

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC**

**REVITALISATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF INDIGENOUS AKAN FEMALE  
MUSIC IN GHANA: A STUDY OF “ADENKUM”**

**BY**

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A  
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN MUSIC DEGREE**

**OCTOBER, 2022**

## DECLARATION

I, Awura-Ama Agyapong, hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my original work produced from research undertaken under supervision. Wherever sources have been quoted or used, full acknowledgments have been made.

Candidate

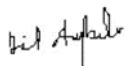
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..... Date...30<sup>th</sup> January, 2023.....

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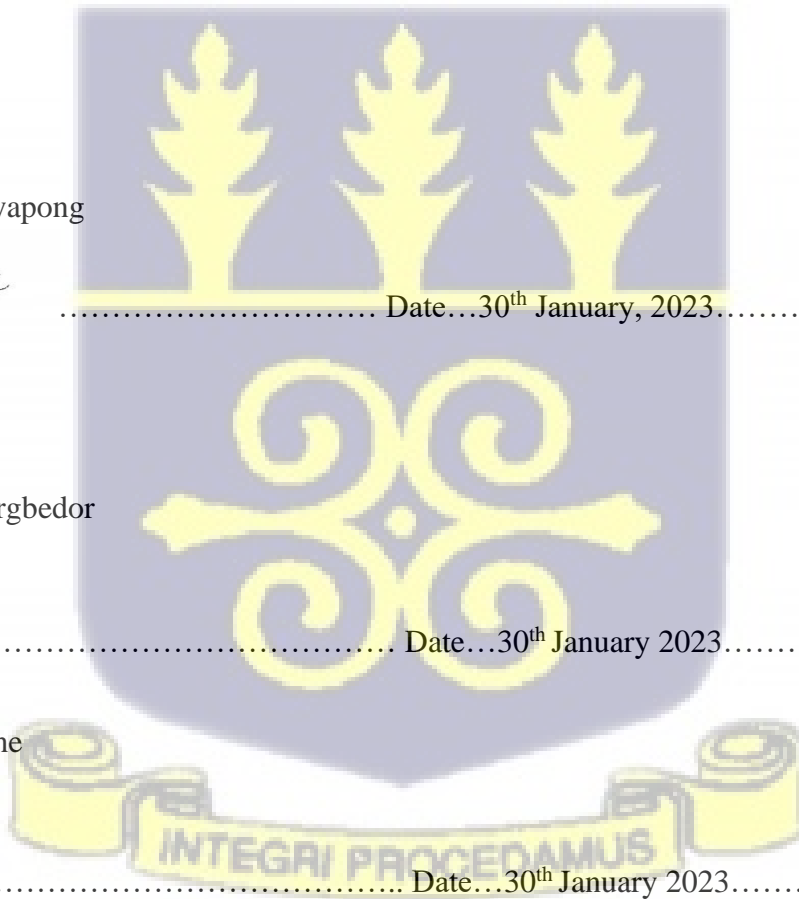


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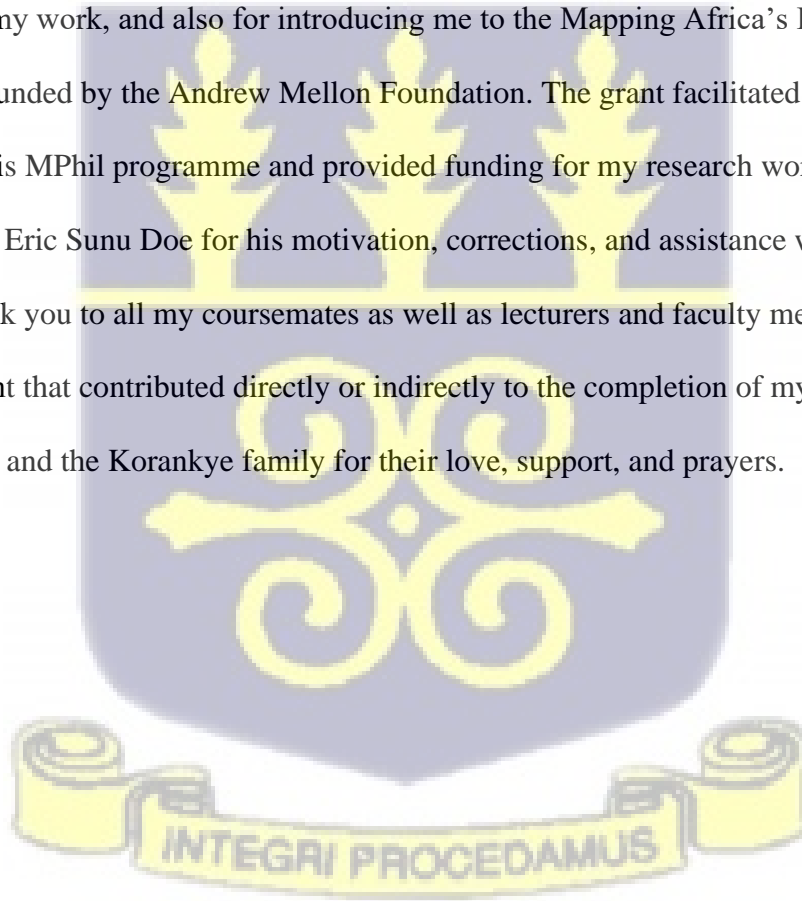
## DEDICATION

In loving memory of Mary Abena Korankyewaa and all emerging female performers hoping to carve a niche for themselves in their respective industries.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank God Almighty for the sufficient mercy, health, grace, and wisdom to complete this research work. I would also like to thank my supervisors: Professor Daniel Avorgbedor and Dr. Adwoa Arhine (Head of Department, Music) for their support and guidance, for supervising my work, and also for introducing me to the Mapping Africa's Identities project grant, which is funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation. The grant facilitated and covered my tuition fee for this MPhil programme and provided funding for my research work. I would also like to thank Dr. Eric Sunu Doe for his motivation, corrections, and assistance with this research work. Also, thank you to all my coursemates as well as lecturers and faculty members of the music department that contributed directly or indirectly to the completion of my thesis. Finally, I thank my family and the Korankye family for their love, support, and prayers.



## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the revival and sustainability of indigenous Akan female musical traditions. It focuses on *adenkum* music to understand how various existing and emerging ensembles revitalise the performance practices of the *adenkum* music in contemporary Ghanaian musical soundscape, which consequently fosters its sustainability. In indigenous Ghanaian communities, women have always played important roles in various contexts of music and cultural traditions. One such musical tradition is the *adenkum*, which, besides its function as entertainment, also serves as a communicative and educational tool. A recent phenomenon in the Ghanaian musical soundscape reveals that Ghanaian traditional musical practices such as the *palm wine*, *borborbor*, and *Adowa* are being re-engaged and rapidly being accepted by the youth. However, personal engagement and interaction with the *adenkum* musical practice reveal that a lot of music consumers or audience think of the *adenkum* as “old school”, “archaic”, “primitive”, and “not very interesting”. However, the Ghana Dance Ensemble, situated at the University of Ghana Campus, Legon, and the *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* (pronounced; “dorkordorkor”) Ensemble, at the University of Education, Winneba, include the *adenkum* in their performances. In this thesis, I examine these ensembles' performance practices to understand how they re-engage the *adenkum* music to revitalise and sustain it in contemporary Ghanaian soundscape. In doing this, I discovered that the primary means by which the *adenkum* is sustained is by continuous engagement with the musical practice and/or revitalising. I further teased out issues of the revitalisation and sustainability that emerged as a result of re-engaging the *adenkum*.

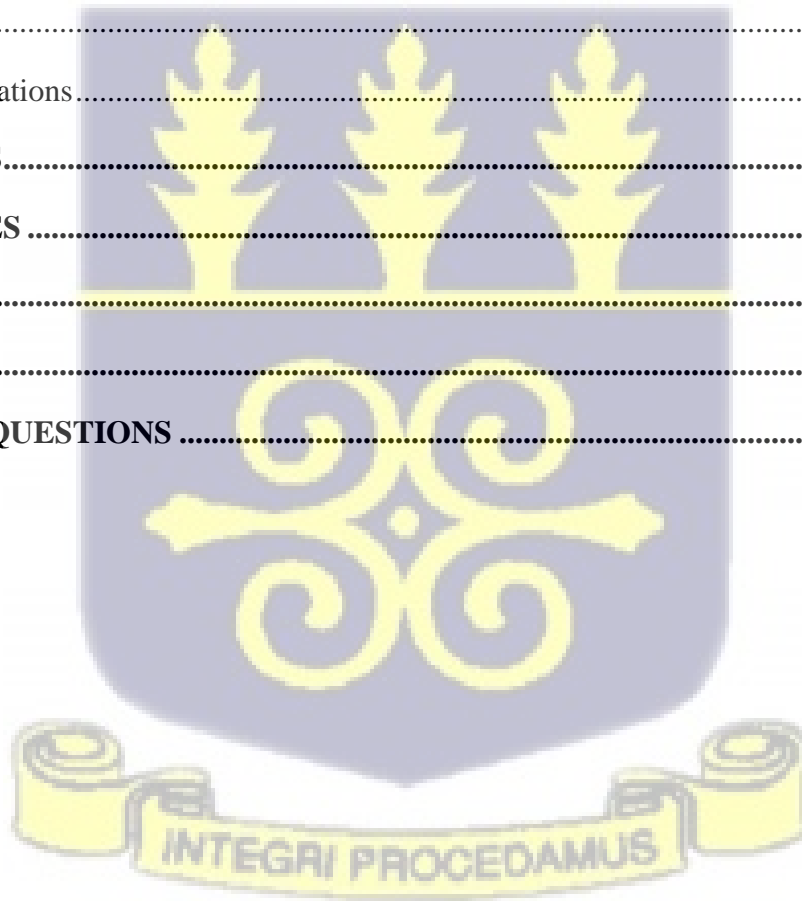
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## GLOSSARY OF AKAN WORDS

Akan: A tribe/ethnic group in Ghana; Languages: Twi, Fante, Bono, Akuapem.

Adenkum: An indigenous musical practice that emerged among women from the Akan areas of Ghana.

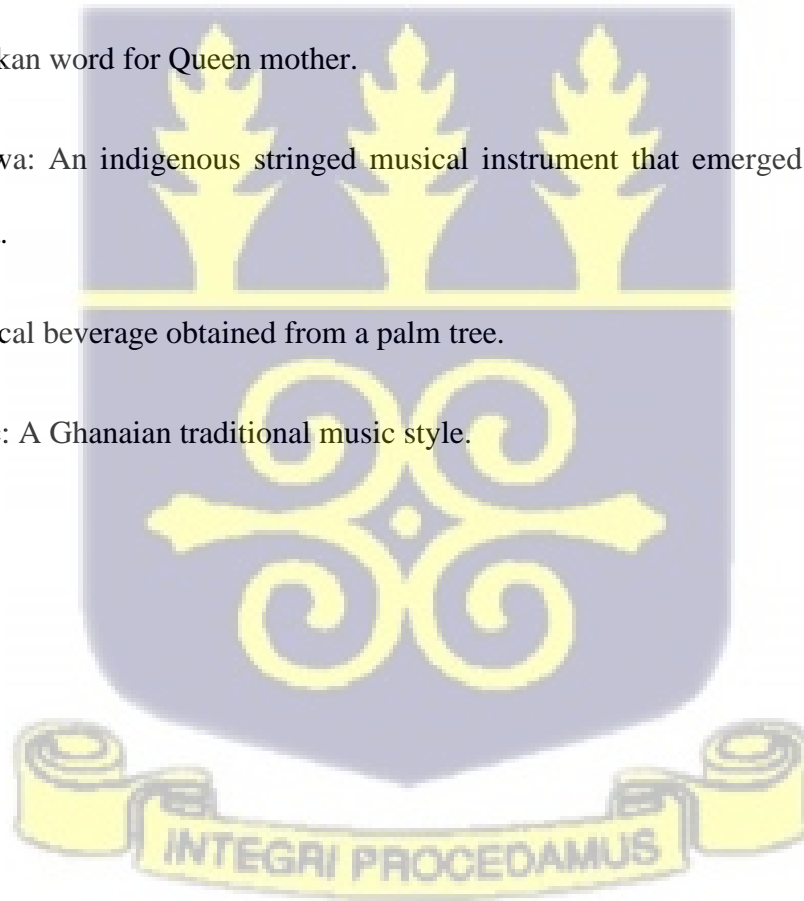
Agya: Akan word for Father/ Elderly man.

Nana Hema: Akan word for Queen mother.

Seprewa/seperewa: An indigenous stringed musical instrument that emerged among the Akan people of Ghana.

Palm wine: A local beverage obtained from a palm tree.

Palmwine music: A Ghanaian traditional music style.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background

Ghanaian traditional music literature has suggested that women have played a significant cultural and functional role in various indigenous musical practices. Aning (1964) documents the *adenkum*, pronounced; (ah-den-koom) music as Akan indigenous music usually practiced by women in some Akan-speaking areas of Ghana. His thesis suggests that several *adenkum* bands in the 1960s performed commercially in the said regions of Ghana. He further documents the songs and some performance practices of these *adenkum* bands. In-depth literature on *adenkum* disappeared on the literary shelf until about a decade ago when Sarpong (2020) began his ethnographic research on *adenkum* music in the North-Western part of Ghana in the Sefwi-Ntakam community. There, Sarpong confirms that these *adenkum* bands are no longer in existence, and its remnant practitioners are now old and have resorted to performing the *adenkum* music in the comfort of their rural homes for personal recreational purposes (Sarpong, 2020).

The terms indigenous, traditional, and neo-traditional music have been contested by various scholars of ethnomusicology. Akin Euba asserts that traditional music is pre-colonial African music that has survived to date. He also continues to posit that neo-traditional music is traditional music that is performed out of its original context. (Euba, 1974). Euba (1975) also asserts that neo-traditional music is music that consists of material taken intact from the old traditional repertoire

and fitted into new surroundings. John Collins describes neo-traditional music as one that has been influenced by popular highlife music (Collins, 2007). However, John Blacking argues that these labels; 'folk', 'art', and 'popular' do not necessarily provide us with a concrete differentiation about different styles of music, but the values these categories carry can be applied to any kind or type of music. He also asserts that “the most pressing tasks are to understand the musical process and ensure that no human beings are deprived of their right to make music....”(Blacking, 1981). Fiagbedzi thereby describes tradition as a term used to describe handing over (Fiagbedzi, 2010). From this line of thought, I will refer to traditional music as the music of indigenous people that has been passed on from generation to generation. However, Gyekye asserts that the new generation will keep taking out and adding to the various particular musical values that are of importance to them at the particular time. He further claims that these alterations can change the authenticity and originality of the particular musical practice in question. (Gyekye, 1997). I, therefore, use these inferences to make the assertion that all folk and indigenous music is traditional music, but not all traditional music is folk or indigenous music. I will therefore describe neo-traditional music in my understanding as indigenous music that has been recontextualised under influences of time, space and creativity. For the purpose of clarification, I will refer to *adenkum* music described and used in my thesis as indigenous music practiced by Akan women in its original context. Where necessary, the term ‘neo-traditional’ will be used if the term is used to describe the *adenkum* performed or staged in a different context.

I posit that, during this timeline, when the indigenous *adenkum* bands declined, from the late 1960s to the early 2000s, John Collins discovered a hybrid of indigenous music styles with Western influences. Popular examples are the *borborbor* and *Wolomei* groups (Collins, 2005). These hybrid

music styles are what we have come to know as neo-traditional music. To clarify and create a focal point for the context of this thesis, I support Eric Sunu's suggestion that due to the influx of these hybrid music groups over the last 50 years, present contact with indigenous musical practices usually receives reception as archaic, primitive, or 'old school'. (Sunu Doe, 2011). Therefore, in this thesis, I refer to the *adenkum* musical practice I examine as an indigenous one performed by women in various Akan areas of Ghana. To exemplify, my first encounter with indigenous Ghanaian music was during my undergraduate days in 2017 at the University of Ghana, music department. I attended a workshop on songwriting on campus with Agya Sei Korankye<sup>1</sup>, the *seperewa*<sup>2</sup> instructor at the music department. He was the principal tutor for the workshop. Agya Sei performs indigenous Ghanaian tunes with the *seperewa* and other indigenous instruments with his group. The audience at this workshop, my age mates, though intrigued by the sound and musical style of the *seperewa*, concluded that, "This is a beautiful old school music style." Agya Sei introduced his daughter, Angela Abena Serwaa Korankye, to the attendees. Serwaa played the *adenkum* alongside her father. The following year, I again encountered the *adenkum* musical practice in a Traditional Music in Ghana course. There, I learned that the *adenkum* is an Akan musical practice that has an instrument as well as songs and dance, which emerged and is usually performed by women in some Akan areas of Ghana. Due to fascination, I decided to experiment with playing the *adenkum* instrument and songs at one of my performances at the Jango club<sup>3</sup>.

Over the past decade, I have observed that the audience's appreciation for indigenous Ghanaian

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<sup>1</sup> Agya Sei Korankye - the *seperewa* instructor at the music department, UG, Legon.

<sup>2</sup> *Seperewa* - a mini hap lute instrument that emerged among the Akan people in the 18th century

<sup>3</sup> Jango club – A night club in Accra, Ghana

and neo-traditional music and dance practices is on the rise. The Legon Palm wine and Kwan Pa bands are typical examples of those who have recontextualised and revitalised palm wine music among the youth in Accra. These groups perform commercially for entertainment and information purposes to large audiences. I also have also observed other professional and amateur groups performing various traditional Ghanaian dances at social events; that is to say, they perform these indigenous music and dance styles in different contexts.

When I began my investigations on the *adenkum*, I discovered that the Ghana Dance Ensemble<sup>4</sup> and the *Dokodoko* Ensemble<sup>5</sup> include the *adenkum* musical practice in their repertoire. Therefore, there is a need to examine these ensembles to understand how they are re-engaging the *adenkum* musical tradition and the implications of this re-engagement for issues of sustainability.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem.**

The recent phenomenon is that various Ghanaian indigenous and neo-traditional music and dance forms are gaining popularity and rapidly being accepted by the youth; as mentioned earlier, the Legon Palm wine band and the Kwan Pa bands have recontextualised and revitalised Ghanaian palm wine music. However, the *adenkum* musical practice is usually tagged as “old school” or “archaic”. Nonetheless, the Ghana Dance Ensemble, situated at the University of Ghana Campus,

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<sup>4</sup> Ghana Dance Ensemble – This is a state-owned group under the auspices of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana that specialises in the performance of various Ghanaian indigenous and contemporary dance practices.

<sup>5</sup> *Dokodoko* Ensemble – This is a privately owned musical ensemble that specialises in the performance of various indigenous Ghanaian musical practices, situated at the University of Education, Winneba. The group is formed and led by Nana Osei Twum Barima.

