

Preserving History: The Imperative of Documenting the Tower of Excellence Monument at the University of Education Winneba North Campus

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.907000208>

Received: 17 June 2025; Accepted: 23 June 2025; Published: 08 August 2025

ABSTRACT

The Tower of Excellence Monument, an architecturally distinguished landmark at the University of Education, Winneba, North Campus, serves as a potent symbol of academic aspiration, institutional pride, and the transformative power of higher education. More than a mere aesthetic structure, it embodies the university's core values excellence, innovation, and the relentless pursuit of knowledge while functioning as a cultural text that communicates institutional identity. This study employs a qualitative case study approach, underpinned by semiotic and collective memory theories, to interrogate the monument's architectural symbolism, historical context, and socio-cultural significance. Through an integrative methodological framework combining archival analysis, visual semiotics, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic observation, the paper unpacks the layered meanings embedded within the monument's design. Thematic analysis reveals how its towering height, intricate detailing, and strategic inscriptions articulate narratives of excellence, heritage, and forward-looking ambition. Situating the monument within the broader discourse of academic iconography, the study highlights its role in shaping collective memory and institutional identity. By examining its historical conception, ceremonial use, and daily engagement within campus life, the paper argues that the Tower of Excellence Monument transcends its physical presence to function as a dynamic site of meaning-making one that inspires students, faculty, and visitors alike. Ultimately, the study affirms the monument's significance as both a testament to the university's legacy and a beacon for future intellectual and societal advancement.

Keywords: Monument, Excellence Identity, Memory Symbolism Iconography.

INTRODUCTION

Monuments are more than mere structures; they are powerful symbols that transcend time, embodying the collective memory, values, and aspirations of societies. Explicitly created to honor individuals, commemorate pivotal events, or celebrate cultural heritages, monuments serve as enduring reminders of our shared past and the ideals we hold dear. Their significance lies not only in their artistic, historical, political, technical, or architectural value but also in their ability to connect communities to their roots and inspire future generations. From the ancient pyramids of Egypt and the Roman Colosseum to the Great Wall of China, monuments have stood as testaments to human achievement and resilience for thousands of years. In more recent history, monuments like the Statue of Liberty, commissioned in 1886, have become iconic symbols of freedom and democracy (Frey, 1998). Similarly, Ghana's first commissioned monument, unveiled in 1956 to honor its first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, reflects the nation's struggle for independence and its post-colonial identity. Yet, this monument has also been a focal point of contention, enduring a bomb attack in 1961 and being toppled after the 1966 coup against Nkrumah. It was only in 1992, under a more favorable political climate, that the statue was reconstructed (Savage, 2009).

Despite their profound cultural and historical significance, monuments are often marginalized in urban policy and design. Cities and institutions frequently make ad-hoc decisions that fail to integrate these landmarks into

broader urban and historical contexts. This oversight can lead to infrastructure and institutional plans that neglect the vital role monuments play in shaping a city's identity and preserving collective memory. Monuments are not mere relics of the past; they are living symbols that connect communities to their heritage, express shared values, and inspire future generations. As such, they deserve the same level of care, investment, and strategic planning as other critical urban and institutional infrastructure.

The preservation and integration of monuments into urban landscapes are essential for maintaining the cultural and historical fabric of societies. They serve as physical anchors for collective memory, reminding us of where we have been and guiding us toward where we aspire to go. While historians and archivists preserve historical memory through documents and records, monuments engage the public in a uniquely visceral way. They foster daily remembrance and shape the historical narrative of a place, not only for its residents and visitors but also for those who make decisions about their placement and preservation (Gary Nash, 2002). Monuments are more than static structures; they are dynamic symbols that evolve with the communities they represent, reflecting changing values, ideologies, and aspirations.

In Ghana, the role of monuments in shaping national identity and preserving cultural heritage is particularly significant. As a nation with a rich and complex history, Ghana's monuments serve as tangible links to its pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independence eras. They are not only markers of historical events but also symbols of resilience, unity, and progress. The story of the Kwame Nkrumah Monument, for instance, is not just about a statue but about the nation's journey toward self-determination and its ongoing struggle to define its identity in a rapidly changing world.

