



Exploring the Aesthetic and Sensual Aspects of Bead Adornment: Beads and Sexual Pleasure among Krobo Women

Daitey William^{1*}, Martey Ezekiel², Adjacodjoe Eyiram Aaron³, Owusu Panin Kwame Baah⁴

¹ Department of Product Design and Entrepreneurship, AsanSka University College of Design and Technology, Ghana

² Department of Art, New Mexico State University, USA

³ Department of Product Design and Entrepreneurship, AsanSka University College of Design and Technology, Ghana

⁴ Department of Jewellery Design, AsanSka University College of Design and Technology, Ghana

* Corresponding Author: **Daitey William**

Article Info

ISSN (online): 3107-3972

Volume: 02

Issue: 05

September–October 2025

Received: 05-07-2025

Accepted: 10-08-2025

Published: 03-09-2025

Page No: 01-07

Abstract

The tradition of bead ornamentation, especially waist beads was as old as Krobo and had profound cultural, aesthetic as well as sensual implications. This paper delves into the creative and sensual nature of bead adornment, in that Krobo women employ beads as instruments of culture, sexual appeal, self-empowerment and relationships. The study takes a qualitative methodology where interviews and focus groups were used to get the respondents, the Krobo women at various ages, to give their perceptions about beads. It was also discovered that beads were empowering and promoted positive body image, and enabled women to reclaim their sensuality and sexuality. In addition, there was generational difference with the younger generations more likely to perceive beads as fashion accessories whereas the older generations preserved the cultural and symbolic meaning. Another problem that the study revealed is that Krobo women experience due to societal stigma, as some of the respondents did not wear beads outside the house or in the workplace. Nevertheless, most participants disproved the negative stereotypes as they insisted that the use of beads is an individual and cultural definition of femininity and empowerment. Other views that were found in the study include beliefs in health and spiritual benefits of beads which also helps to highlight the holistic value.

Judging by these results, the study suggests cultural knowledge conservation of beads by the means of education, body positive promotion, and the support of local bead makers. By introducing beads into modern fashion and by organizing campaigns to combat the stigmatization of bead adornment by society, bead adornment among Krobo women might remain a highly relevant part of their culture.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54660/GMPJ.2025.2.5.01-07>

Keywords: Bead Adornment, Krobo Women, Waist Beads, Sexual Pleasure, Body Empowerment

Introduction

Bead ornamentation has deep cultural, aesthetic, and sensual meaning in the majority of African traditional cultures, particularly among the Krobo of Ghana. Beads formed a fundamental aspect of Krobo womanhood that extended beyond adornment to signify social status, initiation rites, and womanhood itself. Beads are worn in Krobo culture to commemorate transitions at various life stages birth, adolescence, marriage, and death itself. But bead decoration's sensual and aesthetic qualities, its relationship with sexual pleasure, remain relatively unexplored terrain in academic scholarship.

Over time, the Krobo have made bead decoration the most visible aspect of their Dipo ceremony, an initiation ritual for adolescent women transitioning to adulthood. In this ceremony, adolescent girls are adorned in extremely vibrant beads, not only to beautify the body but also to initiate them into womanhood and marriage (Anquandah, 1982) ^[2].

Beads, as lovely as they are, are worn on intimate areas of the body such as the waist, where they become indicators of fertility and beauty. The sensation of beads against the body has long been considered a source of delight, and their movement in rhythm when dancing or loving has been claimed to enhance sexual experience, thus intimacy between lovers (Bimpong, 2017) ^[4].

Bead adornment is still strongly associated with beauty, sensuality, and sexual power in contemporary Krobo culture. Waist beads alone are purported to sensualize a woman's body, seduce, and captivate the senses of her lover (Clark, 2014) ^[7]. Beads are traditionally associated with controlling and stimulating sexual desire due to their position near erogenous zones. For the majority of Krobo women, the somatic sensation of beads and their significance offer a multilayered site of sexual pleasure that is embedded in cultural identity.

