result of the modification of existing knowledge. This comment shared by Oppong supports the view that knowledge is socially constructed. For example, the new name given to the existing pattern called *Fatia fata Nkrumah'* was created through the interactions among weavers, sellers and customers.

4.5.2 Community

The Bonwire Kente weaving village's role in the creation of new Kente-related knowledge was noted during the interview. The villagers have not only collectively created new Kente patterns, they have also named and renamed Kente patterns. The names give new meanings to the patterns and that attracts some new customers.

Kwabena, who is a weaver, tells me how new Kente-related knowledge emerges. He tells me that there are some areas of 'Kente value chain' where some changes have occurred. He mentioned that there have been some changes in patterns. New patterns, as well as names, have emerged. He said that some weavers have created some new patterns:

The Kente weavers create the new designs. I have even created my new own design and the elders in the community gave it the name 'sika yenwe' (you cannot consume money). Money can only be used to make properties and perform other functions but not for consumption. So when I first made the design, I presented it to the elders of the community to name it. Over here we have different groups of Kente weavers so when a weaver creates a new design the person may decide to name it or present it to the elders to name it.

– Kwabena, a Kente weaver

Kwame also told me that through the creativity of the weavers and tailors, and sometimes complaints and suggestions from customers, they have been able to create new patterns and have improved upon the patterns they weave. Like other participants in this study, Kwame acknowledged that the new knowledge is not entirely new. He believes that the new knowledge results from the modification of extant knowledge. Using the emergence of new Kente patterns as an example, he said that weavers just

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add some new features to existing patterns and give it a new name and that becomes a new pattern:

> *The designs are there already. What we do is to add new features and colours to the existing ones. Anyone can create new designs but when it comes to the naming, there are elders in this community who normally do the naming.*

– Kwame, a Kente tailor

Equally in the Kente Master case, the role of the community in the creation of new Kente-related knowledge was evident during the analysis of the interviews. It was also noted that the community had suppressed or discouraged the creation of new knowledge. For example, Peter Akanko noted that someone outside the Kente weaving community invented a machine that could make weaving faster and more efficient but the weavers opposed it and did not adopt the machine:

> *But the other thing too is that if someone comes out with a machine but that machine cannot be used by the Kente weavers, they will definitely oppose that because it will mean that they are taking their jobs from them, but they are the original weavers, so if they are developing a machine it should be a machine that the weavers can use because in that case it will help them weave faster and they will not oppose it, they will only oppose it if the machine is being used by another company for the production of the Kente.*

– Peter Akanko, CEO of Kente Master

Peter Akanko also noted the role of the Kente weaving community in the creation of new Kente patterns. He said that the creation of many of the patterns has resulted from cooperative efforts of the Kente weavers. This is what he told me:

With new pattern of Kente any weaver can decide to come out with a new design as there is no procedures laid down for new design; any weaver can decide to take an old design and modelled it into a new design; however, the person must register the design, there is an association so you will register with the leaders, but after that the proper designs are done at the district level and once that is finally done, an announcement is made that there has been a new design, this has been produced by this person, and is called this name, but when people come out with new designs they can decide to name it by themselves, but if they don't want to they don't have to. There are Kente without names because there are times they give the name to the Kente either by the association, or of individuals who developed the new design. But those I am working with now, most of them have names because they have been there for a long time; the design is not produced within short intervals, it takes time for people to come out with new designs.

– Peter Akanko, CEO of Kente Master

To some extent, the community ensure the quality of Kente-related knowledge (patterns) created. They also ensure that the knowledge created is consistent with the belief and practices of the people of Bonwire. In this case, the community play a custodian role.

4.6 Social relations and new Kente-related knowledge creation

The findings of this study show that elements of social relations such as social technologies play an important part in Kente-related knowledge flow and knowledge creation.

4.6.1 Social Technologies

The results from this study show that the emergence of social technologies has contributed to the creation of new Kente-selling knowledge. Social media has helped Kente sellers to identify new ways of reaching their customers and also of displaying their products.

One of the participants in this study, named Asante, told me during the interview that there have been changes in the distribution channels of Kente. There have been more and new channels of distribution. In the old days, many Kente users had to travel to the Bonwire Kente weaving village to access Kente, but now there are many Kente shops open across the major cities and towns in Ghana. Also, there are Kente vendors who move from place to place in order to sell Kente to the people. In other words, there was a 'pull demand' for Kente but now there is a 'push demand'. The sellers have devised new ways of selling Kente. They have even made use of new media such as Facebook and WhatsApp for displaying Kente products and also linking up with prospective customers. This suggests that social technologies have social capital that facilitates the selling of Kente as well as the transfer of knowledge. Social technologies have changed the ways Kente selling is done. They have made it easier for Kente sellers and customers to interact and have facilitated access to Kente and Kente-related knowledge. Asante told me that:

> *Yes, there can be changes in the selling. As I told you earlier, now we have women who move around the country and sell Kente but it was not so in the early days. Even currently WhatsApp and Facebook are being used to sell Kente so there can be changes in the future.*

> – Asante, a Kente seller

Asantewaa also observed that there have been a lot of changes to Kente-related knowledge. She emphasised how WhatsApp is shaping the interactions between Kente sellers and buyers, and how people buy Kente:

There have been changes in the buying and selling of Kente. At first, anyone who wants Kente will come to Bonwire and buy from a weaver but now there are women vendors who carry Kente around from one community to the other and sell to the buyers. However, with the advancement in technology, we normally get samples on WhatsApp and we will make our choice. Most of the sellers put the samples of designs on their WhatsApp profile so if we see and want the design we will just contact the seller and ask him or her to deliver it to us.

– Asantewaa, a Kente user

Ama told me how social media is shaping and changing how Kente is sold. She noted that with the advent of social media, her customers are able to place orders without necessarily walking to her shop. Some of her customers now make orders through WhatsApp. They just send her the photos of their preferred patterns. She also told me she has been using Facebook to display and promote her products. She finds that social technologies have made it easier for her to share information with her customers. She is also able to describe and explain the various Kente patterns and their meanings on Facebook. This is what Ama said:

Yeah, there have been some few changes. Now through social media, we are able to sell Kente. Of late I receive orders from customers through WhatsApp. They normally send me photos of the designs they want. But in the olden days, they had to bring me the samples of the Kente they want, to me personally, here in Bonwire.

That is, as technology is changing rapidly it is likely to have a significant impact on the Kente industry in Ghana. These changes will not only shape how Kente is sold, they have the potential to shape the invention of Kente patterns as well. Similarly to Ama's assertion, Maame Yaa noted that sellers have also found and adopted new channels of communication and distribution. She noted that Kente shops are using social technology like WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram to reach customers:

> *As I said we did not have these stores/ shops in my days. We also used to carry the cloth from customer to customer trying to persuade them to buy some. Even if a customer wants to select and buy only one design, I had to carry all the designs I have to him or her to select the design he or she wants, but now because of WhatsApp, I don't have to do that. All that I do is to send the designs available to the person through WhatsApp and the customer will make his or her choice and send it to me through WhatsApp. We have also been using Facebook and Instagram.*

– Maame Yaa, a Kente seller

Maame Yaa is of the view that social technologies will play a key role in whose selling activities. Her assertion was based on the fact that currently they hardly use the methods their forefathers used to sell Kente:

> *I believe there is going be changes in the way Kente is sold. Technology is going to play a key role in Kente selling because as we learned from our forefathers Kente selling was between the weaver and the buyer but now as I said people have opened shops and social media is being used to sell Kente so that can change in the future also.*

Marfo, who is a Kente seller but also knows Kente weaving, tells me that now prospective buyers do not have to travel to Bonwire and select their preferred Kente. Such a decision is made using WhatsApp. Again, he mentioned that WhatsApp has made it easier for the sellers too, as they do not have to carry their products around and show them to prospective buyers. They are able to show them through WhatsApp:

There have been so many changes. In the olden days, people have to come to Bonwire and look at the various designs and buy their preferred designs but with the advancements in technology, someone will just WhatsApp the designs he or she prefers and ask the sellers to deliver them.

– Marfo, a Kente seller

The new knowledge here is the 'new channel' through which Kente sellers sell Kente to their customers and prospective buyers. Social technologies in this case are resources for the creation of new knowledge about Kente selling.

4.7 Knowledge flow and knowledge creation

The findings of this study show that as Kente-related knowledge flows among some users, new meanings are created and assigned to the colours used in Kente. These new meanings inform users to select a particular colour of Kente. For instance, Yaw Mensah observed that many Ghanaian youth do not like Kente with certain colours:

Furthermore, most of the youth do not like the Kente with the colours red, yellow, green and black, which were the original colours because they are saying that these types are normally used to decorate corpses or dead bodies. They prefer purple, blue.

Yaw Mensah's observation suggests that as knowledge flows, new meanings emerge from it. This is also my own experience and also my mother's (Chapter 1 and 2), so it seems it is not just a new trend. The new knowledge that is created is accessed through social relations and social structures.

4.8 Prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente and Kente-related knowledge

In this section, I explore how the Chinese-origin Kente is impacting on Kente-related knowledge. Three main themes emerged from the analysis of the data and these are presented below.

4.8.1 Knowledge Distortion

Many of the participants mentioned that the prevalence of the Chinese-origin Kente is distorting Kente-related knowledge. Some of the participants told me that some people, especially non-Ghanaians and those who are not familiar with Kente, find it difficult to distinguish it from the original version. I noticed that some of the customers or users of Kente do not know the difference between an authentic Kente and an imitation version produced on a machine loom. Conversely, I observed that some of the people who buy the imitation actually know the difference, but because the authentic ones are expensive, they buy the imitations which are cheaper:

> *Many people especially non-Ghanaians do not know the*
> *difference between the original Kente and the imitation which*
> *is normally produced in China. They usually identify Kente by*
> *the design, so to some people, anything with the Kente designs*
> *is seen as Kente but that is not the case.*
>
> – Asante, a Kente seller

From Asante's statement, it can be said that the high price of the authentic Kente contributes to the distortion of knowledge about the authentic Kente. During an interview, Yaw Mensa, a consumer and a dealer in Kente, shared a similar view. According to Yaw Mensa:

> *…If you are standing far from someone wearing the Chinese version, you might not see the difference but when you go closer, there you can see the difference…some people, especially those who are not Ghanaians, and to some extent those who are not natives of Bonwire, are not able to differentiate between the original version and the imitation so they may buy the Chinese version at a higher price from the market, thinking that they have bought the original Kente.*

> – Yaw Mensah, a Kente user and dealer

Furthermore, some of the participants said that although in recent times it has become common for people, including Ghanaians, to make reference to Chinese Kente, the Chinese do not have a version of Kente and they do not weave Kente. According to those participants, what the firms in China produce is not Kente and therefore no one should refer to it as such. Some of the participants were not happy when I made reference to Chinese-origin Kente during the interview. The following are some comments from the participants:

> *I will not agree or I do not say the Chinese are producing Kente but what I will say is that the Chinese have just copied the Kente designs and printed them on some fabrics but those are not Kente. But even now they are not popular as it used to be. The production of the imitations has gone down because many people have stopped buying and using the imitations. I will say*

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many people have realised the imitation is not Kente, and that they are not respected when they are wearing them to an important ceremony.

– Maame Yaa, a Kente seller

From this view, it can be inferred that authentic Kente is the handwoven type. Although anything designed with Kente patterns may be referred to as Kente, it is the handwoven cloth that is 'real Kente'.

I am very happy the Chinese have not been able to produce the exact versions of the authentic Kente but what they currently doing is disfiguring and twisting the authentic Kente. It is making it difficult for many people to know what an authentic Kente is and what Kente represents in our culture. It can also devalue Kente so I think the government must do something about it by protecting through legislations.

– Barima, a Kente user

Some of the participants believe that because the producers of the China-origin Kente imitations do not know the cultural significance of Kente, they use any fabric in the production. However, among the weavers of the original Kente, each colour in the cloth is chosen for a purpose and quality threads and yarn are used for the weaving to show the prestigious status of Kente. This trend is also capable of distorting cultural knowledge about Kente. The following are some comments from some of the participants:

It is quite unfortunate that many companies are imitating and distorting the value of Kente but I can also say it is making it affordable for many people to own Kente. I would prefer a Ghanaian

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producing the imitations because they understand the Ghanaian culture and the value of Kente so they will know how to blend colours to communicate to people but the Chinese do not know our culture so they just blend any colours.

<div align="right">– Esi, a Kente user</div>

In this view, it is not only the knowledge about Kente that is being distorted but the values of the people of Ghana which the various patterns of Kente communicate. Understanding the cultural values, philosophies and practices is important for preserving Kente-related knowledge.

I feel so bad that the Chinese firms and other companies are imitating our cherished cloth. My fear is that if we Ghanaians do not take care, Kente will lose its cultural significance. If steps are not taken to stop the production of the imitations and the Kente-weaving industry in Ghana collapses, we will have nothing to show the future generation. The imitations are likely to impact negatively on culture because many people will not know the meanings of the patterns or the designs and these meanings are very important to our way of life.

<div align="right">– Kofi, a Kente user</div>

Asante, who is a Kente seller, told me that because some people find it difficult to differentiate between the original and the imitations which are mostly from China, he bought a piece of the Chinese version and keeps it in his shop to help his customers understand the difference. This is what Asante said:

I have both the original and the imitations in my shop to educate people on the difference between the original and the imitations.

<div align="right">– Asante, a Kente seller</div>

From this, it can be said that Asante acknowledges that Kente-related knowledge is being distorted. Educating customers on the differences between the imitation version and the authentic version is a step that Asante has taken to ensure that knowledge about Kente and its authenticity is preserved.