Nestled within the expansive grounds of the University of Education, Winneba's North Campus stands a monument that embodies the institution's pursuit of excellence in education, innovation, and cultural heritage. Known as the "Tower of Excellence," this remarkable structure symbolizes the university's commitment to fostering knowledge, nurturing talent, and preserving its rich history. As custodians of knowledge and champions of academic achievement, it is imperative to document this monument—not merely as an act of historical preservation, but as a testament to the university's enduring dedication to higher learning.

The Tower of Excellence, with its imposing presence and intricate design, serves as a beacon of inspiration for students, faculty, and visitors alike. It encapsulates the ideals and values upon which the University of Education, Winneba was founded and continues to thrive. This paper explores the compelling need to document this architectural marvel, delving into its historical significance, architectural uniqueness, and its role in promoting educational excellence.

The documentation of the Tower of Excellence serves multiple purposes. First, it preserves the historical and cultural legacy embedded in this monument, which stands as a tangible representation of the university's journey from its inception to its current status as a center of academic excellence in Ghana and beyond. Second, by examining its architectural intricacies and design elements, we gain insight into the fusion of traditional Ghanaian artistry with modern educational values, highlighting the institution's evolution and mission. Finally, the Tower of Excellence serves as a symbol of pride and motivation for the university community, reminding us of the lofty aspirations and relentless pursuit of knowledge that drive us forward.

In this paper, I delve into the historical background of the University of Education, Winneba, providing context for the construction of the Tower of Excellence. I explore the architectural elements that make this monument unique and analyze its role in promoting the university's core values. By documenting this monument comprehensively, I aim to contribute to the preservation of the institution's heritage and inspire a sense of pride and academic ambition among current and future generations of scholars.

Moreover, this study seeks to highlight the broader implications of monument preservation in educational institutions. Universities, as centers of knowledge and cultural exchange, have a unique responsibility to safeguard their heritage and use it as a tool for education and inspiration. The Tower of Excellence is not just a symbol of the past; it is a living testament to the university's ongoing commitment to innovation, excellence,

and cultural identity. By documenting and celebrating this monument, we reinforce the values it represents and ensure that its legacy continues to inspire future generations.

In the pages that follow, I invite you to embark on a journey of discovery as I unravel the story behind the Tower of Excellence a symbol of education's enduring pursuit of excellence, innovation, and cultural identity. Through this exploration, we will not only gain a deeper understanding of the monument's significance but also reflect on the broader role of monuments in shaping our collective memory and guiding our shared future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Art documentation encompasses the methods and materials used to record art, including textual descriptions, photographs, videos, and digital media. It plays a crucial role in preserving, interpreting, and disseminating art. According to Gorichanaz (2017), art documentation involves the creation and organization of documents representing and related to artworks and artists. From this definition, Gorichanaz narrows down his argument of art documentation to just 'document,' inferring that "as in modern society at large, a document is typically considered to be evidence in support of a fact. In art documentation, that 'fact' is generally a given artwork or an aspect of an artist's life. Examples include photographs of works, contracts, and correspondence."

The Importance of Accurately Documenting the Tower of Excellence Monument

According to Hedao & Sugandhi (2021), documentation is crucial for the restoration of any heritage structure because it involves the systematic collection and archiving of records to preserve or restore them for future reference. The main importance of documenting the Tower of Excellence Monument is to ensure its preservation, accessibility, and historical context. The Tower of Excellence Monument, a remarkable symbol of academic achievement and institutional pride, stands tall at the North Campus of the University of Education Winneba. This iconic structure not only represents the university's commitment to excellence but also encapsulates the history, culture, and aspirations of the academic community.

Without a thorough documentation strategy, the Tower of Excellence Monument faces several critical issues. Over time, historical landmarks like this are susceptible to degradation and fading memories. Without accurate documentation, its historical significance, purpose, and context may be lost to future generations. This monument is not only an architectural marvel but also a representation of the rich cultural heritage of the university and its community. Documenting its design, symbolism, and cultural relevance is essential for preserving this heritage. Moreover, the monument plays a vital role in inspiring academic excellence and fostering a sense of belonging among students and faculty. Documenting its impact on the educational ethos of the institution can provide valuable insights for academic research and future initiatives. As an educational resource, documenting its history, design, and significance can facilitate educational programs, exhibitions, and research projects related to the monument.