Despite the ongoing cultural relevance of beads, sensual aspects of Krobo women's bead adornment remain under-researched in their ritual and symbolic implications. This project seeks to explore how Krobo women experience and perceive sensual and sexual pleasure in bead adornment. Through examining the dynamics of the intersection of aesthetics, culture, and sexuality, this project will contribute to the overall understanding of how adornment practices configure intimate experiences and relationships in Krobo culture.

Literature Review

African Cultures' Bead Adornment

Beads have been integral to most African cultures, other than for the adornment role. Beads in most African cultures represent status, wealth, identity, and spirituality. In the West African societies, however, beads feature routinely in the major life phases, which are birth, puberty, marriage, and death. Researchers like Picton (1995) ^[15] have looked at ways in which African beadwork extends beyond ornamentation to a social expression, socialization, and communication art. Beads, for instance, are a royal identity in Nigerian Yoruba, and beads denote social class and religious belonging in Ghana's Ashanti Kingdom (Francis, 2016) ^[10].

Bead jewelry is highly conspicuous among Ghana's Krobo, Ga, and Akan. The Krobo, in particular, have a strong cultural practice of using beads to convey cultural meaning, and their highly elaborate beadwork is both celebrated for its beauty and its cultural significance (Clark, 1994) ^[6]. Beads are everyday sacred objects to these cultures, dense with symbolic meanings that convey subtle messages about the wearer's identity, social standing, and even moral character. Beads in Krobo culture also symbolize transition, for instance, transition into adulthood in the Dipo ritual (Anquandah, 1982) ^[2].

Beads and Sexuality

African cultural research on beads and sexuality has been done in numerous studies, and most scholars have examined beads in terms of portraying femininity, fertility, and sexual empowerment. Beads around the waist, precisely, are indicated to be erotic in nature and serve the purpose of seeking sexual beauty and pleasure (Sarpong, 2007) ^[16]. Krobo waist beads are worn by women from childhood and form part of their sexual identity. They use these beads, which are usually hidden under clothing, to define the hips and the waist, parts of the body that have been used

historically to symbolize sensuality and fertility (Obeng, 2015) ^[12].

Sexuality of waist beads was questioned in the study of Bartels (2000) ^[3], who considers that the beads, by being close to erogenous areas, can be utilized to heighten sexual arousal during sex. Krobo women alone are noted to wear waist beads not only for adornment but also to give sex a boost by exciting partners through the vibration of the beads. This is supported by Krobo sources, where one can attest the back-and-forth movement of the bead during sex or dancing can provide enhanced sensual gratification to the wearer and her partner (Clark, 2014) ^[7].

The Sensual and Aesthetic Pleasures of Bead Adornment

The sensuality of Krobo bead adornment is both in the aesthetic and in tactile experience of wearing beads. The aesthetic appeal of Krobo bead color and pattern is an artwork of femininity, and the feel of beads on the body is most widely recognized to be sensually arousing (Odotei, 2003) ^[13]. Beads girdle the waist, and this visual and tactile rhythm is further enhanced in walking and dancing, and dancing is a major component in the sexuality and sensuality of Krobo women (Bimpong, 2017) ^[4].

It has been expounded by other authors how beads help to construct the body image and self-esteem of Krobo women. Waist beads are a space of embodied empowerment, Ampofo (2010) ^[11] argues, where women become more and more in touch with their bodies and their sexuality. Bead-wearing has been posed as a celebration of the body for Krobo women, of bodily and cultural identity. The bead-body complex constitutes a positive sense of self that dissolves into a freer, more assertive sexuality.

Further, Krobo women also prefer to link their waist beads with agency and empowerment in love affairs. For Obeng (2015) ^[12], the use of beads is seen as a sensible and deliberate endeavor to ensure sexual satisfaction as well as closeness, which provides women with some degree of control over their sexuality. The use of beads as adornment and sexual is at the forefront of negotiation of power dynamics, whereby women use beads to signify their readiness or willingness for sex in subtle, culturally acceptable ways (Bartels, 2000) ^[3].

