Information literacy and the body in the Kente-weaving landscape

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Abstract

This article reports on the relationship between becoming information literate and the body in the Kente-weaving landscape. A mixed approach of incorporative ethnographic participant observation and semi-structured interviews with 24 participants through their roles as either master weaver, junior weaver or novice weaver at the Bonwire Kente Centre. Thematic analysis through an embodied-practice approach to information literacy (IL) frames the analysis of this study. The findings show that the body facilitates IL or knowing by understanding and making meaning of the cues afforded it from interaction and participation in the Kente-weaving practices. The body facilitates or enables IL through identifying and understanding cues in an information landscape.

Keywords

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1. Introduction

Information literacy (IL) studies from the socio-cultural perspective have been conducted in various contexts (Olsson & Lloyd 2017a) focusing on formal and semi-formal contexts (Bonner & Lloyd 2011; Hicks 2018a; Lloyd 2009; Lloyd & Somerville 2006; Sharun 2021). There have been virtually no literacy studies examining informal contexts, for example, the Kente weaving landscape, a fabric-weaving context in Ghana, which has resulted in minimal information on how fabric weavers engage with information in practice.

From the socio-cultural perspective, becoming information literate concerning a workplace is a holistic experience that is not only established textually but also bodily (Lloyd, 2010a). Practice researchers such as Schatzki (1996), Wenger (1998), Reckwitz (2002) and Gherardi (2008) have acknowledged the importance of the human body (hereafter referred to as 'body') in the embodiment of practice. Accessing social and corporeal information in the workplace requires the body to make sense of information (Bonner & Lloyd, 2011; Lloyd, 2009; Lloyd, 2010a; Lloyd & Olsson, 2019). This brings to the fore the importance of the body to the embodiment of practice and therefore needs to be considered in workplace IL studies (Lloyd, 2007, 2014).

According to Schatzki (1996, p. 24), the body is an expression of the condition of life that reflects the discourse of a social site and therefore is vital to its understanding and intelligibility. He explains that other than regarding the body as a mere tool through which people experience life, the body is vital to the enactment of social life. Studies have suggested that there is a relationship between IL and the body in social life (Bates, 2018; Gherardi, 2009; Hicks, 2018a;

Hicks, 2018b; Lindh, 2018; Lloyd, 2010b; Lloyd, 2012; Lloyd, 2017; Lloyd & Olsson, 2018; Lloyd & Olsson, 2019). Underpinning this relationship is the fact that information sometimes makes meaning to people precisely in relation to their bodies (Keilty & Leazer, 2018, p. 468). Sobchack (2004, p. 60) explains it as follows:

> As 'lived body', our vision is always already 'fleshed out'. Even at the movies our vision and hearing are informed and given meaning by our other modes of sensory access to the world: our capacity not only to see and to hear but also to touch, to smell, to taste, and always to proprioceptively feel our weight, dimension, gravity, and movement in the world.

Sobchack's statement above suggests that the body plays a role in knowing (i.e. becoming information literate). The composition of the body as both physical elements and lived experiences, thus something humans are made up of and have, suggests social, corporeal and material encounters with information as ways of knowing a workplace (Lloyd & Olsson, 2018; O'Connor, 2017). Again, Sobchack's statement, in turn, also suggests that knowing the workplace entails access to information modalities including the corporeal modality which pertains to the body, and the five senses (eyesight, hearing, taste, touch and smell).
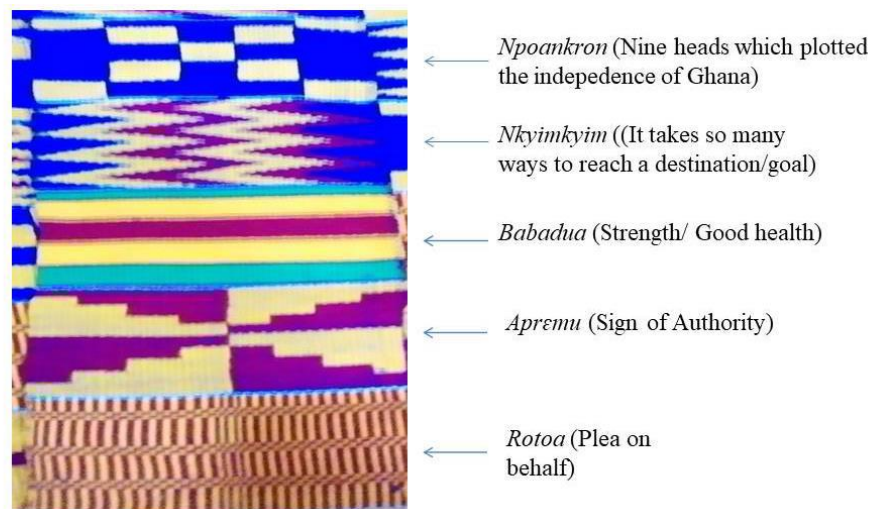
Hence, the conception of Kente knowledge in the minds of the weavers by studies such as Asmah, Gyasi and Daity (2015, p. 115) and Fusein and Kugbllenu-Mahama (2018, p. 727), champions the duality of the mind/body split and therefore silences the physical presence of the body in the co-construction of knowledge in information science (Lloyd, 2007, 2014). The conception of knowledge as existing solely in the mind of the weavers ignores the role of the body in learning and knowing, and therefore the ways of knowing in order to become information literate in the Kente-weaving landscape. This raises the question of learning in the fabric-weaving landscape. Except for a few studies (Lloyd & Olsson, 2018; Lloyd & Olsson, 2019), IL researchers appear to have ignored the role of the body in IL research. It is from this background that this study aims to report on the relationship between becoming information literate and the body in the Kente-weaving (a fabric-weaving) landscape. To understand what Kente weaving involves, the context of the Kente-weaving landscape is introduced. Thereafter, the conceptual framework and the literature review conceptualise IL and the body in the workplace. The reported findings follow the discussion on the methodology of the study.

