

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**EFFECTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON COMMUNITY BASED EVENT:
THE CASE OF ABOAKYER FESTIVAL**



FRANCISCA ASIWOME FORSON

2023

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

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CASE OF ABOAKYER FESTIVAL**

FRANCISCA ASIWOME FORSON

202140300



A THESIS in the

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC EDUCATION,

SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,
University of Education, Winneba in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award
of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Arts and Culture

August, 2023

Student's Declaration

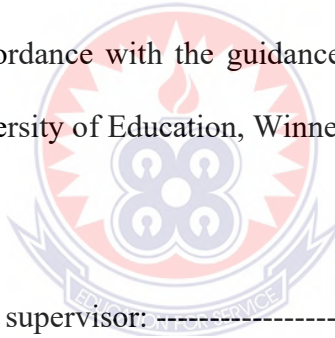
I, Francisca Asiwome Forson, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works of which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for any other degree elsewhere.

Signature: -----

Date: -----

Supervisors' Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidance for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.



Name of Principal supervisor: -----

Signature: -----

Date: -----

Name of Co-supervisor: -----

Signature: -----

Date: -----

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to all who assisted me to the success of this study. Especially, my immeasurable debt of gratitude to my supervisors, Dr Ebenezer Kwabena Acquah and Dr J. B. K. Aidoo the beneficial, constructive suggestions and excellent supervisory role in ensuring the timely completion of this study.

I render my heartfelt gratitude to Dr Joseph Essuman for his inestimable support in this tough journey. Without him, this study would have been a fiasco.

Finally, to my parents, Mr. and Mrs Forson and all members of the Forson family, I say a very big thank you for your constant loving care and understanding throughout my study.

May the Almighty God bless you and keep you safe.



DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my lovely Parents Mr. Mustapha Kojo Forson and Mrs Rejoice Dei Forson. This same work is dedicated to my grandmother who had wished this dream come through years ago. God richly bless you all.



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ABSTRACT

Festivals have aims and objectives that affect the community one way or the other. This study seeks to investigate whether the Covid- 19 pandemic had any effect on the celebrations of the Aboakyer festival of the people of Effutu and finally find out if there were behind the scene pacifications that were used to circumvent the cultural and traditional implications that hitherto would have affected the Effutu community. The purpose of the study was to find out how rituals and any other rites were performed to pacify the gods in the absence of the celebration of the Aboakyer Festival, find out if there are any cultural and traditional implications and also investigate how it has affected the people of Effutu. With the sample size, twelve (12) participants(people) which is made of six (6) Asafo companies; 3 from each of the Asafo groups, two (2) Royals and Two (2) Vendors and two (2) people who stayed in Winneba (indigenes). Purposive and snowball sampling were used as techniques in the study so that credible, appropriate and valid data would be generated. Structured and semi structured interviews were used to illicit information needed to make the study reach and complete. Based on the results from the interviews, the findings were that, the Covid19 pandemic had a serious toll on the celebration of Aboakyer festival in the year under review and though the celebration couldn't come on, certain important rites were performed under cover to pacify the gods without the involvement of the crowd. Vendors and other businessmen and women were not able to make sales, and hence were not able to make the expected income. The study concluded that, the absence of Aboakyer festival celebration caused the community to adopt new strategies in handling certain cultural and traditional practices which hitherto were not adhered to. The study recommends that traditional and cultural practices in the Effutu community should be looked at by stakeholders in art and culture in Effutu so that in case there is any form of pandemic it would not affect the community, the traditional and cultural practices of the communities. A final recommendation is that, there should be awareness creation and involvement in the preservation of the Effutu cultural traditions and the significance of the festival through educational programs, cultural events, and initiatives that encourage community members, particularly the younger generation, to appreciate and actively participate in preserving the Effutu heritage.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

It is evident that most communities celebrate festivals on a yearly basis. These festivals have aims and objectives that affect the community one way or the other. In the case of Aboakyer festival of Ghana example, the catching of the deer by any of the Asafo groups has a meaning that has an implication on the community. There are other behind the scene activities that are performed. In Ghana the Effutu celebrate traditional festival called Aboakyer (deer hunting). The deer hunting is an activity that is performed by two Asafo companies that is Twafo Number 1 and Dentsifo Number 2. This activity has a ritualistic implication. Also, there are other rituals that are performed to pacify the gods of the land which also has an implication and effect on the community.

Organisation of festivals facilitates communication among members of the community, and also enables quick decision making that help in developing a community (Ghananation.com, 2022). Again, it modifies cultural systems to support modern development and cultural heritage. To organize a festival requires event management and event management requires strong organizational, budgeting and creative skills. Those who work in event management fields must be comfortable with interacting with all levels of individuals inside and outside of their organization (Hard, 2014). The event management companies that were organizing marriage ceremonies, birthday celebrations and other events are now offering their exclusive service in festival management. From decorating the places; festival grounds,

entertainment places, family houses, clan and shrines for keeping the gods and to pay homage to other gods of the land and functions to be followed are all managed by the event management company. Mensah (2007) opined that comparatively, the economies with more of the present type of funeral and festival celebrations appear to be more vibrant and booming. Festival celebration is the single most dynamic event that propels most economies (UNCTAD, 2019). One has to look at the various aspects of the economy that are associated with festival celebration to understand its effect.

Festivals constitute a vital part of the local culture and tradition. Most people attach a lot of importance to rites and pacifications that is believe to make the gods comfortable and making good tidings to befall on the citizens of the community. Most traditional people plan for their home town festivals even though they know they may not be there to celebrate it. People devote time, energy and resources during festivals to mourning the dead of their family members and also celebrate them when they indeed left a good legacy for the family. But like most other aspects of Ghanaian culture, festival ceremonies have been based on traditions, culture and supernaturalism. In areas where strong links between rural and urban contexts are maintained through festival events, the latter often offer key insights into crucial traditional, cultural and social dynamics of these societies and still serve their longstanding function of drawing people closer together and reproducing society, as well as forming part of an intentional reaction against the social changes that threaten to weaken clan solidarities and moral orders (Karlstrom, 2004).

Besides, festivals are mostly events that attract lots of people from within the community which it is being organized and those from other nearby communities to make fun and other associated interests. In such situations, celebrants are packed to capacity with close social distancing- a situation which frowns on the principles of the deadly disease called the Coronavirus. Epstein (2020) quoted Edmundson (2019) as saying a pandemic is an epidemic that spreads to more than one continent and the best way to prevent and slow its spread is to be well informed about the disease and the virus spread. He is of the view that to protect oneself and others from infection, is by staying at least 1 metre apart from the other, such as wearing a properly fitted mask and washing your hands or using alcohol-based rub frequently.

The Coronavirus as have been explained, had come with its measures of social restrictions, which makes it difficult for any social activities to take place. It was in view of this that the deer hunt (Aboakyer) festival that is celebrated by the people of Effutu in the Central Region of Ghana was put on hold. This also suggested that all the associated activities, including the many rites and pacifications that are performed by the various clans and Asafo groups; especially, the almighty *Deer Hunt*, could not come to realization because of the covid-19 pandemic. There is a need therefore to find out if in the absence of the celebration of the festival, there were any rituals performed and its implications to the Effutu and its environs.

Statement of the Problem

Festivals are celebrated for recreational, homecoming, for social, traditional and cultural purposes, which includes: commemoration, or thanksgiving to the gods and goddesses which has cultural and traditional implications. It is a way to celebrate the

glorious heritage, traditions and the culture of the people. In the case of Aboakyer the core of the festival is the catching of the deer by any of the two Asafo companies: Dentsifo and Twafo Company. It is believed that the catching of the deer has a cultural implication, the group that catches and other activities thereof also has serious cultural and traditional implications on the people of Effutu.

It is a belief that festivals are celebrated to appease gods of the land to assist in the wellbeing of the people in the community. The Deer Hunting festival (Aboakyer) is one sort of these traditional festival that is celebrated annually by the people of Effutu by making sacrifices to pacify the Penkyi Otu, the Apa Sekum War god and other smaller gods.

Lots of literature have been written on the Aboakyer festival. For instance; Ephraim-Swanzy (2013) looked at the *Recent Discoveries in the Aboakyer Festival of the Effutus*. He focused on the introduction of youth deities during the celebration which has gone unnoticed. Although the Aboakyer festival is characterized by series of rituals that are relevant to the gods and for the wellbeing of the people, the festival has not been celebrated in the past two years.

However, little or no literature and attention has been drawn to the situation, when the festival is not celebrated and its impact on the community. Hence, this study sought to find out if there were performances of rituals as the festival was not celebrated. The researcher investigated whether the absence of the celebrations has had any cultural and traditional implication on the people of Effutu and finally find out if there were behind the scene pacifications that were used to circumvent the

cultural and traditional implications that hitherto would have affected the Effutu community.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to find out how rituals and any other rites were performed to pacify the gods in the absence of the celebration of the Aboakyer Festival, find out if there are any cultural and traditional implications and also investigate how it has affected the people of Effutu.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate how rituals and other practices involved in the celebration of Aboakyer Festival were carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. To ascertain the cultural implications of not celebrating the Aboakyer festival as far as the indigenes are concerned.
3. To analyze the significance of the celebration of Aboakyer Festival to the people of Effutu.

Research Questions

1. How were rituals and other rites in the Aboakyer festival carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic?
2. What are the cultural implications on the indigenes for not celebrating the festival?
3. What are the importance of the Aboakyer festival to the people of Effutus?

Significance of the Study

The importance of the study is enormous and can be experienced from the people of Effutu, policy makers and also in academia. The following are the significance of the study:

1. through this study, the cultural heritage of the people will be maintained, protected, preserved and transmitted to the next generations to come.
2. the study serves as a source of information that would guide policy makers in the formulation of policies to address any barriers or challenges that might have prevented the celebration of the festival. Also, the outcome of the study could help policy makers understand the cultural, economic and social implications of the festival's non-celebration, allowing them to make informed decisions on potential interventions or support to ensure the festival's continuity and its preservation.
3. the study will finally serve as a resource material to stakeholders in education and add to scholarly works in the field of arts, culture and the celebration of festivals in Ghana.

Delimitation

Geographically, the study was delimited to the Effutu community in the Central Region of Ghana. It focused on how the absence of the Aboakyer festival has affected the people of the Effutu community and the findings cover specifically the people of Effutu.

Definition of Terms

Aboakyer Festival: is a bushbuck hunting festival celebrate by the people of Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana.

Apa Sekum: This is the war god that the Effutus celebrate the Aboakyer festival to pacify

Covid-19 Pandemic: is a global pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus.

Dentsifo number 2: the name of the second Asafo company group

Event: An event is described as something that happens

Penkyi Otu: Before the festival the people settled the god at a town called penkye. After the settlement, the god became known as Penkyi Out. To signify the home for the god

Twafo number 1: This is the first Asafo company group of the people of Effutu

Arrangement of the Text

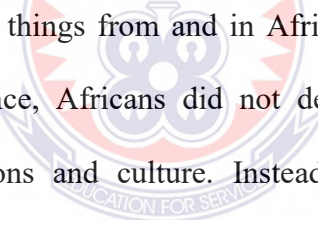
The study has been divided into five chapters. Chapter One is the introductory part of the research it deals with the objectives and the scope which the research covered. The chapter further outlines the importance of the study with definition of some key terms. Chapter Two of the research reviews essentially, related literature about the dissertation. It deals with what various authorities have said about literature that is related to the research and other relevant contributions and suggestions that has been made by the researcher. Chapter Three explains the methodology used in the entire dissertation. Chapter Four of the study looks at the processes of data presentation, analysis and discursion of the findings. Summary, conclusion and recommendations have been addressed in the fifth chapter, followed by references and appendices used in the dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Overview

Prior to the arrival of the European on the coasts of Africa, Africans had their own ways of living. This includes their style of worship, their traditions and ritual ceremonies, festivals and even art forms. The African culture was rich with drama; thus, comparing its elements or features with the modern elements described by the Europeans or the Greeks to be precise. But all these art and dramatization was known or recognized by the African because it was a part of their lives just as eating is a part of human life. For this reason, Africans saw their ceremonies and traditions as a daily, monthly or annual ritual, as modern day brushing of teeth is to humans.



Quite a number of things from and in Africa were neglected or seen as just normal every day, hence, Africans did not deem it very necessary to vividly document their traditions and culture. Instead, they passed them down from generations to generations orally; of which could be influenced over the year by either the narrator, external conditions or situations or even adoptions of other cultures. Africa to this effect began to lose the true essence of their culture and traditions and the originality of their arts – even to this day.

When the Europeans landed on the shores of Africa, they came with their own cultures and traditions, arts, education, system of governance and their religion (Prentice Hall, 2017). They came in the name of ‘literacy’ and ‘civilization’ and imposed their ways on Africans forcefully and manipulatively. They managed to convince Africa that most of their own culture and traditions were ‘barbaric’ and

Africans also ‘sheepishly’ accepted their assumptions and threw their identity into Europeans hands.

Picking up their cue quickly, the Europeans began to redefine African identity through their so – called ‘formal education’. They gave African a criterion to which Africans can define themselves, their arts, tradition and culture. It is to this effect that Africans to this day struggle to claim a firm hold of the origin of their cultural heritage and more importantly, their festivals and other associated celebrations and activities. To make things worse, certain pandemics and natural occurrences have also tried to sabotage certain practices, traditions and cultural activities of the African. The Covid-19 pandemic which recently hit the world is one of such which halted many of such cultures. Religions changed their way of worships and some even closed their churches entirely because of the way they congregate, all because of the fear of being infected with the Covid-19 disease. This actually made almost every activity that should bring peoples together for enjoyment, merry –making, worship and togetherness for development of the society come to a standstill.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework in any research study refers to the critical review of existing theories that concerns issues within the subject matter of the research (Adom, Hussein, & Adu-Agyem, 2018). Functionalist Theory of Culture (Parsons & Durkheim, 1997) state that society is a complex system whose part work together to promote solidarity and stability. This functionalist perspective acknowledges that there are many parts of culture that work together as a system to fulfill society’s needs. Aboakyer festival brings all and sundry together for the betterment of the society. But due to the covid-19 pandemic, this opportunity could not c, hence

sectors of the Winneba community could not come together to perform their activities as they used to do. Such unfortunate situations definitely affect communities where members play a huge part in this cultural celebration with much expectations to achieve something worthwhile for themselves in various ways and for the community at large.

Anthropology also refers to the science of humans and their culture. Anthropology looks at human society as something complex in terms of physical, emotional, social, and cultural complexity (Prasojo, 2013). An in-depth study of what happened behind the scenes as the Aboakyer festival could not come on will therefore bring out all details as to what went on to circumvent the social-cultural and religious practices of the people that hitherto would have brought solidarity and stability of the people and also how activities such as sacrifices for the gods were handled to avoid any hardship on the people of Effutu as it is purported to have happened. It is in view of this that the researcher would want to use this theory as a pivot to hinge the study.

Festival as an Event Motivation

Festivals are an important sector of folk and popular culture. Because of the current importance given to culture and tradition considerable effort has been invested in the maintenance and fostering of such festival (Martinez, 2005). Nevertheless, as an expression of the past, the world-view which these festivals imply can occasionally collide against current social values, which are directly correlated to the issue of people living together in harmony. In this case, people often speak from a traditionalism which is clearly based on a critical and reified view of culture. This

particular way of understanding culture may permeate not only traditional folk festivals but also other ones which, according to well-intentioned multiculturalist perspectives, are organized more and more in Western Europe (Martinez, 2005). Although the aim of these festivals is to support social integration, throughout their reified view of culture they may, in fact, contribute toward legitimizing social constructs which tend to strengthen hierarchical differences between autochthonous and immigrants.

