

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN ARTS & CULTURE

TRADITIONAL CRAFT DEMONSTRATION AS A CATALYST FOR EXTENDED MUSEUM ENGAGEMENT AND EXPERIENCE: A CASE OF THE MANHYIA PALACE MUSEUM

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CITATION: Appiah, A.S., Adom, D., Kquofi, S., Ampratwum, G.B., Brewu, J.K. (2026). Traditional craft demonstration as a catalyst for extended museum engagement and experience: A case of the Manhyia palace museum. *Journal of African Arts and Culture*. 9(2), 278-311.

Abstract

The Manhyia Palace Museum faces the challenge of enhancing visitor engagement and providing a more immersive experience. This qualitative study aimed to examine the current strategies for enhancing visitor engagement and experience, explore viable extended activities, and introduce traditional craft demonstrations at the Manhyia Palace Museum as a catalyst for extended museum engagement and experience. A qualitative research approach and an action research design were employed. A total of 25 participants were purposively selected, comprising four museum staff, two Board of Directors members, two chiefs, two queen mothers, seven tourists, and eight participants in focus group discussions. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. The data were manually transcribed, coded inductively, categorized, and analysed thematically. The findings revealed that the museum has adopted a combination of interpretive, digital, and experiential approaches to enrich visitor interaction. These include guided tours, video documentary presentations, social media platforms, and feedback mechanisms. The study discovered that integrating traditional craft demonstrations such as Adinkra stamping, pottery, bead-making, and wood carving into the regular activities of the museum would contribute to enhancing visitor engagement, deepening cultural learning, and enriching the museum experience, thereby transforming the visit from a passive, observational tour into an interactive, memorable, and meaningful cultural encounter.

The study contributes to museum studies by demonstrating how traditional craft demonstrations connect the tangible heritage with intangible cultural knowledge through experiential visitor learning. The findings could guide initiatives and policies aimed at increasing cultural tourism, strengthening heritage preservation, and boosting tourism revenue.

Keywords: *Museum studies, museum engagement, museum experience, traditional crafts, tourism industry*

1. Introduction

Craft is a concept that takes on different meanings depending on the perspective or context in which it is viewed (Väänänen & Pöllänen, 2020). This versatility highlights craft as a dynamic and multifaceted idea, deeply intertwined with human culture, creativity, and labour. Craft has traditionally been viewed as separate from art, with art seen as more intellectual and craft associated with manual skill (Kroezen et al., 2021). Crafts such as textiles, pottery, woodwork, and metalwork embody not just the skills passed down through generations, but also the stories, beliefs, and values integral to the culture (Yang et al., 2018). In Ghana, the emphasis on craft takes a culturally rooted perspective. Unlike the commercial focus seen in other regions, Ghanaian craft is celebrated and preserved largely for its cultural significance, reflecting the nation's rich heritage and identity (Azizah, 2024; Entsua-Mensah, 2021). Cultural heritage, particularly as embodied in traditional crafts, serves as a vital reflection of a nation's traditions and way of life (Panzer, 2022). These crafts are not merely artistic expressions but are deeply rooted in the identity of specific communities which talks about their values, history and customs that define them (Hou et al., 2022), these traditional crafts are not just remnants of the past but are living traditions that continue to influence modern culture Yang et al. (2018). For Ghana, whose rich and diverse collection of traditional craft items include wood carvings, kente, beads, Adinkra and pottery, the promotion and preservation of these crafts are crucial to maintaining cultural and artistic traditions across generations (Manu et al., 2022; Entsua-Mensah, 2021). Museums around the world play a crucial role in preserving traditional artefacts which serves as key sites for the interpretation and education of cultural heritage (Amoako-Ohene et al., 2014).

Wang's experience theory (2000) provides further insight into the role museums play in creating authentic experiences for visitors. According to this theory, the authenticity that visitors feel is amplified when they really engage in unique hands-on activities within the museum setting. These activities provide opportunities for self-expression and achievement allowing visitors to form a personal and meaningful connection with cultural heritage on display. Adom (2021), however, emphasises a concerning decline in community interest and active participation in Ghana's museums and its cultural heritage sites attributing this to the inability to access many of museums because of disjoint in the activities and the absence of active community engagement. Enabling visitors to engage with traditional craft demonstrations can provide a physical dimension to exhibitions that passive viewing cannot achieve (Siu et al., 2022). The craft demonstrations involve artisans actively showing visitors how indigenous crafts such as carving, pottery is created, often explaining the cultural meaning and techniques behind them. These crafts invite a deeper connection to Ghana's cultural heritage, helping visitors appreciate the skill, creativity, and history behind traditional crafts. Not only does this enrich the experience of visitors but it also contributes to the preservation and promotion of Ghana's cultural traditions, keeping them alive for generations to come. Craft Demonstration involves artisans actively showing visitors how indigenous crafts such as

Adinkra stamping, pottery, bead-making, and wood carving are created, often explaining the cultural meaning and techniques behind them.

The Manhyia Palace Museum is a cornerstone of Ashanti cultural preservation, housing sacred artifacts that reflect the rich heritage of the Ashanti Kingdom, particularly from the era before British colonization (Manu et al., 2022). As highlighted by Manu et al. (2022), this museum serves as a custodian of the history of ancient kings and warriors, with many of its exhibits directly linked to the Asantehene, the king of the Ashanti people. In Ashanti customs, anything associated with the Asantehene is considered sacred, making the museum's collection not only historically significant but also deeply revered. However, despite its rich array of artifacts, the Manhyia Palace Museum faces the issue of enhancing visitor engagement and providing a more immersive experience. While the museum successfully preserves and displays these cultural treasures, there is a growing recognition of the need to move beyond traditional, passive forms of exhibit presentation. To truly deepen visitors' connection to Ashanti history and traditions, the museum must explore innovative ways to actively involve them in the cultural narratives it presents.

The promising solution is to integrate traditional craft into the demonstration offerings. Traditional crafts, known for their creativity and innovation, offer a unique opportunity to satisfy tourists' desires for authentic experiences. As Richards (2011) notes, the creative and aesthetic nature of traditional crafts makes them a popular attraction. In recent years, there has been a shift towards bringing craft-makers and their production processes to the forefront, allowing visitors to interact directly with the artisans. This approach not only verifies the authenticity of the crafts but also makes the heritage more engaging and fascinating for tourists. Research by Halewood and Hannam (2001) supports the idea that visual experiences and direct access to craft production enhance the appeal of cultural heritage sites. The immediate interaction between tourists and producers not only enriches the visitor experience but also ensures that craft-makers receive economic benefits from their dedicated work. This co-creation of craft heritage, where tourists and artisans collaborate to create meaningful experiences, offers a powerful way to convey the historical and cultural significance of traditional crafts.

Building on global trends, many museums have begun incorporating live craft-making demonstrations as a way to enhance visitor engagement. In Hangzhou, China, for instance, government-led initiatives have successfully attracted both artisans and tourists, creating a thriving environment that benefits the craft sector as a whole (Zhang, 2022). Studies by Shen et al. (2019) and Wu and Wall (2017) further highlight the positive reception of interactive experiences by museum visitors. However, despite the evident appeal of these initiatives, there remains a significant gap in understanding how traditional craft demonstration can be effectively integrated into museum settings to maximize engagement. In Ghana, the Nkyinkyim Museum has taken a proactive approach by offering various programs that engage visitors through traditional craft demonstrations (Nkyinkyim Museum, 2024). These efforts aim to create a more immersive experience, allowing guests to connect deeply with Ghana's rich artistic heritage. This study seeks to build upon such initiatives by examining the potential of on-site craft demonstrations at the Manhyia Palace Museum. By investigating how these demonstrations can transform the museum into a more interactive and dynamic space, the research aims to provide insights into enhancing visitor experience and fostering a stronger connection between Ghana's cultural heritage and its people.

Existing studies have documented the cultural identity, sustainability, historical significance, collections, and cultural tourism potential of the Manhyia Palace Museum. However, less attention has been given to how visitors can move beyond observing museum's collections to actively experiencing and participating in Asante cultural practices. Therefore, this study aims to create a more immersive experience, allowing visitors to connect deeply with Ghana's rich artistic heritage through Traditional Craft demonstration such as Adinkra stamping, pottery, bead-making, and wood carving.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework underpinning the study includes: Social Practice Theory (SPT) and Wang's Experience Theory (WET). In addition, the study reviewed Contextual Model of Learning (CML), Constructivist Learning Theory (CLT), Visitor Identity-Related Motivation (VIRM) Theory, and Experiential Learning Theory (ELT). These frameworks provide the structural support for the study, offering tools to explain, predict, and comprehend how traditional craft production serves as a catalyst for extending museum engagement and experience.

2.1.1 Social Practice Theory (SPT)

SPT offers a compelling lens for understanding how people's actions, behaviours, and routines are shaped by the interplay of social meanings, material elements and physical actions (Southerton & Whillans, 2024; Kropfeld, 2023). Emerging in the 1970s, this theory was pioneered by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu as a response to debates surrounding the role of rules in social order, the dynamics between structure and agency, and the scientific foundation of social theories. Over time, influential figures like Anthony Giddens and Michel de Certeau contributed to its development, enriching its scope and applicability. At its core, SPT suggests that practices are constituted by an integration of material elements, meanings, and competences, which collectively come to life through enactment (Kropfeld, 2023). The theory highlights that actions are not isolated events but are embedded within a larger nexus of social and cultural frameworks.

By framing practices as a nexus of materials, competences, and meanings, SPT offers a comprehensive approach to analysing social phenomena. This framework not only sheds light on the mechanisms behind routine behaviours but also underscores the potential for change through the interconnectedness of its elements. In contexts like sustainable fashion, SPT reveals how collective values, shared skills, and material resources shape practices, driving both individual actions and broader societal trends.

2.1.1.1 Linking SPT with Traditional Craft Demonstration for Extended Museum Engagement and Experience

By applying SPT to traditional craft demonstration, museums can create richer, more interactive, and socially connected experiences. The integration of materials, meanings, and competencies that promotes a richer appreciation for cultural heritage while encouraging active participation. This approach not only extends the duration of museum engagement but also transforms it into an inclusive and dynamic exploration of tradition and identity. Through SPT, traditional craft demonstration becomes more than a static exhibit, it evolves into a vibrant, shared practice that connects individuals to history, culture, and community.