Legon, and the *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble, at the University of Education, Winneba, include *adenkum* music repertoire in the performances, as well as a vast number of Ghanaian indigenous musical practices for an all-round commercial, educational and recreational purpose. Therefore, I intend to examine these ensembles' performance practices to understand how they re-engage the *adenkum* music to revitalise and sustain it in contemporary Ghanaian soundscape. The following questions guide the study;

### 1.2 Research Questions

- a. What are the performance practices of the *adenkum* and what are the factors that led to its decline over the last half-century?
- b. How do the emerging ensembles re-engage the *adenkum* musical practice to revitalise and sustain the music style?
- c. What are the pertinent issues that emerge from re-engaging the *adenkum* musical practice by the emerging ensembles?

### 1.3 Objectives of the study.

- i. Identify the performance practices of the *adenkum* and what factors led to its performance decline over the last half-century.
- ii. Examine and analyse how the emerging ensembles re-engage the *adenkum* musical practice to revitalise and sustain the music style.
- iii. Analyse the pertinent issues that emerge from re-engaging the *adenkum* musical practice by the emerging ensembles.

#### 1.4 Scope of the study.

This study focuses on *adenkum* music performance practices, issues of its revitalisation, and its sustainability in contemporary Ghanaian musical soundscape. I, therefore, focus on two urban centres—Accra and Winneba, where my case studies are located. I choose the Ghana Dance Ensemble, situated on the University of Ghana campus, and the *Dokɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble on the University of Education, Winneba campus. I also focused my literature review and interviews on *adenkum* music, revitalisation, sustainability, and oral accounts from *adenkum* music practitioners.

It is also vital to note that engaging with Aning (1964) and some of my participant observations revealed that there are different variants of the *adenkum* from the other Akan areas. So in order to create a focal point for my analysis, I focused my investigations and data analysis on the hollow gourd *adenkum* instrument, known to be performed by the Sefwi and the Asante. Another reason for choosing this variant is that both of the ensembles used as case studies also perform the *adenkum* variant in question. I elaborate further on the *adenkum* variants in my next chapter.

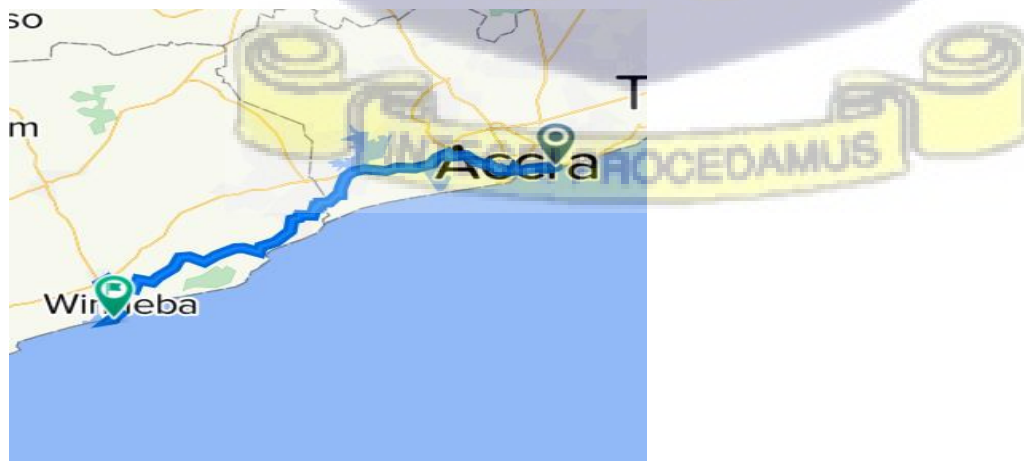


Image 1. Research areas in Focus. NOT TO SCALE. (image from Google location images)

### 1.5 Significance of the study

Revitalisation and sustainability are interdisciplinary concepts that have been thoroughly discussed and analysed on many levels. In Ghanaian ethnomusicology, revitalisation sustainability materials have examined various musical careers of famous musicians with less attention to endangered Akan female indigenous practices. In addition, existing literature on *adenkum* music has explored its history and its performance practices without thoroughly exhausting issues concerning its revival and sustenance. Furthermore, as part of the statutory movement of The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in 2006 (Heritage et al., 2019; Stefano et al., 2014), this work will contribute to community involvement and academic participation policies. There are three related UNESCO Conventions on Culture and Heritage namely, the convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). These Conventions allow the various states to list music; like the *adenkum* as an intangible cultural heritage.

My research, therefore, bridges these gaps and will subsequently contribute to the academic knowledge on the revitalisation and sustainability of *adenkum* music, and other declining female indigenous music across all global music disciplines.

## 1.6 Justification of the study

Literature on *adenkum* has suggested that it is one of the Ghanaian female-dominated indigenous musical practices to have moved from the socio-cultural walls, i.e., original context, to the commercial space. Literature on Akan female traditional music in Ghana has focused on musical traditions like the *adowa* and *nnwomkrɔ*, among others, without paying attention to the *adenkum* musical practice. The other aforementioned Akan female-dominated musical practices also suggest that the women in these ensembles usually leave the instrumental resources to the men in the ensemble. At the same time, they focus on the songs and dances. However, women in the *adenkum* ensembles actively participate in the instrumental resource of the *adenkum* ensemble by playing the *adenkum* instrument and other rhythmic instruments to accompany themselves while they sing and dance. Other studies on Akan female musical practices examine songs and their accompanied dances and instrumental resources without thoroughly engaging issues of their revitalisation and sustenance. In addition, the *adenkum* musical practice has been understudied compared to the other Akan female musical practices mentioned earlier. This research thus fills these gaps. Huib Schippers and Dan Bendrups also suggest that there is a global phenomenon supporting the sustainability of various arts and cultural forms which includes highlights in the ‘millennium development goals’ and the ‘sustainable development goals’ (Schippers & Bendrups, 2015). This justifies the importance of my research work in contributing to the global phenomenon of sustaining indigenous musical practices.

## 1.7 Research method (Methodology)

The methodology I used to facilitate this research work is the qualitative mode of inquiry. I used the case study approach and employed ethnographic participant observation backed by secondary sources. Creswell et al. (2007) posit that the qualitative research design uses non-numerical data to analyse and arrive at conclusions. They also suggest that the case study approach is an exploration of a case over time. The case study approach was essential to this work because it aided in building a focal point on what I aimed to examine, i.e., understanding how various ensembles revitalise or re-engage the *adenkum* musical practice to foster its sustainability.

I participated in the rehearsal and performance schedules of the ensembles, as mentioned earlier that are known to include *adenkum* in their performances. This served as one of the main sources for my primary data due to the scarcity of literature on the *adenkum*. It also created grounds for my participant observation and focused group discussions. I also used other instruments, such as open-ended questions for interviews, informal conversations, and personal communications with the *adenkum* music practitioners, ensemble leaders, members, and traditional music enthusiasts to collect data for the study.

### 1.7.1 Reflexivity

The qualitative research approach usually includes comments by the researcher about their role and their self-reflection in the research work (Creswell & Creswell, 2003). This statement supports my experiences of how I attempted to re-engage the *adenkum* musical practice after my

encounter with it during my undergraduate days in 2017 and 2018 at the University of Ghana, Music Department, as narrated in the background of the study.

In early 2018, I had begun attaching myself to various cover bands to gain some grooming and mentorship to improve my stage presence as a performing artiste. In my quest to create a unique niche and musical identity for my craft, I decided to experiment with playing the *adenkum* instrument and songs at one of my performances at Jango club in Accra the following year to set the tone for what my audience should expect, and also introduce my identity to my audience as an artiste.

As I prepared for my performance days ahead of the set date, 24th September 2019, I discussed with my then significant other, a medical doctor by profession, about opening my performance with the *adenkum* performance for 5 (five) minutes or less. He asked that I demonstrate to him what I intended to do as he was not sure about what I had explained to him. So I performed to him one of the *adenkum* songs as I played one of the *adenkum* rhythms with the gourd as accompaniment. He rather expressed a disappointed face and continued to comment, “*yese bra bebɔ yen nwom a, wo bebɔ yen nontrowa?*” which loosely translates as, “We need you to come and give us music, and you are here playing with empty tin cans.”

He suggested that I discard the *adenkum* with its accompanied songs and go straight to perform the contemporary songs I had rehearsed. Since I was new in the performance scene and was still

trying to find my feet and discover my identity as an artiste, I resorted to seeking validation about my craft from others, including the non-musically inclined. His response about the *adenkum* performance I had just displayed to him discouraged and traumatised me. It made me begin to doubt my capabilities and the strength of my imagination. I, however, decided not to express my sentiments facially or verbally and continued to sing a few contemporary cover songs using the guitar as an accompaniment. He gave me positive feedback on what I did with the guitar and even went ahead to suggest a costume that he thought would complement my craft on the stage.

It should be noted that until about a decade ago, in the Ghanaian social context, female children between the ages of 3 (three) and 7 (seven) years old would often play in the mud, where they conceptualised empty tin cans as cooking utensils. They used sand, ornamental leaves, and flowers as food ingredients to create their imaginary kitchen. They played. This implies that my partner insinuated that playing the *adenkum* gourd with the songs resembled children playing with empty tin cans. In other words, descriptors such as ‘childish,’ ‘not serious,’ and ‘primitive.’

Nonetheless, I followed my instincts, and on the 24th of September 24th, 2019; I began my performance with the *adenkum* instrument alongside two friends (also classmates) as backing vocalists. The reception we received after the performance varied. They included statements like: "This is a very old type of music", "Eei, you've gone deep" and "It is amazing how a young lady like you know knows such old songs performed by old people" and "You have done your research".



Image 2. Image of my *adenkum* performance on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Jango club; justmusic show.  
(Photo by Awura-Ama)

Even though I was not familiar with approaches to ethnomusicological studies, I discovered in the work of (Barz & Cooley, 2008) that, “ethnographers attempt reflexively to understand their positions in the cultures being studied and to represent these positions in ethnographies, including their epistemological stances...”. They further mentioned that, “we get to know other people by making ourselves known to them, and through them to know ourselves again, in a continuous cycle.”. I realise that this was my way of engaging the *adenkum* musical practice while trying to create a niche and an identity for myself as a musical artiste.

Since then, I have mobilised a few friends. We occasionally meet to rehearse and strategise how to situate and perform *adenkum* music in contemporary times should the opportunity arise.

### 1.7.2 Preliminary research

I began my preliminary research on *adenkum* music by scheduling interview sessions with members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble and Agya Sei Korankye since I was unable to find many materials on *adenkum* after visiting the traditional and online libraries; most of the materials with *adenkum* writings covered only snippets of the *adenkum* musical practice. Agya Sei Korankye and members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble were chosen due to my interactions with them when they were invited as resource persons on traditional music, and in the Traditional music in Ghana course in my third year of undergraduate studies. My interactions with Agya Sei Korankye and members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble created a snowball effect, which led to my discovering Nana Twum Barima<sup>6</sup> and his *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble. I further accessed Aning's material on *adenkum* at the reserved section of the Institute of African Studies library on the University of Ghana campus. I also visited the JH Nketia Archives at the same institute to watch and listen to audio-visuals of the *adenkum* musical practice. I discovered several *adenkum* music recordings but only one video of the musical practice which was staged by members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble.

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<sup>6</sup> Nana Twum Barima– Founder of *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble

### 1.7.3 Primary Data Collection

Primary data were geared towards the *adenkum* musical practice. Therefore, visits to the locations of the primary sources in Aning (1964)'s material were crucial in contributing to my findings since the last in-depth research carried out in those areas was in the 1960s-1980s until Sarpong (2020) presented his research findings on the *adenkum* in the Sefwi Ntakam area. Even though I interviewed some *adenkum* music practitioners, the snowball research effect led me to Madam Magdalene Fynn<sup>7</sup>, a queen mother from *Abura Abuase* in the Central region. Popularly known as Nana Afua I or *Nana Hema* (Queen Mother), she is currently an employee of the *Abibigromma* Resident Theatre Group (from the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana). Through her referrals and recommendations, I was able to visit Elmina Chapel Square<sup>8</sup> in the early parts of June 2022 to interact with some *adenkum* performers. I spent the whole day moving around the Chapel Square neighbourhood, talking to the *adenkum* performers I had been referred to. The *adenkum* performers had initially agreed to stage a short performance for me to witness. There, I took the necessary notes and recordings I needed. They, however, told me that due to the spontaneity of the performance, there were no men available to play the *dondo*<sup>9</sup> to accompany them, an instrument they considered vital in an *adenkum* performance.

I spent the night at Eden Lodge Hotel<sup>10</sup> and returned to my residence the following morning. I excluded the Sefwi Ntakam area because Sarpong's recent data were within the last decade. In my defence, I had the same resource persons he interacted with from within my proximity: Agya Sei

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<sup>7</sup> Madam Magdalene Fynn - A queen mother from Abura Abuase in the Central region of Ghana

<sup>8</sup> Elmina Chapel Square – A suburb in Elmina (a town in Central Region)

<sup>9</sup> Dondo - Talking drum, which is known to have emerged in northern Ghana

<sup>10</sup> Eden Lodge Hotel -A guest house located in Cape Coast, Central Region, Ghana

Korankye, his mother, Mary Abena Korankyewaa<sup>11</sup>, (who is rumored to have been an *adenkum* performer in her youthful days), and his nephew, Nana Osei Twum Barima who formed the *Dokodoko* Ensemble at the University of Education, Winneba. I also had informal conversations with Angela Abena Korakye, Agya Sei's daughter, whom I also observed performing the *adenkum* alongside her father. The Korankye family seemed to have created a generational chain of *adenkum* performers. I also participated in the rehearsal sessions of both ensembles and witnessed some of their performances. I further had online interactions with a focused group using the WhatsApp messaging application medium by asking questions using the broadcast message technique and collecting individual answers.

#### 1.7.4 Secondary data

I consulted direct and indirect scholarly and non-scholarly materials on female Akan indigenous music and performance in Ghana, *adenkum* materials, and materials on revitalisation, sustainability, and recontextualisation. I also watched YouTube videos to access and investigate *adenkum* materials and performances. I followed up with frequent visits to the JH Nketia archives at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, to collect audiovisual materials on the *adenkum* musical practice. This was done to ensure the viability of primary data and enhance my research's theoretical backing.

Due to the specifications of my study toward understanding the ways in which the *adenkum* is being revitalized, I adopted the purposive sampling technique to be able to contact and interview specific individuals so as to facilitate my research questions. The sample population thus was

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<sup>11</sup> Mary Abena Korankyewaa – Mother of Agya Sei Korankye

limited to members in the ensembles used in the study, the *adenkum* practitioners, some female live music performers, and other musically inclined individuals.

#### **1.7.5 Tools for data collection.**

I drafted open-ended questionnaires that provided the opportunity for follow-up questions, some of which extended to further ‘WhatsApp’ (messaging software application) chats and phone calls. I also had a jotter where I made notes of crucial points during interviews and observations.

I used my Android smartphone for most of the images and audio-visual recordings. I also used other instruments, such as open-ended questions for interviews, informal conversations, and personal communications with the *adenkum* music practitioners, ensemble leaders, members, and traditional music enthusiasts, to collect data for the study.

#### **1.7.6 Data transcription and analysis**

The data collected from the primary sources were transcribed using my jot book and pen. I transcribed relevant information using Microsoft Word software. Akan dialects were transcribed using the local Twi<sup>12</sup> font application (which I downloaded from Google Playstore<sup>13</sup>) and were transliterated from the Twi dialects to the English language using my computer. Photos captured were also placed in the appropriate places in my writing to facilitate visual effects of the *adenkum* music practitioners and their performance practices. Where necessary, I downloaded images from

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<sup>12</sup> Twi - dialect of the Akan people of Ghana

<sup>13</sup> Google Playstore - an online store operated by Google where people go to find their favourite apps, games, movies, TV shows, books, and more.

the internet to facilitate and speed up the research process. I also used ‘Finale’<sup>14</sup>, a music transcription software to transcribe some of the *adenkum* rhythms discovered in my research.

The data collected were analysed using approaches such as my personal narratives, as well as those of the interviewees, phenomenology while juxtaposing these with the revitalisation and sustainability concepts to tease out my findings, reflections, and recommendations.

## **1.8 Literature Review**

The review of related literature for this thesis explores written materials on *adenkum* music, post-colonial (notion of cultural change) music revitalisation, and music sustainability. The design I apply in reviewing related literature is criticizing previous works on *adenkum*, Akan female musical practices, music revitalisation, and music sustainability while building bridges between related topics to be able to identify central issues in the aforementioned areas as suggested by (Cooper et al., 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2003).

### **1.8.1 Female Indigenous musical practices in Ghana and beyond.**

Kwasi Ampene further examines the female song traditions and the Akan people of Ghana by focusing on the *nwomkrɔ* musical practice. His work explored the creative processes involved in executing these songs. He confirms that the musical practice was primarily for recreational purposes since its inception but became a commercial ensemble over the years (Ampene, 2005).

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<sup>14</sup> Finale - a music transcription software

I relate and compare this to Akosua Anyidoho's contribution to the study of *nnwomkrɔ* in Ghanaian ethnomusicological studies. She investigates the innovations of the performance of *nnwomkrɔ* to understand the ways verbal art forms like the *nnwomkrɔ* musical practice are being modified in contemporary contexts of performance. Some of the key highlights in her writing include the factors causing the decline of *nnwomkrɔ* musical performances. Others include the male participation and categorisation of songs for performance by exclusive bands of men or women in the musical organisation in Ghana. She asserts that the *nnwomkrɔ* performance has been modernised and is now performed in various contexts, including state functions for information and entertainment. It is no longer a leisure-driven musical practice that was performed by women in rural Akan areas on leisure days to release stress and boredom. She concludes that the ambiguity in society's attitude towards change in verbal art might be the result of male conservatism, which, in turn, helps to maintain the status quo (Anyidoho, 1994).

I infer and use these works to inform my analysis of the decline of the *adenkum* in my next chapter. I am able to lend ideas and synthesize to aid in my analysis of the decline and dissemination of the *adenkum* musical practice.

Similarly, Adowa Arhine establishes and contributes to the literature on indigenous Akan female music with her work on the *adzewa* in the Fante society of Ghana. She contends that the *adzewa* is a female complementary performance to a male warrior group, known as the *Asafo*. Her research investigates how *adzewa* songs offer Fante women a way to use the musical resources available to them to address issues that may usually be deemed permissible to discuss in public as well as navigate social realities within the framework of play (*agro*) where women lay claim to a social license to sing about issues that normally may not be deemed permissible to discuss openly all in

the context of agro. She concludes that gender is fluid among the Fante due to the flexibility of roles she discovers in the performance of the Adzewa (Arhine, 2016).

