

Promoting Tourist Attractions in Ghana through Textile Print Designs

Isaac Abraham¹, Solomon Marfo Ayesu,² Daniel Kwabena Danso³

^{1,3}Department of Fashion Design and Textiles Education
Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development
Kumasi, Ghana

²Department of Fashion Design and Textiles Studies, Kumasi Technical University, Ghana

Abstract: Tourism is vital to Ghana's economic growth and development, serving as a major source of income, job opportunities, and foreign exchange. However, there is a pressing challenge in effectively marketing and promoting the country's tourist attractions to generate the necessary revenue and employment. To unlock the full potential of these attractions, a study was conducted with the aim of creating textile designs inspired by six selected tourist sites in Ghana, specifically for African prints. The study carefully chose three sites from the Northern region and three from the Southern region. The researchers leveraged Adobe Photoshop to transform these six tourist attractions into visually appealing textile print designs. The study proposes an innovative marketing strategy by transforming Ghana's tourist attractions into wearable textile designs, effectively promoting tourism and the country's various tourist centres. To implement this approach, it is recommended that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Creative Arts (MTCCA) collaborate with the textile industry to produce and print designs that showcase the captivating tourist attractions in Ghana. This strategic partnership not only serves to market the tourist sites effectively but also acts as a means of supporting the struggling textile industry, which is currently facing a crisis. By adopting this new approach, Ghana can not only attract more domestic and international tourists but also preserve its rich cultural heritage and stimulate the creative economy.

Keywords: Tourism, Tourist attractions, Adobe Photoshop, Textile Design

I. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is recognized as one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the 21st century (World Tourism Organization, 2000). It encompasses various sectors and activities, including trades, businesses, lodging, catering, transportation, and arts and crafts, contributing to economic development and employment generation (Rishi & Giridhar, 2007). The viability of a nation's tourism depends greatly on its rich and diverse natural or built environment (Horobin & Long, 1996). As highlighted by McCool (1996), the tourism industry extends beyond economic development, affecting intellectual, social, and environmental domains, thereby presenting complex challenges and concerns.

Tourism thrives on a wide range of attractions, such as agritourism, arts tourism, cultural and heritage tourism, destination tourism, fairs, events and conferences, and recreational activities (UNWTO, 2007).

Effective planning at all levels is essential for successful tourism development and management, as emphasized by Gunn (1996). Many tourist areas worldwide have demonstrated tourist markets' long-term benefits and satisfaction through a planned approach to tourism development, minimizing significant issues and problems.

In Ghana, tourism significantly contributes to economic growth, employment, and government revenues. In 2020, the direct contribution of the travel and tourism industry to Ghana's GDP was US\$1.9 billion, marking a substantial impact on the country's overall Gross Domestic Product (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2021).

Ghana has great potential for the expansion of its tourism industry. This is due to its wide range of tourism resources, which can be effectively utilized through various means such as tourism support services, infrastructure improvement, effective marketing strategies, and the renowned hospitality of the Ghanaian people. These efforts can contribute to the growth of tourism and create more employment opportunities. Ghana offers prospects for the development of different types of tourism, including ecotourism, cultural and heritage tourism, conference and business tourism, leisure tourism, and beach resort tourism (Bonsu, 2015). However, when compared to other African countries like Kenya and Senegal, Ghana's performance on selected tourism development indicators is relatively lower (Bonsu, 2015). The African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET) recognizes the importance of tourism as a means to achieve economic growth and bring about structural transformation in Ghana (Bonsu, 2015).

Ghana is home to a diverse range of natural attractions that include national parks, resource reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, wetland reserves, beaches, lakes, rivers, waterfalls, and picturesque landscapes (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019). Notably, Kakum and Mole national parks stand out as well-developed natural attractions, with Kakum gaining popularity for its canopy walkway and its proximity to Cape Coast, the regional capital of the Central Region (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2021). Other notable natural attractions include the Boabeng-Fiema sanctuary, Nzulezo stilt settlement, Shai Hills resource reserve, Wli waterfalls, and the Volta Lake. These natural sites provide various opportunities for ecotourism, beach tourism, and adventurous experiences (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019).

