

## Conceptualizing the stylistic body movements in contemporary Ghanaian dances as performance art form

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**Abstract:** This paper attempts to conceptualize the stylistic body movements in contemporary Ghanaian dances through the aesthetic lenses of performance art. The expressiveness of performance art forms is frequently praised for the emotions we have toward them. These feelings are derived from the symbolic connotations and functionalities of the arts in life. Through an exploratory design of qualitative inquiry, the researchers focus on a contextual dialogue on the aesthetic visual presentations of selected contemporary Ghanaian dances as performance art forms. The critical content analysis of music videos was espoused to examine the stylistic body movements and gestures coded in some contemporary Ghanaian dances such as Azonto, Twerking, Kupe, Pilolo and Shoo as part of an empirical artistic study. Instruments for data collection were observation, document analysis and photography for the contextual visual content analyses grounded in semiotic and aesthetic theoretical discourse. This study again relied heavily on secondary data from recorded communication including music videos, books, transcripts, websites, newspaper articles, journal articles and the like to make objective inferences. The findings indicate that dance is the communication that occurs via the conduit of the dancer's body that ruptures individuals' independent existence and generates a sense of finitude. Whereas some of the dances make aggressively erotic visual statements, others are mere expressive gestural and body movements to simply entertain a targeted audience. The result further shows that, the contemporary Ghanaian dance performances transcend beyond mere entertainment but rather are an embodiment of body language emerging from the indigenous dance symbolisms. Teaching learners to perceive visual aesthetic qualities and symbolic interpretations in dance performances will deepen the appreciation of Ghanaian dance performances not just as entertainment but as another medium for expression to transmit their inherent messages. It is suggested that, these dance forms should be formalized as indigenous knowledge in a quest to blend tradition with modernity in our creative endeavours. This knowledge should be propagated through creative arts education in Ghanaian schools. Other performance art components displayed in contemporary Ghanaian dances including body painting, facial expressions, costumology and fashion accessories present another lacuna for further research by future researchers.

**Keywords:** Aesthetics, Body movement, Contemporary Ghanaian dances, Creative Arts, Performance art

## **1. Introduction**

Even though dance education and practice in Ghana have improved steadily over the years, not much can be said concerning audience perception and understanding of contemporary Ghanaian dance forms, and their influence on the development of the creative arts industry. There is limited literature on new dance performances as a medium of socio-political discourse in Ghana. Whereas generally Ghanaian dances in recent times have been appreciated and perhaps enjoyed more on the pedals of entertainment through performing arts rather than a visual language or an artistic statement. However, dances offer more than just entertainment across time. Highlighting some importance of its importance, Agbayizah (2016) suggested that there is a need to incorporate dance therapy in the treatment of hypertension into the policy document of health facilities in Ghana. In agreement with him, Amoo (2016) also pointed out that, the National Commission on Culture and the National Theatre of Ghana should collaborate in structuring periodic new dance performances for Ghana audiences. This discourse should be extended to intensify cultural education at basic and secondary levels through the celebration of the festival of arts and culture. Such education is imperative to help children view dance and its performance differently as art and a form of communication possessing speech act (Guarino, 2019; Bannerman, 2014) and not just as a form of entertainment. Dance embodies and articulates the philosophies of the culture, and the origin, and serves as a unique symbol of identity (Cudjoe, 2015). This paper delves into the stylistic body movements of new dance forms in the contemporary Ghanaian creative arts industry. The study seeks to add knowledge to the documentation of five new popular dance forms into the moral fabric of Ghanaian society and to appreciate the gestural symbolism of the dances from a visual aesthetic perspective.

## **2. Conceptualizing dance as a performance art form**

Dance creativity within the stylistic body movements remains heavily untapped irrespective of its potency as a viable channel in addressing socio-political concerns in the country. Dance forms an integral part of people's lives in Ghana. Various dance forms define the ethnicity of a people through the expression of shared history, experiences, moral philosophies and outlook on life. Activities such as naming ceremonies, festivals, religious ceremonies, and marriage ceremonies are often replete with dancing. Often these dance performances are informed by the ideological and artistic tendencies of the people (Dennis, 2018). Similarly, dance is considered an activity that involves coordinating movements with music, as well as brain activation because it is constantly necessary to learn and remember new steps. Dance as a musical-kinetics skill, requires the coordination of body movements with rhythmic stimuli, developing the adaptability of the movement (Douka, Zilidou, Lilou & Manou, 2019). In a recent study, Bläsing and Zimmermann (2021) narrate in a reflection on dance as a non-visual multi-sensory experience. Their study describes the experiences of visually impaired individuals on a choreographed dance they perceived without music. The narratives indicate that the sound emanating from the dance steps, the rustling of clothes and the breathing of the dancer evoked physical emotions like laughter in the blind person. This possibility can be ascribed to the phenomenon of mental imagery (Bläsing & Zimmermann, 2021). To this end, it is comfortable to assert that dance creates a mental picture in minds of its audience and as such exerts strong visual statements through body movements and gestures.