Arhine's work aids me to synthesize the musical and performance features of the *adenkum* musical practice due to the similarities in the original performance context of verbal expressionism. These inferences guide my analysis in situating the *adenkum* musical practice in contemporary and sociocultural gender binaries in the *adenkum* musical practice, as far as re-engaging the *adenkum* musical practice is concerned. Since the *adenkum* has been asserted by various scholars to be a female-ascribed genre, gender issues are inevitable in my work.

Researchers such as (Ndah et. al, 2021) have investigated the performance of some traditional music in Ghana such as the warrior ensembles like Akpi and Adevu in the Logba area in the Volta region. They thought the general perception was that it is the only men who got involved in Akpi and Adevu performances. However, their findings revealed that women have talent in the performance of these traditional musical types and their related arts, just like their male counterparts. What hindered their participation in these performances was the societal restrictions imposed on them. These include taboos that forbid women from the performance of traditional music since the people believed that it could cause barrenness as well as ridicule from society towards female performers. The perception was that female performers were irresponsible wives and mothers who could not cook for their husbands and take care of their children and the household, yet strangely found time to indulge in music performances. They concluded by encouraging traditional authorities to work on removing the superstitious barriers hindering women from the performance of Akpi and Adevu musical types in the Logba area (Ndah et al, 2021).

Hence, I argue in my second chapter, that the factors stated above contribute to the decline of the adenkum musical practice.

Similarly, Berta Adom investigates the Avatime women's cradle songs to document the voices of women who, through singing to their babies, speak to society at large. A trace of this concept is found in Arhine's (2016) work of Adzewa. Bertha continues to suggest that besides the tradition of oral transmission of songs and other aspects of culture, women create their songs for their babies. Such texts are meant to reassure a baby of a mother's love and affection but some of the songs have no direct bearing on babies at all but are rather aimed at society. However, a woman may perform any of them as a cradle song due to the concept of not being able to discuss these issues openly. Due to the patriarchal nature of Avatime society, cradle songs enable women to express thoughts about their environment that may otherwise be perceived as inappropriate. She concludes that the Avatime women's sentiments, concerns, beliefs, and values are enshrined in cradle songs (Adom, 2006).

Manoleta Mora (2008) suggests that gender relations in island Southeast Asia are often characterised in terms of binary opposites or complementarities. She focuses on the T'boli music-making style and observes that it reproduces patterns of gender difference. She also asserts that it provides avenues for women to participate in aesthetic realms. In other words, T'boli music-making can be said to reproduce patterns of gender difference. She concludes with thoughts that traditional lifestyles have become disrupted, thus, the gender differentiation informed by the T'boli

provides an avenue for representing and reinforcing gender relations to become eminent in the T'boli's changing cultural dynamism. (Mora, 2008).

I use these assertions on female expressive arts and the socio-cultural implications of women in these indigenous societies to serve as a pivot to analyse the importance of the *adenkum* musical performance in the various Akan and other indigenous societies across the globe.

### **1.8.1.1 The history of the *adenkum* musical practice in Akan societies in Ghana**

J.H Nketia's work on Ghanaian folk songs examines some Akan female traditional musical practices like the *nwonkoro*, *assadua*, *adowa*, and *apoo*. His work focuses on the history and socio-cultural aspects of these feminine music traditions and their performance practices. He further examines the mode of transmission of these musical traditions using oral and aural means. He states that musical practices are performed for cultural and economic purposes (Nketia, 1963). Although the *adenkum* music was excluded from his study, Aning(1964) subsequently fills this gap by examining the *adenkum* bands. He introduces the bands and discusses that women dominate the *adenkum* band, with a few men playing other rhythmic instruments to accompany them while the women sing. He also writes that as an instrument, it is usually played by hitting, stamping, and slapping it on the palms, forearms, and thighs. Each part of the instrument produces a different sound when used on a particular part of the body. As a musical genre, the *adenkum* songs, usually sung in unison, in two-part and three-part harmony, have themes of love and address other social issues in particular societies. The themes of the songs also document and educate younger ones on historical occurrences. He conducted his field research among three Akan Areas; the Fante, the

Akuapem, and the Ashanti. He further collected songs of the bands, transcribing and analysing them. There, he traced the origin of the *adenkum* music to belong to the Mampong of the Ashanti region due to the *adenkum* song texts that mostly had themes of appellations to the King Atakora of the Mampong in the Ashanti region. He also categorized the instrumental resource in the *adenkum* ensembles in the three areas. He also revealed that the *adenkum* instrument used in the various areas varied depending on the clan of the Akan people staging the performance. He concludes that the King introduces the *dondo* (talking drum from the north) to the people; thus, the inclusion of the talking drum is a significant part of the *adenkum* performance (Aning, 1964).

Sutherland-Addy (1998) opined that the wives of the Ashanti kings hailed and sang appellations to them while they played the *adenkum* around the 1800s. Her research focused on women and verbal arts in the Ogua Edina Area in the Central region of Ghana. She conducted her research on *adenkum* and Adzewa musical practices. On the *adenkum*, she focused on a group in Elmina called Akonkar *adenkum* group. Even though she could not provide the etymology of the *adenkum*, the group members confirmed that they inherited the *adenkum* musical practice from their mothers and that it had been part of their lives for over a hundred years. She also confirmed the use of the *dondo* in the *adenkum* performances and linked it to the probable cause of trade between Elmina and Kumasi during the period. Sutherland observed that the *adenkum* gourds these women performed with were usually wrapped with threaded beads, small stones, and seeds to create a rattle. She also mentioned that even though all the women in the ensemble played the *adenkum* rattle during the performance demonstration, the ensemble leader had two rattles which she performed with (Sutherland-Addy, 1998).

Sarpong (2020)'s work on *adenkum* focuses on the concept of music and communication. He conducted ethnographic research in Sefwi Ntakam, a town in the North-Western part of Ghana. Sarpong's investigations on the *adenkum* debunk Aning's claim about the origin of the *adenkum* musical practice. Sarpong provides evidence of how the women used music to communicate complex and delicate issues and address societal issues. He also gave detailed information about the etymology of the musical style from his ethnographic days in Sefwi in 2011. However, he did not thoroughly explore issues of sustainability of the *adenkum* music. He confirms that the said music style practitioners are old and currently perform the music in their homes for recreational practices.

Granted that his information is valid, what is left to be examined is how the bands and the performance styles of *adenkum* are being presented in contemporary times to tease out issues of its revitalisation and sustainability as far as staging an indigenous music style in contemporary Ghanaian musical soundscape is concerned.

### **1.8.3 Revitalising Ghanaian female indigenous music in post-colonial Ghana.**

Wallace (1956) posits that members of a society engage in revitalisation movements to construct a more satisfying culture. While Levine (1993) affirms this claim and continues to suggest that music revitalisation provides an avenue to "reshape, reinterpret and redefine a musical culture." This theory was utilised by the late Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who began his revitalisation movement in Ghanaian nationalism. Ghana had just obtained independence but various indigenous music, dance, and cultural practices were being lost and replaced due to foreign influences and religion

during colonial times. To reshape, redefine and reinterpret these cultural practices in order to foster their sustainability and create a more relatable avenue and context for these cultural practices, he implemented statutory policies that sought to pave the way for the establishment of various state-owned institutions to propagate and disseminate Ghana's cultural policies through entertainment and education. These institutions include the Centre for National Culture and the Institute of Arts and Culture. From these was birthed the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana and The Ghana Dance Ensemble (GDE) at the School of Performing Arts (SPA) as a means of propagating Ghanaian culture into the Ghanaian education system. Others include the Centre for National Culture in Accra, Cape Coast, and National Theatre (Botwe-Asamoah, 2013; Schauert, 2015). My focus thus remains on the GDE for my research.

I synthesize Titon (2009)'s assertion about applying sustainability to music, so as to sustain people making music in Nkrumah's statutory cultural policies to contribute to sustaining Ghana's cultural practices. Through his established institutions, Ghanaians can reconnect and reclaim their history and heritage while providing the citizens with an identity.



### **1.9 Theoretical framework**

This study explores how the emerging *adenkum* ensembles present the performance practices of *adenkum* music to understand the revitalisation processes and issues of its sustainability. The theories of sustainability and revitalisation frame the research.

### 1.9.1 Music revitalisation.

The literal meaning of revitalisation is to bring life to something or an idea. Anthony Wallace published a paper called "Revitalisation Movements" in 1956 to describe how cultures change themselves. He describes a revitalisation movement as an organised conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture" (Wallace, 1956). Levine (1993) argues that "music revitalisation has been a strategy for cultural survival..... It is a conscious effort made by the members of a community to construct a more satisfying culture. It provides an avenue to reshape, reinterpret and redefine a musical culture" (Levine, 1993).

Livingston defines music revival as any social movement to preserve a musical tradition believed to be declining or completely relegated to the past. She also proposed a model or factors that scholars should use to help understand the revival of a particular music phenomenon (Livingston, 1999; 2016). I used a few of the points to guide and help analyse this work.

“1. An individual or small group of "core revivalists:" - This informs the use and choice of the case studies, which is to be examined in my third chapter. The case studies used will aid in my analysis of how various individuals are the reasons why the *adenkum* is being revitalized.

“2. Revival informants and/or original sources (e.g., historical sound recording)”.: – This informs the use of primary sources to provide information passed down through oral tradition, hence the use of personal interviews. It also informs my visits to the JH Nketia Archives at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, to gather materials and information on the *adenkum*. This is also exemplified through my visits to the various research areas where *adenkum* is being practiced.

“3. A revivalist ideology and discourse.”

Even though Justyna Olko and Julia Sallabank's work on revitalisation was geared towards languages, they assert that connecting with the past may not alone be a sufficient motivation for instigators to revitalise, but understanding history and heritage is an important part of claiming identity. They also provide other areas of motivation for embarking on revitalisation movements; these include healing and well-being, building community and social change, knowledge, and culture as well as cognitive benefits (Olko & Sallabank, 2021). I infer from this idea which is employed in my theoretical framework to analyse this work, i.e., revitalisation and sustainability. Sunu Doe agrees with Levine (1993) that revitalisation means to reshape, reinterpret and/or redefine, as his research used an action research approach in applied ethnomusicology to understand how palm wine music is revitalised. He instigated the Nsadwase performance circle, which served as an avenue to sustain palm-wine music and revive it in contemporary Ghanaian musical soundscape (Sunu Doe, 2020).

This framework highlights my idea of examining the emerging *adenkum* ensembles as a conscious way of understanding how they re-engage the *adenkum* musical practice in contemporary times. This will help me to understand how the musical practice is revitalised to understand its sustainability issues.



### **1.9.2 Music Sustainability**

The concepts of 'sustenance' and 'sustainability' have been thoroughly argued and explained in literature and various contexts. Various literature on music sustainability focuses on how various musical practices in various contexts can be maintained. Music literature on sustainability has also covered the importance of safeguarding various musical traditions in our sociocultural lives.

The dictionary also differentiates that when the words ‘sustenance’ and ‘sustainability’ are being used as nouns, the difference is that, "sustainability is the ability to sustain something while sustenance is something that provides support or nourishment." For comprehensive purposes of my thesis, the word ‘sustenance’ may be used occasionally as an adverb to qualify and modify the word ‘sustainability’.

Therewith, the main aim of my research focuses on how the *adenkum* musical practice is being sustained or maintained in contemporary contexts. I have been able to achieve this by locating and outlining particular resources, strategies, and related arguments that revealed how various ensembles sustain the *adenkum* music which revitalises and ensures the continuity of the *adenkum* musical tradition even in contemporary Ghanaian music soundscape.

Even though this research was not perceived to be an advocacy, or under the auspices of applied ethnomusicology (Harrison et al., 2010), by virtue of understanding the performance practices of the *adenkum* and how it is being sustained provides and highlights the opportunity to explore my interest in critical theory of (Regelski, 1994) and applied ethnomusicology. This will subsequently inform my further studies on vying for advocacy of the *adenkum* by applying all the knowledge and findings discovered in this first stage of my research work.

Titon (2009) suggests that, "applying sustainability to music is important because even though music is not a natural resource like air and water, it is a biocultural resource and a product of human life..... Therefore, sustaining music means to sustain people making music." We reconnect and reclaim our history, and provide a people with an identity. (Titon, 2009)

Catherine Grant defines music sustainability as the ability of a music genre to endure without implications of either a static tradition or preservationist bearing (Grant, 2013). However, (Gyekye, 1997) argues that "what is not easy to decide, however, is how long a practice or belief must last for it to mature or to be regarded as tradition." He then states that to call a particular cultural value or social practice a tradition, it should have been practiced by and for about three generations, which is approximately 90 years considering our generation has a life span of over 30 years according to the description in the thesis. He then describes tradition as any cultural product created by a past generation and is still practiced and preserved, whether in part or whole, by the successive generation, which is still being maintained to the present.

With these inferences, my findings from investigations on *adenkum* practices over the last half-century would suggest if the music style qualifies to be called a 'tradition' or not. Grant and Titon's concept of sustainability will facilitate my understanding of how the performance practices of *adenkum* have evolved over the last half-century.

I also consider (Kubik, 1986) and (Lomax, 1962) suggestions on how to approach the study of musical practices. Both authors suggest that the cultural history of the society and the particular music context should be examined. Therefore, the Akan and the socio-cultural context of the origin of the *adenkum* music performance will be examined to facilitate my understanding of the *adenkum* musical practice in the Akan society. I will subsequently engage Titon (2009)'s idea of the significance of music sustainability as a way to sustain the people performing the music.

However, Kagan & Kirchberg (2016) also question the credibility of studies on music sustainability. They assert that a specific focus on music is lacking in sustainability science. They investigate the specific potentials of music and its importance. Some of their findings include group cohesion and social creativity. They suggest that both of these are important resources for organisational resilience. Their findings and conclusions subsequently contribute to the cultural aspects of sustainability in communities, organisations, and society (Kagan & Kirchberg, 2016).

Schippers & Grant's (2016) investigate and develop a systematic framework (the scientific approach as stated by Kagan & Kirchberg), to help understand the main forces impacting music sustainability in many cultures. They categorised them into five domains, as so:

1 . Systems of learning music: This domain assesses the learning processes that are central to acquiring music knowledge to facilitate the sustainability of various music cultures. This helps to broaden my scope of merging the revitalization processes of the adenkum music practice for issues of sustainability in this research project. This domain aids my understanding of the learning process of the adenkum. I explore various ways in which the adenkum musical tradition is assimilated by various practitioners for issues of its sustainability. The case studies used also provide the platform to view this through the lens of learning the adenkum musical tradition in established and non-established institutions.

2. Musicians and communities: This domain aids the researcher in examining the roles and interactions of musicians within their communities. Hence, I am able to merge the career life of some of the practitioners, to understand how their career life informs their musical practices and their choice of repertoire in their respective groups.

3. The "Contexts and Constructs" domain explores how social and cultural factors influence musical traditions, including factors like personal and societal preferences, aesthetics, identity, gender, and the often underestimated role of prestige. Here, analysing the career life of the various adenkum practioneers helps in my understanding of the ways in which their socialization in reflected in their various ways of the adenkum revitalization.

4. The "Regulations and Infrastructure" domain focuses on the physical aspects of music, such as venues and resources required for music to thrive. It also assesses the impact of regulations on music, including grants, artists' rights, copyright laws, and challenges arising from authoritarian regimes or civil unrest.

5. Media and the industry. This domain addresses the wide range of dissemination and commercial music industry aspects of music other aspects also include musical survival and the impact of technology on music and the media at large. (Schippers & Grant, 2016).

In my subsequent chapters, I use this domain in my analysis of the ways in which the practitioners of the adenkum music use social media as a platform to revitalize the adenkum by creating various awareness of the history, performance practices, and other contextual aspects of the adenkum. The technological advantage of social media helps to spread the musical tradition to various parts of the world with a click of a button. The information is also stored in the cloud web which will hence be available for many years to come.

### **1.10 Limitations of the Study**

The main limitation I encountered in my research was the absence of in-depth literature on *adenkum*. As a result, I over-depend on Aning (1964), Sarpong (2020), and Sutherland Addy (1998) due to the scanty written materials on the *adenkum*. However, contact with the *adenkum*

resource persons and interactions with the ensembles provided me with enough relevant information needed for this research. In addition, due to the unpopular nature of the *adenkum* musical practice compared to *adowa* and *nwomkrɔ*, I always had to explain the nature and context of the *adenkum* musical practice to my interviewees to have logical interactions with them.

### 1.11 Organisation of the study

The format of the presentation of the thesis for the music department at the University of Ghana is five chapters. The first chapter includes the research purpose, objectives, methodology, and literature review, while the last chapter focuses on findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

My first chapter, therefore, covered my research objectives and motivations, which were primarily to examine various ensembles to understand how they re-engage the *adenkum* musical practice to revitalise and sustain its contemporary Ghanaian musical soundscape. I also gave a detailed account of my methodology and also devoted a section to reviewing, directly and indirectly, related literature to this work while framing it within my theories of revitalisation and sustainability.

The second chapter examined the historical background of women in indigenous Akan performance spaces to understand the socio-cultural significance of their presence in the indigenous musical practices in Akan communities. It further explored the origin, etymology, and performance practices of the *adenkum* musical tradition to understand its relevance to its practitioners in their respective Akan indigenous societies. I also engaged existing literature on

*adenkum* as well as oral accounts to tease out the origin, etymology, and performance practices of the *adenkum* musical practice. This aided me in tracing the dissemination and decline of the *adenkum* musical practice in its origin and performance contexts.

The third chapter discussed how the *adenkum* musical practice is being revitalised, ensuring its sustenance. To achieve this, I examined the concept of revitalisation in Ghanaian nationalism which led me to examine and partition my case studies into two categories; Statutory and non-statutory. This influenced the choice of my two case studies, which are; the Ghana Dance Ensemble (GDE), situated on the University of Ghana (UG) campus (Statutory), and the *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble (DE), on the University of Education, Winneba (UWE) campus (Non-Statutory).

In chapter four, I discussed the pertinent issues that emerge as a result of the revitalisation and sustainability of the *adenkum* musical practice by the selected ensembles. From there, I was able to draw rational conclusions and provide recommendations in the last chapter.



Through the qualitative method, case study approach used, and the research tools applied, I was able to fulfill the aim and objectives of my research, to understand how the Ghana Dance and *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensembles re-engage the *adenkum* musical practice to revitalise and subsequently sustain it. The revitalisation, sustainability, and recontextualisation theories also helped make reasonable arguments and rational conclusions.

## CHAPTER TWO

### WOMEN AND THE *ADENKUM* MUSICAL TRADITION OF THE AKAN

This chapter examines the historical background of women in indigenous Akan performance spaces to understand the socio-cultural significance of their presence in the indigenous musical practices of Akan communities. It further explores the origin, etymology, and cultural practices of the *adenkum* musical practice to trace the decline in its performance and also to understand its relevance to its practitioners in their respective Akan indigenous societies.