Ghana also boasts a rich array of historical and archaeological sites, such as forts, castles along the coast, traditional buildings, mosques, churches, and significant shrines. Two of these sites, the forts and castles along the coast and Asante traditional buildings have been recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Bonsu, 2015). Spanning over 500 years of history, the forts and castles played a pivotal role in the transatlantic slave trade. The traditional buildings exhibit shrines, courtyards, and adinkra symbols, offering insights into the ancient Asante culture and beliefs. These historical assets provide excellent opportunities for cultural heritage tourism, particularly for individuals of African descent residing in the Americas and the Caribbean who are seeking connections to their Ghanaian roots.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts (MTCCA) holds the responsibility of formulating national policies and regulations about tourism, culture, and creative arts in Ghana. The implementation of tourism policies, including the regulation of tourism establishments, falls under the purview of the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), an agency operating under the MTCCA (Ghana Tourism Authority, n.d.). To guide the development of the tourism industry, Ghana has formulated the National Tourism Development Plan (2013–2027). This comprehensive plan provides an analysis of various aspects of Ghana's tourism, including tourism resources, institutional and policy frameworks, tourism infrastructure and services, marketing strategies, conservation and environmental concerns, and community involvement. The plan emphasizes the consolidation and enhancement of existing resources in the Accra-Kumasi-Cape Coast triangle, as well as the development of new attractions along the beaches and the north-south Volta Lake corridor. Additionally, the plan highlights the need to devise strategies for targeted international and regional marketing of Ghana's tourism offerings (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2013).

According to Bonsu (2015), various reports, including the Ghana Economic Transformation Case Study (ACET, 2012), Tourism in Africa, and the National Tourism Development Plan 2013-2027 (Ministry of Tourism, 2013), have emphasized the challenges and issues that the Ghanaian tourism sector faces. These challenges have been identified through consultations with key stakeholders in the industry. Some of the major challenges include a lack of awareness regarding the potential of tourism for economic development, inadequate investment in the tourism sector, insufficient infrastructure and support services at tourist sites, Ghana's perception as a high-cost destination, and issues related to professionalism and service quality. Addressing these challenges requires specific actions in areas such as prioritization, marketing, capacity building, public investments, education, and community involvement (Bonsu, 2015).

To tackle the limited understanding of tourism's economic potential, Bonsu (2015) proposed the following strategies:

1. Raising awareness among the public, private sectors, and local communities about the economic benefits that tourism can bring.
2. Sensitizing communities at tourist sites to the needs and preferences of tourists.
3. Giving priority to tourism by streamlining institutions and policies, developing a national tourism policy, adhering to the tourism development plan, allocating sufficient budgetary resources for tourism, and implementing effective and timely data collection.
4. Developing and promoting domestic tourism products to foster a greater understanding and appreciation for tourism within the country.
5. Engaging in aggressive promotion and branding of Ghana's tourism in targeted international and regional markets.

The purpose of this study is to explore the use of textile designs as an innovative strategy to promote tourism in Ghana. By incorporating significant tourist sites in Ghana into textile print designs, the study aims to create awareness and generate interest in the country's extraordinary range of tourist attractions. Textile designs have the potential to provide visual representations of these attractions, showcasing the cultural and natural heritage of Ghana through the vibrant medium of African prints.

The importance of promotion in the tourism industry is widely recognized. Dibb et al. (1994) emphasize the significance of promotion in ensuring that customers are aware of the products offered by an organization. It is through effective promotion that interest in a business's offerings can be stimulated in the marketplace. Similarly, Kotler and Armstrong (2004) define promotional strategies as how a company communicates the benefits and values of its products to targeted customers, ultimately influencing their purchase decisions.

In the context of Ghana, the study's focus on utilizing textile designs for tourism promotion aligns with the growing interest in fashion tourism and the national efforts to revitalize the textile industry for job creation and foreign exchange earnings. By leveraging the unique appeal of African prints and incorporating tourist attractions into textile designs, the study aims to enhance the visibility and desirability of Ghana as a tourism destination. This innovative approach has the potential to captivate the attention of both domestic and international audiences, fostering a deeper appreciation for the rich cultural and natural heritage of the country.

In summary, this study recognizes the role of promotion in driving tourism growth and proposes the use of textile designs as a compelling strategy to create awareness and generate interest in Ghana's tourist attractions. By merging the worlds of fashion and tourism, the study aims to contribute to the revitalization of the textile industry while showcasing the diverse and captivating facets of Ghana's tourism offerings.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This practice-based research study adopts a transitional design approach, utilizing observation as a data collection tool and Adobe Photoshop as a design tool to generate the results. The observation phase involved visiting and studying six selected tourist sites in Ghana, with multiple photographs taken for each site. The chosen tourist attraction centres include Cape Coast Castle, Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum, Paga Crocodile Pond, Mole National Park, Kakum National Park, and Kintampo Falls. From the extensive collection of photographs, one outstanding image representing each of the six tourist centres was transformed into a textile design, specifically tailored for African print fabrics. The aim is for these designs to be adopted by textile companies in Ghana.