Beads as Symbols of Femininity and Fertility in Culture

The cultural significance of beads among Krobo women cannot be separated from femininity and fertility. Beads, especially waist beads, have also long been a symbol of fertility, and young girls wear them as part of initiation into motherhood (Sarpong, 2007) ^[16]. Young girls are adorned in beads in the Dipo ritual as an indicator that they have been initiated as women and are ready for marriage and childbearing (Anquandah, 1982) ^[2]. Here, the beads are not only ornaments but also carry cultural meanings that convey the assumptions in society about the role of woman as a mother and a caregiver.

Beads also represent fertility through the belief that waist beads have the ability to make a woman more fertile by making her reproductive organs more attractive and thus appealing to potential mates (Francis, 2016) ^[10]. Beads are typically passed down from mother to daughter, symbolizing continuity of life and passing knowledge from one generation to the next. Waist beads in Krobo women also act as a reminder of their heritage and responsibility to uphold cultural traditions that were associated with fertility and reproduction.

Contemporary Use of Beads and Shifting Attitudes

Nowadays, the function of beads among Krobo women has evolved, and the younger generation has adopted bead adornment as a form of fashion and self-expression. While beads' original functions, i.e., Dipo ceremony, remain central to Krobo identity, young women employ beads to portray fashion and self-expression too (Obeng, 2015) ^[12]. This has sparked new interest in beadwear as women use beads as a means of balancing modern looks and traditional values.

Yet, fashion and commercialization are seen by some researchers to be endangering the erotic and sensual character of bead adornment (Ampofo, 2010) ^[1]. The more beads are universally worn and widely imagined as fashionable ornaments, the less likely the richer cultural connection of beads with sexuality and fertility will be maintained. Nevertheless, Krobo women view their beads as precious identity markers, and waist beads still represent a strong symbol of femininity and sexuality.

Methodology

Research Approach

A qualitative research methodology was used in this study in attempting to make sense of the sensual and aesthetic quality of bead ornamentation, or beads and sexual enjoyment by Krobo women. A qualitative research approach was suitable for this research because the research aimed at documenting the lived experience, personal stories, and cultural meaning of bead ornamentation. Qualitative research, Creswell (2013) ^[8] argues, is optimally utilized in circumstances in which the interest lies in examining complex social phenomena in their natural life context, and in-depth investigation of the participants' perceptions is of the utmost importance. Under this mode, research aimed to collect rich descriptive information regarding Krobo women's experience and perceptions of the sensual and sexual meaning of bead adornment.

Research Method

The research approach employed was ethnography, which best suited the study on the cultural meaning of bead adornment among the Krobo women. Ethnography enabled the researcher to be incorporated within the participants' cultural environment so that they could best learn about the symbolic and sensual meanings the beads possess in their daily lives (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) ^[11]. The cultural, aesthetic, and sexual dimensions of Krobo women's use of beads were examined through the assistance of participant observation and in-depth interviewing in the research.

Study Population

The study population given to the research was Krobo women in the Eastern Region of Ghana, where the practice of bead adornment was prevalent in culture. The population of interest were women aged 18-60 years who wore beads on a daily basis, primarily waist beads, and could give information about the historical and modern use of bead adornment. Having various ages, it was possible to explore generational differences in wearing beads and meaning of the same.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting participants with first-hand knowledge and experience in bead decoration in Krobo culture. Purposive sampling, according to Patton (2002) ^[14], is appropriate in research that entails the selection of participants based on predetermined characteristics in reference to the research interest. In this research, the selection of participants was done according to their experience of bead wearing, their awareness of the cultural meanings of beads, and their openness to talking about sensual and sexual uses of beads. In total, 25 Krobo women were selected for research to achieve variation in experience and opinion.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution and Sampling of Women by Age Group

| Group | Target Population | Accessible Population | Sample Size | Frequency (%) |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Young Women (18-30 years) | 500 | 300 | 10 | 40% |
| Middle-aged Women (31-45 years) | 400 | 250 | 8 | 32% |
| Older Women (46-60 years) | 300 | 150 | 7 | 28% |
| Total | 1,200 | 700 | 25 | 100% |

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024.

