

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACTORS INFLUENCING TAKORADI POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS' CHOICE OF
CLOTHING

SCHOLASTICA AZUAH

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CHOICE OF CLOTHING

BY

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the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Home Economics

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:.....Date:.....

Name:Scholastica Azuah

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature:..... Date:

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Co-supervisor's Signature:..... Date:

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to find out the factors influencing Takoradi Polytechnic students' choice of clothing in the Western Region of Ghana. The study was also interested in types of clothing mostly worn by students on campus and the body parts exposed.

Questionnaire and Focus group discussion guide was used. Respondents were chosen at random. The sample for study consisted of 207 students, 104 and 103 students of the Departments of Fashion and Accounting respectively. Seventy seven males and 130 females were involved. Focus group discussion was undertaken using sixty students, fifteen males and fifteen females from each department, summing up to thirty students per department. The study revealed that students' choice of clothing was mostly influenced by psychological factors with self-fulfilment being the most important. The least factor desired by students was choosing clothing to have warm relationship. Fashion students considered social factors most. Accounting students were more inclined to psychological factors. Casual clothing was the most frequently used on most occasions. Twentysix percent of students expressed the desire to expose body parts like breast. Television was the most patronised Media followed by Magazines.

The study recommends that school authorities should institute orientation programmes to educate students on choice of clothing and the suitable occasions to match. Finally disparities among individual student's choice of clothing should be considered in policy making. Students should be encouraged to attend programmes from other departments in order to share common views including the choice of clothing.

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of my parents: Mr and Mrs John Peter Wompakeah.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The problem of youth's choice of clothing has been a topic of major discussion in recent times. While others think one's dressing should not bother anyone, others hold the belief that one's appearance should be acceptable in the setting he or she belongs. As a trader chooses clothing to match the activities of the day, so will a student dress code suit the school environment. Dress code, according to Pauly (2008), is a set of rules, as in a school, indicating the approved manner of clothing. Unfortunately however, campuses of higher institutions today have fostered a climate for the display of seductive wear especially by the female. For instance, those who have visited the campuses of institutions of higher learning in recent times would wonder whether they were in an academic community or an enclave of harlots, owing to the provocative and seductive ways in which most of the students, particularly the females cloth themselves to the lecture halls.

A casual observation of the hallways of many higher institutions today reveals that students have pushed dress code to the limit, Fayokun, Adedeji and Oyebade (2009) stated. There are halter-tops and bare midriff, thigh underwear peeking above ultra low-cut jeans, and bright-coloured bras shining through sheer shirts. "It's getting out of control", said John Amaral (Wareham High School Principal) cited in Fayokun et al. (2009). In educational institutions, thus, the contention that in the absence of a prescribed school uniform or regulation on dress code in public schools will lead to resultant chaos can best be imagined.

As a matter of fact, research has it that dress regulation stabilizes the school classroom atmosphere, promotes decorum and has a real and reasonable connection with the successful operation of the educational system and with the maintenance of school discipline. This according to Fayokun et al. (2009) would be realised when choice of clothing on campus is founded more on cogent and tenable reasoning such as: upholding of academic standards, promotion of decorum and discipline in academic atmosphere, enforcement of morality and decency and security awareness.

In the history of fashion and costumes, there is always a reason why a cloth is worn. Early history indicates people wore clothes simply to keep warm, and the materials available – animal skins and furs then determined kinds of cloth. If a man wore a lion's skin, you could be sure he was a brave hunter. Tribal chiefs liked to wear something (a crown, a hat or a cloak of a special colour) perhaps, which no one else was allowed to have or wear, to distinguish from their subjects.

Adolescents and young adults have long recognised the significance of clothing. To signal connectedness and to distinguish themselves from others, groups of young people adopt styles of clothing that express their particular distinct identity. Odeleye (2000) observed that in making clothing choices, adolescents are demonstrating awareness that a style or choice of appearance has meaning. Rowland-Warne (1992) corroborated this by asserting that clothing in any culture is a means of communication. This assertions, point to the fact that clothing conveys messages when members of a society who share a given culture have learned to associate types of clothing with customary

meaning. Through this customary association, certain types of clothes become symbols of mood, social role, socio-economic status or political class.

Clothing and appearance are forms of non-verbal communication that consist of an individual's outward assemblage of apparel on the body as well as all alterations and additions to the body. Also included are genetic traits such as gender, ethnicity, hair texture, height, and physical build. On an individual level, clothing and appearance can provide information about the wearer's values, attitudes, interests, lifestyle, and social and personal relationships (Kaiser, 1998).

Pope Benedict XVI in the Catholic Standard 2010, August 1st issue entreats 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. Clothing and appearance are highly visible and allow others to formulate opinions or derive various cues including personal information about the wearer. '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' (Damhorst, 1999). Dibley (2004) concluded that values play a dominant role in guiding choices; consumers choose actions that produce desired consequences and minimise undesired consequences. Research again indicates that values affect behaviour (Kahle, 1996). Each individual possesses and follows a set of principles that guide thoughts and influence behaviour. The choice of clothing of the individual could depend on one's values and one's values might result from the society he or she lives.

Clothing and appearance provide us with some of the information needed to try to interpret others' thoughts, feelings, and actions. Society uses clothing and appearance cues to aid us in predicting the behaviour of others. As far as clothing is concerned, everybody is involved, whether in a naïve or a scholarly sense, (Kaiser, 1998). There are certain needs the individual gains through clothing either consciously or unconsciously. These among others are as stated in Maslow's hierarchy of needs; physiological, security, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. Students must consider these in their choice of clothing. It is often observed that students do not consider all aspects that go into their choice of clothing and appearance but rather follow peers.

Dixon (2007) urged consumers to learn more about themselves in seeing how values have a role in influencing clothing and appearance. Values are self-organizing principles that guide our thoughts and actions (Kahle, 1996) and shape individual preferences and choices (Kaiser, 1998).

Values are social cognitions that summarize adaptive behaviours which are in two categories; internal and external values. External values are developed from life experiences and learnt from a variety of sources including peers, relatives, personal experience or learnt indirectly via the media. According to Villani (2001) media has the ability to teach, which in turn may directly or subtly influence the user's behaviour. Internal values – related to an individual's belief system tend to provide an explanation or reasoning for an individual's perception of self as a social object. Kahle (1996) stated that, there are Lists of Values (LOV) an individual possesses that drive his or her behaviour. These values serve as useful instruments in the study of similarities and differences across social units ranging from individuals to countries,

which suggested that LOV offered two important advantages: easy administration and easy and quick completion once values are well defined.

Values are central to people's lives, particularly that of life's major roles such as daily appearance. Values could be related to predictive behaviour or/and related activities. Kaiser (1998) added that the human being has his or her own value systems and past experiences that shape interpretations of clothing symbols. Subjective experience tends to influence choices as to what is desirable or worthwhile. To Dixon (2007), more research is needed to further understand the role values play in influencing clothing and appearance of every individual. Studying values is therefore crucial to the study of clothing and appearance.

Again, it is assumed that, media is a better predictor of clothing and appearance than family and friends. However, Okwu (2006) emphasises that parents have a primary role to play in their wards' choice of clothing through ensuring adequate supervision and control of children to inculcate good value systems in them. In Gravely (1999) study, black males used television as a source of information to purchase suits more than white males. They also read news papers more than their white counterparts. Analysing the mentioned findings, one would suggest that the African is easily influenced by what is viewed and read.

Dixon explained that psychological factors such as self-fulfilment, self-accomplishment, excitement and fun were significant and contributed to the influence on choice of clothing and appearance. Brown (2002) illustrates that values, social and psychological factors had an equally significant opportunity in influencing the dependent variable, clothing and appearance.

It is common knowledge that with respect to Ghanaian culture, students' clothing should be made to cover nudity. But amongst the students today, there is now a new choice of clothing. The students are desperately veering from the past choice of clothing be it the original Ghanaian choice of clothing or the type of clothing brought about by colonisation. Sometime they dress weirdly and embarrassingly. According to Lynn (2004), shifting dress styles in the early to mid-20th century, that exposed more skin and revealed a woman's figure, created new definition in female beauty. The female adolescents mostly dress half nude. They prefer to wear trousers and skimpy shirts or tee-shirts that reveal their tummy, body hug, which shows all the contours in their body frames. Again, they put on mini-skirt with see-through tops. The boys still wear shirts and trousers with the waist of trousers very low and always in various bigger sizes compared to their normal sizes. This observed dressing habit is not limited to a specific class of students. It cuts across the entire socio-economic status; their educational level and status. This has been going on for quite some time and therefore what used to be regarded as fashion, a period's desired appearance is being turned to clothing regarded as established patterns of clothing (Odeleye, 2000).