2. Kente-weaving landscape

The Kente-weaving landscape constitutes the place where hand-woven fabric called Kente, a traditional fabric, is woven in Ghana. The weavers use a loom to create narrow pieces of cloth which are then put together edge-to-edge to form a big Kente cloth. The weaving places include the following communities: Bonwire, Adanwomase, Denase, Ntonso, Kpetoe and Tewobaabi. Oral tradition holds that Kente weaving started in Bonwire before spreading to other communities. In Bonwire, the weavers gather at a common workplace known as the Kente Centre to weave and champion the flow of Kente knowledge. According to Sabutey (2009), there are three types of weaving practitioners in the Bonwire Kente Centre: master, junior and novice weavers. The tools and materials used in weaving Kente include a loom, shuttle, heddle, yarns, treadle, reed; bobbin, pulley and swordstick (Amissah & Afram, 2018).

With the exception of the plain Kente fabrics, all Kente fabrics have patterns in them. The meaning of patterns is also derived from past events, individual achievements and certain traits and attributes of other living things such as animal and plant life (Sabutey 2009, p. 3). The patterns reflect objects whose meaning is underpinned by geometric abstractions (Sabutey 2009, p. 112). The patterns in the Kente-weaving landscape include Babadua, Nkyimkyim, Rotoa, Akonya, Akyɛm, Aprɛmu and Npoankron (see for example Figure 1).

Figure 1: Fatia fata Nkrumah (Fatia matches Nkrumah) fabric with the embedded patterns and their meaning (Agyemang, Wessels, & Du Preez, 2022, Fig. 2).

Npoankron (Nine heads which plotted the indepedence of Ghana)

Nkyimkyim ((It takes so many ways to reach a destination/goal)

Babadua (Strength/ Good health)

Aprɛmu (Sign of Authority)

Rotoa (Plea on behalf)

3. Conceptual framework

The study is underpinned by the conceptualised notion of IL (Lloyd, 2007, 2011), knowing (Wenger, 1998), practice theory (Gherardi, 2008, 2009) and sense-making (Dervin, 1992, 1999; Dervin, Foreman-Wernet & Lauterbach, 2003). IL is understood to be knowing what constitutes an information landscape by drawing meaning from interactions, processes and experiences involving all the sources and forms of information that are sanctioned in a specific landscape (Lloyd, 2006, p. 570). Wenger (1998, p. 141) defines knowing as arising from the context of particular practices, in which knowing emanates from experience, meaning-making and a "regime of competence". In his definition, "regime of competence" means the norms and conditions by which a person is recognised as being capable to perform in a community of practice. According to Wenger's definition, knowing means competent participation in practice (Wenger 1998, pp. 137–141; Wenger 2010, p. 180). It is inferred here that knowing is learning through experience and 'sense-making' of situated practices to acquire competence or skills ('know-how' knowledge) by participating in the training and practices of a community of practitioners.

To the practice theorists, knowledge is rooted in and is an inherent part of action or practice (Savolainen 2009, p. 5). They characterise knowledge as something that does not reside in an individual's head or a book but rather stems from the competence to perform the activities of a setting, using material objects (Gergen 1985, p. 270; Gherardi & Nicolini 2000, p. 331). However, they prefer to use the term "knowing" as it connotes activity, doing, action and process that unfolds over time and as such "knowing" is deemed inseparable from practice (Blackler 1995; Gherardi & Miele 2018; Orlikowski 2002, pp. 250–251). Knowing is not produced or achieved cognitively through mental schemes only, but rather knowing is a practical and embodied endeavour that relates to competence.