The transformation of the obtained images into textile designs was achieved using Adobe Photoshop, a widely used software program. It is important to note that computer images can generally be categorized as either bitmap or vector images. Adobe Illustrator, as noted by Centner and Vereker (2011), is a vector-based program, while Adobe Photoshop is a bitmap-based program. Bitmap images are composed of individual pixels, and the resolution of an image is determined by the number of pixels it contains. It should be acknowledged, as Centner and Vereker (2011) explain, that bitmap images may distort when scaled, reduced, or rotated. However, this characteristic also makes it easier to manipulate images in Photoshop. The program allows for the use of elements as templates, facilitating the reproduction and modification of patterns according to one's preferences (Streeter, 2010). Consequently, a single object can yield a multitude of different results. For this study, six tourist sites were carefully chosen, with three representing the northern sector of Ghana and three representing the southern sector.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Six (6) tourist sites were selected for the study, namely: Cape Coast Castle, Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum, Paga Crocodile Pond, Mole National Park, Kakum National Park, and Kintampo Falls. Pictures of the tourist sites were obtained and transformed into textile designs using Adobe Photoshop.

3.1 Designs developed from tourist attractions

3.1.1 Cape Coast Castle

Located in Cape Coast, the capital of Ghana's Central Region, the Cape Coast Castle has a rich history that spans several centuries. Originally established by the Swedes in the 1650s, the structure underwent a series of transitions as different European powers took control. The Danish, Dutch, and eventually the English possessed the castle, with the English upgrading it to a fortified castle in 1700.

During its tumultuous past, the Cape Coast Castle played a pivotal role as a transit point for enslaved individuals bound for European markets. It served as a central hub for the slave trade, enduring as such until its abolition in 1809 by the British. Following the cessation of the slave trade, the castle's activities shifted to European education and administration.

Today, the Cape Coast Castle stands as a prominent tourist attraction, drawing in a significant number of visitors each year. It serves as a poignant reminder of Ghana's historical significance and the profound impact of the transatlantic slave trade. The castle offers visitors a chance to delve into the dark chapters of human history, fostering a deeper understanding of the struggles endured by enslaved individuals.

Design Process

The progression of textile design for African prints derived from Cape Coast Castle is illustrated through the following plates. Plate 1 presents the original front picture of Cape Coast Castle. Moving to the first stage of development, Plate 2 showcases the Castle with its background removed. In the second stage, as depicted in Plate 3, the Castle transforms, taking on an African print design effect. Plate 4 exhibits the subsequent stage where multiple copies of the Castle are generated, varying in size and arranged in a linear perspective. Stage 5, presented in Plate 5, reveals the castle arrangement with the incorporation of colours. The background texture of this stage portrays two hands in chains joined together, symbolizing the exit point for slaves within the castle. Finally, the completed design, characterized by a contrasting colour scheme utilizing three (3) colours, is displayed.



Plate 1: Cape Coast Castle



Plate 2: Background removed



Plate 3: African print design effect



Plate 4: Design arranged in linear

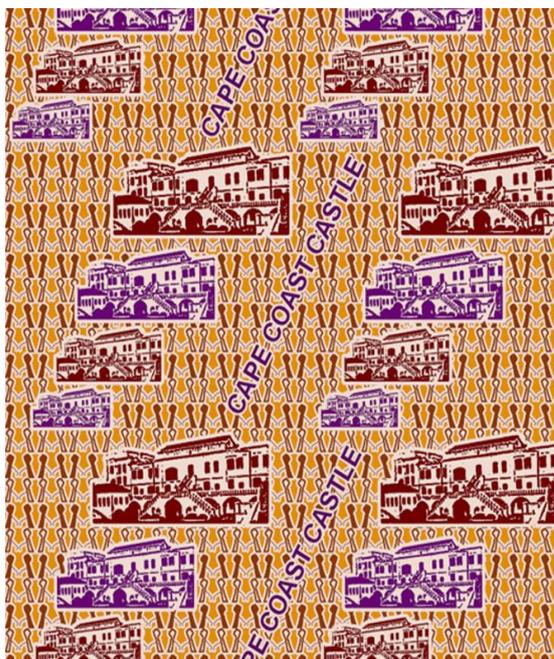


Plate 5: Final design

3.1.2 Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum

Situated in Accra, the capital city of Ghana, the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum was constructed in 1992 under the supervision of the late Jerry John Rawlings, the First President of Ghana's Fourth Republic. The mausoleum serves as the final resting place for Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana during its First Republic, and his wife Fatia Fata Nkrumah.