In Ghana, it has been observed that, the students' choice of clothing in the past few years has been a source of concern to many school authorities, and researchers. Some ladies (students) who were always in sexy clothing during lectures was later found posted in a pornographic picture on the internet. Male lecturers in tertiary institutions often complain that students' choice of clothing to lecture halls put them off.

Making choices is an essential part of functioning independently as an adult in society. Activities specifically directed toward helping students learn to make choices, however, are typically neglected in educational programmes for students. This study presents social and psychological factors involved in choice-making. Approaches that present useful means of conceptualizing choice-making in terms of clothing in the school life of students are identified

Statement of the Problem

The principle of dress code in many tertiary institutions is apparently to promote and embrace important values such as cleanliness, neatness, decency and appropriateness in clothing. This reflects initial dignity and sobriety through which students as well as staff and faculty represent the professional status of their respective disciplines. In the Takoradi Polytechnic Students' Hand Book (2003, p. 48), it is clearly stated that "students should be appropriately dressed on all occasions." However, in the Takoradi Polytechnic, all manner of clothing is displayed on every occasion, pointing to the fact that everyone dresses to suit his/her taste regardless of the impressions given to others. Body image which is the mental picture one has of his or her body may or may not be accurate in relation to the perceptions of others. There is the need for information management when choosing clothing.

Fashion students who are studying clothing and textiles are presumed to have adequate knowledge in this field to serve as role models as far as choice of clothing is concerned. Besides, they are taken through various courses to enable them produce and choose clothing appropriately. Unfortunately however, these students choice of clothing are faced with influences emanating from foreign cultures through various channels. There

seem to be no difference between Fashion and Business students in their choice of clothing.

Also, the researcher observed that sexual promiscuity among students in the Polytechnic could be associated with their ways of dressing and this may be a serious vice that calls for concern. A lady observed to be 'inappropriately' dressed during her first year had to stop after some few months because she was impregnated by a colleague student. In another case, a lady (student) who was always in sexy clothing during lectures was later found posted in a pornographic picture on the internet.

Most of the students who for the first time gain some social freedom from their parents' watchful eyes and guidance may easily fall prey to the temptation of choosing clothing to suit their peers. According to Dibley (2004), students feel tremendous pressure to fit in with their peer group, fear social exclusion, and use clothing products to help them achieve a sense of belonging. Such students may imitate friends' choice of clothing give most of their time and attention to it, to the detriment of their studies. One would wonder if these students have personal values which motivate their choice of clothing.

It has been observed that female students are particularly bedevilled with all kinds of clothing. Most girls go bare exposing sensitive parts, display their navels, breast and wear what are just ample cleavages. It appears that to be fashionable, one has to become half nude, dressed in sleeveless/see-through tops without brassier. Seductive dressing thus has profound negative effect on both students and lecturers alike as some can hardly concentrate on their academic work under such circumstances (Irtwange, 2004). There must be a

moderate position that allows the students to dress in a certain way that meets institutional requirement as well as societal values.

Studies have indicated that higher institutions of learning have been fighting against other social vices such as occultism, examination malpractice, and drug abuse but issues relating to choice of clothing have not received comparable attention. Enough research or documents have not been made to unravel the mystery behind students' choice of clothing. Social and psychological factors influencing students' choice of clothing continue to remain silent creating a gap.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the social and psychological factors that influence the clothing types worn by Takoradi Polytechnic students on campus, the body part(s) often exposed, and the motivations behind such clothing. Also the study tried to find out whether differences in tastes for clothing were dependent on the students' field of study (Fashion or Accounting), or the gender of students. Various channels through which students are influenced were examined and the most influential channels identified.

Research Questions

1. What types of clothing do students of Takoradi Polytechnic Fashion and Business departments wear?
2. What psychological factors influence students' choices of clothing and appearance in Takoradi Polytechnic?

3. What social factors influence students' choices of clothing and appearance?

Hypothesis

1. **H₀**: There is no significant difference relating to factors influencing Takoradi Polytechnic students' choice of clothing in terms of gender.

H₁: There is a significant difference relating to factors influencing Takoradi Polytechnic students' choice of clothing in terms of gender.

2. **H₀**: There is no significant difference relating to factors influencing Fashion and Accounting students' choice of clothing in Takoradi Polytechnic.

H₁: There is a significant difference relating to factors influencing Fashion and Accounting students' choice of clothing in Takoradi Polytechnic.

Significance of Study

Students have the potential of having positive impact on the nation as a whole as far as clothing is concerned. Measures taken to correct issues on choice of clothing could go a long way to mould the nation in terms of their choice of clothing. The study would again, contribute to literature on the influence of social and psychological factors on students/youth choice of clothing.

In assessing choice of clothing on campus with its educational implications, the finding(s) of this research could help counsellors address some irrelevant issues affecting students in terms of clothing.

Extension of the understanding on students' choices of clothing and appearance would help in policy making. It would also provide an image or configuration of reasonable expectation that might be useful in some situations.

Factors associated with preferred choice of clothing that was revealed in the study would prompt school authorities to act appropriately to the situation. Education could also be made on the need for students to link their personal values to societal values in their choice of clothing.

Delimitation

Even though, there might be other factors influencing students' choice of clothing, the study is restricted to social and psychological factors, influencing students' choice of clothing in Takoradi Polytechnic in the Western Region of Ghana.

Social Factors in this work refer to external values that influence students' choice of clothing. The external values include the desire to be well respected; have warm relationships with other and sense of belonging. These could be exhibited in their reactions through channels such as the media, electronics, relatives, peers and friends as well as social/economic class.

Psychological factors are internal values of an individual that could influence his clothing choices: self-respect, self-confidence, sense of accomplishment, security, fun and enjoyment, self-fulfilment, and excitement.

The study specifically deliberates on the Departments of Fashion and Accounting. Department of Fashion was chosen due to its link associated to the topic: "clothing". There was also the need for one department for comparing sake (Department of Accounting).

Limitations

First, the researcher being a teacher would have had some perceived views on factors influencing students' choice of clothing on campus and these might affect the interpretation of some of the data. Though much effort was made to control this, it is possible that there might be few cases of subjectivity. Secondly, even though an assurance of confidentiality was given, there could still be the tendency of students providing inappropriate responses for fear of being a source of reference. A broader participation may have produced different results. Additionally, the socio economic status, and parents' income which could be useful in identifying other social factors that are important in understanding choice of clothing and appearance have not been included. The study should have been taken across all Polytechnics in the ten Regions for adequate generalisation. However, this research is limited to Takoradi Polytechnic.

Definition of Terms

Clothing and Appearance: A non-verbal means of communicating personal or social values that project an image before any words are spoken.

Clothing: clothing is any body covering related to personal adornment which encompasses all forms of body decoration or alteration.

Values: organized principles that guide one's thoughts and actions or shape individual preferences and choices.

External values: organizing principles derived from outside sources including peers, relatives and, media and the society that guide our thought and actions.

Internal values: self-organizing principles related to an individual's belief system which tend to provide an explanation or reasoning for an individual's perception of self.

Factor influence: The relevant contribution of values to one's action.

Psychological factors: the influence of internal values on one's choice of clothing.

Social factors: the influence of external values on an individual's choice of clothing.

Casual wear: simply designed clothing for leisure activities such as house chores, Market, farming, fishing, sports attire etc.

Occasional wear: clothing used for special functions or events that are gorgeously made for occasions such as weddings, naming ceremonies, parties, church service or celebrations.

Formal wear: clothing symmetrical in form established for social functions such as congregation, matriculation, lectures and clothing for interviews,

Traditional wear: clothing originating from the culture of a group of the people. For example, Fugu from northern part of Ghana, Kente associated with Ashantis, Tie Die/ Batik etc.

Organisation of Thesis

This thesis has five chapters. Chapter One is made up of the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research questions, delimitations, limitations and, organization of the study. The second Chapter reviews related literature to the study. The literature review examines in depth both theoretical and conceptual

literature that helped establish the parameters that define students' choice of clothing. The third Chapter outlines the methodology procedures employed in sampling, collecting and analysing data. Chapter Four is devoted to reporting findings and discussing them. Chapter Five consists of the summary, conclusions and recommendations as well as suggestions for future research on students' choice of clothing.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the review of theoretical as well as empirical literature was done to throw more light on the factors that influence students' choice of clothing. The chapter is set in eight main sections and sub sections. The sections are related and in most cases overlap. They are as follows:

1. Theories in social psychology of clothing
2. Clothing and appearance
3. The various functions of clothing
4. Campus dress code
5. Various clothing styles used on the campus of Takoradi Polytechnic
6. Values and choice of clothing
7. Psychological factors and clothing choices
8. Society and individual clothing choices
9. Design details of clothing

Theories in Social Psychology of Clothing

According to Dixon (2007), theories in social psychology of clothing are relatively young compared to other disciplines. The history of social psychology in apparel research is brief. Early documentation of the efforts of pioneer scholars is provided by Sybers and Roach in 1962 where interest in the sociological aspects of apparel gained increasing emphasis as researchers sought, to acquire knowledge about human behaviour. Prior to the interest in sociological studies in apparel and human behaviour, apparel research reflected the problems of the period and focused on standardization, consumer buying, conservation, and garment construction.