SPT emphasizes the importance of materials (i.e. tools, objects, and the physical environment) as foundational elements of social practices. In the context of traditional craft demonstration,

materials such as raw fabrics, weaving tools, and crafted artifacts serve as tangible links between visitors and the craftspeople's world. When these materials are showcased in museums, they do more than adorn exhibits; they invite visitors to interact physically and emotionally, offering a multisensory experience that bridges the past and present. For example, hands-on workshops where visitors manipulate traditional materials not only enhance learning but also create an immersive engagement.

Competencies, another core element of SPT, refer to the know-how, skills, and processes required to participate in a practice. In museums, traditional craft demonstrations or live interactions with artisans allow visitors to witness and, in some cases, acquire these skills. This aligns with SPT's emphasis on the shared and distributed nature of competencies. Visitors gain practical insights into traditional crafts, such as pottery, weaving, or carving, which deepen their understanding of the craft's cultural significance. Such participatory experiences foster a sense of connection and appreciation, making the museum visit more memorable and meaningful.

SPT highlights the role of meanings; social and symbolic aspirations embedded within practices in shaping participation. Traditional craft demonstration carries rich cultural narratives and historical significance that resonate with visitors on an emotional level. By embedding these stories within exhibits, museums create layers of meaning that inspire reflection and dialogue. For instance, showcasing the symbolic importance of a specific craft within its community can evoke a sense of shared heritage and identity, transforming the museum into a space for cultural appreciation and dialogue.

SPT also recognizes that practices are inherently social, involving collaboration and collective participation. When museums facilitate group interactions through craft-making sessions, collaborative exhibits, or storytelling events, they foster a communal atmosphere. Visitors not only engage with the crafts but also with one another, creating shared experiences that amplify the social value of the museum visit. Traditional craft fairs or partnerships with local artisans further extend this engagement by linking museums with living traditions and broader communities. The dynamic nature of practices, as described by SPT, suggests that they evolve over time through changes in materials, meanings, and competencies. Museums can leverage digital tools such as augmented reality, virtual exhibits, or interactive guides to modernize the presentation of traditional crafts. These innovations enhance accessibility and engagement, enabling visitors to interact with crafts in new and exciting ways while preserving their historical essence.

2.1.2 Wang's Experience Theory (WET)

WET offers a compelling framework for understanding how individuals engage with and derive meaning from their experiences. Developed by Ning Wang in 1999, the theory originated in the context of tourism studies, with a particular focus on the nature of authenticity within the tourism experience. Wang introduced the concept of existential authenticity, which emphasizes the deeply personal and subjective aspects of an individual's experience, contrasting with the traditional objective authenticity tied to external criteria such as cultural or historical accuracy (Wang, 1999).

At the core of WET is the recognition that human experiences are inherently multi-dimensional, shaped by personal emotions, social interactions, and the environment in which they occur (Vannin & Williams, 2016). Wang's theory moves beyond rigid definitions of authenticity, arguing that the true essence of an experience lies in its ability to evoke a sense of self-fulfillment, connection, and meaning (Davidov & Russo-Netzer, 2022; Wang, 1999). This approach reframes the idea of authenticity as something internal, derived from an

individual's engagement with their surroundings and their own inner state, rather than being solely determined by external factors. WET provides a valuable lens through which to explore the ways individuals perceive and construct their experiences.

Applying WET in this study is therefore justified because it helps explain how and why traditional craft demonstrations can transform museum visits into richer, more meaningful engagements that promote cultural appreciation, repeat visitation, and long-term connection with the museum. Also, it provides a robust framework for understanding how traditional craft production can serve as a catalyst for enhanced museum engagement and meaningful visitor experiences (Sorensen & Krämer, 2024).

2.1.2.1 Linking WET with Traditional Craft Demonstration for Museum Engagement and Experience

WET offers a strong framework for comprehending how traditional craft production can serve as a catalyst for enhanced museum engagement and meaningful visitor experiences (Sorensen & Krämer, 2024). Traditional craft demonstration offers opportunities for visitors to achieve existential authenticity by fostering both intrapersonal and interpersonal connections. Engaging with traditional crafts allows visitors to reflect on their own creativity and heritage. Activities like weaving, pottery, or embroidery evoke emotions such as nostalgia, joy, or a sense of accomplishment, helping individuals connect with their personal or cultural identity. Collaborative craft-making sessions foster social bonds, allowing participants to share experiences, exchange stories, and connect with artisans or fellow visitors. These interactions deepen the authenticity of the experience by fostering a sense of community.

WET emphasizes active participation as a key driver of memorable experiences, and traditional craft demonstration embodies this principle. Hands-on crafting activities transform museum visits into interactive learning environments, allowing visitors not only to observe historical artifacts but also to participate in the creation of culturally significant objects. The physical engagement of crafting, combined with storytelling by artisans or curators, enriches the visitor's connection to the craft's history and relevance. By integrating WET, museums can transform traditional craft demonstrations into a dynamic tool for engagement. Through participatory activities, culturally relevant storytelling, and opportunities for reflection, experiences created by museums have a profound impact on visitors. This approach enhances visitor satisfaction as well as fosters long-term connections to the museum, its exhibits, and the cultural heritage it represents. WET provides a comprehensive lens for leveraging traditional craft production to extend museum engagement.

2.2 Conceptual Framework for the Study

A conceptual framework serves as a representation in establishing the connections between major variables under the study (Van der Walddt, 2020; Shikalepo, 2020). The variables used in this study includes; the input variables, processing variables and output variables. Most often, a conceptual framework is presented in graphical or diagrammatical form to enhance understanding on how the variables interact with one another. The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.

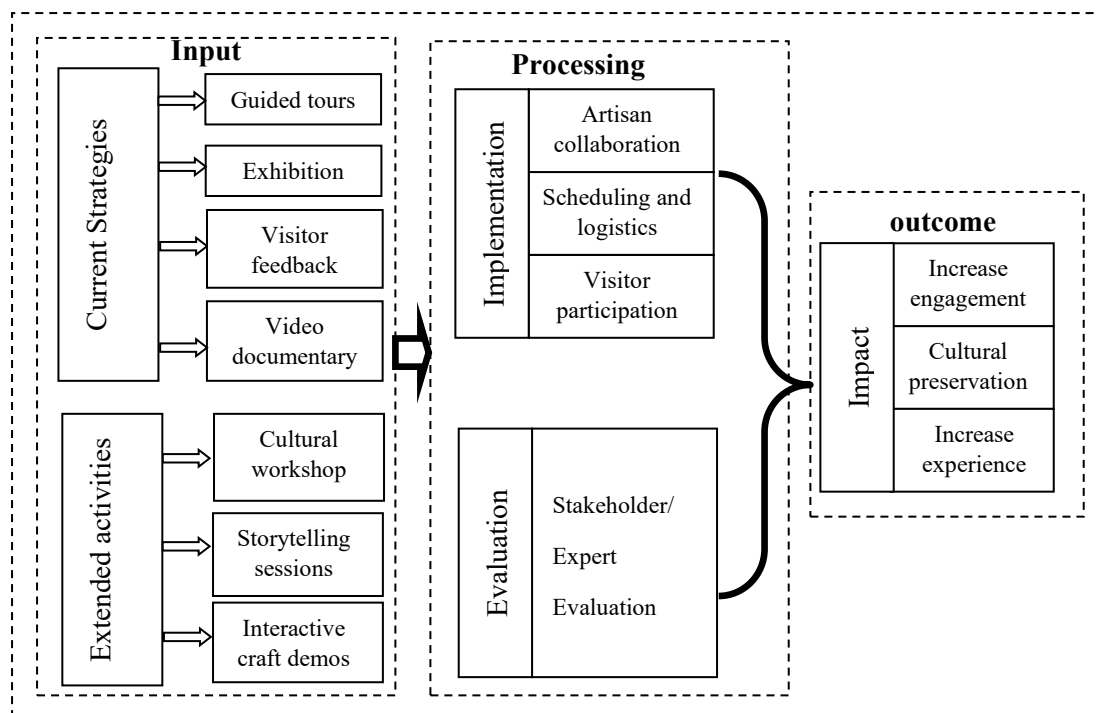


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
(Source: Researchers field construct, 2025).

The conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1 presents a structured, phase-based approach to integrating traditional craft demonstrations at the Manhyia Palace Museum, aimed at enhancing the visitor experience and engagement. The framework is organized into four interrelated phases: existing strategies, extended activities, implementation, and evaluation. Together, these phases provide a systematic pathway for strengthening cultural interpretation and visitor participation within the museum setting.

The first phase focuses on the museum's current engagement strategies, including guided tours, exhibitions, and visitor feedback collection. This phase plays a critical role in establishing a baseline for understanding existing practices and identifying gaps and opportunities for innovation within the museum's offerings. As noted by Falk and Dierking (2016), assessing current interpretive strategies is essential for designing meaningful and visitor-centered museum experiences. Building upon these existing strategies, the second phase introduces extended engagement activities designed to deepen visitor interaction with cultural heritage. These activities include cultural workshops, storytelling sessions, and hands-on demonstrations of traditional crafts such as Kente weaving and Adinkra printing. By expanding beyond passive observation, these activities offer visitors immersive learning opportunities that foster cultural appreciation and experiential engagement.

The third phase emphasizes the implementation of traditional craft demonstrations as a core component of visitor engagement. Key elements of this phase include active visitor participation, effective scheduling and logistical planning, and collaboration with skilled artisans. According to Siu et al. (2022) and Yi et al. (2022), live and interactive demonstrations significantly enhance visibility and foster stronger emotional, cultural, and educational connections between visitors and heritage resources. The final phase of the framework involves evaluating the effectiveness of the craft demonstrations through stakeholder and expert assessments. These evaluations are essential for refining strategies, ensuring sustainability, and guiding future programme development, as emphasized by Carvalho and Simões (2024). When

aligned with relevant indicators, the framework is expected to yield several positive outcomes, including the preservation of cultural heritage, increased visitor engagement, and an overall improvement of the museum experience.

