

A DISCOURSE ON CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN “AKAN” FILMS

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the award of the M. Phil degree and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which had been accepted for the award of any other degree of the university, except where due acknowledgements have been made in the text.

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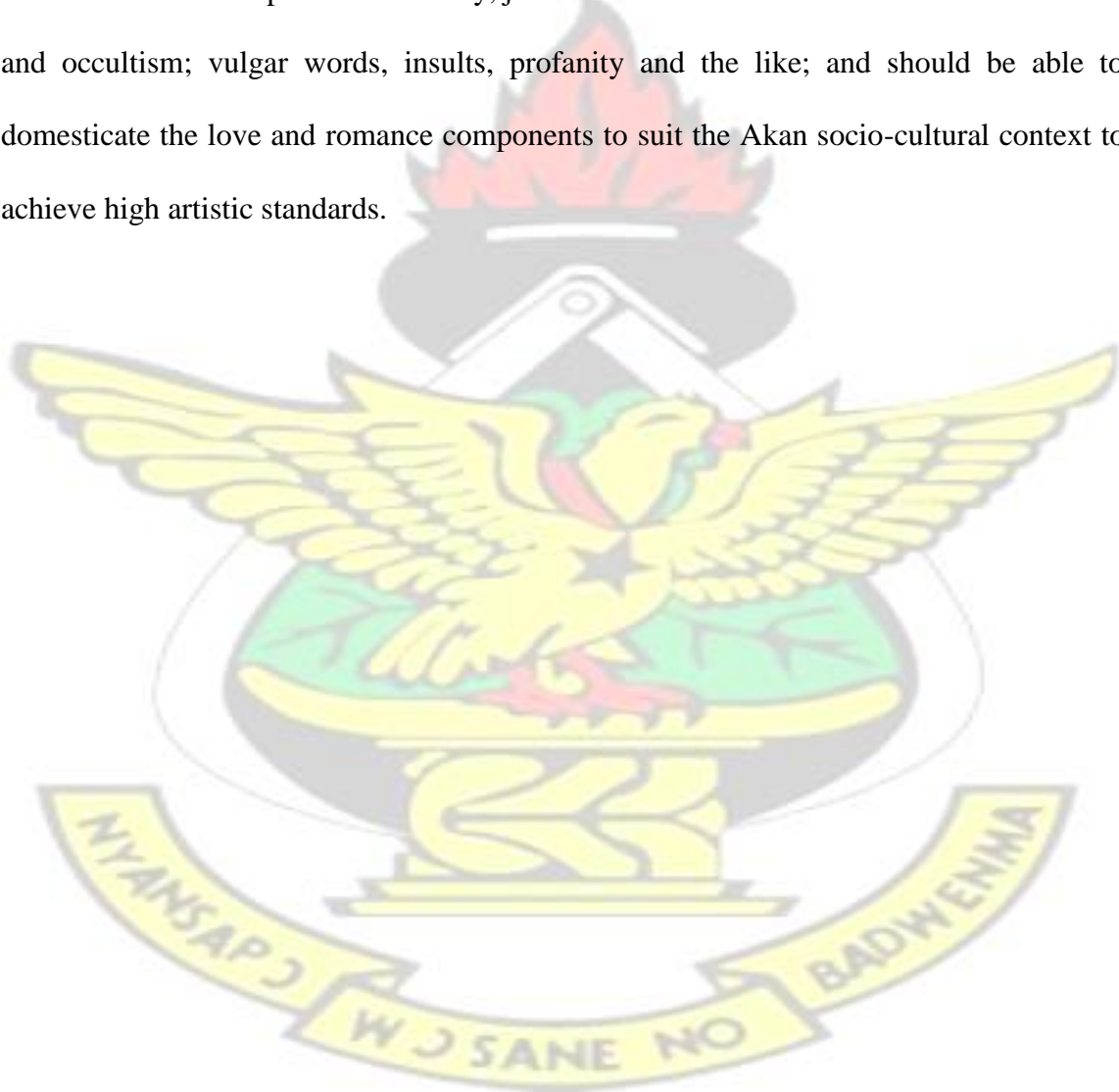
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ABSTRACT

Filmic representations of indigenous people and their knowledge is a starting point to free cultural meanings that objectify the indigenous people as commodities of a global culture. Nevertheless, African films remain “foreigners in their own countries” where the makers of these popular movies have never been principally concerned with authenticity, cultural revival, and or the preservation of their culture. These phenomena have been accused of lowering the image of Africa and the Africans in general through their low quality productions. Thus, based on qualitative research approach, six Akan films, three of which were selected from the 2012/2013 Kumawood Akobeng Awards, and three others sampled from the wider patronage and popular Akan movies to undertake an analysis of cultural elements in Akan films in Ghana. The study sought to ascertain how the Akan films incorporated Akan proverbs; Ghanaian culture and moral conducts; foreign cultural elements and whether Akan films present distortions on Akan culture or not. The selected video films were watched twice by study panel that were knowledgeable in filmmaking and the Akan culture in accordance with a designed film observation guide, which were then transcribed. The results obtained after the content analysis of the data indicated that, Akan films are enriched in diverse Akan proverbs used for ensuring the inculcation of moral conducts, welfare, and acquisition of wisdom; manifestations of the rich traditional Akan kings dress code and adornments; showcasing of Akan traditional festivals, folksongs, drumming and dancing, games; as well as sense of communal welfare, hospitality and traditional courtesies. Nevertheless, witchcraft and fetishism were overused to subjugate enemies. Moreover, there were the inclusion of Western cultural elements regarding banquet-like hall decorations and Hip pop and Nigerian Music, men in

ear rings; women in mini-skirts and anklets. Additionally, the Akan films according to the study obviously depicted distortions of traditional chieftaincy and political customs, hospitality ethics and the use of proverbs. The use of witchcraft and fetishism misinform foreign audience about the true identity and rich culture of Akans, and Africans in general. The results have implications on the “Akan” films in its attempts to present cultural meanings in Ghanaian films. As such, “Akan” films will have to sufficiently capture the national values of respect for humanity, justice and reduce the reoccurrences of witchcraft and occultism; vulgar words, insults, profanity and the like; and should be able to domesticate the love and romance components to suit the Akan socio-cultural context to achieve high artistic standards.



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Films are cultural artifacts created by specific cultures, which reflect those cultures, articulate social consciousness and in turn affect them (Ogunleye, 2014; Ugbam *et al.*, 2014; Crane, 2014). However, African films remain “foreigners in their own countries” where the makers of popular movies have never been principally concerned with authenticity, cultural revival, or cultural preservation (Sama 1996, 148 cited in Garritano, 2008). Implicit of these phenomena is for African filmmakers to intensify efforts in exploiting their own cultural resources, rather than importing the “valueless” aspects of these western cultures (Ugbam *et al.*, 2014). As argued by Ugbam et al. (2014), ‘to lose one's culture is tantamount to losing one's identity’ and “a society cut off from its roots may thrive for a while on its own momentum but eventually it will wither like flowers cut in a vase” (Awoniyi, 1978 as cited in Ugbam *et al.*, 2014).

Contrary to the above view points, researchers such as Diawara (1996) and Akwetey (2007) have it that, “African aesthetics do not come merely from European cinema.” Indeed, such researchers posit that by use of African storytelling techniques and other forms of oral traditions examples of which are folklores and folktales predominantly of the Akans of Ghana, the films in Africa would create a movement away from that of the Western films and cultures toward a predominance of traditional narrative mode. Ultimately, the African film obtains its separate identity as a genre that expresses and represents the continent’s identity and its worldview. Moreover, the African filmmakers

can continue to produce some of the world's finest films in response to the aspirations of their people (Adesanya, 2014).

These features really do not augur well for the development, positioning and differentiating African film genre from that of others, of course, it is through films and documentaries that the culture, people's background and identity as per their nation are exhibited to the outside world (Udomisor and Sonuga, 2012). Consequently, some suggestions have come from some concerned African researchers. For example according to Amayo *et al*(2012), there is every need for all African filmmakers to utilize the film medium to promote the African culture, as well as to correct all the wrongs of past ignorance and late development. However, in the view of Adeleke (2003), African filmmakers should present unadulterated aspects of the African culture and customs, which will likely be of immense value to socio-economic and political growth, and development of the African continent in this era of globalization. Certainly, through these cultural identities there would clearly be a distinction between African films from the others (Adesanya, 2014).

Undoubtedly, films are important art forms, a source of popular entertainment and a powerful method for educating and or indoctrinating citizens of which its visual elements in motion pictures a universal power of communication "Film", (as cited in Ogunleye, 2014). The important roles films play in the transmission of culture has been noted by Ryan (2009). He indicates that films are both culturally rich and complex; and constitutes a form of entertainment that reflects daily lives, which often emphasizes on romance, humor and violent elements; then fantasies, dreams and imagination through which individuals escape from the realities of daily existence. In his view, the fact that

governments spend large sums to maintain a presence in the film industry indicates that films are perceived as having considerable symbolic and cultural value.

Ultimately, there has been long standing concern since the last four decades as to what form African films should take in order to be different from Western cinema. The African major conferences on cultural industries notably, the federation of African filmmakers (FEPACI) in Algiers in 1975, emphasises commitment to this development, that African films should represent Africa from an African point of view; reject the commercial and the Western film codes. The Dakar Plan of Action on Cultural Industries in 1992 and Plan of Action for Cultural and Creative Industries in October 2008 by African Union Ministers of Culture recognized further the potential role of cultural industries in driving economic and social development of the continent (Kwanashie *et al.*, 2009). Conversely, many African directors have retreated somewhat from such radical calls over the past two decades, worrying far more about the problems of forging a popular African cinema and creating a viable African film industry and try to position the African cinema on the global scene.

Ghana like most countries in Africa has taken some necessary actions needed to put the creative economy at the forefront of the development process (Meyer, 2003). Indeed, it is stressed in the National Culture Policy of Ghana (2004) that in the era of globalization and contemporary technological challenges, the people of Ghana must recognize that their culture is the basis of, and the most important factor in the nation's human and material development; and accordingly requires creative and cultural industries such as the local film industry to continue to exercise a deep influence on the history, cultural values, nation's destiny and national life (National Commission on Culture, 2004).

Garritano (2008) indicates that the inexpensive, widely available and easy to use technology for the production and duplication of the movies have transformed movie production on the African cultural landscape. The birth of the video format in the 1990s commenced the paradigm shift in cinema in Ghana, which has led to new trends and genres in the Ghanaian cinema (Tamakloe, 2013). This shows that the number of popular local movies produced in Ghana is becoming astounding and it is therefore important to analyse their socio-cultural contents. Quan-Baffour (2008), has elaborately discussed about the transformation and acculturation in Ghanaian culture. His contention is that, Ghanaians (Asante being the largest cultural group) cherish, love, practice and preserve their culture and tradition through songs, Anansesem, folktales, folklores, names and manner of dressing despite their exposure to western culture (Wiredu, 2005). Ukadike (2000), shares the belief that African cinema is charting a new course and that there is the need to understand the cultural elements which they offer.

Nevertheless, in this era of cultural acculturation through globalization of the media, limited studies can be found on the cultural analysis of African films. Some studies into the aspects of Ghanaian films have focused on “Traditional costumes and their relevance as cultural symbols to film making in Ghana: Asante Case Study” (Akwetey, 2007), “Assessing Brand Ghallywood: A study of the elements that constitute and characterize the Ghanaian Film Industry” (Akrofi, 2013). Indeed, it is only Adeleke (2003) who has tasked African filmmakers to adopt film genre that suit the African culture. Thus the present study focuses on undertaking cultural analysis of Akan Films in Ghana

1.2 Problem Statement

“Akan” films among other African films seemingly not inculcating the varied cultures and their elements of their African origin, but rather depict elements of foreign cultures and events which do not happen within the African culture. These phenomena have been accused of lowering the image of African through the low quality and ‘look’ of their films. In Ghana currently, many audiences question how the upsurge of local movies reflect the “Akan” and Ghanaian culture as a whole. Certainly, Ghana can boast of a varied rich and colorful culture, from food, dance, marriage rites, naming ceremonies, language, proverbs, wise sayings, music and so much more. It is important filmmakers tell the Ghanaian stories in a stunning African way, using these cultural elements.

It is becoming very difficult to understand the true significance of the Ghanaian philosophical and moral values in these films. These foreign culture inclusions in Ghanaian films contradict the authentic indigenous Ghanaian culture and tradition which are still very much alive and cherished, valued, practiced and treasured despite western cultural infiltration, Williams (as cited in Boadou, 2011). Compared to Nollywoods, Schultz (2012) maintains that it prospers by satisfying preference for material that speaks to Nigerians: expression of a point of view – the values, desires, and fears of their popular audience. Indeed, it is a truism that Nollywood films have gained wide acceptance among the African Diasporas within the rest of the Region in Africa and African Diasporas in Europe, America, and the Asian countries as they touch on African experience in everyday life, communal mutuality in village festivals, traditional dancing tunes and steps, religious worships and socio-cultural cooperation in works. This experience may be identical except the language use (Fayomi, 2015).

Contrary to the cultural orientation of most Ghanaian movies after independence, Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president saw indigenous Ghanaian film as cultural, political and most especially decolonization weapon; so with this in mind, a number of more secularly minded, socially-conscious videos were made until 1966 (Haynes, 2007). Indeed, Nkrumah in his words emphasized that Ghanaian films should present Ghana to the world so that people outside would also know about Ghana, just as they knew a lot about America, and other places, even though they had not travelled to those countries before (Tamakloe, 2013). The Ghana Film Industry Corporation and National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI) had well defined missions and visions to craft an 'authentic' Ghanaian film culture. In contrast however, the new entrants to the film industry have been driven more by commercial instincts than a desire to create a system of cultural and a decolonization weapon. Ultimately, there is an ostensibly unconscious state from which the "Akan" filmmakers in Ghana need to come around in line and inculcate 'appropriate' use of the varied Ghanaian cultural elements in their filmmaking.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study generally seeks to explore the manifestations of traditional Ghanaian cultural performances in "Akan" films. Specifically, the study attempts to:

1. Analyze the extent to which present Akan films reflect the Akan cultural elements and moral conducts.
2. Identify foreign cultural elements incorporated in Akan films.
3. Assess whether scenes in Akan films distort the Akan culture or not.

1.4: Research Questions

The study is intended to find answers to the following questions;

1. Which aspects of the Akan culture and moral conducts are depicted in Akan films?
2. What foreign cultural elements are observed in Akan films?
3. In what ways do Akan films present the true reflections of the Akan culture?

1.5: Scope of the Study

The study was confined to presentation of cultural elements of moral and social values, proverbs and wise sayings, moral lessons and educational components of the Akan people of Ghana in Akan films in the Kumasi Metropolis.

1.6: Limitations of the Study

It would be remiss not to acknowledge that this study has several limitations. As previously discussed, it is impossible to tie the values espoused by proverbs to specific historical periods. Concurrence with proverbial messages may have changed over time. Furthermore, proverbs communicate the collective norm (culture outside the self) and do not address individual differences. The study is based on limited elements of Ghanaian cultures. Indeed, elements of culture are broad and multifaceted. The study is not able to ascertain the extent which the globalizations has adulterated cultures and influence of audience demand affects the film-making. Moreover, the sample size been limited to six movies is largely inadequate considering the fact that seven movies are released into the market weekly.

1.7 Importance of the Study

The cultural concept is relevant in addressing questions on the production of African films, about and how they should be constructed and takes its place in the global context. This has become necessary, as Western scholars using western mode of thinking, doing things and concerning reality have dominated the production, reproduction and dissemination of knowledge in Africa. Ghanaian films are not exceptions; however, research has not yet analyzed the cultural elements in the Ghanaian film. The findings would provide credible information for the Ghana film industry practitioners, students in training, and stakeholders to offer capacity building and in-service trainings. The National Commission on Culture and Research Institutions would also use it for policy making.