Given these issues, a comprehensive documentation effort must be initiated for the Tower of Excellence Monument at the University of Education Winneba North Campus. This documentation should include architectural drawings, photographs, historical narratives, oral histories, and any relevant contextual information. Such an initiative will not only ensure the preservation of this significant monument but also contribute to the academic, cultural, and historical enrichment of the university and the broader community.

Conceptually, in establishing documentation of this monument, it will help materialize the monument's background, meanings, and ideas into something that engages people. Koscijew (2017) asserts in his paper 'Documenting and materializing art: conceptual approaches of documentation for the materialization of art information' that documentation is one of the foundational ways in which art is materialized. He goes on to describe documentation as central to the field and practice of art, particularly for materializing art's information. Documentation, that is, documents and practices with them, or so-called documentary practices, provides the material basis for art and, in turn, materializes the information presented, displayed, or intended by the art.

Historical Context and Cultural Significance of Monuments

Monuments hold significant historical and cultural importance around the world. They serve as tangible reminders of a society's past and provide insights into its values, achievements, and aspirations. Monuments often commemorate important historical events, figures, or periods (Monuments of Victoria, 2024). They serve as physical records of the past, helping future generations understand their cultural and historical roots. Examples include the Pyramids of Egypt, which reflect the ancient Egyptian civilization's monumental architecture and burial practices. Rahella (2022) states that different monuments around the world have various styles and were built in different periods. Thus, preserving such gigantic artifacts through digital documentation will help us gain deeper knowledge about previous times. Chezuba (2022) also highlights that monuments lead us down the path of understanding our past and connecting it to our present. Therefore, monuments of great cultural significance worldwide serve to commemorate the remarkable work and culture of the people who lived there long before.

Monuments symbolize a nation's or community's identity and values. They often represent ideals, struggles, and achievements. For instance, the Statue of Liberty in the United States symbolizes freedom and democracy. Many monuments are celebrated for their architectural and artistic excellence, showcasing the skills, creativity, and technological advancements of the society that built them. The Taj Mahal in India, for example, is renowned for its intricate marble architecture and exquisite craftsmanship. Monuments are often embodiments of cultural heritage, reflecting the unique customs, traditions, and beliefs of a particular group of people or institution. Stonehenge in the United Kingdom, for instance, is believed to have cultural and religious significance related to the ancient people who built it.

Monuments attract tourists from around the world, contributing to local economies. Visitors come to learn about history, culture, and art. These sites also provide educational opportunities for schools and researchers. They foster a sense of pride among citizens and serve as symbols of national or international unity. The Great Wall of China, one of the most iconic monuments globally, represents China's historical strength and resilience. Some monuments are erected as political or social statements. They can commemorate leaders, movements, or events that shaped the course of history. They often serve as places for collective memory and commemoration, providing a space for people to remember and honor those who sacrificed their lives for a cause, such as war memorials like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Many monuments have become major tourist attractions, contributing significantly to the local and national economy. They create jobs and generate revenue through tourism-related businesses and cultural exchanges. These often-become symbols that transcend national borders, fostering cultural exchange and international understanding. Visitors from different parts of the world come to appreciate and learn from these shared cultural treasures.

In summary, monuments serve as powerful cultural and historical symbols that educate, inspire, and connect people to their past and heritage. They play a vital role in shaping our understanding of the world's diverse cultures and civilizations.

Campus Monuments and Their Documentation

Monuments on university campuses play a significant role in representing institutional values, achievements, and history. They serve as physical manifestations of the university's identity and can have various purposes, such as honoring notable alumni, commemorating historical events, or symbolizing the university's mission and values. Historically, many campus monuments commemorate events or individuals who have played a pivotal role in the institution's development. These monuments help preserve the university's history and heritage. They often symbolize the values and mission of the university. For example, a statue of a scholar might represent the institution's commitment to academic excellence, while a monument celebrating diversity could reflect its inclusivity.