Data Collection

Two main data collection methods were utilized, i.e., in-depth semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The semi-structured interviews gave a flexible but guided discussion of the experiences of the participants regarding the bead adornment. The interview questions were based on the cultural relevance of beads, and how beads are used in the intimate context and how the participants feel beads affect the sexual pleasure and attraction. The duration of each interview was 45 minutes to one hour and interviews were done in the local language, Krobo, and translated to English.

Participant observation was an additional element that helped in having a better insight into the way beads are worn and how it is part of the everyday lives of Krobo women. The researcher was able to visit cultural ceremonies and noted the ways in which women would decorate themselves using beads but took special attention on how they interacted with each other and how they oriented their beads in both open and private spaces.

Data Analysis

The thematic analysis was used to analyse the data in which they identified and interpreted the main themes that occurred because of the interviews and observations (Braun and Clarke, 2006) ^[5]. The researcher transcribed the interviews and manually coded the data to determine the patterns and common themes that exist in the context of aesthetic, sensual, and sexual meanings of bead adornment. Other important themes that surfaced during the analysis of the data were the beads as a cultural symbol, the use of beads to increase sexual pleasure by means of their movement, and the use of beads in body image and empowerment.

Validation

The researcher used the triangulation method to address the issue of validity and reliability of the data by including several data collection techniques interviews and observations in order to support the results (Denzin, 2012) ^[9].

Also, the process of member checking took place as participants were allowed to check and verify the truth of their interview transcripts and the findings of the analyzing results. This assisted in making sure that the views of the participants were well represented and that the findings made were related to their experiences.

The validation strategy was also peer debriefing. The researcher consulted the colleagues and scholars in the sphere of cultural studies to revise the research procedure, coding, and emergent themes. This offered objective confirmation of the results and reduced researcher biasness.

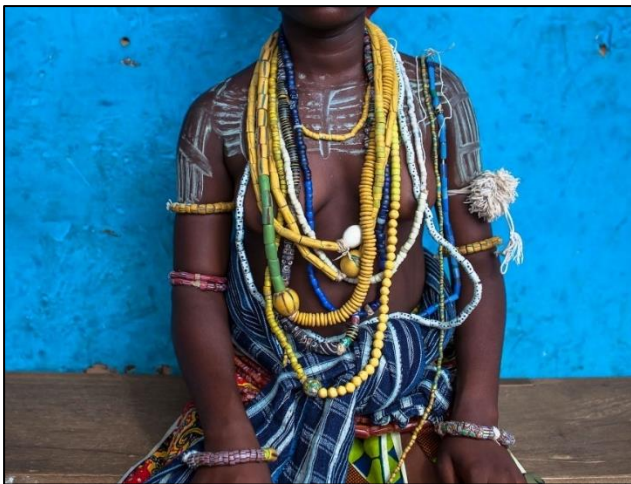
Ethical Considerations

The relevant institutional review board gave Ethical clearance prior to the commencement of data collection. The study purpose, procedures, and the rights of the participants to confidentiality and anonymity were explained to them. All the participants signed an informed consent and were reassured that their personal data and responses remained confidential and would not be used in any other way other than in the context of the research. The participants were also informed of their right to drop out of the study on their terms.

Findings and Discussions

Cultural Significance of Beads

The research discovered that beads, especially waist beads have great cultural and symbolic significance to Krobo women. Based on the interviews, the interviewees stressed that beads are part of the rites of passage, including the Dipo ceremony of a young girl becoming a woman (Anquandah, 1982) ^[2]. The women of various ages stated that in their culture the beads are handed down by mothers to daughters as their cultural heritage, and most of the beads became a symbol of fertility and marriage preparation.



Source: By Researcher, 2024.

Fig 1: A young Krobo girl adorned with traditional beads during a Dipo rite, symbolizing her initiation into adulthood.

2. Beads as Enhancers of Sexual Attraction and Pleasure

The findings revealed that Krobo women perceive waist beads as tools for enhancing sexual attraction and pleasure. Participants across the age groups shared that the tactile experience of wearing beads around the waist heightens body awareness and sensuality. Several women mentioned that the beads accentuate their hips and waist, areas associated with fertility and beauty, which they believe makes them more attractive to their partners (Bartels, 2000) ^[3].