In the past couple of decades, festival and event has been one of the fastest growing sections of the world leisure industry (Getz, 1991; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001) and has received increasing attention by academic researchers. In addition to commonly targeted topics such as economic impact, marketing strategies of mega-events, and festival management (Getz, 1999; Gnoth & Anwar, 2000; Raltson & Hamilton, 1992; Ritchie, 1984), there is a growing stream of research focusing on the motivations of attendees. It has been agreed that understanding motivations, or the “internal factor that arouses, directs, and integrates a person’s behavior” (Iso-Ahola, 1980, cited in Crompton & McKay, 1997, p. 425), leads to better planning and marketing of festivals and events, and better segmentation of participants.

The reasons to conduct festival and event motivation studies were aptly articulated by Crompton and McKay (1997). They believed that studying festival and event motivation is a key to designing offerings for event attendees, a way to monitor satisfaction, and a tool for understanding attendees’ decision-making processes. The present study attempts to briefly review issues related to festival and event. The author, for the purpose of this study, defined “event and festival” as

activities, planning, and management practices associated with public, themed occasions that is characterized with rituals and performances of rites; (such as the Aboakyer festival of the Effutu) that motivates and draws together people from the diaspora and strengthen hierarchical differences between autochthonous (indigenes) and immigrants.

However, according to Booth (2010) an event theme is the big idea behind the entire shindig. It often involves the overall tone, structure, and goals of the event. An event concept sounds similar but is distinctly unique. By definition, an event concept is the event details and elements that make up the practical aspects of the event itself (Booth 2010).

The Concept of Event

Events exit forever. The word '*event*' is derived from the Latin word '*eventus*' and was originally used to describe big happenings out of the ordinary ("Event," 2009). Currently, the concept of events includes a large variety of social gatherings, meetings, sports, shows, and performances. It is now a norm to use the word '*event*' for everything that is happening (Damm, 2010).

An event is described in most cases as something that 'happens', and therefore, in that sense, the term event management to describe the organisation of everything that happens. Getz defines an event as 'an occurrence at a given place; a special set of circumstances; a noteworthy occurrence' (Getz, 2007), and this definition embraces a wide range of possibilities with one important thing in common: they can only occur once. Brown (2005), also defines event design as 'the creation,

conceptual development and design of an event to maximize the positive and meaningful impact for the event's audience and or participants.

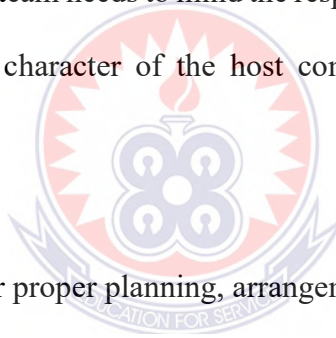
As such, one key feature of event is that they are not continuous, for they each have a beginning and an end, and every event is different from the previous one. "No matter how hard one tries, it is literally impossible to replicate an event" (Getz, 2007); thus, when watching the World Cup, people do not see the same picture repeating itself every four years, for the event changes and evolves over time. Consequently, to wholly understand how things go on within any given event, it is important to get involved in the planning and execution of the event.

Events do not just happen; they are carefully crafted to weave narratives (content) into places (context) through processes of experience design. Effective design of an event can produce more successful business models that can help to sustain cultural and sporting activities even in difficult economic times. Effective design of an event can also become a key element in adapting to changing external conditions and can even create new opportunities where there was a threat (or nothing else) before. Kim (1973) argued that whereas concrete particular events seem to be necessary for an analysis of causation in terms of the temporal priority of causes with regard to effects, abstract events (event types) seem necessary when it comes to analyzing relationship in terms of constant conjunction of cause and effect.

According to Watt (1998) an event can only happen as a result of careful, structured, and logical planning, which according to him, decreases uncertainty,

centres attention to goals, and makes operation effective. On this view, Ducasse, (1926), opines that, the causal relation that may obtain between two particular events say, A and B is conceptually and ontologically prior to any causal law or regularity: although A and B may instantiate a regularity, it is not in virtue of this instantiation that their relationship qualifies as causal.

Human beings in all cultures pay attention to different milestones of life, and all find it important to celebrate such occasions (Douglas & Derrett, 2001). Consequently, event is increasingly being recognised as a field of study on its own in a number of educational institutions (Getz 1997; Douglas et al., 2001). When realising the event, the team needs to mind the responsibilities towards stake holders, as well as reveal the character of the host community as an attractive product (Douglas et al., 2001).

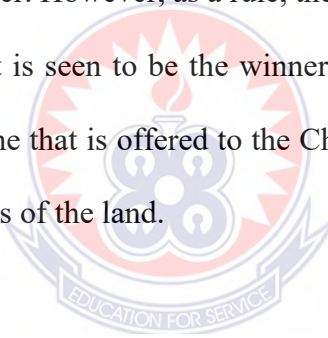


Time is needed for proper planning, arrangements, and realisation of the event, as well as for close down, and ultimately the evaluation (Shone & Parry, 2004). There are a number of progressive stages of organisation that all events regardless of complexity go after, and the following text describes the most fundamental ones. The first section discusses the birth of an event and the matters linked thereto. Next, the planning is discussed, followed by the financial matters, the process of finding venue, managing logistics and how this is related to creation of ambience. Thereafter follow the matters of marketing. The second last section considers how to prepare the operations for the day of the event and the last section describes the close down and evaluation, as well as potential legacies (Watt, 1998).

Starting off, the first thing to consider when starting the creation of a special event is the people who will be involved. Secondly, they need to invent ideas for the event. Thirdly, a feasibility screen of the ideas needs to be conducted (Shone & Parry, 2004).

The event may be organised by an already existing group, such as a committee of a club, organisation or agency for instance, who already have structures and resources for start-up in addition to multiple and complementing talents for management and production (Getz, 1997). Once the team has been formed, it needs to start discussing and brainstorming around the event (Shone & Parry, 2004). Getz (1997), explains that regardless of who has the idea, others have to be convinced of it, for the idea to be realized. The discussion should result in some ideas for the event; creative ideas that according to the writers need to feel appealing and challenging for everybody in the team (McDonnell et al., 1999). A draft plan should be created firstly, listing issues identified during the brainstorming process. To systemize the draft plan, the outcome of the feasibility study should be incorporated, along with some important topics, namely the purpose of the event, people involved, what actually will be happening, as well as how, where, and when the event will happen (Shone & Parry, 2004). Getz, (1997), however, opined that if events want to grow and develop, strategic and permanent planning will have to become the norm, otherwise the team will struggle each year with the planning process. This has been in the case of Aboakyer Festival, where the event is planned way ahead of time. But because of the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated causes, most of the planned activities went dead. This made it impossible for the festival to be celebrated.

McDonnell et al. (1999) break down the planning of every event into two different processes, namely the strategic planning and the operational. The strategic planning is, similar to Getz's definition, the formulation of vision, mission, and objectives and the methods of achieving them, whereas the operational planning process describes the detailed steps of the strategic plan. Operational plans can be both single-use and standing plans. Single-use plans are such that to achieve a certain objective, whereas standing plans can be reused for recurring events and are made up of methods and standard procedures, policies and rules as in the case of Aboakyer Festival of the Effutus in the Central Region of Ghana. For instance, the main objective of the Aboakyer Festival is for the two Asafo (Dentsifo and Twafo) to compete to catch the deer. However, as a rule, the first Asafo Company that catches the deer is the one that is seen to be the winner and that particular deer from the winning group is the one that is offered to the Chief to step on and further offers it as a sacrifice to the gods of the land.



Events are becoming increasingly important as social, cultural and economic phenomena, to the extent that many of us live in 'eventful cities' (Richard & Palmer, 2010). Though there is an economic potential in the celebration of the Aboakyer festival, social and cultural phenomena spear-head. This is because, the festival is celebrated to appease gods (cultural) of the land and to assist in the wellbeing (social) of the people in the community.

Events are also becoming more complex as their range of functions grow; as meeting places, creative spaces, economic catalysts, social drivers, community builders, image makers, business forums and network nodes. Events are therefore

being designed to full particular roles in society and business, and this process requires creative imagination and a design methodology which can be framed in different perspectives. As Brown (2005) points out, the event process really needs to start with design, because ‘events that are designed badly start out wrong and cannot be made better by good management processes and a great risk management plan’.

Event entails people coming together to create, operate, and participate in an experience (Silvers, 2004). It is an activity that brings together the target group in time and room, a meeting where a message is communicated and happening is created (Eckerstein, 2002). The term event is used for describing different activities designed for different purposes. These activities can be art, sports, tourism and social activities, and can also be activities organized by giant organizers more professional and more formal (Argan, 2007). According to Getz and Goldblatt, events are ‘a unique moment in time’ and ‘aside from everyday occurrences’ (Berridge, 2007). Public or private, commercial or charitable, celebratory or commemorative, events create avenues for people to share experiences and produce a measurable outcome (Silvers, 2004). Civic events, conventions, expositions, fairs and festivals, hallmark events, hospitality, incentive travel, meetings and conferences, retail events, reunions, social life-cycle events, sport events, and tourism are the examples of subfields of events (Goldblatt, 2005).

Every event has an organization behind it; managing activities, organizing funding, administering staff and voluntary personnel, undertaking marketing and public relations, organizing security, printing leaflets and tickets, hiring performers,

arranging decorations, sorting out parking and many other activities (Tassiopoulos, 2005). The way in which an organization deals with events is known as event management. It may include the organization's objectives for managing events, assigned roles and responsibilities, ownership of tools and processes, critical success factors, standards, and event handling procedures. The linkages between the various departments within the organization required handling events and the flow of this information between them is the focus of event management (Bhe et al., 2004).

The whole idea of event management is considered as one of the most intense or significant form of advertising or marketing. The entire procedure of event management necessarily involves the organization process. This includes the organization of a personal or a professional event. This may normally involve the seminars, fashion shows, wedding, product launches, exhibitions etc. In short, the event management involves the whole steps of conducting an event right from the planning, financing, conceptualizing etc. In fact, event management is an important area which has been evolving over the years along with the increasing opportunities (Abraham, 2012).

Financial management is another important aspect that the event management companies will handle for the success of the event. This helps to reduce the chance of the finance exceeding the budget limits. Organizing a big event is not an easy task. If the organiser does not have enough experience, it will turn out to be a failure. Much planning has to be done like room hiring, catering special diets, financial

planning etc. All these things are taken care of by Event Management Companies (Abraham, 2012).

In the least, every performer, whether a competitor or an artiste, would want to deliver his or her best performance. The lecturer would want the day to be perfect in every way. The advertising manager and the design team would want their new product to be seen in the best possible light and so has been with organisers of the Aboakyer Festival. In depth planning goes to the preparation of the festival and other activities are also organized to make the festival an eventful one. Unfortunately, all these were curtailed because of the Covid-19 Pandemic which hit the world and for that matter, the country and the Effutu Community in the years under review.

Event Types

Getz (2005) outlines event types as follows;

Mega-event: Those that yield high levels of tourism, media coverage, prestige, or economic impact for the host community or destination

Special event: These are considered outside the normal activities of the sponsoring or organizing body.

Hallmark event: These possess such significance in terms of tradition, attractiveness, quality or publicity, that it provides the host venue, community, or destination with a competitive advantage.

Festival: As defined earlier, it refers to public celebration that conveys, through a kaleidoscope of activities, certain meanings to participants and spectators. This type

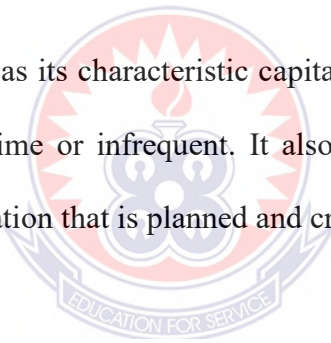
is where the study falls. Aboakyer is a festival where people from across the country gather and take part in all the activities outlined for the week-long programme.

Local community event: This is generated by and for locals and can be of interest to visitors, but tourists are not the main intended audience.

Characteristics of Event types

The first characteristics of an Event is that, it is so large to affects economies and also gains global media coverage. It is highly prestigious, usually developed with a bidding process, has major positive and negative impacts and has about 1 million+ visits.

Event, also has as its characteristic capital costs in excess of \$500 million, which is usually one-time or infrequent. It also has specific ritual, presentation, performance, or celebration that is planned and created to mark a special occasion.



The Concept of Festival

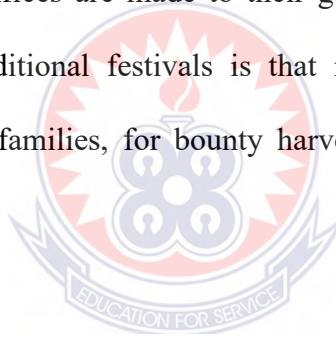
According to Kemevor and Duku (2018), the organization of social life in traditional societies gave a special place to festivals. They are of the view that, the word festival is derived from a Latin word “festivus” meaning a feast, joyous, or mirthful. This also suggests that festivals have been celebrated since the ancient times if its meaning dates back to the early ancient days. Festivals provides a realistic framework to explore how arts-based and community-based cultural festivals around the world thrive. Festivals highlights the big picture, as well at the intricate details that comprise the delivery of a festival to plan and execute a successful festival. Festivals will benefit experienced festival planners as well as those who aspire to

enter or develop their skills in the dynamic field of festival making (Derrett, 2015). Getz (2005) defined festival as public celebrations. In Ghana, the word festival means a joyous ceremony, characterised by display of cultural activities and other pageantry for the celebration of important cultural events. To most Ghanaians, a festival is that chain of activities, celebrations, ceremonies, and rituals which mark the continuity of culture in an environment (Duah, 2017). These festivals occur at appointed times in the lunar calendar and mark the rhythm of life (Ghananation, 2009). The young and old eagerly await such festivals, when demonstration of socio-cultural events and artistic skills are expressed. Earliest festivals seem to have been connected with offerings to the dead. Traditionally, festivals were enacted as a way of remembering ancestors to celebrate victories over dangerous animals, to worship the gods and the deities, and to venerate their spirit of the dead. Currently in Ghana, festivals are celebrated to strengthen the union of members of a community, fortify self-expression for the collective renewal of tides among families and also express the indigenous culture of the peoples. Festivals are again organized to ascertain that community experience, unity and strength, that encompasses the people's life style, strengthen the belief of the gods and their full participation in cultural activities.

In Ghana, different types of festivals are celebrated in the society to mark such historical seasons as the 'Akwambo' (path-clearing) by the Gomoa, Ajumako and the Ekumfi's; 'Ohum' (name of a spirit) celebrated by the kyem; 'Odwira' (purification) by the Akwapem; 'Bakatue' (opening of lagoon) by the Edena; 'Homowo' (hooting at hunger) by the Ga; 'Kotoklo' and 'Nmayen' (eating millet) by the Krobo. There are also 'Agbeliza' (honouring cassava) by the Avenor; 'Hogbetsotso (migration) by the Anlo; 'Damba' (birth and naming of the Prophet

Mohammed) by the Dagomba and Mamprusi and ‘Aboakyer’ (deer hunting) by the Effutu.

Every festival presents a unique attribute that distinguishes it from the other, such as creating room for the renewal of friendship, and fraternizing with relations. At these festivals, as observed by Mbiti (1975), festivals such as the harvesting of yams, for example, prayers and incantations are said on behalf of the celebrating groups, homage paid to the departed and the spirits of the dead invited to participate in the merry making. Turner (1971) also argues that prayers pre-dominate most festivals in Africa. This is so with the Aboakyer festival where special libations, pacifications and sacrifices are made to their god ‘*penkyi Otu*’. But perhaps the important role of traditional festivals is that it provides opportunities for the collective reunion of families, for bounty harvest and as a form of community experience.



This has been buttressed by Kemevor and Duku (2018) that, the importance of a festival in several ways is that, it teaches the people to know about their history; acts as means of communicating with the ancestral spirits, reuniting family members; assessing the efficiency of their leaders; hip a platform for the display of the wealth of the culture; and it promote good citizenry.