Designed with symbolic significance, the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum was crafted from four ceremonial swords, representing the values of peace and harmony in the Akan tradition of Ghana. Adding to its symbolism, the mausoleum is surrounded by water, symbolizing life and imparting a sense of eternal existence for the esteemed Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah.

As a result of its cultural and historical significance, the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum has emerged as a notable tourist attraction in Accra, drawing visitors who seek to pay homage to the visionary leader and learn more about Ghana's rich history.

Design Process

In the first stage of the design process, Plate 6 showcases the front view of the Kwame Nkrumah mausoleum. Moving to stage 2, Plate 7 demonstrates the removal of the mausoleum's background, allowing the monument to stand independently. After the background removal, the image underwent a transformation into an African print motif, as depicted in Plate 8. Multiple copies of the motifs were then created and arranged in horizontal half-drop patterns. The final design, presented in Plate 9, features four (4) distinct colours with the background textured by dots and stars. The choice of colours and the incorporation of stars were inspired by the design of Ghana's national flag. The mausoleum, being a national monument, served as the inspiration for incorporating elements from the flag into the design.



Plate 6: Picture of Kwame Nkrumah mausoleum



Plate 7: Background of mausoleum removed



Plate 8: Motif

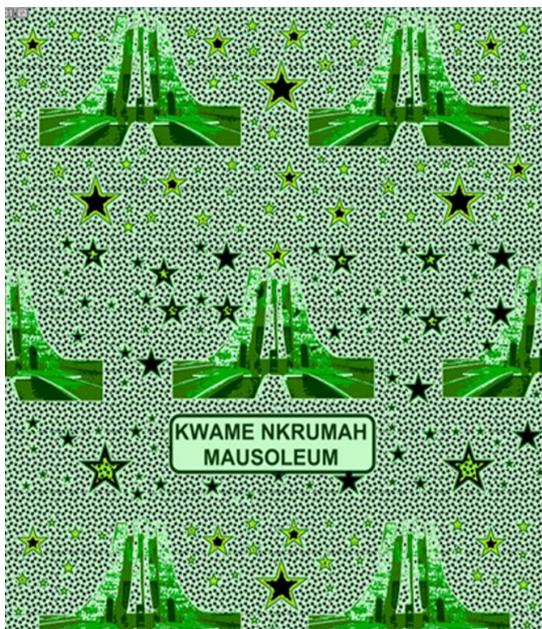


Plate 10: Final design

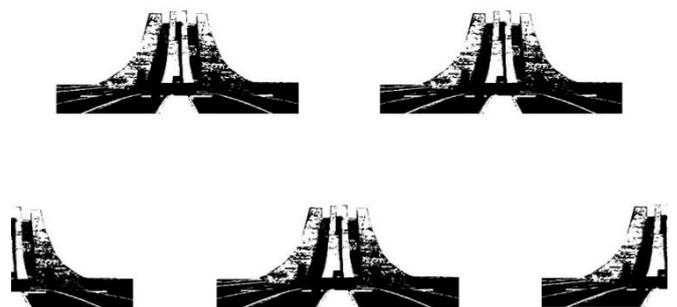


Plate 9: Half drop arrangement

3.1.3 Paga Crocodile Pond

Situated in the Upper East Region of Ghana, the Paga Crocodile Pond is a renowned sanctuary for sacred crocodiles. The crocodiles in Paga have established a unique and harmonious relationship with humans over many years. Visitors to the sanctuary are frequently granted the opportunity to interact closely with the crocodiles, including sitting on their backs or even holding their tails.