4.8.2 Authenticity of Kente and Kente-related Knowledge

Authenticity is a topical concept among some consumers, especially in cultural tourism and among users of cultural artefacts. In this study, I identified two forms of authenticity with regard to the Kente cloth. While some of the participants in this study raised concerns about the authenticity of the status that people communicate using Kente, others raised concerns about what Kente is and is not. During the interviews, seven of the participants told me there is no Chinese-origin Kente. They told me not to mention the term *Chinese-origin Kente* because there is no such thing. According to them, what has become known as Chinese-origin Kente is just a plain cloth with Kente patterns printed on it, and that does not make Kente. These participants explained to me that Kente is a hand-woven cloth with different patterns and colours communicating a particular message. The colours are specifically chosen by the weavers to communicate that message. However, according to the participants, the producers of the Chinese-origin cloth have no clue about what these colours mean. According to these participants, the producers of the Chinese-origin Kente are just producing them for the economic benefits and do not know the cultural significance of Kente. The following are comments from some of the participants:

> *… Although some people buy the Chinese version of Kente, there are*
>
> *some reasons for this decision. Some people just buy the imitations*
>
> *for everyday use while they buy the original for special occasions like*

a marriage ceremony.   There are others who also buy the original

Kente and keep it for posterity.

– Ofosu, a Kente tailor

Additionally, the participants tried to differentiate between the original Kente and the imitations using the texture of the two versions. They indicated that the texture of the original version is rough while that of the imitations is smooth. Again, the imitations do not show the Kente designs on both sides of the cloth; however, the original Kente has the designs on both sides of the cloth.   These are some comments from the participants:

The original version is heavier and thicker than the Chinese

version.   Although many people buy the Chinese version of

Kente, they buy the original version when they are attending a

wedding/ marriage ceremony or any other important occasion.

Especially brides and bridegroom will always choose the

original version over the Chinese version. Many people choose

the original version because of its quality and the status that

comes with it. Even people who buy the pirated version may

want to get the original version but for the price. One might not

want to use the original version as daily attire or for designing

Kente artefacts like shoes and bags because of the price and

how prestigious it is, so normally they use the imitations for

these artefacts.

– Yaw Mensa, a Kente user and dealer

From this extract, it can be inferred that price has been the main reason that people use the imitation Kente which is normally produced in China. In the following extracts,

Esi also emphasised the authenticity issue that has arisen as a result of the emergence of the imitation Kente:

The authentic Kente makes you confident but the fake one does not give me any emotions because they are just like an ordinary cloth. If I should see an imitation of the Kente my grandmother gave me, I will be so disappointed, but I cannot do anything to the person but I will not buy that version, and I will not encourage anyone to buy that. Anytime I see a colourful Kente, I get closer to the person and touch the cloth to ascertain its authenticity. I know the pride that comes with Kente so I normally want to know if such pride is authentic.

– Esi, a Kente user

Another form of authenticity that emerged is the authenticity of status. As I indicated earlier and as the findings of this study show, many people wear Kente to show or communicate social status. Those who wear Kente are perceived to be rich, and the need for this social status has contributed to the flow of Kente-related knowledge. However, some of the participants told me that people who use Chinese-origin Kente do not display the authentic social status that original Kente offers the users. It is very common among users of Kente to ascertain the authenticity of the cloth whenever they see others wearing the cloth or any artefact made with Kente. They normally get close to the person and if they have the opportunity, touch the cloth to ascertain its authenticity. I can relate to what my participants told me because I remember one day I wore a Kente tie for an academic conference in Australia and met a lady who was a Ghanaian. When I met her, she said 'your Kente tie is so beautiful' and she touched the tie to feel it, but I did not know why she touched it. But from the findings of this study,

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I can conclude that she was examining the authenticity of my Kente tie as well as the status I had assumed by wearing the Kente tie. The following are some of the comments from the participants:

When you wear the original version, people associate you with a higher status/class in the society. .... Many people appreciate those who wear Kente. Whenever they see someone wearing Kente they try to ascertain its authenticity. Many people normally try to ascertain the authenticity of the cloth when they see someone wearing it. They go closer to the person or may even touch the cloth to feel the texture. If they find out the Kente the person is wearing is not the original version, they begin to look down on the user. However, if they find out it is the original they respect the person a lot. It is painful if you wear the original version which you bought at an expensive price, and you see someone wearing the imitations. It is painful because, if the imitations were not available, that individual cannot assume the same status as the person wearing the original version. When people see individuals wearing the same design of Kente, the same respect and status will be accorded them until they know that one of them is wearing an imitation.

– Yaw Mensa, a Kente user and dealer

I find further support from the following extract:

Many people want to wear Kente because of its prestige but they do not have the money, that is why they resort to buying the imitations. I normally feel sorry for those who wear the imitations because I

believe that if you want to assume a particular status, you need to

pay for the cost that comes with it.

– Asante, a Kente seller

I can infer from this that users are more emotionally attached to the authentic Kente than the imitation version. This explains why some people buy the authentic Kente in spite of its expensiveness.   I also find support for this view in the following extract:

I feel great and proud that I am wearing an authentic Kente.

Anytime I wear that piece of Kente my grandmother gave, I feel

so proud because of its authenticity. I remember I once wore

that piece of Kente to a wedding and a woman walked up to me

and touched my Kente and asked where I bought it from because

it looked different and was authentic.

– Esi, a Kente user

From this quote, I can infer that users and other individuals who are interested in Kente want to preserve the authenticity of Kente. By normally ascertaining the authenticity of the Kente some people wear, the individuals are in a way ensuring that users buy the authentic Kente. Peter Akanko also acknowledged that there is some imitation Kente on the Ghanaian market but it does not offer users the prestige, social status and royalty they want, so they take the time to ascertain the authenticity of a particular piece of Kente before they buy. This is especially true when they are attending events like weddings or on other important occasions. Peter Akanko emphasised that:

Those from China and elsewhere are not accorded the same

significance, considered as Kente, or regarded as such, because they

are perceived as printed materials, but we are looking at the original

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Kente, the woven one. The woven one gives royal status. The printed Kente are fabric just like any other fabric like GTP, so the Chinese have taken the Kente patterns and have printed them and that can't even be actually recognised as real Kente; it is just the patterns that they have taken and printed but if we are talking about Kente we are talking about the hand woven Kente, we don't regard the printed ones as Kente.

– Peter Akanko, CEO of Kente Master

Similarly, a participant named Kofi pointed out the authenticity of Kente. He indicated that authentic Kente creates authentic status for the user and that the cultural and social significance of Kente resides in the authentic versions. These are some comments from Kofi:

Although people refer to the imitations as Kente and they may wear it on any ordinary day, those people might not want to wear the imitations to a function like a marriage ceremony because the person will feel embarrassed. The person will think that others will ridicule him or her for assuming a 'fake status' because in such traditional or important functions, many people prefer wearing original Kente. ... I do not value the Chinese version /imitations of Kente because it does not offer the kind of status that the original version creates for its users…. In occasions like marriage ceremonies and durbars, many people wear the original Kente to show their status and the rich culture. To me, the cultural significance of Kente resides in the originality of the cloth. I will never wear the imitations of Kente even

> *if someone gives it to me free of charge because the pride of wearing*
>
> *the original Kente is not embedded in the imitated one.*

<div align="right">– Kofi, a Kente user</div>

By wearing the imitation version on ordinary days and wearing the authentic version on special occasions, the users acknowledge that the value of the two are not the same. The imitation version does not show the full cultural significance of Kente. This assertion is also captured by Maame Yaa, a Kente seller:

> *I do not respect anyone who wears the imitations of Kente because*
>
> *that is not Kente. If anyone wants to enjoy the privileges that come*
>
> *with wearing Kente, the person must wear the original version*
>
> *because it is only in the original version that one can get that prestige.*

<div align="right">– Maame Yaa, a Kente seller.</div>

Although the imitation version is referred to as Kente, it is not able to communicate the prestige that the authentic version communicates. The authentic version thus becomes the preferred one for those who wear Kente for its prestige purposes.

4.8.3 Legal protection for Kente patterns/ Designs

Many of the participants acknowledged that they have seen Chinese origin Kente on the Ghanaian market. Some of the Kente weavers and sellers told me that before the Chinese-origin Kente became popular, many Chinese used to visit Bonwire with their cameras and take photos of the weavers and the designs. According to these weavers, they did not know the motive behind that. They thought the Chinese were taking the photos for their memories just like other tourists who visit Bonwire. However, it turned out that some were taking the photos to make imitation Kente. This is a comment from one of the participants:

Initially, we had much Chinese visiting Bonwire with their cameras and they will take photos of the weavers and the designs. We did not know the motive behind that. We thought they were taking the photos for the memories just like another tourist who visit Bonwire. When we realised that they were copying our designs, we have stopped them from taking photos. What they do now is to visit Facebook where many Kente designs are posted and they will download and start printing them on other fabrics and sell them in the Ghanaian market.

– Maame Yaa, a Kente seller

In many ways, the same technologies that help Kente users find designs of their liking and connect with the Kente weavers and Kente sellers are also helping others outside Ghana copy the patterns to make printed amd machine-loomed imitations. Many of the participants raised concerns about the need to legally protect Kente against imitations. They are of the view that in order to protect Kente designs from imitations or appropriations the government of Ghana must enact laws that will protect these designs and the interest of Kente weavers.   These are some of the comments from the participants:

I think that one of the ways so we can protect our designs is to register them or get a copyright for all our designs but it might cost a lot to do that and we do not have money to do that. I think the government should help protect the designs because if there is a legal protection, I am not sure the Chinese will copy the designs.

– Maame Yaa, a Kente seller

The role of the government in protecting cultural artefacts is underlined here. However, Fosu, who is a tailor, shared a contrary view as captured in the following statements:

We see the Asantehene as the custodian of Kente so anytime we weave a new design, we present it to the Asantehene and once he approves of the design, it is woven for other people. Because the Asantehene is the custodian of Kente, I believe the Kente should be registered in the name of the Asantehene. However, currently, there is no legal protection for Kente, which is why many people copy the designs free of charge. The government of Ghana has done little to protect Kente legally; however, the government has set up a task force consisting of members of the security services in Ghana to arrest people who import the imitations of Kente. The task force normally seize and burn this cloth when they find them.

– Ofosu, a Kente tailor

Ofosu sees Kente as a community property of the Asantes and therefore sees it as the king's duty to protect the patterns against piracy. That is, in Ofosu's view, Kente is collectively owned by the Asante tribe. This view was corroborated by another interviewee when I asked about who owns the designs and in whose name the designs can be registered; he said that no individual can claim ownership of the design and for that matter no one can register the designs in their own names:

It can only be registered in the name of the Bonwire community because the community owns the cloth. There is anecdotal evidence in the Bonwire community that the ancestors of one of the families in this community were the first to invent Kente so I think weavers in this community should pay some fee to the family (as franchising and

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licensing). Even then the problem is that there are other communities

in and near Bonwire and other places that also weave Kente and

claim ownership of Kente so it will be difficult to register Kente or

protect Kente through copyright.

– Maame Yaa, a Kente seller

Another participant shared with me how he has taken steps to protect the designs he creates but that approach is not sustainable:

I have employed some individuals to weave for me and whatever

design they make becomes mine. In my own way what I do to

protect the design is that, whenever I create a new design for a

user, I sell it at a higher price before other weavers start

copying or even before the Chinese create the imitations. When

I am delivering to the consumer or the user who ordered, I put

it in an opaque package so that no one sees the design. With this

approach I am only able to protect it for a few days; when the

user starts wearing the cloth, people will see it and copy it.

They normally take photos and put on Facebook and Instagram

and that is where many people copy the designs. Another way

I have used to protect my design is that whenever I take a new

design to a tailor to sew the Kente strips together, I tell him not

to allow anyone to take photos of the designs.

– Yaw Mensa, a Kente user and dealer

There were other participants who were of the view that it is difficult to protect Kente legally against imitations because their forefathers who invented Kente did not patent the designs as they were not aware of such laws and the current weavers did not see the

need either until the Chinese-origin Kente started emerging. They also indicated that the use of social media like Facebook for promoting Kente makes it easier for people to access the Kente patterns. The following are some comments from the participants:

> *We are handicapped in protecting the appropriation of the designs because our forefathers did not see the need and they were not aware of that when Kente was first invented.*

> – Asante, a Kente seller

This view was corroborated by another Kente seller:

> *It will be difficult to protect Kente designs against appropriation because many of the weavers have been using Facebook to promote the designs and they are no legal protection for these designs so it will be difficult to protect the designs against the appropriation.*

> – Ama, a Kente seller

In this way, social technologies have contributed to the appropriation of Kente-related knowledge. The unregulated posting and sharing of Kente patterns on social media makes it easier for people to copy these designs for free.

4.8.4 Chinese-origin 'Kente' and access to cultural capital

The emergence of the Chinese-origin Kente has had a mixed effect on the traditional Kente industry and on Ghanaian and African society in general. Due to its affordability and accessibility, many people who hitherto did not have access to Kente can now own Kente. Such people can now buy 'Kente' to show their identity as Asantes, Ghanaians and Africans. That is, imitation Kente has contributed to cultural inclusion and an increase in people's sense of belonging. Although the imitation Kente does not have the same value as the authentic Kente in terms of prestige and status, the identification role of Kente still exists in the imitation. Additionally, in a way, the imitation Kente has

helped to preserve the cultural significance of and the value placed on Kente. People use the cheaper imitation Kente on ordinary days and reserve the valuable authentic Kente for special occasions.