It should be noted that, African festivals are mostly used as platform for the display of pure culture. They are, therefore, perhaps a country’s richest and most significant means for the expression of the self and most importantly the cultural heritage. This has been expressed by Kemevor and Duku (2018) when they said,

festivals are both a body of knowledge and a series of activities designed to meet specific goals. It is during festivals that drama is used to communicate important causes and solutions that could be used to get rid of certain kind of behaviors that is unpleasant to the community such as teenage pregnancy, open defecation and other human behaviors that seemed unpleasant to the community.

The issue of the origin of African drama has since then been argued among scholars and still is a debate. Some academia still claims the origin of drama traces to African history and culture. Others like Abdulwaheed (2013) and Olatunji (2019) argues that African drama and theatre began to gain prominence after the arrival of the Europeans in Africa. According to Abdulwaheed, though Africa had its own form of dramatization, the experiences that came from the arrival of the Europeans always featured in their drama and theatre. He also states that African drama and theatre base on traditional, history, and contemporary dramatic forms in which Africa range from sacred or ritual performances to dramatized storytelling, literary drama, or modern fusion of scripted theatre with traditional performance techniques. Olatunji also asserts that African drama bases on imparting values, seeking the truth and fighting for their rights. Mention could be made on Akwambo festivals within the central region of Ghana, Nkronu festival celebrated by the people of Shama and its environs where evil deeds of citizens are acted by the community members to conscience members who fell victim to such acts over the year-long to refrain from such unscrupulous behavior in the years to come. This serves as a check on traditional and cultural values of the members in the community.

Festival as an Event

An event is a happening at a given place and time, usually of some importance, celebrating or commemorating a special occasion. Depending on the language and the cultural traditions of the country, a ‘festival’ can be considered a type or a subset of an event. In other words, within a broader interpretation, a cultural event that recurs every year could be called a festival (Findafestival, 2022). This obviously suggest that a festival could be seen as an event. At first glimpse, it may seem as though the two terms are identical or synonymous. However, at a second and a third study with the words, burble them around in your mind, you start to get the sense that the two should be different.

Apparently, in thinking of festivals, different types come to mind. Some could be the Fancy-dressing carnival of the Sekondi-Takoradi, ‘Kundum’ of the Nzema and ‘Odwira’ of the Akuapems and lots of other food festivals such as ‘Homowo’ of the Ga.

On the other hand, when you think of ‘events’, the application gets wider. Maybe an event could be a grand programme photographer, and the press are keen to cover, like a graduation ceremony. This has been buttressed by Findafestival (2022) when it says that maybe an ‘event’ is a networking session between professionals. Maybe an ‘event’ is your little sister getting ready for her very first school dance. No matter how these may mean, however, there are some key differences (and similarities) between the two that might end up making things a little more slippery or clearing them right up (Findafestival, 2022).

Considering the scope, a festival could be a kind of celebration done to mark or commemorate a special or significant occasion. They could also be planned to last a series of days with mini-programs, performances and themed activities. Festivals also usually involve a large group of people that come together, as part of the immediate community but, when large enough, or historical enough, can attract people from around the world.

Festivals were historically steeped in the commemoration and celebration of certain cultural and social customs and conventions (Gervais et al., 2017). They included traditions and rituals. For example, Akwambo festival of the 'Fantes' where certain unaccepted behaviours are put in mischievous songs that are sang during the celebration to unravel bad practices in the years to come. In a broader sense, history is shared, a joyous atmosphere is exhibited and, most definitely, a demonstrated celebration amongst festival-goers. As such, festivals have evolved to be religious, seasonal, historical, or cultural.

According to Findafestival (2022), an 'event' is something remarkable or noteworthy that occurs at some point. It could just be a one-time occurrence, or it could characterise a series of happenings that are all linked. It continues to say that, an event marks a period in time and space as something memorable. In that way, it does have the sense of the 'collective' that a festival does. While an event can include celebrations, it does not have to always be festive in nature. It concludes by stating that an event can be something like Comic-Con, a convention that brings together those who love comics and its cultural offshoots and

contemporaries. It is suggestive to say that a ‘festival’ can be considered a type or a subset of an event.

To reconsider whether festival is an event has been explained by Findafestival, (2022) under four broad headings;

a) Festivals call for a shared heritage and community

When it comes to cultural festivals, there’s another dimension that is at play. There is the sense that these festivals relate to a community’s sense of shared identity. This could be through language, food, practices or a combination of all three. This means that the programming and content of these cultural ‘events’, if we agree that festivals are a kind of event, must serve the purposes of reflecting these practices back to the community and preserving them. Recently, this sense of a ‘community’ has taken on a broader meaning itself. For example, where before, communities would be linked to certain ethnicities, geographical location, a shared language or practice and belief, now communities can include activities, interests, hobbies, passions and preferences.

A group of individuals who share a love for Highlife music and ‘Ndwomkro’ could also be considered a community. For them, these passions and interests make up a part of their preferences and, so, form a larger part of their identity.

b) Economic Impact

When you search for a festival, the difference between festivals and events could be its economic impact. For example, which type brings in economic gain or makes a long-ranging economic impact? What do people expect when it comes to an event,

versus a festival? When you find a festival that you want to attend, it could be structured in one of two ways: either, the entry is free and there are smaller stalls and mini-activities that charge a fee, or the festival charges an entrance fee.

Meanwhile, events can also have a one-time fee associated with them, charged at entry, or through the purchase of a ticket. If we agree that festivals are a type of event, then it can be seen that a multi-day festival has multiple events within it. When you search for a festival, you want to be able to find details of those events so you can plan your experience.

c) Theme and Purpose

According to Derrett (2015) community-based festivals are ‘events’ that allow those within a community to link these occurrences to a physical, natural space. He calls these ‘community cultural events’ and says that festivals offer the chance for individuals to be more invested in their physical locations and tangible traditions and cultures.

Festivals promote a ‘stewardship of the land’. And the community cultural events that are planned around this goal sees events as a subset of festivals. That is to say when the purpose is shared heritage, history or even preservation of these, and a celebration of these, even in cases that involve tourism, festivals involve community cultural events. And this is true even if these ‘events’ occur every year, as festivals do.

But in the case where events are organised for goals other than community building or helping residents identify, build or locate a sense of identity through the happenings, these ‘events’ are more ephemeral and professional in nature. This definition of ‘events’ necessarily divests festivals and any celebration from it. So, these events are put on to bring in an expected short-term or immediate cash flow from participants. However, the economic impact of a festival might be much more long-lasting, since it occurs every year, and socially, as it pulls in people from across the world.

d) Organising Structure

The organisation of festivals and events largely depends upon the body that administers and organises them. For example, for-profit bodies like businesses, companies or commercial and regulatory bodies might put on events that are multi-day and also involve entertainment (both markers of a festival) and yet charge an entrance and access fee. When one searches for a festival, one may find a festival that charges attendees at the gate as well as charging for access to smaller activities, or that is food stalls based. This kind of programming and content structure can have a long-term, financial impact on a community. Events of a more professional nature or even those events that are smaller in venue or have a limited number of ‘seats’ available for sale might ask for RSVPs. In this way, an event could be said to have a more immediate and shorter-term impact. Yet, festivals could also be a strategic blend of the two. When people search for a festival these days, they could run into programming and an organising structure that is set up partly to encourage locals to find a festival where they can partake new traditions within a modern city, and partly to promote festival tourism.

Features of an Event

In recent past, events have been gaining much attention in research and practice. As a result, a separate, special branch of service geared to events has developed in which event agencies; trade fair constructors, talent agencies and sound and light engineers are involved in the organization and creation of events. Numerous studies attest a high potential to events as communication instruments and forecast not only quantitative, but also qualitative growth for the event market (Müller, 2003; Zang er & Drengner, 2004).

Due to the high significance of events in practice, it does not come as a surprise that the scientific world is now beginning to address the phenomenon of the “event”. Noteworthy results have particularly been achieved in marketing and tourism-management (Nufer, 2002; Hede, Jago, & Deery, 2002; Drengner, 2003). One relevant insight gained by the research done since the end of the 1980s is that, the management of events must be seen as an interdisciplinary task field requiring effective and efficient cooperation between diverse partners. As in the case of the Aboakyer festival, there are lots of activities that go on during the whole festivities but they all come to play to make the festival interesting, a successful and effective one. The strategic preparation, as well as the planning and coordination of the execution of an event require professional handling in order to guarantee the optimal interplay between all participants. Support from modern information and communication systems for this process, summarized here under the term “event management”, appears to be a good idea and offers many starting points (Luppold, 2004).

To have a successful event, planning should be the key factor, and this means starting well in advance. To approach planning in the best way, is to comprehensively develop a management plan, which entails a timetable of what needs to be done and when. Crucial elements of the planning for the event, such as advertising, fundraising and booking performers need to happen well in advance of the date of your event so a timeline schedule is essential (Gascoyne Development Commission, 2011).

Getz (2007) stressed that planned events are spatial–temporal phenomenon, and each is unique because of interactions among the setting, people, and management systems including design elements and the program. Much of the appeal of events is that they are never the same, and you have to ‘be there’ to enjoy the unique experience fully; if you miss it, it is a lost opportunity. In addition, ‘virtual events’, communicated through various media, also offer something of interest and value to consumers and the tourism industry; they are different kinds of event experiences. Planned events are all created for a purpose, and what was once the realm of individual and community initiatives has largely become the realm of professionals and entrepreneurs. The reasons are obvious: events are too important, satisfying numerous strategic goals and often too risky to be left to amateurs. Event management is the applied field of study and area of professional practice devoted to the design, production and management of planned events, encompassing festivals and other celebrations, entertainment, recreation, political and state, scientific, sport and arts events, those in the domain of business and corporate affairs (including meetings, conventions, fairs, and exhibitions), and those in the private

domain (including rites of passage such as weddings, funerals and parties, and social events for affinity groups) (Getz, 2007).

Organization Structure of Event

According to Sport and Recreation Tasmania (2009), the following provides an overview of some of the key issues to consider when planning and running an event: Effective planning and preparation are crucial to the success of an event. There are numerous elements involved in planning and preparation.

Purpose of the event

In planning an event it is important to understand why the event is being held, who it is for and who it will benefit. Having a clear focus and defined objectives will help direct the planning process.

Timing and location of the event

When and where an event takes place can have a significant impact on its overall success. When considering the best time of the day, month or year to hold an event, it is important to consider other events that may compliment or compete with the event you are organizing.

The organizing committee and event manager

There is usually more than one person involved in organizing a sport or recreation event. In many cases it is useful to establish an organizing committee and clearly assign roles and responsibilities to committee members.

Event checklist

In order to allocate responsibilities to individuals on the organizing committee, the committee must have a clear idea of all the different aspects of the event, including venue, equipment, staffing, communication, catering, garbage, toilets, money handling, medical, hospitality, transport, prizes, trophies and ceremonies.

Finances and budget

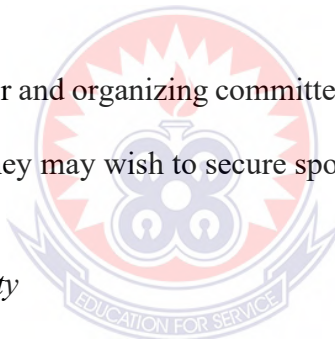
When preparing for an event it is important that all sources of income and all costs are accounted for, including hidden costs and in-kind support. Developing an event checklist before the budget will ensure that all costs are considered.

Sponsorship

Once the event manager and organizing committee have a clear understanding of the finances and budget, they may wish to secure sponsorship for the event.

Promotion and publicity

Regardless of the size of the event it is important to consider the level of publicity and promotion required. While some events may require minimal publicity or promotion (depending on the aim, target audience and existing profile), in most cases event organizers will aim to maximize the profile of the event through promotion (controlled and paid for by organizers) and publicity (media coverage).



Approvals and legal requirements

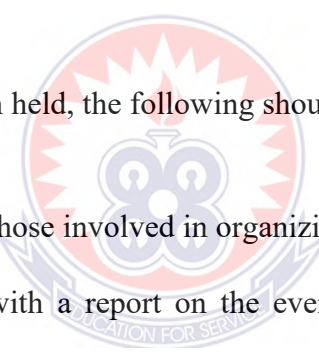
When organizing an event in a public facility, or on land owned by someone other than the organizing group, it is important to get the approval and any permits or licenses required by the property owners or land managers.

Event delivery

If sufficient time and effort has been put into planning and preparation, the event should run smoothly. The event manager should have a checklist of tasks with time frames to keep the event on track.

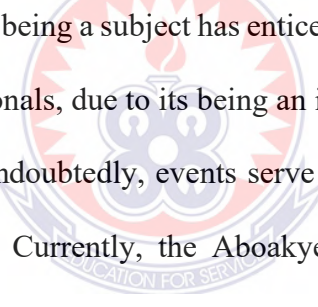
Post event

After the event has been held, the following should occur:

- 
- formally thank all those involved in organizing and running the event
 - provide sponsors with a report on the event and thank them for their involvement
 - contact the media with any final results and media releases
 - pay any outstanding accounts
 - Review the event and keep an accurate record of the organizing committee's methods and activities in order to learn from any mistakes and to make the process of organizing future events easier.

The objective of any events is to minimize the risks and to maximize the enjoyment of events audience. In most cases and in the case of Aboakyer festival, careful attention must be given to venue, transportation, and security and a host of

other elements like financial consideration, timings, Events team, and other stake holders. Managing an event therefore is the application of the management practice of project management to the creation and development of festivals and events. Event Management involves studying the intricacies of the brand, identifying the target audience, devising the event concept, planning the logistics and coordinating the technical aspects before actually executing the modalities of the proposed event (Abraham, 2012). However, though Aboakyer festival is seen as an event, certain details elements as purported by Abraham do not come to play due to the nature of its organisation. Traditionally, certain practices are maintained no matter the year under review.



Event management being a subject has enticed considerable attention of several public relation professionals, due to its being an influential tool for communicating to the target publics. Undoubtedly, events serve as a direct and quick exposure to the targeted audiences. Currently, the Aboakyer festival has become important activity as the event reach out to several people and peculiarly satisfy the desire of most of the people to participate in the event, who have quite a few objectives to obtain like the special benefits offered to the visitors, to enjoy some entertainment, the opportunity to witness the catching of the deer, the enthusiastic members of the two main clans, the privilege to watch the organized fancy dress dancing competition, to socialize, and also to become more knowledgeable on subjects, such as the spring up organizations, new products from existing companies and many others. To event organizers, it is also a specially created forum to share information, showcase achievements and products, and even to express appreciation to the public for their supports (Abraham, 2012). Events managing have come to stay as a core

part of the responsibility for obvious benefits to the business organizations. Needless to say, that event is not just a show business, but an objective based activity in which the companies put in sizable sums of money for obvious benefits and returns (Abraham, 2012).

Festivals and Rituals and their Relevance

The very idea of the existence of *festivals* is something vital for the prolonged integrity of different cultures and traditions worldwide. In our strenuous routines, as the years pass by in this busy foregoing world, we as humans also need to progress for survival and hence, we diversify ourselves-which is a two-edged approach with its own positives and negatives. We live separated from our families in different corners of this beautiful yet perplexing sphere. As a result, we are largely focused only towards work, and having said this we are totally ignoring another important factor which is equally important for the perfect balance of life that is family (Solaimalai, 2018). He continues to say that, having a good social life is quite decisive in determining one's quality of life as it is rightly said- "*All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy*". Here is where festivals jump into action in order to maintain that equilibrium amongst the various components of life.

Solaimalai, (2018) is of the view that a festival can be of any origin such as of religious epicentre or in order to mark some important landmarks in a mythology, to celebrate the folklore of a certain region, or in order to celebrate the infinite joy brought in the lives of our heroes, during the harvest season. One of such festivals is celebrated by the people of Effutu community in the central region of Ghana. The Aboakyer festival also known as the festival of deer hunting which according to the

Effutu tradition is celebrated to mark the victory of the clan that catches the deer and which translates to a good harvest in the subsequent year.