Empirical evidence supports the role of craft demonstrations in transforming visitor engagement. Studies by Yi et al. (2022) and Rainoldi et al. (2018) demonstrate that live demonstrations animate otherwise static exhibits, converting them into dynamic narrative experiences. Similarly, Siu et al. (2022) argued that demonstrations such as weaving, pottery, or carving enrich interpretation by enabling visitors to actively engage with cultural processes. Overall, this framework positions the Manhyia Palace Museum to strengthen its cultural and educational mandate by transforming visitors from passive observers of Ghanaian traditions into active participants in the appreciation and preservation of cultural heritage.

2.3 Museums and Visitor Experience

2.3.1 Ghanaian context on strategies enhancing visitors' experiences

In the Ghanaian context, the role of the museum visitor is seen as central to the very existence and purpose of the museum. As Brida et al. (2016) point out, a museum without visitors lacks vitality, making it essential for institutions to actively seek ways of attracting both physical and virtual visitors, particularly in a world increasingly shaped by digital engagement and global trends. Traditionally, museums have served as spaces for repeat visitors who find personal satisfaction, intellectual stimulation, and opportunities for reflective learning, what Falk and Dierking (2000) term “free-choice learning.” Yet, modern audiences, particularly younger generations, now expect more than passive observation. Visitors seek immersive experiences where they can interact with exhibits and play an active role in the interpretive process. Consequently, museums are evolving into dynamic educational hubs that blend learning with entertainment and social interaction (Janes, 2020).

Museums in Ghana are responding to these shifts by integrating innovative technologies and interactive methods to enrich visitor experiences. Moving away from static displays, institutions are increasingly embracing digital tools to bring their collections to life (Dika & Agyei, 2018). Museums now incorporate digital storytelling techniques, such as animations, short documentaries, and interactive timelines, allowing visitors to engage more deeply with historical narratives and cultural artifacts (Preko et al., 2020). Technological innovation has further manifested through the development of mobile applications that offer audio-guided tours, interactive maps, and easy access to detailed exhibit information, enhancing both navigation and accessibility across museum spaces (Nortey et al., 2022). Storytelling continues to be a cornerstone of visitor engagement in Ghanaian museums. Curators and guides place strong emphasis on delivering compelling narratives that contextualize artifacts and connect visitors emotionally to Ghana's rich cultural and historical heritage (Mensah, 2023; Adom, 2021). In addition, guided tours are carefully designed to highlight the significance of key exhibits, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation among visitors. To further extend the experience beyond the gallery, museums also provide souvenir shops stocked with culturally and historically meaningful items. These allow visitors to take a piece of their museum journey home, reinforcing memory retention and emotional connection to the museum visit (Adom, 2021).

The National Museum of Ghana, in particular, has adopted a multi-dimensional strategy to enrich the visitor experience. This includes designing warm, inclusive environments that encourage exploration, as well as curating diverse, interactive exhibits that cater to various age groups and interests. Digital tools are employed not only to supplement exhibitions with additional information but also to facilitate learning through audio guides, interactive screens,

and virtual tours (Mensah, 2023; Gavua & Kuntaa, 2021). The museum places strong emphasis on educational programming and guided tours, which offer structured opportunities for visitors to engage more deeply with the exhibits. These guided experiences are carefully designed to contextualize the displays and promote active learning, particularly for school groups and international tourists (Mensah, 2023). Another critical component of this strategy is the collection of visitor feedback, which provides valuable insights into audience preferences and helps curators refine exhibitions and programs (Gavua & Kuntaa, 2021). This feedback loop ensures that the museum experience evolves in response to visitor needs, enhancing satisfaction and reinforcing the museum's educational mission (Gavua & Kuntaa, 2021).

According to the study by Nortey et al. (2022), museums in Ghana enhance regular gallery displays by organizing special thematic exhibitions. These exhibitions serve as focal points for exploring particular cultural, historical, or artistic subjects in greater depth (Nortey et al., 2022). A notable example is the *Architectural Heritage of Ghana* exhibition, held from January to March 2019 at the National Museum in Accra. This exhibition highlighted the importance of preserving Ghana's unique architectural landscape, which is rapidly changing due to urban development. By drawing attention to the socio-cultural significance of architectural forms and the stories behind their construction, the exhibition encouraged a renewed appreciation for built heritage and its role in national identity.

In Ghana, museum education typically takes two forms: guided tours led by museum staff or self-guided exploration. Guided tours are particularly effective for groups, allowing visitors to gain curated insights and interpretations. However, a significant number of visitors explore the exhibits independently, especially during peak visitation periods such as public holidays (Eyifa-Dzidzienyo, 2014). In these moments, impromptu group discussions often emerge as visitors engage with the displays, share perspectives, and co-construct meaning. For individual or small group visitors, self-guided experiences allow for deeper reflection and personal connection with the exhibits. Text panels, captions, and interpretive descriptions provide contextual information that helps visitors interpret the artifacts, photographs, and artworks in relation to their own knowledge and life experiences. When well-curated, these written elements weave together narratives of cultural heritage, historical context, and artistic value, significantly enriching the educational experience (Adom, 2021).

It is evident from the various authors that museums in Ghana are evolving into interactive educational spaces where both structured guidance and self-directed learning coexist. Through thematic exhibitions and innovative interpretation techniques, they continue to foster cultural awareness and lifelong learning among diverse audiences.

2.3.2 Visitor Engagement Strategies in Cultural Heritage Sites

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) defines an art museum as a platform for cultural enjoyment, public education and the promotion of cultural heritage (ICOM, 2007). In this framework, the experiences of museum visitors are pivotal, forming a critical aspect of museum operations and management. Recognizing this, museums have gradually embraced a visitor-centered approach, shifting their focus from merely preserving artifacts to engaging and enriching their audiences. Museums today are no longer static repositories of historical or artistic treasures. Instead, they have transformed into dynamic spaces that prioritize interaction, exploration, and education (Rainoldi et al., 2018). This evolution reflects a broader cultural shift toward making museums more inclusive and accessible, encouraging visitors to actively participate in their learning journeys rather than passively observe.

The modern art museum strives to inspire curiosity, spark imagination, and foster understanding (Yi et al., 2022). According to Siu et al. (2022), exhibitions are curated to engage diverse audiences, using multimedia presentations, interactive installations, and immersive storytelling. This allows visitors to form meaningful connections with the displayed artworks and cultural narratives (Siu et al., 2022). By breaking down barriers and creating an inviting atmosphere, museums aim to transcend their physical spaces, connecting people across time, geography, and culture. Through this visitor-centered approach, museums are reimagining their role in society. They aim not only to educate and entertain but also to be spaces where culture is celebrated, communities are united, and lifelong curiosity is nurtured. This evolution highlights the profound and growing significance of the visitor experience in shaping the future of art museums (Siu et al. 2022; Yi et al., 2022).

Falk and Dierking (2016) presented a significant approach to understanding museum engagement, emphasizing that visitor experiences arise from the interplay of three interconnected contexts: the social (i.e., interactions within a group of visitors and conversations with art museum officials or other people), personal (i.e., motivation for personal interest or choice, prior knowledge and visiting), and physical (i.e., artwork labels, environment, exhibitions, and guide media). This model provides a comprehensive framework for exploring how various factors shape the overall museum experience. Falk and Dierking's model highlight the dynamic nature of museum experiences, where the physical, personal, and social contexts are not isolated but interdependent. A well-designed museum visit considers these interactions, creating an environment that is physically inviting, personally relevant, and socially engaging. By addressing these elements holistically, museums can foster deeper connections with their visitors, encouraging repeat visits and long-term engagement. Rainoldi et al. (2018) revealed that museums application of physical, personal, and social dimensions to craft production elevates visitors' experience from passive observation to active engagement.

2.3.3 Traditional artistic demonstrations and experiential learning in museum settings

As noted by Siu et al. (2022), incorporating live demonstrations of crafts like weaving, pottery, or carving can transform exhibits into dynamic storytelling experiences. Observing these intricate processes firsthand breathes life into the crafts, turning them into vibrant narratives. Falk and Dierking (2016) highlight that interactive spaces where visitors can engage in crafting activities themselves offer a tactile, participatory dimension, fostering a deeper connection with the art form. Recreating authentic workshop environments with traditional tools and materials further immerses visitors in the craft's historical and cultural significance. By carefully curating engaging, multisensory physical environments, museums can elevate the visitor experience, transforming passive observation into a journey of exploration and discovery.

Demonstrating cultural crafts not only brings historical practices to life but also fosters emotional engagement and sensory experience, thereby deepening visitors' understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage (Ahmady et al., 2023). This approach allows museums, especially those focused on history and culture, to offer participatory experiences that connect immersion and observation. Engaging activities like group workshops or crafting sessions create opportunities for collaborative learning and interaction, where participants share ideas and perspectives in a dynamic environment (Wood & Latham, 2016). Inviting traditional artisans to interact with visitors provides authenticity and fosters direct connections between the creators and the audience. According to Siu et al. (2022), events such as local craft fairs or exhibits featuring artisan communities position museums as cultural hubs, creating bridges between living traditions and contemporary audiences. These social interactions transform the

museum visit into a collective journey, strengthening bonds and fostering a shared appreciation for cultural heritage.

2.3.4 Existing Research on Manhyia Palace Museum

Existing research on the Manhyia Palace Museum has examined the institution largely from the perspectives of collections management, interpretation of Asante material culture, cultural tourism, heritage preservation and cultural identity. One of the foundational studies is Schildkrout's (1999) who observes that Manhyia Palace Museum does not fit neatly into the conventional Western Museum category but has developed as a showcase of a site of cultural tourism and Asante culture. This perspective is important to the present study because it suggests that the museum can accommodate culturally grounded approaches to interpretation that extend beyond object viewing and conventional exhibit

Amoako-Ohene et al., 2014 examined the sustainability of Manhyia Palace Museum as a repository of Asante cultural identity. Their study highlights the museum's rich collection of historical artefacts and argues that inadequate documentation and publicity present challenges to the preservation and promotion of Asante cultural identity. Similarly, Glime (2020) investigated collections management at the museum and identified weaknesses in areas such as documentation and collections management policy, linking these challenges to the museum's ability to fulfil its educational mission. More recent research has also examined the sacred or numinous character of selected museum artefacts, demonstrating that the objects are connected to Asante beliefs, spirituality and traditional uses rather than being merely aesthetic objects (Manu et al., 2022).