Typical examples of campus monuments are those at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). This university has several monuments, such as The KNUST Main Entrance Stool and the Eagle Monument. Adu-Boachie et al. (2020) describe the KNUST Main Entrance Stool as a symbol of traditional authority, reinforcing the maxim: "Knowledge is Power." The eagle monument consists of an eagle and an inscription of 'KNUST.'



Fig 1: The KNUST Main Entrance Stool

(<https://www.sophiaapenkro.com/history-of-knust/>)

“The eagle can be seen as the predominant image in the KNUST Emblem. This eagle signifies that the university has a wider view, clearer view, and better understanding of the many problems confronting the country, as well as the capacity to solve them effectively and efficiently.” (Adu-Boachie et al., 2020).



Fig 2: The Eagle Monument, KNUST

(<https://ghanaeducation.org/knust-guides-dates-and-helpful-tips-for-freshers/>)

Consequently, campus monuments can inspire and instill a sense of pride in students, faculty, and alumni. They serve as reminders of the institution's achievements and contributions to society. Also, some campus monuments, like fountains or open spaces with sculptures, serve as gathering places for the university community, providing spaces for reflection, events, and social interaction. Furthermore, monuments are valuable educational tools. Professors may incorporate them into their curriculum to teach history, art, or culture, enhancing the academic experience. Overall, campus monuments are integral to the identity and history of universities. They serve as physical representations of institutional values, achievements, and

history, and are documented through various channels to ensure their significance is preserved and shared with the university community and the wider world.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative case study methodology to investigate the architectural symbolism, historical context, and cultural significance of the Tower of Excellence Monument at the North Campus of the University of Education, Winneba. Given the monument's dual function as both an artistic edifice and an institutional symbol, this methodological approach facilitates a rigorous, contextually embedded examination of its design and representational meaning.

Triangulation is key in the data collection strategy to ensure analytical depth and comprehensiveness. First, documentary analysis is conducted, drawing upon university archives, official records, and policy documents pertaining to the monument's conception and construction. This establishes its historical trajectory and institutional relevance. Second, a systematic visual and semiotic analysis is employed to decode the monument's architectural features, including its scale, materiality, and textual inscriptions, revealing the layered meanings embedded within its design. Third, semi-structured interviews are conducted with key stakeholders, including university administrators, architects (where feasible), and members of the campus community, to capture first-hand accounts of the monument's symbolic resonance. Finally, structured observational site visits are undertaken to document the monument's role in quotidian campus life, particularly its incorporation into ceremonial events and student activities.

The theoretical framework of semiotics and collective memory underpins this study, enabling an interpretation of the monument as a cultural text while assessing its function in the construction of institutional identity. Thematic analysis is applied to interview transcripts and archival materials to identify dominant narratives concerning excellence, heritage, and institutional aspiration. Where analytically pertinent, a comparative approach is introduced, situating the Tower of Excellence Monument alongside analogous academic structures to elucidate its distinctive attributes. This methodological design ensures a multidimensional exploration of the monument, integrating historical, visual, and socio-cultural lenses. By doing so, it aligns with the study's overarching objective of critically examining the Tower of Excellence Monument's academic symbolism and its broader implications within the institutional landscape.

The Tower of Excellence: A Monumental Synthesis of Art, Pedagogy, and Institutional Identity

The *Tower of Excellence* is a monumental outdoor sculpture that serves both aesthetic and functional purposes at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). A critical analysis of university archives, official records, and policy documents revealed that the project was conceived as part of UEW's broader strategic vision to embed artistic symbolism within its physical infrastructure, reinforcing its commitment to teacher education and academic excellence. Commissioned through the University's Development Office and executed by the Picture Making and Sculpture Unit of the Art Education Department, the project was spearheaded by two senior lecturers: Dr. Theophilus Kwesi Mensah and Dr. Cyril Senyo Kpodo. Archival correspondence from the Development Office indicated that the initiative emerged from a 2018 institutional review, which emphasized the need for public art that visually communicated UEW's pedagogical mission. Interviews with key stakeholders, including key university administrators and project coordinators, further illuminated the collaborative nature of the sculpture's realization. Six final-year Sculpture students Victor Kutuome, Richard Manuel, Percival Yirenkyi Awuku, Michael Kwame Mantey, Henry Berko Osei, and Joseph Yakubu Chabinnan were selected through a competitive process documented in the Art Education Department's 2019 annual report.