During Aboakyer, hundreds of people gather from all around the world to celebrate and this provides a perfect opportunity especially for nuclear families to get to be a part of a large-scale social gathering.

On a collective basis, for being citizens of a multicultural world, it is necessary to understand different cultures worldwide, thus festivals across the world provide us with the platform for being better global citizens (Solaimalai, 2018). There are millions of festivals, some with large scale audience and some not having that much popularity, but what matters most is the unity and sense of belonging that these festivals bring in our lives. Having taken into account the collective importance of festivals, they also are of vital importance on a personal level as it is quite conspicuous that we have little or no opportunities to spend with our relatives in our routine life, this is where we are blessed to have festival (Solaimalai, 2018). Apart from this, Solaimalai, (2018) concludes that, festivals and other occasions can also be more of a stressbuster as during festivals we mingle and share our thoughts with a widespread audience and hence we spill out the stress and anxiety enclosed within us for quite a long time.

Nothing compares to that of the first-person experience we gain during festivals. Intermingling with our relatives, other distance relatives and being in an atmosphere full of positive vibes is truly a blissful experience. Festive seasons are something that most of us await enroute to making unforgettable memories to be cherished for the rest of our lives.

To sum up, Solaimalai, (2018) said that, the existence of festivals is more like the shining stars in the night sky as they beautify our lives. A life without these occasions would be hard to imagine and definitely wouldn't be as animated as it with its presence. He finalises his assertions by saying that, it is our duty as patrons of the world to understand the importance of festivals in our everyday life and apart from this we should consider the festivals' positive vibes as an epitome to how one should live his/her life and learn to celebrate every day and sketch our own masterpiece out of the blank canvas we are gifted everyday with and in the end when we reminisce, all we see is a colourful album of our own life courtesy the festivals. As a matter of fact, it is none other than you who sculpts your own life.

A ritual on the other hand is a sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects performed according to a set sequence. Ritual is natural to human beings and plays an essential role in building a personal and cultural identity. According to Davis (2020) rituals help us connect with one another, form our identities, and provide a sense of security and order to life. Rituals can be used to mark special occasions, such as weddings, first birthdays, graduations, and other milestones, which can help us savor and remember those moments. Additionally, rituals can provide a sense of belonging and shared purpose, which can be especially important in times of difficulty and change. Research has also shown that rituals can have positive physical and psychological effects, such as reducing stress and anxiety, increasing creativity, and boosting one's immune system (Davis, 2020).

Rituals are an important part of many cultures and societies. They help individuals connect to one another, reduce their anxiety, and help form our identities. Rituals also provide a sense of order and structure to our lives, help us mark special

occasions, and provide a sense of purpose. They are a powerful tool for promoting a sense of belonging and creating meaningful moments in our lives. This has been buttressed by Davis (2020) when he says that rituals help us connect with one another, form our identities, and provide a sense of security and order to life. Rituals can be used to mark special occasions, such as weddings, first birthdays, graduations, and other milestones, which can help us savour and remember those moments. It could therefore be said that, rituals can provide a sense of belonging and shared purpose, which can be especially important in times of difficulty and change.

With regard to Aboakyer Festival, lots of people come together from all walks of life to celebrate the occasion. Old faces are met while new faces are made. All provide a sense of belonging; which reduces anxiety and provide security (Davis, 2020) for members of the community and visitors as Davis has explained. Research has also shown that rituals can have positive physical and psychological effects, such as reducing stress and anxiety, increasing creativity, and boosting one's immune system.

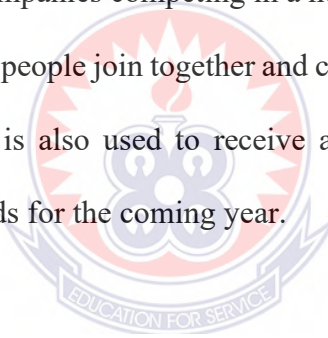
Traditionally, rituals are said to be an important part of traditional festivals in Ghana, as they serve to venerate the ancestors and remember iconic events in the history of the culture. Rituals are also used to give thanks to the divine, to purify gods and stools, to settle disputes, and to teach the meaning of tribal lore to younger generations. Additionally, festivals in Ghana often serve as a platform for political and social discourse, as well as a way to promote tourism and stimulate economic growth.

Rituals are also used in traditional festivals in Ghana to express and reinforce social hierarchies, to celebrate important life events, such as initiations, weddings

and funerals, and to mark the start of the New Year; which is in the case of the Aboakyer Festival of the Effutus. Moreover, festivals could also be said to be important way to celebrate the rich diversity of Ghanaian culture, as well as to mark the passing of time.

The Aboakyer Festival of the Effutu

The Aboakyer festival is a deer or bushbuck hunting festival celebrated by the people of Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana. It is believed to have been celebrated by the Effutu people, who were among the earliest settlers of Ghana, for several hundred years. The festival is celebrated on the first Saturday in May, with two Asafo (local militia) companies competing in a hunting expedition. After a deer has been caught, the Effutu people join together and celebrate (Gyan, 2012). He is of the view that, the festival is also used to receive a productive harvest and spiritual guidance from their gods for the coming year.



The Aboakyer Festival could also be said to be a time for celebration and thanksgiving for the Effutu people. Gyan (2012), says that during the festival, the local militia (Asafo) embark on a hunting expedition, with the aim of catching a deer. After the deer has been caught, the people gather together and celebrate. The festival is seen as a way to receive divine guidance and a productive harvest for the coming year. He is of the view that, other activities associated with the festival include traditional song and dance, feasting, and prayers. The Aboakyer Festival could also be seen as an important cultural event, as it is a time to remember and retell the story of how the Effutu people migrated from the ancient Western Sudan Empire (Gyan, 2012).

The Aboakyer Festival is a bushbuck hunting festival celebrated by the people of Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana. It has been celebrated for several hundred years and is celebrated in the southern coastal region between Accra and Cape Coast. It is a major annual celebration in Ghana and is used to mark the migration of the Simpafo people. During the festival, two Asafo companies (warrior groups) in Winneba take part in a hunting expedition and the first troop to catch a live bushbuck from a game reserve is declared the winner. The deer or the bushbuck is then sacrificed and this signifies the start of the Aboakyer festival (Gyan, 2012).

The Aboakyer festival is a celebration of great importance to the Effutu people. It is said to have originated from an ancient rite of making sacrifices to the god Penkye Otu, as has been stated in the previous chapter which was believed to protect the people during their journey of migrating. Originally, a young member of the Royal Family was offered as a sacrifice to the god, but this practice was eventually changed to a wild cat being caught and beheaded at the shrine. Later, the sacrifice was changed to a young deer (bushbuck), which is a small antelope with a reddish-brown coat that is commonly found in southern Africa (Brown, 2005). The festival is believed to be celebrated on the first Saturday of May and the celebrations last all weekend. It is a main exemption of the hunting ban as it is a significant part of the Simpa people's culture. The Aboakyer festival is used to signify receiving a productive harvest and spiritual guidance from their gods (Brown, 2005).

According to Gyan (2012) during the festival, the Effutu people perform traditional dances and songs as well as allow for visitors to partake in the festivities. He is of the view that, the Aboakyer festival is also a great occasion for the Effutu

people to showcase their culture and traditions to tourists. He continues to say that, during the durbar, after the bushbuck is sacrificed, a soup is made with the meat and is offered to Penkye Otu. This is followed by a night of drumming, singing and dancing. On the last day of the festival, the people present gifts to the chiefs and elders of the town, such as kola nuts, yams, and other food items (Gyan, 2012). The Aboakyer festival could therefore be said to be an important tradition for the Effutu people and is an important cultural event in Ghana.

Traditional rituals are performed during the Aboakyer Festival to honor the gods and ancestors of the people, and to bring the community together. The festival begins with the hunting expedition, in which two Asafo companies take part in the hunt for a live bushbuck. After the bushbuck is caught, it is sacrificed and a soup is made from its meat and offered to Penkye Otu. This is followed by a night of drumming, singing and dancing. On the last day of the festival, the people present gifts to the chiefs and elders of the town, such as kola nuts, yams, and other food items. The traditional rituals of the Aboakyer Festival are an important part of the Effutu culture and help to bring the community together.

During the Aboakyer Festival, the Effutu people perform traditional dances and songs as well as allow for visitors to partake in the festivities. The traditional rituals of the Aboakyer Festival are an important part of the Effutu culture and help to bring the community together. On the first day of the festival, the two Asafo companies (warrior groups) in Winneba take part in a hunting expedition. The first troop to catch a live bushbuck from a game reserve used for this purpose and present it to the chiefs and people at a colorful durbar is declared winner and is highly

regarded for bravery. The bushbuck is sacrificed and this signifies the start of the Aboakyer festival. The festival is also a great occasion for the Effutu people to showcase their culture and traditions to tourists. During the durbar, after the bushbuck is sacrificed, soup is prepared with the meat and is offered to Penkye Otu. This is followed by a night of drumming, singing and dancing. On the last day of the festival, the people present gifts to the chiefs and elders of the town, such as kola nuts, yams, and other food items.

However, the question was whether the people were able to serve the gods in the proper manner given that the festival was not observed. Since none of these performances took place, the researcher investigated what really transpired in this situation. The researcher examined any cultural or traditional effects that the celebrations' absence has had on the Effutu community. Finally, the researcher searched and analysed covert measures were taken to avoid any cultural or traditional effects that might have previously had an impact on the Effutu community.

Mensah (2023), says that, aside the celebration of the Aboakyer festival, the people of Winneba also take part in other activities such as fishing, farming, and trading. He continues to say that, Winneba is also home to a few tourist attractions. Visitors can visit the Fort Victoria Museum which houses a collection of artifacts from the colonial era. There are also the fancy dressing parades which crown the festival event. Furthermore, visitors also take part in this event to happy themselves and make merry to the winning fancy dress team. These are ways for the Effutu people to showcase their culture and traditions to tourists and visitors. The residents

of Winneba engage in a variety of activities outside of the Aboakyer festival celebration, such as farming, fishing, and trading, which contributes to the community's vibrancy and diversity. Finally, for those looking to explore more of the local culture, there are several traditional villages in the area which offer a unique insight into the lives of the people of Winneba

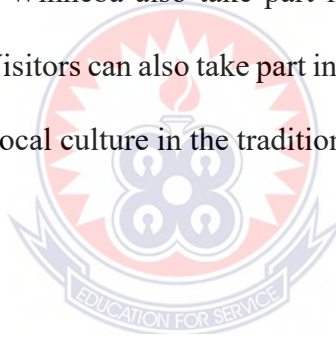
Cultural Perspective of Aboakyer Festival

The cultural perspective of the Aboakyer festival is that it is a celebration of the culture, traditions, and beliefs of the Effutu people. It is a way for them to honor their ancestors. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on festivals and celebrations around the world. Many festivals and activities had to be canceled or postponed, while others had to be modified to comply with social segregation rules and other safety precautions. Livestreams and virtual events have gained popularity as viable alternatives to actual events for bringing people together to commemorate significant events. Drive-in events and virtual parades are two further inventive options. The way people observe holidays and special occasions, there was the possibility for changes in the Aboakyer festival as a result of these developments.

During the Aboakyer festival, the Effutu people perform traditional dances and songs as well as allow for visitors to partake in the festivities. The festival is also a great occasion for the Effutu people to showcase their culture and traditions to tourists. During the durbar, after the bushbuck is sacrificed, soup is made with the meat and is offered to Penkye Otu. This is followed by a night of drumming, singing and dancing. On the last day of the festival, the people present gifts to the chiefs and elders of the town, such as kola nuts, yams, and other food items. The Aboakyer

festival is an important tradition for the Effutu people and is an important cultural event in Ghana. Visitors can also take part in bird watching and wildlife safaris, as well as explore the local culture in the traditional villages. (Fosu, 2011).

The Aboakyer Festival is a celebration of the culture, traditions, and beliefs of the Effutu people. It is also a way for the Effutu people to showcase their culture and traditions to tourists and visitors. During the festival, the people perform traditional dances and songs and offer a soup prepared with the meat of the sacrificed bushbuck to their god, Penkye Otu. On the last day of the festival, the people present gifts to the chiefs and elders of the town. Aside from the celebration of the Aboakyer festival, the people of Winneba also take part in other activities such as fishing, farming, and trading. Visitors can also take part in bird watching and wildlife safaris, as well as explore the local culture in the traditional villages. (Fosu, 2011)



COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. It has caused significant disruption to all aspects of life, including travel, work, social activities, and education. The virus is spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, breathes, or talks. It is also spread by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your face with unwashed hands (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). It is of the view that, to reduce the risk of transmission, it is important to practice physical distancing, wear a face mask, wash your hands frequently, and avoid touching your eyes. (CDC, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the way people celebrate festivals and special occasions. In order to prevent the spread of the virus, many events and festivals have been canceled or postponed and safety measures such as social distancing, temperature checks, and contactless ticketing have been implemented (Bauchner & Soumerai, 2020). They explained that, as the virus continues to spread, virtual events, livestreams, and outdoor events have become popular alternatives to physical events, allowing people to come together to celebrate and stay safe. They conclude by saying that, additionally, event organisers are also working to ensure that events are accessible and inclusive, by providing access to audio-visual recordings, captioning, and sign language interpreters, as well as offering culturally relevant content.

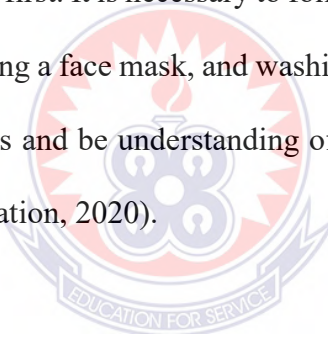
Bauchner and Soumerai (2020), suggested tips that could assist event planners to effectively organize events during such situations. They opined that, to help plan a special occasion during the COVID-19 pandemic, here are some more tips:

- Shop online in plenty of time
- Organise a virtual party
- Produce a very special video for family and friends
- Throw a gaming party
- Send cards through online delivery services or make your own as early as possible
- Order a special takeaway
- Attend an interactive work shop
- Use a cook-along service
- Share ideas or join groups with similar interests online

- Join a religious ceremony/worship group online
- Plan another celebration for when this is all over.

Unfortunately, though these tips could be helpful, they do not apply to all events. Traditional festivals such as Aboakyer, has certain practices that need to be performed at all cost without alternatives. This has been buttressed by Bauchner and Soumerai (2020). They are of the view that, it is important to maintain traditions, even if they have to be adapted to the current situation.

However, when it comes to celebrations, it is important to remember that safety and health should come first. It is necessary to follow all safety guidelines, including social distancing, wearing a face mask, and washing hands frequently. Additionally, try to focus on kindness and be understanding of others' feelings and expectations (World Health Organization, 2020).

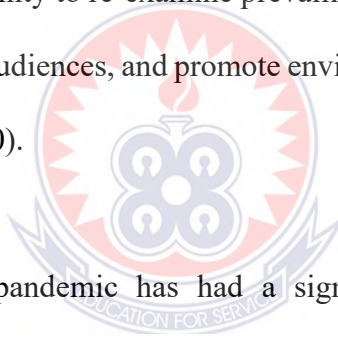


Covid-19 Pandemic and Festival Celebrations

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the list of festivals that were cancelled worldwide is impressive, ranging from world renowned international events to smaller community festivals such as the Aboakyer Festival of the Effutu. Cultural institutions are in crisis due to the pandemic, and leaders in the cultural sector have had to take difficult decisions to limit the human and economic impact of the pandemic. In order to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on festivals, some even opted to move their events online, while some cancelled or postponed their events (Cowling, Lau, Wu, Tsang, Leung, Leung, et al., 2020) as in the case of the Aboakyer. Additionally, some festivals have taken the opportunity to re-examine

prevailing practices, explore new ways of connecting with their audiences, and promote environmental awareness.