Although these studies provide valuable knowledge about the museum's heritage resources, cultural identity, collections and preservation, they give comparatively limited attention to active visitor participation through traditional craft demonstration. In particular, there is limited research examining how live demonstrations of traditional crafts such as bead-making, pottery, wood carving, Adinkra stamping could complement the existing exhibition experience and encourage visitors to engage more deeply with the cultural meanings, skills and knowledge embodied in material heritage. This creates a gap for the present study, which shifts attention from the preservation and display of cultural objects to the potential of traditional craft demonstration as an experiential and participatory strategy for extending visitor engagement and enriching the museum experience at Manhyia Palace Museum.

3. Methodology

All 25 participants were coded to ensure confidentiality, Museum staff were coded MuS 01–04, Board of Directors as BoD 01–02, chiefs as Chf 01–02, queen mothers as QuM 01–02, tourists as Tor 01–07 and focus group participants as FGD 01–02. This coding system facilitated anonymity while ensuring clarity, consistency, and systematic referencing throughout the analysis and discussion of findings.

3.1 Research Approach

In this study, the qualitative research approach was utilised. Based on the research paradigm, the qualitative research approach was suitable for the study, as it produces rich, detailed, and valid process data from participants' rather than the investigator's perspectives and interpretations. Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research is inherently inductive and interpretive, emphasizing the construction of meaning through participants' narratives and lived realities (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). This made it ideal for understanding how visitors engage with museum spaces, how they interpret

traditional craft demonstrations, and how these experiences shape their satisfaction and overall connection to cultural heritage. Unlike quantitative approaches, which prioritize measurement and statistical generalization, the qualitative approach prioritizes depth, capturing the richness and complexity of human experience.

Moreover, qualitative inquiry aligns with the study's aim to examine the museum environment holistically. Museums, traditional craft practices, and visitor engagement are interconnected cultural phenomena that cannot be meaningfully isolated into discrete variables. Qualitative research supports holistic understanding by examining individuals, groups, and institutions within the broader sociocultural contexts that give their actions meaning.

3.2 Research Design

In this study, action research served as the chosen methodological design. It is a qualitative research strategy that prioritizes addressing problems within social systems by generating practical knowledge and taking action in the context where the problem exists (Bourner & Brook, 2019). The central aim of this design is to bridge the gap between theory and practice by producing shared knowledge that can be applied to real-life challenges. As Davison et al. (2021) note, action research integrates action with reflection, and theory with practice, through collaboration with participants to develop practical solutions to issues of concern. The action research method is cyclical, involving a continuous process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, which allows for iterative improvement of strategies (Simmons et al., 2021). Its collaborative focus not only facilitates problem-solving but also empowers participants to contribute actively to positive changes in their own contexts.

3.3 Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis involves breaking down the collected data to understand individual responses and then reorganizing or synthesizing those insights into meaningful conclusions (Tawfik et al., 2019). In this study, the data gathered through interviews, FGDs and observations were analysed using qualitative analytical procedures. After manually transcribing all interview recordings and observation notes, the researchers carefully reviewed the transcripts to gain familiarity with the content. Initial codes were then generated inductively and applied systematically across the dataset. This coding process enabled the researchers to identify patterns, significant statements, and recurring ideas, all grounded directly in the participants' own words. The coded data were subsequently organized into broader categories and refined into meaningful themes that reflected the core issues emerging from the fieldwork. These themes provided a structured framework for reporting the findings, ensuring that the analysis captured the depth of participants' experiences, perceptions, and interactions with traditional craft demonstrations in the museum setting. Through this iterative process of transcription, coding, categorization, and thematic development, the analysis produced rich narrative descriptions that aligned with the research objectives and offered nuanced insights into visitor engagement and experience. Following transcription of the interviews, the data were analysed using a thematic approach to ensure a systematic, in-depth interpretation of participants' responses. The process began with repeated, thorough reading of the transcripts to ensure familiarity with the data. This was followed by coding relevant segments, during which key ideas, recurring patterns, and meaningful expressions were identified and labelled. Subsequently, related codes were grouped into categories based on similarities and underlying meanings. These categories were then refined and organised into broader thematic areas that captured the central issues emerging from the data.

3.3 Population, Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.3.1 Population

In research, the population refers to the group of people or objects from which the findings of a study can be generalized (Majid, 2018). Hossan et al. (2023) define the research population as the set of well-defined people or entities that share binding characteristics. For this study, the target population comprised museum staff, members of the museum's board of directors, chiefs, queen mothers, and tourists who visit the Manhyia Palace, Kumasi. These groups were deliberately selected because they represent the primary stakeholders involved in the museum's operations and visitor experiences. The traditional custodians are individuals responsible for preserving, maintaining, and promoting the museum's cultural heritage. Their knowledge and practices are vital for understanding how traditional craft demonstrations can be effectively incorporated into museum activities to enhance visitor engagement. Additionally, the visitors are the recipients of the museum's offerings, visitors provide critical perspectives on the effectiveness of current exhibits and programs. Their feedback is essential for evaluating the impact of traditional craft demonstrations on enhancing engagement, learning, and satisfaction during museum visits.

3.3.2 Sample size and Sampling Techniques

In research, a sample is a smaller, manageable subgroup of the target population that is selected for study, allowing the researcher to draw conclusions about the broader population (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020). According to Hennink and Kaiser (2022), samples are chosen to reflect the characteristics of the population relevant to the study's objectives, providing insights that can be generalised within the context of the study. For this study, a total of 25 participants were selected, comprising 4 museum staff, 2 members of the museum's board of directors, 2 chiefs, 2 queen mothers, 7 tourists, and 8 members of a focus group discussion. The sample size was guided by Creswell (1998), who recommends 5–25 participants for ethnographic and phenomenological studies, and by Morse (1994), who suggests a minimum of 6 participants. Qualitative research does not prescribe strict rules for sample size, as the focus is on obtaining rich, detailed, and meaningful data rather than statistical representativeness.

To select the participants, purposive sampling was employed. This non-probability sampling technique enables the researcher to deliberately select individuals who are most knowledgeable or experienced in the study topic (Obilor, 2023). In this study, purposive sampling ensured that the participants, both custodians and visitors, had direct involvement with the museum's activities and could provide informed perspectives on traditional craft demonstrations and visitor engagement. This approach enabled the collection of in-depth, relevant data that aligned with the research objectives. Table 1 the demographic characteristics of participants.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Region/Country	Education Level
MuS 01	35	Male	Ashanti	Masters
MuS 02	45	Male	Ashanti	First Degree
MuS 03	40	Male	Ashanti	PhD
MuS 04	35	Male	Ashanti	First Degree
BoD 01	55	Male	Ashanti	Masters
BoD 02	90	Male	Ashanti	No formal education
Chf 01	35	Male	Ashanti	HND

Chf 02	65	Male	Ashanti	No formal education
QuM 01	56	Female	Ashanti	Secondary
QuM 02	58	Female	Ashanti	Secondary
Tor 01	66	Male	Germany	First Degree
Tor 02	45	Male	Italy	First Degree
Tor 03	30	Female	England	First Degree
Tor 04	28	Female	England	Secondary
Tor 05	35	Female	USA	Masters
Tor 06	25	Male	Ashanti	Degree
Tor 07	32	Male	Ashanti	Degree
FGD 01a	11	Male	Ashanti	Student
FGD 01b	9	Female	Ashanti	Student
FGD 01c	24	Female	Ashanti	SHS
FGD 01d	17	Male	Ashanti	Student
FGD 02a	25	Male	Germany	Diploma
FGD 02b	27	Male	Ashanti	Secondary education
FGD 02c	28	Male	Ashanti	SHS
FGD 02d	29	Female	Ashanti	Tertiary

Source: Field Data, 2026

A total of twenty-five (25) participants were involved in the study, comprising museum staff, board members, traditional authorities, tourists, and focus group discussants. Analysis of their demographic characteristics provides insight into the sample's diversity and composition. Of the 25 participants, 16 were male (64%), and 9 were female (36%). This indicates a male-dominated sample, particularly among museum staff, board members, and traditional leaders. Female participants were mainly represented among queen mothers, tourists, and focus group discussants.

The participants' ages ranged from 9 to 90 years, reflecting a wide generational spread. The majority of participants fell within the active working-age group (25–60 years). Specifically, 16 participants (64%) were between 25 and 60 years, 5 participants (20%) were below 25 years, and 4 participants (16%) were above 60 years. This distribution suggests that the study captured perspectives from both younger and older individuals, enriching the depth of the findings. A significant majority of participants, 17 out of 25 (68%), were from the Ashanti Region of Ghana, indicating strong local representation. The remaining 8 participants (32%) were international visitors from countries including Germany, Italy, England, and the United States, as well as participants whose regions were not specified (mainly focus group participants). This mix of local and international respondents enhances the study by incorporating diverse cultural perspectives.

Participants exhibited varied educational backgrounds. About 10 participants (40%) had tertiary education (including first degree, master's degree, and PhD), while 7 participants (28%) had secondary education or equivalent (including SHS). Additionally, 4 participants (16%) had basic or student-level education, and another 4 participants (16%) had no formal education or held diplomas/HND qualifications. This diversity reflects a balance between formally educated individuals and those with indigenous or experiential knowledge, particularly among traditional authorities.

The demographic profile shows a diverse sample in terms of age, education, and geographical background, though with a higher proportion of male participants and strong representation from the Ashanti Region. The inclusion of both local stakeholders and international tourists, as well as participants with varying educational levels, provides a comprehensive basis for understanding perspectives on traditional craft demonstration and museum engagement. These groups were selected because they were directly involved in, or interacted with, the activities of the Manhyia Palace Museum, making them capable of providing relevant and firsthand information on the subject under investigation. Their inclusion ensured that the study was grounded in lived experiences and direct observations of museum operations, craft demonstrations, and visitor engagement processes.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Three data collection methods were employed to gather primary source information. These were interviews, focused group discussions and observation.

3.4.1 Interview

Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data from the traditional custodians. The interview guide was divided into five sections: Section A focused on the background information of participants, Section B explored current strategies for enhancing visitor experience and engagement, Section C examined viable extended activities that could be introduced, Section D investigated how traditional craft demonstrations serve as a catalyst for enhancing visitor engagement, and Section E assessed the effectiveness of traditional craft demonstrations in improving visitor engagement and experience. This structure enabled comprehensive data collection while allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives.

