

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**CLOTHING PREFERENCE AND PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR OF
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE BLUECREST UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE**



MASTER OF EDUCATION

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UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

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UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE BLUECREST UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE**



**A dissertation in the Department of Clothing and Textiles,
A dissertation in the Department of Clothing and Textiles,
Faculty of Home Economics Education, submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Education
(Home Economics)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

JULY, 2021

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Matilda Tawiah, hereby declare that with the exception of the references to other people's work, this research work is the outcome of my own efforts and that, neither in whole nor part has been presented anywhere for the award of a degree. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

Signature:

Date:

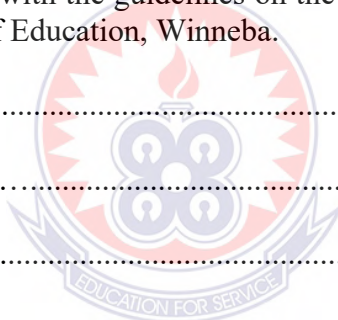
Supervisor's Declaration

I, hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this research work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on the supervision of research work laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Supervisor's Name:.....

Signature:

Date:



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my dearly sister and children.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Ms. Rosemary Quarcoo for always making time out of her busy schedules to guide me in the right direction. Your selfless approach in supervising me can never go unnoticed. It is with great pride and humility that I say thank you, and God bless you.

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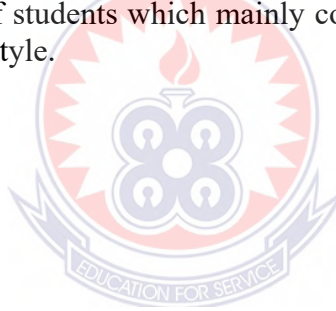
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the clothing preference and purchasing behaviour of undergraduate students of Blue Crest University College. This was a descriptive cross-sectional study involving 111 undergraduate students from the Blue Crest University College in Accra. A convenience sampling method was used to sample participants for the study using a close ended questionnaire. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed using SPSS. The findings show that the physical factors that influence the clothing preference of the students included the fitting nature of the cloth, the ease with which the cloth can be worn, the climatic conditions in the environment, the colour of the cloth and the fabric which the clothing is made up of the psychological factors influencing the clothing preference of the students included cultural factors, the role of the students in society, the peer influence around the students and the ability of the cloth to boost their self-confidence and the ability of the cloth to enhance the self-image of the students. Majority of the students noted that they vary their clothing preference depending on the amount of money that they receive. The study was conducted among the students of Blue Crest College in Ghana. The targeted population consists of all the undergraduate fashion students. According to the data from the registry of the Blue Crest University College, there were a total of 257 students in the 2021/2022 academic year. The researcher recommends that designers in the clothing industry in Ghana need to consider the factors that influence the clothing preference of students which mainly consists of price as well the perfect blend of practicality and style.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

“Fashion today has become phenomenal with its continuous changing trend which is commonly referred to as fad” (Lizák & Mojumdar, 2015). “In most cultures, clothing was introduced as a method of protecting the human body from extreme weather conditions such as strong winds, intense heat, cold and precipitation” (Larsen, 2011). People also wear clothes for functional as well as social reasons. Apart from the practical function of putting on a piece of garment above the skin, wearing clothes also carries specific cultural and social meanings. According to Riungu (2009), in the past, the manner of clothing has been used to differentiate between the elites and non-elites as well as males and females. In a similar manner, today clothing may be used to distinguish between those of low socio-economic status and those of high socio-economic status (Ma, H, Cheng W, Fang F., Hsu, C.& Lin, C. 2014). Dressing expectations relate to people's psychological and socio-economic backgrounds within a given community. The elements of cultural identity and socialization may be altered from time to time due to various influences from the surrounding environment. Such influences include mass media, changes in dress fashion and style, among others (Clifford Meesua Sibani 2018).

According to Azuah (2011), Pope Benedict XVI in the Catholic Standard 1st August, 2010, issue entreated parents, teachers, and the ecclesial community to educate children and young people to be selective and develop a critical attitude, cultivating a taste for what is aesthetically and morally valid. This critical attitude is required in

making clothing preferences (Kordek-Khalil, de Rosset, A & Rutkowski, P. 2020). Clothing and appearance allow others to formulate opinions or derive various cues including personal information about the wearer. The mode of dressing tells people who the individual is. Personal and social values are communicated through one's choice of clothing and appearance, and the manner in which an individual clothing expresses personal values (Kim, C., Srimukhi, P., Lee, J., Fleischmann, S., Aslan, M., & Presser, V. 2017). Cultural considerations are key determinants to one's clothing preference therefore, one's clothing preference depicts the individual's culture. An example is the Ghanaian culture which encourages conservative and decent clothing.

Previous studies on reasons for wearing clothes by the early researchers propounded a theory which brought a deeper meaning to the benefits of clothing, and dressing behaviour of youth. Ryan M. (1966) and Kefgen M. (1986) observed these four theories. The first theory was the biblical one of modesty. Clothes were worn to cover nakedness and shame. Covering a person's body according to the code of decency of that person's society, dictates the proper way of covering the body for social acceptance. However, this theory has been disputed on the grounds that modesty varies with different cultures. A part of the body deemed worthy of coverage may be exposed by another culture without shame. Whatever amount of clothing is in general use in a given culture seems modest to the people in that culture while any subtraction from the customary amount is felt to be immodest.

Another reason people wear clothes is for adornment. Beauty creates a positive reaction in the viewer. This view is supported by psychologists who believe that beauty is essential to human life. Decorative clothing makes one more attractive and

confident. Throughout history, decorative adornment can be found in various cultures. The mode of beauty varies from culture to culture and from person to person according to the beliefs of the individuals.

We also wear clothes for identification or psychological needs. Identification primarily refers to the process of establishing who someone is or what something is. Uniforms are one of the ways of identifying a group of people, be it students or an army of soldiers. Uniforms can also be done through the usage of badges, emblems, patches etc. Ceremonial garments are also another form of identification. White gowns are used to identify the bride from the bridesmaids. Religious leaders are identified by the cassocks they wear in their neck. Clothes are also used to indicate positions of authority and order of hierarchy. (Medvedev 2021)

The final theory of the origin of clothing is its means of aesthetic expression. This theory has been called the decoration or ornamentation theory where people prove their status through clothes and for that matter fashion (Łapka., Furmański, P., & Wiśniewski, T. S. 2016). A combination of these four theories shows that clothing preferences are determined by psychological, physical, economic, and socio-cultural factors.

According to Frings (1991) "...buying motives vary from consumer to consumer and from day to day. They include the desire to be fashionable, attractive, impress others, be accepted by friends, peer groups or colleagues and fulfill an emotional need- new clothes often give a feeling of security and confidence".

In his view, criteria used by consumers for fashion selection include colour, which is usually the first aspect of a garment or accessory to which consumers respond. The texture or surface interest of a garment or accessory and style are the elements that define a style as they include lines, silhouette and details. Practical considerations include price, where the consumer evaluates the total worth of all the fashion appeal aspects of a garment or accessory and their relationship to retail price and their own budget (Wang T.Y. 2010). Fitting is a crucial step in consumers' selection of a garment. Comfort is also one of the most important factors to consider. The garment must have the ability to retain moisture and to keep the wearer at ease whether warm or cool. "Appropriateness, which is the suitability or acceptability for a specific occasion or need, fabric performance, care and workmanship, quality of construction, stitching, or finishing" (Frings, 1991). Frings (1991) further states that brands are a manufacturer's means of product identification. It is based on these factors that a study was conducted to find the factors that influence the clothing preference and purchasing behaviour of the undergraduate students of Bluecrest College.

1.1 Problem Statement

The Ghanaian culture prescribes that clothing choices are to be crafted with respect to the cultural values of the particular society. However, students have lost this very important factor of womanhood and the respect they used to command in society; they would rather follow the dictate of fashion and the desire to stand out among peers. French, Wall and Mitchell (2010) provided evidence that female students with relatively low purchasing power were willing to spend a considerably high amount of money on clothes and hair, even at the expense of their education.

It has also been observed that students are particularly bedeviled with all kinds of clothing (Kim et al., 2017). Most girls go bare, exposing their sensitive parts which include their breasts and navels among others. It appears that in order to be fashionable, one has to be half-nude, dressed in sleeveless or see-through tops without undergarments. Seductive dressing thus has profound negative effects on both students and lecturers alike as some can hardly concentrate on their academic work under such circumstances (Azuah, 2011). Therefore, this study endeavoured to determine factors influencing clothing preference and purchasing behaviour of undergraduate students of Bluecrest University College, Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the clothing preference and purchasing behaviour of undergraduate students of Bluecrest University College.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is consequential to three main domains. Firstly, the findings of this study would enlighten owners and clothes dealers with the right clothes to stock their shops, in order to attract the right customers and consumers. Furthermore, the findings of this study would also aid clothing designers in determining specific clothing styles that would mould to the needs and preference of the female and right attitude to dressing. The results would contribute significantly to research literature for scholarly work on the subject of preference and purchasing behaviour of students.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objective of the study were;

- to establish the demographic characteristics of the students
- to determine physical characteristics of body types that influenced clothing selection and practices of the students
- to identify psychosocial factors that influences clothing selection and practices of the students
- to identify the economic factors that influenced the clothing selection and practice of the students

1.5 Research Questions

- 1 What are the demographic characteristics of the students?
- 2 Which physical characteristics of body types influenced clothing selection and practices of the students?
- 3 Which psychosocial factors influence clothing selection and practices of the students?
- 4 Which economic factors influenced the preferences of the students?

1.6 Limitations

The study was conducted among undergraduate students of the Blue crest University College. Thus, the results of study may not be generalized to students in other universities in Ghana and beyond.