#### 2.1 History of women in indigenous Akan musical practices.

Various Ghanaian literature have concluded that women in Akan indigenous societies play significant roles in the socio-cultural life of their communities. I posit that women are revered in the Akan community because of the Akan mythology of creation. They believe that creation is a birthing process; that is, pregnancy and birthing, which can only be biologically made possible by a woman. In effect, the political system of the Akan is headed by a Queen mother (Nana Hema)

who appoints chiefs and members of the court. The political system is made up of several ranks which come with different responsibilities to the different people based on their ranks.

However, I grew up learning that women in various indigenous contexts or spaces were forbidden from expressing themselves verbally in various performance contexts. The primary means of self-expression for women in these spaces, therefore, was through the use of songs and other musical practices, probably as a result of the influx of hegemonic masculinity practices in the various communities (Donaldson, 1993; Morrell et al., 2012).

Other perspectives, like (Jones, 1993) elaborate on the role of women in warfare during the nineteenth century in the Gold Coast, drawing examples from the Fante/Akan community. He observes that even though women rarely appeared on the battlegrounds, they played a significant role as a support system to motivate their men. The 'mombomme' ceremony was introduced, which involved rituals like dance, prayer, praise and execration, symbolism, obscenity, and inversion. These women subjected themselves to these rituals while their husbands and brothers were at war. The activities displayed in these rituals were believed to have magical significance in helping the men defeat their enemies. If they lost the war, it meant that the women did not carry out certain rituals at the time they should have. In other words, the inversion and symbolic rituals the women practiced complemented the men in war (Jones, 1993).

Some common Akan female indigenous music styles include *nwomkrɔ*, *adowa*, *adzewa*, *apoa*, and *adenkum* (Ampene, 2005; Nketia, 1963).

During my field investigations, I discovered that Agya Sei Korankye's mother, the late Mary Abena Korankyewaa, is rumored to hail from a musical family in the Sefwi Ntakam community that practices various musical traditions like the *seprewa* and *adenkum*. I, therefore, interviewed her, fortunately, before her demise as well as Agya Sei Korankye himself, his nephew, Nana Twum Osei Barima, and his daughter, Angela Abena Serwaa Korankye<sup>15</sup> on the etymology and history of the *adenkum* musical practice since they seem to have created a generational chain of *adenkum* performers.

Agya Sei Korankye and his now, late mother, Mary Abena Korankyewaa gave their opinion on the emergence of women in indigenous music when I interviewed them. They both talked about the times when there were many wars in the Gold Coast. Agya Sei stated that men were trained to fight in wars while women were obliged to stay at home, take care of the children, and run the household. Music was one of the means many women entertained themselves. They also entertained their children and taught them moral values through music lullabies and children's songs. There were also special songs for special occasions to groom and usher young people into adulthood. Apart from these musical functions, women sang and chanted prayers to support their husbands and brothers at war.

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<sup>15</sup> Angela Abena Serwaa Korankye – Daughter of Agya Sei Korankye

Agya Sei also refers to the Bible, where women sang and chanted praise songs when men were victorious in war.

*“When the men were returning home after David killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres.”* (1st Samuel 18:6, New International Version).

His suggestion supports Jones (1993) where women complimented men by creating or inverting roles, praying, and going through several rituals to support their husbands and brothers while they were at war. Agya Sei states that the *adenkum*, therefore, was probably also discovered during war periods, probably due to experimental exploits by women to find a percussive device to support their singing since they were banned from handling drums and other percussive instruments.

The context of music-making in the Akan society is primarily for religious, recreational, economic, and political activities (Nketia, 1974). Every occasion comes with its type of music, which has a different and specific function; that is to say that most of the musical activities in the Akan areas are functional. Bands are formed in the communities to cater for the various musical activities, but the most important ones are their Abofuo (Hunters) and Asafo (warriors) organisations, even though many people usually have informal musical activities and informal spaces.

## **2.2 Context of origin of the *adenkum***

There have been several contentions about what *adenkum* is. As stated earlier in my introductory chapter, Nketia (1963), Aning (1964), Suhterland-Addy (1998), and Sarpong (2020) confirm that

*adenkum* is a type of genre, a musical instrument, and a type of dance that is performed by older women in some Akan speaking areas of Ghana. My observations about the *adenkum* musical practice reflect that the instrument, songs, and dance is named after the *adenkum* instrument. It is made from a calabash gourd with a long neck and two openings at each end. For my research, I will refer to the *adenkum* musical instrument, the songs, and the dance collectively as “a musical practice” for easy comprehension. I will also occasionally refer to the *adenkum* instrument as the “*adenkum* gourd” for comprehensive effect.

As mentioned earlier, Aning (1964) traced the origin of the *adenkum* to have emerged among Mampong in the Ashanti region of Ghana, around the 1800s. Sutherland-Addy (1998) supports Aning’s claim and analyses women’s expressive arts in the Central region of Ghana. Sarpong (2020) subsequently opined that his research led him to believe that the *adenkum* musical practice traces its origin to the Sefwi Ntakam people. This is because, unlike the other Akan areas, the Sefwi Ntakam history curator was able to provide him with the myth or legend about the *adenkum* from which he was able to trace the etymology of the *adenkum*.

Agya Sei Korankye and his mother, Mary Abena Korankyewaa’s account of the era of the emergence of the *adenkum* instrument is similar. Even though they admit that they are unaware of the specific time or period in which the musical tradition sprung up, as Sarpong (2020) stated, the era of the origin of the *adenkum* instrument was around the 1800s, evidently the era of colonialism and wars in the Gold Coast.

This supportive or complementary role still exists in sports, among other fields. An example is when cheerleaders sing and dance to motivate basketball players and brass bands as they play in America and other parts of the world.

### 2.3 Etymology of *adenkum*

According to Sarpong (2020), the curator of history in the Sefwi Ntakam area narrated to him the legend or myth about the *adenkum* instrument, from which the etymology of the *adenkum* came about. He wrote,

In an oral account, Gilbert Kwadwo Kobiri (chief curator of history and culture in the Sefwi province) opined that the *adenkum* instrument was discovered by an anonymous 65-year-old woman around 1805. She lived in a small village called Sefwi-Yawkuro, a suburb of Sefwi-Bodi, and decided to plant seeds of a fruit locally known as *frɛ* (Sefwi dialect). She received the seeds as a gift from her grandmother on her deathbed and decided to plant them after her death. The *frɛ* outwardly resembles a watermelon but is internally dissimilar. The primary distinction is in their preparation and consumption; watermelon is eaten raw whilst *frɛ* is cooked before eaten. According to the myth, after seven weeks of planting, the woman saw a different product than the *frɛ*. At the time, superstition was common and she could easily be associated with an evil spirit. Therefore, in order to escape the suspicion that she was a witch, she rushed to inform her people about what she had seen, which she termed *musue*, a Sefwi word which is translated as "abomination" in English.....Strangely, the report rather projected her as a strange woman and she was shamelessly labeled as a witch..... This compelled most of the natives to distance themselves from the woman. In effect, the woman was banished from the community. (Sarpong, 2020, p. 26-27)

He further documented that the woman did not lose hope but emptied the gourd by making two openings at each end to eject the edible substance out of the gourd even though she did not consume

it. After it dried, she experimented with the empty gourd and realised it created different sounds when struck on various body parts. She then named it,

“*ɔde gua nu*” (Sefwi dialect) or

“*adeɛ yi deɛ ɛgye gum*” (Twi dialect),

which literarily translates as, “this thing makes a “gum” sound. This means "self-resounding instrument" in the English language.

Sarpong (2020) further revealed that what we hear as ‘*adenkum*’ is an adulterated version of the “*odeguanu*” in the Sefwi dialect, which is now casually pronounced “adengum” through originality and to claim ownership of the instrument. Hence, “*adenkum*” as a gourd-based musical instrument is peculiar to the Sefwi people of Ghana. (Sarpong, 2020). I thereby posit, that the name ‘*adenkum*’ emerged through trade and migration between the Sefwi people and the other Akan groups that performed the *adenkum*.

I will back his findings with data from my personal experience visiting Elmina in the Central region to interview some *adenkum* performers. The performers could not tell me precisely the etymology of *adenkum*, but rather, “*yɛbɛ to yɛ*” “which translates, “we came to meet it,” as their mothers thought them.

In answering the question about the etymology of *adenkum*, Agya Sei formulates his theory from how the name for the Seprewa instrument was formed, which is a three-word syllable; se-pre-wa.

Which translates,

*Se-* to speak, *pre-* to touch or play, *wa-* something small.

Meaning, "something small that speaks when touched or plucked". He states that the *adenkum* could also be coined from two words, *Adie, Kum*.

*Adie-* something, *kum-* the sound or exclamation the instrument makes when struck; *kum*.

Meaning, "something that makes the 'Kum' sound".

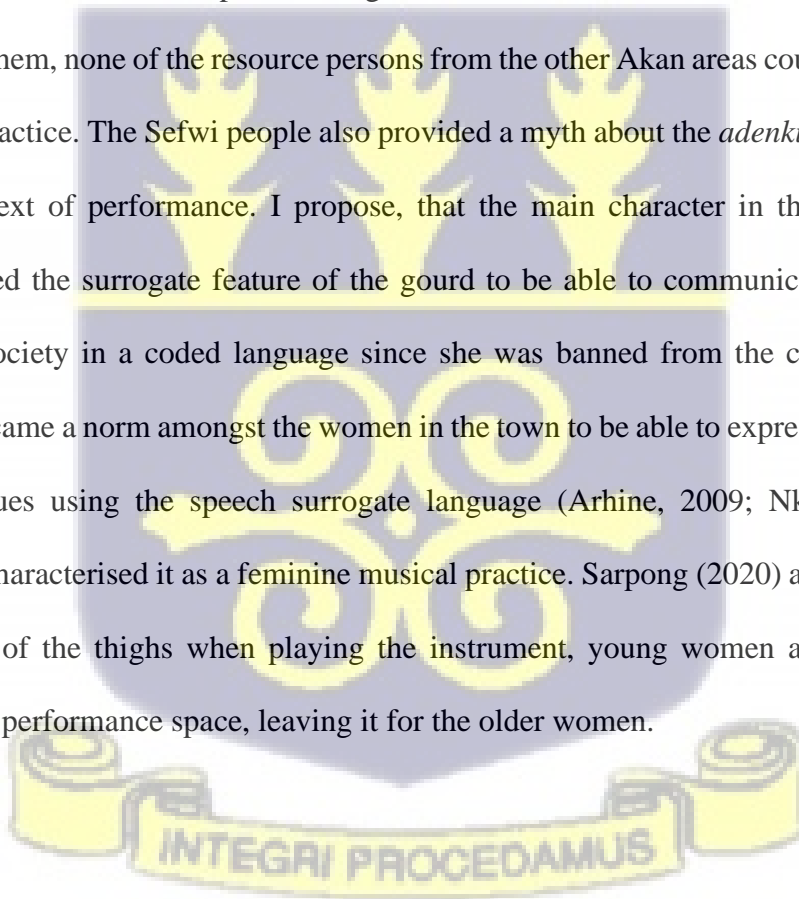
He also mentioned, that, in the past, many of such instruments were discovered during the war periods, and the individuals or soldiers who chanced upon such instruments named them by their nature and how they could identify or recognise them. This sparked the similarities between Sarpong (2020)'s information about the *adenkum*'s etymology and that of Agya Sei and his mother's.

On the contrary, his nephew, Nana Osei Twum, also describes the etymology of the instrument as an Akan word that he is familiar with. He states that the *adenkum* is an Akan word that means "long and nice,"; a popular Akan word used to describe the feminine beauty of a woman's neck, which is slender and beautifully adorned with round lines. He also shares a similar account concerning the origin and history of the *adenkum* with his uncle, Agya Sei Korankye. He also referred to women's roles during warfare as the main reason the *adenkum* became a social practice.

He stated that his grandmother, who was once an active singer, dancer, and instrumentalist in her time, recounted this oral information to him as a teenager. He also stated that she confirmed that women were not allowed to play percussive instruments due to fear of possible contamination

through their menstrual cycle or blood (Adom, 2006; Collins, 1989). The women, therefore, improvised the use of the *adenkum* instrument to accompany themselves while they sang prayers and chants for the men during warfare.

I agree that the *adenkum* musical practice originated from the Sefwi Ntakam community. This is because, unlike them, none of the resource persons from the other Akan areas could trace the origin of the musical practice. The Sefwi people also provided a myth about the *adenkum* instrument and its original context of performance. I propose, that the main character in the myth about the *adenkum* invented the surrogate feature of the gourd to be able to communicate with the other women in the society in a coded language since she was banned from the community; which subsequently became a norm amongst the women in the town to be able to express their sentiments on sensitive issues using the speech surrogate language (Arhine, 2009; Nketia, 1974). This influenced and characterised it as a feminine musical practice. Sarpong (2020) also posits that due to the exposure of the thighs when playing the instrument, young women and men were not permitted in this performance space, leaving it for the older women.



However, the musical practice has evolved over the years and is now open to any gender, age, or race due to improvisation, modernity, and re-contextualisation of the performance practice.

It should also be noted; however, that data collected from my interviews revealed that the *adenkum* hollow gourd is peculiar to the people of the Sefwi Ntakam area and the Asante. The current performers in the Fante land, however, could not recognise or relate to the *adenkum* instrument

but could instead perform some songs they know as *adenkum*. Even though they could trace a link to the source of the music and dance through trade and migration, they could not provide me with any history, etymology, or performance context of the *adenkum*. Having considered all the accounts and theories formulated about the *adenkum*'s etymology and origin, I side with Agya Sei and Sarpong (2020)'s accounts due to the similarities in their description and having had both accounts from the Sefwi Ntakam origin. The closest valid etymology of the *adenkum* is from the Sefwi dialect, Adengum.

Kindly see Sarpong (2020) for further studies and notes on the *adenkum* gourd, instrumental resource information, and other details on the instrument. He also conducted extensive research on the organology and ecology of the *adenkum* in his thesis.

#### **2.4 Performance practices of *adenkum***

The free music dictionary defines performance practice as the study of “musical techniques employed in specific musical genres during specific musical eras”. Quite often, performance practice refers to techniques that are implied, and not written or notated.

<https://www.freemusicdictionary.com/definition/performance-practice/>. However, Gerard Behague in his recent writing on performance and listener music analysis asserts that performance practice has tended to be treated separately from the main musical parameters that retain the analyst's attention. Yet performance practice is an essential aspect of the concerns of researchers who work with orally transmitted repertoires. A clear example is the *adenkum*, thus, he continues to clarify that the concept of performance practice needs to be expanded because the study of

performance is inseparable from musical analysis as a whole, regardless of the specific tradition or the historical period under consideration. He continues to mention that Steven Feld proposed six broad areas of approaching performance practice in musical studies in totality. These areas were: competence, form, performance, environment, theory, value and equality. Some of the tools for studying performance practice include primary sources such as manuscripts, instruction books, historical accounts of performances, and surviving examples of musical instruments, images and iconographical sources (Béhague, 2006; Béhague & Béhague, 1984).

Bowen further supports this in his writing on a similar area of performance practice and performance analysis. He mentions that performance practice is the subdiscipline of musicology that studies performance, and how performance was practised (Bowen, 1996).

The approaches: competence, form, performance, environment, theory, value and equality have therefore been considered. The following information about the *adenkum*, such as the *adenkum* instrument, the songs dance, context, theory, and techniques in playing the *adenkum* instrument, and other vital information on *adenkum* music will reveal the use of the model or approach employed in studying the performance practice of the *adenkum*, as well as the sample ensembles used for the case studies.

#### **2.4.1 The *adenkum* musical instrument.**

As mentioned earlier, Aning (1964) spells out the various instrumental resources of the *adenkum* ensemble in the various areas of his study. He concludes that even though the *adenkum* is the principal instrument in the respective ensembles, the style, the shape of the gourd, and performance

practices differ from society to society in the Akan societies where he conducted his study. Below are the classifications.

Table 1(*Adenkum* Classifications).

Larteh	<i>adenkum</i> (round container type)
Kumasi	<i>adenkum</i> (hollow type), castanet
Elmina	<i>adenkum</i> (enmeshed type), hourglass drum(dondo)

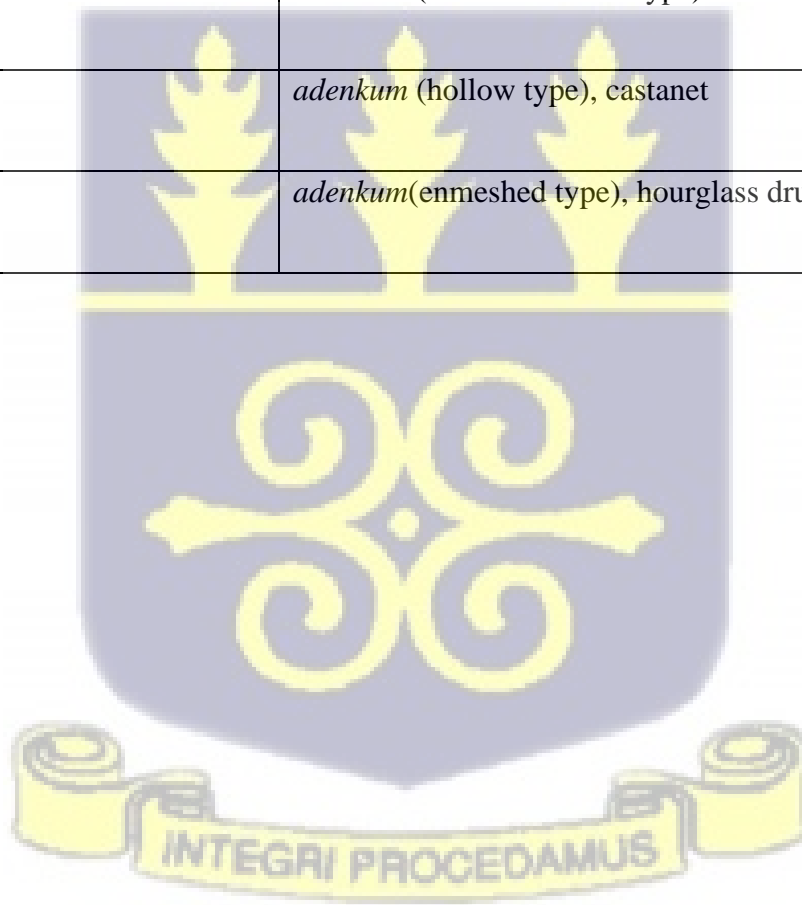




Image 3 . *adenkum* Hollow type.  
(Photo from google images.)



Image 4. Enmeshed type. (Photo from google images.)



Image 5. Round container type. (Photo from google images.)



The Sefwi Ntakam *adenkum* group shared similar traits of performance practice and instrumental resources with the Asante. Sarpong then cites Nketia (1974) in classifying the *adenkum* instrument.