Indeed, it is well attested that cultural revival is expected to empower the African people to take their place not just on the cultural map of the world but in transforming these societies into viable participants in the global economy. The current research is envisaged to fill the academic vacuum created by the lack of information on the inculcation and appropriate use of elements of the diverse cultures of Ghana in their films which would help leverage the Ghana film industry and bring about sanity in filmmaking in these areas; as well as make it perform better in the global market, and attempt to provide information that would correct the misrepresentation of the Ghanaian cultures in film; especially in the Akan films and the Ghana film industry in general. It will help establish the needed cultural identity for the Akan films to create a niche and a cultural identity for the Ghana film and creative industry.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Asante Kente

Bright and multi-coloured strip woven cloth with horizontal and vertical motifs which is woven in the Asante region of Ghana.

Ahenema

Beautifully hand crafted leather slippers originally worn by chiefs and queen mothers in the Asante region of Ghana.

Ampe

This video is about Ampe, which is a game for girls. It involves jumping, clapping, feet moving and dancing in Ghana. This energetic game helps bring communities together and develop the player's skills of anticipation.

Juju

The use of occultism, magic, charm and other powers to harm an opponent, or to influence a person to do his will.

1.9 Organization of the Text

This study has been organized into five chapters. Chapter One sets the background of the study statement of problem, objectives of the study and research questions. It further explains the significance of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study, and finally, organization of the study.

Chapter Two reviews existing literature written by other scholars on culture and film from diverse standpoints. It utilizes a conceptual framework that models the pattern of relationships existing between the variables which were identified in the extant literature.

Chapter Three highlights the research methodology to be used. This entails research

themes, including; profile of the study, research design, population, sample characteristics, sampling technique, instrumentation and data collection procedures.

Chapter Four presents the analysis and discussions of the significant findings from the collected and collated data.

Chapter Five rounds off the study with the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

Under this chapter, the research addresses issues of cultural elements and how African filmmakers effectively utilize them in the film medium to promote their varied culture; citing several cases from Ghana and Nigeria, and indeed towards achieving a sustainable competitive advantage over heavy demanded American, Indian, Chinese and Japanese films. Specifically, a critical review and synthesis of concepts of culture and film, moral and value concepts; what constitute moral and social values in Ghana and other African setting have been elaborated and analyzed, as well as content characteristics of Ghanaian and Nigerian films.

2.2 Historical Background of Film-Making in Ghana

Film production in Ghana is said to have dated way back from the pre-independence era (Meyer, 2003). Yet preceding the 1940s, film production was a work pursued solely by the colonial masters to educate the African indigenes in the art of speaking, understanding and to conform to their dictates; as an educational and transformational tool all under the patronages of the colonially run Film Unit. It is in view of this that the Gold Coast Film Unit was established in 1946 by the British colonial government, to produce educational materials to teach Ghanaians how good it was for the British to rule them.

Ghanaian film in particular dates back to 1948 when the then Gold Coast Film Unit was set up in the Information Services Department. In 1971, the Ghana Film Industry was

established as a corporate body. In 1978, the Government of Ghana brought on stream the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI), a public institution of Higher Education in Film and Television Production with a mandate to train Ghanaians and Africans in filmmaking, and to tell the African story. It produced a number of high quality Ghanaian films and documentaries.

Ghanaian video film industry which emerged in the course of the late 1980s grew steadily and was producing over two hundred movies per annum in the 1990s (Garitano, 2008).

However, by 1996, when the Ghana Film Industry Corporation was divested to a Malaysian consortium, a yawning lacuna emerged in filmmaking in Ghana (<http://www.filmbirth.com/ghana.html>). Critical works and archival material which document the trajectory of Ghana's film history from the colonial period to the mid-90s include Odunton (1950), Noble (1952), Agyei-Addo (2004), Bloom (2009), Holdbrook (1985) and Sandon (2009).

In the late 1990s, the gap created by the collapse of the Ghana Film Industry Corporation was quickly filled by video-movie productions. Adjei (2014) has pointed out that film critics who have drawn attention to the phenomenal rise of video productions in Ghana include Aveh (2002), Meyer (1998; 2003; 2006), Haynes (2007) and Garritano (2013). But he indicates that it was not a phenomenon happening in isolation in Ghana. According to Haynes (2007:1), Video film production began almost simultaneously in Ghana and Nigeria in the late 1980s, in both cases as a result of general economic collapse that made celluloid film impossibly expensive (Garritano, 2013). In Ghana, the way was led by people like William Akuffo, a film projectionist, and Socrates Safo, who was studying to become an auto mechanic. Self-taught as filmmakers, they were outsiders to the Ghanaian

filmmaking establishment, but their tales of witchcraft and sentimental romance immediately struck a chord with their audience.

It is generally believed that, Screening and distributions of films in Ghana dates back as early as the 1920's. Until the late 90's and early part of the new millennium, the Ghana film industry had been struggling to keep in business especially when its counterpart Nigeria had been successful in the area and came to be regarded as the third best movie producers in the world (Utaka, 2010). Like their Nigerian counterparts, the Ghanaian movie industry turned to new video technology to produce their films and started chalking new success and grounds in movie production and sales. Some scholars have attributed the success of Ghanaian films to the introduction of video technology.

Currently, technological evolution has made these movies even more accessible. Garitano (2008) affirms that these movies are produced trans-nationally and broadcasted on television, streamed over the Internet, distributed and pirated globally in multiple formats. Haynes (2010) affirms this trend and indicates that the movies are not just put on Video Home system (VHS) and or compact discs (CD) but are also uploaded on internet-based video sharing sites such as YouTube, Daily Motion, Video Share and other social networking sites. This suggests that these movies have acquired newer characteristics of accessibility, affordability, and ubiquity. Aside the easy accessibility to content, structure and settings of the movies, scholars like Sama (1994) contends that the movies are made on larger scale because unlike the cinematic films, they are inexpensive to produce. Akashoro (2010) contends that these movies have been used to entertain, instruct, subjugate, persuade and propagate the overall social, political, economic and educational

needs of the audience. Addressing mass audiences, these moviemakers are not obliged to speak on behalf of a minority group and remain unencumbered by the burden of representation which has been the core of film critics (Desai 2004; Garritano, 2008).

2.2.1: Akan Movies

Akan movies tell the everyday life of the Ghanaian, particular in Kumasi. *Kumasi Yonkor*, for example was hailed for depicting the daily struggles of the low income Ghanaian who lives in compound houses (Yamoah, 2014). The story lines easily resonate with the audiences, compared with some of the movies in English, which have been criticized for telling stories that do not tell the Ghanaian story. The Akan language is the largest spoken language in Ghana (Yamoah, 2014), spoken by about 44% of Ghanaians (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

The surge of films in the Akan language has created a niche, adopting the production strategies by some production groups such as ‘*Kumawood*’ (films produced using the Akan language, regardless of where they were produced in Ghana). Kumawood films are very popular in Ghana now, with the decline of films produced in the English language, which patrons have tagged ‘Glamour’ as in glamorous, to show contrast to those produced in Kumasi to satisfy the ‘film taste’ of the masses, which mostly are disconnected from the Glamour (Yamoah, 2014). The dominance of the Akan video film industry in Ghana like the Kumawood, is suppressing the dominance of Ghanaian films in English and the Nollywood films marketed and distributed in Ghana. Currently, of the ten movies released in Ghana weekly, seven are from Kumawood. *Kumawood* shows two main categories of filmmaking namely, the “Twi” and the “Twinglish” movies. The *Twi* movies are the type of films where the lingua franca is Asante Twi and other Akan languages, whereas the

Twinglish movies are the types of films where the lingua franca is a combination of English language and the other Akan languages. Ghallywood makes use of English language, Vollywood uses the *Ewe* language, and Nodrafim also makes use of the Northern Regional languages.

According to Adjei et al. (2014), the dominance of Akan films is a direct carry-over from the Concert Party tradition where Akan is more or less the lingua franca, to the extent that even non-Akan actors and actresses are forced to function in the Akan medium. They indicate that in most productions, there is a long-standing tradition of poking fun at Ewes and Northerners who are projected as incompetent users of the Akan language. Indeed, they make it explicit that, films in Akan are far more popular than those in English simply because they are a carry-over from popular theatre, targeted at that massive constituency of patrons which includes peasants, market women, semi-literates and children for whom an indigenous language in any narrative context is closer to linguistically.

2.3 Film Concept

Conceptually, film denotes a work of art on celluloid (from the evolution of the motion picture) and (in modern times) on video and now digital single lens reflex (DSLR) formats. Film as a communicative medium has till date been used to entertain, instruct, subjugate, persuade and propagate, the overall social, political, economic and educational needs of the inhabitants of the contemporary world that are deeply dependent on communication in its various forms, including film as a mass medium (Akashoro, 2010).

As already noted, films are cultural artifacts created by specific cultures, which reflect those cultures, and in turn, affect them (Ogunleye, 2014; Ugbam, Chukwu and Ogbo, 2014; Craig, Greeneand and Douglas, 2003). Film is considered to be an important art form, a source of popular entertainment and a powerful method for educating or indoctrinating citizens.

As used by Vassiliou (2006), film, otherwise known as a movie, moving picture, motion picture or 'flick' is defined as: sequence of photographs projected onto a screen with sufficient rapidity as to create the illusion of motion and continuity" or "a form of entertainment that enacts a story by a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous movement". He indicates that films provide us with the illusion of movement and sound and suspend our disbelief to provide an entertaining, immersive experience for the viewer. Film presents us with a story or narrative that is re-enacted through the interaction of characters. It can be argued that the cause and effect relationship in a film is governed largely by the characters' actions that cause events to change. Characters are said to be the agents of cause-effect relationships (Bordwell & Thomson, 1997).

A film tells a story and has existents (characters, objects and locations) and events. In this work *Film events* describe events common to most films, e.g. action, dialogue, suspense and emotional events. Its plot can be manifested in many ways and can be considered as discourse. When we talk of 'going to the movies' we almost always mean we are going to see a narrative film– a film that tells a story (Bordwell & Thomson, 1997). Hence, film can be considered a narrative and thus we can argue it conforms to narrative theory (Vassiliou, 2006).

2.4 Culture Concept

Film in a broader sense falls under culture and thus, there is the need to touch on and define culture. Culture here, is generally the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual activities and achievements regarded collectively, with elements such as ideas, customs, legends, folktales, traditional stories, etc. and social behavior of a particular people or society. Each time the word 'culture' is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind is a people's way of life. Many sociologists and historians define culture as the complex whole of man's acquisitions of knowledge, morals, beliefs, arts, customs, technology, values which are transmitted from generation to generation (Njoku, 1998:8 cited in Amayo, Uzo, Ernest-Samuel, 2012). As a concept, Amayo et al. (2012) agree with Anyanwu (2011) that, when viewed from a broad perspective, culture could be "perceived as a way of life, which encompasses all human efforts, achievements and attitudes. It manifests in religion, language, philosophy, music, dance, drama, architecture, political organization, technology, education, values, knowledge system, social system, judicial or legal organization, and morality. Culture therefore constitutes what Nwala (1985) observes as "what is natural" in the understanding of the tradition of a people.

In a similar view, Oni (2005) and Ogechukwu et al. (2014) all contend that the concept of culture consists of the values the members of a given group hold, the norms they follow, and the material goods they create. Adeleke (2003) argues that virtually all these varied definitions of 'culture' would seem to anchor on anthropological definition given by

Edward Tylor in 1871. According to him, culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, law, art, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society.

Adeleke (2003) further posits that culture is both 'shared' and 'learnt' in a community or a given linguistic group; points out that in essence, culture is a communal property as it reflects the being of an individual in its totality.

Culture encompasses the programming of the mind which distinguishes members of one human group from another. Thus, the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence humans response to its environment, Adler (as cited in Ogechukwu *et al.*, 2014); the way of life of the members of a society, the collection of ideas and habits learnt, shared and transmitted from generation to generation (Edewor, 2003); that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society; and the set of tangible and intangible elements things like diet, tools, technology, language and values-that gives shape and meaning to everyday lives of a particular group of people (Kanagy & Kraybill, 1999).

According to Udomisor and Sonuga (2012), there exist a group of people who have lived together long enough to evolve common culture, norms and values in a society. They admit that though culture varies among societies, it gives shape and meaning to existence. It is through culture that knowledge, morals, beliefs, arts, custom, technology, etc, are shared and transmitted through the media (such as the use of television, radio, advertising, movies, the Internet, newspapers and magazines) from generation to generation.

In Ghana, the National Policy on Culture (2004) defines culture as the totality of the way of life evolved by people of Ghana through experience and reflection in their attempt to fashion a harmonious co-existence with our environment. This explains that culture is dynamic and gives order and meaning to the social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious practices of people. It also declares that Ghanaian culture also gives its distinct identity as a people. Ghana culture manifests in the nation's ideals and ideas, beliefs and values; folklore, environment, science and technology; and in the forms of political, social, legal and economic institutions. It also manifests in the aesthetic quality and humanistic dimension of literature, music, drama, architecture, carvings, paintings and other artistic forms. From the aforementioned definitions above it is clear that culture is a very broad concept that generally encompasses basically every aspect of human life which thus gives a group of people their peculiar identity.

Since the inception of the Ghanaian movie industry, movies produced have followed the patriarchal pattern of society with Meyer (1999) stating that “movies made in Ghana are made with a masculine eye” (p. 23). Contemporary local movies have gained a lot of popularity among Ghanaians living home and abroad (Meyer, 1999). The explosion of popular local movies on the Ghanaian market is astounding. These popular movies are produced on a very large scale in Ghana because of their wide audience. Research indicates that at least six of these movies are released every week (Garritano, 2008: p. 3).

Just like other African movies, the settings, themes and characterizations of these popular Ghanaian movies have a lot in common with many communal settings and cultural

practices. This therefore makes it easy for people to identify with the movies as they reflect the attitudes and everyday experiences of many of their audiences. Meleiro (2008) adds that, this new movie producing trend is a response to the desire for images that popular audiences can relate with. Ekwuazi (1987) agrees with Adeyemi (2008) that, every movie is derived from specific cultural or traditional realities which inform its meaning as well as its structural methodology. Scenes and stories are sometimes in line with audiences' experiences and these have contributed to the popularity of the movies. As people watch and see their natural material identities replicated in the movie, the desire to watch more and more becomes intense. In effect, Ghanaian popular movies rooted in traditional cultural tropes can be described as a system that produces and naturalizes gender ideologies (Garitano, 2008; Newell, 2000). The popular Ghanaian movies just like any other African popular culture tend to recycle gender stereotypes rooted in patriarchy.

As cultural forms and commodities, popular video movies, like other forms of African popular culture, embrace foreign influences as a source of newness and singularity, Barber (as cited in Garritano, 2013). Garritano (2013) contends that African films appeal are linked to their enormous capacity to recontextualise and localize forms and styles associated with global mass culture, and much as in the African urban environments in which movies circulate, it is the meeting of local and the global that generates the energies and uncertainties that drive their production and consumption. As modern African cultural articulations, they participate in the "worlding" of Africa and indigenizing of global technologies, style, desire, and discourses, Mc Call, Simone (as cited in Garritano, 2013). As global vernacular forms, they trouble generations about an African or national identities because they emerge from, are shaped, and reshaped "as mass-mediated imaginary that frequently transcends national space" (Appadurai, 1996, 6).

2.4.1 Importance of Culture

People consider culture to be important for several reasons. Firstly, it is seen as defining peoples' identity and consequently, it has been argued that a people without culture are a people without identity. By defining peoples' identity, culture helps to distinguish between or among peoples of different societies or communities (Ogechukwu *et al.*, 2014). Summing it up, Adedimeji (2006:10) declares that "to be removed from one's culture is to be deprived of one's identity. To lose one's identity is to be tossed in the wind fluttering along like a leaf separated from its tree." Secondly, culture is considered to be very important in ensuring the survival and development of a community.

Culture plays a critical role in ensuring continuity in any given society by helping to transmit values, beliefs, rituals, etc from one generation to the other. Since culture usually evolves as human beings attempt to meet the challenges of living in their environment (Nwaegbu, Eze and Asogwa, 2011), it obviously plays a key role in facilitating human adaptation which in turn is necessary for long term survival. Finally, culture features in both the internal and external environment of business and influences purchasing decisions. It is therefore a relevant variable in economic development (Ogechukwu *et al.*, 2014).