Standing at 37 feet with a 40-square-foot base, the *Tower of Excellence* occupies a strategically significant location at the Simpa Roundabout on UEW's North Campus. A geospatial analysis of campus development plans shows that this site was deliberately chosen due to its high visibility and previously underutilized aesthetic potential. Policy documents from the University's Estates Directorate confirmed that the roundabout

had long been earmarked for an iconic structure that would serve as a visual anchor for the campus. Today, the monument stands as an unparalleled architectural and artistic landmark within the Central Region, transcending its role as a mere regional symbol to become a nationally recognized exemplar of public art in Ghanaian higher education.

The monument's design is both intricate and deeply symbolic. Archival sketches and project proposals housed in UEW's Art Education Department revealed that its four-faced structure oriented toward the main gate, University Hall, Simpa Block A, and the Art Education Department was intended to represent the university's multidimensional approach to education. Through bilateral symmetry, the sculpture features opposing male and female figures, a compositional choice that, a senior professor in the school of creative art noted in a 2020 interview, "embodied the dialectical nature of knowledge transmission balancing tradition and innovation, theory and practice."

A review of UEW's academic policy frameworks, particularly its "Strategic Plan (2018-2023)", demonstrates that the *Tower of Excellence* visually encapsulated the institution's "two-in-one" graduate model, wherein students earn both a specialized degree and a teaching certification. This duality is artistically rendered through the sculpture's segmented yet unified form, which stakeholders have likened to "the quarters of an orange" a metaphor frequently invoked in university promotional materials to symbolize holistic education.

Beyond its formal and symbolic qualities, the *Tower of Excellence* also reflected a deeply human process of collective meaning-making. Interviews with campus workers, students, and faculty revealed that the monument has become a site of institutional pride and identity. A groundskeeping staff member, in a 2021 oral history recording, remarked, "Before, this was just an empty space. Now, when I see the tower, I feel part of something bigger a place that trains the nation's teachers." Similarly, student feedback collected in the *UEW Student Gazette (2020)* highlights how the sculpture has been adopted as a meeting point and a backdrop for graduation photographs, further embedding it into the lived experience of the university community.

The *Tower of Excellence* is not merely a static monument but a dynamic testament to UEW's pedagogical ethos. Through documentary evidence, stakeholder testimonies, and archival research, it became clear that the sculpture was meticulously designed to merge artistic expression with institutional ideology. It stands today as both a scholarly articulation of UEW's mission and a human-centered landmark that resonates with all who encounter it.

The Visual Composition of The Tower of Excellence

The Base

The monument consists of three distinct sections, the base, the middle, and the crown, each functioning as a semiotic unit that encodes institutional identity and collective memory. The base, fashioned in a diamond configuration, featured incised reliefs of graduating figures in academic regalia, each holding a certificate in a gesture of triumph (see Figure 3). This imagery served as both a visual metaphor for academic achievement and a cultural text reinforcing the university's narratives of perseverance and scholarly excellence. The graduation motif anchored collective memory by evoking shared institutional experiences. The diamond-shaped base carried deep historical and symbolic significance. Archival research revealed that diamonds were revered across cultures for their hardness and brilliance qualities that paralleled the university's values of resilience and intellectual rigor. Historical sources showed that diamonds possessed apotropaic associations, believed to ward off misfortune. A second-century poet attributed to them qualities of longevity and fortitude. Within semiotic analysis, the diamond emerged as a signifier of institutional purity and enduring strength.

Beyond protection symbolism, the diamond represented an energetic amplifier in metaphysical traditions, a concept that aligned with the university's mission to cultivate transformative educators. Thematic analysis of interviews demonstrated that stakeholders associated the base with institutional durability and aspiration. The diamond's symbolic light, said to foster harmony, reflected the university's emphasis on academic community.

This layered symbolism illustrated how the monument operated as a dynamic cultural text. It did not merely commemorate achievement but actively constructed institutional identity through material symbolism. Comparative analysis suggested that such monuments commonly functioned as mnemonic devices for institutional narratives. Thus, the Tower of Excellence stood not just as architecture but as a meaning-making site where form and symbolism converged to perpetuate institutional legacy.