One of the pioneer scientists in social psychology theory George Simmel, a Sociologist, in 1904 was credited as one of the founding fathers of social/psychological and apparel theory. As early as 1904, Simmel published an article titled “Fashion” which reflected fashion in terms of human behaviour. He was the first scientist to study the effect of fashion on human behaviour. Though Simmel’s contribution was significant to the area, the limited research published in the following years suggested that apparel was a manifestation of man’s inner needs (Sybers & Roach, 1962 cited in Dibley, 2004). A series of professional meetings were held by Home economists as early as 1947 to formally explore possible research areas in textiles and apparel related to social sciences. The meetings were attended and hosted by Home Economists, Sociologists, Psychologists, and Economists from leading universities; who raised questions concerning values sought in clothing and, generally, how clothing serves society. In the 1950s, authors within the Home Economics Clothing and Textile area began publishing journal articles and pamphlets on the social meaning of dress. Detailed knowledge in this area accumulated over the years and progressed in the development of effective research methods and theoretical frameworks in which hypotheses were tested. Social psychology offered “an organized body of knowledge and theory which aided in clarifying the influence of clothing on interrelations of people, Dixon stated. By the late 1970s, formal courses and research about the social significance of dress had developed leading to published books in the area.

Herbert Blumer, a sociologist, contributed to fashion theory called collective selection. Blumer’s article, *Fashion: From Class Differentiation to Collective Selection* focused on stability and change through fashion in

society. He used the term “collective taste” to refer to fashion. His article provided support for Simmel’s trickle-down theory. In the following decades, as the social psychological area advanced, Davis’ (1982) contributions bridged various levels of fashion by studying the social process. Davis examined the social process in terms of the group dynamics and the individual. Lennon and Davis (1989) presented information on integrated theories and research in social cognition with research in apparel and human behaviour. Nagasawa, Hutton and Kaiser, (1991) offered a paradigm for studying social-psychological theories associated with the meaning of clothing. In 1997, Kaiser applied symbolic interaction to fashion suggesting that all aspects of dress have symbolic meaning and those meanings change over time. This landmark research invited others to begin communicating about the current status of social psychological research (Nagasawa et al., 1991). In years that followed, other researchers from different apparel areas responded to the call placed by Nagasawa et al. The maturing of the social psychological area of apparel is continuing as theories and effective research methods evolve. There are many theories that can be used as a foundation for this type of research.

Theoretical Framework

Social adaptation formed the theoretical foundation for this research because it encompasses the social and psychological aspects of an individual’s thinking and reasoning which aids in the development of values. Social adaptation is based on one of the most sophisticated interactive theories in psychology. In this theory, individuals adapt to various life roles through value development and fulfilment (Kahle, 1996). The Piagetian theories, on which

social adaptation theory is based, state that information is absorbed into existing cognitive structures through values. Information may also assist existing cognitive structures refined as a result of additional interaction. The information is then organized to synthesize the new information with prior knowledge. This process can change new and old information, which leads to greater integration of information (Kahle, 1996). In other words, a person absorbs external information and transforms both the information and himself or herself in such a way as to promote adaptation. The integration and specific meanings will be unique for each individual. However, similarities in experiences and semantic environments, such as those shared by individuals within a particular demographic category, leads to measurable similarities and patterns of response, Kahle confirmed. This may also work for individuals in subcultures. People gain information by experiencing interaction with their environments and values, developed from these life experiences (Kahle, 1996).

Social adaptation is a psychology-based cognitive model that fits within the paradigm of social psychology theories for studying the meaning of clothing. The theories in apparel research devoted to studying clothing and appearance are linked to cognition – specifically social cognition. Social cognition examines the cognitive process or more precisely the bases for the perceptions and cognitions individuals use to make judgments about people (Johnson, Schofield & Yurchisin, 2002).

Social cognition is concerned with how people form impressions of others and make sense of themselves (Johnson et al., 2002). It “emphasizes the use of cognitive psychological processes with social objects” (Lennon &

Davis, 1989, p. 41). Because social adaptation provides both a social and psychological basis for study of the individual and clothing and appearance, it is ideal to use in this study to determine how social and psychological factors influence clothing choices of students of Takoradi Polytechnic.

Nagasawa, Hutton and Kaiser (1991) offered four models that are found most often in social psychology research. The four models are cognitive, behavioural, bio-volitional, and symbolic. Of the four, the cognitive model focuses on the individual as the thinker by viewing this person as an “active agent who receives, uses, manipulates, and transforms information. The broader scope of the cognitive social psychology model is as follows: Humans are rational, thinking organisms who try to make sense of the social world; Humans process external stimuli by an internal mechanism (cognitive structure) that receives and organizes information; The cognitive structure helps the organism to make sense of the environment and to construct social realities; The key to understanding human behaviour lies in the understanding of how people perceive and process external stimuli (Nagasawa et al., 1991). Nagasawa et al., narrowed the scope to a cognitive perspective typically used in social psychology of apparel research. They explained that “the cognitive perspective focuses primarily on how people form impressions of others and of themselves” by using apparel cues. They also pointed out that cognitive perspective is limited to merely explaining appearances by way of perception, social interactions, and environmental stimulation where an individual is being perceived by someone else. Unfortunately, this particular cognitive model does not allow for self-evaluation or self-examination of internal and external mechanisms, such as values, that may influence choice of clothing and

appearance. Despite the limitation of the cognitive perspective, Lennon and Davis (1989) believed that a social cognitive framework has useful theoretical foundation in which to study apparel and human behaviour because “it provides researchers in the field with insight as to gaps and deficiencies in research regarding choice of clothing.

Lennon and Davis (1989) discussed the self-perception theory, a derivative of the attribution theory. The self-perception theory allows individuals to view themselves to determine causality of their own social behaviour in the same manner in which they would determine others’ social behaviour. Lennon and Davis (1989) strongly supported the use of social cognition as a framework for studying factor influence and choice of clothing due to its broad, social, cognitive, and psychological perspectives. In a more recent study in apparel and textile research, social cognition is linked to impression formation. When studying impression formation, we notice that “people are able to make inferences because they develop mental categories to deal efficiently with the vast amounts of information they have gathered about each other” (Johnson et al., 2002, p. 126). These mental categories function to classify information, infer additional information, guide attention, and facilitate one’s choice of clothing and appearance. Thus, they aid the perceiver in the development of impressions. The observer’s choice of target cues and the meaning he or she attaches to those cues may be impacted by several observer characteristics, including recent experience, personal goals, and preferences. Individuals often link mental categories to physically perceptible features such as apparel. Because clothing and appearance are related to

impression formation, the use of social adaptation as the theory for this research was logical.

The social cognitive studies and theories discussed are all limited to individuals inferring information about someone else based on dress and appearance. Only the self-perception theory provides an option to gaining insight to the person based on that person's evaluation of himself or herself. This particular theory falls within the framework of social cognitive psychology and can be viewed as a perspective within the social adaptation theory because it allows for the individual evaluation component, absent from the other theories discussed or considered. The theory centres on the individuals in a social setting. It is necessary, for this study, to focus on individuals as well as social factors because of the essential information that can be provided by both. Social adaptation is an appropriate theory to use for this study because it allows the foundation for the individual to be evaluated where each person can cognitively self-examine himself or herself both internally (personally) and externally (socially) in order to explain their clothing choices.

Conceptual Framework

Research Model: In thoroughly reviewing available literature, psychological and social factors have not been found to mediate any type of relationship between values and choice of clothing. Instead, external and internal values and the social and psychological factors are associated with one another and both are believed to equally influence clothing and appearance. The following conceptual mode (Figure 1) would be based on a

thorough review of the literature and has been developed for this research study.