### **3. Theoretical dialogue on dance and performance art**

In the view of Dowdy, Cureton, Duval and Ouzts (1985), dance as an art form is defined as a physical activity comprising a structured series of bodily motions that are frequently performed to music. With this, performing a low-impact routine, one of the feet should always be in touch with the ground to create firmness. Acquiring dance skills requires knowledge not just about body movements but also storylines of experiences in various aspects of life. Dancing is thus linked to creativity and intelligence not from the brain alone but also in the entire body. Dance forms an integral part of Ghanaian social life and permeates all events in the society with high degrees of communal involvement (Ampem, 1999). Dance is a language (Bannerman, 2014) and a mode of expressing one's feelings and thoughts which radiates through the body and reflects in arm gestures and facial expressions. All of these are accompanied by vibrant singing and drumming (Asare, 2014). Similarly, Tony (2008) describes dance as an effective tool for expression and conveying emotions for which Cancienne & Snowber (2003) argued in support that the art of dance, choreographed dances, and everyday movement provides a system of meaningful motions for the body to communicate meaningful expressions of knowledge. Notwithstanding, there are instances where traditional Ghanaian dances can be performed without drums or music (Persaud, 2011) whereas Professor John Collins acknowledges in a recent documentary that some Ghanaian dance steps are vital components of music creation (Sounds from Ghana, 2014). With or without music, dance is a visual presentation of expression from the performer. Other visual art components displayed in contemporary Ghanaian dance forms often include body painting, costumology and fashion accessories present another gap for further discourse. However, the dance steps, gestures, body movement costumes and other accessories like props and pieces of jewellery used in dance performances represent strong visual artistic statements than just entertainment. For example, the deity bearers of the *Asafo* youth groups in Winneba are often spotted in a performance of body movements and gestures when possessed (Impraim-Swanzy, 2015).

The search performances are not for entertainment purposes but rather to express the ontological stance of the people. Similarly, performance art presents an artistic visual statement that supersedes mere entertainment. Performance art is an art form in which the artist presents a time-based live performance to an audience (Sandström, 2010). In performance art, the time, space, and the performer's body presence presents a medium and relationship between the performer and their audience and as such and ephemeral art (Bonnici, 2018; Freshman, 2018; Coogan, 2015). With a wider variety of media including dance, performance art tends to communicate through the aesthetic perceptions or ideations of fine arts which end in a live presentation with the performer within the scope of time and space rather than a stifled art form that can be left in an exhibition. The presence of the performer is key to the live exhibition of performance art. These instrumentations are core components of indigenous Ghanaian dance, body movements and gestures which often are performed to invoke spirituality during ritual, initiation, ceremonies or festivals (Wilson, 2006; Wilson, n.d.). This contention contextualizes dance as performance art appreciable through aesthetic elements of fine arts.

### **4. Concealed benefits in dance movements**

Dance has long been acknowledged for its capacity to entertain as well as its cultural preservation goals; nevertheless, beginning a few decades ago, researchers such as Filippidis, Gerovasili, and Majeed (2014) and Stuckey and Nobel (2010) have been investigating the health impacts of dance. Balgaonkar (2010), observes that dance is the most fundamental component of the franchise of arts which encompasses direct expression through

the human body. Dance forms have always had their roots grounded in traditions (Bannerman, 2014; Persaud, 2011). And a dance form that is not grounded in the past and instead casts a shadow into the future perishes with the creation that produces it (Agbayizah, 2016). The continuation of dance via regular practice is as vital to the African as its spread through documentation or any other type of scientific technique (Opoku, 1966 as cited in Agbayizah, 2016). Opoku (2011) reiterated that dancing expresses sentiments, ideas, reflections, reverence, views, or information that might be favourable or bad. Creating dances also increases self-esteem which is so very important to learning (Howe, 2022). Howe added that dance burns calories strengthens muscles, improves balance, increases flexibility, and gives the heart a good workout. Moreover, dance has also been proven to increase cognitive development.