1.7 Delimitation

The research was restricted to undergraduate students of the Blue crest University College. In addition, the study was focused on the physical, economic and psychosocial factors that influence clothing preferences of the students.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Preferences: Feeling of liking or wanting one person or thing more than another person or thing.

Clothes: They are the things that people wear, such as shirts, coats, trousers, and dresses.

Factors: A circumstance, fact, or influence that contributes to a result

Economic: A set of financial factors that influences clothing preferences

Physical characteristics: These are defining traits or features about a person's body. They are aspects that are visually apparent to the observer.

Psychosocial: It refers to a blend of psychological and social factors.

Psychological: Include individual-level processes and meanings that influence mental states.

Social: These are the effects of people and groups influencing each other through culture and subculture, social class, reference groups as well as family.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This is a five-chapter study. Chapter 1 is the general introduction, which looks at the background to the study, the objectives of the study and the statement of the problem. It also briefly looks at the research questions, scope, limitations, and organization of the study. Chapter 2 is the literature review, which analyses literature according to the research questions used in the study. Chapter 3 is the methodology. It explains the research design, gives details about the population, sample and sampling procedures

used in the study. In addition to these, it explains the research instruments, methods of data collection and the corresponding data analysis plan. Chapter 4 is the presentation, analysis and discussion of the data. Chapter 5 presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations for the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

According to Creswell (2015) “literature review provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study as well as a benchmark for comparing the results with other findings”. The literature review in this study is under the following sub-themes:

1. Theoretical framework
2. Clothing, types and functionality
3. Clothing preference
4. Factors influencing clothing preference
5. Conclusion

The literature which are reviewed below were retrieved from a variety of databases including mainstream databases such as Science direct, Ebcobhost, and Google Scholar.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Based on an extensive literature review, this study bases its theoretical framework on the following lines of thoughts: merchandize marketing and target groups, principles of visual perception, that is, figure and ground, Gestalt psychology, and principle and elements of design.

Merchandize marketing concept: The main objectives of selling strategies for fashion and clothing merchandize are two folds: 1) promotional displaying objective

and 2) institutional displaying objective (Gudarzi et al., 2015). The selling strategies to meet the first objective, such as sale/discount campaigns, focus on creating the enticing media to get customer attention. For the second objective, the selling strategies are aimed to maintain and promote corporate images and credibility as well as its products. With well-designed displays, organizational images can be promoted by the simple word-of-mouth advertising, which is the unpaid spread of a positive marketing message from person to person (Gorchakova et al., 2013).

Window display composition: The composition of window display comprises a number of relevant aspects including the design elements (i.e. an overall design, display types, surface, background, and design concept) and the merchandize information (i.e. display goal and content, and product information) (Jaimes et al., 2018). Attracting strategies for window displays can be enhanced by various design elements and principles for example using an appealing clothing mannequin, arranging appropriate light, illustrating unique features of a product, and using product-focused design.

Visual perception principles: The perception related theory, “Visual Perception”, saying that perception is initially generated from the integrated stimuli by viewing the things as a whole, and then what the mind has learnt would be taken into analysis on step by step basis to perceive figure and ground (Kahn & Davies, 2017). It is the fact that, human can selectively perceive what stimuli are of interest to them and perceive incomplete detail by integrating the missing pictures into perfect one.

Simulation Concept is derived from attempting to simulate a design. The design simulation aims to provoke people’s perception towards design work. Since one can perceive image better than text, the simulation can be used as a tool to imitate

scenarios or future situations and used to collect responding data from target groups (Kilinç, 2011)

2.3 Clothing, types and functionality

According to Gupta (2011), established clothing plays a broad array of functions. They serve for the purposes of beautification as well as protection. Functional clothing is defined as a “generic term that includes all such types of clothing or assemblies that are specifically engineered to deliver a pre-defined performance or functionality to the user” (Gupta, 2011, p.13). In order for clothing to serve its purpose, it ought to be made using specific materials or textiles. Thus, functionality of clothing is heavily influenced by the type of the clothing material or the textiles (Baytar & Ashdown, 2014). Buyukuslu et al., (2014, p.64) gave a vivid insight into functional clothing by stating that its “design and development is driven by the choice of materials, as defined by the social, psychological or physiological requirements of the user; choice of technologies as defined by desired functionality; and ergonomic considerations, assembly methods, sizing and fit”. There are two broad functional classifications of clothing; protective clothing and aesthetic clothing.

Classification and functions of clothing standard classification are used for technical textiles, such as Protech (protective textiles), Sportech (sports textiles) and Meditech (medical textiles) ,covering primarily the materials (textiles) and not usually the end product (Bonnet & McAlexander, 2013). Development of products using these materials or textiles for specific end uses technologies. When applied to apparel, the new products cover a vast and diverse realm collectively termed as ‘Functional Clothing’.

Protective functionality of clothing simply pertains to those characteristics of clothing that protect people from risks that are associated with their environments (Chen et al., 2014). Such risks are primarily occupational in nature. Protective functionality of clothing is crucial because it can significantly improve the working conditions of people as well as ensuring that preventable injuries at the workplace of employees are avoided (Chen et al., 2014). Eventually, such clothing improves the quality of life of people whilst promoting their productivity as well (Davis et al., 2017).

There are three sub-categories of protective clothing based on the agent that such clothing protects against. They include biological agents, chemical agents and radiation. Biological agents are those microorganisms that are infectious (Cruz-Cárdenas et al., 2019). A classic example of clothing that protects against biological agents are the aprons that medical doctors wear during potentially infectious procedures. Radiations are mainly observed in the industrial environment (Cruz-Cárdenas et al., 2019). Thus, industrial clothing is commonly designed to protect against radiation. Similarly, chemical agents are found in the industrial environment (Cruz-Cárdenas et al., 2019).

In furtherance, sportswear is derived from clothing. A sportswear is a type of clothing that is worn for the purposes of enhancing physical performances. They have easily become the fastest growing types of clothing. Smith (1999, p.154) reported that this increasing demand of sportswear is mainly due to “dramatic lifestyle changes, a rapidly aging population, increasing sports participation and health consciousness have created a huge demand for functional sports apparel”. Sportswear adopts innovative technology such as “temperature regulation, moisture management, stretch, odour reduction and light weight is available in the market for everyday sportswear”

(de Carvalho et al., 2013, p.19).

To the contrary, aesthetic clothing, also known as vanity clothing, is the category of functional clothes which essentially complements the body and enhances one's appearance and look. Gupta (2011) emphasized the growth in vanity clothing worldwide. Gupta (2011) further attributed this growing affinity for vanity clothing to demographic changes in the world which has resulted in people being more self-aware about their body image. People tend to resort to aesthetic clothing to make themselves look physically attractive. Unlike cosmetic surgery, aesthetic clothing is also a more convenient option for people to enhance their body image without going under the blade.

Whilst the purpose of aesthetic clothing differs from the essence of other types of functional clothing, the approaches to the design and development of aesthetic clothing is similar to the design and development methods of other functional clothing (Dos Reis & Do Freitas, 2014). Kang, Johnson and Kim (2013, p.144) noted that the concept behind aesthetic clothing is to “compress, lift or support certain body parts preferentially in order to create an artificially sculpted and perfectly shaped body”. A multifaceted mixture of preferential density, transient support, stuffing, moulding, wiring, unique seams and unique construction methods are used to attain the preferred properties (Dos Reis & Duarte Freitas, 2014).

2.4 Clothing preferences

Barquet and Balam (2015), discovered that the clothing choice of people boost their psychosocial health by means of promoting their self-image and self-concept as well as self-confidence. These same researchers demonstrated that people's choice of clothing is associated with their mood and behaviour. It appears that the category of

persons whose clothing affects their mood and attitude more is women. Women felt empowered by their clothing choices (Dos Reis & Duarte Freitas, 2014).

Clothing tends to be more useful to women who hold certain negative perceptions about their body. Trautman, Worthy and Lokken (2007) observed that women who were not pleased with their body often turned to clothing to mask the perceived shortcoming they had on their bodies. For example, women who were engaged into unhealthy eating practices would wear apparel to diminish any fats they have accumulated. Such women also avoid wearing skimpy or tight-fitting dresses. Kang, Johnson and Kim (2013) revealed that female students on university campuses incline towards selecting clothing that conceals their body weakness and gives them the confidence they need to feel about themselves and their bodies.

According to Barquet and Balam (2015), also supported other findings that clothing has the ability to make people sure of their abilities. Gbadamosi (2012) added that climatic conditions, social and individual dynamics, and creed also influence clothing choices and selection behaviour among female students.

2.5 Factors influencing clothing preferences

The factors that influence clothing preference are grouped under the following sub-headings: psychosocial factors; physical factors; and economic factors.

2.5.1 Psychosocial factors

The psychosocial factors influencing clothing preferences include three broad categories of factors. These are social factors, psychological factors, and brands.

2.5.1.1 Social factors

Research on the concept of fashion trends produced consistent observations over the period that fashion trends come and go (Dos Reis & Duarte Freitas, 2014; Du, C., Li, B., Yu, W., Liu, H., Li, C., & Yao, R. (2019); Fisher, K. A., Barile, J. P., Guerin, R. J., Vanden Esschert, K. L., Jeffers, A., Tian, L. H., Garcia-Williams, A., Gurbaxani, B., Thompson, W. W., & Prue, C. E). This phenomenon is known as a fashion fad. Others term it as a fashion craze. The world is a constantly changing universe. And this evolution tends to conform to underlying belief systems and values of society. As a result, fashion is not only what people choose to wear or not, fashion is actually the expression of the cultural identities of a group of people within a particular period of time. In Tanzania, almost 80% of undergraduate students who were sampled noted that their culture and community beliefs influence their clothing choices (Zemba Zemba, 2017).