The semi-structured approach was chosen because it allows participants to expand on their ideas and provide detailed responses, rather than being limited to predetermined questions (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). This method also enabled the researchers to adjust the sequence of questions according to the flow of conversation, ensuring contextual relevance and more in-depth discussion (Mannan & Afni, 2020). Semi-structured interviews are particularly suitable for exploring participants' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about a specific topic, allowing researchers to delve deeply into personal or sensitive issues. This flexibility provided rich, nuanced data that was essential for understanding how traditional craft demonstrations influence visitor engagement and overall museum experience.

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted among visitors of the Manhyia Palace Museum as part of the data collection process. An ad hoc focus groups were formed from visitors present at the museum during the data collection period who were willing to participate in the discussion. In total, 8 participants were purposively selected for two focus group

discussion sessions, ensuring a manageable group size that encouraged meaningful interaction while allowing each participant sufficient opportunity to contribute.

The focus group method was considered appropriate because it brought together individuals with shared backgrounds and experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest, herein museum engagements using traditional crafts as an intervention, thereby generating rich qualitative insights (Akyıldız & Ahmed, 2021). This approach allowed participants to express their views freely while also responding to and building upon the perspectives of others (Scheelbeek et al., 2020). The discussion was moderated by the researchers, and they introduced the key issues related to the study and facilitated the interaction to ensure active participation in a natural and engaging manner. The interactive nature of the focus group enabled participants to agree or disagree with one another, providing deeper insight into collective perceptions, attitudes, and experiences regarding the traditional craft demonstration. Such interactions are particularly valuable for understanding how meanings are constructed socially within a group context.

3.4.3 Observation

Participant observation is a qualitative research method that requires the researchers to immerse themselves in a group or social setting to gain an insider's perspective (Tagold & Ullmann, 2020). Through this approach, the researchers observed behaviour, interactions, and activities while simultaneously participating in them. This dual role allows for a deeper understanding of the context, norms, and cultural dynamics at play (Seim, 2024). The method typically involves maintaining detailed field notes, engaging in meaningful conversations, and building rapport with participants to gain richer insights. In this study, participant observation was conducted during the demonstration of traditional craft activities within the museum environment. The demonstration was intentionally structured to reflect the cultural expectations and operational guidelines of the Manhyia Palace Museum, ensuring that it remained both authentic and contextually appropriate. Traditional custodians were actively engaged in this process, serving not only as cultural authorities but also as key collaborators in monitoring and documenting how visitors responded to the demonstration.

The observation focused on several important aspects of visitor behaviour. These included the level of attention and interest shown during the demonstration, the amount and quality of interaction with the craft activity, the cognitive and learning responses displayed, and any behavioural changes or follow-up actions taken after the experience. The contributions of the traditional custodians were indispensable, as their deep cultural knowledge enriched the interpretation of visitor reactions. Their involvement ensured that observations were grounded in cultural understanding, enabling a comprehensive assessment of how traditional craft demonstrations influence visitor engagement and learning in the museum setting.

3.5 Authenticity and Trustworthiness of the study findings

The study adopted several strategies to ensure the authenticity and trustworthiness of its findings. Given the qualitative nature of the study, particular attention was given to ensuring that participants' accounts were accurately represented, that the interpretations were grounded in the collected data, and that the findings reflected the experiences and perspectives of the relevant stakeholders rather than the researchers' assumptions.

Authenticity was enhanced by allowing participants to describe their experiences, perceptions, and understanding of the subject matter in their own words. During the interviews, participants were given sufficient opportunity to elaborate on their responses and provide explanations based on their experiences. Participant quotations were retained in the presentation of the

findings to demonstrate the connection between the interpretations and the original empirical data. Where participant identifiers were used, codes such as MuS 01, BoD 01, Chf 01, and Tor 05 were applied consistently to protect participants' identities while maintaining transparency in the presentation of the evidence.

Credibility was strengthened through the use of multiple stakeholder perspectives. The study obtained information from different categories of participants, including museum staff, board members, traditional authorities, and tourists. This enabled the researchers to compare accounts concerning the same phenomena and identify areas of convergence and divergence. Rather than relying on a single participant's account to establish a finding, the study examined patterns across participants before drawing broader conclusions. This process of cross-participant analysis helped reduce the possibility that the findings reflected the perspective of only one stakeholder group.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical rules and principles guided the researchers' conduct regarding identification and design elements issues associated with traditional craft demonstration throughout this study. Every ethical principle with regards to this study was strictly adhered to. The researchers received approval from the Research Ethics Committee before commencing the fieldwork. They diligently sought permission officially from the relevant authorities where the study was being conducted. Finally, the necessary approval from the Manhyia Palace Museum was taken prior to collecting data from the participants. This was done in accordance with the guidelines and regulations set forth by the participating institutions. This official permission demonstrates a commitment to conduct this qualitative study in a responsible and ethical manner as well as respecting the established protocols of the university.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Current Strategies for Enhancing Visitors' Experience and Engagement

The Manhyia Palace Museum has adopted a multifaceted approach to enhancing visitor experience by combining interpretive session, digital and experiential events. The current strategies currently used are guided tours, video documentary presentations, digital and social media platforms, feedback mechanisms and special experiential events. As noted by Falk and Dierking (2016), assessing current interpretive strategies is essential for designing meaningful and visitor-centred museum experiences.

4.1.1 Guided Tours Strategy

Participants consistently identified the guided tour as the central and most effective engagement mechanism within the museum. Findings revealed that the tour follows a well-structured sequence: ticketing, an 11-minute introductory documentary, and a guided walkthrough of three main sections: the historical palace building, permanent exhibitions, and the contemporary display of the Asantehene. The tour typically lasts 40-45 minutes and concludes with a visit to the gift shop. Tourists overwhelmingly praised the guided tours, emphasizing the guides' knowledge, clarity, and communication skills. Many noted that the guides played a crucial role in contextualizing artefacts, connecting historical narratives, and making the experience meaningful. International visitors, in particular, highlighted that without the guide, they would not have been able to fully understand the depth and significance of the exhibits. Similarly, local visitors observed that guides effectively simplified complex historical information, making it accessible even to younger audiences. The following salient information emerged from some participants.

Museum Staff, MuS 01(personal communication, 26th January, 2026) stated that “the guided tour is the core of our visitor experience.” The participant explained that after visitors’ purchase their tickets, we first show them an 11-minute documentary to introduce them to the Asante history and culture. After that, the guides take them through the different sections of the museum, explaining each artifact in detail. The participant further noted that they make sure visitors understand the meaning, use, and historical background of every object, and we always encourage them to ask questions during the tour.

Similarly, a Board of Director, BoD 01 (personal communication, 26th January, 2026) explained that “the guided tour is very important to how we present our history. After the video documentary, visitors are taken through the galleries where everything is explained step by step. We ensure that each artifact is properly interpreted. For example, when we reach areas like the drums or palanquin section, we explain their meanings and historical significance”

The cultural significance of the guided tour was also emphasised by a chief, Chf 01(personal communication, 27th January, 2026) mentioned that “I believe the guided tour is very important in helping visitors understand our culture. When people come to the museum, the environment already speaks about our history, but it is through the guide that they truly understand what they are seeing. From my experience, the guide's explanations help visitors appreciate the depth of Asante culture.

From a visitor perspective, Tourist, Tor 05(personal communication, 6th February, 2026) indicated that “As a teacher, I found the guided tour very useful, especially for the students. The guide explained things in a way even the younger children could understand. It made the visit more educational because the students could connect what they learned in class with what they were seeing. The tour really helped them grasp the history better.”

Across the accounts of MuS 01, BoD 01, Chf 01, and Tor 5 there is a clear convergence regarding the importance of guided tours in enhancing visitors’ understanding of the museum’s collection and the broader Asante cultural heritage they represent. MuS 01 focused on the systematic interpretation of artefacts and interaction with visitors; BoD 01 emphasised the explanation of the historical significance of specific objects; Chf 01 highlighted the role of guides in communicating cultural meaning that may not be immediately apparent from the physical environment; while Tor 05 emphasised the educational benefits of guided interpretation for students. The convergence across these stakeholder perspectives suggests that the guided tour operates beyond the simple movement of visitors through the galleries. It functions as an interpretive mechanism through which historical information, cultural meanings, and educational knowledge are connected to the physical artefacts.

The findings further indicate that the effectiveness of the guided tour lies partly in its ability to provide contextual information that visitors may not obtain from the exhibits alone. The perspectives of Chf 01 and Tor 05 particularly demonstrate that the guide contributes to visitors' ability to interpret and relate to the cultural materials on display. Thus, guided interpretation emerges from the data as an important mechanism for transforming museum objects from physical displays into meaningful representations of Asante history and culture.

4.1.2 Video Documentary Strategy

The findings further revealed that the video documentary serves as an essential orientation tool for visitors. The 11-minute film, displayed on a large screen (approximately 65–70 inches), provides a visual introduction to the history and culture of the Asante Kingdom before the

physical tour begins. Participants described the documentary as both informative and engaging, noting that it helps visitors develop a foundational understanding that enhances their appreciation of subsequent exhibits. Tourists also affirmed that the documentary “set the stage” and provided important context, making the guided tour more meaningful and easier to follow. During the interview, the participants provided the following information.

Museum Staff, MuS 04 (personal communication, January 26, 2026) stated, “We use the video as an orientation tool. It is very helpful because it visually introduces visitors to the Asante story before the guided tour begins”. The participant further explained that for the school children, it works like a visual summary of what they may have already learned in class, making the exhibits easier to understand when they enter the museum.

A Board Member, BoD 02 (personal communication, January 26, 2026) also explained that, “The documentary plays a very important role in our visitor experience. It sets the background for everything that follows. When visitors watch it, they already have an idea of the history and cultural context. This makes the guided tour more meaningful because they can relate what they see to what they have already watched.”

Similarly, a Tourist, Tor 07 (personal communication, February 6, 2026) stated that “The video documentary set the background for the whole experience. It was very helpful, especially for us as foreigners. It gave us a starting point, so when the guide started explaining things, we already had some understanding of the history.”