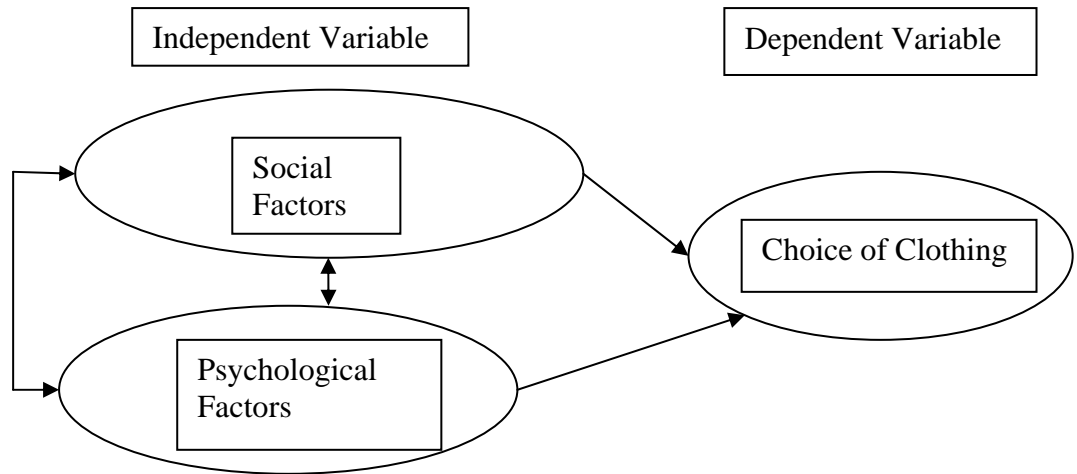


Figure 1. Conceptual Research Model. (Adapted and modified from Dixon, 2007)

Empirically, each variable has its own opportunity to influence or have a positive or negative relationship with dress and appearance. The empirical research model (Figure 2) details the potential, yet equal influence each independent variable in the study has on dress and appearance, the dependent variable.



Figure 2. Empirical Research Model (Adapted and modified from Dixon, 2007)

Clothing and Appearance

Clothing is a broad term in apparel research defined by Johnson, et al. (2002, p. 6), as “an assemblage of modifications to the body and/or supplements to the body”. Also in the words of Sproles and Burns (1994, p.7), “Clothing includes the total presentation of all coverings and ornamentations worn on the human body”. The supplements and modifications to the body communicate to others (perceivers) abstract characteristics of the wearer, relationships the wearer has with others, and the type of situation in which the wearer is involved (Damhorst, 1999). Clothing and Appearance is a non-verbal means of communicating personal or social values projecting an image before any words are spoken (Dixon, 2007). More specifically, clothing and appearance communicate three main messages:

1. Personal characteristics which include traits, values, attitudes, interests, lifestyle, and mood;
2. Relationships such as cultural background, group membership, group roles (family, occupation, friendship, and gender), status, and prestige; and
3. Definition of situation such as intention to act and orientation (formal, casual, serious, playful) (Dixon, 2007, p.9).

(Damhorst, 1999) further explained that clothing is significant in defining self identity to others. Items selected to be worn by an individual reflect his/her interests, personality, roles, membership in groups, intentions, age, gender, socioeconomic status, and more. Clothing is a form of nonverbal communication because it is used to convey personal information about the wearer. Appearance is also a form of non-verbal communication. It can convey personal or social values, thereby generating an image before any words are spoken. It “includes features of the undressed body, such as its shape or colour” (Johnson et al., 2002, p. 125). Appearance, as it relates to dress, has been found to be an effective means of communication during social interaction. When combining these two highly visible forms of communication, clothing and appearance often provide the most immediate and apparent visual cues about age, gender, ethnicity, social status, and social roles Damhorst (1999) illustrated. Clothing consciously and unconsciously encodes multiple messages or cues for others to interpret, in which perceivers translate these messages into meanings whether intended, unconscious, or imagined, from another’s clothing and appearance (Johnson et al., 2002). Much can be learned about an individual by observing his/her clothing and

appearance. A study by Johnson et al. (2002) examined how dress and appearance cues were used to formulate impression. They documented the kinds of visual and non-visual clothing and appearance cues individuals use to form impressions of others in addition to exploring the types of information obtained from the cues.

The study by Johnson et al. showed that the participants formed impressions of others based on their appearance and dress using visual aspects of dress including body modifications and attachments. Impressions were also formed by observing “how clothing was worn on the body or how outfits were assembled”. Visual aspects of the body such as body surface, body motion, and body forms were also found to develop impressions. The study provided support that information inferred about the wearer is based on dress and appearance, and observers felt their impressions were accurate. Overall, based on an individual’s clothing and appearance, others can make inferences about that individual’s personality traits, physical and biological characteristics, demographic and social position, attitudes and emotions, occupational role, and intentions or motives, Johnson et al. (2000) concluded.

This study and other literature reviewed support the need to study clothing and factors that influence students’ choice of clothing to discover additional useful information, such as values, that may be helpful to school authorities and researchers in understanding reasons behind students’ clothing choices. Clothing and appearance provide very specific information about the wearer and are therefore necessary to examine to gain more insight about the students in Takoradi Polytechnic.

Apparel is a visual component of clothing and appearance that, according to Dixon, (2007) “people see first and remember” p.26 making apparel a highly visible form of communication. Apparel is defined as three-dimensional objects that enclose and envelop the body in some way. Again, Sproles and Burns (1994) also described apparel as a decorative body covering. Clothing is frequently used as a generic term for any coverings for the human body. For the purposes of this research the term apparel will be used to refer to clothing per se. Apparel, an essential part of clothing and appearance, supports a sense of identity while at the same time reinforces the images held by peers and associates. “It has been repeatedly documented that individuals are capable of making inferences or forming impressions of others on the basis of dress, specifically apparel” (Johnson et al., 2002, p. 126).

In Dixon (2007) study, apparel serves as tangible items used by individuals to create or project an image to others, establishing the perceived person in a particular role or class. Biecher et al. (1999) found apparel to function on both an individual and group level. When apparel represents the individual, it is always a symbol of who that individual is or strives to be. An example of such use of apparel was previously documented by Horn and Gurel (1981). Horn and Gurel suggested that minority groups tend to subconsciously use clothing to compensate for lack of recognized status.

More recently, it is observed that Ghanaians spend significant amount of money on clothing as a status indicator, that is using apparel to let others know they have “made it” and to enhance their image. Therefore, clothing is significant in this study because it immediately establishes an individual in some sort of social role. However, visible apparel constituting an individual’s

dress can only provide a surface-level interpretation which may not accurately explain the meaning of dress. Clothing and appearance are worthy of study because they are laden with meanings Damhorst (1999) stated.

Apparel, the major component of clothing and appearance, provides many clues about the wearer. Apparel may provide clues as to the sex, age, occupation, socioeconomic status, group membership/affiliation, marital status, intelligence, values, attitudes, and personality of the wearer (Ryan, 1991). As a matter of fact patterns of everyday life are reflected in apparel. The concept of clothing and appearance is more inclusive. On individual and personal level, clothing and appearance “reflect how people feel about themselves, and express personal values and values of the society in which an individual lives” (Damhorst, 1999, p.2). School is a society where students achieve their academic aspirations. It is made up of established norms. A student on campus is therefore obligated to dress accordingly.

Functions of Clothing

In Maslow’s theory, human beings have five basic needs; Physiological, Security, Social, Esteem, and Self-actualization. Physiological needs are the most basic human needs such as food, shelter and clothing. Clothing in general is a basic need which goes beyond the physiological need to promote the achievement of the others like security, where the individual used clothing to protect himself or herself from physical, emotional and psychological hazards. Socially, clothing serves an important role. The individual is accepted in the society when his or her choice of clothing matches society’s norms. This goes a long way to enhance one’s performance in the society. Clothing improves one’s appearance and gives a “sign

language” or impression to onlookers which could make one confident and poised. Clothing is an important clue used by people in first impressions and plays a part in the selection of friends and acquaintances (Ryan, 1991). Again, self-esteem is achieved through clothing and there is the feeling of being the best all the time (Self-fulfilment/actualisation). Therefore, clothing plays a major role in the accomplishment of students’ life which motivates them to perform.

Clothing could be casual, formal, traditional and occasional depending on the function it plays. In the Fairchild fashion dictionary, Tortora (2003) stated that casual wears is explained as clothing designed to be worn on occasions that do not require more formal dress such as leisure and sportswear. Overtime, casual wear has been widely accepted for many activities, including some work situations. A type of wear that places emphasizes on comfort and personal expression, for example, jeans and T-shirt, blouses and shirts, tunics, shorts. Casual dress could take any form from modest to immodest type of designs.

A formal wear on the other side is designed for formal social functions: clothing officially accepted and conservative that includes attire for interviews (suits and clothing moderately and neatly designed), work (uniforms). Formal clothing have well designed features that cover sensitive parts of the body.

Traditional wear is a type of clothing designed to suit a particular culture. They are locally made with specific symbols of a group of people like “kente”, “fugu”. Jones (1990) illustrates various functions of clothing such as modesty, immodesty, protection and adornment.