Lloyd (2010b, pp. 11–12) suggests that information produces knowing in the context of specific practices. Information, in whatever form or modality, be it textual (epistemic), corporeal or social, has to connote meaning to a person to develop the perspective and understanding of knowing a landscape (Lloyd 2006, p. 578). In her understanding of IL, Lloyd conceptualises IL as an information practice framed by socio-cultural elements in a setting (Lloyd, 2007). From a sociological and contextual guided way of learning, the concept of information practices encompasses the information experiences that shape people through their engagement in

social practices (Olsson & Lloyd, 2017a; Talja, 2005). From a holistic viewpoint, Lloyd (2011, pp. 285–292) defines information practice as a collection of information-related activities (actions, doings) and inherent competencies, sanctioned and mediated socially and materially with a view to creating negotiated understanding about the ways of knowing and performing in a collective practice. Information practice is considered a corporeal way of knowing the situated practices in a social site which requires practical understanding derived from being embodied through the active relationship with the socio-material and symbolic elements in the context of an information landscape (Lloyd, 2010c; Olsson & Lloyd, 2017a). Hence, information practice is understood as the information affordance or experiences that enable knowing and understanding in the Kente-weaving landscape.

 In the information landscape, embodied knowing is central to practical accomplishment (Gherardi, 2008; 2009). Gherardi (2008, p. 517) explains this as follows:

> Knowledge is not what resides in a person's head or in books or in data banks. To know is to be capable of participating with the requisite knowledge competence in the complex web of relationships among people, material artifacts, and activities. On this definition, it follows that knowing in practice is always a practical accomplishment.

In this conception of knowledge in practice, affective and embodied practices are acknowledged in knowing the practices of a social site (Olsson & Lloyd, 2017b). These affective and embodied practices relate to sense-making in practice. Like Olsson and Lloyd's (2017b) and Olsson's (2016) studies, this study is also underpinned by aspects of Dervin's (1999) sense-making concept.

According to Dervin's (1992, 1999) sense-making concept, people observe and experience the world in a different way to create meaning. She rejects the notion of individual cognition in understanding how individuals and communities make sense by making the point that meaning is created by people in a time-space. Dervin (1999, p. 730) explains

> embodied in materiality and soaring across time-space … a body-mind-heart-spirit living in time-space, moving from a past, in a present, to a future, anchored in material conditions.

According to Olsson (2016, p. 411), Dervin's notion of sense-making complements practice theory. He suggests that the acknowledgment of the mind and body in practice draws attention to the affective, as well as the embodied nature of the participants' sense-making practices. Following the understanding from Dervin's (1992, 1999) sense-making concept, information is understood as not being independent of human beings but as resulting from human beings' experiences emanating from practices in a physical time-space context (Foreman-Wernet, 2003).

4. IL and the body in the workplace

IL or knowing is perceived as not just a cognitive activity, but a corporeal experience in the construction of practice (Gherardi, 2008; Lindh, 2018; Lloyd, 2007; Lloyd, 2009; Lloyd & Olsson, 2018; Lloyd & Olsson, 2019; O'Connor, 2017). In the construction of practice, corporeal information and embodiment are pivotal to understanding practice as a social site, where the body is referenced in the performance of work and the demonstration of know-how and practical reasoning (Olsson & Lloyd, 2017a). Gherardi (2008, p. 521) has observed that it is through the five senses that knowing and professionalism are acquired. She argues that craft trades require practitioners to exhibit aesthetic knowledge as a basis for specific competence. Aesthetic knowledge is the knowledge derived from the experiences practitioners build up in relation to the taste, look, smell, feel or sound of things in the workplace (Ewenstein & White, 2007, p. 689).

Gherardi (2008, p. 521) suggests that from interaction and participation in the practices of the workplace, novices should be able to train their bodies (develop competences) to have the 'eye', 'nose', 'ear', 'skin' and 'tongue' interpret 'something'. It is understood from Gherardi's (2008, p. 521) point that the senses should be trained to be able to professionally understand and interpret the afforded information of the craft.