For example, Akwasi, who is a Kente weaver, told me that there are many Ghanaians who wish to wear Kente but due to the high price, they are unable to use Kente. When the imitation Kente entered the Ghanaian market, many of those people resorted to buying that:

> *Many Ghanaians want to use Kente, but because of its expense, only a few privileged in society who have money are able to use the authentic one. I will give you this example, many of the women this Bonwire community, when they give birth, they want their husbands to buy them Kente for their 'outdooring' but only a few can afford so such people may buy the imitated version.*
>
> – Akwasi, a Kente tailor

In this case, those women who would have been excluded from using Kente for their outdooring now have access and can participate in such cultural events that demand Kente. In another interview, I noticed that the imitation Kente promotes social mobility to a certain extent, especially among Ghanaians outside the country and Africans in the diaspora:

> *Whenever I see someone wearing Kente (authentic or imitated version), the first thing that comes to mind is that the person is a Ghanaian or has links with Ghana. For non-Ghanaians, I normally say such a person is either married to a Ghanaian, has a Ghanaian friend or has come to contact with a Ghanaian who has shared our*

culture with him or her. The Kente makes it easier for me to

approach the person and interact with him or her.

<div align="right">– Barima, a Kente user</div>

Similarly, Sarpomaa, who is a Kente user and based in Australia, had this to say:

When I see someone wearing Kente, it draws me closer to the

person, I am able to have a chat with the person on the pattern

of Kente the person is wearing, and I ask the part of Ghana the

person comes from. This creates a connection between us.

<div align="right">– Sarpomaa, a Kente user</div>

From these two extracts, it is evident that Kente promotes social mobility and increases a sense of belonging. The identification role of Kente is also evident in these two quotes. Another participant, named Kwabena, told me that many of the Kente artefacts, such as earrings, bags and shoes, are often made with the imitation version. People who might be interested in Kente and admire it but are not able to buy it due to the high price may buy Kente artefacts made with the imitation Kente:

The bags, shoes, earrings and the similar items you see around

are normally made of the Chinese version; only a few are

made of the authentic version. As I said, the authentic ones are

expensive and if you use those ones you have to sell it at a

higher price and with that only a few can afford.

<div align="right">– Kwabena, a Kente weaver</div>

In this case, although these artefacts are made of the imitated version, they have similar patterns and colours to the authentic ones; people who wear them are still identified as Asantes, Ghanaians or Africans wherever they may find themselves.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of my study, linking them to the social capital theory and the existing literature. I present this chapter in seven sections. In the first section, I discuss the extent to which the social capital theory explains the flow of traditional knowledge. In section two, I discuss the elements of social structures that facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge as found in the three cases studied. Similarly, the third section discusses the elements of social relations that facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge. In section four, I discuss how the flow of Kente-related knowledge results in the creation of new Kente-related knowledge. Sections five and six discuss how social structures and social relations, respectively, promote knowledge flow. Finally, I discuss the findings on how the prevalence of the Chinese-origin Kente is impacting on Kente-related knowledge, in section seven.

5.1 Social capital and Kente knowledge flow

I considered three theories in relation to this study: cultural theory (Hofstede 1980), social cognitive theory (Bandura 1986), and social capital theory (Coleman 1988). I chose to focus on the social capital theory because the cultural and social cognitive theories were inadequate to explain how social networks and groups promote knowledge sharing within traditional communities. However, the existing literature shows that in many traditional African societies knowledge flows through social networks, communities and groups (King et al. 2007; Moyi 2003; Macharia 1998). In view of this, I decided to use the social capital theory. The social capital theory posits that social structures and social relations promote individual and collective actions (Coleman 1988; Putnam 2003). I found this theory to be insightful in understanding how traditional knowledge flows among individuals and across the globe, since

evidence from the extant literature shows that elements within social structures and social relations promote knowledge sharing among individuals (see, for example, Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998). One of the strengths of Coleman's (1988) approach to social capital is its emphasis on the family and family networks, which emerged in my research as a crucial factor in the traditional world of Kente. In this view, bonding social capital is a good way to explain the transmission of traditional knowledge from one generation to another within the family. I found that the Kente-related knowledge is perceived as a family asset so that it is the responsibility of the family to preserve and ensure its transfer from one generation to the next. Even in situations where this traditional knowledge has economic value and where there is competition among the individuals involved in the knowledge flow, the social capital within the family and family networks is able to facilitate the flow of such traditional knowledge. However, cultural factors may limit access to the social capital within the family and family networks. For example, I found that the culture of the Bonwire Kente weaving village limits women's access to the Kente-weaving knowledge that men can easily access through their family networks even in a competitive environment. Culturally, it is a taboo in the Bonwire Kente weaving village for women to weave Kente, so Kente-weaving skills are not transmitted to women. Again, the social capital theory does not work so well with the socially based commercial networks and elements of social relations such as social identity and social status, especially when the knowledge has an economic value. In addition, where there is competition, the elements of social relations are less effective at facilitating the flow of Kente-related knowledge.

The findings of this study also show that where access to traditional knowledge becomes difficult, the social capital embedded in social media such as Facebook can help people who have no strong connections with the traditional communities to access knowledge from within these communities. For instance, in my study, I noticed that although the Kente weavers stopped allowing the Chinese Kente producers to come to the Bonwire Kente weaving village to take photos of the Kente patterns, the Chinese were able to access the Kente patterns on Facebook with ease. That is, Facebook can be considered bridging capital for the Chinese. Despite the lack of face-to-face interactions with the Kente weavers, individuals can instantaneously connect with Kente sellers, weavers, fashion designers and users and access the Kente-related knowledge they want through online sites. Facebook and WhatsApp usage is now common among Kente sellers, weavers, fashion designers and users. It helps these people to form connections with each other and form ties, which help them to access Kente-related knowledge and facilitate the selling of Kente. That is, to some extent bridging social capital, such as online sites, promotes individual access to Kente-related knowledge that previously could be accessed only through social groups, families and family networks.

Thus, when examining how social capital affects knowledge flow, it is important to pay attention to cultural orientation and competition. Knowledge is perceived as a source of competitive advantage for people engaged in economic activities, and thus people who possess Kente-related knowledge may have a competitive advantage over those who do not have such knowledge.

The findings of this study also point to the interrelationships among social capital, cultural capital, economic capital and symbolic capital. To some extent, the findings are parallel to Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital and other forms of capital such as symbolic, economic and cultural capital (see Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu 2002). In my study, I noticed shifts between cultural capital and economic capital when it came to how Kente-related knowledge was perceived, alongside the stable notion of Kente as symbolic capital. These forms of capital do not exist in isolation. They are interwoven and evolve and metamorphosis from one to the other. In other words, Kente and Kente-related knowledge that relates to what Bourdieu calls 'objectified cultural capital' has over the years helped people partake in cultural ceremonies such as rites of passage, naming ceremonies, marriage ceremonies and funerals. At the same time, Kente and Kente-related knowledge have gained economic value when people and individuals are able to access such knowledge through bonding social capital existing in the family and family networks. Kente-related knowledge has also evolved from being a cultural artefact into representing an Asante identity, a Ghanaian identity and to some extent an African identity. In other words, Kente-related knowledge is a symbolic capital that contributes to social participation and inclusion. For example, Kente knowledge helps Africans in the diaspora to connect to their African heritage. It also creates an opportunity for individuals to engage in social interactions and form networks, which can help people to access social capital.

5.2 Social Structure and Knowledge Flow

The social capital theory posits that social structures and social relations constitute social capital that promotes collective action (Putnam 2003; Coleman 1988). The

findings of this study are in line with this assertion. The role of the family in the flow of Kente-related knowledge is evident in the cases of Bonwire, the Kente Master website and the Ghanaians living in Australia. I found that many elements of social structure have facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge among people within communities and across the globe. For instance, families have over the years preserved Kente-related knowledge by making sure the knowledge is passed on from one generation to the next. As the first place of socialisation, the family has ensured that men in the family acquire Kente-production knowledge as part of their socialisation process, whilst the women learn how to sell Kente. I find this to be consistent with Fukuyama's (1995) claim that the family constitutes a social capital that supports the socialisation of people. In support of Fukuyama (1995), fathers teaching sons, uncles teaching nephews, grandfathers teaching grandsons, and brothers teaching brothers, are all attestations to the part family plays in the knowledge flow of Kente-related activities.

The flow of Kente-related knowledge was confirmed to take two forms within the family: strategic, thus planned (Xiaoggang & Mingshu 2005), and unconscious (Rodríguez-Elias et al. 2006). These are seen in the deliberate efforts of grandfathers, fathers and uncles passing on Kente-related knowledge to grandsons, sons and nephews respectively. In the case of some of the participants, their family members deliberately taught them about Kente at a certain period in their lives. For example, growing up as a boy, Kwabena sought out Kente-related knowledge from his uncle Fodjour. Likewise, Agyeman's grandfather, noticing Agyeman's interest in Kente, taught him. Agyeman's grandfather's decision to first teach him how to fold and arrange the yarn and threads is evidence that the Kente-related knowledge imparted to him was planned in a structured manner. However, unconsciously, as individuals associate with their grandfathers, grandmothers, fathers, mothers and other family members and see them

weave or talk about Kente, they acquire the knowledge unintentionally. This was the case for many of the participants, for their knowledge of Kente-related activities was not acquired through any conscious means. Ama, like Owusua, acquired her knowledge of Kente and its related activities unconsciously. Growing up in a family of Kente weavers and sellers, and seeing them perform their activities, she acquired the knowledge. The flow of Kente-related knowledge was conducted orally and face-to-face in the family. Similarly, Kwadwo, who was born in Ghana but currently resides in Australia, mentioned to me how as a child he had heard his parents and siblings talking about Kente. As a child, he did not know what Kente meant in the culture of Ghanaians so he could only appreciate the aesthetic beauty of Kente. However, when he grew up he realised the importance and the role of Kente in the Ghanaian culture as he heard stories about Kente from his friends. This supports Alemna and Sam's (2006) point about how knowledge is shared in the African society. According to them, in traditional African communities, knowledge flows through social groups and family relations. Knowledge was imparted through storytelling, oral narration about Kente-related history by the elders in the family. However, knowledge was acquired through observation also. This was seen in the scenario where grandfathers and fathers were observed and studied as they were weaving Kente. Despite the major role the family plays in imparting Kente-related knowledge, the family could also be a hindrance to the flow of Kente-related knowledge. This was the case of Asante, as his grandfather would not impart the knowledge about Kente to him until he had finished his formal schooling.

Another element of social structure that was found to have facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge is socialisation. Socialisation is closely linked to the family, which is seen as the first place of socialisation. Some of the participants had

acquired knowledge about Kente weaving and the sewing of Kente strips as part of their socialisation. Many of these participants are weavers. For instance, Ofosu, who is a Kente weaver, acknowledged that once a male is born into a family in the Bonwire Kente weaving village, the person acquires Kente-related knowledge naturally. Similarly, Oppong, who is a Kente weaver, pointed out that Kente weaving is generational knowledge that is inherited from family**.**

Friendship was also identified as an element of social structure that has facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge in the Bonwire Kente weaving village. I noted that Kente-weaving knowledge and the history and names of Kente flow through friendship. In the case of some of the participants, their Kente-related knowledge was acquired through association with friends. This finding is consistent with the findings of Xiaoggang and Mingshu (2005) and Rodríguez-Elias et al. (2006), who noted that friendship promotes knowledge flow in a working environment. Some of the weavers pointed out how they had either learnt weaving or perfected their weaving skills through their friends who are master weavers. Some of them said that they asked their friends to teach them Kente weaving, and the friends taught them, while others acquired Kente-weaving knowledge through their association with friends who knew Kente weaving. In the case of Ofosu, he was taught by a friend how to sew. Similarly, Kwadwo acknowledged during the interview that his friends told him stories about Kente. For example, Kwadwo told me that his friends told him that Kente originated in Bonwire and that if he needs the original Kente he should visit Bonwire and buy one. Akos, an Australian of Ghanaian origin, also told me how she had learnt the names of some of the Kente designs from her Ghanaian friends in Australia, and from friends in Ghana. From her friends, Akos learnt that new names of Kente designs have emerged and that some of the old designs have even assumed new names. From this finding, I can infer

that friendship constitutes social capital, which facilitates the flow of Kente-related knowledge.

I also found that institutions like tourist centres, educational institutions and apprenticeships have contributed to the flow of Kente-related knowledge. These institutions have also helped the flow of Kente-related knowledge not only in the Bonwire Kente weaving village, but also in Ghana generally, and even overseas. This is in line with Coleman's view that social capital results from appropriable organisations (Coleman 1988). Although some of these institutions have been intentionally set up to promote the flow of Kente-related knowledge, in other institutions, the flow of Kente-related knowledge has come as a residual effect of activities performed by and in those institutions.

The impact of formal education on knowledge acquisition in our society is indisputable. The Ministry of Education in Ghana has developed a formal curriculum that includes the history and cultural components of the major tribes in Ghana; students and pupils are taught the history and culture of their people. It is no coincidence that some of the respondents acquired their first Kente-related knowledge from school. In the case of Afia, she learnt about Kente at school in a subject called cultural studies, in which they were taught about Ghanaian textiles, food, dance, song, and norms. Kwabena learnt this history at school in Bonwire. As part of degree-attaining requirements, students and researchers of Kente, such as myself, also acquired some in-depth knowledge of Kente. For example, through research and transnational studies while studying at the University of Pennsylvania, the founders of Kente Master learnt a lot about Kente. In formal education, Kente-related knowledge flow from one node to the other was explicit. Only the history and a few facts about Kente were learnt in school. Knowledge of sewing, and folding of Kente is deemed practical or tacit

knowledge and is embedded in actions and performance (Nonaka 1994; Polanyi 1969). It could be acquired elsewhere, but not in school in Bonwire or anywhere else in Ghana. This, therefore, confirmed Lin, Wu and Tsai's (2013) point that knowledge flow among people is determined by the type of knowledge that is transferred, the source, the receiver, and the context within which the knowledge flows; an expert weaver or seller is not needed to teach just the history of Kente and a few facts about it.