Design Process

The following depicts the progression of textile design development derived from the Paga Crocodile Tourist site. Stage one showcases a crocodile at the pond in Plate 11. Moving to stage two, the background of the image is removed, highlighting the crocodile and its shadow, as displayed in Plate 12. Stage 3 captures the transformation of the crocodile image into an African print effect, presented in Plate 13. The crocodiles inhabiting the Paga Pond are known for their harmless nature, allowing visitors to touch them without fear of harm. This aspect is captured in stage 4, where an individual can be seen holding the tail of a crocodile, as illustrated in Plate 14. Finally, the completed design, featuring the crocodile in colour and arranged in a half-drop pattern, is displayed in Plate 15.



Plate 11: Crocodile at Paga



Plate 12: Background removed



Plate 13: Crocodile in African print effect



Plate 15: Final design



Plate 14: A man holding a crocodile at Paga pond

3.1.4 Mole National Park

Situated in the West Gonja District of the Northern Region of Ghana, the Mole National Park is the largest national park in the country, spanning an area of 4,577 square kilometres. This expansive park provides visitors with the unique opportunity to have up-close encounters with elephants, often spotted near the forest's perimeter. The Mole Park is home to a diverse range of wildlife, including both large and small mammals, reptiles, and birds, making it a thriving habitat for various species.

Design Process

Plate 16 showcases a photograph displaying both the back and front views of two elephants at Mole National Park. Progressing to the first stage of the design process, specific sections of the background were eliminated to provide a more distinct view of the elephants, as depicted in Plate 17. Stage two exhibits the transformation of the elephants into an African print motif effect, as exhibited in Plate 18. Moving forward, stage three unveils the finalized design presented in colour, featuring the elephant motifs arranged in a perspective order, as demonstrated in Plate 19. The textures incorporated in the design aptly capture the natural habitat of elephants, further enhancing their representation within the textile design.



Plate 16: Two Elephants at Mole Park



Plate 17: Portions of the background removed

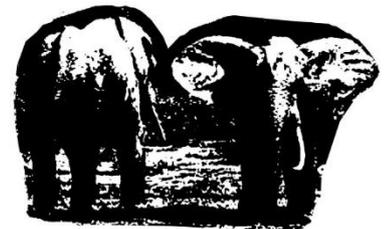


Plate 18: The two Elephants in African print effect

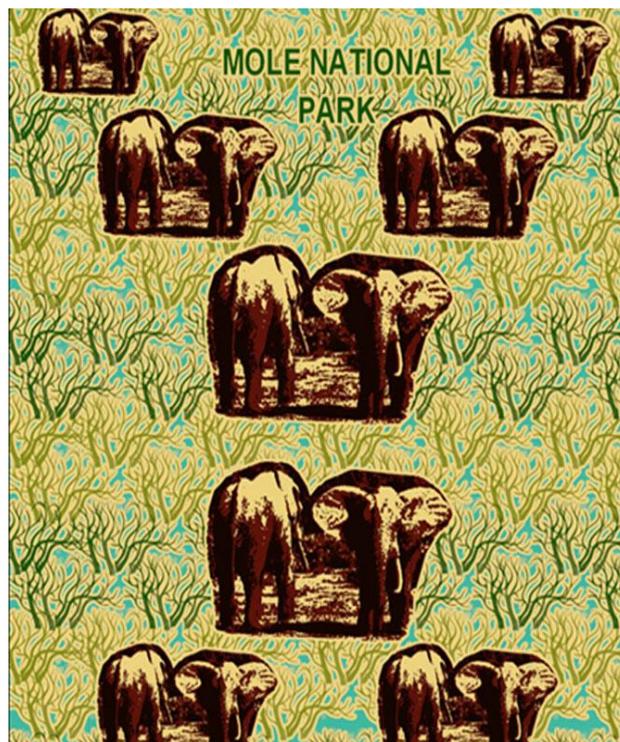


Plate 19: Final design

3.1.5 Kakum National Park

Situated in the central region of Ghana, the Kakum National Park is approximately 33 kilometres away from Cape Coast. Encompassing an area of 350 square kilometres, the park is renowned for its main tourist attraction, the Canopy Walkway. This impressive walkway draws in over 10,000 visitors annually, offering them a thrilling experience amidst the treetops. The Kakum National Park boasts a rich variety of vegetation that serves as a habitat for a diverse array of wildlife, including both large and small mammals, reptiles, and birds.