The body generates meanings, and visual cues about activities that lead to understanding and embodied knowing (Goffman, 1983; O'Loughlin, 1998, p. 279; St. Jean, Jindal & Chan, 2018). Embodied knowing is defined as knowledge located within, and accessed through the body (Nagatomo, 1992). Lloyd (2010a) notes that the body is not just an embodied-knowing source, but also represents a visible and situated enactment of knowing. Thus, underpinning every intelligence or experience is the body; and as such, the body becomes a site for information and understanding and should be considered in IL or knowing of practice (Cox, Griffin & Hartel, 2017; Hedemark & Lindberg, 2018 Hoffmann & Pfeifer, 2011; Lloyd, 2010a). In addition, it is argued that the body possesses, produces and disseminates information vital to the understanding of our information experiences and knowing through situated practices that reflect specific information landscapes (Bates, 2018; Hicks, 2018b; Lloyd, 2010a; Lloyd & Olsson, 2018; Lloyd & Olsson, 2019; Rambusch & Ziemke, 2005; Veeber, Syrjäläinen & Lind, 2015). For example,

- Firefighters develop 'fire sense' – cues from smelling fire, hearing the loudness of the fire and seeing the smoke; these 'cues' facilitate knowing the fire in the firefighting landscape (Lloyd & Somerville, 2006, p. 193).
- In the ambulance service, officers develop 'breath sound'– cues through interaction with patients. 'Breath sound' cues could not be conveyed on a piece of paper (Lloyd, 2009, p. 403), in that the officers develop skills to access patients' 'breath sounds' for diagnostic and decision-making purposes. The body provides cues of patients' heartbeats or pulse. The body, through its senses, provides the participants with the information needed to evaluate a casualty scenario and to decide whether there is a need to trigger cardiopulmonary resuscitation procedures (Lindh, 2018, p. 323).
- Nurses depend on their senses, which include touching, smelling and hearing patients, for diagnostic information to ascertain the state of the patient's health (Bonner & Lloyd, 2011, p. 1219).
- Chefs touch, taste and smell food for information. For example, through touching, the texture gives information about the food, whether fresh or old, whether good or bad (Fine, 1996, p. 76; Fafeita & Lloyd, 2012, p. 95; Wellton, Jonsson & Svingstedt, p. 2019, p. 404). Also, Cormier-MacBurnie (2010, p. 33-34) found that looking at and feeling the texture of flour dough being kneaded provides knowing affordance of information to tell when the dough is ready.
- Archaeologists taste and feel artefacts for texture or temperature to access information (MacGregor, 1999, p. 264). Also, the heaviness, lightness, smoothness and colour of an artefact, as experienced by the body, signify meaning (Olsson, 2016, p. 414).
- Car restorers feel metals differently when they make panels. The feel of the metals determines the amount of pressure to apply when making panels (Lloyd & Olsson, 2019, p. 7).
- Miners sense danger when they hear specific noises or smell a specific odour. For example, a pop sound indicates the pressure of methane and a bump sound indicates collapsing pillars (Sauer, 1998, p. 137; Somerville & Abrahamsson, 2003, p. 26). In addition, the sound and feel of the drill support them in determining the presence of layers and fractures (Hill, Smelser, Signer & Miller, 1993, p. 496).
- Potters, through the senses of smell, sight, temperature, taste and hearing access corporeal information (Richards, 1989, p. 146).

As in many workplace contexts, including craft workplaces, the cues suggest that there is 'dialogue' between the human (body) and the material objects (Illum, 2006, p. 119; Lepistö & Lindfors, 2015, p. 4; Nasseri & Wilson, 2017, p. 194). The 'dialogue' develops through the senses of the body such as hearing, touching and seeing (Illum, 2006, p. 119; Hofverberg & Kronlid, 2017, p. 3). According to Nasseri and Wilson (2017, p. 203), the meaning of craft dialogue is embodied in the interaction between material objects and the body and hence is different from that of verbal dialogue. Vannini and Vannini (2019, p. 2) suggest that materials interact with the body during practice. They explain as follows:

> Working with materials, feeling them, watching them, listening to them, and thus paying attention to what they can teach us is revealing of what we learn in virtue of our openness to the world.

In the craft landscape, material objects, when being worked with or upon, afford information that is accessible by the body (senses):

- Woodworkers relate to the sound of the wood when being worked on (nailed into) to detect that there is a correct blow or crack (Illum, 2006, p. 119; Vannini & Vannini, 2019, p. 6). The sound is accessed (by ear) through their hearing to provide for remedial action should it be required. Craftspeople read wood by touching the wood with their hands (Maapalo & Østern, 2018, p. 388). Woodworkers (e.g. guitar makers) use their fingers to ascertain the unique qualities of the wood texture through combing (Vannini & Vannini, 2019, p. 8).
- Clay workers use their hands to feel the clay and their ears to hear the associated sound, using both these sensory experiences to determine the smoothness and how much contact and rhythmic movement is needed to complete their task (Batmaz, 2019, p. 40; Groth, Mäkelä & Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, 2013, p. 8; Nasseri & Wilson, 2017, p. 201).
- Metalworkers receive cues by smelling the odour of metal and seeing the colour of smoke, respectively (Kuijpers, 2018, p. 866). Metalworkers recognise cues from the sound and feel of a hardened metal (for example, tin-bronze) during hammering to detect that the desired hardness has been reached to prevent cracking (Kuijpers, 2018, p. 871; Untracht, 1969, p. 246).