The flow of Kente-related knowledge in the form of apprenticeships in Bonwire or elsewhere is purely informal. Formal apprenticeship programmes that train individuals to be Kente weavers and sellers are rare in Ghana, if they exist at all. One has to consult a master weaver and seller to be trained. In the case of Obeng, he was taught under apprenticeships, and being a master weaver now, he has apprentices he is training. This flow of Kente-related knowledge from master to apprentice is in agreement with Lin, Wu and Tsai's (2013) position that the type and the source of knowledge also determine the flow of knowledge. The practicalities of weaving Kente could not be taught by anyone who has not passed through the training and graduated. Graduating and being a master Kente weaver, one is recognised as an authority on Kente and its related activities. Hence, any Kente-related statement emanating from a master weaver is regarded as authoritative. It is therefore not surprising that Obeng was introduced to a master weaver by his aunt; to a person she trusted. With the transfer of specialised Kente-related knowledge from a master weaver to Obeng, the basic aim of knowledge flow, that is, the transfer of ideas, know-how and expertise from one individual to another is facilitated (Nissen 2002). This way of acquisition of knowledge can be said to be congruent also with Zhuge (2006) who presented the concept of nodes in the flow of knowledge. In this concept, master weavers who transmitted the knowledge of Kente are the nodes for the individuals who received it.

I also noted that there are individuals who are not apprenticed, yet help others to do their business; they unconsciously acquire knowledge just by helping others do their business. This was the case of Ama who had people around her to help her sell Kente. These individuals would definitely acquire knowledge in Kente selling, thereby exemplifying the unconscious acquisition of knowledge as proposed by Rodríguez-Elias et al. (2006).

Furthermore, the findings of this study show that social interactions promote the flow of Kente-related knowledge through exchange of ideas and information relating to Kente among the people within the Bonwire Kente weaving village. For example, I noted that when Kente weavers, users, sellers, tailors and fashion designers meet, they share Kente-related knowledge.

Social interaction has been found to be a medium for knowledge flow (see for example Napieth and Ghoshal 1998); as one interacts or associates with people, whether face-to-face or online, one acquires knowledge consciously or unconsciously. The role of social interactions in Kente-related knowledge flow was central in the Bonwire Kente weaving village case and that of the Kente Master case. Some participants admitted/mentioned that they had acquired (some of) their knowledge about Kente through interactions with weavers, sellers, colleagues and customers. Agyeman, like Asante, shares his Kente-related knowledge with customers and the young. Through interaction with customers, some weavers and sellers have passed on the meaning of some of the Kente designs to customers. Additionally, knowledge about the seasons or occasions during which a particular design of Kente can be used has also been passed on to some customers or users. Again, sellers have shared with customers the features of authentic Kente. On the other hand, some customers and users have, in their interaction with Kente weavers and sellers, given them ideas which they have

incorporated into their work. Through multiple flows of knowledge via social interaction (Haldin-Herrgard 2000), and even through suggestions and complaints, Kente-related knowledge is passed on. Some design suggestions were appreciated by sellers, tailors, and weavers as worthy. Ama, for instance, acknowledged how some suggestions from customers increased her knowledge base. Hence, oral communication through face-to-face interaction among individuals makes knowledge accessible, and thereby knowledge flows from one node to another (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Alemna & Sam 2006).

The uniqueness of Kente has brought both domestic and foreign tourists to Bonwire. And when people gather, there is always a flow of knowledge. It is, therefore, no wonder that the curious minds who sought to know a lot about Kente were sated here. During visits to Bonwire, some tourists have tried to weave by taking a seat at the loom with master weavers teaching them. As I learnt from Kwabena during the interview, he has taught some tourists who have visited the Bonwire Kente weaving village how to weave Kente. Also, as Asantewaa pointed out, she has shared the history of Kente with many tourists. From these accounts, I can infer that tourism has promoted the flow of Kente-related knowledge to many parts of Ghana as well as overseas, since these tourists come from Ghana and from other parts of the world. Parallel to Coleman's (1988) account of how merchants access social capital at the market place, tourism is embedded with social capital, which has helped people who did not have knowledge about Kente to easily acquire Kente-related knowledge.

Additionally, I found that the community in which participants reside has facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge. Community-based knowledge and community-based professions are common in Ghana. Many traditional communities have knowledge or professions specific to them. When an individual is born into a

particular community, he or she learns the profession of the community or the knowledge situated within the community via socialisation and friendship. Growing up and seeing what is done in the community, he or she gets knowledge about the occupation of the community and may decide to be part of it, or not, although in previous days, community members had no choice but to be part of it. Even today, with weavers found in almost every household in the Bonwire Kente weaving village, some of the participants became Kente weavers and sellers by virtue of the fact that they were brought up in Bonwire. Hence, the Kente-related knowledge that some weavers and sellers have come as a result of their being born or brought up in the community. As some weavers gather at one place to weave in the community, some of the Kente-related knowledge is acquired by observation. This was the case with Asante, who visited some weavers to observe them weaving and use their looms any time they were free. The willingness of members to share some knowledge as in the creating and naming of designs, coupled with the fact that there is a Kente weaver in every family, indicates that the Bonwire community is a collective society, and hence they share knowledge among themselves (Yoo & Torrey 2002). From these results, I will say that knowledge is not only constructed socially (see Berger & Luckmann 1967), but also shared socially, through the family, socialisation, friendship and social interactions.

5.3 Social Relations and Knowledge flow

Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) conceptualised social capital from a perspective of social relations, arguing that elements of social relations constitute social capital that promotes knowledge sharing. In line with this assertion, I found that elements of social relations, such as social identity, social status, social technologies and benevolence, have facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge in all the three cases I studied.

In trying to communicate their social identity and social status, many users have shared Kente-related knowledge with other people. The participants' knowledge of belonging to or having an association with Asantes, Ghana or Africa has facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge globally also. As participants identify as Asante, Ghanaian or African they tend to learn more about the Kente cloth, which has become a symbol of Africa among many African-Americans (Ross 1998). The flow of Kente-related knowledge from a family member, be it a father, grandfather or uncle, identifies one's social identity as to where he or she comes from or belongs in terms of tribe, ethnicity clan, and nationality. The knowledge acquired by virtue of belonging to a tribe or ethnic group is subsequently passed on to acquaintances. This point is also illustrated by Asantes or Ghanaians in the diaspora, for the wearing of Kente not only declares their origin, identity and culture, but also creates a platform for the flow of Kente-related knowledge for curious minds. Through socialisation with other cultures in the diaspora, Asantes and other Ghanaians pass on Kente-related knowledge or Kente wearers pass on Kente-related knowledge. Owusuaa, for instance, talks a lot about Kente to her friends in America whenever she is seen wearing Kente, and hence it is an essential aspect of her image (Tajfel & Turner 1986). In communicating with her friends about Kente, Owusuaa makes its history, facts and the meaning of the various designs and patterns of Kente known to them. Many of the participants from the Ghanaian community in Australia also pointed out that they wear Kente to communicate their identity as Ghanaians and as Africans and many times, when they have worn Kente, non-Ghanaians even people who have no Ghanaian roots, have asked them about the cloth. I could also infer from my interactions with the Kente weavers that social identity can also impede the flow of Kente-related knowledge; for example, the weaving of Kente is seen as men's work. As a result, I did not get to know many

female Kente weavers. In this case, many women are denied access to Kente-weaving knowledge because of their social identity. Females are not taught or given the chance to practise Kente weaving. These gender roles in the Bonwire Kente weaving village to some extent impede Kente knowledge flow. In this regard, the flow of Kente-weaving knowledge is hindered by gender (Sabutey 2009), which is an aspect of social identity. Also, I perceived that the presumption that every native of Bonwire knows a lot about Kente was an impediment to the flow of knowledge about Kente. Asante, for instance, thinks that everyone in Bonwire already knows about Kente and hence fails to share his knowledge.

The role social technologies play in knowledge flow is evident in our daily lives, from the instant dispersion of knowledge to the immediate receipt of knowledge. According to Coleman (1988), information is vital for individuals' decision-making; however, acquiring such information can be costly, thus people rely on their social relations to acquire information for free. He thus sees social relations as constituting a social capital. Parallel to this assertion, I noted that social technologies, which are now an element of social relations, have become a channel for Kente-related knowledge flow. This channel has not only made it possible for people to access Kente-related knowledge free of charge, but has also made the flow of Kente-related knowledge easier and faster. As online information grounds (Narayan 2013), social media can make Kente-related knowledge accessible to a large number of people who would not have even heard of Kente. The marketing of Kente by sellers and weavers on various social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook promotes Kente, and at the same time, communicates Kente-related knowledge in terms of the meanings of the various designs and patterns. Thus, through these social media platforms, Kente-related knowledge flows to potential buyers and other categories of people, for example with

Ama, who uses social media to display Kente designs to the world. When Kente is displayed to the world, facts about Kente are always put out there as well. Knowledge can be embedded in pictures, but there are also comments about these pictures on social media. The sharing of pictures on social media is always associated with knowledge, especially tacit knowledge. Therefore, through the posting, reposting, sending and receiving of pictures on social media from customers, sellers or weavers, Kente-related knowledge is communicated widely. Additionally, social platforms have created a new social learning environment where people can learn about Kente weaving and the materials and equipment used for it. As we observed from the Kente Master website, there are also YouTube videos of individuals demonstrating Kente weaving. The step-by-step approaches shown in the video make it easier for an individual to learn Kente weaving. Thus, social technologies are facilitating the flow of Kente-weaving knowledge to people who watch the videos on the Kente Master website or on YouTube.

The wearing of a particular type of cloth or fabric communicates information. In many communities in Ghana, a person's social status is created and communicated via the use of Kente. As with Western society, where a person who puts on a 'suit and tie' is perceived to have a certain social status, so it is with the wearing of Kente in Ghanaian society. The wearing of Kente connotes honour, prestige, dignity and royalty in Ghanaian society. Hence, when one wears Kente, one is perceived as having such qualities. The need for this status has resulted in the flow of Kente-related knowledge also. In the cases of Marfo and Agyeman, when wearing their Kente, they were perceived as an important person and was allowed entry into an event meant for dignitaries. The fact that they would otherwise not have been allowed entry indicates that wearing Kente makes a statement and elevates a person's social status. This

scenario complements the assertion that clothes are used to make statements about social class and social identity (Boateng 2011; Crane 2000, p.16). Deducing from Marfo's statement that 'it is not common and easy for people to buy and use Kente', the elevation of his status associated with his wearing Kente can be seen to be a result of the fact that Kente is not cheap. Many of the participants who indicated that they wear Kente to elevate their status mentioned that anytime they wear Kente, people at least ask them for the name of the Kente design and where it is available. As such the creation and communication of status via Kente and the flow of Kente knowledge are inseparable. They are interwoven, and the cloth itself is woven full of knowledge so that by wearing it the person shares this knowledge about the cloth.

5.4 How Knowledge is created

New knowledge can be created through the combination of existing knowledge. The merging of different elements of existing knowledge can certainly result in something new. The application of weavers', tailors' and sellers' existing knowledge of Kente can result in the creation of new Kente-related knowledge. Various patterns and designs of Kente are combined to form new Kente patterns or designs. It was noted by some respondents that new Kente-related knowledge is created from just the combination of existing Kente-related knowledge. This would confirm the fact noted by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) and Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) that knowledge can be created through combination and exchange of knowledge.

Knowledge can also be created through imagination, or by thinking about how best to improve upon existing knowledge, situations or processes, or through the introduction of new features, processes or styles. In all cases, there is a modification to the status quo. The creative imagination of adding new features to the existing knowledge at times does not produce anything new. That is, at times it results in an

error. The creative imagination could also result in something new. For example, Agyeman, a Kente weaver, described how new Kente designs are created by imagining new features onto the existing designs. He claimed that anyone can just look at two designs or colours and imagine the results of their merger. As with every imagination, this is not always successful in implementation. This 'trial and error' is an indication of the messiness of the creation of new Kente-related knowledge and is a method for learning from mistakes. Trial and error may be the reason strips are sewn together these days instead of weaving them as one strip. It may be the reason large strips are used instead of the original small ones. It could be argued that the creation of new Kente-related knowledge "is an intensely human, messy process of imagination, invention and learning from mistakes, all embedded in a web of human relationships" (Scharmer 2001). The imaginative thinking in the creation of new Kente-related knowledge may arise from the different skills, perspectives and opinions individuals have in their interaction, as these elements are capable of creating new knowledge (Hackman 2004). Individuals Kente-related skills, perspectives and opinions can be a catalyst to the individual imaginative thinking and hence their creativity in the creation of new Kente-related knowledge. The blend of the individual's explicit Kente-related knowledge and his or her tacit Kente-related knowledge in terms of his or her skills, perspectives and opinions would form a synergy to create new Kente-related knowledge (Choo 1996). The synergy in the creation of new Kente-related knowledge would arise between the person's ability to use their Kente-related skills and the actual combinations of various designs or colours. Kente would not have come this far had it not been for the continuous creation of new Kente-related knowledge. The discovery of a way to store and preserve Kente in order for it to last longer is an example of this. The sewing,

designs and selling of Kente have all changed as a result of the creation of new knowledge about Kente.