"All *adenkum* groups share common musical instruments that are categorized within the classification of idiophones and membranophones. *adenkum* is the primary instrument of the ensemble. It falls under the category of idiophones....." (Sarpong,2020, p.39).

In an interview with Agya Sei Korankye, who also hails from the Sefwi Ntakam community, he mentions that the gourd can potentially replace a contemporary drum set, depending on how it is played, which is usually by hitting, stamping, and slapping it in the palms, forearm, and thighs. Each part of the instrument produces a different sound when used on a particular part of the body. Through my participation in the rehearsals of the current ensembles that perform *adenkum*, I can confirm this. Sarpong (2020) references Nketia (1974) in the classification of the *adenkum* musical instrument as follows:

*According to (Nketia,1974), the tip of the gourd is carved in an open-ended manner and cupped by the free hand during performance. A small hole is also cut at the base of the gourd for varying degrees of tone production by a performer. Thus, a tone is produced when the carved gourd is struck against the bare thigh. The sound produced is described as 'tim' from the drum language 41 syllables. Similarly, another tone is produced when the tip is hit against the cupped palm. This is labelled as 'dum' according to the drum language syllables. Also, a sound is made when the instrument is smashed against the arm (either left or right). The sound produced is termed 'ta' from the drum language syllables. Again, a sound is produced when the palm is smashed or brushed against the gourd. This is labelled as 'ti' in line with the drum language syllable. Lastly, a sound is made when the bulbous edge is hit with the fingers, which is termed 'pa' according to the drum language syllables. Hence, the *adenkum* instrument manifests five main timbres described as **dum**, **tim**, **ta**, **ti**, and **pa** according to Ghanaian drum language syllables. (Sarpong, 2020, p.41)*

The *adenkum* instrument also has a speech surrogate feature that was and is still being used by its practitioners to communicate incognito. Sarpong (2020) dedicates his thesis to analysing the *adenkum* as a communicative tool. The *adenkum* players used these means of coded communication skills to address sensitive issues that were difficult to express or otherwise forbidden to say in the specific societies, confirming my earlier claim that the most viable means of self-expression among women in the indigenous communities was through musical practices.

In order to create a focal point for my analysis, I gear my investigations and data analysis on the hollow gourd type, which is known to be performed by the Sefwi and the Asante. It is also crucial to note that the case studies I examine in my subsequent chapters also perform the *adenkum* with the hollow gourd type. That is to say that the case studies I examine in my thesis perform the *adenkum* musical tradition by the Sefwi and the Asante, who use the *adenkum* hollow gourd.

What separates the *adenkum* from the many Akan female musical examples is its customised strand and the nature of the songs, the instrument used, and its dances, all being called *adenkum*. Even though a variety of Ghanaian musical practices have this theme, with regards to similar names for their dance and musical traditions, what makes the *adenkum* different is the calabash gourd itself being named *adenkum* with women dominating in its performance practice. The unique nature of the customised *adenkum* ensemble brings to it a brand identity that promises a high chance of creating a market niche with a suitable plan in place. Even though the other ensembles may have a strict regimen of particular percussive instruments used, the changing times

and contextual circumstances can cause them to adjust and restructure. The *adenkum*, therefore, is most likely to retain consistency because of the use and dominance of the *adenkum* instrument.

#### 2.4.2 The techniques involved in playing the *adenkum*.

Even though Aning (1964) and Sarpong (2020) wrote about the techniques of playing the instrument and other performance practices, I will add to it by contributing what I learned during my participant observations in the *adenkum* ensembles and interviews with the *adenkum* practitioners. Angela Abena Serwaa Korankye (Mary Abena Korankyewaa’s granddaughter), who, in my opinion, is currently one of the most reliable sources of information on the *adenkum* and an embodiment of the *adenkum* music practice, revealed to me in an interview the appropriate and standard *adenkum* rhythms, variations, and techniques involved in playing, as her grandmother taught her. She demonstrated about six main rhythmic variations: ‘*Kotwoletwa*’, ‘*Me kunu fira ntoma pa’a, sika*’.., ‘*Wo dɔ me papa a, me dɔ wo*’, ‘*kwantikiti kensuo*’, ‘*Kapenta wobete atɔ nsuo'm*’, ‘*gyese abain mu*’. Below is a guide key.

Table 2. Names of *Adenkum* rhythm variations.

Names	Translations.
1. Me kunu fira ntoma pa’a, sika	If my husband wears an authentic cloth, there is wealth.
2. Wo dɔ me papa a, me dɔ wo	If you truly love me, I love you
3. Kotwoletwa	N/A

4. kwantikiti kensuo	The small road touches water
5. Kapenta wobete ato nsuo'm	You will fall into waters, carpenter
6. Gyese abain mu	N/A

(Hand) H = when the gourd moves upwards using the head to hit inside the palm



Image 6. *adenkum* playing technique, (Photo by Awura-Ama)

(Thigh) T = when the gourd hits her thigh



Image 7. *adenkum* playing technique, (Photo by Awura-Ama)

(Elbow) EL = when the gourd hits close to her elbow



Image 8. *adenkum* playing technique, (Photo by Awura-Ama)



(Slap) S = when she slaps the gourd inside her palm



Image 9. *adenkum* playing technique, (Photo by Awura-Ama)

(Slap downward) \*S = when she slaps the gourd with her hand moving downwards.



Image 10. *adenkum* playing technique, (Photo by Awura-Ama)

(Slap thumb) SR = when she hits the gourd with the outside of her thumb a little close to her wrist



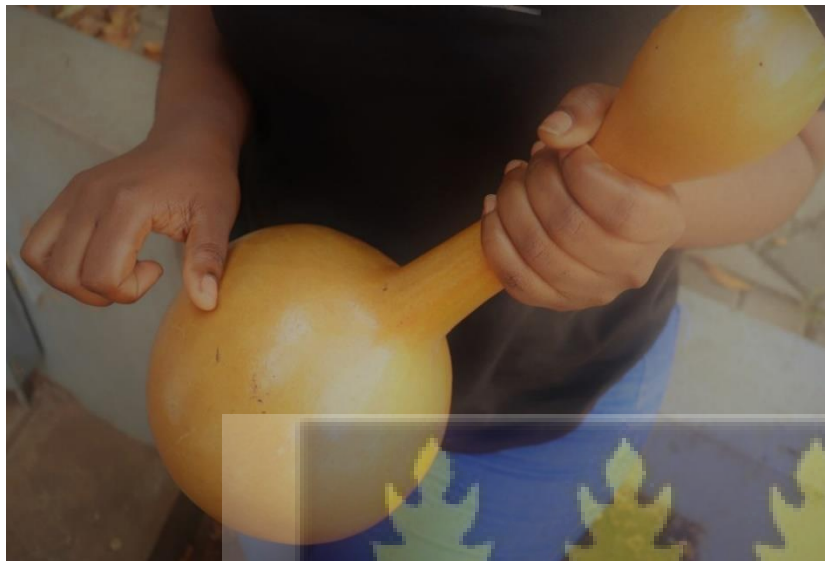


Image 11. *adenkum* playing technique, (Photo by Awura-Ama)

1. Kotwoletwa

T H T EL T EL H T EL

2. Me kunu fira ntomapa a, sika

EL EL H T S EL H

3. Wo do me papa a, me do wo

H T H T S EL HS T S



The following is her detailed view of the technique involved in playing the *adenkum* instrument. These techniques, if adhered to, will help the performer to comfortably play the instrument without strains, pains, or stress and at the same time, will help produce the right sounds/tones. Serwaa also mentioned that the player should strike the instrument on the softest part of the skin or where there's most flesh. It is also advisable to use little effort in hitting, stamping, and knocking to produce the sound. Knocking and stamping vigorously does not guarantee that the instrument will produce a louder or better sound. Simply put, the softer the impacts, the louder and better the sound.

### 1. Sitting

She states that the instrument is best played seated on a low chair without any back support. Preferably a kitchen stool. This will enable the player to comfortably sit and tilt her body towards the right, left, forward, or backward.

### 2. Leg positioning

The sole of the right leg should stand alert while the left slants forward and relax.

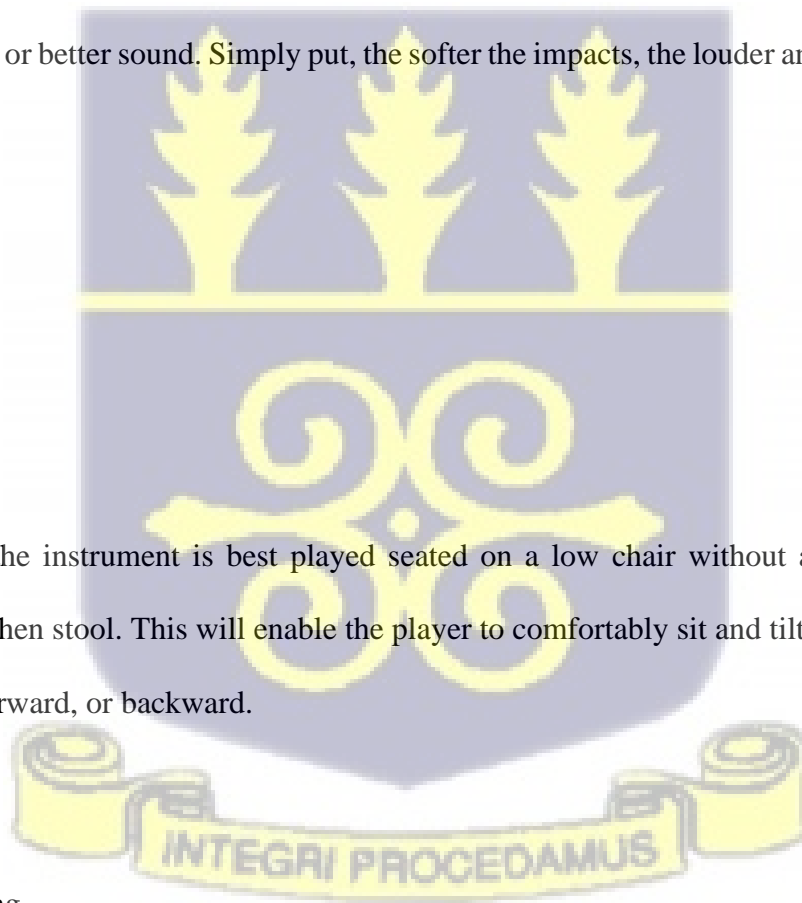




Image 12. *adenkum* playing technique, (Photo by Awura-Ama)

### 3. Hand positioning

The *adenkum* is usually held by the neck in the left hand, slightly above the middle. This helps to pivot the wrist of the player. The right hand is used to slap, stamp, or knock the hollow part of the instrument to produce the sound. The neck could also be held by the right hand, depending on the rhythm being played.

#### 4. Costuming

Sarpong (2020) and Aning (1964) suggest in their works that the *adenkum* performers are always clad in a popular Ghanaian costume known “Kaba and slit” (skirt and blouse sewn from African fabrics). However, based on my participant observation and notes with the ensembles, I propose that a loose straight dress, a blouse with a loose cloth, a skirt, or shorts can also be worn to enable the player to expose her left inner thigh, which is essential to produce the appropriate sound expected (with an emphasis on exposing the inner thigh of the player to produce a good sound and also protect the player from injury during the performance).

#### 5. Contact with skin

The player needs to hit the instrument on the softest part of the body where there is most skin, more detached from any bone. Explaining the preference for the forearm and inner thigh. This protects the player from injury while at the same time producing preferable sounds.

I observe that the *adenkum* performers from areas where Aning (1964) conducted his study comply with some of the playing and performance techniques but fail to expose their thighs to produce the “required sound” expected from contact with the thigh. I also deduce that even though the sound produced by the *adenkum* is achieved by hitting, stamping, and knocking, on various parts of the body, the technique used in playing that *adenkum* instrument is in such a manner that it protects the player from injury. It is, therefore, important to adhere to the essential prerequisites to aid in smooth and flawless execution.



Image 13. *adenkum* playing technique, (Photo by Awura-Ama)

## 2.5 The *adenkum* songs

The *adenkum* songs are usually sung in unison, in two-part and three-part harmony. The songs bear themes of love and address other social issues in particular societies. The songs' themes also document and educate younger ones on historical occurrences (Aning, 1964; Sarpong, 2020). Agya Sei Korankye, in his account, also states that it is or was a tool used by women to cheer or motivate men during warfare, as well as for recreational purposes. A trace of this statement is found in the works of (Arhine, 2016; Jones, 1993). Aning (1964) opines that an *adenkum* band is dominated by

women and a few men who play other rhythmic instruments to accompany them while they sing. He continues to document many rhythmic and song text examples in his work, as did Sarpong (2020). Some songs include; Famame, menko, Serwaa *adenkum* Serwaa, among a few others. Various musical examples have been noted and analysed by Aning (1964) and Sarpong (2020). They also wrote extensively on composition processes, origin of the songs, among other vital information. Kindly refer to their works for musical examples and further clarifications.

### 2.5.1 The *adenkum* dance

As stated earlier, my research revealed that the *adenkum* songs and dances are more inclined toward the Fante practitioners. Even though they could not demonstrate the dance to me, I was able to witness a pre-recorded performance of theirs. I did not come across the *adenkum* dance in my investigations at the JH Nketia archives at the Institute of African Studies. During my interviews with the Sefwi Ntakam practitioners and Nana Osei Twum Barima, they confirmed that there was indeed an *adenkum* dance. However, they failed to demonstrate it to me, leading to my conclusion that the *adenkum* instrument and songs are peculiar to the Sefwi Ntakam people and the dance affiliated with the Fante. Aning (1964) also illustrated the *adenkum* dance in his thesis. Kindly refer to his thesis for more information on the *adenkum* dance. On the contrary, interviewees of the Ghana Dance Ensemble said that they knew nothing about the *adenkum* dance, except that the women would usually choreograph or improvise local dance moves to accompany the songs as they sang and played so that the performance did not get monotonous. I was able to confirm this after witnessing an *adenkum* performance of theirs.

## 2.6 The dissemination and decline of the *adenkum*

The following is the information I have gathered about the dissemination and decline of the *adenkum* musical practice.

### 2.6.1 The dissemination

Aning (1964) confirmed that a spree of *adenkum* bands flourished in the early 1960s. Various *adenkum* ensembles thrived in indigenous Akan communities until about the late 1990s, after 1998, when Sutherland conducted field research on *adenkum* in the Central region.

#### Migration and Trade

I am of the assertion that the pertinent medium for disseminating the *adenkum* musical practice has to do with migration and the 'travelling to the urban centre or abroad for greener pastures' phenomenon in Ghana. I believe this caused the spread of the *adenkum* musical practice into the Urban centres. I back my claim with Agya Sei Korankye's narration about his career life. He narrated to me, that he left his hometown in the Sefwi Ntakam area during the late 1970s for greener pastures in Accra, Ghana's capital.

Agya Sei also mentions that another cause for the dissemination also has to do with trade among the various Akan communities. I also believe this is the main reason why different variants of the *adenkum* developed, which subsequently also caused the name alteration from '*adengum*' to '*adenkum*.'

### 2.6.2 The decline

Literature on *adenkum*, as well as its performance, seems to have been missing in Ghanaian literature and Ghanaian urban performance spaces until Sarpong (2020) concluded that the performers are now old and have resorted to performing the music in the comfort of their homes for recreational and personal purposes. However, his investigation was in one indigenous community, the Sefwi Ntakam community. While the research area is not enough to arrive at this conclusion, (Collins, 2005) discovered a hybrid of indigenous music styles with Western influences during the late 1960s, which corresponds and validates with the time Aning (2020) completed his investigations on the *adenkum* bands in the Akan areas. Popular examples of hybrid musical groups include the *borborbor* and *Wolomei* groups (Collins, 2005). Eric Sunu suggests that due to the influx of these hybrid music groups over the last 50 years, present contact with authentic or indigenous musical practices usually perceives reception as archaic, primitive, or 'old school' (Sunu Doe, 2011). I, therefore, refer to (Anyidoho, 1994; Emielu, 2009) ideas to analyse the concept of the decline of the *adenkum* music practice. Even though there is no empirical data to back the fact that the *adenkum* musical practice went through absolute decline, interactions with all reviewed materials in my work, the *adenkum* music practitioners, and other Ghanaian traditional music materials suggest that the *adenkum* musical practice is unpopular and has been least engaged within Ghanaian literature. This leads me to conclude that its performance also declined as far as female indigenous musical performances are concerned. The notion of the decline of the *adenkum* performance is not only a socially constructed belief; but also has the following reasons I believe led to the decline in the performance of the *adenkum*.

### 2.6.2.1 The Influx of Christianity and Formal Education

Anyidoho's findings on "Tradition and innovation of Akan female verbal art on *nnwonkoro*" was that the first cause of the decline of the *nnwonkoro* musical practice was due to the influx and introduction of Christianity and formal education, which rendered most of the indigenous musical practices as archaic and fetish (Anyidoho, 1994). I believe these factors also influenced the decline of the *adenkum* musical practice based on the similarities between the *nnwonkoro* and the *adenkum* performance. I will build on her knowledge by adding the following factors that I opine to have led to the decline of the *adenkum* musical practice.

### 2.6.2.2 Pregnancy and child-rearing

Pregnancy and child-rearing responsibilities - The widespread phenomenon that African women should fulfill their socio-biocultural responsibility of procreation. I assert that women who took the lead in practicing the *adenkum* musical practice grew to participate less in the performance because they had to raise their children and run their households; Since pregnancy and childrearing take a lot of time and dedication. Examples are drawn from (Collins, 2005; Ndah et al, 2021) on some of the factors that hinder women from participating in some traditional musical practices they examined. They point out that women who participated in these musical activities were not respected by their respective societies. They are required to fulfill their socio-cultural responsibilities of mandatory marriage and child-rearing. According to (Gueutal & Taylor, 1991), their findings on researching pregnant female employees revealed that pregnant women tend to be less productive at work as compared to when they were not pregnant. Some of the interviewees complained about morning sickness, lower back pains, and mood swings. I posit that these physical challenges women face during pregnancy limits their participation in musical performances. I back

these claims with responses from some colleagues/friends of mine who are also live music performers like myself. Their responses from the informal conversations I had with them suggested, that they have one way or the other had their music careers halted, due to this assertion. I label them as Subject K and L for purpose of this work due to ethical issues.