In dialogue with material objects and their active participation in practices, craftspeople have access to an embodied knowing (Illum, 2006, p. 119).

An admission of the body as key to knowing and therefore becoming information literate collapses the traditional dualistic notion of mind and body agency (Lueg, 2015; Scott & Uncles, 2018). According to Gherardi (2009), people know through their bodies. This recognition of people knowing through their bodies reflects how knowledge manifests in 'know-how' (Reckwitz, 2002; Hicks, 2018a). Researchers such as Bonner and Lloyd (2011), and Lloyd and Olsson (2018; 2019) acknowledge that the embodiments of IL practice are experienced at the "moment of practice" at the workplace. IL practice enables the negotiation of realities and the development of skills that facilitate knowing the information environment (Lloyd, 2010a).

5. Methodology

This study employed an ethnographic research design with mixed data collection methods of participant observation and semi-structured interviews of weavers (master, junior and novice) at the Bonwire Kente Centre in Ghana. All participants were males. The male dominance is informed by the culture of the Bonwire community.

The researcher is familiar with the operations of the setting as he comes from a nearby village where Kente is also woven. The researcher got access to the Bonwire Kente Centre through a gatekeeper. Upon realising the researcher hails from a nearby village where Kente fabric is also

woven, though not on such a large or extensive scale as in Bonwire, specifically the Bonwire Kente Centre, trust was built and approval to conduct the research was granted. This was because the researcher was regarded as a brother. The researcher was subsequently introduced, by the executives, to the weavers at one of their regular meetings and informed consent was signed.

The researcher took up the role of 'participant as observer' in the Kente-weaving landscape. Considering how informal the Bonwire Kente Centre is, by assuming this role, the researcher became an apprentice to a master weaver for six months to collect data. This decision was also inspired by the possibility of the Hawthorne effect as alluded to by O'Reilly (2009). The Hawthorne effect is the study of the behavioural changes participants exhibit in response to their knowledge when being observed (Sedgwick, 2012). This was to avoid or reduce the behavioural changes caused by changes external to the individuals (in this case the weavers), for example, having a newcomer within the landscape and knowing that they are observing you (O'Reilly 2009). According to O'Reilly (2009), this tendency to feel uncomfortable does diminish over time, as the ethnographer joins in and becomes part of the landscape that others take for granted. In effect, this decision was taken to limit the possibility of behavioural changes with regard to the sayings and doings when interacting with the weavers and endeavouring to build rapport at the Bonwire Kente Centre in Ghana. The researcher jotted down field notes of relevant activities in the field.

Though this study is informed partly by the theoretical perspectives of practice theory and sense-making, it aims to report on the situated understanding of the relationship between becoming information literate and the body in the Kente-weaving landscape. The interview was conducted and recorded in Twi (the native language of the participants, weavers) and later translated into English transcripts to facilitate analysis. Eight participants each from the master, junior and novice weaving classes were selected purposively. In all, the sample included 24 weavers. The researcher spent an average of thirty-one minutes on each interview at the Bonwire Kente Centre.

The thematic analysis method was used to analyse the field notes and interview transcripts. Dervin's (1999) view of the actor as an expert in her world (e.g. in her body, her work, her life) informed this study where the analysis focused much more on the perspectives of the actors instead of the observer. The analysis of the data set was done according to Saldana's (2013, p. 13) codes-category-theme model for qualitative inquiry. The model provides the link from the codes through the category and to the theme. Saldana explains that a code is a word or phrase that is used to describe the salient and evocative trait for a portion of data. The data set can comprise interview transcripts or field notes emanating from participant observation (Saldana 2013, p. 13). The field notes and interview transcripts were coded together. Hence, excerpts of the data from the analysis were provided with pseudonyms to support the argument of the data presentation.

6. Findings

The study shows that the body facilitates IL by understanding and making meaning of the cues afforded it from the interaction and participation in the Kente-weaving practices. Cues are the informative signals the body gives through the senses and enables understanding of the daily weaving practices of the workplace. These cues are categorised into tactile and visual Kente cues.