It was interesting to note that knowledge from a different sector or area can also be imported and regarded as new knowledge within the Kente industry. New Kente patterns are woven from designs from other fabrics, following suggestions from customers, and these ideas are taken and applied to the Kente industry and treated as new knowledge. Kente artefacts such as earrings, ties, shoes and bags are a sign of how such new knowledge has emerged.

5.5 Social Structure and Knowledge Creation

The combination of existing Kente-related knowledge to create new knowledge would have to be acknowledged by the community as new knowledge. After creating new patterns, the weavers bring the designs to elders in Bonwire to confirm their quality. The weavers, in collaboration with the community, name the new Kente design. This attests to the role the community plays in the creation of Kente-related knowledge. In as much as the community as a social structure facilitates the creation of Kente-related knowledge, it can hinder its creation as well. Any development of Kente-related knowledge that would not expedite the weaving of Kente but seek to replace the human element in the weaving of Kente would be rejected by weavers in the Bonwire community, for although new knowledge is good, it must be to the advancement of the community. Any knowledge that entails bringing machines to do the work of the Kente weavers and tailors would certainly be to their disadvantage. They will, therefore, protest it.

When people/practitioners/people in the Kente industry work together and interact with others, Kente-related knowledge is created. As Kente-related knowledge flows through social interactions, new Kente-related knowledge is created. Knowledge

in the form of advice, feedback and suggestions is exchanged to create new Kente-related knowledge. The weavers, tailors, sellers and customers interact, resulting in the creation of new Kente-related knowledge . The Kente sellers' discovery of new ways to sell Kente is an indication of this; Kente is now being sold differently, through online social media. Also, cooperative efforts from weavers facilitate the creation of Kente-related knowledge. Several weavers come together to work as a community of practice, and through their interactions new Kente-related knowledge is discovered, such as looms with 'gears', the development of which is community knowledge and does not belong to any one weaver. Modernity has also changed the way people think and reason about Kente; in social interactions, various suggestions are made which may lead to the development of new design. Suggestions from customers, tailors and weavers to combine different styles and patterns result in the creation of new Kente designs. As in the case of Maame Yaa, Kente-related suggestions from customers to weavers have also helped in the creation of new Kente designs. It can therefore be agreed that these micro-level interactions between individuals (weavers, sellers, tailors and customers) also help in the development of new Kente-related knowledge (Jakubik 2008).

5.6 Social Relations and Knowledge Creation

The role of social technologies in knowledge creation is supported in this study. The existing literature points out that the collaborative and interactive features of social technologies make them potent tools for knowledge creation. Social technologies make it easier for users to create and edit content, and share ideas and expertise (Lipponen 2002). The exchange of ideas and expertise are some of the means through which knowledge is created (see Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998). Social technologies promote and make it easier for information to flow among users, sellers and weavers, which helps Kente weavers to create new knowledge in the form of new Kente patterns or

designs. Furthermore, face-to-face interaction, which is a means by which many people have created and shared knowledge in traditional African societies, (Alemna & Sam 2006; Wilson 1987) is complemented by online interactions. Through social technologies, Kente sellers have devised a means of reaching their customers easily and within the shortest possible time. Kente sellers and weavers have devised new business models, new patterns and a new channel of communication as well as new channels of distribution.

5.7 Impact of Chinese-Origin Kente on Kente-Related Knowledge

I have grouped the discussion in this section into four sub-sections: authenticity of Kente, knowledge distortion, legal protection of Kente and building of cultural capital.

5.7.1 Authenticity of Kente

Authenticity was a major theme in all three cases studied. It emerged as the themes of 'authentic status' and authenticity of Kente. People who wear authentic Kente assume an authentic status that comes with wearing Kente. People who wear authentic Kente are honoured and respected; they are perceived as people of class in the Bonwire community. They are sometimes recognised as kings and are accorded with respect. As indicated earlier, in the old days, Kente was meant for kings, queens and other members of a royal family so it is not surprising that people who wear authentic Kente are identified as kings. However, people who wear the imitation Kente are rarely honoured or respected by others. Only wearers of Kente that bears the hallmark of originality should expect to be honoured and respected on special occasions or among dignitaries. One cannot accord the prestige associated with the wearing of authentic Kente artefacts to the wearing of fake Kente artefacts. The quality and prestige of the authentic and imitation Kente are not the same; therefore, their admiration and prestige would

certainly not be the same. According to Trilling (1972), if a cultural artefact (in this case Kente) appears to be what it claims to be, it will be admired and idolised. For a Kente cloth to be considered authentic it should be hand woven and not printed. Anything less or more than a handwoven Kente is fake. Therefore, the issue of authenticity of Kente is seen in the handiwork, or the energy expended in making it. Any Kente-like fabric which is not hand-woven is deemed to be fake. The consideration of the handwoven element in the sanctioning of Kente as authentic confirmed Trilling's (1972) point that the use of 'the hand' is a central criterion for judging the authenticity of a cultural object. Kente being a cultural object that is hand woven by weavers and not mass-produced using a machine, it is also noted that for Kente to be considered authentic, it should fulfil the requirement of having been 'made by a local traditional artist'. This is consistent with Trilling (1972), who postulated that the authenticity of a cultural artefact is partly determined by who makes the artefact, local people or foreigners. The weavers of the authentic Kente are local traditional artists most of whom were born or grew up in the local area. They therefore understand the culture and the meaning of the blend of the various colours and designs. In consonance with Taylor (2001), some of the research participants mentioned the question of the origin of the material or cloth as an important factor in the establishment of the authenticity of Kente. Likewise, for Robertson-Friend (2004), the source of the materials can attest the authenticity or otherwise. From his point of view, where the Kente is produced determines its authenticity. Kente is regarded as a cultural object and should therefore be produced locally by inhabitants of the traditional society. No matter how good the materials might be, if it is not produced in Bonwire, it cannot be regarded as authentic Kente. Using the features of culture and traditional origin to determine the authenticity of Kente, is exemplified by the rejection of all so-called Kente produced outside

Bonwire and other Kente-weaving towns in Ghana, especially that coming from China. Emanating from this element of origin is also the issue of authority. I observed that the place of origin has the authority to proclaim a cloth as authentic or not. What Bruner (1994) calls the 'point of authority' can be established from the data , as Kente hails from Bonwire and as such Bonwire has the authority to determine what constitutes authentic Kente. The originality of Kente, as far as the people of Bonwire are concerned, is tied up with their spiritual beliefs, history, ceremony, art and intellectual and cultural property rights, Kente is attributed as such to them , and must respected and protected (Taylor, 2001). The cultural and social significance of Kente resides in its authenticity. It is therefore not surprising that Kente pretenders from outside Ghana are looked down upon.

Contrary to the position of Ingemann (2012) that modern technology has the ability to make objects look more authentic, it has been hard for the companies to produce imitations and make them look authentic. Users of Kente, especially those from Bonwire, can easily differentiate between the authentic Kente and the imitation just by feeling the texture of the cloth; the weight of the Kente can also determine its authenticity. It is authentic if the texture is rough, heavier and thicker, fake if it is smooth and light.

5.7.2 Knowledge Distortion

Kente, which emerged as an official cloth for the Asantehene of the Asante monarch, has now become a global cultural artefact. Due to its popularity and the increase in demand for Kente by consumers, coupled with limited supply, many textile companies, especially from China, simply print the Kente patterns on plain cloth and sell it to consumers as Kente. In other words, they have taken advantage of modern technologies to produce imitations of the authentic Kente and sell them to consumers. The increase

in imitation Kente production has also been attributed to a lack of legal framework protecting the Kente patterns. On the positive side, the production of the Chinese-origin Kente, which is affordable, has made it possible for many people to own Kente (and feel a sense of belonging as Ghanaians and as Africans), as noted by some of the participants of this study. This trend has implications for Kente-related knowledge creation and flow. In terms of knowledge creation, it has the potential to discourage Kente weavers from innovating new designs, although the appropriation has improved the flow of Kente-related knowledge. This finding is in line with Mancilla and Sepúlveda (2017) who found that information is distorted when information flows within any network. Also, as shown in the study, the participants do not consider the Chinese-produced cloth to be Kente; however, some Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians do consider those imitations Kente for purposes of identity. This means that the Chinese-origin Kente is distorting some people's knowledge of what Kente is or is not (especially amongst tourists in Ghana), but this distortion does not affect the Kente knowledge amongst Ghanains themselves, although the price difference can influence their buying decisions; for example, they may buy original Kente for important occasions, but use the Chinese-origin Kente for things like curtains an other artefacts.

Furthermore, as found in the study, producers of the Chinese-origin Kente do not know the cultural significance of Kente. This means that the knowledge contained in Kente and other knowledge about Kente may be lost if the Chinese-origin Kente dominates the market. Kente-weaving knowledge can also be lost as a result of the Chinese-origin Kente. The appropriation of Kente may also restrict the flow of Kente-related knowledge. The appropriation of Kente designs also implies that Kente users need to know the difference between the authentic and counterfeit versions, which can be difficult for new, younger, or non-Ghanaian users who are not already familiar with

Kente. It also has the potential of reducing the value of the prestigious status Kente holds. Those who buy the imitations may use it as everyday wear but this may be an affront to some consumers who buy the authentic version at a higher cost just for special occasions.

5.7.3 Legal protection for Kente patterns/ Designs

It is evident that Kente originated in Ghana. Therefore, the proliferation of Kente from other parts of the world in the Ghanaian market brings legal and copyright issues to the forefront of the discussion. Ghana has a copyright law, yet piracy of Kente is on the increase. The enactment of a law is one thing; enforcement of the enacted law is something else. The weavers cited social media as one of the reasons for the appropriation of Kente; however, it would not have been one of the major causes of the imitation if the Geographical Indications Act and the Ghana Copyright Act were recognised in practise globally, as noted by Boateng (2014). This would have ensured the curbing of the imitation of Kente in some other African countries and China.

The call for a copyright law when some laws already exist clearly shows that there are complexities in the copyright of Kente. Kente cannot be registered to an individual because it is already in the public domain and belongs to the community at large; this makes it difficult for it to be copyrighted. Kente and its production processes have existed for so many years that they do not qualify to be patented either, as Kente fails the test of novelty (Government of Ghana, 1973).

The government of Ghana recommends that the best way to deal with issues of imitation is to get a trademark for the various individuals (Government of Ghana, 1973). The issue of a trademark would also resolve the issue of authenticity of the Kente, as the trademark would show who the weaver is, where the owner is, and where the Kente comes from. With Kente's authenticity associated with the community of Bonwire,

such a niche can be built. From the findings, patenting Kente patterns might be difficult but not impossible, hence place of origin can be a basis for Bonwire Kente to acquire legal protection, and perhaps even the exclusive permission to use the name Kente.

5.7.4 Access to cultural capital

Knockoffs in the textile and fashion industry have received much attention from textile producers, legal practitioners and researchers. The impact of knockoffs has normally been addressed or debated from an economic perspective. For example, in Ghana, there have been several calls on the government to ban the importation of Ghanaian textile knockoffs from China and other countries. Kente weavers and some Ghanaians have over the years pressured the government to develop and implement policies that will protect Kente from appropriation. Researchers including Boatemaa Boateng have written extensively on the copyright and related issues surrounding Kente (Boateng 2014). Similarly, in countries such as Australia, issues of the appropriation of traditional Aboriginal arts have been discussed extensively (Fowler 2004). In all these instances, the argument has been that owners of the artefacts and the countries lose huge sums of money through the appropriation of cultural artefacts. The results of my study indicate that the issue is more complex and nuanced. I found that although the advent of the Chinese-origin Kente has distorted Kente-related knowledge, the social and cultural value of the original handwoven Kente has not been negatively affected; rather, it is enhanced to a large extent. The appropriated versions also play a role in giving more people access to Kente in order to display their Ghanaian identity and increase their sense of belonging. Many people who were not able to use Kente because of its high cost can now afford Kente. Such people are no longer excluded from participating and sharing in their culture. Also, imitation Kente has made Kente-related knowledge accessible to people. The imitation Kente is very common especially among Africans

in the diaspora. They identify Kente by the patterns and the colours. Thus, they buy any fabric with the Kente pattern and colours regardless of its authenticity (Boateng 2014; Boateng 2007). For many of these Africans in the diaspora, the imitation version does not have the same meaning as authentic Kente cloth woven in Ghana, however, the message in the imitated version still remains one of 'African pride'. In other words, the imitation version still helps them to connect to their African roots and communicate their African identity.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction

This chapter summarises the study and captures its implications. The chapter also discusses the lessons learnt from the study as well as areas for future research. I have also included in this chapter some new research questions pointing to potential future research in this area.

6.1 Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand how social structures and social relations facilitate the flow and creation of Kente-related knowledge. It also sought to understand how the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente has impacted on Kente-related knowledge.

To achieve this purpose, I studied three cases, namely the Bonwire Kente weaving village, the Kente Master website, and a Ghanaian community in Australia. In each case, I studied multiple flows of Kente-related knowledge. There were 24 participants in all: 14 participants were selected from the Bonwire Kente weaving village, 2 participants from the Kente Master website, and 9 participants from the Ghanaian community in Australia. Additionally, I examined documents and posts from the Kente Master website and on social media. I conducted interviews with the participants to generate data, which I analysed to address the research objectives. I also relied on secondary data from Facebook and blogs to address my research objectives. I analysed all the data using a thematic data analysis technique.