Dance may thus be seen as a type of exercise that has a significant influence on a person's physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. Agbayizah (2016) also agrees that dance is also a multi-cultural technique that improves overall well-being. The reasoning is that no cultural or ethnic group has a monopoly on dancing, thus it acts as a universal therapy for everyone. To him, dancing as cultural identity is demonstrated by the fact that all cultural groups participate in dance as part of their accepted conventions in their societies. Dance has a therapeutic impact because it improves social connections among people. Dance is the creation of rhythmical steps and motions for the sake of producing them. Hanna (1995) observed that dance incorporates the culturally mediated body, emotion, and cognition, which improves bodily health through a stronger immune system.

Nketia (1999) acknowledges the importance of transmitting and preserving our cultural values by providing opportunities for children to experience the dance forms of their environment to ensure continuity of participation in the social life of the communities they belong. These gestures serve as non-verbal communication that gives information about the cultural and historical background of the people in the area. These go to affirm the contribution of the performing arts to the promotion of stylistic body movements of new dance forms in the moral fabric of Ghanaian society. Balgaonkar (2010) demonstrates that dance is the most basic component of the arts which encompasses direct expression through the human body. As indicated by Sokpor (2016: 7), dance is defined as the “expressions of physical, psychological and spiritual emotions to communicate ideas”. The idea is that through dance, participants can physically communicate ideas with other people. Psychologically, dance affords dancers the avenue to develop their psychological make-up which engenders the well-being of the entire body. In terms of the spiritual makeup of a person, dance enables people to relate with their creator and other spiritual beings. The argument here is that dance offers a myriad of opportunities with health as the pinnacle. Through dance, people can show thoughts and emotions which may either be pleasant or unpleasant. According to Amenuke, Dogbe, Asare, Ayiku and Baffoe (1991: 129), “miming, stamping of the feet, leaping, hopping, stooping, jumping, tumbling and kicking are all characteristics of dancing”. They added that specific movements or actions in dance may be performed to express the mood of an occasion or ceremony. Concluding that, dancing is done basically to exercise the body.

Stuckey and Nobel (2010) noted that dance significantly helps in healing emotional injuries, elevates one's understanding of himself and others, stimulates self-reflection, reduces symptoms, and enables people to modify their thinking processes and also behaviours. In terms of the physical and mental impact of dance, the following are revealed: Dance enhances the functioning of the mental faculty of the body, it engenders physical functioning of the entire body; boosts the healthier performance of the heart and lungs; dance strengthens the bones and reduces the risk of other diseases; dance creates an enabling atmosphere for better coordination and agility of

the body (Agbayizah, 2016). As argued by Amenowode (2002), healing in Ghana is not just a situation of taking a medicine that you feel can cure the ailment, but a pile of complex processes with interactions between the society and people. This process ends up strengthening the physical architecture, enhancing the emotions, encouraging the spiritual makeup and others. In supporting this view, Penniman (2002) opines that healing through dance within the Ghanaian context has never been the preserve of a particular ethnic group. In other words, all ethnic groupings have their dance that is used to cater for people in terms of ailments. Amenuke et al. (1991) indicated that, to the Ghanaian, dance is life in action. To them, performance is therefore vigorous and life-enhancing and therapeutic in nature.

## **5. Research methodology**

The paper conceptualizes the visual presentation of contemporary Ghanaian dance forms such as *Azonto*, *Twerking*, *Kupe*, *Pilolo* and *Shoo*. The study employed the exploratory design of a qualitative inquiry approach to collect multimedia visual data. Tegan (2022) explains exploratory **research design** as a methodology approach that investigates research questions that have not previously been studied in depth and is often qualitative in nature. As a qualitative inquiry, the researchers delve into understanding the meanings associated with the selected dance performances as a phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). This approach proves to be a viable option in defining and explaining the stylistic body movements embedded in the dance forms under consideration. Observation and document analysis (Hefferman, 2013) of still and motion pictures were used as instruments. Hefferman (2013) describes document analysis as analysing data from the examination of documents from secondary sources like textbooks, magazines and so forth relevant to a particular study. The initial phase of the inquiry process focused on watching 10 selected music videos (two each for the selected dance forms) after which an observation guide and checklist were developed and tested through a pilot critical observation to validate the instrument. Initially, there were challenges with focusing on the scope of the study as the dance videos present an interesting subject. Hence, second and third rounds of observations were deployed to help align the focus. This also paved way for another validation through triangulation analysis of the contents from both textual sources and the music videos (Peshkin, 1993 as cited in Adom, 2016) to vouch for their credibility. The content analytic tool underpinned by the aesthetic and semiotic theories (Helbo, 2016) was utilized to ascertain the themes or concepts and meanings of the stylistic body movements in the dance forms. This study relied heavily on secondary data from recorded communication including music videos, books, transcripts, websites, newspaper articles, journal articles and the like to make objective inferences (Holsti, 1969 as cited in Terrell, 2016).