6.1 Identifying and understanding visual Kente cues

With regard to the body, findings show that IL relates to the ability to identify and understand visual Kente cues in the Kente-weaving landscape. Out of experience, competent weavers

determine the quality or otherwise of a Kente fabric from visual cues the Kente-weaving landscape affords. Kwaku Duodu, a master weaver, explains the importance of experience in the weaving landscape:

> Regardless of the number of years spent in weaving, the finishing of the fabric tells it all as to whether the maker is a master or a novice. Fabrics woven by most novices are fluffy as they do not trim the fabric after weaving. Also, the fabrics woven by novices have frayed selvage ('atwuntwum').

The cues to determine the quality of a fabric are evident from its finishing features. Visual cues of low-quality fabric are the appearance of bits of fluff and frayed selvage on the fabric. Duodu's statement implies that the eyes should be trained to identify bits of fluff and frayed selvage. The presence or absence of bits of fluff and frayed selvage on fabric is a cue for determining the quality of the fabric. Hence, the presence of features such as frayed selvage defects on a fabric means that the fabric is poorly woven. In addition, the presence of bits of fluff and frayed selvage on a piece of woven fabric signals that the maker is a novice. The use of the eyes is one of the means by which the quality of the fabric is determined. Agyare Ansukun, a junior weaver, attested to this point in the following statement:

> A competent weaver can determine from the look of Kente fabric if it is of lower quality or not. For the look, for example, when there are broken ends ('Ɛfoɔ') in the woven fabric, it shows that the fabric is lower quality and that the weaver could be a novice. The broken ends ('Ɛfoɔ') occur as a result of warp breaks. … For example, if there is a heddle break, and it is not fixed, it would cause a defect called a float. This is where the weft yarn does not interlace the specific warp yarn for which the 'eyes' of the heddle have been damaged thereby causing the warp yarn to appear and hang on the woven fabric. So seeing some of the warp yarns appearing and hanging on the woven fabric attest it is of lower quality.

The appearances of broken ends ('Ɛfoɔ') and floats on a piece of woven fabric are visual cues that the Kente fabric is of low quality. Seeing broken ends ('Ɛfoɔ') and floats on a woven fabric are indications of warp and heddles breaks. It is implied from the statement above that the presence of broken ends ('Ɛ) ɔ') and floats are signals that are understood by trained 'eyes' that the fabric could be of low quality.

There are also cues for identifying the various types of Kente fabrics or patterns. Apart from the raw or plain Kente fabric, which has no pattern, all other Kente fabrics have patterns in them. The types of patterns embedded in the Kente fabric are cues for identifying Kente fabrics. Kwabena Apam, a novice weaver, explains:

> The pattern layout signals the name of the Kente fabric. Every Kente fabric has different patterns.

Kente fabrics are identified by the kind of patterns embedded in them. The patterns are of different shapes and layouts. The kinds of patterns found in a piece of Kente fabric are cues to its name. In relation to the cues for identifying a Kente fabric, the following field note observations were made:

> I observed that the Kente fabrics are identified by the embedded patterns. For example, I observed that the Fatia fata Nkrumah fabric is embedded with the following five patterns namely:
> - Babadua pattern: This is a 'square-ish' shape with six horizontal or vertical partitions with different colours. The colours include black, green, red, and yellow in a square-like shape.

- Aprɛmu pattern: This is a stepped shape at the four sides in a rectangular shape on the fabric.
- Rotoa pattern: This is like the Akyɛm pattern with broken vertical lines.
- Nkyimkyim pattern: This is a pattern with vertical zigzag shapes running through the fabric.
- Npoankron pattern: This is a pattern with two square-shape lines crossing each other diagonally to the four corners within a square or rectangular shape.

The cue for identifying the Fatia fata Nkrumah fabric is that it has five patterns. These patterns are Babadua, Aprɛmu, Rotoa, Nkyimkyim and Npoankron. The shapes of these patterns are described in the statement. These patterns are the identifying features of the Fatia fata Nkrumah fabric. However, it is noted that the patterns are not exclusive to any particular Kente fabric. In relation to this, the following field notes reflect this observation:

> I observed that different Kente fabrics may have some common patterns in them. However, there is always a cue to identify one Kente fabric from the other. This cue could be the presence or absence of one or more patterns. Typical examples of such fabrics are the 'Fatia fata Nkrumah' fabric and the 'Wo sin wo yonko a wotaa wo' fabric. In these two fabrics, I observed that the 'Wo sin wo yonko a wotaa wo' fabric has four patterns of which three are found in the 'Fatia fata Nkrumah' fabric. These three patterns are the 'Babadua', 'Rotoa' and 'Nkyimkyim'. The fourth pattern in the 'Wo sin wo yonko a wotaa wo' fabric which is not found in the 'Fatia fata Nkrumah' fabric is the 'Puduo' pattern. The 'Puduo' pattern is of a spider's web shape.