This study shows the different elements of social structure and social relations that facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge among people and across the global world. The participants have received and shared Kente-related knowledge via elements of social structures and social relations. Furthermore, the findings show that the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente has distorted Kente-related knowledge, and has

raised authenticity issues about Kente-related knowledge and Kente itself. It has also raised intellectual property concerns.

The role of the family in the flow of Kente-related knowledge was evident in all three of the cases I studied. In the Bonwire Kente weaving case, many of the participants mentioned some family members who transferred Kente-related knowledge to them. The participants who are Kente weavers learnt Kente weaving from family members such as uncles, fathers, brothers and grandfathers. While some of them learnt Kente weaving by observing these family members, others received formal training from these family members. According to the participants, their family members believe that Kente weaving is generational, so as they received knowledge from their forefathers, and they want to pass such knowledge to the younger generation. Participants from the Kente Master website and the Ghanaian community in Australia also attributed the knowledge of Kente to their family. They acknowledged the role their grandmothers played in helping them know about Kente. Some of the participants indicated that their grandmothers told them the history of Kente and the cultural significance of Kente in the lives of Asantes. Some of them also indicated that their grandmothers taught them how to wear Kente. The interesting thing here is that while the males in the family taught the male participants Kente weaving, the grandmothers taught many of them how to wear Kente and also the cultural significance of Kente.

Furthermore, socialisation has played a role in the flow of Kente-related knowledge. Kente-related knowledge, especially Kente weaving, was an aspect of the learned behaviours that many of the participants from the Bonwire Kente weaving village had to learn while growing up. Participants from the Kente Master website and the Ghanaian community in Australia had to learn about Kente and the importance of

Kente in their culture. Many of them had seen their family members using Kente and heard them talking about Kente.

Many of the participants also mentioned that they read about Kente in books during their primary school education. That is, formal education has contributed to the flow of Kente-related knowledge. Many of the participants acknowledged that they read about the history of Kente weaving and its cultural significance in books. One participant from the Ghanaian community in Australia indicated that Kente weaving was part of his primary school education curriculum, so he learnt the basics of Kente weaving via formal education.

Also, some of the participants learnt Kente weaving and how to join Kente strips to form the various patterns from their friends. This is especially the case of many of the participants from the Bonwire Kente weaving case. Although many of these participants had knowledge about Kente and Kente weaving from their family members, their friends formally taught some of them. Apprenticeship is another element of social structure that has facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge, especially knowledge about Kente weaving. Some of the participants served as apprentices under master weavers who taught them how to weave Kente. These apprentices, after becoming master weavers themselves, have then taught Kente weaving to apprentices of their own.

I also found that Kente-related knowledge flows through social interactions. For example, I noted that when customers and users interact with Kente sellers, Kente-related knowledge flows among these people. The Kente users propose new designs to the sellers; the sellers teach the users how to keep Kente, how to wear Kente, the meanings of the patterns and how the users can identify authentic Kente. Similarly, interactions among weavers and sellers, and some users, resulted in the flow of Kente-

related knowledge. Sellers normally pass on suggestions they receive from their customers to the weavers, which helps the weavers create new patterns of Kente.

Tourism has also contributed to the flow of Kente-related knowledge, especially from the Bonwire Kente weaving village to the global world. Many of the tourists who visit the Bonwire Kente weaving village learn about the history of Kente, how to weave Kente, and its cultural significance. Some of these tourists later create blogs and write about their experiences with Kente. Again, the findings show that the Bonwire community has promoted the flow of Kente-related knowledge. I noted also that the elders of the community have been stewards of Kente and Kente-related knowledge. They have ensured that knowledge is transferred to the younger generations, while also safeguarding the authenticity of Kente and its value.

The study also found that the following elements of social relations have facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge: social status, social identity, social technologies and benevolence. The participants, especially those who reside outside Ghana, said that wearing Kente communicates their identity as Ghanaians. Similarly, some African-Americans who have bought Kente stoles from the Kente Master website posted on Facebook that using Kente links them to their African heritage. It identifies them as Africans. The participants from the Ghanaian community in Australia also alluded to the communication of identity as the reason for wearing Kente in Australia, and reported that whenthey wear Kente, many non-Ghanaians ask them about the cloth and they talk to them about the cloth and its cultural significance.

Additionally, I found that social status as an element of social relations has facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge. Many of the participants told me that they wear Kente to communicate their prestige and pride, and indicate their connection to royalty. According to them, this knowledge is embedded in the cloth and so whenever

they wear Kente it attracts people's attention, and this normally elicits conversations about the cloth. That is the social status the cloth gives people, which has helped the flow of Kente-related knowledge among people. The participants also acknowledged the role of social technologies like Facebook, WhatsApp, blogs and Instagram in the flow of Kente-related knowledge. The sellers told me that they display photos of the Kente patterns on these platforms to create awareness and educate about Kente. I also found blogs, which contained some aspects of the history of Kente, the meanings of the patterns and the cultural significance of Kente. Furthermore, some of the participants told me that they have facilitated the flow of Kente-related knowledge in the sense that they share their knowledge about Kente with anyone who wants to know more about Kente. Many of the participants told me that they rarely charge a fee for the knowledge they share with people, although for those who want to learn Kente weaving via apprenticeship, the master weaver may charge a fee.

The findings indicate that although knowledge about Kente production and selling has evolved over the years, new knowledge is continually being created through the sharing of information among designers, weavers, sellers, tourists and local Ghanaians. This information sharing results in new knowledge that is often a response to contemporary needs and fashion trends. New patterns of Kente come with new meanings, but remain within the old rules of weaving and patterns, and have emerged from a combination of these influences. In addition, new Kente-related knowledge is created through interactions among the Kente weavers, sellers, tailors, users and fashion designers, who together form a community of practice. Through regular interactions, they exchange ideas among themselves, which results in the creation of new knowledge. As this cultural-heritage knowledge flows among the community, new meanings are created. New knowledge also emerges through individuals' imaginations

as well as through trial and error. In short, the preservation of this living cultural heritage depends not just on propagating existing skills and knowledge in the traditional manner, but also on adapting to new demands, new processes and new fashions, and occurs not only through the free flow of information between these stakeholders, but also through informing and educating the consumers about the value of the authentic Kente compared to the imitations.

On the question of how the prevalence of the Chinese-origin Kente has impacted on Kente-related knowledge, I found that the emergence of Chinese-origin Kente has distorted some aspects of Kente-related knowledge. The participants told me that some people find it difficult to identify the original Kente. Again, some of the participants told me that many people now make reference to 'China Kente' but that there is no such thing. The Chinese do not have a Kente tradition and do not weave Kente; what some companies in China are doing is to copy the original Kente patterns and print them on other fabrics.

Furthermore, many of the participants told me that with the emergence of the Chinese-origin Kente, they are now concerned about the authenticity of status that people assume by wearing Kente. They told me that whenever they see others wearing Kente, they try to verify the authenticity of the Kente the person is wearing, which helps them to authenticate the social status the person is communicating.

Some of the participants, especially the Kente weavers, raised concerns about intellectual property rights. They told me that some Chinese firms have copied the Kente patterns without paying those who created these patterns. They attributed this problem to the fact that their ancestors, who invented the Kente patterns, did not seek any legal protection for the patterns and that this lack of legal protection has continued until the present time. They also said that many of the weavers did not see the need to

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seek legal protection for the patterns until the emergence of the Chinese-origin Kente. Some of the participants told me that because the knowledge about Kente weaving belongs to the Bonwire community, they do not think any individual can claim ownership of the patterns and register the patterns in their names. They told me that at best, the patterns should be registered in the name of the Bonwire community. Some other participants also pointed out that since the Asantehene is the overlord of the Asante Kingdom and Kente belongs to the Asante Kingdom, they expect the Asantehene to take the initiative to seek legal protection for the Kente patterns, or for the government to create a trademark for authentic Kente, or provide legal protection for the use of the name Kente.

I have summarised the findings of my study in regard to my research questions below:

- In regard to research question 1: 'What facilitates the flow of traditional Kente-related knowledge?' I found that social structure facilitates Kente-related knowledge flow. Family, formal education, socialisation, apprenticeship, social interactions, tourism, and community are the elements of the social structure that facilitates the flow of Kente-related knowledge. Furthermore, I found that social relations and its elements such as social identity, social status, social technologies, company website, and benevolence facilitate the flow of Kente-related knowledge.

- In regard to research question 2: 'How does knowledge flow facilitate the creation of new Kente-related knowledge?' I found that social structures and its elements such as community and social interactions have facilitated the creation of new Kente-related knowledge. Additionally, social technologies

that enable contiunual social relations have also facilitated the creation and flow of Kente-related knowledge.

- In regard to the research question 3: 'How has the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente impacted Kente-related knowledge?' I found that the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente has made both positive and negative impact on the Kente industry. On the positive side, it has made it possible for many Ghanaians who cannot afford the authentic Kente to access cultural capital. Some Kente weavers also consider the Chinese-origin Kente as free advertising for the original Kente. On the negative side, it has led to Kente-related knowledge distortion, intellectual property issues, and also issues of authenticity for the amateur consumer.

6.2 Implications

The results of this study show that there are elements of social structure and social relations that have contributed to the flow of Kente-related knowledge within the Bonwire Kente weaving village and across the globe. This study has contributed to the understanding of how traditional knowledge and knowledge embedded in cultural artefacts flow, for the knowledge embedded within an artefact such as Kente would be lost without the social knowledge created and maintained by the community. This has implications not just for understanding Kente, but also for understanding any traditional knowledge or traditional skill embedded within traditional communities across the world.

The findings of this study have implications for both theory and practice. Firstly, the findings of this study suggest that elements of social relations and social structure constitute social capital, which facilitates the flow of Kente-related

knowledge. However, where there is competition among actors involved in the same economic activities, elements of social structures such as friendship and community do not facilitate access to a resource. As observed in this study, the weavers in the Bonwire Kente weaving village try to keep new patterns they have invented from one another until they have made monetary gains from such designs. The inventor of the pattern does not teach other weavers how to weave the new design. Those who are interested in the design and want to weave such designs have to obtain and observe the weaving of such designs from the users who own them before they can weave the same design. In this case, competition among actors within a social structure plays a role in the actors' access to resources. This is especially so if the resource in question has an economic value, as the Kente patterns do. In this context, social capital does not provide individuals access to skills and knowledge when there is competition among individuals within the social structure.

Furthermore, the findings imply that cultural context is important in the developing and maintenance of, and access to, social capital. This is evident in the Bonwire Kente weaving community where, culturally, women are not permitted to weave Kente. That is, it is a taboo for women to weave Kente. The cultural beliefs of the people of the Bonwire Kente weaving village impede women's access to the social capital within their families that helps younger men acquire Kente-weaving knowledge from their uncles, fathers, brothers and grandfathers. That is, the patriarchal culture of the Bonwire Kente weaving village limits women's access to the social capital that facilitates access to Kente-weaving knowledge. In terms of the role of culture in the development of social capital, this study reveals that the collective cultural value of the people of the Bonwire Kente weaving village promotes cooperation and interactions among weavers, sellers, users and tailors, which creates strong ties among these people.

Again, the extended family system practised in the Bonwire Kente weaving village has contributed to the development of social capital via strong ties that help the young men in families to acquire Kente-weaving knowledge freely and easily. The communal values in the Bonwire Kente weaving village help people to 'build and bridge ties' easily; this helps even those who have loose ties to access and share Kente-related knowledge.

Additionally, the findings imply that the social capital theory offers a way of understanding information flow, offering insights on knowledge flow within traditional communities situated within the information age. The findings also imply that knowledge flow is shaped by the extent of closeness and social interactions that occur among individuals within social institutions and communities. This implies that information professionals who seek to provide specific information to communities may rely on social institutions through individuals and their relations to disseminate such information. The close ties and continuous interactions among members of the community enable tacit knowledge to be transferred to others while knowledge is still retained within the community. That is, social capital not only facilitates the flow of knowledge, but it also helps to retain knowledge within a community.

The study also shows the importance of both formal and informal institutions and how socialisation is essential for the flow of knowledge and knowledge retention in communities. In this view, knowledge flow can be said to be a collective effort rather than the result of individual learning. The study also confirms that social technologies themselves constitute a form of social capital and that they are interwoven with social relations. The findings also show that social identity is an element of social relations that also constitutes a form of social capital although few studies that have employed social capital to study knowledge flow address social identity.

Furthermore, this study shows that the participants judge not only the authenticity of the Kente cloth but also the social status the consumers communicate by wearing Kente. The participants believe that the royal status or affluent status that users display by wearing Kente resides only in the authentic Kente. The participants also determine the authenticity of the cloth via the authenticity of the knowledge about Kente weaving. This implies that the authenticity of Kente-related knowledge is of paramount importance to the participants. They expect people to sustain the production and usage of the authentic Kente and the knowledge about it.

6.3 Lessons learned

From the findings, I have learnt that in knowledge related to cultural artefacts such as Kente, the family is the central element of the social structure that facilitates the flow and sustenance of such knowledge. The family ensures the sustainability of such knowledge by passing it on from one generation to the other, while movements of members of the family and their activities spread such knowledge to other communities. That is, although the closure of social network is very significant in the creation and maintenance of social capital for the creation, flow and sustenance of knowledge, the sparsity of the social networks also creates social capital for the flow of knowledge to a new environment.

I have learnt that knowledge creation in culturally situated communities is situated within traditional practices, but in order to survive, this knowledge needs to adapt to new information that evolves alongside social processes, activities, people and artefacts from outside this traditional community, but without losing the aspects of the knowledge of the artefact (Kente cloth) that makes it unique. Thus, this traditional community is sustained through the interactions among weavers, sellers, tailors, fashion designers and users.