Design Process

The Canopy Walkway at Kakum National Park in the Central Region served as the inspiration for the development of an African print design. Plate 20 showcases a photograph of the Canopy Walkway, capturing its essence. Proceeding to Stage One of the textile development process, a portion of the walkway image was carefully cropped to obtain a motif, as illustrated in Plate 21. Stage Two showcases the transformation of the image into a striking black-and-white effect, as depicted in Plate 22. Stage Three presents the final design, characterized by four distinct colour schemes and the inclusion of trees in the background to symbolize the lush forest environment, as exemplified in Plate 23. Additionally, the motifs within the design were thoughtfully arranged in a horizontal full-drop pattern. Notably, the dominant green colour within the design signifies the prevalent hue found in the forest. These stages comprehensively depict the process.



Plate 20: Picture of Canopy walkway



Plate 21: Motif from Canopy walkway

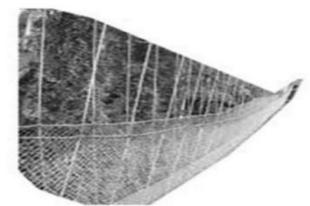


Plate 22: Motif in black and white

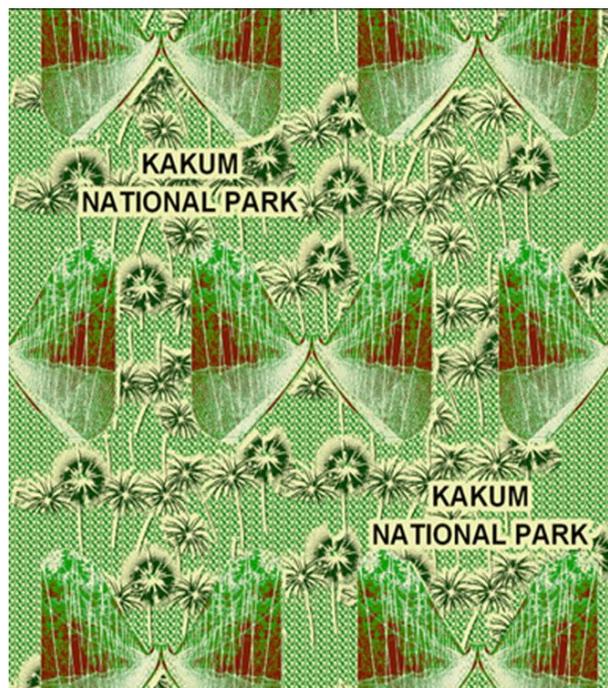


Plate 23: Final design

3.1.6 Kintampo Waterfalls

Situated in the Bono East region of Ghana, the Kintampo Waterfall is recognized as one of the tallest waterfalls in the country. It is located approximately 4 kilometres from the Kintampo Municipality along the Kumasi-Tamale Road. At this captivating natural attraction, the Pumpu River gracefully cascades down rocky steps, plummeting around seventy metres before continuing its course.

Design Process

The provided images offer a visual representation of the step-by-step process involved in converting a photograph of Kintampo Falls into a captivating African print design. Plate 24 presents the initial depiction of the waterfall captured in the photograph. In stage one, Plate 25 showcases the photograph skillfully cropped into an elegant oval shape, adding a touch of uniqueness to the design. Transitioning to stage two, Plate 26 reveals the image transformed into a captivating black-and-white effect, laying the foundation for the subsequent application of multiple colours. Moving forward, stage three, beautifully displayed in Plate 27, highlights the ingenious repetition of the black and white images in varying sizes, meticulously arranged in a perspective order to enhance the visual impact of the design. Finally, the culmination of the design process is seen in the final stage, portrayed in Plate 28. Here, the design takes on its full form, featuring four distinct colours harmoniously combined with textured elements arranged in a graceful wavy pattern, symbolically representing the dynamic flow of the river. Together, these stages illustrate the creative transformation of the Kintampo Falls photograph into a captivating African Prints design, showcasing the beauty and allure of this natural wonder.



Plate 24: Picture of Kintampo Falls



Plate 25: Cropped Kintampo Fall



Plate 26: Kintampo Falls in black and white



Plate 28: Final



Plate 27: Kintampo Falls in perspective arrangement

IV. Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to conduct a comprehensive exploration of the potential use of textile designs as a powerful marketing tool to promote tourist attractions in Ghana. The research objectives encompassed the identification of significant tourist sites in the country, the assessment of the applicability and effectiveness of utilizing textile designs in promoting these attractions, and the development of specific textile designs based on selected sites for African prints.