In order to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on festivals, event organizers have had to take difficult decisions. Some festivals have opted to move their events online, either through livestreams or virtual experiences, while others have had to cancel or postpone their events (Skrip, Kieny, & Duraffour, 2020). Governments have also implemented economic responses to limit the economic impact of the pandemic on the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs). These include financial aid packages, tax relief measures, and loan guarantees. Additionally, some festivals have taken the opportunity to re-examine prevailing practices, explore new ways of connecting with their audiences, and promote environmental awareness (Yang, Hou, Gong, Guo, & Li, 2020).



The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on festivals and celebrations around the world. Many festivals and events have had to be cancelled or postponed, while others have been adapted to meet the requirements of social distancing and other safety measures. Virtual events and livestreams have become popular alternatives to physical events, allowing people to come together to celebrate important occasions. Other creative solutions include drive-in events and virtual parades. These changes are expected to have long-term effects on the way people celebrate festivals and special occasions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced event organisers to come up with creative solutions to ensure that people can still participate in and enjoy festivals and celebrations. Virtual events and livestreams have become popular alternatives to

physical events, allowing people to come together to celebrate important occasions. Virtual parades, drive-in events, and outdoor concerts are also increasingly being used (Pasquini-Descomps, Mereckiene, Prata, & Lutomski, 2017) to enable people to safely celebrate together. As the virus continues to spread, it is likely that these types of events will become more common, as they provide a safe way to bring people together. At the same time, it is important to remember the importance of maintaining social distancing and other safety measures when attending events or gatherings.

According to Cowling, Lau, Wu, Tsang, Leung, Leung, et al., (2020), in order to ensure the safety of attendees, event organisers are increasingly implementing safety measures such as temperature checks, contactless ticketing, and face masks. Some events are also using contact tracing technology, which can help to identify who has been in contact with whom at an event, in order to quickly identify and isolate people who may have been exposed to the virus. Event organisers are also offering virtual alternatives to physical events, such as virtual tours, virtual concerts, and virtual classes, which allow people to participate in events without leaving their homes (Piltch–Loeb, Galvez–Romero, Roque–Velazquez, Ramos–Avila & Orive, 2019). These types of events can also be used to reach a wider audience and to ensure that events are accessible to people who may not be able to attend in person.

In addition to safety measures, event organisers are also working to ensure that events are accessible and inclusive. Events are being held in different formats, such as virtual, outdoor, and drive-in, to make sure that everyone is able to safely participate. Event organisers are also making sure to include people with disabilities

in events, by providing access to audio-visual recordings, captioning, and sign language interpreters (Yang, Hou, Gong, Guo, & Li, 2020).

Most event organizers are also making sure to include people from different backgrounds and cultures, such as Aboakyer Festival event, by providing culturally relevant content, such as traditional music and dance. By ensuring that events are naccessible and inclusive, organisers can also create a safe and welcoming environment for everyone to enjoy.



Summary

It can be deduced from the review that, festival is a crucial cultural and traditional event that is celebrated on a specific date or season, typically involving forms of entertainment. It often serves as a way for a community or group of people to come together, express their beliefs and celebrate their customs and traditions. The Aboakyer festival is seen to be a lively and vibrant event that brings people together to celebrate their traditions, display their cultural identity and honor their heritage. It creates a sense of community, fosters unity and serves as a time of joyous celebration and more importantly, to societal issues. As expressed by Richard & Palmer (2010), Events are becoming increasingly important as social, cultural and economic phenomena, to the extent that many of us live in eventful cities. Though there is an economic potential in the celebration of the Aboakyer festival, social and cultural phenomena spear-head its celebration. This is because, the festival is celebrated to appease gods (cultural) of the land and to assist in the wellbeing (social) of the people in the community.

Supported by event planners, the Aboakyer festival entails people coming together to create, operate, and participate in an experience (Silvers, 2004). It is an activity that brings together the target group in time and room, a meeting where a message is communicated and happening is created (Eckerstein, 2002). These activities are enhanced by art, sports, and social activities organized by giant organizers more professional and more formal (Argan, 2007) all geared towards the attainment of solidarity among the people to come together to solve social issues and explained by the theory which the study is hinged

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter deals with the systematic procedure which the researcher used in the conduct of the study. It discusses the research design, the population, the sample population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and method of data presentation and analysis.

Research Approach

The qualitative research approach was adopted and this assisted the researcher to understand the meaning of the underlying phenomena and make sense or interpret the phenomena in terms of the meanings people will bring to bear. Again, the qualitative research approach was used because the study required that the researcher collect part of the data in words so that objective considerations of the targeted population would be counted for during the interpretation and analysis of the data.

Research Design

A research design is a basic plan that guides the data collection and analysis (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005). The plan should systematically answer the research questions. An interpretative case study takes a phenomenon, or our perception of a phenomenon, as starting point (Coe, 2012). It aims to represent, describe and understand particular views of the cultural world. The research design for this study was the case study which falls within the qualitative research paradigm. As Walsham 1998 indicates that the vehicle for such interpretive investigations is often the in-

depth case study, where research involves visiting the field. Again, a case study is one of the qualitative approaches which allows an investigation to real life event or the condition of in-depth analysis, usually over a limited period of time, and focuses upon limited number of subjects (Yin, 2011). Using a case study research design advances the field of study and knowledge based of a particular area under study. Also, case studies are helpful in the process of eliminating wrong data conclusions and preserving only the compelling data interpretations. The researcher again chose this design due to the nature of the research questions. It is also justified because a case study offers a positive, successful avenue for investigating complex settings with great potential for understanding of a phenomenon (Merriam, 1988).

Again, the study used the descriptive research design. The primary focus of the descriptive research method is simply to describe the nature of the demographics under study (VOXCO, 2021). This method helped the researcher to describe whatever happened during the Covid-19 period as the festival was not celebrated.

Population for the Study

A research population is known as a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics. A population can be defined as including all people or items with specific characteristics one wishes to understand. It could therefore be said that population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a study. Babbie (2010), confirms this as he views population as the theoretically aggregation of the study elements.

The population of this study involves the people of Effutu, while the accessible population were the Asafo companies, Royals and Vendors among the people of Effutu.

Target Population

Target populations are groups of people identified as the focus of a particular research, program, or initiative. They are typically identified based on certain criteria, such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, educational level, income level, or geographic location. Target populations are important to consider when designing research or interventions, as they provide a basis for understanding who the intervention is most likely to help, and how it should be implemented for maximum impact (Mills, & Cockerham 2015).

For example, a research study on the health effects of a new medication might focus on a target population of individuals aged 18-25, living in a particular city, and earning below a certain income level. This target population is important because the results of the research would not necessarily apply to individuals outside of that group, and because the intervention needs to be tailored specifically to their needs. In addition to helping identify the target population, it is important for researchers to consider why the population has been identified, and how the intervention will benefit them (NIH, 2016). This is especially important when considering vulnerable populations, as researchers must also consider any potential risks or unintended consequences of the intervention. By understanding the target population and why they have been identified, researchers can better design interventions and programs that will benefit the most people, while minimizing any potential risks.

For any intervention or research involving a target population, it is important to cite any sources used to identify the population. Doing so will help to ensure that the research is accurate and reliable, and that the intervention or program is well-tailored to the identified target population. In view of that, the targeted population for this study would be the Royal members of Effutu, Asafo Companies of the Winneba Municipality, Vendors in the Effutu municipality and the indigens of Effutu community.

Accessible Population

Accessible population is composed of members of the targeted population who are willing to participate and will be available at the time of the study. It is important to consider whether the population is self-selected, or if it is randomly selected from a larger pool of people (Mcleod, 2020).

Kilburn (2020) states that accessible population should also include appropriate demographic information. This includes age, gender, ethnicity, and even location. Knowing this information can help to ensure that the results of the research are valid and representative of the population being studied. Hence, the accessible population for this study were three (3) each from the two Asafo companies, two (2) Royal members of the Effutu, two (2) indigens of Effutu community and two (2) Vendors in the Effutu municipality.

Sample Size

With the sample size, the researcher has sampled twelve participants (people) which is made of six (6) Asafo companies; 3 from each of the Asafo groups, two

(2) Royals and Two (2) Vendors and two (2) people who stayed in Winneba. These groups of respondents were accessible to the researcher during the period of the study.

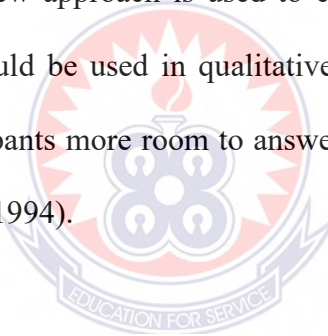
Sampling Technique

A sample is a proportion of an accessible population selected for the purpose of gathering data and its interpretation (Best, 1981). According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000), in order to facilitate data collection and gather credible and reliable data for the study, the population is reduced to a reasonable smaller unit within which a sample population is selected. In view of this the researcher used purposive & snowball sampling as techniques in the study so that credible, appropriate and valid data would be generated. The purposive and snowball sampling technique were used because, some of the population used for the study are known and can give valid information for the study. The snowball was also used because in the case of the Asafo groups, the researcher do not know anyone and hence, needed someone who would be able to lead her to the right person for the right and valid information for the study.

Data Collection Instruments

Instruments that were used under this study were structured and semi-structured interview. According to Kvale, (1996), qualitative interviewing is appropriately used when studying people's understanding of the meaning in their lived world as in the case of the Effutus and their rich festival, Aboakyer. "Interviewing is the best technique to use to find out those things we cannot directly observe, feelings, thoughts and intentions" (Merriam, 1998; p.105).

Under this heading, relevant data for the research was pursued using structured and semi structured interviews. These data collection instruments were used because the study requires a comprehensive information on how certain activities were performed without the celebration of the festival. This criterion was used because, in order to develop appropriate questions for an interview guide, the questions must be based on criteria that will elicit valid responses that can effectively answer the research questions and reflect the purpose and specific objectives of the study (Agyedu, Donklor & Obeng, 1999). In view of that, structured & semi structured interviews were used to illicit information needed to make the study reach and complete. This has been buttressed by Lofland, (1971). He is of the view that, a semi-structured interview approach is used to carry on conversations that would elicit rich data that could be used in qualitative analysis. Again, semi-structured interviews give participants more room to answer in terms of what is important to them (Miles & Huber, 1994).



Data Collection Procedure

The researcher used both primary and secondary data for the study. With regard to the primary data, the researcher conducted personal interviews with the respondents. This has been remarked by Kothari (2006, p.96) when he said, “primary data are collected afresh and for the first time, and thus, happen to be original in character” in view of that, the researcher collected introductory letter from the faculty where the researcher is studying. This, in a first instance, gave the researcher the opportunity to collect fresh data from all the sampled population for the study and also served as a defensive cover that protected the researcher to ask any important question that is related to the topic.

Secondary data that were used on the other hand were library sources such as books, articles, journals and periodicals. The internet was also a source that assisted in obtaining second hand information that is related to the study. This has been buttressed by Onkvisit (2009), when he states that a secondary data is a kind of information that has already been collected for other purposes and it is thus readily available.

Before carrying out the study, respondents were briefed on the purpose and the nature of the research to give them detailed information on how the research was all about. Following the briefing to each participant, the researcher administered the interview guide and interacted with each participant 30 minutes. This took about three days because some of the participants were not readily available in some of the days visited. The interviews collected by the researcher were transcribed and later analyzed descriptively per the demands of the research objectives.

Validation and Reliability of Data Collection Instruments

The researcher conducted a pretest of the data collection instruments to establish their validity and reliability. The pretest subjects were briefed on their role. The researcher allowed the interviewees to go through the interview guide. Due to the fact that most of the interviewees were not fully educated, where the understanding was not clear, the researcher gave further explanation to them. Again, any ambiguities in the interview guide were clarified to ensure that correct data was gathered. The researcher by the day, had seen all the ambiguities in the interview guide, they were corrected and removed.

This exercise helped the researcher to know the internal consistency of the instrument, check the data analysis procedure and also helped to restructure the items. It finally assisted the researcher to identify and correct some research items that were wrongly formulated and could have given some unintended results.

Validity as a matter of fact, is concerned with accuracy of the instrument used. Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure. The purpose is to ascertain the degree the measure is accurate for specific purpose (Agyedu, 2013). It is also a means of ascertaining the accuracy of the instrument by establishing whether the instruments focus on the information they are intended to collect. This has been buttressed by Kothari (2007). He pointed out that, validity measures the accuracy of the instruments in obtaining the anticipated data which can meet the objectives of the study.

Reliability refers to the extent to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same condition with the same subjects (Agyedu, Donkor & Obeng, 2013). Reliability also refers to the extent a researcher's findings can be replicated. Reliability is based on the assumption that there is one single reality. The purpose of reliability therefore is to assess the instrument's ability to measure the same way in each administration to the sample. To ascertain the reliability of the research instrument therefore, the piloting results were used to establish the reliability of the instruments.

Ensuring Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of the data gathered was ensured by using triangulation and member checking, and, maintaining data integrity through data cleaning, and the use of informed consent. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) as cited in Korstens (2018) and Shenton (2004), trustworthiness is all about establishing these four things, which are described below.

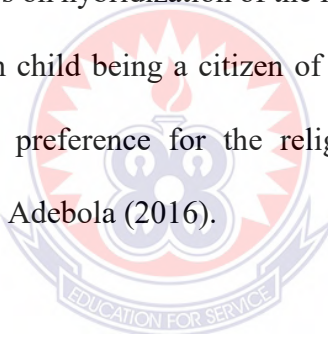
Credibility: Credibility has to do with the confidence the qualitative researcher is in the “truth” of the research study’s findings. The researcher used triangulation to show the research study’s findings are credible: using more than one research design (case study and comparative study) and data collection instrument (interview and observation) as well as member checking the researcher used the information received from the participants from each ethnic group to find out how they corroborate each other within the identified ethnic group and also interviewed at least two senior citizens within each group to confirm and validate the information obtained from the respondents. Also, data integrity was ensured through data cleaning. Data collected was cleaned when it was being processed. The researcher made sure responses were logical and that people answered what they were supposed to answer and did not answer what they were not supposed to answer.

Transferability: This refers to a demonstration that the researcher study’s findings are applicable to each other contexts. Other contexts mean similar situations, similar populations, and similar phenomena. As such, extensive description of the artefacts, their significance, and how similar and different they are from two study groups show that the research study’s findings can be applicable to

other contexts, circumstances, and situations as far as conducting studies in other groups in Ghana are concerned.

Confirmability: This refers to the degree of neutrality in the research study's findings. Thus, the findings are based on participants' responses and not any potential bias or personal motivations of the researcher. The interpretation of what the research participants said corroborates other periods studies within the two regions (Ashanti and Volta).

The findings confirm Adebola's (2016) study on *changes in marriage ceremonies in West Africa: A study of the Yorubas of Nigeria and the Anlo-Ewes of Ghana*, which concludes on hybridization of the forms of marriages that solidify the dilemma of the African child being a citizen of two cultural milieu. Furthermore, there is an increasing preference for the religious marriages, over traditional marriages, according to Adebola (2016).



Dependability: Lastly, dependability refers to the extent to which the study could be repeated by other researchers and the findings would be consistent. Thus, if a researcher plans to replicate this study, the researcher should have enough information from the research report to do so and may obtain similar findings as this study did. Therefore, to establish dependability, the supervisor of this thesis reviewed and examined the research process and the data analysis in order to ensure that the findings are consistent, dependable and could be replicated.

Finally, respondents were not coerced to answer or respond to questions. Their permissions were sought and they consented by signing informed consent forms before the commencement of the interviews.

Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

Narrative data analysis is important for the interpreting of raw data in order to obtain the meaning and pattern from data (Bell, 2010). Narrative data analysis is one technique that you can use to analyze and evaluate qualitative data. Narrative data analysis evaluates the speaker or writer who provided the information, asking what their statement says about them as well as what it says about the issue you are studying. Since this study employed the qualitative approach, narrative and thematic data analysis were used to vividly analyze information given by respondents.