I have also learnt from this study that for a community built around a traditional knowledge such as Kente-weaving in Ghana to thrive in our age of commercialisation, it is necessary for the community to engage with information from the outside world in a way that is sustainable for both the community and the diverse world of its consumers.

Furthermore, I have learnt from the findings of this study the importance of social technologies like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook in Kente-related knowledge. These technologies are changing the way knowledge is created in traditional African societies like Bonwire where face-to-face interactions were central in knowledge creation and knowledge flow. This means that social technologies are a new social environment where knowledge is co-constructed and shared. Social technologies have the potential to empower people to be creative and to develop new ideas for their day-to-activities. Social technologies thus serve as platforms for informal learning.

Additionally, from the findings of this study, social technologies are understood as a channel of knowledge flow even within traditional African societies where face-to-face is the preferred mode of knowledge sharing. The participants in this study use social technologies like WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook to exchange Kente-related knowledge. These technologies are seen as the fastest way of accessing Kente-related knowledge in the form of new designs. In fact, social technologies can enhance Kente-related knowledge flow and creation. For example, people use YouTube to create and share content online, while others debate and engage colleagues in discussion on social technology platforms like Facebook. From these findings, we conclude that social technologies can be essential for social knowledge creation and acquisition of knowledge.

I have also learnt that in spite of the evolution of Kente weaving, the uses of Kente and the emergence of Chinese-origin Kente, the cultural significance of Kente prevails. Also, for Ghanaians, Kente is still the traditional cloth produced by traditional methods of weaving, generally from traditional weavers. It is still strongly associated with royalty and Ghanaian identity. However, the raffia palm leaves that were originally made into threads to be woven have now been replaced with silk, cotton and rayon. Vegetable and natural dyes have been replaced with commercial dyes. Again, Kente has evolved from being a symbolic and traditional artefact used by royalty and for special family occasions such as rites of passage, weddings and funerals into a cultural artefact that represents Ghana and Ghanaian identity, to a pan-African identity in general, and even African-American identity and Black pride. Furthermore, Kente production has gone from a traditional industry based on the knowledge preserved within a specialised community, to a mass production industry, with machine-printed or machine-woven Kente. Cultural reproduction has resulted in several Kente-branded products catering to local Ghanaians, the African diaspora and tourist markets. Additionally, Kente has evolved from an Asante tradition to a Ghanaian nationalist identity, to a Pan-African identity, to an example of tourist knick-knacks, and to an ethnic identity in the Ghanaian diaspora. All these evolutions have contributed to the flow of Kente-related knowledge.

I have also learnt from this study that elders in the Bonwire Kente weaving community believe that Kente is a valuable and a sacred artefact and thus sometimes feel offended when they see Kente artefacts such as Kente shoes. In their view, it is disrespectful to use Kente for shoes because of its royal status. They rather think that if we must, the Chinese-origin Kente should be used for Kente artefacts like Kente shoes.

In terms of the impact of the imitation Kente on the Kente business, I learnt that it has not affected the usage of the authentic Kente much because many people still use the authentic Kente for traditional ceremonies and other important occasions, so they still buy the original version. Only those who cannot afford to buy the original version anyway, buy the imitations. Hence, the imitations have not eaten into the market for authentic Kente, but rather have created a new market for themselves, although the imitations have indeed caused some confusion, where even authentic Kente is often questioned and examined to make sure it is authentic.

6.4 Future Research Directions

The findings of this study indicate that there are several avenues for future research. One of the key areas of research that future studies may explore further is what constitutes authentic Kente in the eyes of non-Ghanaian tourists, and Africans in the diaspora.

This study was limited to the Bonwire Kente village, Kente Master Website, and the Ghanaian community in Australia; however, there are many other Kente-weaving communities in Ghana and there are many users of Kente in the United States. The views of these people can be valuable to understanding knowledge flow and the impact of the prevalence of the Chinese-origin Kente on Kente-related knowledge. Future studies may consider these potential participants.

Additionally, future studies may explore the philosophies behind the various Kente patterns and how knowledge of such philosophies informs users' choice of these Kente patterns. Also worth exploring is how Kente-related knowledge and Ghanaian culture connect Ghanaian communities, whether in Africa or in the diaspora.

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Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview Guide (Bonwire and Kente Master

Cases)

1. What does Kente mean to you?
2. How do you feel when you or others wear Kente?
3. How do you feel when you or others wear modern products such as Kente ties or earrings or shoes?
4. What normally comes to your mind when you see people wearing Kente?
5. How did you first learn about Kente and who were the important people involved?
6. How do you think new patterns/ designs of Kente emerge?
7. How have you shared what you know? Why have you taken this approach?
8. How has the weaving/selling/whatever the process is/ changed over time?
9. How do you think it will change in the future?
10. Have you also taught others how to weave Kente? If yes who are these people?
11. How do you feel about the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente?(What do you think about the Chinese-origin Kente and does it have anything with you?)
12. How has the Chinese version of Kente affected your life/ people's life/Ghanaian Culture
13. What have you learnt from the emergence of the Chinese-origin Kente/ version of Kente?
14. How do you feel when you wear /you see people wearing the Chinese -origin Kente
15. How do we address the challenge
Semi-Structured Interview Guide – Ghanaian Community in Australia Case

16. How long have you been in Australia? What do they do?
17. Did you use Kente in Ghana?
18. Do you use Kente here? For what Occasions?

19. Where did you get your Kente?
20. How do you source for new members of family if any of them needs one?
21. What does Kente mean to you?
22. How do you feel when you wear Kente? (sentimental, connection to country, pride, standing out in a crowd, awkward, embarrassed)
23. How do you feel when other Ghanaians wear Kente?
24. How do you feel when non-Ghanaians wear or use Kente?
25. What kind of reaction do you get from non-Ghanaians when you wear Kente?
26. What kind of Kente products do you personally use?
27. How do you feel when you or others wear Kente artefacts such as Kente ties or earrings or shoes?
28. What normally comes to your mind when you see people wearing Kente?
29. Can you think about your childhood, and think about how did you first learn about Kente and who were the important people involved?

30. Is Kente easily available in Australia? How do get seamstresses to sew for you? Are they easily available and are they able to sew your preferred style?
31. Have you created new Kente patterns for yourself? Did you have any specific meanings in mind?
32. Do you choose Kente based on its meaning (of patterns and colours) or simply for the cloth itself (the general meaning of being Ghanaian?). Have you ever designed clothes or suits or dresses yourself using Kente cloth?
33. What do you think of Kente and does it mean anything to you?
34. What are your memories of Kente when you use Kente or you see others using Kente?
35. Have you come across Kente imitations? Where are they from?
36. Have you bought any? For whom? For what occasion? If not, why not?
37. Is authenticity important to you? Why?
38. What do you feel about the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente?

Appendix 2: Ethical Clearance

Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au

Thu 20/04/2017 13:35

Inbox

To: Henry Boateng; Bhuva Narayan; Research Ethics;

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Dear Applicant

UTS HREC REF NO. ETH17-1334

The UTS Human Research Ethics Expedited Review Committee reviewed your amendment application for your project titled, "Informal Knowledge Sharing: A Study of Ghana", and agreed that the amendments meet the requirements of the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct In Human Research (2007). I am pleased to inform you that the Committee has approved your request to amend the protocol as follows:

I need to do to interview some Ghanaians and Ghanaian-origin people in Australia, not originally included in your ethics application, and give them some possible questions such as what they think of Kente, whether they have any with them, when they use it, what are their memories of Kente, and what they feel about the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente?

You should consider this your official letter of approval. If you require a hardcopy please contact the Research Ethics Officer (Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au).

To access this application,

Appendix 3 A: Information Sheet (English Version)

Knowledge creation and Knowledge flow within Ghana's Kente Industry: A Social Capital Perspective
(ETH17-1334)

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

My name is Henry Boateng and I am a student at UTS. My supervisor is Bhuva Narayan (PhD).

WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH ABOUT?

This research seeks to understand the knowledge systems around the Kente cloth and how people use Kente to articulate and communicate their collective identity and gain social membership. Specifically, it seeks to understand how information flows facilitate the creation and sharing of knowledge resources about Kente and the kind of social relations that facilitate the sharing of this knowledge. It also seeks to understand how people use Kente to create and affirm personal identity, social/ethnic identity, and national identity. Last but not least, it seeks to understand how people use Kente to hint their membership of a social class.

IF I SAY YES, WHAT WILL IT INVOLVE?

If you agree to participate in this research, you will respond to interview questions from Henry Boateng which will take no more than an hour or until you no longer wish to continue. I will record the interview, and transcribe and save on his personal storage device. The questions will focus on your knowledge about Kente and your personal experience around Kente, as well as some demographic questions (gender, age, tribe, etc.). I may contact you later by email, etc. in order to ask follow-up questions and/or ascertain your opinion regarding ideas & themes emerging from the analysis. I will ensure that the information you provide will remain confidential. Be assured that this study is purely for research purposes.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS/INCONVENIENCE?

There are very few if any risks involved with your participation in this research because the research has been carefully designed and approved by my university's ethics committee. However, it is possible that the interviews will involve questions that ask about your personal experiences with and about Kente, which can make you uncomfortable, especially if you had bad experiences. Your answers may also involve examples that may touch upon what you consider your trade secrets but rest assured that any such references will not be made public or published in any way. Any publications arising from this research will only refer to data in the aggregate and any quotes to illustrate the analysis will be de-identified and only pseudonyms will be used. This will be done with awareness of not compromising any trade secrets etc.

WHY HAVE I BEEN ASKED?

You are being asked to participate in this research because this research is about the world of Kente, and you identify yourself as one of the following: Kente weaver, Kente seller, a fashion designer who uses Kente, or a user of Kente cloth.

DO I HAVE TO SAY YES?

You don't have to say yes.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I SAY NO?

Nothing. I will thank you for your time so far and won't contact you about this research again.

IF I SAY YES, CAN I CHANGE MY MIND LATER?

You can change your mind at any time and you don't have to say why. I will thank you for your time so far and won't contact you about this research again.

WHAT IF I HAVE CONCERNS OR A COMPLAINT?

If you have concerns about the research please feel free to contact my supervisor on +61 2 9514 2718 or via email at Bhuva.Narayan@uts.edu.au. You may also contact Okoe Abednego my local contact person on +233208119637.

If you would like to talk to someone who is not connected with the research, you may contact the Research Ethics Officer via Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au, and quote this number: ETH17-1334

Appendix 3 B: Information Sheet (Twi Version)

Knowledge creation and Knowledge flow within Ghana's Kente Industry: A Social Capital Perspective
(ETH17-1334)

NHWEHWE MU FOƆ

Me din de Henry Boateng. Me kɔ sukuu wɔ suapon UTS. kyerɛ kyerɛfoɔ dokota.
Bhuva Narayan.

DWUMA DIE NO MU NSɛM

Dwuma die no fa Kente ho. ɛfa nnimdeɛ a me nim fa Kente ɛho nyinaa.

Me teaseɛ sɛ, nsɛm bisa no bɛ tumi afa m'asuma sɛm wo medwuma a medie ho. Me gyi tomu sɛ abrɛ biara me pɛ no me tumi agyae anaa sɛ merenyi nsɛm bisa yi nyinaa ano.

Me teaseɛ sɛ, nsɛm bisa no bɛ tumi afa m'asuma sɛm wo medwuma a medie ho. Me gyi to mu sɛ abrɛ biara me pɛ no me tumi agyae anaa sɛ merenyi nsɛm bisa yi nyinaa ano.

Me teaseɛ sɛ, me tumi agyae aberɛ biara me pɛ. Me teaseɛ sɛ me gyae ɛrenfa nsusuaso biara ɛmerɛ me.

Me teaseɛ sɛ me wɔ ɛhawo anaa nsɛm bisa biara Henry Boateng ntumi nyi a, me tumi afrɛ dokota Bhuva   Narayan wɔ +61 2 9514 2718 anaa me tumi atwerɛ no wɔ Bhuva.Narayan@uts.edu.au. Me teaseɛ sɛ bio sɛ me tumi afrɛ Okoe Abednego a wɔ Nkran wɔ +233208119637. Me sanne teaseɛ sɛ me tumi afrɛ suapon yi wɔ +61 2 9514 9772 anaa me tumi atwerɛ wɔn wɔ Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au).

Appendix 4 A: Consent Form

_____ *(participant's name)* agree to participate in the research project ***Informal Knowledge Sharing: A Study of Ghana*** being conducted by Henry Boateng, PO Box 123, Broadway NSW 2007 Telephone: +61 466096737. Email: Henry.Boateng@student.uts.edu.au of the University of Technology, Sydney for his PhD research.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to understand traditional and new knowledge flows in a Kente-weaving village named Bonwire, the home of the Ashanti Kente cloth in Ghana and globally, and how this knowledge flow results in the creation of new knowledge within this community. It also seeks to understand how the prevalence of Chinese-origin Kente impact on Kente related knowledge.

I understand that I have been asked to participate in this research because I am a Kente weaver/seller/ user, fashion designer who has expert knowledge about Kente. I am willing to participate in this study and understand that my participation in this research will involve responding to interview questions from Henry Boateng which will take no more than an hour or until I no longer wish to continue. I understand that Henry will record the interview, and transcribe and save on his personal storage device, which may be saved on his university's computers. I understand the questions will focus on my knowledge about Kente and how I create and affirm my identity through Kente, as well as some demographic questions (gender, age, tribe, etc.). I understand that some of the questions may require that I talk about my personal experience with respect to Kente and that I can refuse to answer any questions that may make me uncomfortable. I understand that the researcher may contact me later by email, etc. in order to ask follow-up questions and/or ascertain my opinion regarding ideas & themes emerging from the analysis.