Modesty Function of Clothing

Modesty refers to ideas about the proper way to dress to cover the body. This theory stresses that clothes are worn solely to conceal or cover nakedness. The covering of oneself indicates that clothing is worn to cover nudity, to appear decent, modest and to have a body image. Horn and Gurel (1981) defined body image as the picture individuals have in mind about how they look like to others. The shame that follows improper dressing reflects degree of modesty. Throughout the world, there are different ideas about the parts of the body that should be covered. Some people think that modesty is not the reason people began to wear clothes but that ideas of modesty were developed after people started to wear clothes. However, Kaiser (1998) observed that clothing, whether covering or ornamenting the body is as much a part of the self as the body itself (extension of self). It therefore reflects individual's values. In selecting a garment the individual's image is considered.

Immodesty Function of Clothing

Immodesty theory states that clothing is used not to cover but to attract attention. Kaiser (1984) added that clothing is worn for sexual attraction and as various theorists began to reject the motive of modesty as the sole purpose for wearing clothes, more attention was paid to the inextricable relationship between modesty and immodesty. Kaiser continued to cite two authors, Westermarck and Langner, who indicated respectively that the role of clothing is to display or emphasize the attributes of the body rather than concealing them. Again, she argued that the human body is less interesting or erotic when it is totally exposed. As clothing choices are made the idea of attraction comes

to play. According to Vanderhoff (1984), clothes also communicate without words. Apparels tell others something about the wearer. They may suggest how a person feels about himself or herself. Communication is successful only if the meaning of the words or actions are understood by both the person sending the message and the person who receives the message. The response is the reaction on the clothes. This could be accepted or complete outcast or misunderstood. Students should be mindful of the messages carried out through their clothing choices.

Protective Function of Clothing

Protection theory views physical protection and psychological protection as the major reasons for wearing clothes. Some people put on certain clothing such as rain coats, winter coats and wide-brimmed sun hats to be protected from climate and environmental conditions. In the school situation, the opposite sex could be affected in one's choice of clothing which goes to impede learning in the lecture hall environment. Protective and functional clothing is essential in such areas as sports or occupations requiring contacts with potentially dangerous substances or elements. Certain clothing is made for the industry purposely to protect the wearer from getting hurt and for free movement. Clothing could also protect some people from visible enemies in battle like helmets, partial body shield, suits of armour and bullet-proof vest. Padded suits, helmets and protective aprons are some type of clothing designed to guard workers who are employed in hazardous occupation.

Vanderhoff (1984) claimed that clothes are sometimes used for protection against evil spirits. Clothes worn by witch doctors, traditional people in war dance and spiritualists are believed to protect the wearer against

evil spirits. Wearing a flowing dress is prohibited in the laboratory because it has been found to cause dispense of corrosive chemicals. Spill over such as these usually eats up the laboratory benches and often the skin (Okwu, 2006). In the case of concentrated sulphuric acid, the burn it causes leaves a wound that takes a long time to heal with a permanent scar. Types of dress used in the laboratory are different from those used for lectures. While casual dress is suitable for the laboratory formal clothing should be used at lecture halls.

Identity Function of Clothing

Clothing can be described as “sign vehicles” or ‘cues’ that help onlookers to identify or assign status to individuals as well as influence how they will be treated. This implies that clothing symbols convey certain meanings about people. The symbolism theory of clothing influences the first impression people establish about others at their first meeting. Individuals identify people with regards to their clothing. Traditional, religious and occupational identity depends on the society one lives in and this affects students’ clothing choices. However the school environment also forms another society.

When one gets to the Ashanti region, ‘kente’ is observed during traditional functions. In the northern sector, women are clad in their traditional woven striped clothes while men are seen in smock (fugu). To Fulani women, traditional dress consists of a wrapper tied around the waist, girded with beads called “jigid” and a short, tight and sleeveless blouse that barely covers the bust. A student coming from the western world would also dress in a manner similar to their culture. A school is a place of diverse cultures and this tends to influence clothing choices among students.

Clothes worn by a woman can serve as a signal of interaction with the opposite sex in most cases. For instance, in the African community, a woman dressed in “hot pants” is probably looking for a sex mate. On the other hand a Moslem woman dressed in “hijab” wants no interaction with men, (Ryan, 1991). Clothing is the unique feature that conveys these expressions and identity.

Adornment Function of Clothing

Adornment is a theory that stresses that clothing is worn for beauty. But the question is, what is beauty? How do human beings decide who is attractive and who is not? Society is full of messages telling us what beauty is, but what are those definitions based on? Do we consciously decide whom we are attracted to, or is biology somehow involved? The issue of beauty and how we define it has been studied for centuries. Scholars from all fields of study have searched for the "formula" for beauty. There is no standard for beauty, people as well as students clothe themselves according to their personal value and that of the society. Dibley (2004) stated that Darwin in his book “The ‘Descent of Man” wrote, "It is certainly not true that there is in the mind of man any universal standard of beauty with respect to the human body. It is however, possible that certain tastes in the course of time become inherited, though I have no evidence in favour of this belief." The emphasis is that people wear clothing to decorate or adorn the body according to the standard of their culture.

Aesthetically, human beings want to appear beautiful and attractive and one important function of clothes is to decorate the body for attraction. Today women have taken over the attraction role that is exhibited on special

occasions. This explains why beauty contests based on attraction are organized only for ladies hence the saying “dress makes the woman”.

Beauty attracts attention. However, the perceptions of beauty in various societies vary. As the adage goes, “Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder”. Therefore, there is the need for one to dress according to the norms of his or her society or surroundings.

Social Function of Clothing

Marshal, Jackson, Stanley, Kefgaf and Touchine-Spectit, (2000) indicated that clothing is worn for the expression of status. Distinguished personalities in the society usually wear clothing to distinguish themselves out. The noble and the rich normally dress in designer labelled clothes made from quality fabrics so as to conform to their status in the society. In this category are presidents, first ladies, ministers, and people of high status in state functions and various occasions. Upper socio-economic groups adapt fashion as symbols of distinction and exclusiveness (Simmel, 1973). Students who want to belong choose clothing to fit the group they are associated with. Clothing is therefore, an important factor in the interpretation of body image that affects the response behaviour of the beholder. A student’s appearance profoundly affects the way he or she is treated by others at home, social gathering, market, job area, office or school.

Although clothing messages may sometimes be misinterpreted and falsified, Weber (1990) warned that since clothing communicates 90 percent of an individual’s qualities with which he/she is judged by others, clothing power should not be underestimated. Weber stated that a false impression created of an individual due to his or her clothing could change a person’s life.

This could mean a difference between success and failure not only in interpersonal relations and professional careers but also in educational pursuit and in marriage. Clothing has been used to deceive people. It is regrettable that some people adopt extreme styles of clothing to create a false image about themselves. While some try to dress modestly, others care less about their clothing and appearance. Weber again concluded that either too much or too little concern with clothes may limit a person's life.

Campus Dress Code

The principle of dress code in tertiary schools is apparently to promote and embrace important values such as cleanliness, neatness, modesty, decency and appropriateness in dressing which reflect initial dignity and sobriety through which students as well as staff and faculty represent the professional status of their respective disciplines (Odeleye, 2000). Thus, many schools in Ghana like Takoradi Polytechnic have gone ahead to pronounce a well circulated "dress code" guidelines, which state among others that "students should maintain a clear and well cared for appearance in all settings on campus". Wearing of tight, strapless and revealing clothes, or clothes whose lengths are above the knees are considered to be unsuitable on many campuses. Some departments and schools have further prescribed special clothing for certain occasions and lecture activities.

Perhaps these guidelines would have been more effectively enforced if the authorities knew why students resort to various forms of dressing. Decency comes in to play here again and the question is how decently should a student dress? Decency may mean different things to different people. Thus, the

contention that in the absence of a prescribed school uniform or regulation on mode of dressing in public schools will lead to resultant chaos can best be imagined. As a matter of fact, it has been found that the dress regulation stabilizes the school classroom atmosphere, promotes decorum and has a real and reasonable connection with the successful operation of the educational system and with the maintenance of school discipline. However, it is the strangeness of the above assumption in a tertiary school setting which belies the adoption of a campus dress code. According to Odeleye (2000), the rationale for the adoption of the dress code in schools has to be founded on more cogent and tenable reasoning such as:

- (1) Upholding of academic standards;
- (2) Promotion of decorum and discipline in academic atmosphere;
- (3) Enforcement of morality and decency;

Students' choice of clothing in school should be such that their safety is ensured as well as conformability in the school environment. Clothing plays major roles in the lives of an individual and should therefore not be overlooked.