The fact that a particular fashion trend is limited to the scope of a specific time brings about the intriguing case of “social agenda of fashion trends” (Geng et al., 2010). This concept has it that fashion trends reflect the lifestyle choices and attitude of a particular group of people who are living at a particular location within a particular time frame. In summary, fashion trends are a direct product of the fundamental values in society as well as the feelings and inclinations of individuals within the given society.

A study conducted by Dzrmedo (2009, p.156), reveals that, the preference of a particular dressing code and its body adornment over another, is “partly influenced by technology, values, morals, rituals as well as aesthetic and symbolism of the traditional practices in an area every culture is defined by their ways of dressing and

their way of living also, their customs and climate are the contributing factors responsible for the stability and code of dressing”.

Culture is taken to mean a social occurrence that recognises and links an individual to a society who have faith in one philosophy that projects throughout their behaviour and the way of their lives such as clothing, food and traditions and customs. Culture gives the locals a characteristic uniqueness; this distinctiveness can be observed through clothing and values and principles, decency or otherwise (Dzramedo, 2009).

Danso et al., (2019) disclosed that the majority of the clothing in Africa is crafted with respect to their cultural values. The culture in Africa prescribes that clothes are designed to have appealing, useful and ethical values and they also have typical symbolisms of source or emanating from the people’s principles and value system. African nations are gifted with rich customs and history which regulate their choice of clothing (Gorchakova et al., 2013).

Dutta (2011) established personality as one factor that influences cloth selection of people, including university students. Students use clothing as an avenue to project their social roles and values (Chen, X., Li, F., Zhao, Q., & Quan, L. 2014). Students believe that what they wear reflects their personality among their peers. Furthermore, some students were of the view that their clothing preferences distinguishes them from students in lower levels of education, thus making lecturers and their peers accord them the appropriate respect and necessary support (Du, C., Li, B., Yu, W., Liu, H., Li, C., & Yao, R. 2019).

In addition, some students can be unique in the sense that many of them are family people and important leaders within their circle. And choice of clothing enables these

sets of students to communicate their family roles as well as their status in the community (Yang & Huang, 2011). In a like manner, about three-quarters of students sampled in Bangladesh noted that they wore clothes in order to maintain their “self-respect” (Islam et al., 2017a).

The article goes on to establish that, the single students prefer clothes with bright colours which reflect enthusiasm, cheerfulness, but because such colours show the students off as being responsible (Wetmore et al., 2015). Peer influence is another factor that determines the clothing preference of students. About half of students sampled from a Turkish university revealed that their choice of clothing was based on the recommendation or trends among their peers (Ozturk & Karakas, 2016). Meanwhile, only 9% of students from the University of Ghana, Legon, noted that their peers influenced their clothing preference (Ofori et al., 2014).

Also, some students tend to depict their creativity by means of their clothing preferences. Take for instance, students who are “fashionistas” tend to take various fabrics in varying colours and blend them together to make a fashion statement. Such students typically vary their dressing style often (Hsu, 2013).

2.5.2.1 Psychological factors

Kodzoman (2019) opined that the mental identity of people significantly influences their preferences when it comes to clothing. Clothing is a critical aspect of one’s personality in the sense that it can be used to transform one’s physical outlook as well as boosting one’s self-identity. Clothing can communicate one’s ethos and principles, posture and frame of mind. It recognized the importance of body image in relation to clothing and included a body image dimension in the Proximity of Clothing to Self-scale. The study also revealed that body image may affect clothing behaviour and

clothing may affect body image and self-feelings. Thus, how we perceive our bodies can affect how we use clothing.

Findings in the study of Asare, Ibrahim and Kwesi (2016) showed that the fundamental manner in which people perceive themselves underscores their very self-identity. These mental perceptions include “self-esteem, body image and body dissatisfaction” (Asare, Ibrahim & Kwesi, 2016, p.46). Self-esteem primarily refers to the overall manner in which an individual views his or herself. It could either be positive or negative. On the other hand, body image is the manner in which an individual views his or her physical outlook. Body image includes both emotional and intellectual perception of oneself (Thompson & Van den Berg, 2002). In the United States of America, about half of the students in a College of Education, Alabama, observed that they wore clothes that boosted their self-confidence and self-esteem (Barquet & Balam, 2015).

Barker and Galambos (2003) defined body dissatisfaction as the manner in which the individual judges the attractiveness of his or her body. Take for instance, an individual could feel that their body is either attractive or unattractive, and this feeling presents body dissatisfaction. A study by Riungu, (2009, p.14) disclosed that the self-concept is “about how the individual perceives his or her abilities, be it weakness, personal character, personal worth, appearance and attractiveness in relation to himself and other people ". It is against this background that people use clothing as a medium for expressing their self-concept.

2.5.3.1 Brand

Nordquist (2019) referred to a brand as a form of a sign that gives acclaim to the originator of a specific piece of work. So in clothing, a brand is the signature of a

cloth which certifies that the particular cloth is owned by an individual or a firm. Thus, a brand in clothing works to help in identifying the source of a particular fabric or garment as well as in helping to differentiate between an original piece of fabric or garment and a fake one. Brands therefore play crucial roles in the clothing choices of people as they enable consumers to feel affiliated to the designer of the work of art that they wear (Wetmore et al., 2015).

A study done by Isik and Yasar (2015) states that an organization's brand image can be as important as the goods or services it produces. A strong brand image is a powerful asset. A recognized and trusted brand identity makes people confident that the organization is dependable, developing a corporate brand is important because a positive brand image will give consumers, and other interested stakeholders, confidence about the full range of products and activities associated with a particular company. Therefore, many youth in our time do their best to associate themselves with one brand or the other, just to stand out among his or her peers. Similarly, a large-scale survey, sampling college students across the United States of America, revealed that almost all of the students clearly established that the brand of the designer is important to them in making their clothing choices (Su & Chang, 2018).

Isik and Yasar (2015) stated that consumers will often choose a brand that they consider similar to their self-image. With this idea, an individual basis will try to reflect his or her own identity through choice. When part of a larger social group, consumer choices tend to converge to a certain pattern thus forming the basics of an individual social identity (Cătălin, Andreea, 2014).

Isik and Yasar (2015) stated that, in most cases, Brand preference is regarded as a major key factor to consumers decision making, In establishing brand preference,

consumers often compare and rank other brands by focusing on their exclusivity, as to compare to a brands that a consumer would consider purchasing in the near future (Jin & Weber, 2013). Also, customer's review has a positive effect on establishing a positive effect on brand and consumer preferences (Güngör & Bilgin, 2011).

Several brands exist worldwide, and in this session, some of the very top brands in the world are highlighted below. The Armani brand, named after its originator, Giorgio Armani is one of the world's most popular brands. It is located in Italy, and it provides a range of wearables as well as perfumes. The brand is estimated to be worth \$3.1bn (Modi & Modi, 2020). Similar to Armani, House of Versace, simply known as Versace is another Italian fashion line. Versace has grown from an infant brand in 1978 to a mammoth firm which is estimated to possess a brand value of \$5.5bn. Gucci is known mainly for its luxurious designs featuring some of the most exotic leather materials. The brand is worth over \$12, and it is the brainchild of an Italian designer. One of the early Italian fashion houses was Prada. Established in 1913, Prada remains relevant in the fashion world of today. The company transformed from a fashion store into a major player in the fashion world, valuing over \$5bn as well. This impressive collection of Italy originated brands suggests that Italy is a leader in the fashion world (Pavão et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, Burberry has had to combat dwindling fortunes in the early part of the 21st century to maintain its position as one of the go-to fashion brands in the world (Thomassey, 2010). Founded in 1856 by Thomas Burberry, this fashion behemoth has been one of the mainstays in the industry for centuries (Vinokurov et al., 2010). But it had to resort to aggressive innovations in design in the 2000s to revive its failing shares.

One brand that has become known for women clothing is Coco Chanel. This is because the \$6.8bn rated company has made women its focus, accordingly, spending huge amounts of resources into dressing women in a stylistic and authoritative manner (Ventosa et al., 2012). The brand has grown beyond a fashion giant over the years, and has become a model of women empowerment. In addition, Louis Vuitton is a fashion brand that is associated with a wide range of fashion products and accessories (Ueland et al., 2019). LV produces dresses, shoes, watches, jewellery, and other fashion accessories.

2.6 Physical factors

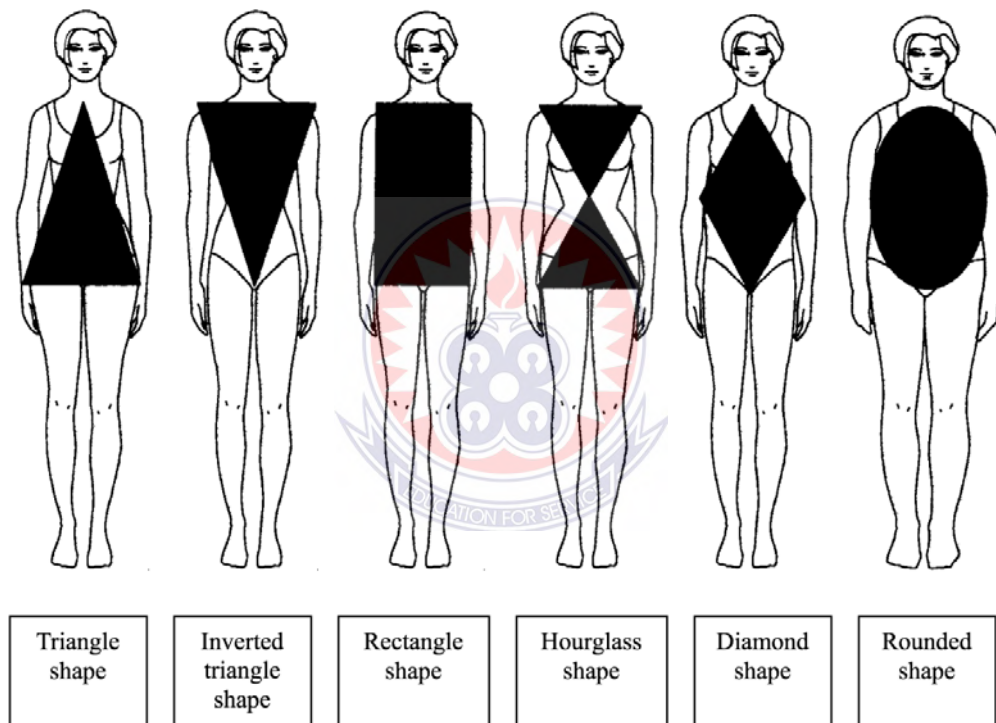
Physical factors that influence clothing preferences include physical characteristics of the individual, colour and climatic conditions.