## **6. Results and Discussion**

### **6.1. Stylistic body movements in the performance art of contemporary Ghanaian dances**

#### *Azonto dance*

*Azonto* is a communication dance thought to have evolved from the word 'Amaa,' which means 'to work.' *Amaa* was a word that was used to describe a person's profession. The *Azonto* dance has evolved since then to communicate hidden messages. The dance eventually became ingrained in the majority of Ghanaians' minds. *Azonto* is a type of Ghanaian music and dance (Jakana, 2012). The dance has a connection to the traditional Ga dance *Kpanlogo*. Chorkor, James Town, Teshie, Nungua, and Tema are all coastal towns in Ghana where it is

found. According to some accounts, Azonto was once known in these communities as *Apa*. Their body movements focus on their hands, shoulders, legs, knee bending and hip movements. This dance involves hand movement that mimics everyday activities like driving, boxing, ironing clothes, and washing dishes among others. They are gestural codes that make visual statements of expression (Cancienne & Snowber, 2003) from the dancer or performer to a targeted audience. This justifies earlier assertions of other scholars that the performance of Ghanaian contemporary dance is an art form and a language (Bonnici, 2018; Freshman, 2018; Coogan, 2015; Bannerman, 2014; Cross, 2014) in which case we argue in favour that dance is a visual performance than just mere entertainment.



Figure 1: Group of dancers, dancing Azonto

Source: GHkasa.com, 2022

### *Twerking dance*

*Twerking* is a sexually provocative dance style characterized by quick, repetitive hip thrusts and buttock shaking, often when crouching. *Twerking* has become a catch-all term for an aggressively sexualized form of dance in which the hips and posterior are manipulated in an often mesmerizing and physics-defying bounce. This type of dance has gained global attention and is performed widely among the youth. Findings from our review of online documents largely posit *Twerking* as a form of dance that originated in New Orleans' bounce music culture in the late 1980s (Patrickka, 2021; Cudjoe, 2015; Pérez, 2015). However, the findings indicate that the dance was performed among black women. Undoubtedly, the origins of *Twerk* dance as associated with black women can be traced to Africa (Cates, 2021). Performers of the dance move by tossing or pushing their hips back or shaking their buttocks, as a rule in a moo hunching down position (figure 2) and are generally but not only performed by ladies (Dee, 2012). *Twerking* is a subset of the "bounce" dance style, which originated in New Orleans. Mixing, exercising, the bend over, the shoulder hustle, clapping, booty clapping, booty popping, and the wildwood are all moves associated with booty-shaking or bouncing and often associated with stigmatized sexuality (Patrickka, 2021).

Findings indicate that the gestures and body movements in *Twerk* dance are sexually suggestive and erotic as in the case of some indigenous Ghanaian dances like *Kpalogo* and *Adowa* (Editorial Team, 2022; Asare, 2014). Aside from the body movements especially the shaking of the buttocks by the *Twerk* dance performers symbolising explicit sexual statements, the dance was found to be more aggressive and sexually provocative than the traditional *Adowa* and *Kpalogo* dance. Performed with a dynamic blend of slow-motion and

aggressively shaking and bouncing, twerk dance is popular and high patronised by the youth as portrayed in the music videos. Such inferences can be likened to the composite of performance art as discussed at the onset (Freshman, 2018; Coogan, 2015). *Twerking* is only one type of bounce choreography (Fuse, 2013). In 2018, the *Gwara Gwara* dance, a viral South African dance, went global. The dance, invented by DJ Bongz, involves lifting and swinging one leg while engaging the entire body, including the arms in sync with the leg movement. The *Gwara Gwara* reached its pinnacle when it was performed at the 2018 Grammy Awards Ceremony. Rihanna is one of the international artists who has performed and moved *Gwara Gwara*. Analysing their similarities, both the Twerk and *Gwara Gwara* are projected erotic visual gestures that are seductive in nature and often targeted at enticing the opposite sex.