2.5: The 'Akan' People

The Akans belong to the *Kwa* group of languages found in West Africa. It is the indigenous language with the largest number of speakers in Ghana. About 49.1% of the national population of Ghana is Akan, based on the Ghana National 2000 Census. Akan

has the largest percentages of both Legislative Instrument 1 and Legislative Instrument 2 speakers in Ghana. According to Gedzi (2014), the Akan comprise sub-ethnic groups such as *Akwamu, Guan, Fante, Denkyra, Brong, Akyem, Kwahu, Sefwi, Wassa, Akwapim, Assin and Asante*. Geographically, Akans occupy the western, central and Ashanti regions and parts of the Brong-Ahafo, eastern regions of Ghana and the eastern part of the Ivory Coast. There is consensus that Akan groups, migrated from ancient Mesopotamia to sub-Saharan Africa (Gedzi 2009; Osei 2004 all cited in Gedzi, 2014). Each ethnic group is autonomous but linked by similar culture and the Twi language.

Among the Akan, music is an integral part of their lives. Songs are used to express love, hatred and sorrow in terms of occurrence of death in the community (Ampene, 2005). For instance, songs are powerful links to the worldview of the Asante and are highly customized for specific occasions and contexts; whilst songs depicting joy and happiness at celebrations cannot be sung at funerals when people are mourning and vice versa, Arts Council of Ghana and Kamba, (as cited in Boadou, 2011). Indeed, Akan have rich dresses (Kente), for music and dances (Adowa, kete), puberty and marriage rites; moral values which are so valuable to them and has transcended generations. The current study explores how some of the Akan cultures are represented in their films.

2.5.1 Akan Proverbs and Wise sayings

The Akan refers to a proverb as *εβε* denoting singular and proverbs *mmε* as plural. The Akan people of Ghana likewise other African societies appreciate the use of proverbs in their daily communications. Akan proverbs have been studied by several researchers over the years. Dzokoto and Darkwah (2014), noted some works by Chritensen's 1958 - observed "verbalization of customary law"; Brookman-Amisah, 1986 (Death and

funerals); and Yankah (1986) demonstrating the relationships of Akan proverbs and morality in specific interpersonal context and rulings of traditional as distinct from Western –style. Additionally, Boaduo (2012) has pointed some early studies on Akan proverbs by researchers such as Rattray, 1930; Kani, 1953; Akrofi, 1958; and Mensah, 1966.

Nevertheless, these existing works on Akan proverbs mainly focus on the identifications, classifications based on occasions; meanings and socio-cultural significance. Indeed, studies cannot be found on how some of these identified proverbs are not documented which are used in the film medium for entertainment and education, and indeed, their correct usage in depicting and preserving the Akan rich linguistic culture.

2.5.2.1 Perceptions and definitions of African Proverbs

From the analysis of literatures in Ghana and other African societies, there are different and unique perceptions of African proverbs; Ikenga-Metuh (as cited Ayantayo, 2012:10) argues that:

Proverbs spring spontaneously from the people. They are voxpopuli... in profound sense and consequently, should be accepted as a true index of what a people regard as true and are interpretative of the principles of life and conduct. Proverbs are therefore, trustworthy witness of the social, political, ethical and religious ideals of the people among whom they originate.

Proverbs in the Akan context represent statements that would otherwise be a long and tedious disquisition and can be used as a polite form of criticism when direct speech would cause offence, and thus, are ways of avoiding quarrels or conflicts, Kani (as cited in Boudou, 2012). They need to be preserved and cherished in all their richness profound or

punning or philosophical, obvious occasionally and more often than not, illuminatingly obscure.

Furthermore, analysis of some researchers such as (Boverd, 1977; Olantunji, 1985; Ajibola, 1947, and Ayantayo, 2012) reveal that proverbs communicate societal ethical values in their daily language usage; used to praise or appreciate positive values and conversely used to dissociate people from negative values.

Nevertheless, from the perspective of Adedimeji (nd) proverbs “address the heart of the discourse in any given context, truthfully and objectively” in the context of the Nigerian society. He has observed that proverbs are indeed regarded as the “reliable horses, which convey meanings to their destinations or hearts of the listeners”. Adedimeji (nd) further asserts that “the ability to sum up ideas and experiences in captivating and succinct expressions have always been considered a sign of native intelligence, linguistic competence and cultural erudition”. His opinions are that proverbs as common features of conversational eloquence in many African cultures are usually acquired and learnt from listening to the elders’ talk. This viewpoint clearly denotes the role of the elders in African societies as repositories of knowledge, this also means the young should be ready to learn proverbs and learn from them. This means proverbs are both acquired either consciously or not. Indeed, one’s ability to speak in proverbs is determined by what is already known from his elders.

From the foregoing perspectives, African proverbs represent every society’s cumulative wisdom since their existence is passed on from generation to another, which happens to be a society’s moral standards. These perspectives show that proverbs are culturally specific; they are initiated by people based on all aspects of their culture and experience, events.

2.5.2.2 Uses and Importance of African Proverbs

According to Dzokoto and Darkwah (2014:2), in the Ghanaian and other African societies context, “proverbs - succinct statements that carry a message - are ubiquitous cultural products that collectively encapsulate cultural norms and standards” Proverbs play important roles in the culture of Ghanaians. Indeed, through proverbs. the authors posits that “Members of a society learn about, internalize and incorporate societal ideas in their thoughts, feeling and behavior, and by doing so, create patterns, actions, products and discourse that reproduce, and on occasion, modify the prevailing socio-cultural narrative”.

The Akan proverb: “*Oba nyansafoɔ ye bu no be, na ye nka no asem*”. Literally means that the wise person is spoken to in proverbs but not in plain words Boating (as cited in Okra, 2003), concludes the values of Akan proverb. This proverb clearly states the significance and values attached to proverbs. The proverb further signifies the recognition Akan people accord to people who speak in proverbs. According to Okra (2003), Dzobo describes proverbs as “normally short and pithy sayings which are very popular devices used to state metaphorically certain general truths about life”. In Dzobo’s opinion as stated by Okra (2003), “proverbs are effective mode of communication and their persuasive and correct usage in speech is always taken as a sign of sound education, well nurtured, maturity, cultural sophistication and wisdom”. Thus, children are brought up in accordance with the Akan proverbial adages that have been validated through the experiences of the forefathers.

Yankah (2012), made the most comprehensive study on Akan proverbs by vividly discussing the socio-cultural and philosophical significance of the proverbs in Akan society as well as highlighting how they are created and used in various contexts, including jurisprudence, church sermons and dance performance. According to Dzokoto and Darkwah (2014), analysis from researchers such as Hussein, 2005; Gyekye, 1996; and Yankah, 2000; African proverbs are values in diverse respects. They deduced from these studies that proverbs are “value repositories and actively serve as socialization tools used to advise, reprimand, instruct, encourage, settle scores or conflicts, and remind people of societal values”. This implies that in the African society, proverbs are used to inculcate cultural values regarded as right and or wrong to the younger ones to lead good lives. This gives an indication that African societies may not wish that indeed, their younger ones will never repeat the mistakes of their forefathers and suffer from any misfortunes that may arise from bad immoral values. Ultimately, as films are educative and have moral contents, any usage in the communications effectively expose moral values to enable the present younger generation to desist from immoral behaviors.

Another importance of Akan proverbs has been ascertained by Boaduo (2012) in his recent notable study “Epistemology of Proverbs and idioms of Asante ethnic group of Ghana for introspection”. He indicates that through proverbs “the youth is taught the philosophy and the way of life of community, its customs and prejudices through proverbs and idioms”. Boaduo (2012:1), indicates further that “Akan people do not always make use of clear and direct statements in their speeches” and indicates that the use of proverbs occurs when communicators do not want strangers or immediate people to understand the content of their conversation and matters of higher importance. Although, this opinion truly stands, it totally convenes during important platforms when Akan use their proverbs. These Akan

proverbs of the *Twi*-speaking people of Ghana are creatively crafted speeches with beautiful and rich values that make lengthy statements short; and spoken in a cultured way for communicating traditional values. Kquofi et al. (2013), also assert that, the influx of foreign languages in Ghana has contributed to the rapid decline in the standards of this cherished Akan indigenous linguistics. Although, the information is not specifically placed, it gives an indication on the need to revise the use of these rich proverbs through the film medium to revise and preserve them.

The Akan usage of proverbs is used in specific times. In the very words of Boaduo (2012): ...the Asante ethnic group cherish eloquence in language in terms of word usage as well as expression of utterances that do not make the meaning easily understood by the uninformed, especially children. The belief is that secrets embedded in those expressions should be revealed only to the elderly and not to the uninitiated in terms of the message required to be carried to the listener. Because of this, if children are among elders when they are engaged in conversation, which they may not want to chase away, most of their utterances during the conversation are shrouded in proverbs and idioms to deprive the children from grasping the content of the conversation (Boaduo, 2012:10).

Implicit of this is the fact that children and strangers are regarded as people who do not understand proverbs as it takes relatively longer time to be conversant and understand proverbs. In all, the value of proverbs in the African and in particular the Akans are noted, however, the extent to which they are used in the film and the media industry are less known. Indeed, the frequency, the nature, and reflection of context are not documented as portraying the Akan culture. Thus, the present study focuses on identifying the types and their usage in the Akan films.

The use of proverbs and wise sayings has always been integral part of Akan communicative weapon as they need wisdom and technical keys to unravel through critical and thorough studies among the Akan. Adedimeji (p.4) notes from Adegbija (1988), certain factors are responsible for deciphering the meaning to gaining understanding of these proverbs. This

means that proverbs are not easily understood and are really abstract with hidden meanings. It may take the traditional knowledge, intelligence and experience in culture to be able to use and get their meanings. Indeed, Akan proverbs can be interpreted within the tested and contested theories of meaning and literary production (Daaku, 1974 cited in Boaduo (2012:2). By implication, proverbs are culturally specific and need to be understood and interpreted in relation to the culture of the people associated with the proverbs. This stresses the fact that, before a person can become well versed in the customs and traditions, proverbs have to be taught to and learnt (Kani, 1953). From this perspective, it can be argued that proverb communicators in communities are facilitators of ethical values. According to Buoduo (2012), profuse uses of proverbs are associated with elders. This means that one has to spend time with elders who are well versed in Akan proverbs for a longer period to be able to know and understand proverbs. This suggests that, speaking in proverbs is a socialization process. It is also obvious from the above that, film actors must use proverbs flexibly and convenient to enable audience get their meanings and enjoy them.

2.6 Cultural Content of African Films (Ghana and Nigeria)

The inclusion of African cultural elements in African films, to truly tell the African story is increasingly becoming alarming. Njewel (2007), quoting from Kaboré (2000:187), argues that:

The day you can speak to the people of your village in words that they use every day and are understood by them, that day you have the means to communicate with the whole world. In other words, the fusion of African traditional cultures in African films was done in the hope of reawakening the African mind and inducing it with pride and self-esteem.

The assertions above suggests that communication especially in the indigenous African languages and of course in the Ghanaian films, Ghanaian local languages is vital in raising societies, inculcation, motivation and mobilization weapon for cultural emancipation.

Anyiam-Osigwe (2001) traced emphasis on negative themes in African films. Her study found out that in order to satisfy the profit orientation of these marketers, script writers, producers and directors roll out of movies focusing on themes of violence, rituals, occultism, fetishism, whilst some characters are created to unleash their verbal tirades on other characters (Adélékè, 1995). Similarly, Akashoro (2010) found that the perception of the content of contemporary African films, particularly the home videos, vary among the film audience in Nigeria. Opinion largely favored a new orientation towards a de-emphasis on obscene scenes, rituals, fetish practices, violent crimes and display of partial or total nudity in African film content. One of the major criticisms of the Nigeria film industry is the obsession with the occult world (juju, black magic, sorcery, ritual murder, and witchcraft), obscenity, prostitution, kidnapping and “money worship.”

Nigerian video films, along with their Ghana counterparts, have been described by Larkin (2005) as a mixture of “horror, magic and melodrama”. Udomisor and Sonuga (2012) argue that, there is nothing wrong with a film dealing with any of these themes, but critics frown at the fact that they reoccur, film after film. They explain that the reason for this phenomenon is that producers may argue that video films address the social problems plaguing society, yet many people are disturbed by their treatment of ethical and moral issues. Though it is believed that ethical re-engineering in the larger society may be a

prelude to sanitizing the video industry, he nevertheless observes that the situation does not obviate the need to urgently re-examine the ethical foundations of the video industry itself.

Garritano (2013), in his famous work on African video movies and global desires indicates that, the indigenous African religious and mystical beliefs and practices appear frequently, which he opines signifies either as signs of backwardness and superstition (e.g. women and children suffering from unjust witchcraft accusations) or as figures for African tradition, valorized within the fiction (e.g. about educated Africans who must recognize the powers to be found in the village world they have left and now return to) but not necessarily demanding literal belief. Garritano quoting from Sembene set the tone of ironic distance.

From the above view points, the makers of African films give the continent the wrong identity either based on technical knowhow, lack of film marketing strategies to competitively position and differentiate African films and how to effectively package the rich African cultural elements to market Africa in the present globalised world. Indeed, African filmmakers should consider the potentials of promoting, developing and the preservation of these cultures where the youth could learn the culture and history of the African societies and hence cherish their cultural heritage.

In truism these themes have distinguished the African films from the Western and the Asian ones. Moreover, such themes make the African foreign audiences and others who truly know less about Africa perceive that indeed African culture is all about sorcery, witchcraft and occultisms. Consequently, others who have responded to these scenes about

African cultures like Wálé Ògúnyemí (1996) have this to say on incessant use of ‘juju’ in African films:

Our culture is not just juju or incantations. It involves our religion, belief system, dressing, greeting, demeanor, courtesies, etc. It's not just dressing shabbily and going about the bush chanting incantations etc...

Consequently, film critics such as Balogun (2005) and Iroh (2009) have condemned the overall quality and narrative value of Nigerian films for several additional reasons. Iroh, for instance, condemns the “poverty of creativity, ideas, innovation and a coordinated strategic plan” in the industry. Akande (2009) on the other hand, believes that the content of Nollywood films is predictable and always revolves around topics like “conflict between mothers-in-law and their son’s wives, scenes dealing with police battling criminals, burial and consultations with native doctors, and so on”. Udomisor and Sonuga (2012), indicate that Nigeria Home videos emphasize on themes such as sex, violence, prostitution, sibling rivalry, evils of polygamy, devilish spiritualism and rituals.

Contrary to these views is Schultz (2012), who posits that the Nollywood films address local issues, and themes and plot elements include: social ills such as corruption, prostitution, crime, family strife arising from polygamous marriages, money troubles, success abroad; historical epics; native doctors; recent news events; and many other issues particularly relevant to local audiences. Similarly, Akan films in the media also touch on morality, the Akan family structure, and social responsibilities as indicated by Agyekum (2000). He asserts that, such genres educate people and draw attention to the fact that people cannot do away with some of the traditional family systems, family structures, systems and patterns of inheritance and the interrelations between family members and the

opportunities and responsibilities that accompany them, despite ever-increasing dependencies of Westernization, Christianity and Modernizations.

The fusion of traditional cultural performances in African films has been recognized by researchers like Njewel (2007) in his famous study *Manifestation of Traditional African Cultural performances in African Films*, using the two Tanzania Feature Films: *Arusi Ya Mariamu* and *Maangamizi*. The study showed some interesting findings on the manifestations of traditional African cultural performances on traditional dances, rituals, heroic recitations, songs and storytelling. Secondly, the study indicates that the respondents understood the performance in the two films as the films truly reflected the socio-cultural issues among other things of their ethnic group. The findings imply that Africans may appreciate and patronize films made in Africa when they truly reflect their socio-cultural realities. Nevertheless, the study was only based on two traditional films which were highly based on traditional stories and cannot be used to generalize the inclusions and manifestations of cultural elements. Moreover, other elements regarding the accent of actors in the communications, the use of idioms, riddles, proverbs and other wise sayings were not manifested.