Various Clothing Styles used on Tertiary School Campuses

Accounting Odeleye (2000), students in tertiary schools spend considerable time discussing "looks," exchanging information about the availability of particularly desired garments, and who has been seen wearing what and where. Most of them love clothes. Their interest in apparel is valued in positive terms by the friends they move about with and they all spend considerable time and effort discussing the current dress in vogue. "It is the combination of clothing that demonstrates your sense of style." said a 22 year

old student, “Clothes place me in my class,” said a twenty-four year old marketing student. One said she did not like baggy jeans, “no boring loose slacks” as one expressed it, “because they are tomboyish, and gangster,” a comparison that we also heard some young men make.

Odeleye’s study indicates that every student dresses to suit his or her taste. During his interactions with some of young students in one campus in Nigeria, one of them said they dressed decently but casually. Students dress for lectures casually rather than formally, and casual clothing could take any form: from provocative (dressing the observer feels uncomfortable to watch) to the exposure of sensitive body parts.

Students’ attitude to wearing traditional outfits revolves around beliefs and age. Looking best on “traditional clothing” evoke a level of maturity which some young students consider to be old fashioned. Something that is associated with what their mothers and grandmothers wear is considered old fashion (Hansen, 2004). With such an outlook, no wonder that “casual” is the thing to wear. In another instance, a twenty-one year old woman said, “Everything I wear should make people look and say ‘wow, she is nice...’.” In their concern to create their own fashion statements and demonstrate an individual sense of style, students would make sure they show off their personality in their choice of clothing, while their self-styling attitude has something in common with their colleagues.

Considering, the above comments made by students, one would imagine the various types of clothing exhibited on campus. Hanson again stated that, the desired clothing silhouette for both adult women and men is neat and tidy. It is a product of immaculate garment care and of wearing

clothes in ways that are not considered to be too revealing. Even then, women's and men's garments are understood differently. The cultural norms on how to dress weigh down on women more heavily than men. In effect, women feel restrained in their freedom to dress so as not to provoke men (Hansen, 2004). Women should not expose their shoulders. Above all, they must cover their "private parts," which in this region of Africa includes their thighs. This means that dress length, tightness, and fabric transparency become issues when women interact with men and elders both at home and in public. The desire for uniqueness, to stand out, while dressing the body on Ghanaian terms entails considerable skill in garment selection, making discriminating decisions concerning quality, style, and value for money in garment co-ordination to fit specific occasions and contexts, and in the overall presentation and comportment of the dressed body to produce a "total look." Many young adults are extraordinarily savvy when it comes to making clothing choices aimed to produce particular effects.

All-bany (2007), after monitoring the Ghanaian media houses and visiting news stands for sometime observed that most of them had intensive discussions about the present Ghanaian dress styles in the society and this is not different from what is used on campus. The media houses including the print, the electronic and the internet play a role in the various dress styles used on campus. For instance some of the Ghanaian dailies had articles that were captioned "the dress to kill craze", "The law on indecent dressing must bite" and "What had happened to decent Ghanaian dressing". From some of these write-ups it could be deduced that some of these headline suggest there is something wrong with the current mode of dressing be it outside or on

campus. However, in the school setting students claimed their choice of clothing suits the environment in which they are.

All-bany's (2007) study identified the trend of dress styles exhibited in the school environment under the following:

- i. **Provocative Dressing:** - Dress styles that had disturbing and compelling attraction from the audiences towards the wearer. These are styles made of seen-through fabrics, too tight fabric, vibrating body plains, protruding body shapes or structures, which compelled the observers to watch especially from the opposite sex. Some of the local descriptions for such dress styles are 'Apuskelenke', 'fufu and dish', 'show your waist', 'show your back', 'backyard', 'follow me' and 'show your front' among others.
- ii. **Body Exposure:** – This described the act of dressing and exposing specific parts of the body in such a manner that was considered unacceptable or indecent in the educational institutions. The clothing often looked too skimpy (too small) to cover the body parts thereby exposing vital parts of males or females such as the chest, the back of the buttocks, the breast, the nipple, the navel, the waistline, the thighs and the cleavage – (the space between a woman's breasts seen in a low cut dress). Some local terms used to describe type of clothing are 'I am aware', 'Free show', 'Ma tricky Jesus', 'Excursion', 'Dare you' and many more.

Clothing styles such as these used on campus even though do not reflect the accepted indigenous code of dressing in an academic institution, are influenced from various sources, be they psychological or social.

Values and Choice of Clothing

The theory that a close relationship exists between the product or brand choices a consumer makes and the values they seek to satisfy, is the theory that underpins the present study. "Examination of values provides a more meaningful and interpretive analysis of the underlying motives that structure attitudes and behaviour" (Dichter, cited in Dibley, 2004, p.24). This explains why various choices are made by individuals (students).

Rokeach (1973) defines value as, "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence". It is critically important to understand what these values are, as they serve as a basis for the formation of beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Rokeach describes values as, a standard employed to influence the attitudes and actions of at least some others. To him, parents will attempt to pass down to their children, beliefs about preferable conduct or end-states of existence. In Munson's (1984) work on personal values, he sums up the breadth of definitions by scholars, while at the same time acknowledging the reasonable degree of consensus that has emerged. Values, Munson (1984) says, have been defined as, "a need, a belief, a motive, any object of interest, a conception of the desirable and not something merely desired, a standard in terms of which evaluations are made, and a cognized belief of what ought to be required by society" (p.16). He summarizes values as "beliefs about what the individual considers right, fair, just, or desirable". It would be realised from definitions above that values could be personal as well as social; this is because a culture, an individual and a society he belongs may share the same values. A student in a school

environment is also likely to adapt to the common norms in addition to his own which could be conflicting.

Baker and Jenkins (1997) highlight five key elements of values that appear frequently on this subject:

1. Preference values: concerned with choices or alternatives.
2. Endurance values: enduring beliefs.
3. Guidance values: act as guides to behaviour or action.
4. Centrality values: beliefs that are centrally held.
5. Abstractness values: abstract or ambiguous concepts, as opposed to attitudes which are generally seen as object-specific.

This analysis is in line with the five formal features of values identified by Schwartz and Bilsky (1987). According to the latter authors, values are concepts or beliefs, pertain to desirable end-states or behaviours, transcend specific situations, guide selection or evaluation of behaviour and events and are ordered by relative importance. In Schwartz and Bilsky's book; *Toward universal psychological structure of human values* page 557, two distinct tracks have emerged in the literature with regard to applications of values theory: the macro approach, and the micro perspective. The macro approach is, quantitative in essence, aimed to clustering individuals into groups (social) which was defined by a prior specified value orientations. Dibley (2004) assumed that character is socially conditioned and proposed three typologies of social character: tradition-directed, inner-directed, and other-directed: Values take the micro perspective when they limited to an individual. As such "values are personal, traditional and social directed" (p.31). An influential

student of a different culture can easily affect his colleagues with his values there by causing them to choose similar clothing of his.

Dibley, (2004) again attempted to define individuals according to distinct value orientations, claiming that, cultural value is determined by biological human nature, social interaction and the culture's uniqueness." Maslow's need hierarchy (1954) is also pertinent to this macro discussion of values. He believed that an individual's "most basic needs must be satisfied at a minimum level before other needs are activated" (Lee & Beatty, cited in Dibley, 2004, p.32). they described a hierarchy moving from physiological needs to safety needs to belongingness, to self-esteem, to self-actualization. A value, to Maslow, is simply a specific type of need which motivates and directs individuals to fulfil it. However, the question that remains is whether there is a link between values and choice of clothing. In Munson's (1984) work on personal values (1984) he discusses the difficulties in linking values and brand choice. He asserts that; different value systems may lead to the same formal behaviour, students dressing according to school environment and, similar value systems may lead to different behaviour: Students from the same culture choosing clothing differently to suit associations/friends. He asserts that values may prove more useful in discriminating choice behaviours among alternative generic clothing categories, than among specific brands within a given generic category such as mini skirts, maxi skirt or a variation in term of colour. He concludes that values are only indirectly linked to brand choice behaviours, stating that it is, more likely that anyone value or value system will operate to influence brand choice through a system of intervening attitudes.