**Figure 2:** A woman *Twerking* at a music festival

**Source:** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Girl\\_dancing\\_Holi\\_feest\\_2008.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Girl_dancing_Holi_feest_2008.jpg)

### *Kupe dance*

The findings from the documental review reveal that Michael Amofa aka Incredible Zigi, a leader of the AFROZIG Movement and ace choreographer, started dancing professionally on the streets of Accra in 2003 has been credited for viral the *Kupe* dance (Onyekwena, 2018). His career began with the assistance of his brother, who provided him with opportunities to travel and attend dance workshops (Somuah-Annan, 2018). Zigi's work went viral on social media, with thousands of people taking the dance challenge on Instagram. In an article published by the Guadian Arts, Zigi expresses that he named the dance after a popular street slag *kupe* in Ghana – a term used to 'warn' or threaten someone. But for him, he coupled the dance step with clapping to draw attention and then show the peace sign to promote peace in society (Onyekwena, 2018). A critical observation of the sharp swing of the body and feet forward that ends in a sudden pulse on a tip-toe (see figure 3) is not far from portraying the act of someone stopping an act due to a direct order from a superior. Again, the performance of the gestures in the dance was not for entertainment's sake but to make a strong visual statement on peace promotion through performance. It is not surprising that the dance went viral globally (Onyekwena, 2018).



**Figure 3:** *Kupe* dance step tutorial by the originator, Zigi

Source: <https://youtu.be/IF-VU1UnM8I>, 2022

#### *Pilolo* dance

According to the Opera News in 2020, *Pilolo* got to be a hit in New York City after Janet Jackson performed it at the end of her "Made for Now" performance on Jimmy Fallon's "The Tonight Show" (News24\_RSA, 2020). Zigi, the originator of the *Kupe* dance discussed earlier is again credited for *Pilolo* dance. Zigi expresses that the dance name *Pilolo* was inspired by the popular Ghanaian children's game of "hide and seek" (Onyekwena, 2018) In analysing the dance as performed by Zigi and his crew in a short YouTube video (Incredible Zigi, 2018), it was found that the invigorating movements and gestures resembling the *Kupe* dance moves portray nothing significantly aside from entertaining the audience (see also figure 4). As one of the traditional games held in high esteem by the old and the young, *Pilolo* provides a platform for children to hone their social skills, familiarize themselves with their environment and interact properly with others. (OfosuHemaa, 2016 as cited in Boateng-Nimoh & Nantwi, 2020). As the name goes, the presentation of the *Pilolo* dance emits cheerful emotions, unlike the Twerk dance which suggests an explicit visual statement.



**Figure 4:** Zigi (in white shirt) with his crew performing the *Pilolo* dance

Source: <https://youtu.be/I1Aqry8v3vE>, 2022

#### *Shoo* dance

Laud Anor Konadu, better known by his stage name Dancegod Lloyd, is unquestionably one of Ghana's best dancers in recent times (GhanaWeb, 2021). He perfected his dancing skills and danced his way to the apex. It's incredible to see how well his creativity has been infused with African dance. With the help of his dance buddy,

he founded the DWP (Dance with a Purpose) dance academy. People haven't been able to get over Shoo Dance since Dancegod Llyod posted it on Instagram. Shoo dance has grown in popularity over time and shows no signs of slowing down. The dance is a freestyle and was created by Dancegod Llyod (Barnes, 2020), a rising star in the dancing fraternity. Whereas there seems to be little or no empirical literature on the meaning of *Shoo* dance, the originator has seem not to have resealed any official statement on the symbolism of the dance steps. In our analysis of the dance, we found that the blend of dynamic interchange in body swings, flexing of legs and hands, kicks and jumps resemble some gestures relate to gymnastics and sporting activities. As a freestyle dance, the *Shoo* performer is open to creativity expressivity and making visual statements from the subconscious mind which is transferred into the limbs, – a phenomenon that fits into the description of performance art (Freshman, 2018; Coogan, 2015).