The cue for identifying a Kente fabric with some common patterns is the presence or absence of specific patterns. It is evident from the observation that no two Kente fabrics are the same. Hence, the novice weaver has to train the 'eyes' to read the cues and to identify the patterns.

6.2 Identifying and understanding tactile Kente cues

The ability to identify and understand tactile Kente cues is critical to becoming information literate and for that matter a competent weaver. The ability to make meaning of tactile sensations in the Kente-weaving landscape is core to becoming information literate in the Kente-weaving landscape. For example, the smoothness of the fabric is a cue that signals well-woven fabric. Atta Sarfo, a junior weaver, states:

> I can tell from a fabric whether it was woven well or not. Though it depends on the type of fabric or the embedded patterns, when the surface of the fabric is smooth it means it was woven well; if the surface of the fabric is rough, it means it was not woven well. If the surface of the fabric is smooth it means the weaver beat up the fabric well when weaving, but if it is rough, it means the weaver did not beat up the fabric well. When pieces of yarn appear on the surface of the fabric it means that it is rough.

The smoothness or roughness of the fabric indicates its quality. Whereas the smoothness of the fabric signals that the fabric is of high quality and was well beaten up; the roughness of the fabric means that the fabric is of poor quality and was not beaten up well during the weaving process. The competent weaver can handle and feel a piece of fabric to make a judgment on its quality. Agyare Ansukun, a junior weaver, attested to this point in the following statement:

> For the feel, you can handle the fabric and feel it to determine if it has been woven properly. For instance, if it is heavier, it means the fabric was beaten up and closely woven. It therefore suggests the fabric is of high quality. If the fabric is beaten up, it becomes compact and heavier. If it is light, it means the fabric was not closely woven and that the weaver is a novice and the fabric is low in quality.

The weight of the fabric provides a cue for determining the quality of the fabric. The feel from handling the fabric in terms of the weight provides information for judging its quality. It is understood that a heavier feeling signals high quality and a lighter feeling signals low quality. Kwadwo Afriyie, a junior weaver, explains:

> I can look at Kente fabric and tell if the maker is competent or a novice. When I hold the Kente fabric, I can tell from the weight of the Kente whether it is quality or not. The quality of the Kente fabric tells you whether the weaver is competent or not. If Kente fabric is heavier and compact it means that the Kente has been woven well. If the Kente fabric is light and easily bendable, it means that the Kente fabric is not compact and that it has not been woven well. The Kente fabric becomes compact when it is beaten up well with the reed during weaving. However, some master weavers intentionally do this to dupe their customers.

A heavier feeling from holding the fabric indicates a high-quality fabric whereas lightness indicates a low-quality fabric. A lighter feeling from the touch of the fabric suggests the reeding technique was not properly done as the fabric is not compact. Unless this is an intentional act by the weaver, it is suggested that the makers of such fabrics are novices. It is noted that the bendability of the fabric gives information on its quality. Whereas easily bendable fabric signals low-quality fabric, fabric being difficult to bend signals high quality.

There are also cues for determining the type of yarns in the Kente-weaving landscape. The cotton and the rayon yarns are identified by their 'hardness'. Kankam Yeboah, a master weaver, comments on the yarn:

> The cotton yarn is harder than the rayon.

The hardness of the yarn affords information to determine the type of yarn: cotton yarn is harder than rayon yarn. Kwabena Amoako, a master weaver, explains the different yarns:

> Also, rayon yarn is softer and easier to tear apart as compared to cotton. To identify which is which, we take a single yarn to tear it apart. If it is torn with very little effort then that yarn is rayon. However, if the yarn is a little hard to tear apart, then that yarn is cotton.

The hand is used to tear the yarns into two. The hardness or softness of the yarn is determined by the effort applied to tear it apart. The cue for determining the type of yarn is provided by the effort it takes to tear it up.

7. Discussion

The body facilitates IL by identifying and understanding the visual and tactile Kente cues in the Kente-weaving landscape. The human senses come to the fore in understanding and making meaning of these cues of the landscape. When participating and interacting in the Kente-weaving landscape, Kente cues that are understood through the body are afforded the weavers in Kente-weaving landscape. This finding emphasises that the weavers' information practices are not only cognitive but also embodied. The embodied practices reiterate Gherardi's (2008, p. 521) point that in interactions and through participation in the practices of the workplace, novices must be able to train their bodies to have the 'eye', 'nose', 'ear', 'skin' and 'tongue' to interpret or identify 'something'. Understanding Gherardi's (2008, p. 521) point means that the senses should be trained to be able to professionally understand and interpret the afforded information of the craft, drawing attention to physical cues afforded in the Kente-weaving landscape. In accordance with the findings of this study, when the weaver interacts and

participates with others in the Kente-weaving landscape, the eyes of the weaver are trained to read and understand the visual Kente cues in relation to the quality of a woven fabric.