From the above, it seems that African films reflect some positive, rich and the negative cultural aspects of the African culture. Indeed, the use of magic, occultism, sorcery, juju', Christianity among other elements perceived as negative about Africa must be understood in the films context and properly regulated as they have the ability to influence behaviors in society

2.7: Language usage

According to Griff (2006), language is another important cultural element because it allows members of the society to communicate with each other and primarily delineates cultural groups. In addition to shaping one's perceptions of the world, language provides important clues about the cultural values of the society and aids acculturation. He indicates that countries with multiple language groups tend to be heterogeneous, with language providing an important means of identifying cultural differences within the country. He believes that 80 to 90 percent of all information is transmitted among members of a culture by means of nonverbal communication (e.g. facial expressions, gestures, intonation, eye contact, body positioning, and body posture). Movies presented to Ghanaian and Nigerian audiences are with characters that look and talk like them with stories they are familiar with. Myer explains that Ghanaian popular video was born out of people's desire to see their culture dominate the television or cinema screen" (1999, 98).

Adedun (2010), argues that films that are produced in indigenous languages also have a lot of English switching (or intrusions) as it is a super language that is associated with education, prestige, class and opportunities in most African countries. He maintains that it is a language that everyone strives to use and this is reflected in the movies. This situation has led to what Bamiro describes as "subtractive polyglossia"; thus his term for the dominance and ascendancy of the English language at the expense of the regression and decline of the local languages. This is a reaffirmation of an earlier point made by Ng and Bradac that "competence in the foreign language is acquired, but only at the expense of the native language' Ng and Bradac, 1993 cited in Adedun, 2010. As a result of the powerful influence of English in Nigeria, which is also reflected in Nigerian movies,

Adedun found that parents consciously encourage their children to gain mastery of English while discouraging them from learning their first language. The resultant effect is that most children are now monolingual Nigerian speakers of English or at best ‘‘defective bilinguals’’.

In the analysis of the three video films that are concerned with the paper, English language spoken was the ‘‘Nigerians English’’. Indeed, Katsuva (2003) pointed out that several researchers (e.g. Banjo, 1979a, 1971b; Adesanoye, 1978; Adetugbo, 1979a, 19791b, and Odumuh, 1984, 1987) Nigeria English has developed a distinct phonetics, phonological, lexical and syntactic characteristics. These characteristics are quite stable and cannot be regarded as deviations from native norm. Katsuva (2003) further notes that one feature of Nigerian English, which makes the film easy to understand and interpret by their audience is the feature of direct transfer of native language to English. Katsuva (2003) further points out to some common expressions in the Nigerian film. ‘‘I could not see the abomination with eyes and sleep with it’’, which he termed word-for word translation from African language into English or transliteration. He asserts that for a native speaker of English, this expression would sound deviant or tautological as in English, the expression ‘see with one’s eyes would not be acceptable. But in African languages, we can use the verb ‘‘to see’’ for see (with eyes), ‘understand or think something.

2.8 Moral Values: Definitions and Meanings

The term ‘‘morality’’ can be used either descriptively or normatively. Anderson (2013) quoting Gert (2012) definition of morality, states ‘‘morality’’ is used simply to refer to a code of conduct put forward by any actual group, including a society, whether it is distinguished from etiquette, law or religion and used in a descriptive sense. This means

that, the outcome behaviors of an individual portrayed in the societies via morality is culturally defined. However, as quoted in Ayantayo, (2012:2), Dyck (1977:22) defines ethics as a “systematic reflection upon human behavior with expectations on how they ought to behave and what they ought to do”. What is unique about ethical principles worldwide is based on the fact that, it is either positive (good) or negative (bad).

Igboin (2011) has summarized the meaning of values based on Ewelu, 1999 and Omotehinse (2001) points of view. Those values may be ideas that propel man’s daily actions. In other words, they are the standards which members of the community adhere to in their personal and communal interaction towards the achievement of the goals. This means that moral values are processes; interaction of societal members; and which determine actions which need reward punishment and or encouragement among others.

In the Ghanaian contest, morality concept has been viewed by several authors (e.g. Wiredu (1992), Gyekye (1996); and Fagothey (1959). Wiredu (as cited in Anderson, 2013), “morality in the strictest sense, is universal and essential to human culture”. Morality for him is, simply, the observance of rules for the harmonious adjustment of the interests of the individual to those of others in society. He adds that morality does not just refer to the conformity to the requirements of the harmony of interests, but also that conformity to those requirements which is inspired by an imaginative and sympathetic identification with the interests of others even at the cost of a possible curtailment of one’s own interests”.

Gyekye (1996) seems to share similar view with Wiredu (1992). For Gyekye (1996), morality is “a set of social rules and norms intended to guide the conduct of people in a

society. He explains that the rules and norms emerge from and are anchored in people's beliefs about right and wrong conduct and good and bad character. For him, morality is social; arising out of the relations between individuals; if there were no such thing as human society, there would be no such thing as morality. It is in this same vein that Gyekye (1996) posits that because morality is essentially a social phenomenon, it can emerge only in a human society in which there is an overriding concern for harmonious and cooperative living consideration for the interest of others and hence, a sense of duty to others, are intrinsic to the meaning and practice of morality". These views suggest that morality is a prerequisite for peaceful coexistence in the society and it general based on balance an individual's interest and that of others. In this regard, African films must present and facilitate the inculcation and imbibing of African unique moral conduct and moral knowledge and attitudes especially to the young audience in making them aware of the moral values and principles of the African society.

Anderson (2013), Fagothey (1959) defines morality as the "quality of human acts by which we call them right or wrong, good or evil". He indicates from Fagothey (1959) that the determinants of morality are *the act itself*, *the motive* and *the circumstances*. By '*the act itself*', Fagothey argues that it is simply what the agent wills, considering it not in the physical but in the moral codes. In reference to what he means by '*the motive*', he posits that the motive or intention is what the agent personally wishes to achieve by the act over and above what the act naturally tend to. Finally, by what he refers to as '*the circumstances*', he points out to the fact that the circumstances are the accidental surroundings of the act. Morality for me however, is the hermeneutics of human act and its quality that can be judged right or wrong in the light of a standardized set of codes

defined by society. Indeed, African societies like the Akan have their defined moral values which their filmmakers have to portray to the world.

Some researchers such as Kquofi *et al.*, 2013; Yankah, 2012; and Addo, 2001 suggest that the Akan rich symbolic and socio-cultural values are potential assets to the promotion of the socio-cultural development of the peoples. This means that Akan based films can harness these social capitals to facilitate the development of Akan culture in this way. This implies that foreign cultural elements in Akan films are rather sidelining the Ghanaian rich traditions.

Ghanaian culture like other societies upholds social values. Indeed, some researchers like Yankah, 2012 and Gyekye (1996) have identified godliness, respect, hospitality, service, gratitude, loyalty, tolerance, freedom and responsibilities, truth, integrity, honesty, dedication, patriotism and others as crucial social values. This means that any true Akan film should incorporate these values to entertain, educate and inform their market. Additionally, Igboin (2011) posits that the total well-being and welfare of the community are essentially important to the moral values and indicates that responsibility, love, accommodation, kindness, honesty, hospitality, generosity, compassion, faithfulness, fruitfulness, dignity, diligence, etc., are all considered to be moral values. Ayantayo (2012), groups moral values as positive and negative ones. He indicates that, the positive values include justice, gratitude, honesty, loyalty, truthfulness, generosity, kindness, tolerance, responsibility, cooperation and fidelity to one another. The society expects its members to apply these values to all social relations. He opines that the negative value conversely portrays the positive values and constitutes actions which are considered as wrong and discouraged. They include idleness, laziness, injustice, selfishness, greed,

avarice, intolerance, stealing, exploitation, oppression, hatred, falsehood, dishonesty, irresponsibility and many other social vices Brandt(as cited in Ayantayo, 2012).

From the foregoing discussions, it can be deduced that moral values are intrinsically social, and can be deduced that what is considered as positive and negative values are identical to African societies and other cultures. Moral values arise from interdependent relationships and remain crucial to the proper functioning of the society. Notwithstanding the *deculturalisation* of the African society, Africans have still not fully abandoned their moral values inherent in them, as the indigenous communicators (villagers) are the main conservatives of Africa's existing moral values (Ayantayo, 2012). This means that Akan based films have to tap the moral values from these indigenous communities to be able to make films that suit their moral conducts. These views suggest that moral behaviors are encouraged by the societies and are standard behaviors that individuals who want to live peacefully must inculcate. As films are cultural industries, they have the mandate to present the moral values of the African societies, as children may imitate whatever actors portray in such films or regard them as culture of our African societies.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This third chapter presents the research methods that have been applied for undertaking the current research. The present study by its nature adopts the qualitative approach and

accordingly uses suitable qualitative research techniques towards executing cultural analysis of Akan Films. The chapter also explains the procedures involved in applying the following methods, notwithstanding the justification for adopting the techniques involved.

3.2 Research Design

Television and films influence everyday life. Qualitative research uses these to tell us about the social construction of reality (Flick, 2009). For example, (Flick, 2009) cites Denzin (1989) analyzes of Hollywood movies that contain social reflections on social experiences (such as alcoholism, corruption, and so on). The study employed the descriptive analysis, based on film observation content of their cultural element specified in this study (Ting-Toomey (as cited in Kquofi *et al.*, 2013). Qualitative research design is said to be the study of symbolic discourse that consists of the study of texts and conversations, interpretive principles that people use to make sense in their symbolic activities. The qualitative research method was adopted to enable the researcher study the social and cultural phenomena of Akan people as depicted in Akan films which required ethnographic interpretation (Kquofi *et al.*, 2013). Indeed, this approach enabled the researchers to gain insight into people's attitudes, behaviours, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyles as attached to proverbs and symbols.

The study being a qualitative study, implies that the results reflect description and interpretive, not in some local words and proverbs which have been quoted in the results.

3.3 Sources of Data

Data for the study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. This was based on the assertion by Bliakie (2000) who argued that using multiple sources of data reduces

the peculiar biases of each one. Both primary and secondary data were crucial for the execution of the present research and as such some valuable secondary data was widely sought to work on the first three chapters. These were sourced from published journals, articles, reports, from the internet and institutions. However, primary data were collected from the Akan films in the form of observation with film observation checklist in obtaining information on proverbs and wise-saying, moral conducts, foreign cultures, distortion versions of Akan cultures portrayed in Akan films.

3.4 Sampling of Video Movies

It is usual that small and selective samples are used in qualitative research as it requires an in-depth analysis of a large volume of data (Schwandt, 2001). Choice is an essential part of video analysis and it is important to make clear what choices are made, using what criteria, and for what purpose/rationale (Jewitt, 2012). Miles and Huberman (as cited in Macnamara, 2005) argue that “sampling strategies for qualitative research should be driven by a conceptual question, not by concern for ‘representativeness’” (p. 29). They suggest instead, three techniques which can be used together to yield rich results in qualitative analysis:

Indeed, the sampling was based on some key elements that the researcher believes contribute to the popularity of Ghanaian films (the subject matter of the films, the language and cultural aspect of the films. Four movies out of thirteen films that won awards at the 2012/2013 Kumawood Akobeng Movie Awards were selected for the study. The movies include Menko M’Abusua (The Family I Have), Time Changes, Ama Ghana and Okomfo Anokye; and two blockbuster movies namely the Bearer and Praba.

From the researcher's perspective, these films are combinations of films typical, disconfirming and exceptional examples for cultural analysis for the study. Indeed, qualitative analysis generally can explore the boundaries of the data field and identify the range of views including discordant ones and extremes in various directions, as well as the typical.

3.5. Instruments and Data Collection

The instrument used in collecting the video data was a designed film observation guide (See Appendices A.). In line with study objectives, the data collection guide was designed into five sections namely, proverbs and wise sayings, use of proverbs, foreign cultural elements, Ghanaian moral values, and distortions. Indeed, the instrument guided the data collectors as to what scenes, words, dressing, attitudes, performances, etc to critically observe and note in the selected films during the watching.

The study involved the collection of video data from the sampled films. The data collected involved the collection of video data by film observation guide (Appendices A). The data collections were undertaken by seven assistants who are well versed in Akan traditions. These people were selected by virtue of their rich knowledge and familiarity in Akan culture. The video data collection involved multiple viewings of the selected films and playing back of scenes considered important for clarifications.

The first viewing of each film was geared towards enjoying the film without worrying about the argument to be eventually cultivated and to establish familiarity with the video data. However, it was during the second viewing that focus was given to the interesting

elements of the films that the study highlights to explore. Nevertheless, it becomes irrelevant to watch the film after second watching since the panel could recollect most of events and scenes observed for documentation and analysis. It was during the second viewing that the relevant video data were transcribed. This is supported by Strauss' (1987) assertion that it is more reasonable to transcribe only as much and only as exactly as is required by the research question. Transcribing is generally the process of converting audio or video data to text for analysis. According to Bezemer and Mavers (2011), multimodal approaches to transcription offer a framework to account for transcripts as artifacts, treating them as empirical material through which transcription as a social, meaning making practice can be reconstructed.

It must be emphasised that during the documentation of the video data, documentation was done on frequent interval of every 3minutes to be able to capture data as difficult to watch for continuously 20minutes without forgetting important points, sayings, recall proverbs, actions etc. In the video data collection, the interest focused on attaining the maximum exactness on the use of language, actions and performances of festivals, dances, singing, drumming and games, attitudes, proverbs and wise-sayings, vulgar words among other relevant elements. These standards of exactness contribute to the natural science ideals of precision in measurement and are imported into interpretive social science through the back door (Flick, 2009).The data have been translated from Asante *Twi* to English language with the exception of *Praba* which's lingua franca was English language, the data was analysed, interpreted and presented according to the study research questions.

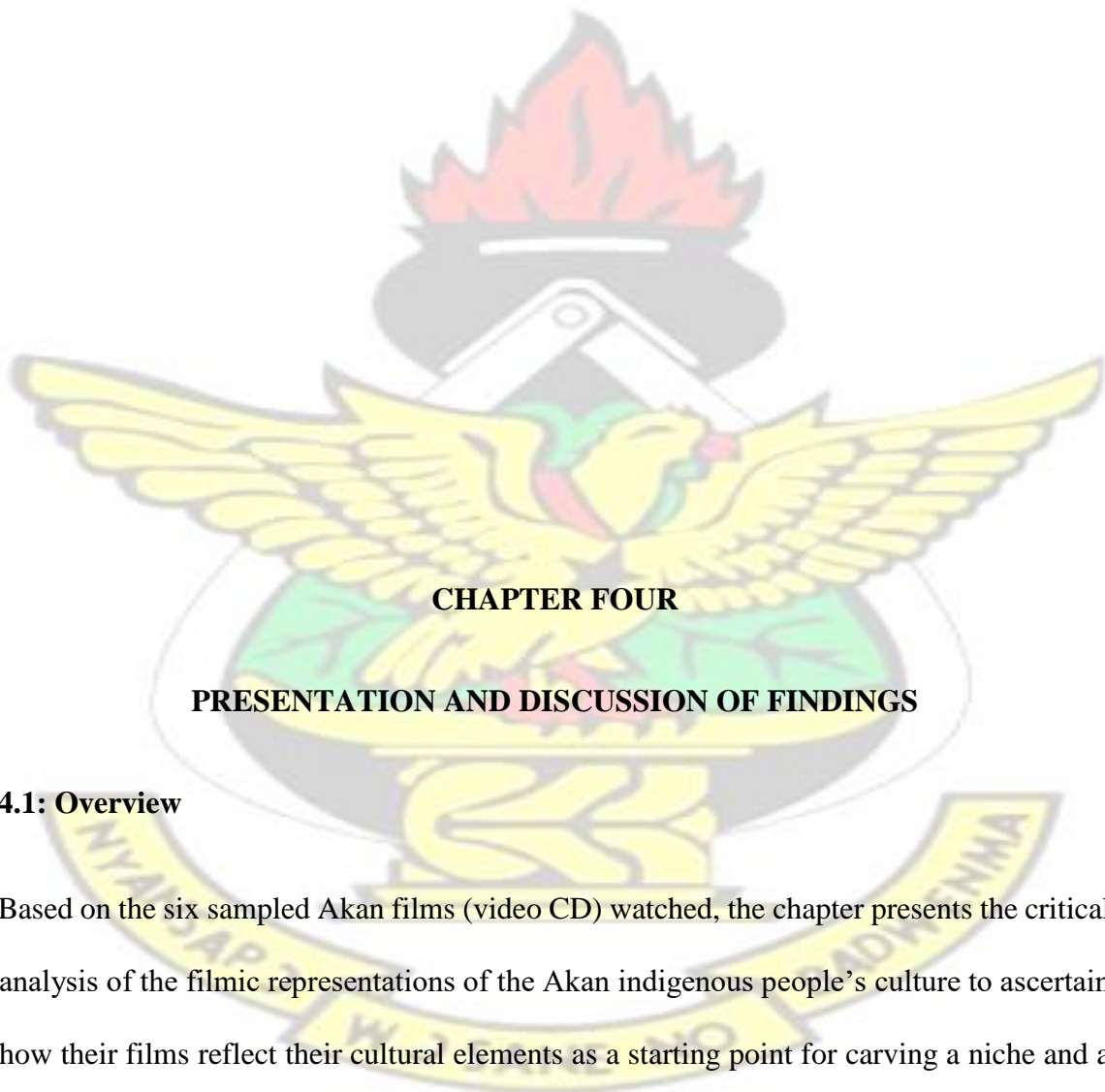
3.6 Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis is defined as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The video data transcribed from text to words were analysed with Qualitative Content Analysis techniques. Leslie et al. (2009) describes content analysis as involving the categorization and classification of data to make inferences about the antecedents of a communication, describe and make inferences about characteristics of a communication, and make inferences about the effects of a communication. The objective of content analysis is to convert recorded “raw” phenomena into data, which can be treated in essentially a scientific manner so that a body of knowledge may be built up. Likewise in this study, selected films were watched and transcribed into data (Leslie *et al.*, 2009). The data analysed is presented in narrative format where inferences have been made regarding direct statements, words, proverbs etc.