These views are echoed by Shrum and McCarty (1997) who assert that, values' studies on values view the relationship between values and behaviour as simple and direct but ignores other variables like antecedent and intervening in the value-behaviour relation. Examples of these variables include attitudes, individual difference variables, and demographics. Shrum and McCarty illustrate clearly that, if there is a weak link between personal values and behaviour, then, the impact of values on making clothing choices will be correspondingly weak as well (p.59). They conclude from their studies using Rokeach's Value Scale and Kahle's List of Values that, for low involvement products in particular, choices among products may have little to do with value orientations. They also reach the interesting conclusion that the value-behaviour link depends on the nature of the individual. They therefore explained that, individuals who are more aware of their internal dispositions such as motivations, attitudes and values, and are more prone to introspection, more confident of their values, and more aware of links between internal disposition and behaviour. Their study concluded that, the more individuals were aware of their inner feelings, the more differentiation they exhibited in their ratings of the personal values. A search on values takes us to America to study list of values that could influence choice of clothing.

List of Values (LOV)

“The absence of a universally certified set of values and their mode of operations has hindered progress in the empirical study in this area” (Goldsmith, Heitmeyer & Freiden, 1991, p. 246). Kahle (1996) and colleagues developed a simple operational list of American values as a direct response to

the many complex and lengthy operational values that made surveying inconvenient and limited the scope of values in studies of individual choices. Goldsmith et al, stated. The LOV survey was found to contain a high percentage of items that people feel influence their lives daily (Beatty, Kahle, Homer, & Misra, 1985). LOV is based on Maslow's (1954) theory of hierarchy and Rokeach's (1973) study of 18 human values called Rokeach Value Survey (RVS).

The nine values included in the LOV instrument are self-respect, sense of accomplishment, being well respected, security, warm relationships with others, excitement, self-fulfilment, fun and enjoyment in life, and sense of belonging. The external values from the LOV include being well respected, warm relationships with other, sense of belonging and economic background. The internal values from the LOV are self-respect, sense of accomplishment, security, fun and enjoyment, self-fulfilment, and excitement. Kahle (1996, p. 138) defines the values as follows:

- (i) Being well respected: to be admired by others and to receive recognition.
- (ii) Security: to be safe and protected from misfortune and attack.
- (iii) Warm relationships with others: to have close companionships and intimate friendships.
- (iv) Sense of belonging: to be accepted and needed by our family, friends, and community. Self-respect: to be proud of yourself and confident with whom you are.
- (v) Sense of accomplishment: to succeed at what you want to do.
- (vi) Fun and enjoyment in life: to lead a pleasurable, happy life.

- (vii) Self-fulfilment: to find peace of mind and to make the best use of your talents.
- (viii) Excitement: to experience stimulation and thrills.

When studying values in personal behaviour and clothing choices the LOV are most commonly used. Two very significant studies compared the use of LOV to other value surveys in understanding people behaviour. Kahle compared and contrasted LOV and RVS in regard to marketers' interest, social desirability, and measure of assessment.

The findings related directly to assessment suggested LOV contains a more relevant set of values than RVS. Additionally, values aid understanding and interpreting important areas of consumer attitudes and behaviours, and have empirical validity for consumer behaviour research. The study concluded that LOV contained a higher percentage of items said to influence individuals' daily lives. Dixon's study revealed that through the LOV, four of the five psychological values were most important with regard to clothing choices in human being daily lives. High ranking values were sense of accomplishment (94%), self-respect (93%), fun and enjoyment (90%) and self-fulfilment (89%). The most important daily value was **self-respect** – an internal (psychological) value. Self-respect is defined as: being proud of yourself and confident with who you are. The other most important daily values were self-fulfilment (an internal value) and being well-respected (an external value). The high ranking and importance this study placed on internal values brings us closer to understanding and informs us of students' perceptions of self as social objects. To Goldsmith et al findings, the value of excitement in United

States and United Kingdom is more important as far as internal values are concerned.

A second study conducted by Beatty, Kahle Horner and Misra (1985) compared and contrasted LOV and Values and Life Style (VALS). The results of the study implied that LOV predicted consumer behaviour trends better often than did VALS. Their study concluded that LOV had greater predictive utility than did VALS in consumer behaviour trends. LOV had an advantage of obtaining demographic predictions and readily identifying the source of influence.

The work of Kahle (1996) provides strong support for the use of LOV in determining which values are most influential in guiding dress and appearance behaviour. External values from the LOV have been found to have an impact on fashion as it relates to appearance. Goldsmith, et al (1991) earlier attempted to reveal external values of fashion leaders. Their study examined the relationships between fashion leadership and the values. More specifically, the researchers compared hypothesized differences in the importance placed on external values between fashion leaders and fashion followers. Using an all female sample, they found that fashion leaders or those found to be more fashion conscious placed a greater importance on two values: fun/enjoyment and excitement.

Goldsmith et al. (1991) found that external values and fashion leadership demonstrated that external values offer insights into the motives underlying fashion purchases.

Values have been found to vary among different groups. In 1997, Prensky and Wright-Isak took a values-based approach to examining culturally

targeted television commercials. The study found that black respondents viewing black culture oriented commercials were more positively affected by the commercial's message. As a result the black oriented television advertisements elicited a positive strong response to the brand and commercial itself, and generated a significantly different response in terms of perception of the value message. Prensky and Wright-Isak (1997) therefore concluded that being well-respected was rated the highest value in all commercials by African American respondents followed by self-fulfilment, self-respect, and accomplishment.

Using the LOV, Kahle (1996) associated external values with need for affiliation, group identification and conformity, which linked external values with an increased importance on style, brand name, and the utilitarian qualities of a garment. All of the previous cited studies support the importance of studying values using LOV to produce useful information which contributes the study of values, clothing and appearance, and human behaviour.

Individual ambivalences relating to issues of individuality bring clothing to a very personal level (Kaiser, 1997). Internal factors may not have as obvious an influence as external factors and have not been studied as extensively. Internal factors are more closely related to individual values and belief systems and tend to provide an explanation or reasoning for an individual's perception of self as a social object.

Other researchers agree that there are variables that intervene between values and behaviour. Prensky and Wright-Isak (1997) believe that, attitudes and behaviours are enactments of values and that enactment is a socio-cultural process that occurs in the context of a community. Allen (2001) proposes an

attribute-mediation approach where, human values do not influence product preference directly, and instead values influence the importance of product attributes that in turn guide product evaluation and purchase. Allen (2000) also describes the attitude-mediation approach where, values influence general attitudes toward products that in turn guide product evaluation.

Based on the discussion on personal values one can not possibly state whether values influence choice of clothing or not based on the two schools of thought. This study hopes to bring out what pertains between polytechnic students and their choice of clothing. This research hopes to find out if there are external forces that influence individuals' values and whether these impact could affect students' values and choices.

Psychological Factors and Choice of Clothing

Psychological factors may not have as obvious an influence as social factors. Dixon (2007, p. 47), indicated that "psychological factors are more closely related to individual values and belief systems, and tend to provide an explanation or reasoning for an individual's perception of self as a social object". Hazen (1998) emphasizes that "good appearance builds morale, helps to maintain our self respect and is important in achieving success in our competitive system whether we are competing in the social, political, economics or marriage market" (p.10). Psychological factors that are useful in determining appearance are typically those that are found in clothing and appearance research. Psychological factors include self-consciousness, self-confidence, self-fulfilment, excitement, sense of accomplishment, fashion leadership, security, fun and enjoyment and spending behaviour. Self-

confidence and self-consciousness are two personality characteristics that are capable of providing understanding regarding the individual in relation to self.

Psychological Protection through self-Consciousness

According to Kaiser (1997), the use of dress or adornment for psychological protection has a long historical and cross-cultural tradition. For instance, in culture, and in private lives, one may find that some clothing symbols that are believed to bring us luck or happiness. For example, there is a tradition of wearing something old, new, borrowed, or a specific colour when it is associated to good fortune. There may also be “lucky” dresses or favourite clothes which are associated have favourable experiences, and thus we associate them with luck. Again, it is common to wear a team’s colour to a football game, to symbolise spirit and to support a team. The Ghanaian football team is believed to have recorded loss over the years when playing with their blue jerseys and this was perhaps “confirmed” in their match with Egypt in the African Cup of Nation tournament that took place in Ghana in 2008. Reasons like these could influence ones choice of clothing.

Expression of Individuality, Self- fulfilment and Self Confidence

“Apparel and fashion are means through which individuals may express their unique personalities and views.” (Goldsmith, Flynn & Moore, 1996, p. 242). It is fashion leaders who are more fashion forward and strive for individuality or uniqueness in clothing and appearance. Persons who emphasize their own individuality and personal interest in order to set themselves apart from others are inner-directed. “An inner-directed person has an inclination to internalize standards, in an effort to be a non-conformist in

clothing and appearance, a follower of a sub-cultural style, or a fashion leader” (Miller, 1999, p. 208). Those individuals who strive to meet clothing and appearance expectations of others are other-directed. Other-directed individuals adopt fashion in an effort to conform to others in dress and in doing so become a conformist or a fashion follower Miller stated.