Across the three accounts, there is a convergence in participants’ perceptions of the video documentary as an important orientation and contextualisation tool. MuS 04 emphasised its educational value, particularly for school children, while BoD 02 focused on its role in establishing the historical and cultural context necessary for understanding the subsequent guided tour. Tor 07, from the visitor perspective, similarly highlighted its value in providing foreign visitors with preliminary knowledge of Asante history. These accounts suggest that the video documentary functions as more than an introductory presentation; it prepares visitors cognitively for the guided tour by providing foundational historical and cultural information against which the artefacts and subsequent explanations can be understood.

The convergence among museum staff, board members, and tourists further indicates that the documentary serves a common interpretive function across different stakeholder perspectives.

4.1.3 Digital and Social Media Platforms Strategy

The study identified an emerging digital strategy within the museum, incorporating platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and a dedicated website, as well as newly introduced QR codes on exhibit walls. Staff further indicated that a metadata software system is currently under development to digitize the entire collection, with plans underway to create a virtual museum experience. According to participants, these digital and social media platforms are used to share information, promote museum activities, and extend engagement beyond the physical space. The introduction of QR codes was particularly noted as a positive step, enabling visitors to access additional information about artefacts at their own pace. The interview data revealed nuanced perspectives on the digital and social media platforms strategy skills, as reflected in the following excerpts.

A Tourist, Tor 02 (personal communication, February 6, 2026) mentioned that “I think the digital tools are very useful, especially the QR codes. They make it easier to understand the

exhibits in more detail. Also, seeing the museum on social media before coming helped me know what to expect and made me interested in visiting.”

Another Tourist, Tor 03 (personal communication, February 6, 2026) also stated that “We saw that the museum is using social media platforms, which is very helpful. It allows people to share and learn about the culture even if they are not physically here. I think it is a good way of promoting the museum internationally.”

Similarly, a queen mother, QuM 02 (personal communication, March 11, 2026) affirmed that “From what I know, the use of videos, security systems, and proper lighting has improved how the museum presents our culture. I believe these digital tools help preserve and showcase our heritage to both locals and foreigners.”

Additionally, a Museum Staff, MuS 03 (personal communication, January 27, 2026) stated that “We are actively using platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and our website to promote the museum and share cultural activities. Recently, we also introduced QR codes on some exhibits so visitors can scan them to learn more about the objects. We are working on digitizing all our collections, and in the future, we plan to have a virtual museum.”

Across these accounts, there is a clear convergence among tourists, traditional leadership, and museum staff regarding the growing importance of digital tools in the presentation, interpretation, promotion, and preservation of cultural heritage. However, the participants emphasised different dimensions of this role. Tor 02 focused on QR codes as a means of obtaining additional information and social media as a factor influencing visitor interest, while Tor 03 emphasised the capacity of social media to extend cultural information beyond the physical boundaries of the museum. QuM 02 associated digital and technological interventions with improved cultural presentation and heritage preservation, whereas MuS 03 provided evidence of the museum's institutional efforts to expand its digital presence through social media, QR codes, collection digitisation, and plans for a virtual museum.

The cross-participant evidence therefore suggests that digital technology is assuming multiple functions within the museum's heritage management and visitor engagement practices. It operates as an interpretive tool through QR codes, a promotional tool through social media and the museum's website, and a potential preservation and accessibility mechanism through the digitisation of collections.

4.1.4 Feedback Mechanisms Strategy

Findings also showed that the museum employs both traditional and digital feedback mechanisms to evaluate visitor experience. These include a physical guestbook as well as a QR code-based questionnaire, which is reviewed periodically to inform improvements. Staff conceptually categorized feedback into three forms: interactive feedback, which occurs through real-time dialogue during guided tours; responsive feedback, obtained through written comments and digital submissions; and a desired practical feedback mode, which could emerge through hands-on engagement activities. Tourists acknowledged that these feedback channels offer an opportunity to share their experiences, suggestions, and observations, which, in turn, help the museum refine its services and respond to visitor needs. Some visitors also noted that contributing feedback made them feel included in the museum's development process. From the interviews, Specific insights included:

Museum Staff, MuS 01 (personal communication, January 27, 2026) stated that, “We collect feedback through a visitor guestbook and also through QR-code questionnaires that visitors can complete after their tour. We usually review feedback quarterly to improve our services. We also get a lot of informal feedback during the guided tours when visitors interact with the guides.”

Additionally, a Museum Staff, MuS 04 (personal communication, January 27, 2026) affirmed that, “Our feedback system is both written and digital. Visitors can write their comments in the guestbook or scan a QR code to answer questions about their experience. We also consider the conversations they have with guides during the tour as important feedback because it gives us real-time reactions.”

Similarly, one of the Board of Directors, BoD 02 (personal communication, January 26, 2026) explained that, “Feedback is very important for us because it helps us know how visitors perceive the museum. We use both formal and informal methods. The guestbook gives us written opinions, while the QR code system provides structured digital responses. These help us identify areas that need improvement.”

A chief, Chf 01 (personal communication, January 27, 2026) asserted that, “From what I have observed, visitors often express their feedback through their reactions after the tour. I have seen students who wished they could stay longer because they were so interested in what they experienced. To me, this shows that the museum is doing well, but there is still room to improve engagement.”

Additionally, a Tourist, Tor 06 (personal communication, February 6, 2026) stated that, “The feedback system is quite good. During the tour, we were also able to ask questions and make comments, which felt like informal feedback. I think this helps the guides and staff understand visitors’ experiences immediately.”

The cross-participant evidence therefore suggests that the museum's feedback system operates through a combination of formal, digital, and informal channels. The guestbook and QR-code questionnaires provide structured mechanisms for recording visitor responses, whereas interactions with guides and observable visitor reactions provide more immediate forms of feedback. The convergence between staff, board, and visitor accounts also indicates that feedback is viewed as an important component of understanding visitor experiences and informing service improvement. At the same time, Chf 01's observation that there remains “room to improve engagement” suggests that the existence of multiple feedback mechanisms does not necessarily mean that all opportunities for visitor engagement have been fully realised. This indicates the need to consider not only how feedback is collected but also how the feedback is subsequently used to strengthen visitor engagement and museum services. The finding shows that the museum employs both traditional and digital feedback systems, including guestbooks and QR-code-based questionnaires, which are periodically reviewed to inform decision-making. It was evident that the feedback system not only supports continuous improvement but also strengthens the relationship between the museum and its visitors by making them active contributors to enhancing the museum experience. Special experiential events including the Akwasidae festival, naming ceremonies for diaspora visitors and opportunities to observe the interaction between the Asantehene and his chiefs were described as authentic, emotionally engaging, and culturally immersive.

These findings align with contemporary museum practice which suggests that modern museums are increasingly adopting approaches that prioritize visitor engagement and educational value Carvalho and Simões (2024). Moreover, experiential events and interactive activities contribute to activity-based experiences, a core component of WET. These activities elevate visitors from passive spectators into active participants, thereby deepening their engagement and making the experience more memorable.

4.2 Activities that can be Introduced for Visitors' Engagement and Experience

The study's findings indicate that although the Manhyia Palace Museum has established a strong interpretive base through guided tours and multimedia presentations, there is considerable opportunity to further enhance visitor engagement by introducing more experiential and interactive activities. Viable activities that emerged were traditional craft workshops, live cultural performances, establishment of a traditional restaurant and virtual reality and digital extensions. Parker (2024) and Zollo et al. (2022) note that such performances create emotional connections and foster a sense of authenticity, making cultural experiences more relatable and memorable.

4.2.1 Traditional Craft Workshop

The findings revealed that activities such as kente weaving, Adinkra stamping, bead making, wood carving, basketry, and pottery have the potential to significantly enrich the visitor experience. The museum staff also highlighted the current absence of hands-on craft workshops as a critical gap hence emphasizing that while artefacts are displayed and explained, visitors are often unable to see or experience the processes behind their creation. The Board of Directors and participants noted that integrating artisans into the museum on a rotational or temporary basis would not only enhance engagement but also support local craftsmen economically.

A chief, Chf 01 (personal communication, January 27, 2026) indicated that, "I strongly believe that introducing traditional craft workshops at the museum is very necessary. From my experience, many visitors want to see how things like kente, wood carvings, and Adinkra are actually made. Instead of travelling to places like Bonwire or the Cultural Centre, I think it would be better if these activities are brought closer to the museum."

Similarly, A Queen Mother, QuM 02 (personal communication, March 11, 2026) affirmed that, "I think bringing craftsmen into the museum to teach activities like bead-making, Adinkra stamping, and carving will help a lot. From my perspective, visitors should not only see the artefacts but also experience how they are made."

From the perspective of a Tourist, Tor 05 (personal communication, February 6, 2026) indicated that "As a teacher, I strongly support this idea. Our students learn about these crafts in school, but seeing and practicing them here will give them a better understanding. It will make learning more practical and meaningful."

Across the three participant accounts, there is a clear convergence regarding the potential value of incorporating traditional craft workshops into the museum experience. Chf 01 emphasised the importance of bringing craft production closer to the museum and making the processes visible to visitors, while QuM 02 focused on the involvement of craftsmen in demonstrating and teaching traditional skills. Tor 05, from an educational perspective, highlighted the potential of practical participation to complement classroom-based learning. Although the participants approached the issue from different perspectives, their accounts collectively

suggest that craft workshops could strengthen the connection between visitors and living cultural practices.

4.2.2 Live cultural performances

Live cultural performances emerged as another highly desirable activity, particularly among international tourists. Performances such as Adowa dance, Kete drumming, traditional singing, storytelling, proverbs and appellations, were identified as means of bringing culture to life. Although certain activities such as drumming require prior authorization to ensure respect for palace protocols however broad agreement existed that live performances if properly managed would significantly enhance engagement.

A Museum staff, MuS 05 (personal communication, January 26, 2026) stated that “Live performances will make the museum more dynamic. Instead of just listening, visitors will see and feel the culture being performed.”

Additionally, BoD 02 (personal communication, February 9, 2026) remarked that “When visitors see cultural dances and drumming, they become more interested and may even want to participate. It makes the experience more interactive.”