Older participants explained that the movement of beads during dance and intimate moments serves to stimulate sexual pleasure. Many women also reported that beads create a rhythmic sensation during intimate encounters, which both they and their partners find pleasurable. This tactile stimulation, combined with the visual appeal of the beads, was frequently mentioned as enhancing sexual experiences.



Source: By researcher, 2025.

Fig 2: A collection of colourful waist beads worn by Krobo women to enhance sensuality and body awareness.

3. Beads as a Source of Body Empowerment

The research identified that the use of beads serves to promote a positive body image and empowerment of Krobo women. Most of the participants noted that waist beads enable them to become more attuned to their bodies, honoring their flesh and femininity. Waist beads, as noted by young women, help them feel confident, particularly if worn inside in private areas. This is consistent with Ampofo's (2010) ^[1] argument that the use of beads enables women to reassert their sexual selves and their bodies.

Surprisingly, beads were also reported to be worn as a method of intimate communication with their partners, as a sign of readiness for intimacy or as a personal reminder of one's sensuality. This feeling of empowerment was felt across the generations, with the majority of the women reacting to the desire to feel desirable and in control of their sexuality.

4. Generational Differences in Bead Use

The results also exhibited generation differences in the use and perception of beads. The elderly women tended to value beads as ritualistic and cultural, whereas the younger women tended to use beads as fashion accessories or as the representations of the modern-day self-expression. Even some of the younger informants disclosed that although they may be aware of the cultural meaning behind beads, they still perceive beads as fashion and not necessarily as fertility or marriage preparation.

This has changed the attitude in harmony with what Obeng (2015) ^[12] noted that the younger generation is rebranding bead ornamentation to fit their contemporary lifestyles. Nevertheless, the bead wearing and body confidence boosting sexuality was still enjoyed by most of the young women.

5. Waist Beads and Fertility Beliefs

While the majority of participants spoke about beads' sensuality, a few also associated waist beads with fertility.

Older women, especially, believed that waist beads facilitate fertility by drawing attention to the hips and the reproductive area. Younger participants were not fully convinced by this belief but still wore beads as part of identity and sensual expression, embracing cultural associations with fertility.

6. Colour Symbolism and Sexual Significance

Participants revealed that bead colours have specific meanings, which influence their wearing during intimate events. For example, red and black beads were commonly associated with passion and seduction, while white and blue beads were seen as symbols of purity and tranquillity. Some participants revealed that specific colours are worn during special intimate events, either to pass a secret message to a partner or to elicit specific moods or feelings.

Older women were acquainted more with the traditional meaning of bead colours, while the younger women chose the colours based on fashion, though some of the older ones still thought that the selection of colour could influence their partners' desire and attention.

7. Beads as a Tool for Body Modification

The study confirmed that waist beads are worn not only for adornment but also for body modification. The majority of the respondents described beads as waist and hip body shape and size control devices. Some of the women indicated that they use beads that are smaller in order to slim their waists and utilize the beads as a gauge to determine weight gain or loss. This was prevalent with young women who viewed beads as an alternative to more invasive body alteration.

Respondents also revealed that frequent wearing of beads helped them achieve a more defined waistline and highlight their curves, which are culturally associated with beauty and fertility in Krobo society.

8. Beads in Marriage and Sexual Intimacy

One more of the fascinating findings was the utilization of beads in marriage. Married respondents often discussed the function of waist beads in their sexual relations with their husbands. Some women mentioned that they keep some beads for their husbands only as a source of sexual enhancement. Some respondents went as far as to mention that they have sets of beads which they use only during sex, and this, according to them, keeps the sexual thrill in their marriages alive.

Additionally, some informants revealed that waist beads are presented to women by husbands or partners as a component of marriage rituals to seal the marriage of the couple and the husband's appreciation of the wife's sensuality and beauty. This resonates with Krobo traditions where waist beads are cosmetic and intimate gifts that reinforce marriage bonds.