The data collected was coded and checked for inclusiveness and completeness. Frequency tables and percentages were used to present the research findings. The frequency tables showed the number of respondents in each of the required categories. The percentage of the respondents who chose a particular component was computed and comparison made among the categories. The computed frequency, percentages were represented in tables for ease of interpretation. The narrative analysis helped the researcher to focus on the specific happenings as the festival was not celebrated. It also helped the researcher to describe the narrative of the qualitative responses generated through the interview. The narrative analysis technique also made it easy to draw conclusions and made recommendations for the study. The field notes and recordings made from the interview sessions were analysed based on the major themes the researcher formulated.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Overview

This chapter presents the findings from the data gathered from participants in this study through interviews. The interviews were examined using Narrative data analysis. Narrative data analysis is one technique that you can use to analyze and evaluate qualitative data. Narrative data analysis evaluates the speaker or writer who provided the information, asking what their statement says about them as well as what it says about the issue under studying. Since this study employed the qualitative approach, narrative and thematic data analysis were used to vividly analyze information given by respondents.

The data collected was coded and checked for inclusiveness and completeness. The process of analysing the data involved two stages. The first stage was where the data from the interviews was transcribed manually. The second stage presented the analysed transcription in tune with the research questions which are; how were rituals and other rites in the Aboakyer festival carried out during the covid-19 Pandemic? What are the traditional and cultural implications on the indigenes for not celebrating the Aboakyer festival? And what are the importance of the Aboakyer festival to the people of the Effutu? Afterwards, they were all grouped under themes basing them sequentially on the research objectives.

Effort has also been made to reduce excess work by integrating and analyzing data that are similar and yet seek to answer the research questions and objectives of the study. Besides that, any explicate information given by the respondents during

the interviews and observation made by the researcher has also been categorically and unequivocally stated.

How were rituals and other rites in the Aboakyer festival carried out during the covid-19 Pandemic?

In a bid to understand how rituals and other rite are carried out during the covid-19 Pandemic, it is first important to understand how the Aboakyer festival came into an existence. In this regard the Safohene of the Tuafo group briefly explained how Aboakyer festival came into an existence.

Aboakyer was initiated when I had not been born but I can say it is more than 200 years. The main reason behind Aboakyer festival is that when our ancestors settled here, they needed to offer sacrifice to thank their gods and also to seek its guidance and protection over their lives. So, in other for them to show their gratitude and also to make their god happy, they sorted the consent of the god what it wanted to be appeased with and the god asked them for a human sacrifice every year. It is not just any human being but a nephew of the royal home which they intentionally groom for that purpose. (A. safohene, personal communication, 2020)

Aboakyer is a festival that has a rich history dating back over 200 years. The festival was established as a way for the ancestors, upon settling in this area, to express their gratitude to the gods and seek their guidance and protection in their lives. It was believed that, to appease the gods and make them happy, a human sacrifice was required each year. This has been buttressed by Brown (2005). He opined that Originally, a young member of the Royal Family was offered as a sacrifice to the

god, but this practice was eventually changed to a wild cat being caught and beheaded at the shrine. Later, the sacrifice was changed to a young deer (bushbuck), which is a small antelope with a reddish-brown coat that is commonly found in southern Africa. However, the study also revealed that this sacrifice was not just any person; rather, a nephew from the royal home which was intentionally groomed for this purpose. This tradition highlights the deep cultural and religious practices that were followed by their ancestors, demonstrating their devotion and belief in the power of sacrifice.

The Safohene further narrated that:

During Aboakyer festivals, an antelope is captured in the forest and brought to the shrine to appease the elderly deities. In the event that this antelope was not captured, a cow and sheep bought as a substitute. Other gods also required offerings of Schnapps at their respective shrines to ensure that all the rites and the rituals in the festival were performed accordingly. (A.safohene, personal communication,2020)

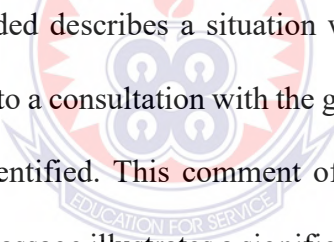
The statement sheds light on the complex and multifaceted nature of the Aboakyer festival. It reveals the significance of animal sacrifices and the adaptability of the festival in the face of practical challenges. Additionally, it underscores the importance of offerings to multiple deities and the role of libation in the overall performance of the festival's rites and rituals. Such insights contribute to our understanding of the rich cultural and religious heritage embedded within the Aboakyer festival.

The rituals and rites play a significant role in the culture of the people and its absence may have consequences bearing on the people. In light of this, the chief

priest of the Tuafo group explained how the rites and the rituals were carried out during the covid-19 Pandemic.

The head chief priest narrated that,

The lack of an antelope hunt resulted in we consulting the gods to redirect us to what rituals and rite they would want us to do for them in place of the antelope rituals. The gods understood that it was not for our own selfish reasons for not catching the antelope so they gave us a list of items they wanted us to purchase like cow, sheep, schnapps, yams, eggs, palm oils; all through me. (B.Priest, personal communication, 2020)

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central sunburst or starburst design in white and red. Below the sunburst are two stylized human figures in blue and white, holding hands. The entire emblem is set against a red background with a white border. The text 'UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION' is written in a semi-circle above the emblem, and 'EDUCATION FOR SERVICE' is written in a semi-circle below it.

The excerpt provided describes a situation where the absence of an antelope hunt during a ritual led to a consultation with the gods, resulting in alternative rituals and offerings being identified. This comment offers an academic analysis of the statement. That is, the passage illustrates a significant aspect of cultural and religious practices, wherein the inability to fulfill a specific ritual requirement prompts a consultation with the divine entities to seek guidance and alternative solutions. The practitioners involved recognized the importance of adhering to the gods' expectations and sought their input to ensure that the rituals were performed appropriately. This clearly suggest that, there is importance attached to the performance of rites and rituals in the Aboakyer festival celebration.

To explain how the items bought were used for the rituals needed to be made, the chief priest continued to say that;

The cow from the list is used in place of the antelope, so when the cow was bought the chief of the land examined it and then stepped on it, indicating that he has accepted it and so can be used for the rituals, the chief steps on it because in that moment it is believed that he chief is possessed and is transfigured in the image of the gods so whatever he says at that time is not from him but rather it is the gods speaking through him. So once the cow is accepted, they do not slaughter with a knife or any other object but it is placed at the feet of the stool god Penkyi Otu for some time and by the time they are come back the blood would have been squeezed out of the cow, indicating that the god has feasted on it and the meat is used to prepare soup for the royals to eat from

Three (3) pieces of eggs from the eggs bought is used to determine either there would be plenty of food and fishes or there would be famine. With this the eggs are not crushed or broken but the one in charge stands at a distance and throw the egg to an ash circled area, once this is done, when the egg lands on the ground at the pointed edge, it is a sign that there would be plenty of fishes. And when it lands on the ground with the bit broad base it is a sign of plenty of food that coming year. The point where we all pray it does not end on the ground is the side view of the egg, this is because it is a sign of famine in the land.

The remaining eggs, the yams and the palm oil from the list, is used for preparing Eto and the priest and the priestesses sprinkles the 'eto' at every four (4) road intersections in the community. (B, Priest personal communication,2020)

The narration provided describes various rituals and practices associated with the Aboakyer festival, specifically focusing on the use of a cow as a substitute for

the antelope. The significance of the chief stepping on the cow, the use of eggs for divination, and the preparation of Eto using remaining eggs, yams, and palm oil, are all part of the process in the performing of the rites even though the festival was not celebrated. The substitution of a cow for the antelope indicates the flexibility and adaptability within the festival to ensure the continuation of the rituals. The act of the chief examining and stepping on the cow holds great significance, as it signifies the acceptance of the animal for the rituals. The belief that the chief is possessed and transfigured by the gods during this moment underscores the divine authority attributed to the chief and the communication channel established between human and the divine realms.

The placement of the cow at the feet of the stool god Penkyi Otu, allowing the blood to be squeezed out, is a symbolic act indicating that the gods have feasted on the animal. This act further reinforces the belief in the divine presence and participation in the rituals, as well as the acknowledgment of the gods' share in the offerings made.

The use of eggs for divination adds an intriguing element to the festival. The specific method of throwing the eggs onto an ash-circled area and interpreting their landing position as signs of abundance or famine showcases the belief in divinatory practices and their role in predicting future outcomes. The rituals surrounding the eggs highlight the importance placed on agricultural and fishing prosperity within the community.

The utilization of the remaining eggs, yams, and palm oil for preparing of 'Eto', which is then sprinkled at four road intersections in the community, demonstrates the communal and communal-centered nature of the Aboakyer festival. This also to

affirms the use of the framework that supports this study, that there are many parts of culture that work together as a system to fulfill society's needs, (Parsons & Durkheim, 1997)

The involvement of the priest and priestesses in this act underscores their role as intermediaries between the human and divine realms, as they carry out the ritualistic practices and ensure the blessings and protection of the community. Being mindful of the passage provides a glimpse into the intricate rituals and symbolic actions associated with the Aboakyer festival. It highlights the interplay between the human and divine realms, the role of divination in predicting future outcomes, and the communal significance of the festival's practices. Such insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural and religious dimensions embedded within the Aboakyer festival and its role in fostering a sense of community, tradition, and spiritual connection which could be tied to the theoretical framework of the study.

What are the traditional and cultural implications on the indigenes for not celebrating the Aboakyer festival?

This section looks at the data on the traditional and cultural implications on the indigenes for not celebrating the Aboakyer festival.

A native of the community shared a view that:

See, in our traditional African belief systems, the gods are seen as powerful and influential beings that controls many aspects of human life ooo, including fertility, health, and prosperity. So, if the gods are not appeased, they may become angry and

bring misfortune and calamities to the community. The failure to pacify the gods during the Aboakyer festival at the time of the covid-19 pandemic left us feeling anxious and uncertain about our future. (A, Panyin personal communication, 2020)

The provided statement offers an academic analysis of the belief system surrounding the gods in traditional African culture and the perceived consequences of failing to appease them during the Aboakyer festival, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

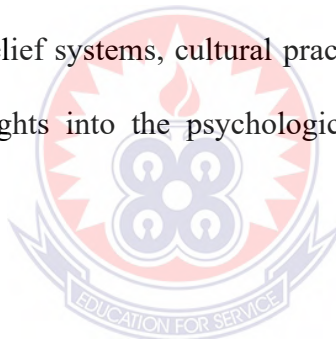
The statement highlights the significance of the gods in traditional African belief systems, portraying them as powerful entities that exert influence over various aspects of human life. Within this belief system, it is commonly held that the gods possess the ability to impact fertility, health, and prosperity. Consequently, the act of appeasing the gods through rituals and festivals, such as the Aboakyer festival, is regarded as crucial for maintaining harmony and well-being within the community.

The statement again suggests that, the failure to appease the gods during the Aboakyer festival, which likely occurred due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulted in feelings of anxiety and uncertainty among the members of the community. This sentiment arises from the belief that if the gods are not adequately pacified, they may respond with anger and inflict misfortune and calamities upon the community. From an academic standpoint, this statement provides insights into the role of belief systems and their impact on the psychological well-being and outlook of individuals within a cultural context. It sheds light on how the belief in the power and influence of gods can engender a sense of anxiety and

uncertainty when traditional rituals and festivals, which serve as mechanisms for appeasing these deities, cannot be carried out as usual.

Furthermore, the statement underscores the interplay between cultural practices, belief systems, and external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic. It reveals the potential conflicts and challenges faced when cultural traditions clash with circumstances that necessitate the suspension or alteration of customary practices.

This statement provides an academic analysis of the belief in the power and influence of gods within traditional African culture, the significance of appeasing them through rituals and festivals, and the emotional impact of failing to carry out these rituals during the COVID-19 pandemic. It leans to light on the complex interaction between belief systems, cultural practices, and external circumstances, offering valuable insights into the psychological and cultural dynamics of the community.



He further explains that:

The festival has significant cultural and historical implications on we the people of Effutu, its non-celebration during the covid-19 pandemic has had several impacts on us. This is because, the Aboakyer festival is a time for our people to come together to celebrate our heritage, history, and culture. The festival usually involves various traditional activities such as drumming, dancing, hunting, and feasting. These activities provide an opportunity for us to bond and showcase our cultural identity to the world. The non-celebration of the festival during the covid-19 pandemic, therefore, meant that we were unable to participate in these activities and missed

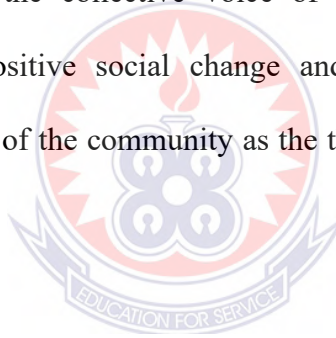
out the opportunity to celebrate our culture and more importantly, also come together and strengthen the bonds among families. (A,Panyin, personal communication)

The provided statement highlights the cultural and historical significance of the Aboakyer festival to the people of Effutu and discusses the impacts of its non-celebration during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This comment provides an academic discourse, in that, the narrations emphasize the profound cultural and historical implications of the Aboakyer festival for the people of Effutu. Festivals often play a pivotal role in preserving and showcasing cultural heritage, history, and identity. The Aboakyer festival, as described, serves as a significant occasion for the community to come together and celebrate their shared traditions and values. The festival's customary activities, including drumming, dancing, hunting, and feasting, provide a platform for cultural expression, fostering community cohesion, and reinforcing a collective sense of identity which further foster a sense of unity and belonging within the community. It also creates a common bond among individual members of the community, making them more likely to support and cooperate with one another. This unity promotes social cohesion and strengthens the overall fabric of the community. Again, it also brings collaboration and cooperation. This suggests that when individuals identify themselves as part of a community, they are more inclined to work together towards common goals. They are more likely to engage in cooperative efforts, share resources, and contribute to the well-being of the community as a whole.

It could also be said that, collective identity plays a crucial role in preserving and celebrating a community's cultural heritage, traditions, and values. It fosters pride in one's cultural background and encourages the transformation of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. This technically, helps maintain cultural diversity and enriches the overall social fabric of the community.

Ostensibly, a collective sense of identity empowers community members by giving them a platform to voice their concerns, aspirations, and needs. It enables individuals to advocate for their rights, influence decision-making processes, and seek representation in the various spheres of society. So that a strong community identity can amplify the collective voice of its members, leading to greater empowerment and positive social change and contributes to the well-being, resilience, and growth of the community as the theoretical framework of the study seeks to talk address.



The COVID-19 pandemic, as acknowledged in the early part of the above narration, had several impacts on the non-celebration of the festival. Pandemic-related restrictions and safety measures that hindered the organization and participation in large-scale gatherings and communal activities. The absence of the festival during this time resulted in a missed opportunity for the people of Effutu to engage in the cherished cultural practices associated with the event as indicated. This non-celebration disrupted the usual rhythm of community bonding, cultural expression, and the pride derived from showcasing their heritage to the world.

The impacts of the non-celebration can extend beyond the immediate loss of cultural expression and community cohesion. Festivals often serve as economic drivers, attracting visitors and stimulating local businesses, artisans, and tourism. The absence of the Aboakyer festival may have had economic repercussions for the Effutu community, particularly those whose livelihoods are directly or indirectly linked to the festival.

Furthermore, the non-celebration of the festival during the pandemic underscores the broader global challenges faced by cultural events and the necessity to balance cultural preservation with public health concerns. It highlights the need for creative adaptations and alternative means of cultural expression during times of crisis, such as exploring virtual platforms or smaller-scale events adhering to safety guidelines. Obviously, the statement sheds light on the cultural and historical significance of the Aboakyer festival to the people of Effutu and the impacts it can have as it was not celebrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. It underscores the festival's role in community bonding, cultural expression, and economic vitality. The non-celebration serves as a reminder of the challenges faced by cultural events during times of crisis and the importance of finding adaptive solutions to ensure the preservation and continuation of cultural heritage.