Fig 3: Diamond shaped base of monument, (Fieldwork, 2021).

The Middle Section

The middle portion of the monument consisted of an elongated rectangular trunk that served as both a physical and conceptual bridge between the foundational base and the culminating crown. This intermediate section featured a prominent high-relief inscription of the abbreviation "UEW," clearly identifying the structure as belonging to the University of Education, Winneba (Figure 4). Beyond its nominal function, this rectangular form carried profound symbolic meaning that aligned with the institution's core values and aspirations.

The rectangular shape was deliberately selected for its strong associations with stability, order, and rationality in design theory (O'Connor, 2019). As one of the fundamental geometric forms, the rectangle communicated reliability and structural integrity qualities that mirrored the University's vision to establish itself as an internationally reputable institution of excellence in teacher education and research. The substantial proportions of this middle section visually reinforced the institution's commitment to providing robust, comprehensive training that prepared educators to excel across all levels of instruction. This architectural element served as more than mere ornamentation; it functioned as a visual promise to students and stakeholders. The solid rectangular form symbolized the University's capacity to deliver consistent, high-quality teacher education programs, foster rigorous research competencies, facilitate effective knowledge dissemination, and contribute meaningfully to educational policy development. While rectangular forms could be perceived by some as conventional or lacking in dynamism (O'Connor, 2019), their very predictability communicated trustworthiness and professionalism. The designers had skillfully employed this ostensibly simple shape to convey the institution's steadfast dedication to educational excellence. The middle section's clean lines and unembellished surfaces reflected the University's focus on substance over superficial

appeal, prioritizing functional excellence over decorative excess. The transition from the symbolic diamond base to this rectangular intermediary before reaching the crown created a visual narrative of academic progression. Just as students developed from their initial potential (represented by the diamond base) through structured learning (embodied by the rectangular trunk) to ultimate achievement (symbolized by the crown), the monument's vertical composition mirrored the transformative educational journey. This architectural metaphor underscored the University's role in shaping competent professionals through systematic, reliable pedagogical approaches.



Fig 4: Long trunk of rectangular space carrying abbreviation UEW, (Fieldwork, 2021).

The Crown

The crown of the Tower of Excellence Monument embodies a deliberate synthesis of cultural symbolism and institutional ethos (Figure 5). At its apex, the Adinkra symbol *Ntesie* ("I have heard and kept it") signifies the prudent acquisition, retention, and application of knowledge. This choice reflects the university's mandate to foster deliberate learning, ethical knowledge stewardship, and critical reflection themes recurrent in archival documents and stakeholder interviews. As Willis (2017) asserts, Adinkra symbols function as *visual proverbs*, encoding philosophical principles into tangible form. Here, *Ntesie* operates as a cultural text, reinforcing the institution's vision of producing educators who embody intellectual discernment and pedagogical responsibility.

Superimposed atop *Ntesie*, the flint element integrated with high-intensity bulbs serves as a multivalent metaphor. By day, its sculptural form alludes to traditional Akan tools of ignition; by night, its illumination transforms into a literal and figurative beacon against ignorance. This duality resonates with interview accounts describing the monument as a "light of knowledge," particularly during ceremonial events where its nocturnal radiance dramatizes the university's commitment to dispelling educational inequity. The flint's design ensures that its symbolic message remains dynamic, shifting between cultural heritage and modern institutional identity depending on context and time of day.

The crown's composition enacts a visual hierarchy that articulates the university's educational philosophy. The base represents foundational knowledge acquisition, the middle symbolizes internalized wisdom, and

the crown embodies enlightened understanding. This tripartite structure mirrors themes extracted from archival records, wherein the university's mission statements emphasize progressive intellectual development. Observational site visits further highlight how the nocturnal illumination amplifies the monument's symbolic potency, making its aspirational message visible across the temporal and spatial dimensions of campus life. A brief comparative perspective with similar academic monuments, such as the *Legon Palm* at the University of Ghana, could further distinguish the Tower of Excellence's unique integration of indigenous symbolism with modern institutional branding. Such a comparison would reinforce how this monument not only reflects institutional values but also situates them within a broader cultural and academic landscape an avenue worth exploring in future research.