Similarly, A Chief, Chf 01, (personal communication, January 27, 2026) indicated that, “I believe live cultural performances will add great value to the museum. For example, demonstrating naming ceremonies or aspects of marriage traditions will help visitors understand how we live as Asantes. However, for some activities like funerals, it may not be possible to recreate them, so I think using videos for such events will be more appropriate.”

Across the three participants, there is a common view that live cultural performances could improve visitor engagement and help communicate Asante culture in a more practical way. MuS 05 and BoD 02 focused mainly on the interactive nature of performances, while Chf 01 emphasised their cultural and educational value. The findings therefore suggest that live performances could complement the existing museum displays by allowing visitors to see cultural practices rather than only learning about them through explanations and artefacts. However, the findings also indicate that not every cultural practice should be recreated, making alternative methods such as video presentation important for sensitive practices.

4.2.3 Traditional Restaurant

Participants also emphasized the importance of introducing a traditional restaurant within or near the museum premises. Many argued that traditional food is a critical component of cultural experience, and its inclusion would add a sensory dimension that is currently missing from the museum visit. Providing local cuisine within the museum setting would enable visitors to connect more deeply with Asante culture through food, thereby creating lasting memories.

According to one of the Museum Staff, MuS 01 (personal communication, January 27, 2026) “Introducing a traditional restaurant will allow visitors to experience our culture through food. Food is an important part of our heritage, and it will encourage visitors to spend more time at the museum.”

A Queen Mother, QuM 02 (personal communication, March 11, 2026) also indicated that although my focus is more on craft, I also think that adding a place where visitors can enjoy traditional food will make the museum more complete. Culture is not only about what we see but also what we taste, so I believe this will enhance the overall visitor experience. Additionally,

a Tourist, Tor 06 (personal communication, February 6, 2026) explained that, “If there is a restaurant here, it will improve the whole experience. Visitors will not need to leave immediately after the tour.”

The establishment of a traditional restaurant was identified as an important complementary activity that would enhance the overall visitor experience. The finding highlighted that cultural engagement is not limited to visual and intellectual experiences but also integrate sensory dimensions like taste. Providing local cuisine within the museum setting would enable visitors to connect more deeply with Asante culture through food, thereby creating lasting memories. Furthermore, a restaurant would encourage visitors to spend more time at the museum, thereby increasing both satisfaction and revenue.

4.2.4 Virtual reality and digital extensions

The finding revealed that Virtual reality has the potential to allow individuals, especially those unable to visit in person, to experience the museum remotely for a fee. are the proposed activities that are perceived not only as visitors’ engagement and experience but as necessary additions that could transform the museum into a more holistic cultural destination.

According to MuS 01 (personal communication, January 26, 2026) “We are planning to introduce Virtual Reality so that people who cannot visit physically can still experience the museum online. It will also allow visitors to explore more content beyond what is displayed.”

From the traditional leadership perspective, a chief, Chf 01 (personal communication, January 27, 2026) commented that “From my perspective, using digital tools such as videos to show how traditional buildings are constructed or how certain cultural practices are performed is very important. Not all visitors can travel to villages, so I think recorded content can help them experience these activities even while they are at the museum.”

Similarly, a Tourist Tor 05 (personal communication, February 6, 2026) indicated that “Digital tools like VR will support teaching and learning, especially for students who cannot visit physically.”

Virtual Reality (VR) and broader digital initiatives were identified as forward-looking strategies to expand access to the museum and enhance visitor engagement. The finding revealed that VR's have the potential to allow individuals, especially those unable to visit in person, to experience the museum remotely for a fee. This innovation was also seen as a way to modernise the museum’s offerings, attract younger and tech-savvy audiences, and preserve cultural heritage in digital formats. The effectiveness of these proposed activities can be best understood through Experiential Learning Theory (ELT). ELT posits that meaningful learning occurs through a cyclical process of direct experience, reflection, conceptualization, and application. Traditional craft workshops, for instance, provide visitors with direct, hands-on experiences where they actively participate in cultural practices such as weaving, carving, or stamping.

4.3 Traditional Craft Demonstration as a Catalyst for Museum Engagement

Participants consistently acknowledged that introducing craft demonstrations would significantly transform the museum experience. These clearly aligns with Yi et al. (2022) who emphasises that demonstrations enhance understanding by revealing the processes and meanings behind cultural products, thereby making knowledge more accessible and relatable.

A number of actions needed to provide this catalytic effect for museum engagement were captured under sub-themes.

4.3.1 Shifting Visitors from Passive Observation to Active Participation

The first is shifting visitors from passive observation to active participation. The current museum model is observational and participants across groups described craft demonstrations as a qualitative catalyst to shift from passive observation to active participation. The following interview excerpts illustrate how participants perceive traditional craft demonstrations as a means of transforming visitors from passive observers into active participants:

According to MuS 01 (personal communication, February 13, 2026) the participant emphasised that “I believe what we currently do is mostly observational. Visitors come in, they listen to the explanations, and they watch the artefacts. But if we introduce craft demonstrations, everything will change. When someone is given the chance to try weaving or stamping Adinkra, they may not say much, but doing so shows they understand. It becomes a practical form of feedback and deeper engagement with our culture.”

From the governance perspective, another Museum staff, MuS 04 (personal communication, February 13, 2026) indicated that “The current system is good, but it is more of seeing and listening. If we bring in demonstrations, especially for students, it will help them to connect better. When they use their hands, they remember more. It makes the whole learning process active and meaningful.”

From the leadership perspective, a Board Member, BoD 01 (personal communication, February 13, 2026) stated that “When a visitor is involved in the process, it changes their whole experience. If someone sees how a talking drum is made or even tries part of it, the understanding becomes deeper. The person is no longer just listening to history but participating in it. That is what will make the museum more engaging.”

According to a Chief, Chf 01 (personal communication, February 13, 2026) emphasised that “From my experience, the current museum setup allows visitors to mostly observe, but I believe adding craft demonstrations will change that. When visitors are given the opportunity to try things like weaving or Adinkra stamping themselves, they become part of the experience.”

Across the participants, the finding revealed that traditional craft demonstrations would significantly shift the museum experience from passive observation to active participation. By engaging visitors physically and emotionally, these activities would enhance learning, deepen cultural appreciation, and create more memorable and meaningful experiences.

4.3.2 Craft as a System of Cultural Symbolism and Semantics

The second sub-theme concerns craft as a system of cultural symbolism and semantics. Traditional crafts are carriers of cultural meaning and therefore engaging visitors in craft demonstrations enable them to move beyond surface-level appreciation to a deeper understanding of the messages each artefact echo.

A tourist, Tor 04 (personal communication, February 13, 2026) mentioned that “It was fascinating to learn that the fabrics and symbols have different meanings and uses. If there was

a way to see or take part in how they are made, it would help us understand those meanings more clearly, not just as information but as something lived.”

Similarly, another tourist, Tor 06 (personal communication, February 13, 2026) noted that “When you see the artefacts and hear the explanations, you understand to some extent. But if you are involved in making them, you will understand the meaning better. It helps you to connect with the culture on a deeper level.”

A Queen Mother QuM 02 (personal communication, February 13, 2026) indicated that “I strongly believe that our crafts are a way of communicating. Through Adinkra, bead-making, and other practices, we express ideas and values. When visitors participate in these activities, they begin to understand the messages behind them.”

The finding highlighted that traditional crafts function as systems of cultural symbolism and meaning within Asante society. Engaging visitors in craft demonstrations enables them to move beyond surface-level appreciation to a deeper understanding of the cultural messages embedded in artefacts. Through this process, visitors are not only informed but also culturally connected, fostering a more meaningful and interpretive museum experience.

4.3.3 Generation of Cultural Ideology and Cross-Disciplinary Thinking

The third theme is the generation of cultural ideology and cross-disciplinary thinking. Participants positioned craft demonstrations as catalysts for stimulating critical thinking, creativity and innovation. Through engagement with these crafts, students and researchers are exposed to indigenous knowledge system that intersect with various disciplines, for example kente weaving involves mathematical patterns and design principles while bead-making utilizes material science and aesthetics which when integrated can help students and researchers think across different areas.

According to MuS 01 (personal communication, February 13, 2026) that “When visitors engage in craft demonstrations, they begin to see that what we have is not just culture but knowledge. For example, when you explain how a talking drum is made or how kente is woven, you are also teaching history, design, and even science. It helps people to appreciate that our indigenous knowledge is valuable and relevant.”

A Museum Staff, MuS 03 (personal communication, February 13, 2026), also affirmed that “These demonstrations can go beyond culture. They can help students and researchers think across different areas. For instance, weaving involves patterns and calculations, and bead-making involves design and creativity. So, it brings together different fields of learning in one activity.”

A Chief, Chf 01 (personal communication, February 13, 2026) revealed that “I see craft demonstrations as a way of teaching not only culture but also creativity and innovation. When visitors learn these skills, they begin to think about how our traditional knowledge can be applied in modern ways. To me, this helps preserve and develop our cultural ideas.”

A Chief, Chf 02 (personal communication, February 13, 2026) mentioned that “In my opinion, when people learn about our crafts, they also learn about our way of thinking and living. It goes beyond just making objects; it teaches discipline, patience, and meaning. I believe this can influence how people think in other areas of life as well.”

The responses demonstrate that traditional craft demonstrations can serve as intellectual and educational tools that extend beyond mere cultural appreciation. By engaging visitors in practical activities, these demonstrations stimulate critical thinking, creativity, and interdisciplinary learning, while also promoting the value of indigenous knowledge systems. This positions the museum not only as a site of cultural preservation but also as a centre for knowledge generation and innovation.

4.3.4 Cultivating Repeat Visitation

The summing effect is to cultivate repeat visitation. Participants indicated that without dynamic and evolving activities, museums risk becoming monotonous, leading to reduced interest among returning visitors. The introduction of craft demonstrations on a rotational basis was seen as a solution to the challenge.

Tourist, Tor 06 (personal communication, February 13, 2026) noted that “When there is something new to experience, it motivates people to come back. If you add live activities and demonstrations, it will make the museum more interesting and increase the number of visitors.”

A Queen Mother, QuM 01 (personal communication, February 13, 2026), stated that “From what I have seen in Bonwire, visitors who try weaving often want to come back or even bring others along. I believe the same will happen at the museum if such activities are introduced.”