9. Challenges and Stigma Associated with Bead Usage

Despite the good connotation of bead adornment, the study also uncovered issues and stigma that some Krobo women who wear beads face. In the view of some of the respondents, in contemporary Ghanaian society, waist beads are sometimes associated with looseness or poor character, particularly if they appear in the public sphere. This has resulted in some women avoiding wearing waist beads in the open, particularly in professional or religious settings.

However, the majority of the respondents dispelled such stigma, quoting that bead are cultural and cannot be sexualized in the wrong way. Young women were more

willing to embrace waist beads freely as a means of fashion identity, while older women were discreet in the way they exposed their beads to the public.

10. Waist Beads and Health Perceptions

One more of the themes was the concept that beads can be used to influence health and wellness. Some of the elders discussed how certain beads are thought to have some sort of spiritual or medical power, such as keeping evil spirits away or making one a fertile person. An example is beads created out of particular natural items such as seeds or stones, which were thought to be healing and were used to be worn as a protection against injury or sickness.

Though younger participants less frequently adhered to them, they nevertheless recognized the significance of beads in ensuring spiritual and emotional well-being, i.e., with regard to body awareness and self-care. Such a conclusion is consistent with the larger literature on customary African beliefs regarding the spiritual and health-promoting aspects of adornment.

Conclusion

The results of this research also coincide with the literature on African bead ornamentation, which is the case with the Krobo. The deep cultural significance of beads, especially in rites of passage such as the Dipo ceremony, has been well-documented by scholars like Anquandah (1982) ^[2]. This study corroborates the finding that beads are strong cultural symbols of femininity, fertility, and initiation into womanhood.

The data about beads aiding sexual pleasure offers new insight into where decoration meets intimate experience. Waist beads enhancing body consciousness, both in their touch and in their ability to call attention to sexual parts of the body, was attested to by participants. This is echoed by Bartels (2000) ^[3], who argued that beads, through closeness to erogenous zones, enable sexual pleasure. The women's collective experience is that beads are functional and aesthetic intimacy machinery.

One of the most significant discoveries is the role of beads in body empowerment. Wearing beads was discovered to be associated with positive body image, particularly in young women, but such findings do confirm Ampofo's 2010 ^[1] argument regarding how beads enable women to regain their sexual identities. It informs people that this individual power of beads, particularly as personalized markers of sensuality and confidence in intimate relationships, demonstrates the convergence of adornment, body image, and sexuality.

The intergenerational difference in the usage of beads gives a detailed description of how the adornment of beads is evolving. While older women continue to associate beads with tradition, young women are reconfiguring their usage to include contemporary fashion and individual expression. The transformation shows that beads remain pertinent but are being reconfigured to fit the contemporary tastes, a finding which shares common ground with Obeng (2015) ^[12]. That young women today still appreciate the sensual and liberating character of beads, though they do not assume the whole cultural significance, is a sign of the active character of cultural practice.

Again, the view of beads as symbols of fertility, especially among older women, illustrates strongly entrenched cultural values. Younger respondents, though more skeptical about this connection, still recognized the historical connection of

the beads with fertility and womanhood, pointing to the complexity in bead adornment meaning.

These additional findings provide a more extensive grasp of the multifaceted roles of beads within Krobo society, specifically concerning sexuality, body modification, health, and identity.

That beads are being utilized both as a body modification technique and as a weight-watching aid shows the modern application of adornment in new spheres. Beads are not merely decorations but practical items that operate to build the body, revealing an obsessive cultural fascination with body image, particularly for young women. The observation demonstrates how bead adornment has gained new applicability in modern beauty ideals without relinquishing its traditional applications.

The analysis of colour symbolism within the intimate space also contributes to the knowledge on how adornment affects intimate relationships. Beads are never worn for physical appeal alone but are saturated with meanings that convey feelings, needs, and expectations, which reinforce their use as a channel of non-verbal communication among lovers.

The application of waist beads within marriage and intimacy speaks to the continued relevance of beads in Krobo society. Beads represent a symbolic intersection between tradition and human relations, sealing marriage intimacy and reflecting the status of the relationship between the couple. The literature that exists on the intimate applications of waist beads (Bartels, 2000) ^[3] supports this argument, illustrating how waist beads coexist as both cultural objects and objects of individual desire.