The visual Kente cues are read and understood according to what the weaver sees on the woven fabric. Visual cues like bits of fluff and frayed selvage are understood and interpreted as low-quality or poorly woven fabric. Other visual cues for low-quality fabric that facilitate understanding through the eyes are the appearance of broken ends and float on the surface of the fabric. The broken ends and floats on a woven fabric are corporeal information which indicates that the warp and heddles got broken when the fabric was being woven. Relating the body to the IL in the Kente-weaving landscape, the eyes are trained to identify and understand the features of fluff, frayed selvage, broken ends and float.

The patterns are cues for identifying Kente fabric. Each pattern has its distinct layout and design. The design and shape of the Babadua pattern are different from the Aprɛmu pattern; the Rotoa pattern is different from the Nkyimkyim pattern. The findings show that the types of patterns found in a piece of Kente fabric provide a cue that signals the name of Kente fabric. The information literate person in the Kente-weaving landscape must have an 'eye' for identifying patterns to be able to identify the types of Kente fabric.

In addition, the findings show that cues emanating from the smoothness or roughness of fabric are accessed and understood through the skin. The tactile Kente cues from the touch and feel of Kente fabric are cues that give information on the quality or otherwise of the woven fabric. The tactile cues emanating from the weight of the fabric make this finding relatable to Olsson's (2016, p. 414) findings that the heaviness, lightness or smoothness of an artefact as experienced by the body connotes meaning. A smooth feel to the touch signals quality whereas a rough feel to the touch signals low quality. Just as Vannini and Vannini (2019, p. 8) observe the use of the fingers in woodwork to ascertain the unique qualities of wood's texture through combing, the weight in the Kente fabric is ascertained by holding with the fingers. The weight that is felt from holding a fabric provides a cue for assessing the quality or otherwise of that fabric. A heavier feeling signals well beaten-up fabric, which is of high quality, whereas a lighter feeling signals a poorly beaten-up fabric of low quality. It was found that the bendability of the fabric gives information on its quality. Whereas, easily bendable fabric signals low-quality fabric, fabric that is difficult to bend signals high quality. Understanding aesthetic knowledge as knowledge experienced through the taste, look, smell, feel or sound of things in the workplace (Ewenstein & White, 2007, p. 689), the findings show that aesthetic knowledge in the Kente-weaving landscape is ascertained through the body.

The findings show that yarn can be identified by its hardness or softness. The tactile cue of its softness or hardness is ascertained by an attempt to tear the yarn into two. This finding is relatable to Illum (2006, p. 119), Lepistö and Lindfors (2015, p. 4), and Nasseri and Wilson (2017, p. 194) who suggest that in craft, the cues suggest a 'dialogue' between the body and material objects. The 'dialogue' is understood as the feedback received in the attempt to tear up a yarn. The amount of effort exerted to tear the yarn signals the type of yarn. The findings show that cotton yarn is harder in comparison to rayon and therefore much effort is exerted to tear it up. Hence the effort applied in tearing up a yarn affords cues of hardness or softness, which relate to cotton and rayon, respectively.

8. Conclusion

If we understand IL as a socio-cultural information practice about knowing what constitutes an information landscape by drawing meaning from interactions, processes and experiences with all the sources and forms of information that are sanctioned in a specific landscape (Lloyd 2006a, p. 570; Lloyd 2007), then the ability to access corporeal information to understand and

make meaning of tactile and visual Kente cues constitutes knowing the Kente-weaving landscape.

The findings show that the body plays a pivotal role in knowing the Kente-weaving landscape. The body facilitates IL concerning the practices in the Kente-weaving landscape. The body enables the understanding and making sense of the cues in the Kente-weaving landscape. It is through the performance of bodily actions that the corporeal information of the cues is accessed to understand some of the practices such as quality and types of yarn determination.

The socio-cultural context of the information landscape determines the valued and sanctioned information that is understood to make a person information literate. This study draws attention to the often-ignored corporeal information in the IL literature. The socio-cultural context of the informal workplace landscape affords the corporeal modalities of information. The corporeal modality of information enables understanding and making meaning of the cues thereby making a person information literate in the Kente-weaving landscape.

For this reason, Olsson and Lloyd's (2017a) notion that the body should be viewed as a reference point for the visible enactment of knowing the situated practices of an information landscape is reiterated. The body should be considered in the study of IL in any setting.

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