3.7 Research Ethics

Heady et al (1996) asserts that ethics have to do with upholding moral principles and values which influences an individual’s beliefs, actions and decisions. It involves leading an unquestionable lifestyle especially within the professional domain. Research ethics is an important part of qualitative research which involves the collection of primary data (Rudestam and Newton, 2001). The anonymity of video data was ensured through the use of coded identification (Creswell, 2007; Rudestam and Newton, 2001). The producers of the Movies in question were adequately informed of the purpose of the study and their role clearly stated.

KNUST



CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1: Overview

Based on the six sampled Akan films (video CD) watched, the chapter presents the critical analysis of the filmic representations of the Akan indigenous people's culture to ascertain how their films reflect their cultural elements as a starting point for carving a niche and a cultural identity in the global film and creative industry. The discussions make use of the major findings, noting their implications on African films and cultures; as well as possible causes and explanations from the literatures reviewed. It must be acknowledged that, the

individual films obviously do equally present all the content considerations equally regarding the use of proverbs, scenes of foreign cultures, etc.

4.2 Synopsis of the Movies

4.2.1 Menko M'abusua

This movie is set in the present-day of the Ghanaian Akan community. The movie tells the presupposed everyday stories whereby family members liaise with others to bewitch the well-to-do members of the family, pulling them from grace to grass. The narration tells of two sisters namely Benewaa and Ama Foriwaa whose main aim is to destroy their younger brothers Akosah and Nkrumah. Through witchcraft, they disable Akosah, make him jobless and mentally deranged. Through this same diabolic and mischievous behavior of spirituality, they try to prevent Mina, Nkrumah's wife, from getting pregnant. They vilify anyone who tries to help these brothers and eventually prevent any good from coming their brothers' way. Through witchcraft they make Life very unbearable for Mina, Nkrumah's wife, prior and during their marriage. They take Nkrumah's house hold and saturate it with witchcraft. Through the same diabolic and mischievous behavior of spirituality through witchcraft, they try to prevent Mina from getting pregnant, but through prayers, God blesses them with a girl child. Mina is able to sustain her husband and child with her prayers until her own child is infiltrated with witchcraft by these witches and uses it against her father. How long can Mina keep praying? Will Nkrumah finally realize the spiritual problems in his family? At the end of the movie, Mina with the help of a pastor prays with Nkrumah in their family house and there is manifestation as the witches confess their deeds and the family is released and saved.

4.2.2 Time Changes

This movie tells the story of two sisters, Akosua Dampo and Adwoa who were fighting over a kingship position for their sons. This is made known when the king at a time foretells the heir apparent to his throne in his absence. That the ancestors through the king's dream have revealed that the son of Adwoa, becomes the next king when he is no more. The families are called to the palace to discuss the issue and in order for her eldest son to win; Akosua Dampo through consultation with the god of Atwea via juju cripples her sister's son, Nkansah and her daughter Naomi blind.

Akosua Dampo's son and another person are set on the throne and are both rejected by the gods. It is here that the crown leaves the throne by itself and finds Nkansah in the forest. Nkansah, Naomi and Adwoa are transported to the village square where the chieftancy activity is happening by the crown or should I say the gods. All of a sudden, Nkansah could stand and walk, Naomi could see again. Nkansah is made king and Akosua Dampo goes blind; the truth comes to light through the confession of her deeds, bringing about poetic justice. Everyone gets to know the evil machinations of Akosua Dampo.

4.2.3 Ama Ghana

The movie was to be set in the 1960's according to their hair style and costumes, yet per the sound track made for the movies as in the theme music, the movie is said to have been set in 1742. The movie tells the story of kaakaku and his wife Araba, a poor couple whose main core or motive is to find a very wealthy man to give their beautiful daughter, Ewura Ama's hand in marriage. The couple extort money from would be suitors and people who come to seek her hand in marriage.

Ewura Ama, who happens to be a very beautiful girl in her prime, faces a lot of pressure from her peers and parents alike to marry a rich man per her parent's wish; whilst she in turn battles them, she also feels that age is gradually catching up on her. After throwing away various suitors, her parents finally find her a rich man to marry. Despite the good fortunes of the man, he is unable to sexually satisfy Ewura Ama to consummate their union because he is impotent. Under the influence of her two promiscuous friends, Ewura Ama begins to have extra marital affairs. Ewura Ama's husband is advised to seek help from a German doctor who is a specialist in potency issues such as the one he is experiencing. He then travels to Germany for medication and comes back a full man, very potent. He goes looking for his wife and they resolve all the issues in their marriage and reunite.

4.2.4 The Bearer

A civilization is either destroyed or made when its beliefs, culture, norm and gods are made or destroyed. It was in the era of slave trading and missionary exploration in Africa; when the whites docked their sailing ship on the shores of gold coast to trade. History has it that, the same ship that brought guns and gun powder as well as alcohol is the same that brought the BIBLE. Two most powerful native priests, Okomfo Kyenkye and Okomfo Tuda are sent to pursue the missionaries from the Fante land; unknowingly to Kyenkye, Tuda had plotted to eliminate him on the expedition because the white slave traders are his allies. Tuda and his brother Atobra are deeply engaged in kidnapping and capturing natives as slaves and trading them off for gold and silver bars, broken mirrors, gun and gun powder, etc.

At the church of the Berch, the priests and their guards confront him, Berch sees them shoot at Kyenkye and he takes the bullet in his stead to save him. Berch dies and Kyenkye becomes the bearer of his message, the Gospel of Christ. Okomfo Kyenkye quits practicing his craft of native priesthood and turns to propagate the gospel of Christ with the use of the Holy Bible. This fuels the hatred and anger that Tuda has for him. Tuda tries all means to assassinate him so as to do away with every obstacle hindering his secret trade. Kyenkye is able to preach the word of God to majority of the inhabitants, converting them to Christianity as well as memorize every bit of the bible before he is also captured as a slave by his own people and the bible destroyed. He is persecuted and beaten by Tuda and his brother with the permission of the king as was done to Christ

In a second assassination attempt, Tuda mistakenly shoots his only brother Atobra dead, instead of Kyenkye. The captured slaves break free. Kyenkye meets Tuda in a duel but spares his life. He goes to a sanctuary where he meets two white ladies who reprints the bible via his narration. Message reaches the throne that the captured natives have broken loose and have been able to come home. Kyenkye comes back with his new bible to preach to the authorities. Bad deeds of Tuda are laid bare in front of the king and his elders through his confession, bringing about poetic justice.

4.2.5 Praba

Fanteman, a peaceful and prosperous Akan settlement with the secret of their success in Praba, the goddess of vengeance and retribution, whom they all serve committedly. Adu, the warrior throws away the image of Praba in anger because the shrine of Okomfobaa, the priestess of Praba was unable to cure his daughter of a strange ailment which caused the death of his daughter, Effeh. This begins the journey of the entire settlement into finding

a solution for the mysterious death that plagues the village, as Praba returns with vengeance upon the village for this abomination of one man.

The oracle has spoken through the priestess that Adu must journey through the evil forest to the land of the living dead to find the image of Praba he threw away he adamantly refuses. Men, women, children, animals die mysteriously. Esi, Adu's wife is attacked by a strange incurable ailment. Villagers protest against the seemingly 'I – don't – care' attitude of the palace towards this horror. Kojo confronts his father, Adu with the verdict of the gods as sent from the palace through the elders. Adu threatens the palace and the authorities. He commits suicide out of shame for his act.

Kojo accepts his father's responsibility to go to the land of the living dead, to save his fostermother and the entire village from the anger of the fearsome goddess. His girlfriend, the princess and his friend Akwa protested against it and finally his friends agreed to accompany him on this dangerous journey. As they died one after the other, it is left with Kojo, the prince and Akwasi, his rival, who decided to accompany him to the land of the living dead with the motive of returning alone to become the hero of the land and marry Kojo's girlfriend. Kojo, Akwasi, the prince and a magician return with the image of Praba and the herb that could cure Jojo's mother and save the entire village settlement.

4.2.6 Okomfo Anokye

The movie was geared towards telling the history of the Ashanti Kingdom through Okomfo Anokye, an Ashanti fetish priest, statesman, and lawgiver. A cofounder of the Ashanti Kingdom in West Africa, who helped establish its constitution, laws, and customs. His father was called Kaku Ackah and his mother, Maame Nkobe'. Anokye was named after

his paternal Uncle Egya-Ano who was a fetish priest. The Nzema called him Ano~kye which means Ano Junior. The Denkyiras later heard of his wonders and requested his aid. Through Anokye's help, the Ashanti's successfully defeated the Denkyiras.

Osei Tutu, the King of Ashanti, requests Anokye's aid. Anokye obliges and with Tutu carries out an expansionist policy on their predecessors, defeating the powerful Denkyira. Okomfo Anokye brings the golden stool from the sky and gives it to the Ashantis. He also puts a sword on the ground as a symbol of unity amongst the Ashantis.

After, Okomfo Anokye brought the golden stool from the sky and gave it to the Ashantis. He also put a sword on the ground as a symbol of unity amongst the Ashantis. Some members of the elders planned to kill him and in the end Anokye disappears.

4.3 The usage of proverbs in Akan Films

The ability to sum up ideas and experiences in captivating and succinct expressions has always been considered as a sign of native intelligence, linguistic competence and cultural erudition as posited by Adedimeji (nd). The first objective set for the study as indicated in the Chapter One was to identify the use of proverbs in Akan films. Observation of the films all showed high usage of diverse Akan proverbs and wise sayings. These proverbs identified have been categorized under sense of: advice and precaution; honesty and truthfulness; love and solidarity, wisdom and patience; and sense of community based on the contexts used, their meanings and socio-cultural significance. The socio-cultural meanings and interpretations of the respective proverbs have been noted based on the researcher's perspective on Akan culture. These themes of Akan proverbs connote what other researchers such as Hussein, 2005; Gyekye, 1996; and Yankah, 2000 all cited in Dzokoto and Darkwah (2014: 2) as serving as value repositories; socialization tools used

to advise, reprimand, instruct, encourage, settle conflicts, and remind people of societal values. Certainly, the use of proverbs in Akan films is a good attestation that Akan films present Akan culture with respect to linguistic /language richness. Indeed, these proverbs have been used for multiplicity of purposes as already indicated. Indeed, Dzokoto and Darkwah's (2014:2) perspective sums them all that, "Members of a society learn about, internalize and incorporate societal ideas in their thoughts, feeling and behaviour, and by so doing, create patterns, actions, products and discourse that reproduce, and on occasion, modify the prevailing socio-cultural narrative".

4.3.1 Proverbs and wise sayings on Advice and Precautions

In Ama Ghana, one notable proverb of Akans was emphasised in the film. The proverb that states: *Mpaninfoɔ se, wo kurom pɛtɛ di wo nam a, ebi ka*, which literally means *when the vulture from your hometown eats your flesh, some bits and pieces remain*. The explanation of the proverb is that, Akan people believe that people who hail from one tribe or land show love and trust for each other. That is, it is more secured for an individual to associate him/herself with his/her own people other than strangers. This is by virtue of familiarity and considerations as you all hail from one area. This proverb is similar to the English proverb, "better the devil you know". In most cases, the proverb is used to caution people not to marry from different tribes. The basis of this Akan proverb is that; the Akan people's desire is to see their wards marry from the Akan tribe or their hometown as they strongly believe that there are more advantages to marry an Akan to an outsider.

One other proverb observed in this theme was: *Kwaterekwa se obema wo ntoma a, tie ne din*. Literally, the proverb is stated as: *If the bare assures you of clothing, just consider*

its name sake. This proverb was used in the *Menko M'abusua* movie. *Promises of those who have nothing to offer are null and void as they have nothing to give.* The proverb is used to offer advice to people in order to be more cautious of deceit, lies and vague assurances and promises from unrealistic people or sources.

In the movie *Time Changes*, an elder of a palace used the *Akan* Proverb: *wo be soo gya, na w'ame hwe nkwan mu.* “*You are here to fetch fire, not to poke your nose in the soup*” The proverb was used in anger to position someone to stay away from matters of discussion that is not his or her concern, or when an outsider is inquisitive or expresses curiosity in another's matter. The proverb was appropriately used. Indeed, in the *Akan* context, the proverb is to set a word of caution for people who try to intrude or gossip or poke their noses in other people's affairs or in matters that do not concern them. By implication, people should not exceed their given limits or take advantage of situations to exploit people.

An important wise-saying used in the *Bearer* was: *Deen nti na mpaninfo se, wontumi nkyekyere mmoatia? Efiri se, mmotia naenwene nhoma, enti won na onim senea wosanenhoma.* Why do the elders say that, one cannot tie a dwarf? In answering: It is because dwarfs are the originators and manufactures of ropes, so they know the rudiments of tying and untying knots. This wise-saying was presented in the form of rhetorical question by Okomfoɔ Tuda, where the answer was given by an elder. Similarly, in *Praba*, the priestess poses a rhetorical question *Nwaba be ye dzen na w'anantew abir a nakyir nyihɔ (Fante); How can the snail move without it shells?* Indeed, the snail cannot move without it's shell, as it is its source of protection. The proverb was used to mean that, it was impossible for the people to live without their leaders and their gods.

In *Menko M'abusua*, Asumadu (Actor) used the Akan proverb: *Oba yansafoɔ yebu no be, na ye nka no asem*”, with the literal meaning: “*The wise is spoken to in proverbs and not in mere literal words/ a word to the wise is enough*”. In the Akan setup, this proverb attracts frequent usage. The Akan associate understanding of proverbs to wisdom. In another sense, it implies that one should not waste his/her time to go over and or explain issues to the wise person, for he/she is already endowed with the abundance of wisdom. The proverb is alternatively used to stress on the importance of statements, most especially when an individual is proving stubborn or recalcitrant to comply or take an advice. Indeed, it is used after an advice has been offered as a conclusive statement. Moreover, people normally use this proverb to present or as a sound of precaution to make people know the implications of their actions and inactions.