Figure 5: Dancegod Lloyd (right) exhibiting *shoo* dancing skills

Source: <https://myinfo.com.gh/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/38518530.295.jpg>

## 7. The aesthetic value of contemporary Ghanaian dance forms

The creation of the art has to do with the organisation of elements guided by principles of design. The elements and principles together constitute the visual qualities in art forms. A well organised visual quality in art forms enhances the aesthetic value of the arts (Kemevor & Duku, 2013). The level of audience participation as a reflection of the amount of enjoyment generated by the performance determines the aesthetic value of dance. A musical dance performance must elicit audience participation to be aesthetically appreciated and valued because music and dance in traditional Ghanaian society are participatory communal activities in which everyone participates. Wilson (1971 as cited in Ayine, 2009) defines aesthetic experience as an active open confrontation with both artistic and natural phenomena. The individual performs visual analysis and value judgments of the many qualities and aspects present in the phenomenon during this process. He continues, that individuals' feelings are transformed toward the situation or object so that judgment can be made on whether the object or situation is desirable or not. This experience, he claims, entails perception, visual analysis, appraisal, and discernment.

Gyekye (1996) indicated that dance performance is evaluated by reference to the aesthetic qualities of body movements and style and the significance of the movement. In a broader sense, aesthetics encompasses not only the observation and comprehension of art but also nature and its beautiful aspects of it. The swerving of the horsetails, as well as the movement of the legs, hands, and head, are pleasing to the eye. Dance movements are inspired by natural events, everyday life, religious themes, experiences, beliefs and attitudes which may be easily

translated into dance steps. Costume and body markings are used as an extension of body gestures during dance performances. These stimulate the movement of the eyes around the body from the head to the feet, thus creating aesthetic sensations in the eyes of the observers and the dancers. The dance forms being integrated with everyday life are used to secure and continue the spiritual and physical welfare of the community. They reflect the struggles and aspirations of the people primarily through body movements and gestures (Kemevor & Duku, 2013). When the object of attention is regarded as desirable in and of itself, the experience is aesthetic. That perception is accompanied by an aesthetic emotion. Dancing can become an object of attention to which value is attached only while the dancers dance. We can perceive dancing only while it is being danced. This is because the body and its movement are the medium of dance. The artist dances with his or her body and its movements (Vermeiji, 2017).

## **7. Conclusion**

The stylistic body movements in dance forms serve as the foundation of absolute community. It is the communication that happens via the conduit of the dancer's body that ruptures individuals' autonomous existence and creates a sense of finitude. Non-verbal communication is one of the most important ways of transmitting messages to people and its response in a social context is very crucial and effective. Gestures in our contemporary dance performances such as *Azonto*, *Twerking*, *Kupe*, *Pilolo* and *Shoo* are among the non-verbal way of sending messages across to an individual in a special way. To revitalize a feeling of community, the dancer's body must transmit a culture's past. However, before a dancer can express a cultural passion to an audience, he or she must first experience the sensation of the community by challenging his or her sense of absolute individualism. This implies that the dancer must be so profoundly connected to the culture and history reflected in Ghana's pre-modern dance traditions. He then enters a community of self, where he sees himself as a finite creature and the passion of culture runs through every limb and is stimulated in every movement. At this moment, the dancer-audience interaction is touching, the transfer of a tremble on the border of existence, the sharing of a desire that makes us brethren. Once the dancer has experienced total community in his own body, he may successfully express a culture's enthusiasm to his audience and share the feeling of absolute community with them. It can also be asserted that dance transcends beyond entertainment to a rather visual non-verbal message associated with performance art.

Aesthetic experience is required to perceive the symbolism and the coded language buried in dance performances. The foci of visual arts appreciation in schools ought to be extended to enact perceptual abilities in learners to appreciate dance performances as art visual artworks. This will help the youth to develop an intense appreciation of both indigenous and contemporary dance not just as means of entertainment but as another medium of artistic expression to transmit their message. Dance movements are inspired by natural events, everyday life activities, religious themes, experiences, beliefs and attitudes which are easily translated into dance steps. Through dance performances, career opportunities could be developed out of positive engagement of this genre of performing arts. Again, it is suggested that the contemporary dance forms should be formalized as indigenous knowledge in a quest to blend tradition with modernity in our creative endeavours. Whereas efforts must be made to preserve the originality of these dance forms as authentic contemporary Ghanaian aesthetic expressions. Other performance art components displayed in contemporary Ghanaian

dances often include body painting, facial expressions, costumology and fashion accessories present another lacuna for further research by future researchers.

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