The dilemmas and stigmatization of bead-wearing in modern contexts also attest to the complex social dynamics that women must navigate in taking up traditional practices in modern contexts. The observation attests to the overall tension between cultural heritage preservation and conformity to modern societal norms. The women's rejection of stigmatization attests to a strength in the persistence of cultural expressions, even as they adapt to modern lives.

Finally, the understanding of beads' health and spiritual properties highlights the deeper connection of body adornment and general well-being in Krobo culture, and although contemporary meanings are likely to be different, the implication that beads influence physical and emotional well-being conveys toward a broader understanding of adornment as an essential part of self-care and spiritual balance in African cultures.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, some recommendations are put forth in a bid to improve the understanding, preservation, and proper appreciation of bead ornamentation among Krobo women, its cultural, aesthetic, and sensual aspects more so.

1. Cultural Education and Preservation

Against the backdrop of beads' deep cultural meaning for the Krobo, it is suggested that cultural education campaigns are initiated and sustained, especially among young people. Such campaigns should be premised on the cultural and historical importance of bead ornamentation, for instance, its use in rites of passage, fertility legends, and marriage. Public exhibitions and cultural workshops can be organized to teach young women the traditional value of beads so that this valuable cultural tradition is not lost.

The study also found that young women are beginning to view beads as fashion items, and this could lead to the loss of their cultural significance. It is recommended that local cultural leaders, cultural institutions, and schools unite in integrating information on beads into informal and formal educational systems. In this way, the cultural significance of bead adornment will be preserved while being allowed to adapt to modern fashion.

2. Promoting Positive Body Image and Empowerment

Beads are strongly connected to Krobo women's body image and empowerment, particularly in the cultivation of body confidence and sensuality. Body positivity and empowerment campaigns and workshops are recommended, particularly examining what role adornment can play in the cultivation of a positive body image. These workshops can feature bead designers, cultural historians, and health professionals discussing topics on the areas of how beads, when worn, can empower women and foster body awareness in a positive way.

These activities can be replicated in girl empowerment programs to market beads as a way of self-expression and body appreciation. Emphasizing the relationship between heritage and current self-empowerment has the potential to enhance young women's knowledge regarding their bodies while reducing stigma or misinformation that may be associated with bead adornment.

3. Challenging Stigmatization of Beads

The research found that there are certain challenges faced by some Krobo women due to the stigmatization of waist beads by society, particularly in religious and professional settings. It is recommended that sensitization campaigns should be started to dispel the negative perceptions towards bead wearing. These campaigns will involve the local media, the traditional leaders, and women's activist organizations, who will unite to educate the general populace on the cultural and personal significance of beads, that they are not only sexual items but Krobo heritage and identity.

By increasing appreciation for the role of beads in Krobo society, these activities would do away with the social stigma and encourage the wearing of beads by women in various contexts, including professional and public settings.

4. Empowering Local Bead Artisans and the Bead Industry

As bead decoration is still a significant cultural practice, it is essential that local artists producing traditional beads are supported. This research recommends government and private sector support to the local bead-making sector in the form of capacity-building training, grants, and business development services. This support for the industry's development will not only help save traditional bead designs and production techniques, but also create economic opportunities for local artists.

Furthermore, cultural festivals and bead markets of human beings can be established to foster the sale of original Krobo beads. These festivals and markets have the potential to draw in tourists and bead lovers from all over the world, stimulating the local economy apart from promoting the awareness of the relevance of bead ornamentation.

5. Integrating Beads into Fashion and Contemporary Identity

The research concluded that the young Krobo women are likely to embrace beads as a fashion identity. It is recommendable that the changing trend is embraced through the innovation of modern designs of beads that accommodate both traditional and modern tastes. This can be achieved by involving cultural experts, bead designers, and fashion designers in creating bead accessories that are trendy to the young generations without compromising their cultural meaning.