In the *Okomfo Anokye* movie, Kwaku Frimpong, as the main character, was imprisoned by the King of Denkyira upon some Awukugua elders gossiping about Awukugua’s nonreadiness to serve the Denkyira Kingdom. In this development, Anokye priest was implicated. He was then arrested and imprisoned and charged to be behind the stubbornness of *Awugukua*. Indeed, by virtue of Anokye’s implication, the King of *Denkyera* and his elders accordingly threatened and vented their spleen through several proverbs. One such important proverb was: *Patapaa pieto ye de mmra na eworɔ*. The literal meaning of the proverb is that: “*It takes diktat to be able to remove the dress of a stubborn person*”. The proverb was used to mean that Okomfo Anokye would be dealt with mercilessly. However, the proverb in the Akan usage means that, it takes the rudiments of

the law to deal with the unscrupulous and or the cunning by virtue of their stubborn and difficult nature. That is, there is no way the stubborn can go unpunished. In simply terms, “*all days for the thief, one day for the owner*”. The other proverb used by the elders of Denkyera for Anokye was: *Se akyekyedee se wo repɛ ne mogya dodoo a, yede nsuo na eframɔ ma no*. The proverb’s literal meaning is that: *When the tortoise desires for more blood, it is only made possible by adding water*. The proverb was used to mean that Anokye was going to be punished according to the enormity of his crime. This proverb is used in situations where a person is proving difficult to desist from bad habits. It is also accordingly used as a form of advice. The proverb in terms of its socio-cultural norms also means that, people who do not accept advice end up in trouble. Similarly, another proverb used by the elders of Denkyera to mean punishment was the usage of the Akan proverb: *Wansena tufo antiɛna, yɛ sie funu a oka adaka menamu*. The proverb’s literal meaning is that “*the stubborn fly remains with the corpse in the coffin or it is the stubborn housefly that follows the corpse to the grave*”. According to the *Akan*, their elders observed that if the housefly remains stubborn and persistently perches on the corpse in spite of funning it out, it is eventually buried with the corpse. The proverb means upon several advice, if one remains adamant, he or she is left to his or her fate. The socio-cultural implication is that people who do not listen to advice fall into troubles. In the Okomfo Anokye movie, Anokye was seen by Osei Tutu from Asante upon his visit to the King of Denkyera and Anokye on seeing him disclosed his stool succession secrets; so Tutu requested for his release. However, the elders of Denkyera insisted that Anokye was a bad person and accordingly used the proverb: *Yafunu bone nnim se m’asa*. The literal translations states: “*A dire stomach does not respond to any medication*” to mean that, when Anokye is released and pardoned for his implications, he was going to repeat his misdeeds. To the elders, such a character could not be permitted to work with a good friend of the Denkyera

king, Ansa Sasraku. The proverb in the Akan tradition is used to mean that worse people or characters are almost always adamant to advice. Thus, it's usage in the film was in the right context. The evil will never refrain from their bad deeds no matter the numerous pieces of advice given them. Thus, there is no need in trying to advice / institute reformatory measure for the wicked, because they will never change. That is, it is not advisable to trust a bad person.

Another proverb used to denote Anokye's rising powers was responded by a council of Denkyera that *Ye ntumi mma yen anamon nsene yen tenten* (*We cannot afford our footsteps to be longer than our heights*). This proverb in the film context suggests that the kingdom of Denkyera would not foresee itself that Anokye and Awukugua under their control should rise against them. The socio-cultural significance is that a master cannot afford for his/her subordinate to control him.

The fall of Anokye, was as a result of his being deceived to eat his aversion "apaterε"(freshwater fish), which he complained to his good friend Osei Tutu in Asante Kingdom where Anokye implicated some of Asante elders for his misfortune. King Osei Tutu showed his sympathy to his to him via the Akan proverb: *Se aboa bi beka wo a, na ofiri wo ntoma mu*. Transliterated the *insect that bites you is found in your own cloth*. This means that, it was his (Anokye) closest ally who effected his aversion against him. The basis of the proverb in the Akan tradition is that peoples' problems are caused by their immediate associates other than outsiders. This means that people should not down play or excessively trust their closest allies and not to reveal their secrets to their immediate people by virtue of their potency to cause their downfall.

In contrast to the above proverbs used on bad characters, another useful proverb used is: *Aso pa nkyere asem te*. Transliterated, *Good ears easily understand message*. Indeed, it is perceived by the Akans that it is not the lengthy talk, repetition or stresses that would make a person accept an advice, likewise, the amount of punishment that can change a bad person or deter him/her from the bad deeds. It is easy to work with people who are good and not difficult, the proverb is used when people prove difficult to heed instructions or reforms.

In *Menko M'abusua*, another useful proverb used, thus: *Bia a wusie firi ba biara no, na egya wɔ ho* meaning “*there is no smoke without fire*”. The proverb means there are problems everywhere. And it is thus better for people to be content with what they have and where they find themselves. In another sense, the proverb can be used to imply that behind every rumor, there is an element of truth.

The *Menko M'abusua* movie further presents: *Panin a ewɔ fie no, eno biara na ewɔ wura mu*. *The elders at home are not different from those of the bush*. The proverb among other purposes is used as a signal that an individual cannot be easily defeated or underrated when someone tries to threaten or attack. Additionally, when elders are not given equal recognition, respect or treatment, the proverb is applied in that sense. This proverb is also used when one person is favoured at the expense of the other.

4.3.2 Sense of Honesty and Truthfulness

In the movie *Time Changes*; during the disagreements/disputes on the successions to the throne, one elder raised an issue that *Dee adee da no, wo amfa anto a, efiri to / If something is not placed in its rightful place, it falls*. In the film, it was used to denote that; if the right person was not chosen; it was going to be impossible to get the next king. In societal context, the proverb suggests that for peace to prevail, truth must be ensured. This requires that everything must be done in accordance with its rules. This proverb implies that mischievous acts are not most often than not successful. Thus, the proverb can be used to caution individuals to be honest, truthful and fair in their dealings.

Another category of Akan proverb used in the *Okomfo Anokye* film was: “*Kaakum ye gye no Okokuo anum*” by a council of elder during a meeting. The proverb was used to give explanations to events he witnessed. The literary meaning of the proverb is that *the bare truth can only be attested by the mouth of the owl*. The proverb’s socio-cultural implications are that, it is proper to rely on people to attest to their own deeds than what others have to offer. This means, it is not proper to rely on speculations for judgments/decisions but rather the main source.

In the *Menko M’abusua* film, an equally important proverb was noted. “*Se kukuru kukuru no gyae a, keka keka no nso begyae*”. Transliterated, “*Should the drumming stop, the accompanying noise would also cease*”. By explanation, if the cheating stops, peace will prevail; one thing leads to another and every cause has its resultant effect. That is, when there is no cause, there are no effects, and every problem has its own cause. The proverb

is used to advise peoples to desist from deeds which amount to problems. In essence, the proverb is appropriate during calls for orderliness, peace treaties and reconciliations.

In Menko M'abusua, there was an assertion that: *M'ada nso me nan gu abonten*; which literally means *Although, I am asleep in my room, my legs are exposed outside*. The proverb is also an irony that implies that the truth has been hidden from an individual; there are some developments about a person of which others are aware but he's not been alerted. This proverb is used to advise people when they pretend; to draw people's attention when they are trying to lie or becoming untruthful.

The findings on the proverbs above support the observation that proverbs as expressed are used to cautions manners of exploitation, oppression and hatred, (Brandt 1961:20 cited in Ayantayo, 2012). This proverb category presents how meaningful proverbs are being used as a polite form of criticism in cases when direct speeches would cause offence as posited previously by Kani (1953); Fianko, (1955) all cited in Boudou (2012). Based on this crucial social function in avoiding conflicts, Akan proverbs need to be preserved and cherished in African indigenous films. For the numerous conflicts in Africa to be settled peacefully, some of these proverbs socio-cultural significance should be valued. This finding is in line with the viewpoints of researchers like Boverd, 1977; Olanunji, 1985; and Ajibola,1947; according Ayantayo (2012) who confirmed that proverbs communicate societal ethics and values in their daily language usage; used to praise or appreciate positive values and conversely used to dissociate people from negative values.

4.3.3 Proverbs denoting wisdom and knowledge sharing/ideas

Some proverbs from Okomfo Anokye, *Time Changes* and Praba films showed matters relating to wisdom and knowledge sharing/ideas. The first proverb states: *Se obi nnim a,*

obi kyere, (*Okomfo Anokye*) literally meaning: *If someone does not know, another person teaches*. The socio-cultural implication of the proverb means that learning has no end. That knowledge is not the monopoly of one person. It also means that one person cannot know it all and that it is not wrong to ask what you do not know from others who seemingly know. In short, it implies that it is better to seek the views of others in matters of importance or when problems arise.

The next proverb used in this category is: *Ti korɔ nkɔ agyina* in the Bearer and Okomfo Anokye. Transliterated: *one person (head) does not constitute a council*. Possibly, it takes more persons to hold a council. The proverb is similar to the English proverb, *two heads are better than one*". It denotes that more persons collectively possess rich ideas than an individual. The socio-cultural significance is that it is advisable to rely on the submissions of more persons than an individual. Another proverb identified in this category in Praba states: *Sɛ abɔfra nnin ahahan a ɔfrɛ nonwura*. That is: *When a child doesn't know the value of herbs, he calls it weed*. Socio-cultural significance: the proverb means people should not undervalue someone, when they don't know what he or she is made off or who he or she is.

The socio-cultural implication of these Akan proverbs stress the importance of learning from each other and how knowledge can be sought, as no individual can know or possess all forms of knowledge. Ultimately, as films have educative functions, their relationships with proverbs are established in this regard. These types of Akan proverbs relate to knowledge, capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society as identified by Kanagy and Kraybill (1999).

The remaining two proverbs on wisdom were noted from the *Praba* and the *Bearer* films. It was evident in the *Bearer* that: “*Se aboa okoto nante ko ne nkyenkyen mu a, na enkyere se w’ayera ne kwan / The fact that the crab walks sideways does not mean it has lost its way*”. Indeed, the Akans say that, when an individual sees a crab moving sideways, it doesn’t mean that it doesn’t know where it is heading towards. Certainly, that is the way the crab walks, implying that each and every one has his or her way of doing things; so it is important not to merely condemn or judge people based on their actions and inactions thereof.

In the *Bearer*, *Otuahantankran se, onni abusua nti na, ode ne ho akobɔ doduo akwaban se, se owu a, w’asie no.* – The cockroach says, it’s because of the fact that it doesn’t have a family that it has affiliated itself with the ant clan, that should it die, they bury it. In the *Bearer* it is also asserted that *Se aborɔfo anitifɔɔ yi ayɛ wɔnho se nnomaa nnitifɔɔ a wɔ nenam soro aberea onsi fom a, yen nso ye betoto yen aboɔ no basabasa, abere a yen nweneho* – If these white men have developed the habit of frying without perching, then we would also be in the right to shoot our stones anyhow without aiming.

4.3.4 Proverb on Self Consolations and Hopes

Another significant context in which some Akan proverbs were applied in these films was related to self-consolation. These proverbs were used timely to be able to cope with miseries and pains of misfortunes such as death, poverty, disease and other bad events. These proverbs suggest that Akan people use proverbs to deal with psychological and traumatic situations. Similarly, Donatus Nwoga, made use of versions of proverbs as

“figurative expression to the point of traditional wisdom relevant to a given situation (Asika, undated).

In such bad situations, Akan people are fond of saying proverbs such as: *Mpaninfoɔ se, sɛ ɛyɛ bɔne kora a ye kutamu*. Literally, it means that, *the elders say, no matter how bad the situation is, they are still content with it*. Indeed, this was used in *Okomfo Anokye*, when an elder was to give an account of their situation when Nana Osei Tutu visited his friend Ntim Gyakari (King of Denkyera). In the film, the proverb was rightly used as it pertains in the Akan cultural setting in welcoming visitors after their missions have been asked, and upon the host giving account of developments happening to him, this proverb is used especially, where someone is in bad times. The socio-cultural significance dictates that there are situations people have no options than to contain bad times. Indeed, one outstanding feature of the usage of Akan proverbs as revealed by the present study in this section regards their etiquettes (*Elders Say/Mpaninfoɔ se*). Most proverb statements are guided by this principle. The use of these courtesies by proverb users acknowledges or presents gratitude to Akan forefathers who are regarded as the originators of these proverbs. It may be on these bases that Yankah (1986) stated that Akan proverbs and morality in specific interpersonal context are distinct from the Western style.

4.3.5 Proverbs denoting a sense of Patience

It was only in one film that a proverb denoting the need for patience in an individual’s life was used. In *Time Changes*, there was a scene with the proverb: *Sɛ ɔbaa ɛkyɛrɛ wɔ adwareɛ a, na ɔreyɛ neho yie* (*Okomfo Anokye*). This proverb literally means that *when a woman takes a longer time in the bath, it may be that she is putting herself in order*. By

sociocultural implication, should expectations/desires take so long to materialize, it may be an indication of success. Delay may be a sign of success, and does not necessarily imply time wasting. Good things may come out from patience. In contrast, there is no literature noted in relation to proverbs of this nature.

4.3.6 Proverbs denoting Sense of Disappointment

In the film *Okomfo Anokye*, there was a proverb in a form of a request used to denote the scene where a good friend of King *Ansa Sasraku*, *Osei Tutu*, asked for the release of *Okomfo Anokye* so that he could follow and help him build his kingdom. Indeed, this request disrupted how the elders had planned to punish Anokye on the count of his charges. It was on this reason that one elder said: *W'ama yen nsa asi fom; which means that You have made our hands stepped on the grounds or better you have taken the meat out of our mouth*. This means their enemy was escaping unharmed and was indeed a difficult request to grant, if not for the fact that it was not for a good friend. In contrast, the proverb is usually used to associate with events of disappointment by a loved one, trusted person or a close relative or friend. This proverb is also used in situations where disappointment has led to the expectations of the opponents.

4.3.7 Sense of Responsibility

On the proverbs presenting matters of individual responsibility, it is a truism that the sense of responsibility is a value members of African societies uphold, the norms they follow according to Oni (2005) and Ogechukwu et al. (2014) contrary to irresponsibility and many other social vices (Brandt 1961:20 cited in Ayantayo, 2012). Indeed, in *Okomfo Anokye*, an elder said that, *“Daasebre, ye se obi nnom aduro mma yarefo”*. That is, medicines are not taken on behalf of the sick. In the context used, it means that the speaker expressed to speak by himself so that he could be well understood. Socio-cultural significance implies

that no one can effect a change in another person's life, unless he or she avails him or herself and makes a conscious effort.

4.3.8 Love and Solidarity

Regarding the Akan proverbs identified in depicting love and solidarity, Igboin (2011) posited that they represent the total well-being and welfare of the community and their essential moral values. Proverbs denoting a sense of patience are evident in the current study. Nevertheless literature provides no information on such proverbs in African societies. Other proverb used signify the love for children. Indeed, in the *Praba* movie, it was observed that where an elder indicated that: *Se abɔfra ho ye tan se deen mpo a, ye nto no nfra adwaree nsuonɡu*. Literally, no matter how ugly a child is, none throws the child away with the bath water. This implies that no parent can say his or her ward is so ugly that, he or she would throw away the dirty water with the child after bathing it. The sociocultural significance is that no matter how bad or irresponsible someone has behaved his family cannot reject or throw him away.

4.3.9 Sense of Community

In *Praba*, it was said that “*the sponge does not refuse the touch of the soap neither does the tread refuse the touch of the needle*”. There is no way the sponge can effectively clean without the soap, likewise trying to stitch a cloth with a needle without adding a thread. Another related proverb was *ntasuo nkoa nante/ the saliva does not walk alone*. The proverb means no individual is an island of himself or herself.

In all, it is of cultural importance in the present study that Akan films are enriched in Akan proverbs. In contrast, Njewel (2007) finds the use of idioms, riddles, proverbs and other wise sayings not manifesting in traditional films in Tanzania.

4.4 Ghanaian Moral conducts in Akan Films

The focus of the second objective of the study is on exploring the extent to which the present Akan films reflect Ghanaian moral conducts. The data collected have been presented as immoral conducts and other Akan cultural elements such as profanity, insult, gross disrespect for the elderly, indecent dressing, etc. This information have been analysed and presented below.

4.4.1 Immoral conducts elements in Akan films

4.4.1.1 Profane languages and Insults

Ghanaian culture, like other societies, upholds positive social values (Yankah, 2012; 1996). Regrettably, vulgar words like *“bled de fool; foolish, and “you goat”* were observed in Time Changes. There were exchanges of insults and the use of profanities such as *Kwasea* (fool), *Aboa* (animal), *Odwan* (Sheep) also in Okomfo Anokye. The presence of some of these scenes as revealed by Adélékè (1995) is that some characters are created to unleash their verbal tirades on other characters. Moreover, the uses of vulgar words such as *“bled de fool; foolish, and “you goat”* in Time Changes, also confirm that films that are produced in indigenous languages also have a lot of English intrusions (Adedun, 2010). Indeed, the usage of indigenous language alongside English in the view of Adedun is

because English is a super language that is associated with education, prestige, class and opportunities in most African countries.