A Chief, Ch 02 (personal communication, February 13, 2026), emphasised that “In my view, when visitors see how crafts are made and even try them, it creates a lasting impression. They will want to return and share their experience with others. This will help promote the museum.”

The responses consistently indicate that traditional craft demonstrations can play a significant role in cultivating repeat visitation. By introducing rotating and diverse activities, the museum can maintain novelty, prevent visitor fatigue, and sustain long-term interest. This dynamic approach not only promotes visitor satisfaction but also increases patronage and the museum's overall sustainability. The findings perfectly align with the Contextual Model of Learning (CML) proposed by Falk and Dierking (2016). According to this model, museum experiences are shaped by the interaction of three key contexts: personal, sociocultural, and physical. Traditional craft demonstrations effectively integrate these dimensions.

4.4 Effectiveness of Traditional Craft Demonstration

Participants directly engaged in pottery, Adinkra stamping, bead-making and wood carving which provided first-hand evidence of its impact. It was evident from the Focus Group Discussions and individual tourist reflections that traditional craft demonstrations are highly effective at deepening and enhancing museum engagement and experience. The participants' responses were organized into three main sub-themes: direct experiential evidence, deepening cultural understanding and repeat visitation. The findings of this study align with the existing literature. Siu et al. (2022) highlight that live craft demonstrations transform exhibitions into dynamic storytelling platforms, allowing visitors to witness the processes behind artifacts. Similarly, Carvalho and Simões (2024) argue that presenting crafts as cultural narratives encourages reflection and deeper cultural appreciation. Rainoldi et al. (2018) further emphasize that such interactive engagement creates a unique and meaningful connection between visitors and exhibits, resulting in resonant and impactful experiences.

4.4.1 Direct Experiential Evidence

The focus group discussions provided rich, first-hand evidence highlighting the effectiveness of traditional craft demonstrations in enhancing visitor engagement and experience at the Manhyia Palace Museum. Participants in both FGD 1 and FGD 2 were not merely observers but active participants who engaged directly in a variety of traditional activities, including Adinkra stamping, bead-making, clay work, and carving. Participants described the direct experiential evidence as practical, engaging and impactful.

One participant, FGD1a (personal communication, February 13, 2026), explained that “The activity made it very practical. It wasn’t just a walk around; we had to try our hands at something, which really made the tour very meaningful.”

Another participant, FGD1b (personal communication, February 13, 2026), emphasized that “The demonstrations helped me appreciate the Asante culture, and I will describe the demonstration as very effective.”

A participant, FGD1c (personal communication, February 13, 2026), further noted that “The demonstration provides *first-hand evidence*.....coming to do something, try hands-on, see something, get things explained adds a topping to the whole experience.”

The findings provide clear and consistent evidence that traditional craft demonstrations significantly enhance visitor engagement by deepening museum engagement by making it immersive, interactive and resonant. It was evident that learning through participation is far more impactful than observation alone, positioning craft demonstrations as a critical component of an enriched museum experience.

4.4.1 Deepening Cultural Understanding

Participants consistently noted that while the finished artefacts were beautifully exhibited, they often leave unanswered questions about production processes and the cultural philosophies embedded in them. However, the hands-on exposure enables tourists to appreciate the effort and knowledge required to create traditional artefacts.

FGD2a (personal communication, February 13, 2026), stated that “Participating in bead-making and Adinkra stamping helped her understand the meanings behind colors and symbols in Ghanaian culture. The experience taught me moral values embedded in the symbols and increased my confidence in engaging with cultural practices.”

FGD2b (personal communication, February 13, 2026), emphasized that “The demonstrations provided a complete understanding of the craft process, from production to final output...the hands-on exposure enabled me to appreciate the effort and knowledge required to create traditional artefacts, thereby deepening my cultural awareness.”

FGD2d (personal communication, February 13, 2026), affirmed during the discussion that “Observing and participating in the activities helped bridge the gap between theory and practice...seeing how artefacts are made provided a clearer understanding of Asante cultural practices and the everyday lives of the people.”

The findings clearly demonstrated that traditional craft demonstrations significantly enhance visitors’ cultural understanding by bridging the gap between observation and experiential

learning. While museum exhibits provide valuable visual and historical information, the addition of live demonstrations enables visitors to engage directly with the processes, meanings, and symbolism embedded in Asante cultural artefacts.

4.4.2 Stimulating repeat visitation

The demonstrations also proved effective in stimulating repeat visitation. FGD1a expressed excitement about revisiting while FGD2b indicated a desire to share the experience with friends and family. Interactive and participatory activities were identified as creating lasting and memorable experiences with the opportunity to produce something tangible and help strengthen emotional attachment to the museum. These directly align with Siu et al. (2022), who highlight that live craft demonstrations transform exhibitions into dynamic storytelling platforms. Carvalho and Simões (2024) similarly argues that presenting crafts as cultural narratives encourages reflection and deeper cultural appreciation.

FGD1(personal communication, February 13, 2026), stated during the discussion that “The demonstrations are enjoyable, interactive, and have motivated me to revisit, especially if new activities are introduced...the fun aspect of the experience makes it worth repeating.”

During the discussion, FGD2b (personal communication, February 13, 2026), indicated that “I expressed a strong desire to revisit the museum. I would like to participate in the activities again because they help me learn more about the Asante culture...I would share my experience with my friends and family.”

FGD2c (personal communication, February 13, 2026), commented that “The craft demonstrations I participated in have given me a different museum experience...these interactive elements have made the visit more appealing, and it has encouraged me to return for another engaging experience.”

The findings indicated that traditional craft demonstrations are a strong driver of repeat visitation and visitor loyalty. The interactive, hands-on nature of these activities creates memorable, emotionally engaging experiences that visitors are eager to relive.

5. Conclusion

Manhyia Palace Museum serves as a vital institution for the preservation and promotion of Asante cultural heritage. As a repository of sacred artefacts and historical narratives, the museum plays a significant role in safeguarding the legacy of the Asante Kingdom, particularly from the pre-colonial era. However, beyond its traditional role as a custodian of history, the study establishes that the museum is gradually evolving into a dynamic learning environment.

The study showed that the Manhyia Palace Museum has adopted a combination of interpretive, digital, and experiential approaches to enrich visitor interaction. It was discovered that stakeholders collectively recognize guided tours, video documentaries, digital platforms, feedback loops and targeted experiential events as the foundational strategies currently utilized.

According to the study, while the museum already provides a solid interpretive foundation through guided tours and multimedia tools, there remains significant potential to expand engagement through experiential and interactive activities. However, activities like traditional craft workshops, live cultural performances, the establishment of a traditional restaurant, and virtual reality/digital extensions would act as a catalyst for visitors’ engagement and experience.

Furthermore, the study showed that introducing traditional craft demonstration is viewed as a strategic intervention capable of shifting visitors from passive spectators to active participants in cultural learning. Hence, enabling them to connect more deeply with the cultural, symbolic, and practical dimensions of Asante traditions.

The study further concludes that such experiential approaches and craft demonstration not only deepen cultural understanding but also foster emotional attachment, improve knowledge retention, and encourage repeat visitation.

Recommendations

The Management of the Manhyia Palace Museum together with traditional craftsmen should formally collaborate and integrate traditional craft demonstrations such as Adinkra stamping, pottery, bead-making, and wood carving on a fixed recurring schedule with a dedicated budget line. This formal integration will facilitate consistent, resourced and continued traditional craft demonstration hence promoting the educational mandate of the museum and long-term sustainability of cultural transmission.

The Museum Management should allocate more time and resources to allow visitors deeper involvement in the crafting process, including detailed explanations of materials, tools, and techniques.

The Management of the Manhyia Palace Museum in collaboration with the local artisans should design a clear pricing and revenue-sharing arrangement that gives the visitors opportunity to keep or purchase items they create. This policy will enhance memory retention, emotional attachment, and a steady additional income stream for both the institution and the craftsmen.

The Management together with Ghana Tourism Authority should draw up a phased digital transformation strategy introducing virtual reality, interactive media and augmented reality to complement physical demonstrations and extend engagement beyond the museum space.

The Management of the Manhyia Palace Museum should consider introducing additional attractions such as traditional restaurants, live cultural performances, and storytelling sessions to provide a holistic cultural experience.

Limitation

This study was conducted solely at the Manhyia Palace Museum; consequently, the findings may not be readily generalised to other museums in Ghana or to broader cultural heritage institutions. As a result, the interpretations presented are context-specific and should be understood within the operational and cultural environment of the Manhyia Palace Museum. In addition, the study was constrained by delays in obtaining ethical clearance and administrative approval from the museum authorities prior to data collection. This extended approval process reduced the time available for fieldwork and data collection. Data collection was further challenged by the limited availability of key informants, including chiefs, queen mothers, members of the museum board of directors, and museum staff, many of whom had demanding schedules and limited time for interviews. These constraints affected the pace of data collection and limited the depth of engagement with some stakeholders.

Suggestions For Future Research

Future studies could employ quantitative methods including structured surveys and statistical models to examine the impact of craft demonstrations on visitor satisfaction, learning outcomes, and behavioural intentions. Although, the qualitative approach prioritizes depth, capturing the richness and complexity of human experience, the quantitative approach would provide more measurable and replicable evidence that museum administrators and policymakers like Ghana Museums and Monuments Board and Ghana Tourism Authority can confidently use when making decisions about cultural programming.

Additionally, Comparative research involving other museums within Ghana or across sub-Saharan Africa could provide broader insights into best practices for experiential learning in cultural institutions, and such a study is necessary because the focus of the present research on Manhyia Palace Museum alone does not account for how differences in history, institutional structure, or visitor demographics across other sites may influence engagement with craft-based programming; comparing multiple institutions would help researchers and practitioners identify which outcomes are unique to Manhyia and which principles can be applied more widely across the region.

Finally, Future research may investigate how integrating craft demonstrations influences revenue generation, local artisan livelihoods, and tourism development, and this is particularly important because the present study, while noting the economic potential of such activities, did not measure these outcomes in any systematic way; without dedicated research in this area, museum boards and institutions such as the Ghana Tourism Authority will continue to lack the evidence needed to justify sustained investment in craft-centred programming as a practical development strategy.

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