I am aware that I can contact Henry Boateng's research supervisor Dr. Bhuva Narayan at bhuva.narayan@uts.edu.au if I have any concerns about the research. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my participation and my consent from this research project at any time I wish, without consequences, and without giving a reason.

I agree that Henry Boateng has answered all my questions fully and clearly.

I agree that the research data gathered from this project may be published in an aggregate form that does not identify me in any way. However, if I wish to be identified, I will let the researcher know in advance.

Tick one:

☐ I do not wish to be identified in any publications arising from this research.

☐ The researcher may identify me in publications arising from this research.

_____   ____/____/____
Signature (participant)

_____   ____/____/____
Signature (researcher or delegate)

NOTE:
This study has been approved by the University of Technology, Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any aspect of your participation in this research which you cannot resolve with the researcher, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (ph: +61 2 9514 9772 Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au) and quote the UTS HREC reference number.

Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix 4 B: Consent Form (Twi Version)

NSHESHE Yɛ

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Me ……………………gye to mu sɛ mede me ho bɛwura nhwehwɛm dwumadie a Henry Boateng, P.O.Box 123, Broadway NSW 2007 Telephone: +614660967ɛ7. Email: Henry.Boateng@student.uts.edu.au a ɔ wɔ University of Technology, Sydney.

Mete aseɛ sɛ dwumadie yi botaeɛ ne sɛ ɛde nteaseɛ a ɛfa Kente ho ne sɛdeɛ wɔ de Kente di nkutaho fa wɔ n bɔ berɛ ne wɔ n asetena mu nsɛm ho, bɛba.

Mete aseɛ sɛ mede me ho ahyɛ saa dwumadie yi mu esiane sɛ me nwono Kente, me tɔ n Kente, mede Kente di dwuma na me wɔ Kente ho nimdeɛ. Mepɛ sɛ mede me ho hyɛ saa dwumadie yi mu, na mete aseɛ sɛ m'adwuma bɛyɛ sɛ mereyiyi nsɛmmisa bi ano afiri Henry Boateng hɔ . Menim sɛ saa nkutahodie yi remmoro dɔ nhwere anaasɛ kɔ si berɛ a me ara mempɛ sɛ metoa so. Mete aseɛ sɛ Henry bɛtwe me ne ne nkutahodie no agu n'afidie so. Menim sɛ nsɛmmisa no bɛgyina me nimdeɛ a mewɔ fa Kente ho, sɛdeɛ mede Kente kyerɛ me bɔ berɛ ne nsɛmmisa bi a ɛfa me ho bi te sɛ me mfie, ne me nkyi. Mete aseɛ sɛ nsɛmmisa no bi bɛma maka m'ankasa suahunu a mewɔ wɔ Kente ho, na metumi aka sɛ merenyi asɛmmisa biara a ɛmmoa me ano. Me gye to mu sɛ deɛ ɔ reyɛ nhwehwɛm yi bɛtumi ne me adi nkutaho wɔ abɛɛfo kwantempɔ n so fa biribiara a ɔ bɛhia bio de aboa ne dwumadie no mpɛnsɛnpɛnsɛnmu. Menim sɛ metumi ne deɛ ɔ rehwɛ Henry Boateng dwumadie yi so, Dr. Bhuva Narayan, adi nkutaho wɔ abɛɛfo kwantempɔ n bhuva.narayan@uts.edu.au afa nhwehwɛm yi ho. Menim nso sɛ metumi agyae biribiara a meretɛ de aboa saa dwumadie yi berɛ biara a mepɛ, a nsunsuansoɔ bɔ ne biara mma me so na me ne obiara nni nkyerɛkyerɛmu biara.

Megye to mu sɛ Henry Boateng ayi me nsɛmmisa nyinaa ano kama. Megye to mu sɛ wɔ betumi atintimdeɛ wɔ benya afiri nhwehwɛm dwumadie yi mu wɔ ɔ kwan bi so a ɛmfa me din nto dwa, gye sɛ mepene so na mede hyɛ no ase anaa meka kyerɛ no ntɛm.

Kyerɛ deɛ wopɛ:

☐ Mempɛ sɛ wɔ de me din bata biribiara a wɔ bɛtintim afiri saa nhwehwɛm yi mu.

☐ Wɔ bɛtumi adan m'adi wɔ biribiara wɔ bɛtintim afa nhwehwɛm yi ho.

☐ M'ayɛ krado sɛ Henry Boateng bɛ tumi aferɛ me wɔn wɔ tetefon so ama yɛn adi nkɔ afa twumadie yi ho

…………………………………………………………….
Tims o (participant)

……………………………………………………………
Tim so (researcher/delegate)

Hyɛ Yei Nso

Human Research Ethics Committee a ɛwɔ University of Technology, Sydney agye saa nhwehwɛm dwumadie yi ato mu. Sɛ wowɔ ɔ haw biara fa dwumadie yi ho a, wobetumi ne abedwakuo no adi nkutaho wɔ : the Research Officer(phone: +61295149772, Research.Ethics@uts.edu.auɔ . ɛyɛ a fa UTS HREC aba no ka ho.

Yɛbɛyɛ nhwehwɛm afa ɔ haw biara a wode bɛto dwa ho kokoam, na yɛbɛma wo nsa aka nea ɛbɛfiri nhwehwɛm no mu aba no.

Appendix 5: List of Publications arising from the thesis (as at June 2018)

1. **Boateng, H**. & Narayan, B. 2017. Social capital and knowledge transmission in the traditional Kente textile industry of Ghana. *Information Research*, 22(4)..
2. **Boateng, H.,** & Narayan, B. 2017, "Exploring knowledge creation and information sharing within the culturally situated world of Ghana's traditional Kente community", *In Proceedings of the Information Interactions Impact i3 Conference 2017, Robert Gordon University*, Aberdeen, UK. pp. 38-40.

3. **Boateng, H**. & Narayan, B. 2016, "The Warps and Wefts of Knowledge Creation: A Case of Kente Weaving", *Research Applications Information and Library Studies, Wellington, New Zealand,* 6-8 December 2016.
4. **Boateng, H.** 2016, "Informal Knowledge Sharing: A Study of Ghana. Presented at *Convergence and Emergence": UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Annual Higher Degree Research Student Conference*, University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, 25-26 Nov 2016

Appendix 6: List of all publications during PhD Candidature

1. Agyemang, F.G., Dzandu, M.D. & **Boateng, H.** 2016, "Knowledge sharing among teachers: the role of the Big Five Personality Traits", *VINE Journal of Information and Knowledge Management Systems*, vol.46, no.1,pp. pp.64 – 84.

2. Agyemang, G.F, **Boateng, H.,** & Dzandu, D.M, 2017 "Examining intellectual stimulation, idealized influence and individualized consideration as antecedents to knowledge sharing: Evidence from Ghana, *Knowledge Management & E-Learning: An International Journal,* vol. 9 no.4, pp.484–498

3. Amegbe, H., **Boateng, H.**, & Mensah, F. 2017, "Brand community integration and customer satisfaction of social media network sites among students". *Management Science Letters*, vol.7 no.11, pp.541-554.

4. **Boateng, H.** & Abdul-Hamid, I. 2017, "An Evaluation of Corporate Social Responsibility Communication on the Websites of Telecommunication Companies Operating in Ghana: Impression Management Perspectives", *Journal of Information Communication and Ethics in Society*, vol.15,no. 1,pp. 17-31

5. **Boateng, H.** & Agyemang, F.G., 2016, "A qualitative insight into key determinants of knowledge sharing in a public sector institution in Ghana", *Information Development*, vol.32, no.1, pp.35-43.

6. **Boateng, H.** & Agyemang, G. F. 2016, "The role of agreeableness trait and communal organizational culture in knowledge sharing", *International Journal of Knowledge Management Studies (IJKMS),* vol. 7 no.1-2, pp.154-165.

7. **Boateng, H**. & Narayan, B. 2017. Social capital and knowledge transmission in the traditional Kente textile industry of Ghana. *Information Research*, 22(4), paper rails1620.

8. Boateng, H. & Okoe F. A. 2015 "Determinants of consumers' attitude towards social media advertising, *Journal of Creative Communication,* vol.10, no.3,pp. 1–11. DOI: 10.1177/0973258615614417.

9. **Boateng, H.** & Okoe F. A. 2015, "Consumers' attitude towards social media advertising and their behavioural response: the moderating role of corporate reputation", *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, *9*(4), 299 – 312.

10. Boateng, H. 2016, 'An Interrogation of Corporate Social Responsibility Communication on Banks' Web sites, *Communicatio : South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research,* vol. 42,no.1,pp.100-118.

11. **Boateng, H.** 2016**,** "Customer Knowledge Management on Social Media Platform: A case study of MTN Ghana and Vodafone Ghana", *Information Development,* vol.32 no.3,pp. 440-451.

12. **Boateng, H**., Adam, D.R, Okoe, A. & Aning-Dorson, T. 2016, "Assessing the determinants of Internet Banking adoption intentions: A Social Cognitive Theory Perspective" *Computers in Human Behaviour,* vol.65, pp.468-478.

13. **Boateng, H.,** Agyemang, F.G Okoe, A.F. & Tiniwah M.D 2017, "Examining the relationship between Trustworthiness and Students' Attitudes toward Knowledge sharing", *Library Review,* vol.66, no 1/1, pp.16-27.

14. **Boateng, H**., Dzandu, M. D. & Tang, Y. 2016 "Knowledge sharing among employees in Ghanaian Industries: the role of leadership style and organizational culture", *Business Information Review,* vol. 33 no.3, pp.145-154.

15. **Boateng, H.,** F.G Okoe, A.F. & Tiniwah M.D 2017, The Relationship between Human Resource Practices and Knowledge Sharing in service firms, *Business Information Review*, vol. 33, no.2,pp. 74-80

16. **Boateng, H.,** Okoe, A.F. & Omane, A.B., 2016, "Does personal innovativeness moderate the effect of irritation on consumers' attitudes towards mobile advertising?", *Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, vol.17, no.3, pp.201-210.

17. Dzandu, M.D., **Boateng**, H., Agyemang, G.F., Quansah, F. 2016, "Social media adoption among University Students: What is the role of gender, perceived usefulness

and perceived ease of use?, *International Journal of Social Media and Interactive Learning Environments*, vol. *4* no.2,pp. 124-136.

18. Odoom, R., **Boateng, H**., & Omane, A. B. (2017). An empirical investigation of perceived relational benefits and brand engagement in restaurant services. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, vol.29 no.11, 00-00. //doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-01-2016-0040

19. Ofori, K. S., **Boateng, H.,** Okoe, A. F., & Gvozdanovic, I. 2017. Examining customers' continuance intentions towards Internet banking usage. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning, 35(6), 756-773.*

20. Okoe A. F. & **Boateng,** H. 2016, "CSR disclosure in the financial services sector: Assessing the information needs of Microfinance Institutions' customers", *Journal of Information Communication and Ethics in Society,* vol. 14 no.3,pp. 272-287.

21. Okoe F. A. & **Boateng, H.** 2016, "Assessing the Online CSR communication of an indigenous Ghanaian Bank", *Communication Research and Practice,* vol. *2* no.2,pp. 229-243.

22. Okoe F. A. & **Boateng, H.** 2016, "Assessing a two-way communication on bank websites: A Data Triangulation Approach", *Information Development,* vol. 32 no.5, pp.1471-1484.

23. Okoe F. A., **Boateng, H.** & Anning–Dorson, T. 2016, "Consumers' preference for Foreign Products: Do Family Communication Patterns and Self Esteem play a role?" *International Journal of Business and Emerging Markets,* vol. 8 no.2,pp. 210-221.

24. Okoe, A., **Boateng, H.** & Mensah, T., 2016, "The effects of job satisfaction, employee commitment, workplace friendship and team culture on service recovery performance", *Management Science Letters*, vol.6 no.11,pp. 713-722.

25. Osakwe, N.C, **Boateng, H.,** Popa, S. Chovancová, M & Soto-Acosta, P. 2016, "Modelling Cosmopolitan Consumers' Repeat Purchasing Behaviour in an Online Context: Shoppers' Brand Orientation and Vendors' Reputation", *E+M Economics and Management Journal,* vol.19 no.4,pp.149-166.

Conference Papers

26. Abdul- Hamid, I.K, Okoe, A.F, **Boateng, H.** 2017, "Corporate Social Responsibility Communication (CSR) by Banks: Exploring Young Customers' CSR Information Behaviour", *18TH Annual International Academy of African Business and Development (IAABD) Conference, Atlanta, Georgia*, 17-20 May 2017.

27. **Boateng, H**. & Narayan, B. 2016, "The Warps and Wefts of Knowledge Creation: A Case of Kente Weaving", *Research Applications Information and Library Studies, Wellington, New Zealand,* 6-8 December 2016.

28. **Boateng, H.** 2016, "Informal Knowledge Sharing: A Study of Ghana. Presented at *Convergence and Emergence*": *UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Annual Higher Degree Research Student Conference*, University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, 25-26 Nov 2016.

29. **Boateng, H.,** & Narayan, B. 2017, "Exploring knowledge creation and information sharing within the culturally situated world of Ghana's traditional Kente community", *In Proceedings of the Information Interactions Impact i3 Conference 2017, Robert Gordon University*, Aberdeen, UK. pp. 38-40.

30. Hinson, R.E, Anne, R. **Boateng H.** & Okoe A.F. 2016, "Mining firms and Sustainability Reporting in Ghana", *7th International Conference on Social Sciences*, Cape Town, South Africa 22 – 23 September 2016.