Additionally, the study found out that the usage of some vulgar words like “*tweso nwee*” literally *hairs on a women’s private part (vagina)*; “*mɛ dwam*” to express sexual desires (Time Changes) are immoral in the Akan and the Ghanaian cultural setup. This happened when Nana Nkansa’s blind sister was presented to the fetish priest for sacrifice in order to make it possible for Akosua Dampo’s son to qualify for the chief position. The fetish priest said that the lady was so beautiful and used the word *Mɛ dwam* to express his desire to have sexual act with her. Indeed, it becomes an uncomfortable and disgraceful scene to watch with children, the elderly, in-laws or people of repute as Akan culture demands. Moreover, this kind of speech is an obvious contradiction to the Akan morality concept. Unexpectedly, it is immoral and irresponsible for a woman (mother) to state those words. These observations contrast with the position of Ayantayo, (2012) that African society still has not abandoned their moral values inherent in them. These scenes of insults and profanity present negative connotations as to how best Akan films can present African culture and craft their identities in the film industry globally. Furthermore, these scenes portray the negligence of some of these film makers and how they abuse and distort Akan moral values in the film medium.

4.4.1.2 Romance Scenes

Agyekum (2000) has attested that Akan films in the media also teach morality, among other social elements of life. In contrast however, majority of scenes observed in *Ama Ghana*, showed hot romantic and pornographic scenes. In this film, there were scenes

where a security man stalked the master's wife (Awura Amma) and made sexual advances at her. Furthermore, Awura Ama and her boyfriend were further observed seducing and kissing each other openly, thus in front of the security man in her matrimonial home. They were seen dancing in sexy erotic moves. These acts of infidelity on the part of Awura Ama, all happened as being a house wife, took advantage of her husband's impotency and numerous travels to engage in extra marital affairs. Indeed, this woman slept with her sexual partner countless times in her husband's master bedroom where they were eventually caught by the husband. In another scene, the daughter of Kaakaku (Kofi Adu) and her boyfriend were always seen at obscured places flirting in Ama Ghana movie. On these bases, Akan film makers will have to tap the moral values from Akan indigenous communities to be able to make films that will suit their moral conducts. These scenes as reported by Garritano (2013) were outsiders to the Ghanaian filmmaking establishment, but the tales of sentimental romance immediately struck a chord with their audience. Meleiro (2008) contended that this new movie producing trend is a response to the desire for images that popular audiences can relate with. Indeed, in the African's quest to have spectacular and rich cultural identity for its cultural films, what roles do the immoral scenes offer? Obviously, these phenomenon retards the Akan rich symbolic and socio-cultural values as potential assets to promote socio-cultural development. This implies that Akan films have not yet harnessed the social capitals to facilitate the development of Akan culture as envisaged by some researchers' expectations like Kquofi et al. (2013); Yankah, (2012); and Addo (2001).

In Time Changes, a prostitute insults her Client for not being able to have sexual intercourse with her. Moreover, the male customer also wore ear rings contrary to

Ghanaian traditional adornments for males. Additionally, the prostitute's dress was a tiny skirt exposing greater part of her legs. In *Ama Ghana*, Awura Ama back in the days before marriage at her village, used to sit under a tree with her lovers where they kissed, romanced and petted each other, whilst people passed by. Indeed, as the two lovers were still under parentage, they were not supposed to confidently and openly engage themselves in such acts.

4.5 Cultural elements showcased in the Akan Films

To re-emphasise Ghanaian National Policy on Culture (2004) which stresses culture as dynamic and gives order and meaning to the social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious practices of people. Moreover, Ekwuazi (1987) quoting from Adeyemi (2008) maintains that every movie is derived from specific cultural or traditional realities which inform its meaning as well as its structural methodology. It was thus important that the Akan films sampled for this study used Akan indigenous language. Ultimately, the use of Akan language in Akan films potentially creates a niche to capture several audiences in Ghana from the reigning Nigerian and Western movies. As touched by Griff (2006) language provides important clues about the cultural values of the society and moreover satisfies the 'film taste' of the masses (Yamoah, 2014).

Despite several scenes of foreign cultural elements, some important scenes depicting typical Ghanaian (Akan) cultures were observed. The elements observed as reflecting Akan culture in the films have been presented in the following themes: traditional customs;

Traditional music, meals and games, matters of chieftaincy, welfare, gratitude and appreciation; and the use of juju and witchcraft.

4.5.1 Traditional Palace Customs

As declared by Adesanya (2014), it is through cultural identities that Africans would clearly separate African films from those produced on other continents. It was of importance that the traditional palace customs were eminent in the Akan films observed. In *Praba and the Bearer*, Kings and elders were dressed as perfectly as Akan royals. Indeed, they wore their traditional Akan cloths, headgears, crown, adornments and all that. In reality, the study revealed how Akan kings showcased their customs. In *Praba*, the king removes his right native sandal, steps on it; lowers his *Kente* cloth on his left arm and with a calabash takes a palm wine from pot poured by the linguist to pour libation. He first and foremost shows the drink to *Odomankoma* (The Creator of all things), then acknowledges *Asaase Yaa* (Mother Earth) and the ancestor before making his request through libation. In *Praba*, as customs demanded, the king presents the baby prince to the priestess for protection and blessing, there were displays of traditional drumming and dancing in *Kpanlogo*, *Adowa*, *Kete* and *Sekyi* observed at a durbar in the palace where the prince was traditionally being dedicated to the gods. In another durbar to welcome those who went on a deadly quest to save the kingdom from a plague, traditional drumming and dancing thus *Bawa* and *Damba* were observed. In this same film, the linguist also brings his cloth to the waist as Akan custom demands, when addressing issues in a gathering or a meeting. The theme music and sound tracks were all traditional drumming / instrumentation. The priestess wore a cloth, thus skirt and top made in a form of raffia skirt with sea shells attached to them, typical of olden Fante priestesses. Her hair was locked with couriers in them with native powder markers on her, typically of *Akan* culture and wielded a staff.

The ladies had their hairs braided with beads around their necks, wrist and ankles not the waist as normally portrayed in Nigerian movies.

The presentation and celebrations of traditional festivals like *Odwira in Time Changes*; the enstoolment of chief in *Time changes*, the councils of elders in *Denkyera*, and *Awukugua*, chief sits in palanquin. The use of traditional umbrellas, singing by men and women and children and chiefs calling for prosperity for their kingdoms were observed in these three movies *Bearer*, *Praba* and *Time Changes*. In the two films *Praba and Time Changes*, there were scenes on how information and messages are communicated from the chief to his people. In *Praba*, there is a town crier (a gongon beater) who carries the kings' message to his people in a unique way. Similarly, in *Time Changes*, gong-gong (*Dawuro*) was beaten by a crier calling all citizens to assemble towards the chosen and enstoolment of a new king.

These traditional political custom manifestations attest to the fact that the local film industry continues to exercise a deep influence on the history, cultural values, and nation's destiny and national life (National Commission on Culture, 2004). Nevertheless, the earlier position of Sama (1996) as noted by Garritano (2008) that African films remain "foreigners in their own countries" where the makers of popular movies have never been principally concerned with authenticity, cultural revival, or cultural preservation has been disputed by these findings.

4.5.2 Manifestation of Traditional Music and Games Performances

The fusion of traditional cultural performances in African films has been recognized by researchers like Njewel (2007) in her famous study in Tanzania. Similarly, the *Praba* film in Ghana showcased myriad displays of traditional drumming and dancing. There was also very important presentation and celebrations of traditional festivals like the Odwira in Time Changes, drumming of *Atumpam* and *Kete* dances. Moreover, *Praba* presents important local games like ‘*Ampe and Oware*’ whilst the *Bearer* showcases the game ‘*anhwe w’akyire*’. There was the usage of traditional shrine songs by the priestesses. In Ama Ghana again, the famous Ghanaian *Kakaaku*’s music thus the palmwine guitar song “Ma ye agyanka ba, m’enenam wiase mmɔbɔ mmɔbɔ...” meaning “...I have become a miserable orphan roaming about in this world...” and “Sɛ ye ka sɛ ɔɔ bi ye owuoaa...”. “When we say some love is sacrificial...” The present findings in Akan films have some similarities with cultural films studied by Njewel (2007) in Tanzania regarding traditional dances and songs. Nevertheless, heroic recitations and storytelling in traditional films in Tanzania were not observed in Akan films most of the films except for the *Bearer* and *Praba*. Obviously, Akan films present traditional games as a unique identity. The findings imply that, Africans may appreciate and patronize films made in Africa when they truly reflect their socio-cultural realities. Certainly, as people watch and see their natural material identities replicated in the movie, the desire to watch more and more becomes intense. Ultimately, the manifestation of Akan cultural performances and traditional games attest to Williams (1974) as cited in Boadou (2011) version that despite western cultural infiltration, Ghanaian traditions are still very much alive and cherished, valued, practiced and treasured. Clearly the findings attest to the fact that, Ghanaian popular movies are rooted in traditional cultural troupes (Garitano, 2008; Newell, 2000).

4.5.3 Communal Welfare, Hospitality and Traditional Courtesies

In *Okomfo Anokye*, Kwaku Frimpong's father (Agya Ano) paid a courtesy call to his friend (Agya Ano) when he lost his grandfather. During the visit, he shook hands with the friend to offer him his bereaved sympathy and further asked about the funeral arrangements. He then gave assurances of his support during the funeral rite. This finding is consistent with Ayantayo (2012) assertion that good moral values are shown by actions of kindness and compassion among other elements to one another. In contrast, the findings do not support the position that, African films remain “foreigners in their own countries” where the makers of popular movies have never been principally concerned with authenticity, cultural revival, or cultural preservation as posited by Sama, 1996 cited in Garritano (2008).

Furthermore, there was the use of complements by council of elders. In the *Bearer* for example, elders frequently used the word *Mo Opiafo!* – Thank you or thanks for hitting the nails right on its head. In *Ama Ghana*, *Ewura Ama* gives her parents the uttermost respect by marrying someone she did not even love. This shows the state of obedience young ladies give to their parents other than showing disrespect by following their wishes

In *Okomfo Anokye*, during the planning of the “Odwira” festival, the queen mother asked questions before the council of elders and consequently, the Okyeame (linguists) followed the traditional courtesy and repeated the summaries of the council of elders' statements and discussions followed. In *Okomfo Anokye and the Menko M'abusua* movies, the chiefs and gods were all addressed in their befitting regalia's as *Nana and Odeefoo*. Kings sought

the guidance and wishes of their gods and ancestors through the fetish priest to make decisions regarding wars. For example, King Ansa Sasraku in planning to attack Awukugua people consulted the gods through the fetish priest. Consequently, in the Bearer the priest incanted:” *You thirty gods who surround this kingdom this is the request of Odeefo!* Also in *Okomfo Anokye*, Ansa Sasraku of Denkyera discussed issues brought before him with his elders as a sign of respect in following his traditions. Moreover, he warmly received friends (nobles) from the Asante kingdom.

4.5.4 Expression of Gratitude

In the movie *Okomfo Anokye*, the good works of *Anokye Komfo* in helping to build the Asante Kingdom was duly appreciated. During the time of Anokye’s infirmity, Osei-Tutu offered prayers for him. He incanted: *Nananom nsamanfo ne abosom, ye sere mo se mongyina Anokye akyire akyigyina pa. Se Anokye mpo na areko shaw a etese yi a na yen akwakhweapaa de ye be yeden? Ancestors and gods, we beg of you, take control of Anokye. If Anokye the highly spirited one, goes through this suffering what happens to us the powerless?* It can also be remembered from the *Okomfo Anokye* film that Osei Tutu (Then Asante King) commemorated the works of Anokye after his death: *Bosiako na ode ne ti gye akyerema!*, which signifies that Anokye died a hero. Indeed, Osei-Tutu in his words concluded that “*the future shall forever remember Anokye*”. This sense of gratitude by Osei Tutu to his good friend Anokye was observed from tribute he offered for Anokye.

“I am promising that whatever that I’m to do to make your name remain in Asante Kingdom; I’ll do to honour you! I ask the gods and ancestors that, when the settlement expansion reaches where you are buried, it shall be called Kyire apatre, meaning your enemies fed you with fresh fish which led to your untimely death. Indeed, no one buys drink to bless his enemies!”

It can be deduced from the tribute that, the king doomed the perpetrators of *Anokye* Kɔmfɔɔ. Nevertheless, in *Time Changes*, when time really changed, events and Nkansah was eventually healed by the gods from his disability and his sister Naomi from her blindness, they collectively expressed appreciation to the gods and the ancestors.

4.5.5 The Conflicting Powers of Christianity, 'Juju' and Witchcraft in Akan Films

The scenes of juju, black magic, sorcery, occultism, fetishism and witchcraft, obscenity among other themes have widely received criticisms in most African films by film viewers and researchers such as Akashoro (2010); and Adélékè 1995). In *Time Changes*, Kyeiwaa sought the services of a fetish priest to make her sister's son, Nkansah a cripple so that he could not become the next king. This was because in the Akan tradition, no disabled person qualifies to be king. She used the same platform to make her niece blind, fart sporadically, soil herself and smell so much that it would cause her sister's family to be scorned by all to pave way for her eldest son to be crowned the next king. The intentions were meant to make Acheampong, her son succeed the king when he died, contrary to what the gods and ancestors had willed.

In addition, within Menko M'abusua through witchcraft, life is made very unbearable for Nkrumah and his wife, Mina. Indeed, it was through witchcraft that her family members were preventing her from getting pregnant. However, through prayers, this machination were neutralised and eventually God blessed Mina with a baby girl; of whom she was able to sustain with her prayers thus her husband and child. Unfortunately, the child was possessed with witchcraft by these two sisters and used against the family. Akosah was also disabled, made jobless and mentally deranged but Mina kept on praying.

Consequently, Nkrumah finally realises the spiritual problems in his family and there is manifestation as the witches confess their deed and the family is released and saved.

In *Time Changes*, it was through magical powers that Akosua Dampo's son and the other persons who were set on the stool experienced discomfort and were rejected as would be kings. It was through the same magical powers that Nkansah and Naomi were healed. It was then that the crown left the throne by itself and found Nkansah and his family in the forest, brought them to the gathering healed them for him to be enstooled. Some of these scenes may explain why Nigerian films, along with their Ghanaian counterparts, have been described by Larkin (2005) as a mixture of "horror, magic and melodrama". Nevertheless, Adjei et al. (2014) and Udomisor and Sonuga (2012) contrary to this believe that there is nothing wrong with a film dealing with any of these themes, but rather their reoccurrence in film after film. Consequently, some of these manifestations present negative image on the rich varied African cultures and films as African foreign audiences and others who truly know less about Africa perceive that indeed the varied African cultures are only about sorcery, witchcraft and occultisms (Ògúnyemí, 1996).

4.6 Manifestations of foreign cultural elements in the Akan Films

Adedimeji (2006) declared that "to be removed from one's culture is to be deprived of one's identity". The third objective set for this study focused on identifying foreign cultural elements incorporated in Akan movies. From the data obtained in the selected films watched, the main foreign cultural elements manifesting in Akan films were mainly music and entertainment. Indeed, regarding the exhibition of foreign music, entertainment and dinner, evidence points firstly to *Menko M'abusua*. In the film, the setting of the witches' camp appeared as a Western Banquet-like Hall decorated with conference hall table and

chairs, Champaign and sparkling wines with wine glasses and bottles of ‘voltage’ mineral water, sound system controlled by the only wizard amongst them by name DJ Lilwyn. This witches’ camp setting was entertained by Hip pop and Nigerian songs coupled with seductive, strip and pole dances. Indeed, also observed were nice acrylic plates and surprisingly the use of a laptop computer for their leader. In the film, the leader of the witches wore a very short dress with only brazier and performed erotic dances similar to that of pool and strip dancers in a nightclub. Certainly, the music played in the witches’ camp was indeed a surprise and so unacceptable even to think that Hip pop and Nigerian pop music could be imagined as the witches’ music.