2.6.1 Physical characteristics

People come in various sizes and shapes; people could be fat or lean or thin and tall or short. The various shapes include apple, rectangular, hourglass, diamond, triangle and others. These physical sizes and shapes inform their clothing choices regardless of prevailing fashion trends (Gorchakova et al., 2013). Clothes are designed to complement the various body dimensions and shapes through two primary means; clothes can either project the appealing parts of one's shape or mask the not so appealing aspects. Short people can project their height by wearing clothes with vertical lines and designs, which create the false-reality that the clothes individual is tall. To the contrary, tall people can conceal their height by opting for clothes with horizontal or diagonal designs which makes them appear shorter (Grinevičiūtė et al., 2015).

There is not a single fits-all-size design in the fashion industry. The distinctive nature of the body shape and sizes of individuals means that the same cloth that looks impeccable on one individual can look awful on the other. For this reason, a fundamental understanding of the body size and shapes of people dictate their clothing choices. This underscores the essence of physical characteristics when it comes to clothing preferences (Grinevičiūtė et al., 2015).

The figure below illustrates various body shapes for women.



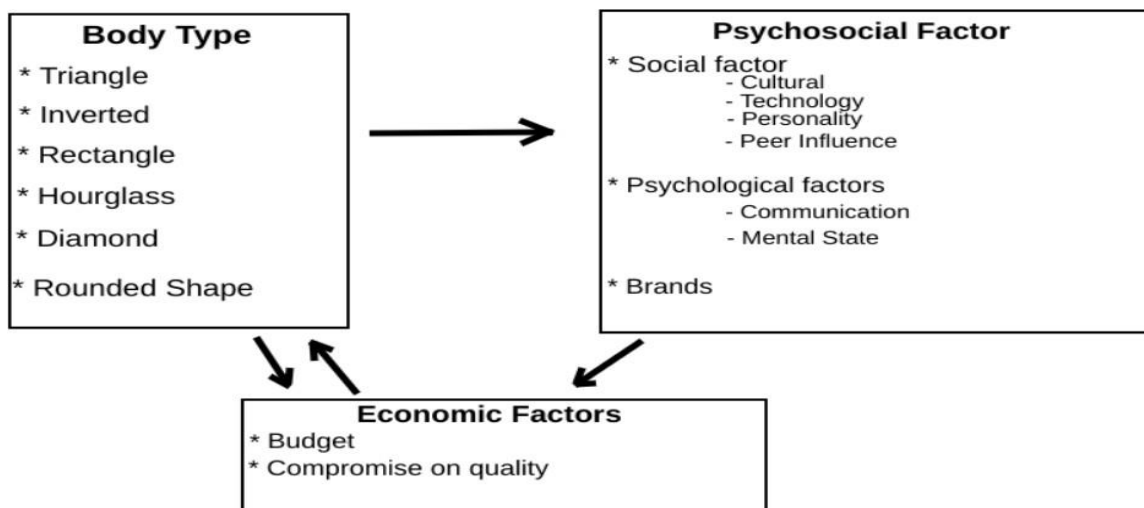
Bellatory (2012) stated that there are six women's bodies with each of these body shapes determined because of the physical characteristics of the body of an individual.

Figure types:

1. Triangle/Pear: A female with this shape has a “round, heavy bottom with a defined waist but hip size is always wider than the bust and shoulders”. In addition, small legs with a filled thigh are typical features.

2. Inverted Triangle: A woman with this shape has “broader shoulders, a large bust, narrow hips, slim legs, flat bottom”. Fat is mainly distributed in the abdomen, chest, and face.
3. Rectangle/Straight” A female with this figure has a “boyish look with small/medium bust, slender arms and legs”. There is usually a corresponding width of the waist and the hip, whilst the bottom is flat.
4. Diamond: This shape has an “undefined waist with a large and high stomach, and the female may also have a full or flat bottom”.
5. Rounded/Oval: This shape has “an overall appearance of being round especially around the waist region, the stomach are large, the hips are wide, and upper thighs are full”. Furthermore, there is either a full or flat bottom.
6. Hourglass: This is a curvy female “with the hips and bust of the same width which emphasizes a defined waist”

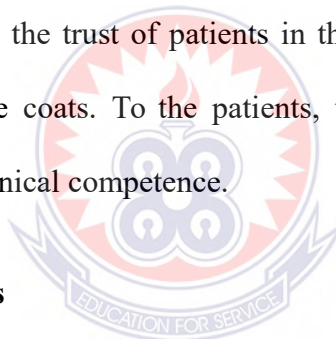
Over half of some minority students who were sampled from a university in Alabama, United States of America, indicated that they wore clothes which were fitting and tight closely to their skins (Barquet & Balam, 2015). Also, undergraduate students in the University of Delhi, India, overwhelmingly noted that they prefer outfits that look tight on them (Aggarwal & Vasundhara Verma, 2016).



2.6.2 Colour

Colour is “light, carried on wavelengths, which are absorbed by the eyes and are converted by the brain into the colours that become visible to the eye” (Kent & Groves, 2020, p.59). Colours have the ability to induce the nerve cells to produce emotional and psychological responses from the brain which consequently influences the way an individual is perceived. This ability of colour makes it one of the most important factors in making clothing choices. Adebisi (2017) colour also emphasized that colour evokes various feelings, state of mind and even cultural identities. It can also be used as a tool for communication.

The impact of colour on thoughts and emotions was demonstrated by Kodzoman (2019) who revealed that the trust of patients in their clinicians increased whenever the clinicians wore white coats. To the patients, the colour of the uniform of the physicians represented clinical competence.



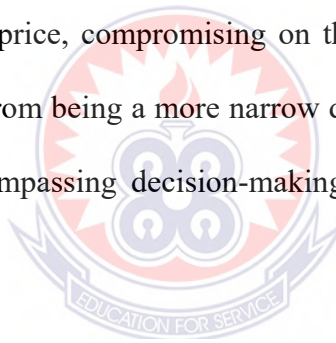
2.6.3 Climatic conditions

It appears that the primary reason for which early humans wore clothes is to cover up their bodies (Ghazy, 2019). Because clothes served, and continue to serve as protectors which shields people from heat and cold and help us in maintaining body temperature in adverse circumstances. This has made climate an important factor which influences the choice of clothing among students. During the warm season in Western Countries such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom, students in such countries mostly shopped for light dresses in order to don dresses that are consistent with the weather (Kahn & Davies, 2017; Kim et al., 2017). To the contrary, during cold seasons such as the winter, students were mostly seen wearing

thick clothing in order to protect themselves from the possible harmful effects of the weather (Kahn & Davies, 2017; Kim et al., 2017).

2.7 Economic factors

The general buying patterns of students tend to alter with respect to their economic situations. Students react to most of the change in the economic circumstances around them by changing their fashion preferences (Muniady et al., 2014). This results from a change in the levels of students' budget. Students become scared to spend and too careful with what clothes they spend on during the financial crisis. Instead of buying expensive brands, they rather spend on less affordable designs (Nadu & Nadu, 2015). Economic situations compel students to compare the prices of different clothes and select the best based on price, compromising on the quality. The whole purchasing process can be changed from being a more narrow decision-making buying behaviour to becoming an all-encompassing decision-making purchasing behaviour (Nadu & Nadu, 2015).



A study among a group of Jordanian students established that students from well-to-do homes are likely to place emphasis on brands of clothing during their shopping for garments (Al-Obaidi et al., 2020). In a similar manner, it was shown among a group of African-British students in the United Kingdom that the income of students determines the type of clothes he/she is able to purchase because income represents the change in an individual's or economy's income and shows how that change impacts the quantity and quality of clothes (Eze & Bello, 2016).

In furtherance, demonstrated that the willingness of students to pay for premium products and their corresponding ability to afford such products influences the clothing preferences of the students (Islam et al., 2017b). The authors added that the desire to afford premium brands was more common in female students than male students (Islam et al., 2017b).

Alamelu (2018) found out among undergraduate students in Nigeria that the monthly living stipend given to students by their parents/benefactors influenced the clothing preference of the students. Students who received minimal monthly allowances from their sponsors preferred clothing that is relatively cheap whilst students who had relatively higher income were more likely to purchase luxurious and trendy clothing. Another study in the Bono State of Nigeria reported that the household income of the students influence their fashion purchasing behaviour (Lawan & Zanna, 2013).

2.8 Conclusion

The literature review above explored the breadth and depth of literature on the clothing preference of students. The review showed that many factors such as climate, weather, personality, psychological factors, economic activities and others. Furthermore, brands were key determinants to the clothing choices of students. The major brands in the fashion industry were also highlighted in the literature review above. The diverse nature of the factors influencing clothing preference of students, and the limited number of studies specifically studying the factors influencing clothing choices of students gives further justification for carrying out this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methods and materials involved in the research process. The research methodology is the framework that guides the study (Wahyuni, 2012), the research methodology is the technical framework which guides the study. The chapter explains the design of the research, the research approach, target population, sampling, and determination of the sample size, the sampling frame, and the sampling techniques. The chapter ends with a discussion on the description of the mode of data collection adopted in the study and the analysis of data as well as ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

The research design represents the specific methodological template of the study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2018). The research design entails research plans, choices of the study, and the timelines of the investigation. A quantitative method was used in this study. According to Creswell (2013), the quantitative research method primarily deals with quantifying relationships that exist between the various variables under study through the use of statistical measures, average, frequency and others. Quantitative method was used in the undertaking of the study since quantitative research is usually associated with a deductive approach, where the focus is on using data to test theory. The reason for choosing quantitative research for this study was due to the fact that it provided the avenue to collect and analyse large data in a standardized manner.