An asafo member from the Dentsifo group touched on another sensitive area of importance on the same question by saying that:

The Aboakyer festival is also an important source of revenue for us because it attracts visitors from around the world who come to witness and participate in the various activities including patronizing our local delicacies. The non-celebration of

the festival, therefore, meant that we lost a significant source of income, which had economic implications on us. (A. Kofi, personal communication)

The above highlights the economic significance of the Aboakyer festival to the community, emphasizing its role as an important source of revenue through attracting visitors and promoting local businesses, particularly those involved in providing local delicacies. This comment offers an academic analysis of the statement: The Aboakyer festival, as mentioned, serves as a significant source of revenue for the community. Festivals often have economic implications as they attract visitors from around the world who are drawn to the unique cultural experiences and activities they offer. The Aboakyer festival's ability to bring in visitors from diverse backgrounds provides an opportunity for local businesses to thrive through increased patronage of goods, services, and local delicacies.

The non-celebration of the festival, as stated, resulted in the loss of a significant source of income for the community. This loss of revenue can have economic implications for the local population, particularly those who rely on the festival for their livelihoods. Local businesses, including vendors of local delicacies, artisans, and service providers, may have experienced reduced sales or financial hardship due to the absence of the festival.

The economic impact extends beyond the immediate financial losses. The festival's ability to attract visitors from around the world contributes to the growth of the local tourism industry. It promotes cultural exchange, encourages local entrepreneurship, and generates employment opportunities. The non-celebration of the festival hindered the community's ability to capitalize on the economic benefits associated with tourism and hindered the growth of related industries.

The statement highlights the interconnectedness between cultural festivals, tourism, and local economic development. It underscores the need for the community to find alternative means of promoting their cultural heritage and generating income during periods when traditional festivals cannot be celebrated, such as exploring virtual platforms or developing smaller-scale events that adhere to safety guidelines.

In a nutshell, the statement provides insights into the economic significance of the Aboakyer festival to the community, particularly in terms of revenue generation and its role in supporting local businesses and the tourism industry. The non-celebration of the festival demonstrates the economic implications faced by the community, highlighting the importance of finding alternative strategies to sustain economic growth during challenging times. These assertions suggest that the non-celebration of the Aboakyer festival during the covid-19 pandemic had significant cultural and economic implications on the people of Effutu. However, the researcher viewed that it was necessary to prioritize public health and safety during the pandemic, hence the decision to suspend the festival was a responsible one.

A vendor who has stayed in business for over 20 years shared her experience that:

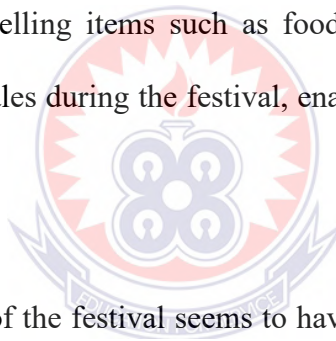
The cancellation of the Aboakyer festival had a very huge impact on us. Because, most of us rely on the festival for our income and again because the festival attracts a large number of visitors, we the vendors sell a variety of items such as food, drinks, souvenirs, and clothing to make earnings meet. So, with the cancellation of the festival most of us lost big time on an anticipated potential sales and income.

See, many of us (vendors) depend on the Aboakyer festival as our primary source of income for the year, so without the celebration of the festival, we struggled to make

ends meet, especially as the covid-19 pandemic had already had a significant impact on the economy. (P. Kwesi, personal communication, 2020)

The comments highlight the significant impact of the cancellation of the Aboakyer festival on the vendors who heavily rely on the festival as their primary source of income. This comment provides an academic analysis of the statements:

The cancellation of the Aboakyer festival, as expressed in the comments, had a profound effect on the vendors who depend on the festival for their livelihood. Festivals often provide a substantial economic opportunity for vendors, as they attract a large number of visitors who engage in various activities and patronize local businesses. Vendors selling items such as food, drinks, souvenirs, and clothing anticipate a surge in sales during the festival, enabling them to generate significant income.

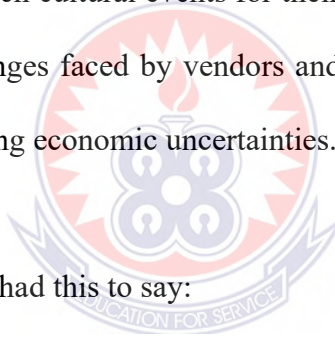


The cancellation of the festival seems to have resulted in a significant loss for the vendors, as they missed out on the potential sales and income they were expecting. This loss has had a severe impact on their financial well-being, especially when the festival serves as their primary source of income for the year. The absence of the festival has created a challenge for the vendors to make ends meet and sustain their livelihoods as expressed by in the response.

The economic impact of the festival's cancellation was further compounded by the existing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which had already affected the economy. The pandemic that resulted in reduced economic activity,

limited tourist travel, and stricter regulations on gatherings and events, all of which affected the vendors' ability to earn income even before the cancellation festival.

The comments shed light on the vulnerability of vendors who heavily rely on cultural festivals as their main source of income. It highlights the need for diversification of income streams and the development of alternative strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of unforeseen circumstances, such as the cancellation of festivals or unexpected crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. The comments therefore emphasize the significant financial setback experienced by vendors due to the cancellation of the Aboakyer festival. It underscores the need for support systems, both from the community and the broader economic context, to alleviate the impact on vendors who heavily rely on such cultural events for their livelihoods. The comments bring attention to the challenges faced by vendors and the importance of resilience and adaptability in traversing economic uncertainties.



A popular vendor also had this to say:

It is possible that some vendors may have found alternative ways to sell their products, such as through online platforms or other local events. However, the cancellation of the Aboakyer festival still had a significant impact on our livelihoods. It is important for the community to come together and support us vendors during difficult times, perhaps by finding ways to promote and sell our products through other means or by providing financial assistance to those of us in need. (P. Kwesi, personal communication, 2020)

The comment recognizes the potential for vendors affected by the cancellation of the Aboakyer festival to explore alternative avenues, such as online platforms or other local events, to sell their products. While these options may provide some relief, it acknowledges that the absence of the festival still had a substantial impact on their livelihoods.

The comment highlights the significance of community support during challenging times. It suggests that the community should come together (Parsons & Durkheim 1997) to assist vendors by finding ways to promote and sell their products through other means. This may involve collaborative efforts to create alternative platforms or events that can showcase and support local vendors. Additionally, the seemingly sad response from this vendor suggests the possibility of providing financial assistance to those in need, recognizing the importance of sustaining their livelihoods and ensuring their well-being during times of crisis.

The response finally emphasizes the importance of community solidarity and proactive measures in supporting vendors affected by the cancellation of the festival. It also recognizes the need for creative solutions and collective efforts to mitigate the economic impact on vendors and underscores the significance of providing assistance by the community to help them navigate through difficult circumstances.

If the gods were not pacified, how did it affect the community and the general well-being of the people of Effutu?

A sub question on how the community was affected as the gods were not pacified. The following was the response shared by the Okyeame (Nimfa hene) of the Dentsifo:

The failure to pacify the gods during the festival had significant implications on us in the community and our general well-being, but those that are not closer to the stool did not notice or did not associate some of the occurrences to the outcome of the non-celebration of the festival. Other people will tell you that they did certain rituals so there were no calamities, it may be true in a way but though we consulted the gods and appeased them, some personalities closer to the stool and the indigens at the beach shores experienced some natural ailment that led to some losing their lives. See, most of us are fishermen and farmers. So, because the gods were not fed, there were no rains as it should have and when there were too, we experienced floods and heavy storms destroying our livelihood. So, crops of farmers did not yield anything better. We the fishermen would also go to the sea for fishing, sometimes spending like a month or even more on and yet, come back home empty handed.

Also, during the festival, all the people that are seeking for the fruit of the womb are matched by the head priestesses to the river Ayensu to offer sacrifices and ask for children for them and before the year will come to an end, the women that are seeking for children and went to pray would be jubilating. But this is the case where the festival was not celebrated and so that aspect of happiness in various homes of these people were cut short. (N.Okyeame, personal communication,2020)

In Effutu culture, the belief in appeasing or pacifying the gods was a significant aspect of their religious practices. The gods were seen as powerful and influential beings who could directly impact the community and the well-being of its people. The commentary given by the Okyeame, suggests that if the gods are not pacified, the community and the general well-being of the people of Effutu experience several negative effects. Some consequences that were mentioned are as followed;

1. **Natural Disasters:** Effutu people believe that the gods controlled natural forces such as rain, wind, and fertility. Since the festival was not celebrated, it is believed that they unleash some kind of destructive natural disasters such as droughts, floods and storms. These disasters led to crop failure, famine, and the destruction of homes and infrastructure, causing suffering and hardship within the community.
2. **Economic Hardship:** The gods were also associated with agricultural productivity and economic prosperity. If they were not pacified, it was believed that they withhold their blessings, leading to poor harvests, decreased fertility of livestock, and economic difficulties. This could result in poverty, unemployment, and a decline in the standard of living within the community.
3. **Spiritual and Emotional Distress:** The belief in appeasing the gods was deeply rooted in the spiritual and cultural fabric of Effutu society. If the gods were not pacified, it could lead to a sense of spiritual disconnection, guilt, and fear among the people. This could result in emotional distress, anxiety, and a general decline in the psychological well-being of individuals within the community.


It is obvious from the above that, if the gods are not pacified in Effutu culture, it could have far-reaching consequences, impacting various aspects of the

community's well-being, including physical, social, economic, and spiritual dimensions.

What is the importance of the Aboakyer festival to the people of Effutu?

On the issue on how important is the Aboakyer festival to the people of Effutu, it was revealed that, the Aboakyer festival holds significant importance to the people of Effutu. It is a traditional celebration that has both cultural and spiritual significance. Here are some concerns of some individuals in the community as to why the Aboakyer festival is important to the people of Effutu.

An indigene of the community shared that;

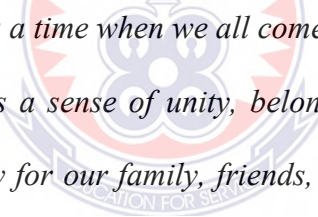


Madam, I want to start by talking about our cultural heritage. The Aboakyer festival is deeply rooted in our history and cultural identity. It serves as a reminder of our ancestral traditions, customs, and values. The festival allows us to connect with our heritage, preserving and passing down our unique cultural practices to unborn generations. The festival acts as a unifying force within us, bringing people together from all walks of life. It creates a shared experience and a sense of belonging among we the people, fostering a strong community spirit and solidarity. In essence, the Aboakyer festival serves as a powerful tool for cultural transmission, allowing us to connect with our heritage, preserve their ancestral traditions, and pass on the unique customs and values to our unborn generations.

The Aboakyer festival holds a profound significance in preserving the cultural heritage of the Effutu community. By celebrating this tradition, individuals have the

opportunity to reconnect with their ancestral customs and values, ensuring that their unique cultural practices are passed down to future generations. This has been buttressed by Davis (2020) when he says that rituals help us connect with one another, form our identities, and provide a sense of security and order to life. This cultural continuity helps maintain a sense of identity and fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Effutu history. The festival serves as a powerful reminder of the rich cultural tapestry that defines the Effutu people, allowing them to honor their roots and ensure the preservation of their heritage for generations to come.

He continues to say that:



The Aboakyer festival is a time when we all come together being adults, youths and even children. It fosters a sense of unity, belonging, and solidarity among us. It provides an opportunity for our family, friends, and other community members to gather, celebrate, and strengthen the bond we share as a community.

The Aboakyer festival plays a crucial role in bringing the Effutu community together, regardless of age or social status. It serves as a unifying event that fosters a strong sense of unity, belonging, and solidarity among community members. The festival provides a unique opportunity for families, friends, and neighbors to come together, celebrate, and strengthen the bonds that connect them as a community. This has been expressed by Parsons & Durkheim, (1997) that state that society is a complex system whose part work together to promote solidarity and stability. (The

theory on which the study hinged. This theory acknowledges that there are many parts of culture that work together as a system to fulfill society's needs. It is a time when everyone can actively participate and contribute to the shared experience, creating lasting memories and nurturing a collective spirit of togetherness.

Still on the importance of the festival, the chief priest of the Tuafo group also narrated that:

The festival is a way for us to express gratitude to our gods for their protection, blessings, and guidance. It is a time to acknowledge and appreciate the spiritual forces that have a significant influence on our lives. Through rituals, offerings, and prayers, we show our thankfulness and seek continued favor from the gods. The Aboakyer festival is associated with renewal and purification in the sense that it symbolizes the cleansing of our community from negative energies, misfortunes, and obstacles. The ceremonial hunting and capturing of a live deer represent the triumph over challenges and the hope for a fresh start.

This narration suggests that, the Aboakyer festival serves as a meaningful platform for expressing appreciativeness to the gods for their guidance, protection, and blessings as expressed by the Chief Priest, in the lives of the Effutu community. It is a time to honor and appreciate the spiritual forces that hold significant influence over their well-being. Through sacred rituals, offerings, and prayers, the community demonstrates their heartfelt thankfulness while seeking continued favor and divine support.

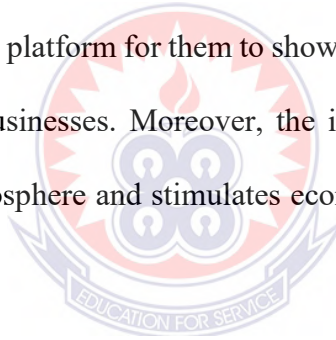
Moreover, the festival carries profound symbolism related to renewal and purification. It represents the cleansing of the community from adverse verves, misfortunes, and obstacles that may have accumulated. The ceremonial hunting and capturing of a live deer serve as powerful metaphors, symbolizing the triumph over challenges and the aspiration for a fresh start, as the narrative suggests. It is this aspect of the Aboakyer festival that instills hope and a sense of rejuvenation within the community, inspiring them to overcome adversity and embrace new beginnings. It could also be said from the narrative that, the Aboakyer festival combines expressions of gratitude towards the gods with symbolic rituals of renewal and purification. It highlights the spiritual connection between the Effutu people and the divine forces they believe in, nurturing a deep sense of faith, hope, and renewal within the community. Lastly, the Aboakyer festival plays a crucial role in preserving Effutu cultural heritage, fostering community unity, expressing gratitude to the gods, promoting economic growth, and providing a platform for celebration and entertainment. It is a cherished tradition that holds deep meaning for the people of Effutu.

After a long chat, a vendor shared her thought on the importance of the Aboakyer festival. She said:

... the Aboakyer festival always attracts visitors from within Ghana and beyond. It has become a major tourist attraction, contributing to the local economy through increased tourism-related activities. The festival provides opportunities for local businesses, artisans, and we the vendors to showcase and sell our products, thereby stimulating economic growth in the region. The Aboakyer festival is a vibrant and

joyful celebration. See, madam, there're lots of activities that comes with the celebration of the Aboakyer festival ooo, some includes our traditional music, dance performances, cultural displays, and various forms of entertainment. It allows we the people of Effutu to celebrate our cultural heritage, enjoy festivities, and create lasting memories. I think it is important ooo because, I make lot of sales and I believe my other colleague sellers would attest to this fact.

From the narrative of this vendor, the Aboakyer festival is truly a remarkable event that brings together people from all over Ghana and beyond. Vendors attested to the positive impact the celebration of the Aboakyer festival has on their economy. The festival serves as a platform for them to showcase and sell their products, which greatly boosts their businesses. Moreover, the influx of tourists during this time creates a thriving atmosphere and stimulates economic growth in the town and the region at large.