Well considering this movie as an African (Ghana “Akan”) movie in the first place, it implied that the choice of music was way out of contest. The setting and properties (props) in the witches’ camp actually recognize civilization and luxury. Indeed, it can closely be described as more of a banquet than what is usually imagined to be. Possibly, such scenes as reported by Anyiam-Osigwe (2001) seek to satisfy the profit orientation of the most African film marketers. Indeed, the elements of foreign cultural inclusions shown in the films studied contradicts with the Ghanaian culture and traditions. In contrast to Nollywoods, Schultz (2012) maintained that it prospers by satisfying preference for material that speaks to Nigerians: expression of a point of view; thus the values, desires, and fears of their popular audience.

4.7 Distortions of Akan cultures in Akan Films

The last objective of the study sought to assess whether scenes in the films distort Ghanaian cultures. This arose to ascertain whether Akan films truly attempt to depict the varied Akan

cultures. Semali and Asino (2013) posited that global media and the non-Africans who drive projects of films of cultural heritage have distorted the reality of Africa. In contrast, the current study reveals some number of scenes distorting Akan cultures of Ghana in films directed by Ghanaians. It was obvious in the movie *Okomfo Anokye* that, Anokye's parents disrupted a council meeting by just budging in unwarrantedly to the palace while the council was in a meeting; fetish priestess and elders did speak to kings in Menko M'abusua and *Time Changes* without recognizing the presence of the linguist who happens to be the mouth piece of the stool; the priest and priestess also walked and spoke without acolytes. The elders of the land, who happen to be the custodians of the land, tied their cloths as in knots on their right shoulders instead of packing them on their left shoulders *as observed in the movie Okomfo Anokye*. Those scenes contradict with courtesies of the Akan tradition and the palace norms and practices. Indeed, it obviously depicts the lack of order and a sign of gross disrespect to the stool, customs and traditions of the Asante kingdom as a whole. However, these victims of the traditional courtesies and formalities were not penalized but were left off the hook. A traditional elder had an unkempt hair (dreadlocks) whilst, a king's palace was represented as living room with stuffing chairs and few pieces of *Kente* cloth hung at the backdrop; whilst the enstoolment processes of a king is done in secrecy and later the chosen king is presented to the public, in the movie *Time Changes* the enstoolment of the king (Nkansah) was done in front of the public. These phenomena may explain why many Ghanaian audiences are concerned about how the upsurge local movies present the Ghanaian and for that matter the "Akan" culture as a whole. Surprisingly, *Okomfo Anokye* and *Time Changes* were films supposed to be purely based on the Akan traditions and historical events; which were ultimately expected to show authenticity and originality of these cultures, but rather sought to present those films their own way to suit their own purpose and financial gains. In the Akan political setup and

culture, elders including the linguist when addressing the king ought to lower their cloths to their lower waist; but in contrast, this was not practiced by all people who spoke to the kings in the *Menko M'abusua* and the *Okomfo Anokye* films.

Moreover, in the Akan political setting, an Akan leader, royal or council of elder's traditional hair style is the one cut down and known as *Dansinkran* or any befitting hair style, but contrary to what was in *Time Changes*, a traditional elder had an unkempt hair (dreadlocks). Indeed, the name of that elder affectionately was *Agya Mpeɛɛ mpeɛɛ*; as evidence. In the Akan tradition, a bastard does not qualify to be an heir to a throne; but however, a bastard was also among the nominees for the kingship position although he was later rejected by the gods.

In the Akan political system, the linguist (*Okyeame*) is the spokesman of the chief and no one speaks to the chief except to and through him. Nevertheless, in *Okomfo Anokye*, elders did speak to kings directly and even without permission from their linguists. In another instance, the meeting of the priestess by Anokye's parents, priest spoke without an acolyte and also directly to the king. These findings support the position of Sama (1996) as cited in Garritano (2008) that the makers of popular movies have not been principally concerned with authenticity, cultural revival, or cultural preservation (Sama, 1996: 148 cited in Garritano, 2008). This development regarding traditional culture distortions validates Bego (2010)'s position that "the present generations of filmmakers lack the competence and awareness to adapt published works for the screen".

As indicated by Adjei et al. (2014), even non-Akan actors and actresses and filmmakers are forced to function in the Akan medium. It was nevertheless, a surprise that Akan films are wrongly stating Akan proverbs. This may be accounting for some distortion in these proverbs as found in Menko M'abusua, "Opanin *etena efie ema nkola ewe nanka a, ye buno nankawefo number one*". In truism, the proverb should have been stated as: *Se opanin tena fie ema nkwadaa we nanka na yere kan nnankawefo a, aka ho bi*. This proverb literal means: should an elder sit unconcerned and allow children devour snake, when considering those who finds snake meat a delicacy, he is included. The *number one* as used in the proverb is as an emphasis. Indeed, in its correct usage, the number one should have been "*aka ho bi*" (meaning he is among). It is clear that there is a corruption of the Akan language with that of the English Language, which is wrong culture-wise as the proverb is Ghanaian. In another assertion, it was noted that an Akan proverb was wrongfully stated thus: *Se edin bonii antumi woa, etete wontoma* was wrongfully stated. In the correct sense it should have been stated as "*Se nimo antumi woa etete wo ntoma*. Literal meaning suggest that: *If your names is continuously and controversially mentioned in an instance its implications comes with its resultant effect on you*. In the film, the proverb was used to point out a character's bad behaviour and attitudes.

Dee akonwa ese no na odie; which should have been Dee adee wo no na odie. That is *it is only rightful owners in line to the throne who are enstooled as kings*. Another interesting finding on the Akan proverbs in the films was on their presentation of matters of individual responsibility. In Praba, the linguist said that, *Daasebre, ye se obi nnon aduro mma oyarefo/ medicines are not taken on behalf of the sick*. The distortion versions of the Akan proverbs questions how indeed, Akan proverbs can be preserved in their original rich philosophical, educational, socio-cultural and moral values with its significance continued to be cherished by the younger generation (Yankah, 2012; Boaduo, 2012). By implication,

Ghanaian filmmakers ought to learn how to present the Ghanaian proverbs in their original state, understand the socio-cultural and philosophical significance of these proverbs; and how they are created and used in various contexts as given by Yankah (2012).

In *Time Changes*, there was a scene of wrong representation of customs and traditions in relation to the enstoolment of the king. It was obvious in the movie that the enstoolment processes of the king (Nkansah) were done in the public notice. Customarily wise, a king's enstoolment is not a public affair; without a doubt, a nominated candidate is placed under custody for grooming and training by the elders versed in the traditions of the state, where he learns more traditions and other elements. It can be inferred that Akan films highly distort the traditional political practices. This means that such films have been used to subjugate the Akan and Ghanaian culture other than to persuade and propagate, entertain, instruct and educate the audience on the socio-political and economic needs of the audience as reported by Akashoro (2010).

There was a scene which contradicts the Ghanaian hospitality manners. In *Ama Ghana*, Uncle Odum and family visit Kaakaku and his wife Araba, who refused to offer them seats and water. In Ghana, the first thing a person does when he gets a visitor is to offer him/her seat, followed by water and ask of missions. In *Ama Ghana*, a disrespectful scene was observed when Awura Ama gives her underwear that is panties and brassieres to a man to wash. The man who happened to be the security man washes these under wears, stretches them open, smells it and fraternizes with it.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

The chapter presents a summary of the major findings in accordance with the research questions the study set to answer. Based on the findings, conclusions are drawn and suitable recommendations are offered for the problems identified and also implications for further empirical study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Based on the research questions, the current study explored, the following summaries were noted and presented below.

Akan films are enriched in Akan proverbs used diversely as depictions of moral conducts, reprimanding; sense of love, patience, wisdom and knowledge, communal welfare and gratitude.

These films show immoral attitudes such as insults and profanity such as to express sexual desires, hot romantic and erotic scenes, public kissing; romance and petting; infidelity; stalking; seduction and performance of sexy erroneous dances by some characters.

The study showed how Akan kings, queens and elders dressed in the rich Akan *Kente* cloths, wore headgears, crowns, adornments, and celebrated some traditional festivals, showcased the enstoolment of kings, the conducts and traditional political chieftaincy organisation, folktales, how chiefs sit in palanquins, and singing of folksongs.

The study obviously showed numerous display of traditional drumming and dancing and most importantly local games as well as sense of communal welfare, hospitality and traditional courtesies.

The use of witchcraft, juju, occultism, fetishism and magic were depicted to subjugate enemies, to cripple and blind in order to make desires materialise and cause untold suffering and unbearable miseries to enemies.

Foreign cultural settings were shown as witches' camp appeared as a Western banquetlike hall decoration with Sound System, the playing Hip pop and Nigerian pop music being

controlled by Disc Jockey (DJ) by name Lilwyn; men in ear rings; woman in mini-skirts, and gold plated anklets.

They were scenes which obviously depicted distortions of traditional chieftaincy and political customs such as disruption of chief council meeting; fetish priest and elders speaking to kings without the linguist; elders tying their cloth on their right shoulders instead of packing them on their left shoulders; a traditional elder with an unkempt hair; king's palace represented in Western living room, with few pieces of *Kente* cloth hanging on the walls; enstoolment processes of kings were done in the public notice and visitors not being offered seats and water; and abusive use language and proverbs.

5.3 Conclusions

The conclusions to be deduced from this study are self-evident. The present study presents some new identity for Akan films from others like “Traditional costumes and their relevance as cultural symbols to film making in Ghana: Asante Case Study” (Akwetey, 2007); “Assessing Brand Ghallywood: A study of the elements that constitute and characterize the Ghanaian Film Industry” (Akrofi, 2013); being diversely rich in the cultural elements of Akan proverbs, moral conducts; sense of communal welfare, hospitality; traditional political customs, celebration of festivals, dressings (ornaments, kente etc), enstoolment, traditional games, drumming and dancing, folktales, folk songs and other historical accounts.

The Akan films' cultural elements and cultural performances attest to the fact that, the local film industry exercises a deep influence on the history, cultural values and the nation's destiny as well as the national life presenting a positive image on African culture

and films; as the filmmakers inculcate cultural elements in their films making both African and foreign audience who truly know less about Africa, perceive African culture along those lines.

Nevertheless, these Akan films underscore the reality that they misrepresent the Akan culture, beliefs and moral values as well as distorted versions of Akan traditional chieftaincy and palace customs; witchcraft and fetishism overly used to subjugate enemies. Most of these misinform foreign audience about the true identity and rich cultures of Akans, and Africans in general. The results have implications on the “Akan” films in its attempts to present cultural meanings in Ghanaian films.

Lastly, the study showed evidence that Akan films have not been able to harness the authenticity, cultural revival, or cultural preservation hence distorts the Akan cultural elements as well as not being able to domesticate the love and romance components to suit the Akan socio-cultural context making scene of that nature in the films seem morally wrong.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the problems found from this study, the following recommendations are offered for the Akan Ghana Industry, Film institutions, National Commission on Culture in Ghana, National House of Chiefs in Ghana, Centers for National Culture, Ghana; sister film

industries in Africa seeking to present the African culture in spectacular ways to the global audience and all interested bodies concerned with restructuring African films to reflect their cultures.

1. Filmmakers are to search for phenomenal values and themes based on Akan cultural beliefs, expressions, moral values, historical and cultural event, to tell the Ghanaian stories in a spectacular way.
2. Filmmakers are to discard Western popular culture imitation such as romance and petting scenes (stalking; seduction and performance of sexy erotic dances) as well as reoccurrences of witchcraft, occultism and insults; and make use of the Akan authentic culture to achieve high artistic standards through training and capital injection to carve a niche for it on the global scene.
3. Filmmakers to seek for reliable information on Akan cultural elements from traditional elders and people who are well knowledgeable in the customs and traditions, histories and indigenous settings to do away with cultural distortions.
4. As part of Akan films contribution to the projection of African culture and restoring undervalued and distorted African cultures in early films in some media, these films would have to sufficiently capture and begin to promote ideas that reinforce quality of life, national pride and consciousness; motivate and stimulate creativity, be inspired by our traditions and values, such as respect for humanity, justice, constituted authority, the dignity of labour and national developmental aspirations and needs.
5. To be able to well orchestrate and authentically showcase the traditional customs and avoid cultural distortions in Akan films, there is the need for extensive research to obtain reliable information from traditional chiefs and queens, linguists, other people who are knowledgeable in the customs and traditions, histories and

indigenous settings where culture remain less adulterated. Whilst, indigenous filmmakers can also be trained on the Ghanaian culture to play these important cultural roles.

6. It is also important that, filmmakers to search for phenomenal values, themes and a broad range of materials based on the varied Ghanaian rich and colourful culture; interests and people's aspirations, those factors which define their beliefs, expressions, moral values, historical and cultural developments in general, to tell the Ghanaian stories in a spectacular way through the wide range of documents which provide evidence in these quests, including letters, trade journals, movie reviews, contracts, financial information, scripts and studio memos other than the frequent showcasing of witchcraft, occultism, magic, sorcery, 'juju', etc being accused of lowering the image of African through the low quality of their films.
7. Akan films alongside other African cinema, in the service of cultural nationalism, must be seen and used as a revolutionary weapon fashioned "to provide concepts of leadership, community collaboration, economic structures and socio-political mobilization capable of engaging radical change which will help Africans define their own culture, based on their heritage and history.
8. The study recommends further studies into
 - i) Ways of improving the cultural based films in Ghana and
 - ii) Akan cultural values for basing cultural films in Ghana.

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Films

Ama Ghana; 1 & 2, Paul Gee Productions,

Bearer 2hrs; Afridreamz Pictures

Time Changes; 1, 2, 3 and 4, Naadjei Productions

Okomfo Anokye; 1, 2, 3 &4, Paul Gee Productions,

Menko M'abusua, 1, 2, 3 &4, Pat Thomas Production

Praba 2hrs; Afridreamz Pictures

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

FILMS OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Section 1: Usage of Language

1. Direct translations from Twi to English or vice versa
2. Notes the use of English or any other foreign language intrusion
3. Unethical language scenes
4. Do the characters talk like Ghanaians in the movies?
5. Do you observe Ghanaian pronunciations Language identity of Ghanaian
6. Instances of salience, nodding of head, etc. and what for?
7. Are the uses of traditional songs observed? If any do they reflect the instances they are been used?

Section 2: The usage of proverbs

1. List any scene of the use of Ghanaian proverb
2. List any scene of wise sayings
3. Note whether the proverbs and wise sayings are expressed gently or in a veiled way?

Section 3: Foreign cultural elements

The study was interested in noticing cases and incidence of Western cultural elements/lifestyles regarding: music, marriage relationships, settings, smoking, sexual and romantic scenes, wearing of foreign costumes.

Section 4: Ghanaian Moral Values/ Conducts

Section A.

1. Dressing, setting, music, relationship, Parting, dinning, marriage, which deviates from Ghanaian ones should be noted and described as depicted in the films

Section B:

- i. Godliness, Respect for elders and authorities; responsibility, honesty
Hospitality for visitors; Hardworking; ii. Do you observe instances of cheating , dishonesty, Fraud iii. Service, generosity, truth, compassion, faithfulness, fruitfulness, love, dignity, and diligence.

APPENDIX B:
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do characters talk like Ghanaians in Akan films? Yes No
2. What language(s) is or are used in Akan films?
3. Do they make use of proverbs? Yes No A. Is yes, are they the right proverbs?
B. Are the proverbs used in their proper context?
4. Were the proverbs and wise sayings are expressed gently or in a veiled way?
.....
5. Do these Akan films make use of English Language? Yes No
6. Do you find any other foreign intrusions in Akan films? Yes
No
7. What unethical languages do you find in these films?
8. What unethical scenes do you find in these films?
9. Are the uses of traditional songs observed? Yes No
10. If any do they reflect the instances they are been used?
.....
11. Tick Western cultural elements or lifestyles regarding the following seen Akan films: music marriage relationships settings

smoking

sexual scenes romantic scenes foreign costumes

12. Tick Ghanaian Moral Values or Conducts regarding the following which deviates from Ghanaian ones should be noted and described as depicted in the films

Dressing setting music relationship

Partying marriage cheating Fraud dishonesty

dinning Service generosity truth compassion

faithfulness fruitfulness love dignity diligence