Marketing bead fashion through media, catwalks, and the internet would enhance beads' image as both fashionable and culturally rich products. This would persuade other ethnic women to adopt beads as part of their body-empowerment and fashion culture, thereby expanding the market for Krobo bead products.

6. Health and Well-being Awareness

With the conviction of the spiritual and health significance of beads, it is recommendable that there is greater study and discussion among spiritual leaders and health professionals regarding the claimed health benefits derived from wearing beads. The potential for holding workshops or wellness programs on how beads can be utilized to support emotional and spiritual well-being, particularly through body awareness, relaxation, and personal empowerment, needs to be explored.

While older beliefs in spiritual or medicinal properties of beads may not be shared, it is interesting to explore the ways in which beads contribute to holistic well-being. Bead adornment activities can be integrated into wellness initiatives as a way to provide women with new self-care options that can enhance mental and emotional well-being.

7. Additional Research on Beads and Gender Identity

This study has revealed the utilization of beads in the production of gender identity based on sexuality and the empowerment of the body. There is a need for further study to demonstrate the broader gender relevance of bead ornamentation, that is, how beads constitute gender roles and notions of masculinity and femininity in Krobo society. This can involve an investigation into the utilization of beads by men in Krobo society and how their ornamentation can be dissimilar from or akin to that of women.

Tracing gender dimensions further would lead to a more complete picture of how adornment aids in the construction of gendered identities, and in what ways beads can be utilized to undermine or reaffirm conventional gender roles.

Funding

This research received no external funding

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Author Bio Note

William Daitey is a passionate innovator, educator, and sustainability advocate. He is a lecturer in the Department of Product Design and Entrepreneurship at AsanSka University College of Design and Technology. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Integrated Rural Art and Industry and a Master of Philosophy in Product Design Technology, both from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

(KNUST).

With a strong commitment to innovation, William explores diverse media, including waste plastics and metals, to create sustainable and impactful designs. His teaching philosophy is rooted in inspiring students to think critically, embrace creativity, and develop eco-friendly solutions that address real-world challenges.

His research focuses on sustainability, environmental conservation, sustainable product design, education, and social sciences, all geared towards fostering a greener future. Through his work, he bridges design, technology, and environmental responsibility, driving forward the principles of eco-conscious living and responsible innovation.

References

1. Ampofo A. Beadwork, body image, and female empowerment in Krobo society. *Ghana J Soc Sci.* 2010;12(4):123-34.
2. Anquandah J. Beads as an aspect of traditional Krobo culture. Accra: Ghana University Press; 1982.
3. Bartels FL. Sexuality and adornment in Krobo culture: the role of beads. *J Afr Cult Stud.* 2000;3(2):45-58.
4. Bimpong O. Cultural significance of beads in Krobo traditions. *J Afr Stud.* 2017;6(3):45-58.
5. Braun V, Clarke V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qual Res Psychol.* 2006;3(2):77-101.
6. Clark G. Adornment, gender, and culture: beads in Krobo society. *J Ethnogr Folk.* 1994;4(3):34-47.
7. Clark G. Women and adornment: cultural perspectives on the Krobo beads. *Cult Anthropol.* 2014;8(2):24-36.
8. Creswell JW. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications; 2013.
9. Denzin NK. *The research act: a theoretical introduction to sociological methods.* New Brunswick: AldineTransaction; 2012.
10. Francis R. The social and cultural roles of beads in West Africa. *Afr Herit Rev.* 2016;9(1):21-35.
11. Hammersley M, Atkinson P. *Ethnography: principles in practice.* London: Routledge; 2007.
12. Obeng J. Waist beads and femininity in contemporary Krobo society. *Ghana Cult Stud J.* 2015;7(1):56-73.
13. Odotei I. Body adornment and aesthetics in West Africa. *J Afr Art.* 2003;10(1):33-50.
14. Patton MQ. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications; 2002.
15. Picton J. Beads in Africa: a history of material culture. *Afr Arts J.* 1995;28(1):43-49.
16. Sarpong P. Fertility and adornment: the symbolic role of beads among Ghanaian women. *Int J Afr Stud.* 2007;5(2):71-88.