The specific subset of the quantitative method that was used in this study is the descriptive cross-sectional design. Descriptive cross-sectional study is an “observational study design that examines methodically, data collected from a population or a representative sample at a particular point in time or a defined time” (Brink, 2013, p.15).

Cross-sectional studies are cost effective as compared to other types of study designs such as cohort studies. And this study was funded by the researchers, so cross-sectional study design allows the researchers to save money. This study design also meant that the study was completed within the stipulated period of time, because it enabled researchers to complete the study in a timely period (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012).

3.3. Study setting

This study was conducted among students of the Bluecrest University College of Ghana, located in Accra, Ghana. Established in the year 2000, BlueCrest College has been leading Western Africa through market-relevant education, training, and research programmes as a pioneer. The institution revolves around four pillars which form the organisational and academic structure of the institution. The four pillars: Leadership (L), Innovation (I), Technology (T), and Entrepreneurship (E) are reflected in all endeavors and activities of the institution.

3.4 Target Population

This presents the bigger pool from which sample is taken for the study (Fisher, 2010). The target population of the study consisted of all the undergraduate students of the

Bluecrest University College. According to data from the registry of the Bluecrest University College, there were a total of 257 students in the 2020/2021 academic year.

3.5 Sample Size

The Yamane (1967) simplified formula for calculation of sample sizes was used to determine the sample size for the study.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n = sample size

N = Population size (Total of students in Blue Crest University College = 257), e = Precision (standard error in this case 0.05)

$$\begin{aligned} &= \frac{257}{1 + 257(0.05)^2} \\ &= \frac{257}{1.6425} \\ &= 156.49 \end{aligned}$$



Therefore, a total of 156 students were expected to be sampled for the current study but due to COVID-19 imposed circumstances, the researcher was able to sample only 111 students.

3.6 Instrument for Data Collection

Questionnaire uses a series of written questions on a particular topic about which a respondent's opinion is sought and it could be open or close ended (Best, 2019). In this study close-ended questions were adopted.

The questionnaire was in four parts. The first part collected information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the study. The socio-demographic characteristics assessed included age, sex, marital status, religion, ethnicity, average monthly income and number of dependents. The second part of the questionnaire collected information on the physical characteristics that influences the clothing types of the respondents, whilst the third and fourth part collected information on the social and economic characteristics that affects clothing preferences of the respondents respectively.

The adoption of the closed-ended questions ensured that it was convenient for the answers to be coded and analysed (Creswell, 2013). It also made it easier for the researcher to collect the data in a fairly quick manner.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection is the “process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes” (Creswell, 2013, p.35). The data for this study was collected through face-to-face administering of the questionnaires for the study.

3.8 Sampling Procedure

A sampling procedure is “the name or other identification of the specific process by which the entities of the sample have been selected” (Ritchie et al., 2013, p.77). In broad terms, there are two types of sampling procedures; probability sampling procedure and non-probability sampling procedures.

A convenience sampling method, in which respondents were sampled by on their availability. This sampling method is a probability sampling method. The researcher entered the various classes of the students during their free periods and began the process of consenting. Students who consented then participated in the study. In addition, the researcher interacted with students during non-class hours and administered the questionnaire.

3.9 Reliability and Validity

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure and performs as it is designed to perform. And reliability estimates evaluate the stability of measures, and internal consistency of measurement instruments.

The research work was reliable as the questionnaire was drafted with the aid of the supervisor, and literature from previous research. Also, validity was ensured by adopting the standardized questionnaire which was used in other studies and then modified it to suit the purpose of the study.

3.10 Data Management

The identities of the participants were protected. The names of the participants were not written on any of the questionnaires. All the collected data was coded thus the names of the participants were not revealed. Data was entered and stored in a computer software. This computer was protected with a password known only to the researcher. Only the researcher had access to the collected data.

3.11 Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The data was coded and entered using Microsoft Excel (2018 version). Also, the entered data was cleaned using this same software. Thereafter, the data was imported into the Statistical Software for the Social Sciences (version 25) and analysed.

Descriptive statistics (mean, frequencies and percentages) were used to determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, the factors influencing the clothing characteristics of the respondents, as well as the clothing preference of the respondents. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to establish the relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their clothing preferences.

3.12 Ethical Procedures

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Blue crest University College. The consent of the respondents was also sought. The respondents were informed that their rights were guaranteed and protected if they agreed to be included in the study and that participation in the study was voluntary. The purpose of the study and procedure of the research was made known to the respondents via the Google Forms. Furthermore, anonymity of the respondents was ensured. The names of the respondents were not collected, instead, codes were assigned. This ensured that the names of the respondents were not revealed at any stage during this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of the results of the study. The results are presented with respect to the objectives of the study. These include the demographic characteristics of the participants, the physical factors influencing the clothing preference of the participants, the psychosocial factors influencing the clothing preference of the participants, and the economic factors influencing the clothing preference of the participants. The chapter also includes the discussion of the results. The results are presented in charts, and tables.

4.2 Demographic characteristics of the participants

The demographic characteristics which were assessed in the study include gender, age in years, ethnicity, religion, marital status, number of dependents, average monthly income (GHC), and means of transportation to campus (Table 1.0).

Table 4.1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants

Characteristics	Frequency (N=111)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	98	88.3
Male	13	11.7
Age (years)		
10 to 19	13	11.7
20 to 29	65	58.6
30 to 39	19	17.1
40 to 49	14	12.6
Ethnicity		
Akan	44	39.6
Ewe	32	28.8
Ga-Adangbe	13	11.7
Guan	2	1.8
Gurunsi	1	0.9
Konkomba	1	0.9
Mamprusi	2	1.8
Others	16	14.4
Religion		
Christian	103	92.8
Muslim	6	5.4
No specific religion	1	0.9
Traditionalist	1	0.9
Marital status		
Divorced	2	1.8
Married	20	18.0
Single	89	80.2
Number of dependents		
1 to 2	48	43.2
3 to 5	11	9.9
6 or more	2	1.8
None	50	45.0
Average monthly income (GHC)		
1,000 to 1999	20	18.0
2,000 to 2,999	6	5.4
3,000 to 3,999	3	2.7
4,000 to 4999	1	0.9
5,000 and above	1	0.9
Less than 1,000	80	73.0
Means of transportation to campus		
Foot	19	17.1
Personal vehicle	9	8.1
Public transport	57	51.4
Taxi	18	16.2
Uber	8	7.2

Ninety-eight (88.3%) representing most of the participants were females whilst 13 (11.7%) of the participants were males (Table 1.0). Most of the participants, 58.6%, were between the ages of 20 to 29 years, followed by 17.7% who were within the ages of 30 to 39 years, and 11.7% who were within the ages of 10 to 19 years. In addition, most of the participants, 39.6%, belonged to the Akan ethnic group, and 28.8% of the participants were Ewes. In terms of religion, 103 (92.8%) of the participants were Christians, 6 (5.4%) were Muslims, and 1 (0.9%) were traditionalists.

Eighty-nine (80.2%) of the participants were single, 20 (18.0%) were married and 2 (1.8%) were divorced. Also, 50 (45.0%) of the participants did not have any dependents but 48 (43.2%) had 1 to 2 dependents. Most of the participants, 73.0%, had an average monthly income less than GHC1,000.00 and only 0.9% of the participants had an average monthly income worth over GHC5,000.00. Regarding means of transportation to campus, 57 (51.4%) of the participants used public transport, 19 (17.1%) walked to campus, 18 (16.2%) used taxis, 9 (8.1%) used personal vehicles, and 8 (7.2%) used Uber (Table 1.0).

4.3 Clothing preference of the participants

The clothing preference of the participants was measured in three domains: preferred cloth; favourite cloth; and commonly bought cloth.

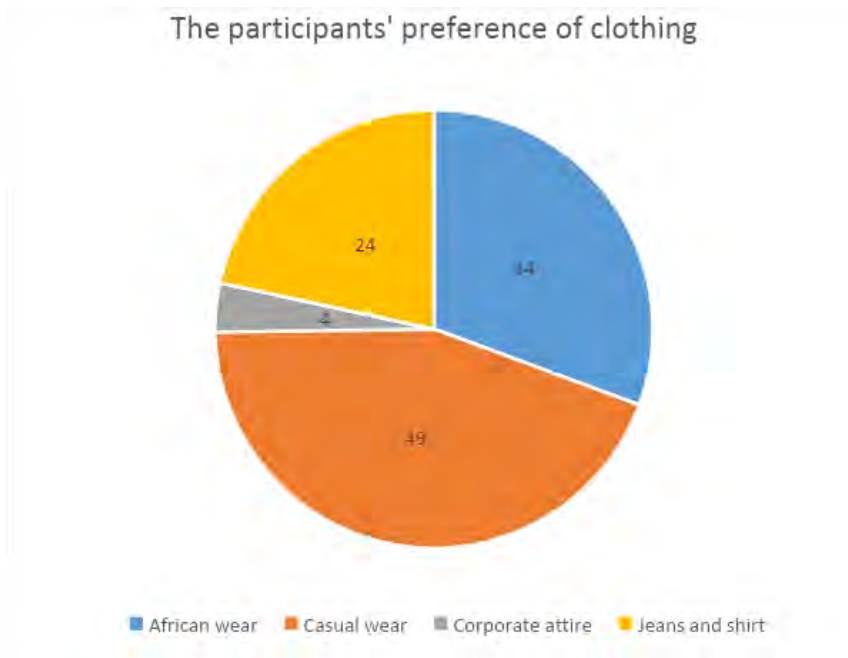


Figure 4.1: Participants' preference of clothing

The participants' preference of clothing in ascending order of increasing are corporate attire (4), jeans and shirt (24), African wear (34), and casual wear (49) (Figure 1.0).