Subject K is 37 years old. She has years of experience as a live music performer. She is also a professional model and has appeared and been featured in prestigious tabloids. During our casual conversation, she shared her experiences with me as follows;

*“I’ve been singing all my life. I started in the church where I sang with the choir. With my music, it still hasn’t taken off the way that I wish it would have. I got pregnant in the year 2017 and after I had my son, that was the end or close to the end of my career; because my body changed and my priorities changed, I went ahead to have 3 more children since then. I however have no regrets because my children are amazing and I will choose my children over any career if I am to choose. Fortunately, my husband is well-to-do and a selfless provider, so I’ve been lucky enough not to worry about work or money so I can be a mother to my children. I hope to get back to singing and modeling when my children are older and are able to do basic things for themselves.”*

Subject L is also in her mid-30s. She has over a decade of experience and exposure in the Ghanaian music industry. she has built a brand as a solo act and performs all over the world. She said;

*“It has been difficult, when I got pregnant and had my son, I gained so much weight and it changed my body, I had to work extra hard to get back in shape. I also put a hold on all my bookings, tours, and appearances because I was sick all the time and very weak.*

I synthesize from their experiences that the average female performer who solely depends on her performances for her livelihood and is passionate about her career will one way or the other try to

get back to performing after pregnancy and a few years in child rearing. However, if they should prioritize their children and have a stable or reliable source of finance, they will hardly prioritize going back to music performances. This confirms my assertion that women who took the lead in practicing the *adenkum* musical practice grew to participate less in the performance because they had to raise their children and run their households.

Even though the sample size for the backing of this claim is small, their responses are an essential component form my work so as to show evidence. In my defense, it was hard to get random female performers to talk about something as personal as their career and family life.

### **2.6.2.3 Affirmative Action Paradigms**

Another cause of the decline can also be attributed to the affirmative action paradigms, which include gender activism and feminism. More women were allowed into higher education systems and occupied political positions. Since the primary context of the *adenkum* was a means to support verbal expression, it gradually declined in both the indigenous and urban spaces (Anyidoho et al, 2016).

### **2.6.2.4 Technology**

It also became difficult for the old practitioners in the rural parts of the Akan communities to hand down the tradition to the younger generation through the indigenous means of orality and apprenticeship. This is because the indigenous standards of learning and documentation were through oral tradition and apprenticeship. Due to technological advancements, this changed to the

use of written texts and the use of audiovisuals. Ursula Lorenz work on the lives and experiences of freelance female musicians in the United States music industry confirms this (Lorenz, 2017). Even though the geographical and cultural contexts are different, she still maintains that technology is one of the main challenges affecting these independent female musicians.

In this chapter, examining the historical background of women in indigenous Akan performance spaces aided my understanding of the socio-cultural significance of women in indigenous musical practices of the Akan communities. Reviewing existing literature on *adenkum* and interviewing some practitioners of the musical style aided in teasing out the origin, etymology, and performance practices of the *adenkum*. This will further influence my understanding of the revitalisation and sustenance of the *adenkum* in my next chapter. It additionally aided me in tracing the dissemination and decline of the *adenkum* musical practice in various locations and contexts. The limitation I encountered in this chapter was the overdependency on Aning (1964), Sarpong (2020); and Sutherland Addy's (1998) materials due to the scanty written materials on the *adenkum*. I managed the situation with interviews and oral tradition accounts from some of the *adenkum* practitioners.



## CHAPTER THREE

### REVITALISING AND SUSTAINING *ADENKUM* MUSIC IN SOUTHERN GHANA USING TWO CASE STUDIES

This chapter discusses how the *adenkum* musical practice is being revitalised, ensuring its sustainability. To achieve this, I examine the concept of revitalisation in Ghana's statutory policies, which leads me to partition my case studies into two categories, i.e., statutory and non-statutory. This further influenced the choice of my two case studies; the Ghana Dance Ensemble (GDE), situated in the University of Ghana (UG) campus (statutory), and the *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble (DE), in the University of Education, Winneba (UWE) campus (non-statutory). I selected these ensembles because they are the known ensembles that currently practice *adenkum* music in their repertoire in the urban centre with a significant number of audiences. I will also occasionally draw examples and instances from some individual *adenkum* practitioners to support my data from the selected ensembles. I will then analyse my data with the concept of music revitalisation and sustainability with other supporting theories.



#### **3.1 Emergence of music revitalisation and sustainability in Ghanaian nationalism**

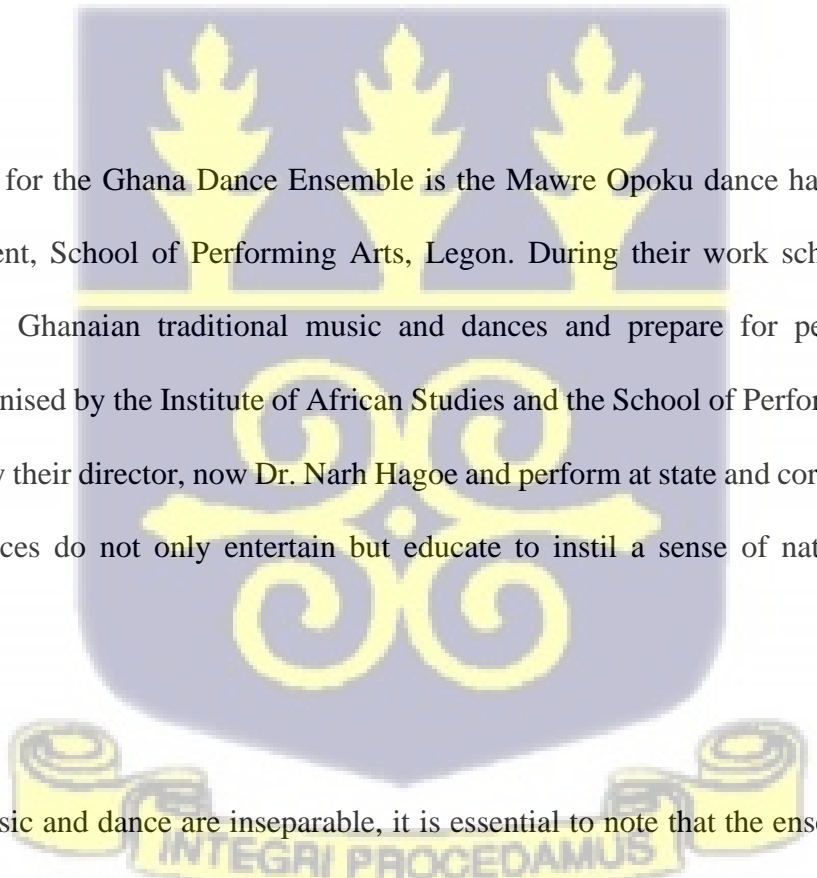
As explained in my introduction, revitalisation is a broad concept that many scholars have thoroughly researched. Wallace (1956) posits that members of a society engage in revitalisation movements to construct a more satisfying culture. Levine (1993) affirms this claim and continues to suggest that music revitalisation provides an avenue to “reshape, reinterpret and redefine a

musical culture." This theory was utilised by the late Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who began his revitalisation movement in Ghanaian nationalism. Ghana had just obtained independence, but various indigenous music, dance, and cultural practices were being lost and replaced due to foreign influences and religion during colonial times. To reshape, redefine, and reinterpret these cultural practices to foster their sustainability and create a more relatable avenue and context for these cultural practices, he implemented statutory policies that paved the way for the establishment of various state-owned institutions to propagate and disseminate Ghana's cultural policies through entertainment and education. These institutions include the Centre for National Culture and the Institute of Arts and Culture. From these emerged the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana as a means of propagating Ghanaian culture into the Ghanaian education system. Others include the Centre for National Culture in Accra, Cape Coast, and the National Theatre. There, the Ghana Dance Company (GDC) was established, which spread as an affiliate known as the GDE at the School of Performing Arts (SPA), UG (Botwe-Asamoah, 2013; Schauert, 2015). My focus thus remains on the GDE for my research.

Titon's (2009) statement, "applying sustainability to music is important because even though music is not a natural resource like air and water, it is a bicultural resource and a product of human life...., therefore, sustaining music means to sustain people making music" is displayed in Nkrumah's actions. He used these statutory cultural policies to contribute to sustaining Ghana's cultural practices. Through his established institutions, Ghanaians can reconnect and reclaim their history and heritage while providing the citizens with an identity.

### 3.2 The Ghana Dance Ensemble

The GDE was established in 1962 by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah to represent and promote Ghanaian music and dance heritage worldwide. The office and rehearsal space for the GDE is situated at the Institute of African Studies, SPA (Schauert, 2015). As part of entertaining and reclaiming cultural arts, the Ghana Dance Ensemble has been observed to include the *adenkum* musical traditions in the repertoire of its performances.



The workstation for the Ghana Dance Ensemble is the Mawre Opoku dance hall situated in the Dance Department, School of Performing Arts, Legon. During their work schedule, members rehearse various Ghanaian traditional music and dances and prepare for performances and productions organised by the Institute of African Studies and the School of Performing Arts. They are supervised by their director, now Dr. Narh Hago and perform at state and corporate functions. Their performances do not only entertain but educate to instil a sense of nationalism among Ghanaians.

Even though music and dance are inseparable, it is essential to note that the ensemble is a dance ensemble, as the name suggests, “Ghana Dance Ensemble,” and thus focuses more on dance performances than musical ones. Since my research is musically inclined, I geared my interview questions toward musical and *adenkum* performances.

Dr. Hargoe, the director of the Ghana Dance Ensemble, and other ensemble members mentioned that the ensemble learns and rehearses the musical aspects of the various dances simultaneously with their accompanying dance movements. Almost all the interviewees admitted that they specifically dedicate “lazy days” to learning songs of different musical traditions, like the *adenkum*.

I propose that the “lazy days” mean a day where there is no dance rehearsal or performance. In effect, this has limited or branded the *adenkum* musical practice as inactive and solemn by the Ghana Dance Ensemble. In affirmation, the respondents mentioned that they perform *adenkum* mostly during funerals due to the nature of the performance practice. That is, seated in a round or horseshoe formation and clothed in *kaba* and *slit*.

### 3.3 The *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble

*Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* is an Akan word that means “sweet.” Nana Twum states he chose the name *dɔkɔdɔkɔ* based on his philosophy of how sweet our Ghanaian traditional music is. The motto of the ensemble is “the natural taste of Ghanaian music.” Nana Says he established the ensemble because as a child, he only saw his family playing the *adenkum*, *densuom*, *prempremsiwa*, *adwoke*, and the *seprewa*. His uncle Osei Korankye focused on the dissemination and sustenance of the *seprewa* instrument. This led him to question himself about how he could promote and sustain the other instruments he has been groomed and oriented to practice. He, therefore, decided to collectively include all the indigenous musical practices in one unified informal space where he could implement and experiment with all the musical practices available to him. He says that he established the ensemble when he saw the Ghana Dance Ensemble playing the *adenkum* at an

event. Even though he was fascinated, the performance executed by the ensemble was not “authentic enough” due to his vast knowledge of the *adenkum* musical practice.

*“So I established the Dɔkɔdɔkɔ Ensemble to organize all the traditional instruments in Ghana and perform together as an Orchestra in the future.”*

Nana narrated that he conceptualised the ensemble in September 2017 but it became physically feasible in March 2020 since it took him nearly three years to plan and execute. The rehearsal days for the ensemble are Wednesdays and Thursdays from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm at the music department at the University of Education, Winneba. There, he plans the ensemble's repertoire and teaches the members how to play and perform with the various instruments (*adenkum*, *densuom*, *prempremsiwa/prenpremsiwa*, etc.). When necessary, he sometimes goes to the students' respective hostels to teach them individually before they meet to have a group rehearsal. Even though the ensemble is informal and free to participate in, there are some basic requirements he looks out for before recruiting members. These include but are not limited to:

1. Should be able to sing
2. Should be ready to multi-task, i.e., to play more than at least one instrument
3. Be ready to commit to the ensemble's rehearsals and performances
4. Have at least a diploma certificate

As stated earlier, various indigenous musical traditions are practised by the *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble, including the *adenkum*. During my participant observation with the ensemble, I observed that Nana teaches all the members of the ensemble how to play the *adenkum* instrument, regardless of age,

gender, or race. During performances, he orchestrates the performance in such a way that everyone plays a musical instrument and also helps with backing vocals for the chorus because most of the songs performed are in a call-and-response form.

He also said that the ensemble does not have a strict regime of *adenkum* songs since most of the performances include various Akan musical practices from Ghana and beyond. The *adenkum* instrument is, therefore, present in almost all their performances. What informs his arrangement of the repertoire of the song is the theme and type of event they are to perform at. For instance, if they are to perform at a wedding party, he selects songs with the themes of love, understanding, and mutual respect. Be it a funeral, songs with themes of oneness, life, and death are selected and performed. He sometimes also composes original songs for the event should the need arise, but most of the time, they perform existing folk songs that he obtained from his oral tradition lessons from his grandmother. Nana Twum believes there are no differences between *the adenkum songs*, *nwomkro*, and *adowa* songs. He said that the only thing that differentiates them is the context of the performance and the accompanying instruments.



### 3.3.1 A brief biography of Nana Osei Twum Barima

Nana Osei Twum Barima was born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of September 1999. He started his musical career at the age of eight with the *densuom*, *prempremsiwa* instrument but he currently plays eleven different instruments, with the *adenkum* being one of his signature instruments. Nana hails from, *Shwi* which has been proven and traced to be the origin of the *adenkum* musical tradition. He is also from a musical family. He had a Bachelor of Arts in music at the University of Education,

Winneba from 2017-2021, and was a member of the Super Oppong Stars band. Nana runs his studio known as 'Seperewa Studios' and is the founder and leader of the *Dokodoko* Ensemble. He said that his mission is to serve as a pillar for his generation and the younger generation to know about our roots.

In my interview with Nana, he stated that he first started pursuing science when he was in senior high school but decided to put a hold on his science dreams when he realised that he had the responsibility to make changes concerning the study of music in our universities.

*“I first wanted to have a diploma in music to have an idea about the traditional music I'm doing. But when I got to the music department in Winneba, I realised, that there is a problem in our music schools; which is, the concentration on Western musical cultures. This is the reason why I decided to further my course with a bachelor's degree in music to be able to make some changes in the system. My vision is to be a music professor but still perform with traditional instruments so that I can be a role model and an inspiration to anyone interested.”*

- Nana Osei Twum Barima.

Schippers and Grant (2015) second domain “Musicians and communities” guides my investigations and analysis of Nana’s career life and how he established the ensemble as a result of his musical orientation with his family and his formal education at the University of Education, Winneba.



Image 14. Image of Nana Osei Twum Barima (Photo by Nana Osei)

Nana, therefore, instigated the *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble at the University of Education to mobilise and disseminate all the indigenous musical practices he had been oriented with.

### **3.4 Revitalising Processes by the Ghana Dance and *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensembles**

The following are some of the ways in which I observed that the ensembles under study are revitalising the *adenkum* musical practice to sustain it.

#### **3.4.1 Maintaining some of the original contexts with females leading the *adenkum*.**

Staging an *adenkum* performance will require lead singers and instrumentalists. Dr. Hargoe mentioned that even though all the ensemble members are required to know how to play the *adenkum*, they attempt to recreate the context of the *adenkum* performance by orchestrating the

performance in such a way that the lead singer and the *adenkum* players are all women. The men play the other percussive instruments like the bell, rattle, and *preprensiwa*<sup>16</sup> to support the women; they also join the chorus for aesthetic purposes and harmony. Women with strong vocals and stage presence lead most of the songs while the others act as support in the chorus and other aspects of the performances.

Most of the time, Nana ascribes the *adenkum* instrument to the females in the ensemble. I deduced that he does this to maintain the original context of the performance of the *adenkum* as a female musical practice. Even though his response to his motive for this activity is:

*“I want to send a message to the ladies of today that they should not be shy showing off their thighs when playing adenkum.”*

This feature is also visible in the Ghana Dance Ensemble’s performances. This way, some of the original elements of the performance context are maintained amidst time and location.

### **3.4.2 Teach and perform the *adenkum* on various platforms.**

Members of the ensemble also revitalise and sustain the *adenkum* by teaching students about the *adenkum* at the primary and tertiary levels. The ensemble members help many university students with traditional music and dance projects for recreational and academic work. The original context

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<sup>16</sup> *preprensiwa* - an indigenous Ghanaian bass instrument in the form of a box

of the *adenkum*, a means of communication, is altered since it is now situated within the formal educational setting. Although changed, it contributes to its sustenance.

Also, the Ghana Dance Ensemble revitalises and sustains the *adenkum* when it performs the musical style at various regular and cooperative events and platforms. This way, it markets and brings to notice the existence of the *adenkum* to new audiences every day. Interactions with members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble revealed that the *adenkum* is usually performed at various events but mostly at funerals due to the themes in the songs. They also mentioned that the *adenkum* is preferable during funerals or life memorial events due to the nature of the performance of the *adenkum* musical practice, which is originally best expressed when the performers are seated. The “relaxed” manner of the performance makes it appropriate to perform the *adenkum* during funerals to add to the solemn and melancholic atmosphere.

Schippers & Grant’s (2015) first domain of understanding music sustainability is exhibited in the learning activity. “Systems of learning music”, which assesses the learning processes that are involved in acquiring music knowledge to facilitate the sustainability of various music cultures. This instance exhibits the ways in which the *adenkum* musical tradition is transmitted and assimilated by the various practitioners, members of the ensembles, and the new audiences that it is being revealed to.

Shuert (2015) states that the concept of staging involves the process of finding, constructing, assimilating, and presenting. This resonates with what Levine (1993) posits that music revitalisation provides an avenue to reshape, reinterpret and redefine a musical culture. I observed that these are the ways the Ghana Dance Ensemble revitalises *adenkum* music: teaching the *adenkum* via different platforms and performing the *adenkum* at various events and functions.

In my interview with Nana Twum Barima, he mentioned that through his ensemble, he can pass on the *adenkum* teachings to his classmates and random individuals interested in learning about the music style.

Over the last decade, social media has become one of the primary means of communication, education, business, and entertainment. Many individuals use the platform to advertise their businesses and services as well as conduct business transactions. Nana Twum and his *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble are not an exception. Nana uses social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to disseminate his musical practices and original songs. Sometimes he also holds live tutorials on *adenkum* songs and how to play the *adenkum* instrument. As he does this, he can reach a large audience and interested persons worldwide, creating a new perspective on indigenous music for a vast number of people across the globe.

Schippers & Grant's (2015) assertion on media and the industry is exhibited here. The ways in which the practitioners of the *adenkum* music use social media as a platform to revitalize the *adenkum* by creating various awareness of the history, performance practices, and other contextual aspects of the *adenkum*. The technological advantage of social media helps to spread the musical

tradition to various parts of the world with a click of a button. The information is also stored in the cloud web which will hence be available for many years to come.

### 3.4.3 Incorporating Various Musical Cultures.

Even though Nana's primary reason for creating the ensemble is to revive and reclaim Ghanaian traditional music practices, the inclusion of Western musical instruments is also welcomed, not only to bring variety to the performances but to create an avenue for various musically inclined individuals to feature in the ensemble's performances. This helps reach more people and appeal to the youth, but most importantly, it reinstates folk music in contemporary Ghanaian soundscapes. My informal interaction with my peers on indigenous musical practices brings me to the conclusion that the vast portion of my age mates (the youth) have lost touch with these indigenous musical practices, which has led them to render indigenous music as "not serious" and primitive. Nana affirmed my finding when he mentioned that he made it a prerequisite for an individual to have at least a diploma to join his ensemble due to misconceptions about individuals who perform indigenous Ghanaian music. This is because he always got the impression from his audience that indigenous Ghanaian music is meant for the illiterate (those who had not had a formal education).