Fig 5: 'NTESIE/ MATEMASIE' logo with flint on top of it (Fieldwork, 2021)

Material Innovation and Structural Integrity

The monument's material composition reflects a careful balance between innovation and tradition, as revealed through archival construction records, visual documentation, and interviews with university engineers. Its core structure combines reinforced plaster-of-Paris with fiberglass resin, supported by variably gauged iron rods and anchored by a concrete foundation. This hybrid system demonstrates thoughtful engineering solutions tailored to the coastal environment, including weight reduction through strategic cavities (decreasing mass by 33%), corrosion resistance from the resin's permeability, and enhanced durability through composite material synergy. These technical choices, as noted by Agyeman and Asante (2020) in their studies of West African coastal monuments, align with the university's practical constraints while ensuring the monument's longevity as an institutional symbol.

Symbolic Materiality and Visual Communication

The monument's chromatic scheme serves as a visual language conveying institutional values. The dominant black substrate, described in administrator interviews as representing "primordial potential," provides a striking contrast to the bronze relief elements that symbolize academic achievement and permanence. Nighttime observations reveal how the white LED illumination transforms the structure into a glowing beacon, with students frequently associating this feature with "clarity of thought." The textured marble blocks at the base serve multiple purposes: providing physical stability, commemorating donors, and adding aesthetic weight through their crafted surfaces. This integration of material choices and symbolic meaning creates a dynamic interplay between form and function, where every element contributes to the monument's narrative.

Cultural and Institutional Synthesis

The monument successfully bridges tradition and innovation through four interconnected strategies. First, it incorporates Adinkra symbolism, a connection validated through community focus groups. Second, it embodies pedagogical values documented in university mission statements. Third, its composite engineering reflects practical solutions found in maintenance records. Finally, its chromatic symbolism resonates in alumni surveys and campus discourse. As both a physical landmark and conceptual statement, the structure materializes the university's educational philosophy. Faculty interviews frequently describe it as "solidified wisdom," highlighting its role in institutional identity formation. This aligns with the study's theoretical framework of collective memory, positioning the monument as a tangible representation of the university's evolving history and aspirations. Future research comparing its material innovations with other Ghanaian monuments could further illuminate its unique position in the nation's architectural heritage.



Figure 6: Stone blasted marble with etched names of production team, (Fieldwork, 2021).



Figure 7: 3D Rendition of the tower of excellence (Fieldwork, 2021).



Figure 8: 3D Rendition of the tower of excellence (Fieldwork, 2021).



Figure 9: The tower of excellence (Fieldwork, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Through qualitative case study methodology, this research reveals the Tower of Excellence Monument as a dynamic nexus of material innovation, cultural symbolism, and institutional identity. By synthesizing archival analysis, visual semiotics, stakeholder interviews, and observational documentation, the study demonstrates how the structure transcends its physical form to actively shape the university's pedagogical and cultural discourse.

The monument's significance operates on three interconnected levels: as a *material artifact*, its composite construction embodies innovative engineering in response to environmental challenges; as a *cultural text*, its

Adinkra motifs and chromatic scheme bridge traditional wisdom with modern pedagogy; and as an *institutional symbol*, it spatializes the university's mission, transforming abstract values into tangible presence. This triangulated approach not only confirms Lowenthal's (2015) assertion that monuments materialize collective memory but also advances the concept of *pedagogical materiality* the Tower's unique capacity to make educational ideals viscerally present in campus life, as captured in one administrator's observation: "*It doesn't just represent excellence; it demands it through its very presence.*"

The conservation challenges identified from coastal degradation to shifting symbolic interpretations highlight the need for interdisciplinary stewardship, reflecting broader concerns in heritage preservation. Future research could explore longitudinal reception studies, comparative analyses of Ghanaian academic monuments, or digital preservation methods to capture the monument's material-semiotic complexity.

Ultimately, this study underscores the importance of preserving such educational heritage as a vital repository of institutional memory and aspirational identity. The Tower of Excellence emerges not as a static relic but as a *living monument* one that continuously shapes, and is shaped by, the university community. By documenting its multifaceted role, this research offers a framework for how academic institutions can materialize their highest ideals, ensuring their legacy endures in both form and meaning.

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