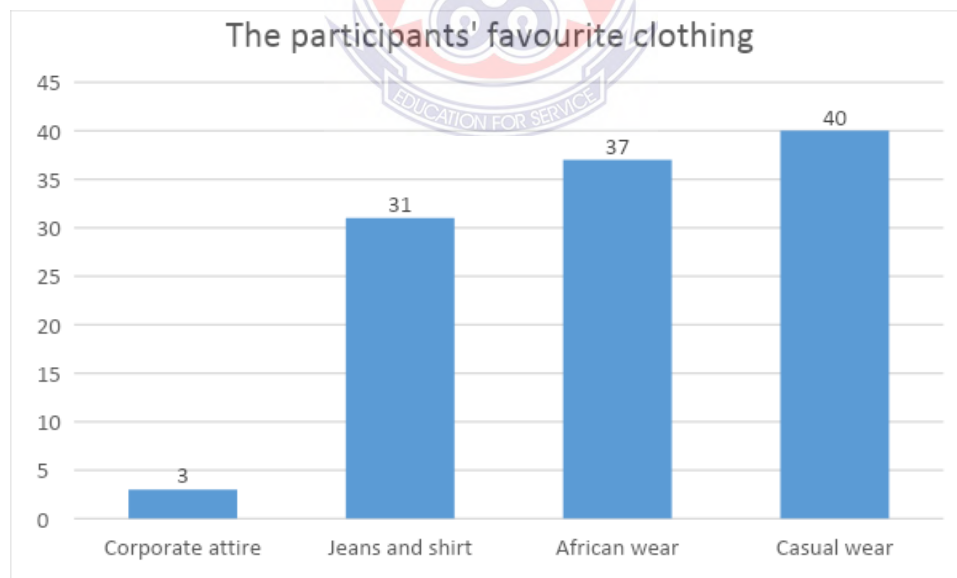


Figure 4.2: Participants' clothing preference

The participants' favourite clothing in ascending order of increasing are corporate attire (3), jeans and shirt (31), African wear (37), and casual wear (40) (Figure 2.0).



Figure 4.3: Places from which participants bought their clothing

In ascending order of increasing, the place from which participants bought their clothes were street hawkers (1), boutiques (19), shops (24) and open markets (67) (Figure 3.0).

4.4 Physical factors influencing clothing preference of the students

The physical factors influencing clothing preference of the students are in Table 1.0. In total, eight physical factors were assessed in this study. The factors assessed included the fitting nature of the clothes, the length of the clothes, the colour of the clothes, the climatic conditions within the environment, the number of pieces the cloth is made up of, and the ease of wearing the cloth.

Table 4.1: Physical characteristics influencing clothing preference of the students

Statement	Frequency (n=111)	Percentage (%)
I prefer fitting clothes		
Agree	25	22.5%
Disagree	7	6.3%
Neutral	43	38.7%
Strongly agree	30	27.0%
Strongly disagree	6	5.4%
I prefer long dresses		
Agree	27	24.3%
Disagree	15	13.5%
Neutral	49	44.1%
Strongly agree	14	12.6%
I prefer short dresses		
Agree	27	24.3%
Disagree	20	18.0%
Neutral	37	33.3%
Strongly agree	9	8.1%
Strongly disagree	18	16.2%
I prefer one-piece clothes		
Agree	21	18.9%
Disagree	29	26.1%
Neutral	45	40.5%
Strongly agree	8	7.2%
Strongly disagree	8	7.2%
My choice of clothing depends on the ease of clothing		
Agree	55	49.5%
Disagree	3	2.7%
Neutral	10	9.0%
Strongly agree	39	35.1%
Strongly disagree	4	3.6%
My preference for clothing is determined by the fabric that the clothe is made up of		
Agree	57	51.4%
Disagree	6	5.4%
Neutral	12	10.8%
Strongly agree	35	31.5%
Strongly disagree	1	0.9%
I made my choice of clothing based on the colour		
Agree	55	49.5%
Disagree	5	4.5%

Neutral	21	18.9%
Strongly agree	28	25.2%
Strongly disagree	2	1.8%
I make my choice of clothing based on the weather		
Agree	51	45.9%
Disagree	5	4.5%
Neutral	16	14.4%
Strongly agree	37	33.3%
Strongly disagree	2	1.8%

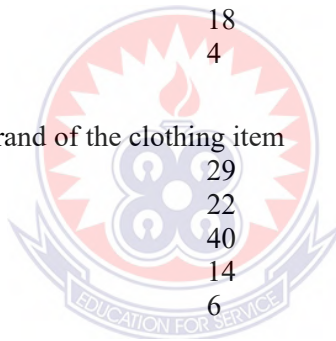
Forty-three (38.7%) representing most of the participants were in a strong agreement that they prefer fitting clothes, 49 (44.1) representing most of the participants were in a strong agreement that they prefer long dresses as well. Meanwhile, 37 (33.3%) representing most of the participants were neutral over their preference for short dresses, and 45 (40.5%) representing most of the participants were neutral over their preference for one-piece clothes. Meanwhile, 55 (49.5%) of the participants agreed that their choice of clothing depends on the ease of the clothing, and 57 (51.4%) were also in agreement that their preference for clothing is determined by the fabric that the cloth is made up of. A further 55 (49.5%) of the participants indicated an agreement that their choice of clothing was based on colour, and 51 (45.9%) indicated an agreement that their choice of clothing was based on the weather.

4.5 Psychological factors influencing clothing preference of the students

The psychological factors influencing clothing preference of the students are presented in Table 3.0. Ten psychological factors including the ability of the cloth to boost the self-image and self-confidence of the students, the extent to which eh clothing places emphasis on the body figure of the students, brand of the clothing, and impact of cultural beliefs of the students on their clothing preference. In addition, peer influence, the role of the students in society and the role of the students in their family.

Table 4.2: Psychological factors influencing clothing preference of the students

Statement	Frequency (N=111)	Percentage (%)
I wear clothes which boost my self-confidence		
Agree	36	32.4%
Neutral	6	5.4%
Strongly agree	66	59.5%
Strongly disagree	3	2.7%
I prefer clothes in which emphasis is made figure		
Agree	50	45.0%
Disagree	4	3.6%
Neutral	32	28.8%
Strongly agree	16	14.4%
Strongly disagree	9	8.1%
My purchasing decision on clothes is based on fashion trends		
Agree	44	39.6%
Disagree	16	14.4%
Neutral	29	26.1%
Strongly agree	18	16.2%
Strongly disagree	4	3.6%
I buy clothes based on the brand of the clothing item		
Agree	29	26.1%
Disagree	22	19.8%
Neutral	40	36.0%
Strongly agree	14	12.6%
Strongly disagree	6	5.4%
I prefer clothes which give me good self-esteem		
Agree	38	34.2%
Disagree	2	1.8%
Neutral	2	1.8%
Strongly agree	66	59.5%
Strongly disagree	3	2.7%
I wear clothes that reflect my cultural beliefs		
Agree	41	36.9%
Disagree	14	12.6%
Neutral	38	34.2%
Strongly agree	10	9.0%
Strongly disagree	8	7.2%
My peers influence my clothes		
Agree	13	11.7%



Disagree	39	35.1%
Neutral	10	9.0%
Strongly agree	10	9.0%
Strongly disagree	39	35.1%
I wear clothes which reflect my status in society		
Agree	40	36.0%
Disagree	18	16.2%
Neutral	32	28.8%
Strongly agree	14	12.6%
Strongly disagree	7	6.3%
I wear clothes which reflect my role in the family		
Agree	24	21.6%
Disagree	27	24.3%
Neutral	44	39.6%
Strongly agree	9	8.1%
Strongly disagree	7	6.3%

Most of the participants, 59.5%, were in a strong agreement that they wear clothes which boost their self-confidence, 45.0% of the participants agreed that they prefer clothes which make emphasis on their figures, and 39.6% of the participants were agreed that their decision on clothes is based on fashion trends (Table 3.0). In addition, 40 (36.0%) of the participants were neutral on the influence of the brand of the cloth item, 66 (59.5%) were in a strong agreement that they prefer clothes which give them good self-esteem, 41 (36.9%) were in agreement that they wear clothes that reflect their cultural beliefs, and 40 (36.0%) of the participants were agreed that they wear clothes that reflect their status in society. However, 39 (35.1%) of the participants were in a strong disagreement that their peers influence their clothes, and 44 (39.6%) were neutral that they wear clothes which reflect their role in their family (Table 3.0).

4.6 The economic factors that influence clothing selection and practices of the students

This study assessed seven economic factors which influence the clothing decision of students. The results are presented in Table 4.0.