The inclusion of various instruments such as lead and bass guitar, double bass, and others creates an inter-culturalist theme and an afro-fusion sound that brings various people from various backgrounds together. When he uses the *adenkum* as the main rhythmic instrument in various performances, it draws attention to the *adenkum* music tradition, although in a different context, it aids in reviving a music tradition that is on the verge of extinction due to societal changes. The use

of other modern and or Western instruments in the ensembles appeals to the masses during performances and creates a fascination with the possibilities that can emerge from merging these various musical practices.

My finding supports (Emielu, 2018)'s theory of progressive traditionalism to combat the notion that African traditional music is static, fixed, and does not change or employ new forms. It similarly affirms (Collins, 2006)'s theory of progressive indigenisation, where he examines how African principles and rhythms are executed on the Western guitar. Both authors state that this happens because of modernity, westernization, and change.

The case of Nana Osei Twum's hybridisation has the same concept as he includes Western instruments in his ensemble to revitalise various indigenous musical practices that are on the verge of disappearing. They play the *adenkum* songs with the *adenkum* instrument as well as Western instruments such as the lead and bass guitars, saxophone, keyboards, etc. I deduce that this is easily achieved because the *adenkum* instrument is a rhythmic instrument and can act as a lead and supporting instrument in many musical contexts.

#### **3.4.4 Other emerging *adenkum* performers and ensembles**

During my interview with Mary Abena Korankyewaa, she revealed that she took the liberty of training and educating her children and grandchildren about the various musical traditions that have been passed on to her by her mother and grandmother. Some of these musical practices are

the *ajoke* and the *adenkum*. I posit that this initiative of hers, although humble and non-statutory, has contributed to the sustenance of the *adenkum* musical practice.

Her granddaughter, Serwaa, confirmed this to me when I interviewed her.

She said:

*“All the children in the family were required to learn how to play all the musical instruments and also learn the songs as well as how to dance. My grandmother (Mary Abena Korankyewaa) made it a bedtime ritual for all her grandchildren to play/practice the seprewa, adenkum, ..... for her listening pleasure. At the same time, teaching us new techniques and songs now and then. She was strict with her mode of teaching. She even went to the extent of flogging if we should constantly make mistakes while singing and playing. My father (Agya Sei Korankye) also continued this ritual as my grandmother kept growing old. My siblings and I are still his musical apprentices. We are five siblings in total, but it seems that it is only my younger brother (3<sup>rd</sup> of five siblings) and myself (2<sup>nd</sup> of five siblings) who are interested and also have an inclination toward the musical traditions we have been taught. My other siblings can play the instruments and sing as well, but my father only performs with my brother, my cousin: Nana Twum, and me.”*

- Angela Abena Serwaa Korankye.

In that effect, her biological son, Agya Sei Korankye, as stated earlier, who is a traditional music practitioner who specialises in the *seprewa* instrument, as well as other indigenous musical practices, runs a *seprewa* ensemble which he has named *seprewa agofomma*, which translates as “children who play with the *seprewa*”. He sometimes includes the use of the *adenkum* instrument, played by two or three women in his performances. The use of the *adenkum* in his ensemble contributes to revitalising and sustaining the *adenkum* musical practice.

Subsequently, his daughter, Angela Abena Serwaa Korankye, has also acquired the skills of playing and executing many traditional musical practices like the *seprewa* and the *adenkum*. Serwaa often performs alongside her father and shares her *adenkum* performances on social media and with her peers, which contributes to sustaining the *adenkum* musical practice by creating awareness.

Similarly, Agya Sei's nephew, Nana Osei Twum Barima, followed his family's legacy by not only performing the musical traditions he had been taught but also by establishing the *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble at the University of Education, Winneba.

#### **3.4.5 Care and preserving the *adenkum* gourd.**

Even though Sarpong (2020) dedicated a section of his thesis to the ecology of the *adenkum*, I also interacted with Serwaa about how the gourd can be cared for and sustained. During our informal conversations, she mentioned that after the gourd is harvested and emptied, it is dried in the sun for a few days until the shell gets hardened and turns brownish. To improve the brittleness and hollow sound quality, the gourd is soaked in water for a few hours or overnight. She also mentioned that practitioners should always keep the *adenkum* in an airy environment and keep it in a bag with the neck facing downwards. This will allow for more space in the bag in which it is packed and also protect the bulb part from any external pressure crushing it. It will also help to remind the holder to consciously keep an eye on the gourd.

In this chapter, I examined how selected ensembles and individual *adenkum* practitioners revitalise and sustain *adenkum* music. My case studies included the *Ghana Dance Ensemble*, situated on the

University of Ghana campus, and the *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble, on the University of Winneba, Campus. I selected these ensembles because they are known ensembles that currently practice *adenkum* music in their repertoire in urban centres with a significant audience. Hence, I concluded that the revitalisation processes include maintaining some of the original contexts of the *adenkum* performance, teaching and performing the *adenkum* on various platforms, as well as incorporating various musical cultures. I further analysed the data collected with the concept of music revitalisation and sustainability with other supporting theories.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### ISSUES OF REVITALISATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF *ADENKUM*

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses the issues that revolve and emerge as a result of the revitalisation and the sustainability of *adenkum* music using a personal narrative and data collected from the individual *adenkum* practitioners and the selected ensembles examined in my first and previous chapters.

#### 4.1 Relatability toward the *Adenkum Musical Practice*

From the personal account narrated in the first chapter about my first attempt in trying to reengage the *adenkum* at the Jango club in Accra in 2019, I posit in my first argument, that there is no inclination toward the *adenkum* musical practice. I say this because I deduce that my significant other, at the time, referred to the *adenkum* musical practice as “not serious”. After all, he could not relate to it nor had any inclination towards it. It was a new phenomenon to him. I trace this to Sunu Doe’s (2011) claim that the development of hybrid bands like the *borborbor* in the early 1990s flourished enough for the raw, indigenous, and authentic musical practices to disappear and lose their value in various social and musical contexts. As a result, responses from my interviewees, who are my age mates (mid to late 20-year-olds), would characterise the *adenkum* music practice as old, primitive, not serious, and childish. Even though their emotions or taste in music cannot be measured, the majority of the sample agreed that although they had not seen or heard about the *adenkum*, it is an old musical style that is practiced by old people and meant to be consumed by villagers.

Other respondents also stated that they could not relate to the musical practice because they did not understand the lyrics and had not seen or heard the *adenkum* musical practice before.

I deduce from these responses that this could be a result of the concept of relatability. The majority of the current generation cannot relate to the *adenkum* musical practice due to the social context ascribed to its origin and practice, which is a communal musical practice performed by women who could not fully express themselves in public in an era with little technological advancement. Women gathered to play, sing, and talk about delicate issues in their homes and societies. It was also used as entertainment as well as a means of passing down important historical information to the younger generation. Other sources of entertainment included playing in the mud, singing, dancing, and telling stories by the fireside under the moonlight.

However, the current generation was born into the age of technology and grew up playing with phones, tablets, computers, and video games. I trace Schippers & Grant's (2015) third domain on music sustainability in this claim. The third domain focuses on contexts and constructs. Here, the domain assesses the social and cultural contexts of musical traditions. These include values such as musical tastes, aesthetics, and recontextualisation.

Due to the changing context of the performance of the *adenkum*, its performance is limited or associated with specific music contexts for a specific or particular event. Similarly, over the last two decades, the Ghanaian populace, majorly consisting of youth, has been exposed to, but not limited to, a wide range of hybrid genres such as highlife, hiplife, afro beats, Afropop, and others. Therefore, the "extinction" of the indigenous musical practice like the *adenkum* has caused this

generation to have no connection to the musical practice rendering it “archaic,” “primitive,” and “not serious.”

#### 4.2 Our beautiful thighs.

Some other responses on the performance practice suggested that many people thought the musical practice was sexual. The few times I performed the *adenkum*, I would get strange facial expressions and sexually geared questions about the *adenkum* gourd. The responses I got from these interviewees left the impression that the instrument, with its accompanied musical practice, came across as sexual.

“Beautiful thighs.” One respondent commented when he witnessed the *adenkum* in practice. As mentioned earlier, to achieve the “required” sound, the instrument should touch the softest part of the skin to protect the player from pain and injury; thus, the use of the loose skirt in costuming exposes the inner thigh of the player. Male audience members are usually interested in having a delightful view of the inner thighs of beautiful young women as they play instead of engaging or enjoying the music for its main purpose. This takes the focus off the musical practice and inadvertently promotes it as “a sexual musical practice.”

The surrogate language of the *adenkum* instrument, as examined by Sarpong (2020) would suggest that the women use the instrument and its accompanied songs to communicate delicate issues such as sexual innuendos in their various matrimonial homes. It could be coincidental. However, I believe that these sexual ascriptions of the *adenkum* instrument and its performance practice contribute to its rendering as “not serious.”

In an informal conversation with most of the interviewees, they mentioned that when they observe an individual (one woman) performing with the instrument, it looks as if the handle represents the male genital organ, probably because the instrument is embodied by a woman. Some also mentioned the gourd had an imaginary shape of a complete image of male genitalia in its full sexual mode where the handle represents the upper part of the male genitals while the lower part of the gourd represents the lower part of the male genitals. One of the respondents even nicknamed the *adenkum* gourd in this sexual context; giving it the nickname “African traditional dildo.” I trace this concept in (Doubleday, 2008)’s writing, where she posits that some musical instruments are constructed in the shape of the male genital organ to be handled by women in their society. They believe this will help boost their fertility. However, the scenario is not the same if they witness a group of women performing with the gourd.

I posit that this concept of sexual ascriptions to the *adenkum* instrument also symbolises the influence of women over male sexuality. When women handle and perform with the *adenkum* gourd, it symbolically represents the power and control women have over men’s sexual organs, which in turn controls their sexual desires. To exemplify, women can influence the decisions and choices of men by employing physical attraction and seduction. The phenomenon is that the presence of female sexuality in the content of various art forms and music boosts the popularity and sales of that particular art form. I believe that this could be harnessed and branded effectively to aid in the revitalisation process of the *adenkum* musical practice, which will subsequently foster its sustainability.

### 4.3 The necessary alterations

In my second chapter, I documented the different variations of the musical practice as well as *adenkum* rhythms, which were demonstrated to me by Angela Abena Serwaa Korankye, exactly as she had been taught by her grandmother using the *adenkum* gourd. This raised issues of authenticity after I referred her to a video of her cousin, Nana Twum's *Dokɔɔkɔ* Ensemble performing songs with a variety of instruments, including the *adenkum*. I asked which particular variation of the rhythms she mentioned was being displayed. Her first reactions included;

*"Ah! why are the ladies wearing jeans?"*

*"Why are they playing like that?"*

*"If our grandmother should see this, she'll get angry!"*

She also answered that she had not seen or heard of that type of rhythm before and that she thought her cousin was simply improvising to suit the songs being played. Collins (2006) and Emielu (2016)'s theories of progressive traditionalism and indigenisation, respectively, posit that modernity, westernisation, and change are some of the factors that will cause music instigators to merge or employ Western musical practices with indigenous styles to suit the society. This validates Levine (1993)'s definition of revitalisation as reshaping, redefining, and reinterpreting. Here, I believe Nana Twum redefines some aspects of the *adenkum* musical practice to aid its sustainability regardless of the contextual value of the musical performance. It has become important to him to include the *adenkum* by any means necessary to his repertoire to draw attention to the musical practice through his performances.

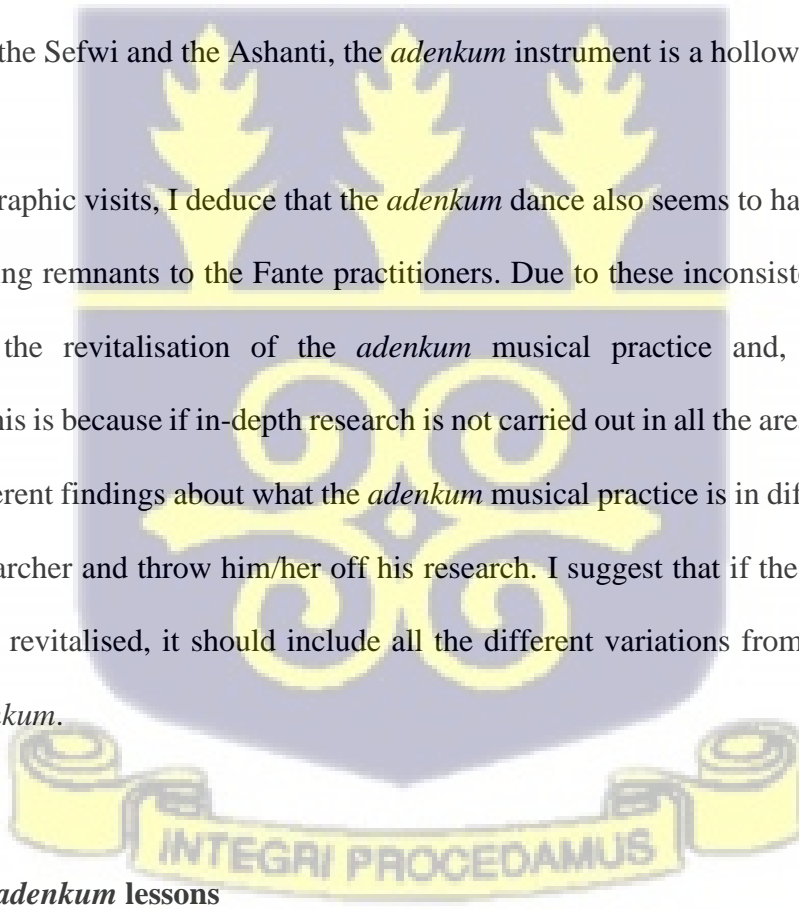
According to some members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble, alterations have been made to various music and dance practices that the ensemble performs. In other words, they have been reconstructed for demonstration and performance. They state specifically that some of the music and dance practices demand traditional religious rituals and routine sacrifices that need to be carried out before such music or dance practice can be performed. They stated that they had to make changes or reconstruct these musical and dance traditions to avoid spiritual attacks and interferences during performances. However, the *adenkum* musical performance in its indigenous form does not require special religious or traditional rituals or sacrifices before it can be performed. Even though its performance technique is however important, members of the dance ensemble revealed that depending on the occasion, they would usually adjust the *adenkum* performance practice, like the rhythms and required costumes to suit the occasion. They do not confine themselves to the laid down requirements but rather allow a free flow of ideas to penetrate their performances should the need arise.

Interactions with them revealed that they usually tailor various musical traditions to suit a particular event or occasion when the need arises. Dr. Hargoe exemplified this using an event that has a theme of women empowerment and bridging gender constructs. There, supposed traditional drums that were forbidden to be handled or played by women were performed by women in the ensemble who got handy with the instrument during rehearsals. "We do not limit our performances to only men or only women," he said. This proves Koskoff's (2014) claim that there is no specific space for a particular gender performance, but rather they coexist and complement each other.

#### 4.4 The different *adenkum* variations

In the second chapter, I discussed the origin and history of the *adenkum* musical practice through various scholars and oral accounts. Reviewing their works showed that the *adenkum* musical tradition is practiced by various Akan groups in different areas. The findings also revealed that the *adenkum* instrument represents different things to the people in these areas which have been studied. To the Fante and Akupem, the *adenkum* instrument is an enmeshed gourd that has different shapes, while to the Sefwi and the Ashanti, the *adenkum* instrument is a hollow gourd.

From my ethnographic visits, I deduce that the *adenkum* dance also seems to have been lost in the Sefwi area, leaving remnants to the Fante practitioners. Due to these inconsistencies, I conclude that it hinders the revitalisation of the *adenkum* musical practice and, subsequently, its sustainability. This is because if in-depth research is not carried out in all the areas where *adenkum* is practised, different findings about what the *adenkum* musical practice is in different areas might confuse the researcher and throw him/her off his research. I suggest that if the *adenkum* musical practice is being revitalised, it should include all the different variations from all the areas that practice the *adenkum*.



#### 4.5 Inadequate *adenkum* lessons

When I was introduced to the *adenkum* musical practice in my third year of undergraduate studies, not much information about the *adenkum* was taught by the resource person. I believe that most of my colleagues and I did not appreciate learning much about the *adenkum* musical practice because we did not know the socio-cultural impact and relevance of what we were being taught. From my performance experiences, whenever I got the opportunity to explain the socio-cultural significance

of the *adenkum* musical practice to an audience, I received better reception and found my audience wanted to know more about the musical practice. This affirms the popular saying, “If you understand the past, you can better understand the present and even make predictions for the future.” It also appears that one appreciates something better if they are involved in the making or development of a particular thing.

#### **4.6 Acoustics and audibility.**

Some respondents were only concerned that the performers were in pain due to the performance technique using the *adenkum* hollow gourd. This is because the instrument, in its nature, is mobile. That is to say, it has to move across many parts of the body for its natural and “required” sounds to emerge. The instrument has to swing across both hands to the elbows, down the inner thigh of the performer to achieve its required sounds. Depending on the location of the performance, the sound projected is usually not loud enough as compared to other local percussive instruments. Even though most of the traditional percussive instruments have been made of acoustic features, they are usually micro-phoned during stage performances to aid the sound projection.

Gauging from my experience as a performing artiste, favourable sound quality from a public address (PA) system has a positive performance impact on the performer and the audience. Poor and unclear sound projections from the public system might disrupt an inexperienced performer, which could subsequently have a negative impact on the audience.

If a PA system is required for the performance, a cardioid or omnidirectional microphone should be placed at least six inches away from the performers’ navel to capture sounds from the instrument in all directions when it is being played.

In this chapter, I discuss the issues that revolve and emerge as a result of the revitalisation and the sustenance of *adenkum* music, using a personal narrative and data collected from the selected ensembles examined in my previous chapter. I discovered several issues around the revitalisation and sustenance of the *adenkum* musical practice. These include issues of relatability towards the *adenkum* musical practice, sexual ascriptions to the musical practice, few *adenkum* ensembles, and issues around the acoustics and audibility of the *adenkum* hollow gourd.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, I tease out my concluding thoughts from my research after thoroughly engaging the concept of revitalisation and sustenance of the *adenkum* musical practice while using existing and emerging ensembles as case studies. I will then summarise my thesis and make recommendations for further studies on the *adenkum*.