The vibrancy and joyfulness of the Aboakyer festival are unparalleled. Traditional music, dance performances, cultural displays, and various forms of entertainment make it a truly captivating experience. Through that, visitor make lots of sales without thinking of it. It is also a time of festivities, togetherness, and the creation of cherished memories. It could therefore be said that, the Aboakyer festival is not just a local celebration but a significant tourist attraction that contributes to the cultural richness and economic prosperity of the central region of Ghana. It is a truly unforgettable experience for both locals and visitors alike.

CHAPTER FIVE

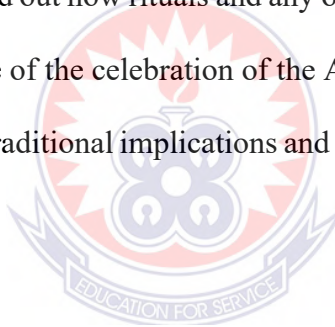
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter highlights the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations made on the study. It concludes with suggestions for further studies.

Summary

The study sought to find out how rituals and any other rites were performed to pacify the gods in the absence of the celebration of the Aboakyer Festival, find out if there were any cultural and traditional implications and also investigate how it has affected the people of Effutu.



The study employed the functionalist theory of Culture as its theoretical framework (Parsons & Durkheim, 1997). Parsons & Durkheim (1997) define society as a complex system whose part work together to promote solidarity and stability. The study employed interpretivism research philosophy, a qualitative research approach and a descriptive case study design. Primary data was generated from twelve (12) participants with the aid of interview-guide. The purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. Narratives approach was used for the analysis.

Summary of Findings

The study revealed that the Aboakyer is a festival which dates back over 200 years, holds a deep-rooted significance in the history and culture of the community. Originating from a time when their ancestors settled in this region, the festival serves as an expression of gratitude towards the gods, seeking their guidance and protection.

The Aboakyer Festival emerged during a period of settlement when their ancestors sought to establish a harmonious relationship with the gods. Recognizing the role of divine intervention in their lives, they embarked on a practice of offering sacrifices to express their gratitude and seek favor from the deities. The festival has served as a link to the past, allowing successive generations to connect with their heritage and honor the traditions established by their forefathers. Its long-standing existence demonstrates the festival's resilience and enduring relevance to the community. Central to the Aboakyer Festival is the offering of sacrifice, where the gods stipulated the annual sacrifice of an antelope.

Regarding the rituals and rites that comes with Aboakyer festival of the Effutu people. It was revealed that the rituals and rites play a significant role in the culture of the people and its absence had consequences bearing on the people. The finding on how rituals and rites in the Aboakyer festival carried out during the Pandemic revealed that, in the event that the antelope was not captured, a cow and a sheep was bought as a substitute. Other gods also required offerings of Schnapps at their respective shrines to ensure that all the rites and the rituals in the festival were

performed accordingly. The study also revealed that, the transition from antelope rituals to alternative offerings, was a directive from the gods, which reflects the adaptive nature of cultural practices in response to changing circumstances. The understanding and cooperation between the community and the gods demonstrate a mutual respect and recognition of the underlying intentions behind the rituals. While specific reasons for the lack of an antelope hunt were due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, it is evident that the gods acknowledged the sincerity of the community's efforts and provided guidance on suitable replacements. This adaptive approach ensured the continuity of religious practices while accommodating practical constraints.

The research again revealed the significance of traditional African belief systems, in this instance, where the gods are considered powerful entities with control over various aspects of human life, such as fertility, health, and prosperity. So, to an extent it was said that the failure to appease the gods during the Aboakyer festival in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic led to feelings of anxiety and uncertainty about the future within the community.

On traditional and cultural implications that befell the indigenes for not celebrating the Aboakyer festival, the finding revealed that, traditional African belief systems often emphasize the importance of rituals and offerings to maintain harmony with the gods. Secondly, the Aboakyer festival, in particular, serves as a means of appeasing the gods and ensuring their favor and blessings upon the indigenes and the community as a whole. Hence, because the festival was not observed in its traditional manner due to the COVID-19 pandemic, community

members were left in a sense of unease and anxiety because they were hit by calamities, though members of the community members did not associate it with the non-performance of the right rituals and other rites to the gods.

On the other hand, the Aboakyer festival not only holds cultural and historical significance for the community but also serves as a vital source of revenue. The festival attracts visitors globally who contribute to the local economy by participating in various activities and patronizing local delicacies. It serves as a significant source of revenue for vendors as it attracts a large number of visitors who purchase various items such as food, drinks, souvenirs, and clothing. However, the non-celebration of the festival during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a loss of income for the community, which by extension, had a serious and profound economic implication on members of the community, especially vendors who anticipated big sales and income. This further compounded the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had already affected the overall economy.

With regards to the finding on the importance of Aboakyer festival to the people of the Effutu, there was a revelation that, the festival acts as a unifying force within the people of Effutu, and also bringing Effutu indigenes together from all walks of life. It creates a shared experience and a sense of belonging among the people, fostering a strong community spirit and solidarity which serves as a powerful tool for cultural transmission, allowing them to connect with one another and their heritage, preserve their ancestral traditions, and pass on the unique customs and values to the unborn generations. Again, because of the community's openness to

consultation with the gods during the festive season, and their willingness to adapt their rituals, showcase their commitment to preserving their cultural heritage. Finally, through continued dialogue, documentation, ethical evaluations, and inclusive decision-making, the community ensures longevity and relevance of their rituals, while respecting contemporary values and safeguarding their cultural identity.

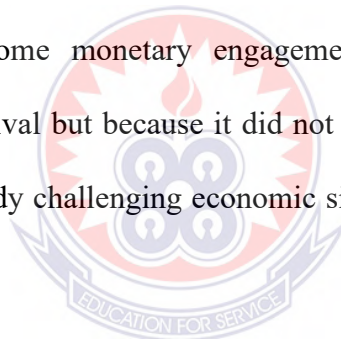
CONCLUSION

The Aboakyer Festival is a cultural cornerstone, representing the collective identity of the community. It provides an opportunity for community members to come together, celebrate their shared heritage, and strengthen social bonds. The rituals, rites and ceremonies associated with the festival are deeply ingrained in the fabric of the community, passing down cultural knowledge and reinforcing a sense of belonging. However, the study concludes that, though the festival was not celebrated due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all important rituals and other rites were dully performed but in a slightly different from the norm, but guidance and directions were given and agreed by the gods after consultations were done.

It could also be deduced from the findings that, though the festival was not celebrated, certain rituals and other rites were performed. Yet, other communal ones, for example, where the whole community come together to perform, with those seeking the fruit of the womb matched to the river Ayensu didn't come on. Hence, there were certain significant calamities that be fell on the community. The study concludes that, while some individuals may not have noticed or attributed certain

occurrences to the non-performance of certain rituals and rites, others experienced negative outcomes that affected their lives. For instance, individuals close to the stool and those living near the beach shores experienced natural ailments, leading to loss of lives. Moreover, droughts and excessive rainfall adversely affected agricultural practices and infrastructure in the community. This resulted in food scarcity, damaged homes, and disrupted livelihoods for many residents.

In that same vein, the study further concludes that, local organizers and vendors had their fair share of the economic impact associated with the non-celebration of the Aboakyer festival. In that, these vendors and organizers of the festival had made some monetary engagements in preparation towards the celebration of the festival but because it did not come on, the effect was massive, exacerbating the already challenging economic situation in the community and the country at that time.



Finally, based on the findings, it could be concluded that the people of Effutu reverend the Aboakyer festival because it connects them to one another and their heritage, preserve their ancestral traditions, unique customs and values that could be passed on to the unborn generations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion, it is recommended that the community continues to engage in open dialogue with the gods, seeking their guidance on appropriate rituals and rites.

This ongoing communication, the researcher believes, allows for the evolution of cultural practices in line with changing circumstances and societal values.

It is also recommended that, a crucial documentation and preservation of these rituals, including the list of items specified by the gods be done to ensure the transmission of this knowledge to future generations. Such documentation can serve as a valuable resource for academic research, cultural preservation, and promoting intergenerational understanding.

It is also recommended that, there must be re-establishment of communication between custodians and stakeholders of the Effutu land and the Effutu community ,so that proactive measures are considered at all times if there should be any such change of plans where there is the possibility of the festival not being celebrated in a particular year. So that necessary precautionary measure are put in place by event organisers and planners of the Aboakyer festival for any future eventuality. This has been buttressed by luppold,2004 when he says that the management of events must be seen as an interdisciplinary task field requiring effective and efficient cooperation between diverse partners. He is of the view that, the strategic preparation, as well as the planning and coordination of the execution of an event require professional handling in order to guarantee the optimal interplay between all participants

It is also recommended that diversification of income sources and economic activities within the community be encouraged to reduce dependence on the festival as the sole source of livelihood. This may involve promoting alternative tourism

attractions, supporting the development of other industries or sectors, and providing training or resources to help individuals explore new income-generating opportunities and promote economic resilience.

Finally, because people of Effutu finds the Aboakyer festival significantly important, it is recommended that there should be community awareness creation, and involvement in the preservation of the Effutu cultural traditions and the significance of the festival. This can be achieved through educational programs, cultural events, and initiatives that encourage community members, particularly the younger generation, to appreciate and actively participate in preserving the Effutu heritage and ensure a comprehensive and sustainable approach.



Suggestions for Further Research.

1. The researcher conducted the study in Effutu Traditional Area in the Central Region of Ghana. It is being suggested that a similar study be carried out in other part of the country so that comprehensive research on the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on community-based event in bringing about socio-economic development in their communities can be documented.
2. Further studies can be conducted on how the COVID-19 pandemic on community-based event have been effective as facilitators of grassroots development in promoting socio-economic development as well as the factors that account for the challenges they encounter in community development.

3. Lastly a broader study could be conducted on the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on community-based event: the case of festivals in Ghana.



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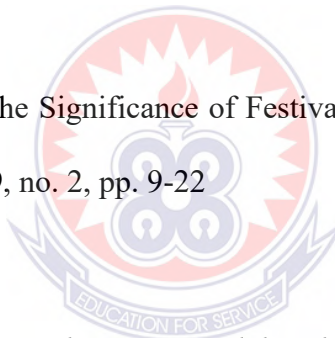
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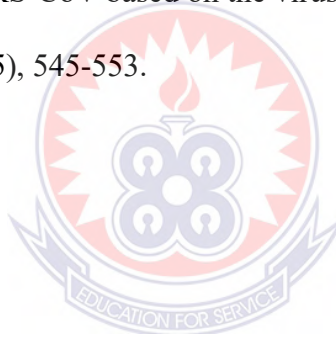
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APPENDIX ONE

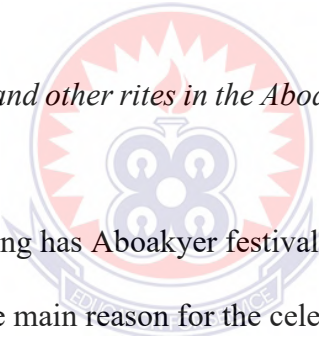
Interview Guide

The questions below are intended to investigate *The Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on Community Based Event: the case of Aboakyer Festival*. The researcher is a Master of Philosophy (Arts and Culture) student who would appreciate very much if you could take some time off your busy schedule to give me your audience. Your comments would be treated confidentially and purely for academic purposes.

The interview is for academic purposes only and the responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

QUESTIONS

1. *How were rituals and other rites in the Aboakyer festival carried out during the pandemic?*

- 
- a) For how long has Aboakyer festival been in existence?
 - b) What is the main reason for the celebration of Aboakyer festival?
 - c) How was it celebrated in 2020 and 2021?
 - d) Why was it not celebrated?
 - e) In the absence of rituals and other rites that are characterised with the Aboakyer festival, what options were used to pacify the gods?
 - f) What is it about the Covid-19 pandemic that made it impossible for the festival to be celebrated?

2. *What are the traditional and cultural implications on the indigenes for not celebrating the festival?*

- a) In the absence of the festival, how did that affect the traditions of the people of Effutu?

- b) Were there any cultural implications on the people of Effutu as the festival was not celebrated?
- c) If the gods were not pacified, how did it affect the community and the general well-being of the people of Effutu?
- d) Were there any alteration of the traditions of the Effutu community as the festival was not celebrated?

3. *What are the importance of the Aboakyer festival to the people of Effutus?*

- a) In your view, what are the significance attached to the celebration of Aboakyer Festival?
- b) What groups of people do you think would have been mostly affected positively if the festival had been celebrated?
- c) Are there specific benefits when people from the diaspora come together for the celebration of the Aboakyer festival?
- d) In your view, who were the most affected people as the festival was not celebrated?



UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC EDUCATION

P.O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana
+233 (0)3221 22035 / (0)32 2941184

dmusic@uow.edu.gh

Ref: SCA/DME/REF/Vol.1/70

19th December, 2022

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Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION – FRANCISCA ASIWOME FORSON (202140300)

Francisca Asiwome Forson is a final year student pursuing MPhil, Arts & Culture at the University of Education, Winneba.

She is currently writing her thesis on the topic "*Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on Community Based Event: the case of Aboakyer Festival*" and therefore needs your assistance to enable her acquire the necessary information for this thesis.

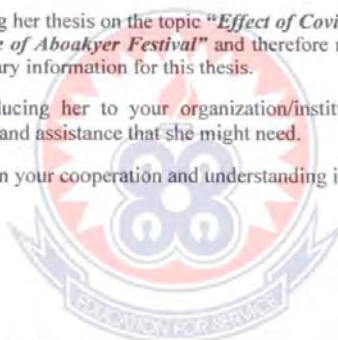
I am officially introducing her to your organization/institution to provide her with the necessary information and assistance that she might need.

We count very much on your cooperation and understanding in this regard.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. (Mrs.) Augusta Arko-Mensah
Ag. Head of Department



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University of Education, Winneba
School of Creative Arts
Adult Participant Written Informed Consent

APPENDIX THREE

Informed Consent Form

Responsible Project Investigators: Dr J. B. K. Aidoo and Dr. Ebenezer Acquah

Investigator: Francisca Asiwome Forson

School of Creative Arts
University of Education, Winneba
P. O. Box 25
Winneba-Ghana

Purpose of this Research

The purpose of this research is to examine find out how rituals and any other rites were performed to pacify the gods in the absence of the celebration of the Aboakyer Festival.

What you will be expected to do

If you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to participate in a guided interview with the investigator (tape-recorded). Then, you will be tape-recorded while conversing about matters relating to *The effect of Covid-19 pandemic on community-based event: the case of Aboakyer festival*. This study will take approximately 30 minutes of your time.

Your rights to confidentiality

The obtained data will be treated with absolute confidentiality. A random number will be assigned to you in order to conceal your actual identity. No information will be released to expose your identity. The audio recordings and background information will be stored in a secure location and only the responsible project investigator and his research consultants will have access to them.

Your right to ask questions at any time

You may ask questions about the research at any time by emailing the responsible project investigator at by phone at 050 -739-1013.

Your right to withdraw at any time

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may withdraw from it or discontinue participation at any time. You may also request for the destruction of your data without any consequences.

Benefits

Your participation in this research may benefit the general populace among the people of Winneba. It adds to the scholarly works in the field of festivals. The research also potentially has a direct implication for the development of arts and culture with reference to materials and building.

Possible risks

To our knowledge, there are no risks or discomforts involved in this research beyond those found in everyday life.

Dissemination

The results will be disseminated through an MPhil. thesis. They may also be disseminated at conferences and in journals.

University of Education, Winneba
School of Creative Arts
Adult Participant Written Informed Consent

Giving consent to participate

By signing the consent form:

- You certify that you are 18 years of age or older, that you have read, and understand the above, that you have been given satisfactory answers to questions concerning the research, that you are aware that you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation in the research any time, without any prejudice.
- If you cannot obtain satisfactory answers to your questions, or have comments or complaints about your participation in this research, you may contact: Dr. Ebenezer Acquah on 0507391013 or Email: ekacquah@uew.edu.gh.

Participant: I have read and understand the above information and voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

Name

Signature

Date

Please keep a copy of this consent form for your records.