Table 4.3: Economic factors that influence clothing selection and practices of the students

Statement	Frequency (N=111)	Percentage (%)
I buy second-hand clothes		
Agree	34	30.6%
Disagree	18	16.2%
Neutral	35	31.5%
Strongly agree	13	11.7%
Strongly disagree	11	9.9%
I purchase only new clothes		
Agree	30	27.0%
Disagree	22	19.8%
Neutral	35	31.5%
Strongly agree	16	14.4%
Strongly disagree	8	7.2%
I buy expensive clothes		
Agree	12	10.8%
Disagree	29	26.1%
Neutral	47	42.3%
Strongly agree	9	8.1%
Strongly disagree	14	12.6%
I buy clothes which cost moderately		
Agree	4	3.6%
Disagree	30	27.0%
Neutral	17	15.3%
Strongly agree	1	0.9%
Strongly disagree	4	3.6%
I vary my choice of clothe depending on my prevailing financial state		
Agree	62	55.9%
Disagree	6	5.4%
Neutral	16	14.4%
Strongly agree	24	21.6%
Strongly disagree	3	2.7%
I buy clothes often (at least once a month)		
Agree	32	28.8%
Disagree	34	30.6%

Neutral	24	21.6%
Strongly agree	14	12.6%
Strongly disagree	7	6.3%
I buy clothes based on the amount of money my parents/benefactors give to me		
Agree	38	34.2%
Disagree	20	18.0%
Neutral	17	15.3%
Strongly agree	28	25.2%
Strongly disagree	8	7.2%

Most of the participants, 31.5%, were each neutral when asked about buying second-hand cloth as well as purchasing only new clothes (Table 4.0). Another 47 (42.3%) of the participants were neutral when asked about buying expensive clothes. However, 30 (27.0%) of the participants disagreed that they bought clothes which were moderate in cost. Also, 62 (55.9%) of the participants agreed that they vary their choice of clothing depending on their prevailing financial state. And 38 (34.2%) of the participants agreed that they buy clothes based on the amount of money their parents/benefactors give to me (Table 4.0). In terms of the frequency of buying clothes, most of the participants disagreed that they buy clothes at least once a month (Table 4.0).

4.7 Discussion of the demographic characteristics of the students

Based on the data collected, out of the 111 students, 98 of them were females. This shows that the majority of them were females. This observation could be because, traditionally, female students have taken more interest in fashion related programmes than their male counterparts. This study was conducted in an institution which has been designated for fashion, thus, the likelihood that more of the students would be females was high. In addition, most of the students were between the ages of 20 to 29

years. This is consistent with the general statistics on the age distribution of undergraduate students not only in Ghana but across the world in general.

In terms of religion, 103 of the participants were Christians, 6 of them were Muslims 1 was a traditionalist and 1 had no specific religion . In broad sense, these findings are consistent with findings from the Ghana Statistical Service (2012) which revealed that about seven out of ten Ghanaians are Christian, two out of every ten Ghanaian is a Muslim whilst the remaining 10% either belong to the indigenous religion or do not hold any religious beliefs.

In furtherance, out of 111 students, 89 of them were single. These findings on the marital status of the participants could be due to some reasons. Firstly, it could be attributed to the fact that the participants are undergraduate students. The second reason could be due to the age of the participants. The average participant in the current study was between the age group of 20 to 29 years. Meanwhile, the finding that most of the participants in the current study had no dependents could be due to the fact that most of the participants were single. “The natural and probable event that an individual could have a dependent is that the dependent is an offspring, and offspring usually result from marriage” (Ceka 2016). Perhaps, this train of thought explains the fact that over 50% of the participants did not have a dependent. Those who had dependents could represent the minority group of participants who may be responsible for the welfare of their immediate or external family members. The average monthly income in the current study was less than GHC1, 000, and this could be because the students are not employed and rely on a limited source of income.

4.8 Discussion of the physical characteristics that influence clothing selection and practices of the students

The results of this study showed that 38.7% representing most of the participants were in a strong agreement that they prefer fitting clothes. This finding is consistent with the finding of Barquet and Balam (2015) who discovered among some undergraduate students of black/Hispanic origin in Alabama, United States of America, that the students prefer fitting and tight dresses. In a similar fashion, the finding of the current study on students wearing fitting and tight dresses is consistent with a study in the University of Delhi, India, where it was revealed that the majority of the students prefer fitting clothing. The consistency between the results of the current study and results of the aforementioned studies could be attributed to globalization. Historically, fitting clothing was promulgated by the Western culture (Kinuthia et al., 2012). This culture has since found its way to other parts of the world, including Ghana, due to advancements in information and community technology which makes it possible for ideas to cross over from one culture to another with relative ease (Kaveh et al., 2015). Undergraduate students are likely to pick up such cultures because they are educated and technologically savvy. Thus, they have easy access to information and lifestyle in other jurisdictions (Kaveh et al., 2015).

In addition, it was realized in the current study that about half of the participants prefer long dresses. This finding is consistent with findings in the study of Hsu (2013) who observed among a group of students in South-western China that the students prefer to wear long dresses. The similarity between the findings in the current study and the study of Hsu (2013) could be due to similar cultural dispositions in Ghana and

South-western China where the indigenes are typically conservative in nature. The people do not wish to be seen as being promiscuous, a tag that is associated with wearing short dresses. Perhaps, this explains the findings in the current study.

To the contrary, the finding is dissimilar to the results of Barquet and Balam (2015) who realized that the majority of minority students in the United States of America prefer to wear short dresses. Differences between the cultures of Ghana and the US may explain the differences in the observations of the current finding and the study of Barquet and Balam (2015). However, this cultural difference does not seem to explain the prior proposing that students in Ghana adopted Western culture in wearing fitting clothing. It could also be that whilst students in Ghana are willing to adopt certain elements of western culture on clothing, the students are reluctant to wholly consume western culture related to dressing. This possible explanation could shed further light on the finding in the current study where about one-third of the students were neutral over their preference for short dresses.

Another finding in the current study was that the majority of the participants agreed that choice of clothing depends on the ease of the clothing. This finding is confirmed by the study of Bellatory (2012) who established that the ease of the clothing in terms of the ability of the students to wear the clothing influences the clothing preference of students. A fairly straightforward explanation could be adduced for this finding. Academic work by its nature is tedious and demanding. Students spend tons of time and energy in studying their academic materials and fulfilling other obligations. So students find clothing which is easy to wear to be handy.

In furtherance, the current study showed that over half of the students indicated that their preference for clothing is determined by the fabric that the cloth is made up of. Alamelu (2018) who observed among students in Nigeria that their clothing preference was influenced by the fabric the cloth is made up of confirms the finding in the current study. In addition, literature available on the clothing preference of students in Asia, Europe, North America, and South America established that the clothing preference of students was determined, in part, by the fabric of the clothing (Lawan & Zanna, 2013; Islam et al., 2017; Barquet & Balam 2015). These studies, combined with the current study, strongly suggest that fabric is almost a universal factor that students take into account during their clothing selection process.

A further 49.5% of the participants in the current study indicated an agreement that their choice of clothing was based on colour. Colour has long been established as a key influencing factor of clothing preference, not only among students, but also the general population (Hsu, 2013). And the finding of the current study confirms prior studies on the influencing nature of colour in shaping clothing preferences. As explained in the work of Hsu (2013), colour affords people the opening to show their mood, create impressions about their looks, and result in pleasure to a personal wardrobe. Colour belongs to a broad category in fashion known as elements of design. In addition to colour, other elements of design include space, line, texture and form (Hsu, 2013). Colour is one of the most predominant elements because it can be utilised in various ways by designers to good effect.

The current study has also shown that climatic conditions inform the clothing preference of undergraduate students. Gbadamosi (2012) who observed among

undergraduate students in Tanzania noted that the clothing preference of students is influenced by climatic conditions. This finding goes back to one of the primary objectives of clothing. Clothing serves as a form of protection against harsh weather conditions. Clothing can also allow people to express themselves during accommodating weather periods. People usually wear thick clothing during cold weather, and lighter clothing during warm weather.

4.9 Discussion of the psychological factors influencing clothing preference among the students

Most of the participants in the current study were in a strong agreement that they wear clothes which boost their self-confidence. This finding was confirmed by the Kodzoman (2019) and Barker and Galambos (2003). In the study of Barker and Galambos (2003), it was discovered among students in North America that clothing served as a confidence booster for the students as they felt more assured about themselves whenever they wore clothing that they considered complementary. Kodzoman (2019) observed among students in Britain that clothing helped them boost their self-confidence. Clothing may help students feel better about themselves because clothing is designed to accentuate the positive features of an individual whilst concealing the not so positive characteristics. This way, clothing adds extra beauty to the appearance of the students, making the students more presentable and thus boosting their image and self-confidence. The students are then able to carry themselves about in courage and authority.

A similar finding in the current study was made in another question. When asked about the impact of clothing on their self-esteem as a factor in clothing preference,

about 60% of the students in the current study gave an affirmative answer. Psychologists have established a relationship between self-esteem and self-confidence (Nadu & Nadu, 2015). As a matter of fact, these two words tend to be used interchangeably. However, the current study considered each of these two factors as separate units in order to make comparisons between the findings on the impact of self-confidence and self-esteem on the clothing preference of the students. This categorization also made the questionnaire for the study more reliable and accurate. Instead of creating a possible conflation between self-esteem and self-confidence, each of these elements were treated separately. But the similarity in the findings of the current study on each of these two elements could mean that self-esteem and self-confidence are not so distinct in relation to clothing behaviour and clothing preference of students.

Similarly, findings from the current study showed that 45.0% of the students agreed that they prefer clothes which make emphasis on their figures. This could be a way for the students to boost their self-image and self-confidence. In the study of Barker and Galambos (2003) where similar findings were made that students tend to wear clothing that lays emphasis on their body shape, the authors linked this taste for shape-appropriate clothing on part of the students to the idea that the better an outfit is suited to the figure of the wearer, the more presentable the wearer is. Subsequently, the self-image and the self-confidence of the wearer is improved upon as they feel confident in their garment.

In addition, most of the students in the current study noted that their clothing preference is influenced by fashion trends. Ofori et al., (2014) made similar findings

to the results in the current study. Ofori et al., (2014) observed among students in the University of Ghana that the students' clothing preference was influenced by fashion trends. Fashion trends make people feel they belong to a particular community. It helps bring a sense of bonding and social belonging. And this desire to belong to a social setting and feel part of their community (Ramya & Ali, 2016).