#### 5.1 Summary

The primary aim of this research work is to understand how selected ensembles revitalise and sustain the *adenkum* musical practice. My study focused on *adenkum* music practice because it appeared to be one of the female Akan musical practices that had not received much attention in both academia and Ghanaian performance soundscape as compared to other Akan female musical practices like the *nwomkro*, *adowa*, and *adzewa*. I was able to achieve this by using the *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble and the Ghana Dance Ensemble as case studies. These ensembles were selected because they are the ensembles that currently perform *adenkum* as part of their repertoire commercially in urban centres with a significant audience.

My second chapter aimed to answer my first research question which was: “What are the performance practices of the *adenkum*, and what are the factors that led to the decline in its performance?”. I was able to achieve this by examining the historical background of women in

indigenous Akan performance spaces to understand the socio-cultural significance of their presence in the indigenous musical practices in Akan communities to set the tone for the scope of my study. I examined the origin, etymology, and cultural practices of the *adenkum* musical tradition to understand its relevance to its practitioners in their respective Akan indigenous societies. I also engaged existing literature on *adenkum* as well as oral accounts to tease out the origin, etymology, and performance practices of the *adenkum* musical practice. I was able to achieve this by interviewing some practitioners of the *adenkum*. This further influenced my understanding of the revitalisation and sustainability of the *adenkum* in my subsequent chapters. It additionally aided me in tracing the dissemination and decline of the *adenkum* musical practice in its origin and performance contexts. These are migration, childbearing and rearing influences, technological advancements, and affirmative action concepts.

I continued to examine the concept of revitalisation and sustainability in Ghana's statutory policies, which led me to examine and partition my case studies into two categories; statutory and non-statutory. This was in the third chapter which aimed to answer my second research question, which was: "In what ways do the current ensembles re-engage the *adenkum* musical practice to foster its sustainability?". This influenced the choice of my two case studies, which are; the Ghana Dance Ensemble (GDE), situated on the University of Ghana (UG) campus (statutory), and the *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble (DE), on the University of Education, Winneba (UWE) campus (non-Statutory). I selected these ensembles because they are the known ensembles that currently practice *adenkum* music in their repertoire in the urban centre with a significant audience. I also drew examples and instances from other individual *adenkum* practitioners to support my data from the selected ensembles. In doing this, I discovered that the primary means by which the *adenkum* is sustained

is by continuous engagement with the musical practice and or revitalising. This is achieved when the aforementioned ensembles stage *adenkum* music performances, maintain some of the original elements in the performance practice of the *adenkum*, teach *adenkum* music in schools, merge the *adenkum* musical practices with Western and contemporary songs, as well as engage the musical practice on social media.

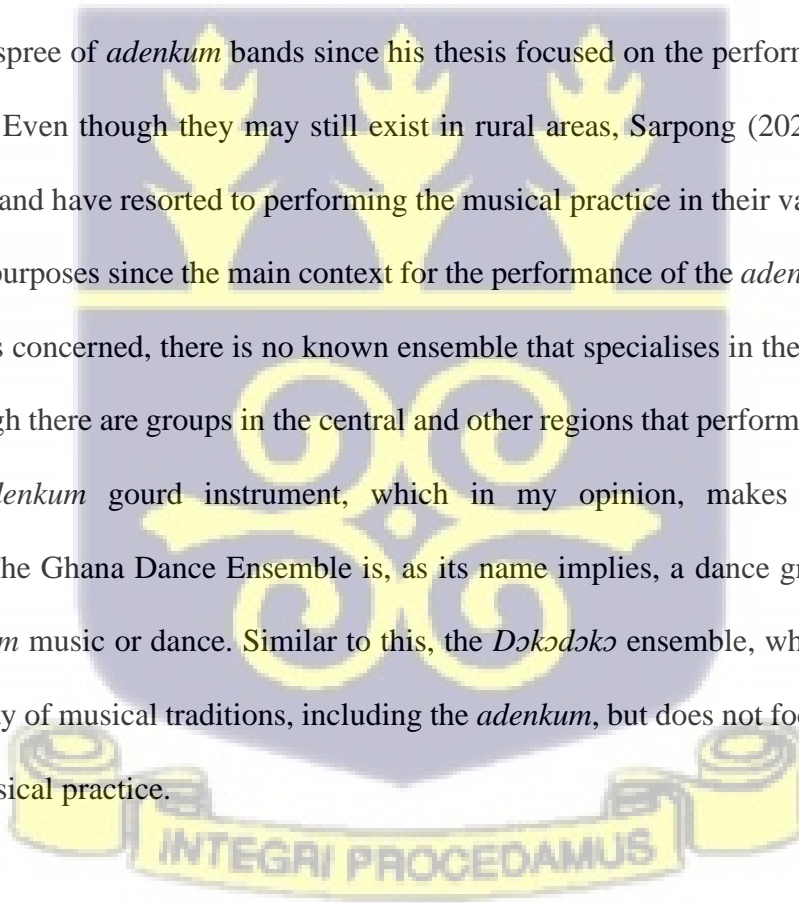
In chapter four, I sought to answer the last research question which was to tease out the pertinent issues that emerge as a result of the revitalisation and sustainability of the *adenkum* musical practice by the selected ensembles. Even though many factors hinder the smooth process of revitalisation and sustenance of the *adenkum*, I assert that re-engaging the *adenkum* musical practice in schools, motor skill development studies, contemporary music platforms, and establishing a specialised *adenkum* ensemble will aid in fostering its sustainability; hence providing female indigenous music practitioners in Ghana with a sense of identity. I concluded with the realisation that tradition is not static; redefining, reshaping, and reinterpreting various music traditions like the *adenkum* will foster its sustainability.

## 5.2 Findings

The findings from my research and analysis on the revitalisation and sustainability of the *adenkum* music are presented in the paragraphs that follow.

### 5.2.1 There are currently no *adenkum* bands or ensembles.

I deduce that the revitalisation and sustenance of the *adenkum* are at a snail's pace because there is no known ensemble that specialises in and is dedicated to practicing the *adenkum* alone. My interactions with Mary Abena Korankyewaa confirm that there were ensembles that specialised only in the *adenkum* musical practice during her youthful days as a performer. She was part of a band called '*adenkum Mmayewa*' meaning, '*adenkum* girls'. Aning (1964) validated this claim that there was a spree of *adenkum* bands since his thesis focused on the performance practices of *adenkum* bands. Even though they may still exist in rural areas, Sarpong (2020) has mentioned that they are old and have resorted to performing the musical practice in their various rural homes for recreational purposes since the main context for the performance of the *adenkum* is lost. As far as my research is concerned, there is no known ensemble that specialises in the *adenkum* musical practice. Although there are groups in the central and other regions that perform *adenkum*, they do not use the *adenkum* gourd instrument, which in my opinion, makes the performance unsatisfactory. The Ghana Dance Ensemble is, as its name implies, a dance group that does not focus on *adenkum* music or dance. Similar to this, the *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* ensemble, while a musical one, performs a variety of musical traditions, including the *adenkum*, but does not focus exclusively on the *adenkum* musical practice.



### 5.2.2 The *adenkum* is no longer a female-ascribed musical practice.

Ellen Koskoff asserts that there is no designated or separate performance space for a particular gender, although various writings on *adenkum* have suggested that older women perform and dominate the musical practice. Although one gender may be dominant over the other, all genders exist together and complement one another. As a result, although men may not have participated

in the traditional *adenkum* music performance context, they do so in the Ghanaian dance ensemble performances by providing additional percussion to the women's playing and singing. (Koskoff, 2005).

Most importantly, Nana Osei Twum, a "male," has accepted the responsibility of reviving the *adenkum* and keeping it alive by incorporating *adenkum* music into his performance through his *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble. Even though the context of the performance of the *adenkum* has changed, this is inevitable due to change and cultural dynamism.

### **5.2.3 Most Ghanaian music listeners have no affinity for the *adenkum* musical tradition.**

In as much as contemporary music cannot be analysed compared with traditional music, I deduce from my investigations and interactions with my peers that contemporary music renders the *adenkum* musical practice irrelevant, archaic, and primitive. I conclude that this is because the average Ghanaian music consumer over the last half century was socialised with contemporary music styles such as afrobeat, afro-pop, and highlife; due to this notion, I believe that the primary means of revitalising the *adenkum* is to re-engage using contemporary lenses such as merging the musical practice with Western and contemporary sounds like Nana Twum has done with his *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble. I deduce that experiencing a blend of local and Western instruments on various contemporary stages is somewhat relatable to the average Ghanaian music consumer.

Other current bands/ensembles that practice tradition, such as the *Kwanpa* and Legon *palm wine* bands are thriving because they merge Western and contemporary music styles and popular cover songs in a staged and different context. The indigenous *adenkum* musical practice, however, seems to be accepted in situations where it is staged in its original context to entertain or create a special effect.

#### **5.2.4 The dilemma of rhythmic instruments.**

As mentioned earlier, in African music, drums and other rhythmic instruments serve important communicative purposes (Burns, 2017; Nketia, 1974). However, in contemporary Ghanaian music settings as well as recreational and entertainment contexts, such rhythmic instruments have come to serve as a support for melodic instruments. It is therefore unlikely to perform at venues or events in an entertainment context with only a rhythmic instrument; like the *adenkum*, unless it is to serve a particular purpose.

#### **5.2.5 The sexual ascriptions attached to the *adenkum* render it as ‘unserious’.**

In my previous chapter, I described and analyzed the various ways in which many audiences attach sexual ascriptions to the *adenkum* musical practice. Comments about the shape of the gourd, like the “African Dildo”, *ntontrowa* (empty tin cans) reveal that new audiences who witness the *adenkum* in effect will have a pre-conception that the musical practice is unserious. I also conclude that the revealing of the thighs when playing the *adenkum* contributes to this conclusion.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Through my research, I have illustrated that music is an essential communicative tool. The *adenkum* musical practice is one such tool which also has different variants. I focused my questions and investigations on the *adenkum* hollow gourd which is known to have originated from the Sefwi Ntakam community in the Western region of Ghana. This variant that makes use of the hollow gourd is also known to have been common and practiced in some parts of the Ashanti region. It is also crucial to note that the ensembles I used as my case studies primarily make use of this particular variant of the *adenkum* in their repertoire. By studying and participating in the

ensembles' *adenkum* performances, I make the assertion, that continuous engagement with the *adenkum* forsters its sustainability. Also, even though the original context of the performance of the *adenkum* is not present in contemporary Ghanaian soundscape, staging and/or recontextualising the performance practices of the *adenkum* revitalise and sustain it. The phenomenon of the flexibility of any musical tradition, like the *adenkum* allows room for growth in the changing times and various spaces of the global village, our world.

Through my reflexivity and participation in the performance and revitalisation of the *adenkum*, I also suggest that it can be used as a motor skill tool and or therapeutic medium for physically and mentally challenged individuals. This is because apart from the mental focus that is needed in executing the various *adenkum* rhythms, it also has choreographic features that can help in building the mind's focus and organisation. I, therefore, intend to extend this research into how the *adenkum* performance practice contributes to mental well-being.

In this chapter, I presented my findings from my research after thoroughly engaging the concepts of revitalising and sustainability of the *adenkum* musical practice. I then summarized my writing and teased out my concluding remarks. The following are recommendations for further studies on the *adenkum* musical practice.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

I suggest a critical look into the packaging and preservation of the *adenkum* gourd. I believe ways of preventing termite infestation and breakage due to the fragility of the gourd will be revealed. Another area of study on the *adenkum* that can be further researched is the issue of gender in the

performance of *adenkum*; as explained in my findings, the *adenkum* is no longer a female-ascribed musical tradition.

Finally, since my thesis is a music-affiliated study, I recommend that in-depth investigations of the *adenkum* dance should be carried out by dance-inclined scholars. Upon visiting the JH archives, I did not come across any *adenkum* dance. The video I witnessed was an illustration of the *adenkum* music performance with the hollow gourd, which was staged by members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble.



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<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.djembedirect.com%2Fadenkum-gourd-calabash-hand-drum-ghana-womens-drum%2F&psig=AOvVaw0owpILewmRZ3aOavo6KAiW&ust=1670870999832000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CBAQjRxqFwoTCKC86did8vsCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAE>

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[TpHIOHMUqYtyqq4yAbk&ust=1670881606651000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CBAQjRxqFwoTCNiO0pnF8vsCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAE](https://www.google.com/search?q=TPHIOHMUqYtyqq4yAbk&ust=1670881606651000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CBAQjRxqFwoTCNiO0pnF8vsCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAE)

Google search (n.d) retrieved from

[https://www.askdifference.com/sustainable-vs-sustenance/.](https://www.askdifference.com/sustainable-vs-sustenance/)

Google search (n.d) retrieved from

<https://www.modernghana.com/news/659059/the-ultimate-demise-of-traditional-african-dance.htm>



**APPENDIX**

**INTERVIEWS**

Ametefe, Selorm. (2022, April 21) Personal Interview.

Bruce, Jacob. (2022, May 31) Personal Interview.

Fynn, Magdelene. (2022, May 31) Personal Interview.

Hargoe, Narh. (2022, April 19) Personal Interview.

Korankye, Osei. (2021, May 6) Personal Interview.

Korankye, Angela. (2022, March 10) Personal Interview.

Korankye, Mary. (2022, February 7) Personal Interview.

Laryea, Gifty. (2022, May 31) Personal Interview.

Maame Panin. (2022, June 3) Personal Interview.

Subject K and L. (2022, December 15) Personal Interview.

Twum, Nana. (2021, May 6, 2022, April 14) Personal Interview.

Whatsapp contacts respondents: Nii Armah Mensah, Kwame Crentsil, Stephen Mensah, Fiifi. .  
(2022, April 21) Whatsapp Broadcast Message.



## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

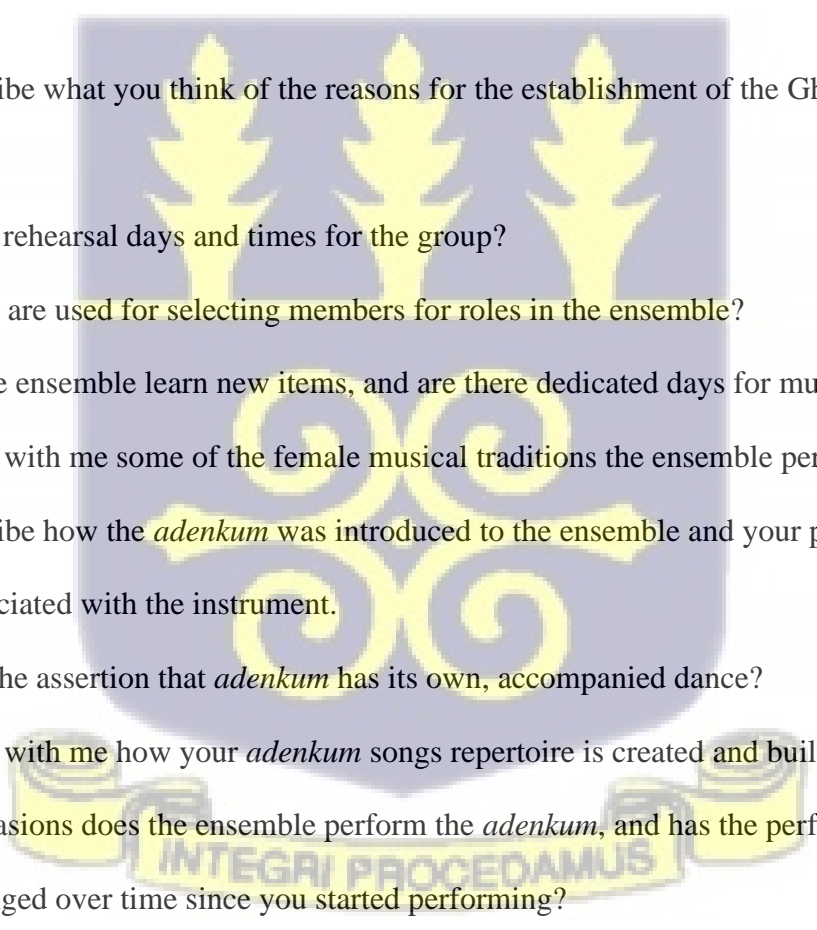
Interview questions for Nana Osei Twum Barima and some members of the *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble.

1. What is the *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble?
2. Kindly describe the reasons for the establishment of the *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ* Ensemble.
3. When was it established?
4. What are the rehearsal days and times for the group?
5. What criteria are used for selecting members for roles in the ensemble?
6. How does the ensemble learn new items, and are there dedicated days for *adenkum* rehearsals?
7. Kindly share with me some of the other female musical traditions the ensemble performs.
8. Kindly describe how the *adenkum* was introduced to the ensemble and your performance practice associated with the instrument.
9. How true is the assertion that *adenkum* has its own, accompanied dance?
10. Kindly share with me how your *adenkum* songs repertoire is created and built on.

11. On what occasions does the ensemble perform the *adenkum*, and has the performance practice changed over time since you started performing?

12. Do you envisage many groups performing the music tradition?

Questions for Dr. Hargoe Narh and some members of the Ghana dance ensemble.

- 
- The image contains a large, semi-transparent watermark of the University of Ghana crest. The crest features three golden palm trees at the top, a central shield with golden scrollwork, and a banner at the bottom with the Latin motto "INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS".
1. Kindly describe what you think of the reasons for the establishment of the Ghana Dance Ensemble.
  2. What are the rehearsal days and times for the group?
  3. What criteria are used for selecting members for roles in the ensemble?
  4. How does the ensemble learn new items, and are there dedicated days for music rehearsals?
  5. Kindly share with me some of the female musical traditions the ensemble performs.
  6. Kindly describe how the *adenkum* was introduced to the ensemble and your performance practice associated with the instrument.
  7. How true is the assertion that *adenkum* has its own, accompanied dance?
  8. Kindly share with me how your *adenkum* songs repertoire is created and built on.
  9. On what occasions does the ensemble perform the *adenkum*, and has the performance practice changed over time since you started performing?
  10. Do you envisage many groups performing the music tradition?

Questions for the other practitioners and whatsapp group members.

- 1) Do you know anything about *adenkum* music?

- 2) Do you know why it is performed?
- 3) Who performs the *adenkum*?
- 4) Why is it considered a female musical practice?
- 5) Kindly name and sing some of the *adenkum* songs.?
- 6) On what occasions is *adenkum* performed?
- 7) Are there Specific rhythms that apply only to the *adenkum*?
- 8) Have there been any significant changes in the performance since you were introduced to it?
- 9) Of what relevance is the *adenkum* performance to your kins?

Questions for female music performers.

1. How long have you been a live music performer?
2. At what point before or after your music career did you get married?
3. In what ways has being a wife affected (positive/negative) your marriage? (Optional).
4. At what point in your music career did you get pregnant?
5. In what ways did your pregnancy affect(positive/negative) your music career?
6. In what ways has being a mother affected (positive/negative) your music career?
7. In what ways do you think being single and not being a mother could have accentuated your music career?