To achieve these objectives, a meticulous selection process was undertaken, resulting in the inclusion of six prominent tourist attractions from both the Northern and Southern regions of Ghana. These attractions, namely Cape Coast Castle, Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum, Paga Crocodile Pond, Mole National Park, Kakum National Park, and Kintampo Falls, were chosen as representative examples of the diverse and rich cultural heritage of the country.

To materialize the concept of integrating textile designs into the promotion of these tourist sites, the researchers employed Adobe Photoshop, a versatile design tool, to develop six distinct designs derived from the chosen attractions. The intention was to tailor these designs specifically for African prints, with the aim of partnering with local textile companies in Ghana for their production and distribution.

Based on the findings and the successful creation of these textile designs, the study strongly recommends the widespread adoption of this innovative approach by all tourist centres throughout the country. It is suggested that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Creative Arts (MTCCA) take the lead in embracing this strategy and collaborate with the textile industries to produce the prints, particularly for the major tourist attractions in Ghana. This endeavour not only serves to effectively market tourist attractions but also plays a crucial role in revitalizing and sustaining the struggling local textile industries.

The implementation of this approach holds immense potential for driving the production and sale of indigenous textiles, particularly in communities housing significant tourist attractions. Consequently, it would also generate employment opportunities for individuals involved in the textile industry and contribute to the overall economic growth of these communities. Furthermore, the visibility of these textile products showcasing the imagery of the tourist attractions is expected to enhance the patronage of these sites, ultimately leading to increased government revenue generated through tourism.

To fully capitalize on the outcomes of this study and capitalize on its potential, it is strongly recommended that the government of Ghana views it as an effective and strategic campaign strategy for promoting tourist attractions within the country. The unique designs derived from the tourist sites and intended for African prints possess the power to provide visitors with a captivating glimpse into the extraordinary array of tourist attractions Ghana has to offer, fostering a heightened interest and engagement with these sites. By leveraging this opportunity, the government can significantly amplify its efforts in attracting both domestic and international tourists, thereby reaping the economic benefits associated with increased tourism revenue.

References

- [1] World Tourism Organization. (2000). *Tourism 2020 Vision*. UNWTO.
- [2] Rishi, R. K., & Giridhar, G. V. (2007). *Tourism marketing*. Firewall Media.
- [3] Horobin, H., & Long, B. (1996). *Tourism and sustainability: New tourism in the third world*. In *Tourism and Sustainable Development: Monitoring, Planning, Managing* (pp. 17-33). University of Waterloo.
- [4] McCool, S. F. (1996). *What's in a name? Definitions and prospects for sustainability in tourism*. In *Tourism and Sustainable Development: Monitoring, Planning, Managing* (pp. 36-47). University of Waterloo.

- [5] United Nations World Tourism Organization. (2007). Tourism market trends: Africa. UNWTO.
- [6] Gunn, C. (1996). Tourism planning: Basics, concepts, cases. Taylor & Francis.
- [7] World Travel & Tourism Council. (2021). Ghana: Economic impact 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/countries-2019/ghana2019.pdf>
- [8] Bonsu, O. A. (2015). Policy brief: Realizing Ghana's tourism potential. African Centre for Economic Transformation.
- [9] Ghana Statistical Service. (2019). Ghana Living Standards Survey Round 7: Main Report. [Online]. Available: https://www2.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/glss7/GLSS7_Main%20Report.pdf
- [10] Ghana Tourism Authority. (n.d.). About GTA. [Online]. Available: <https://visitghana.com/about-gta/>
- [11] Ghana Tourism Authority. (2013). Kakum National Park. [Online]. Available: <https://visitghana.com/attractions/kakum-national-park/>
- [12] Ghana Tourism Authority. (2013). National Tourism Development Plan 2013-2027. [Online]. Available: <https://visitghana.com/downloads/ntdp/NTDP.pdf>
- [13] ACET. (2012). Ghana Economic Transformation Case Study. African Centre for Economic Transformation.
- [14] Ministry of Tourism (2013). National Tourism Development Plan 2013-2027.
- [15] Dibb, S., Simkin, L., Pride, W. M., & Ferrell, O. C. (1994). Marketing: Concepts and strategies. Houghton Mifflin.
- [16] Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2004). Principles of marketing. Pearson Prentice Hall.
- [17] Centner, M., & Vereker, F. (2011). Fashion Illustrator Handbook for Adobe Illustrator, 2nd ed. United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- [18] Streeter, L. B. (2010). Essentials Fashion Illustration: Digital, 2nd ed. United States: Rockport Publishers.