In addition, 40 (36.0%) of the participants were neutral on the influence of the brand of the cloth item. This finding is inconsistent with other research which concluded that brand plays an important role on the clothing preference of undergraduate students. Isik and Yasar (2015) discovered among the majority of students in a Turkish study that showed that the clothing preferences of the students was influenced by the brand of the cloth. In a similar study, Jin and Weber (2013) found out in a study among undergraduate students in the United Kingdom that the clothing preference of the students was influenced by the type of brand. A reason for the differences between the findings of Isik and Yasar (2015), Jin and Weber (2013) and the current study could be due to the commercial market surrounding clothing within the various contexts. In western countries like the United Kingdom and Turkey, well-labeled brands are part and parcel of the clothing economy (Ramya & Ali, 2016). But in a country like Ghana, brands are not always formally labeled because the informal sector plays a role in the clothing industry. In addition, several clothes of multi brands and types are imported from Asian countries. The variety of brands that are imported into the country and the informal clothing sector of Ghana might make it difficult for the students to keep track of the various brands that they desire.

In addition, most of the participants noted that they wear clothes that reflect their cultural beliefs. This finding is consistent with the study of Zemba Zemba, (2017) where it was discovered that most of the students in Tanzania made clothing choices based on the prevailing culture within their communities. Danso et al., (2019) also confirmed the findings of the current study on the influence of culture on the clothing preference of students in Ghana. The findings of the current study differs when compared to the study of Wetmore et al., (2015) who discovered that the culture of students does not influence their clothing preferences.

These findings suggest that the culture plays a key role on the clothing preferences of students in the country and some other parts of the African continent. This observation could be due to the conservative culture of the area which sort of dictates the lifestyle of people.

4.10 Discussion of the economic factors that influence clothing selection and practices of the students

Most of the participants were neutral when asked about buying second-hand clothes. This finding is similar to the finding of Alamelu (2018) who found out among students in Nigeria that the majority were unconcerned towards buying second-hand clothes. This observation could be due to the income that the students make. Majority of the students in the current study had a monthly income less than GHC1,000, and this may have limited the ability of the students to explore new clothing options because second-hand clothing typically cost less than new clothing. Thus, they cared less whether or not the clothing they were purchasing was second-hand or new. This finding may also be related to another finding in the current study which showed that most of the students were neutral about buying new clothes as well.

Also, over half of the participants agreed that they vary their choice of clothing depending on their prevailing financial state. In support of this finding, most of the students in the current study also mentioned that they buy clothes based on the amount of money their parents/benefactors give to me. This finding seems to be a natural point of progression from the findings in which most of the participants were neutral over second-hand clothes and new clothes. Buying clothing based on prevailing financial situations suggests that the students do not take entrenched clothing decisions and are flexible when need be. Lawan and Zanna (2013) who found out among students in the Bono State of Nigeria that the students make clothing choices based on their prevailing financial situation is consistent with the findings of the current study.

In terms of the frequency of buying clothes, most of the participants in the current study disagreed that they buy clothes at least once a month. This finding is consistent with the finding of students in the Middle East where it was discovered that most of the students do not buy clothes at least once a month (Islam et al., 2017). Students may not buy new clothes at least once a month because of their financial standing. As observed on the demographic characteristics of the students, most of the students get an income less than GHC1,000.00 out of which they make expenses relating to their activities of daily living. Thus, the students live on a constrained budget and routinely spending on new clothing on a monthly basis does not appear to be a financially prudent thing to do.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS

AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of the summary of the findings of the study. The summary of the finding provides an overview of the major findings with respect to each of the objectives. Afterwards, there is a brief conclusion of the study. The recommendations are made. The recommendations include recommendations for key players in the clothing industry as well as those in academia.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The current study involved single undergraduate students who were mostly between the ages of 20 and 20 years. Most of the students had a monthly income of GHC1,000 or less. The students mainly preferred to wear casual clothes. And the place from which most of the students brought their attires was the open markets.

A variety of factors influence the clothing preference of the students. Physical factors that influence the clothing preference of the students included the fitting nature of the cloth, the ease with which the cloth can be worn, the climatic conditions in the environment, the colour of the cloth and the fabric which the clothing is made up of. The students also considered the length of the cloth as a factor influencing their clothing preference. Most of the students preferred long clothes but most of the students were neutral over short clothes.

The psychological factors which influence the clothing preference of the students included cultural factors, the role of the students in society, the peer influence around

the students, the ability of the cloth to boost their self-confidence and the ability of the cloth to enhance the self-image of the students. Another influencing fact was fashion trends. However, the students did not consider the brand of the clothing as influential in their clothing preference.

Majority of the students noted that they vary their clothing preference depending on the amount of money that they receive. However, the students did not consider whether or not the clothing is second-hand or new or the expensive nature of the cloth as important in influencing their clothing decisions.

5.2 Conclusions

The results of this study delivered some insights into the clothing preferences of undergraduate students in a Ghanaian university. The study also produced results on the factors that influence the clothing preferences of the students. The factors that influence the clothing preferences of the students are physical, psychological and economic in nature. Some of the factors are consistent with findings from other parts of the world whilst others are unique to the Ghanaian setting.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the current study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Fashion designers in Ghana should place more emphasis on designing and sewing clothes that are suited to the body shape and figure of their clients. Those who are into the already-made cloth type of service should conduct a comprehensive research on the body type of the Ghanaian populace in order to be able to design and sew suitable clothing.
2. Tailors should make the satisfaction of their clients a priority so as to boost the

self-confidence of those who patronize their products

3. Stakeholders in the clothing industry should devise means in reducing the prices of the cloths they sell to their patrons so as to enable students buy clothes more often
4. Stakeholders in the clothing industry need to take measures to enhance the branding of their various outfits to create a clear enough distinction between the various clothing brands on the clothing markets
5. Players within academia should conduct more research on the clothing preference and factors influencing the clothing preference of undergraduate students in Ghana. The studies should adopt both quantitative and qualitative methods. In addition, the studies should delve deeper into the nuances of clothing preferences such as the type of colour and fabric that the students like. Future studies should also compare clothing preference according to sex- that is male vs. female.
6. Dressmakers should blend local fabric with Western fabric. This will rouse their interest in our locally made clothes.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION OF WINNEBA FACULTY OF HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION

Dear Valued Participant,

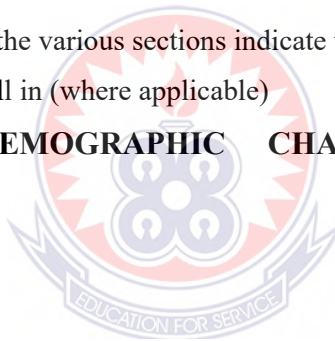
This is an academic exercise in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a BlueCrest University College. Please note that whatever information you provide will be treated confidentially and used for only its intended purpose. Your voluntary participation is valuable. There are no risks involved in taking part in this study. As a voluntary participant, you are not required to answer any question that you do not wish to respond, and you can withdraw at any time during the process. Your answering of this interview schedule will indicate your consent to participate in this study.

Instruction

Please, for each question in the various sections indicate the chosen option by ticking the most appropriate answer(s) and fill in (where applicable)

PART I: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

1. Gender
 - A. Male
 - B. Female
2. Age (years)
 - A. 10 to 19
 - B. 20 to 29
 - C. 30 to 39
 - D. 40 to 49
 - E. 50 to 59
 - F. 60 and above
3. Ethnicity
 - A. Akan
 - B. Ga-Adangbe
 - C. Dagomba
 - D. Ewe
 - E. Guan



- F. Gonja
 - G. Mamprusi
 - H. Nanumba
 - I. Gurunsi
 - J. Konkomba
 - K. Others
4. Religion
- A. Christian
 - B. Muslim
 - C. Traditionalist
 - D. No specific religion
5. Marital status
- A. Single
 - B. Married
 - C. Divorced
 - D. Widowed
6. Number of dependents
- A. None
 - B. 1 to 2
 - C. 3 to 5
 - D. 6 or more
7. Average monthly income (GHC)
- A. Less than 1,000
 - B. 1,000 to 1,999
 - C. 2,000 to 2,999
 - D. 3,000 to 3,999
 - E. 4,000 to 4,999
 - F. 5,000 and above
8. Means of transportation to campus
- A. Foot
 - B. Taxi
 - C. Uber
 - D. Personal vehicle
 - E. Public transport



SECTION B: CLOTHING PREFERENCES

9. Which of the following do you prefer (*Tick as many as applies*)
- A. Jeans and shirt
 - B. Casual wear
 - C. Corporate attire
 - D. African wear
10. Which of the above clothes is your favourite?
- A. Jeans and shirt
 - B. Casual wear
 - C. Corporate attire
 - D. African wear
11. Where do you buy your clothes from?
- A. Boutiques
 - B. Shops
 - C. Open markets
 - D. Street hawkers



The following items relate on what determines your choice of dressing styles. State by ticking (✓) your position. Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

	SA	A	N	D	SD
PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CLOTHES					
I prefer fitting clothes					
I prefer long dresses					
I prefer short dresses					
I prefer one-piece clothes					
My choice of clothing depends on the ease of clothing					
My preference for clothing is determined by the fabric that the clothe is made up of					
I made my choice of clothing based on the colour					
I make my choice of clothing based on the weather					
PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS					
I prefer clothes in which place emphasis on my physical figure					
My purchasing decision on clothes is based on fashion trends					
I buy clothes based on the brand of the clothing item					
I prefer clothes which give me good self-esteem					
I wear clothes which boost my self-confidence					
I wear clothes that reflect my cultural beliefs					
My peers influence my clothes					
I wear clothes which reflect my status in society					
I wear clothes which reflect my role in the family					
ECONOMIC FACTORS					
I buy second hand clothes					
I purchase only new clothes					
I buy expensive clothes					
I buy clothes which cost moderately					
I vary my choice of clothe depending on my prevailing financial state					
I buy clothes often (at least once a month)					
I buy clothes based on the amount of money my parents/benefactors give to me					