Fashion leaders have different internal and consumer characteristics than fashion followers. Fashion leaders are more involved with fashion and apparel. They tend to be more abreast of fashion; they shop more, and spend more money on apparel than fashion followers (Goldsmith et. al, 1996; McKinney et al, 2004; Stanforth, 1995; Workman & Kidd, 2000; Xu, 2001). They are early adopters of new styles and are risks takers. Nevertheless, the choice to be a fashion leader or fashion follower is guided by personal values. Fashion opinion leaders are considered to be individuals who influence the decisions of other people to accept or reject an innovation and are reference groups for many consumers. Fashion opinion leaders can influence an entire segment of consumers, if they endorse a particular fashion.

Consumer research as well as apparel research regarding shopping enjoyment and finances has indicated that students are very much interested and aware of fashion -they enjoy shopping and spend a significant portion of their income on apparel and apparel related products and services (McKinney et al., 2004; Simon 2003). But the question still remains; do economic factors limit students from making clothing choices?

It has been observed that students in the Polytechnic enjoy shopping while in school especially during week ends. Fisher’s (1996) study of the characteristics of black consumers similarly indicated that Africans in his

sample believed shopping was fun and they enjoyed making trips to the mall on social event. These findings support other research (Goldsmith, Heithmeyer & Freiden, 1991; Stanforth, 1995) that fashion leaders gain fun and excitement from activities related to fashion.

Osei-Poku and Adu-Agyem (2008, p.4), added that “African are always willing to spend money to acquire the best. They choose to purchase brand name goods which may be perceived by others as a sign of success”, however brand name apparel is important in enhancing individuals’ personal appearance, but has the design of an apparel any effect on one’s choice of clothing?

Social Factors and Choice of Clothing

It is hardly controversial to say that society has an unhealthy obsession with images of beauty, good looks and the idea of perfection. If one were to judge our civilization solely by images found in magazines and on television and film, they would labour under the false impression that not only did we all bear a striking physical resemblance to each other, but that we are an inordinately attractive race. More controversial, perhaps, is the subtext beneath the plethora of attractive entertainers. Turn on any television show, flip through any magazine, go to any movie and if you do happen to come across someone who doesn’t fit into the narrow mould of what is considered good looking, chances are that person is presented as either the "bad guy" or, more probably, the "nerd" Sexton (2006). Again, there is evidence to suggest that the constant flow of images that stem from a certain ideology do have an effect on the masses, and there can be little doubt that modern society's obsession with appearance can be traced to an onslaught of images holding out

as the ideal a physicality that is not only unrealistic for the majority of people, but also unhealthy. Beyond that, and perhaps far more dangerous, is the possibility that those who do not attain this ephemeral and phoney concept of the ideal are treated with disregard and discrimination. In other words, some dress choice situations are more conscious than others, and the audience plays a part in its selection.

In sociological and anthropological literature, the role of dress in human society has often been described as a form of non-verbal language or code through which people communicate to their audience. Society has the ability of expressing what is termed ideal. In terms of its audience, dress does two antithetical things: it includes into a group identity those dressed the same way and excludes those who dress differently. Similarly, dress choice is both public and personal and as such is influenced not only by social constraints but also by individual choice (Dixon, 2007). This leads to enormous diversity in dress behaviour. For example, African often negotiated their ethnic identity by wearing a mixture of native and western clothes in a variety of combinations. Dressing the body can also be both a passive process and be actively used as a medium of asserting a person's position in non-verbal social 'dialogue'. Likewise, dress codes related to age and profession will have played a part in expressing belonging or distinguishing between groups in society. The society, again have a way of influencing ones choice of clothing through what he or she is being expose to. Emphasis placed on dress and appearance by an individual is influenced by social and other factors.

In this study, social factors include media, school environment and referent groups such as peers, and family members who are believed to have a direct influence on individuals' clothing and appearance choices.

Media Influence

Media and acculturation present new ideas and designs in dress, which affect the cognitive structures and network of thoughts of individuals. Cognitive theorists believe that perceptions change and that this change is inevitable (Manwa, Ndamba & Lokadhia, 2010). School authorities should be well informed of these changes hence there is need to constantly conduct market research.

Individuals are usually receptive to the various social influences around them. Influencers of dress and appearance maybe associated to media. Media are used as a source for gaining knowledge and are known to significantly shape value systems (Villani, 2001). Before discussing the effects media has on students and young adults it is important to understand the concept of media literacy. In simple terms, media literacy is a set of skills that enables people to critically analyze messages in the media. Media literacy encourages people to ask questions about what they watch, see, and read. Kyle (2008) indicated that developing the skills needed to detect things such as propaganda, censorship, and bias are vital to creating an accurate account of media exposure. This is the primary reason that young people tend to be more adversely affected by the media. Young people, who might be called media illiterate, are far more vulnerable to media influence than older and more mature individuals who have developed these skills. It helps form beliefs, ideals, and structures everyday life (Al-Obaidi, Lamb-Williams & Mordas,

2004). It has the ability to teach which in turn may directly or subtly influence the user's behaviour Villani again indicated. The influence of media is phenomenal in today's society because media are carriers of popular culture (Cusic, 2001) which includes clothing and appearance. Media's ranges of influence are evident in the following examples, a percentage of youth for that matter students enjoy hours of music videos on television. However watching videos may negatively influence clothing and appearance, communication, spending habits and self-esteem. In the April 2004 issue of 'Essence', cited by Dixon (2007) in her study on students clothing and appearance, an article appeared regarding the negative effects music videos had on one college student. The author writes, "My younger sisters and I learned to dress, style our hair and speak by watching videos...I bought \$20 lip glosses – well beyond my student budget... I dug deep, maxing out two credit cards with purchases for trendy purses and leather boots I could barely walk in." "...My professor pointed out the negative impact of videos on my self-esteem. He suggested I stop watching them for a time to see what would happen" (p.32). The media does not only influence choice of clothing but students' way of life.

As the world becomes more fast-paced, people become more dependent on the media to shape ones life. This has led to several trends in "society" (Kanellakis, 2007). The negative effects of the media can be seen most predominantly in today's young people. Research studies have shown media can have negative effects when the content contains themes such as violence and aggressive behaviour, sexual content, body image, and stereotypes. Exposure to the wrong types of media is not the only concern. Studies have also shown that too much exposure, even too positive media

forms, can inhibit mental development and adversely effect physical health. If not closely monitored, young people can suffer a vast array of negative effects from media exposure.

Media influence the subconscious mind of the masses. Students continue to spend money trying to achieve this look they constantly see in adverts. For instance, the basic trend in the media industry at the moment is to promote skinny, even skinny unnatural looking women's bodies as being beautiful. Students would therefore, strive to choose clothing that will give them this look. Women of all ages but especially young women look at magazines, TV, movies and other media products full of images that show skinny women's bodies. And these are perceived by the subconscious mind of young women as being a role model to follow and aspire to be like (Webster, 2007).

In the above example, television had the potential to condition its regular viewers to more readily accept and support negative imagery and behaviours. The influence of various media may be more powerful than research has reported. Today's younger generations are bombarded by numerous forms of media on a daily basis that may include television, movies, radio/music and music videos, magazines, newspapers, and internet. This generation has access to the internet, television, music, and print media and it dominates their leisure activities. "Each week 18-24 year olds spend an average of 10 hours online, 10 hours in front of a television and 5 hours listening to radio" (Weiss, 2003, p. 31).

Television

As technology rapidly advances, we find ourselves more submersed in various forms of entertainment and communication. Televisions can be found in nearly every household along with computers equipped with internet access. The society is becoming more and more capable of being constantly entertained, informed, or connected to other people at the click of a button.

Television has the potential to condition its regular viewers to more readily accept and support negative imagery and behaviours. As students are made to believe that anything coming out from the television is perfect so will every appearance be influential. The influence of various media may be more powerful than research has reported. While this fast paced accessibility has positive affected people by providing educational materials and cultural experiences that would otherwise not be possible, it has also negative effects. Television is the most obvious media influence on students' choice of clothing. In Moschis and Moore's (1979) research into decision-making among the youth; they find some support for their hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between the amount of television viewing and the extent to which an adolescent has brand preferences (although the findings are not statistically significant). Wyckham and Collins (1997) also find a correlation between brand recognition and commercial television viewing.

Internet

The internet is believed to be indispensable in the daily activities of today's society especially for that of students (Hoffman, Novak, and Venkatesh, 2004). It is a great tool for communicating and information seeking. In Hoffman et al., 2004 study, a total of 126 million Americans use

the internet with an average of 66 million users on a typical day. Among the growing users are Africans and college students. In 2003, 51% of the African population used the internet. To Hoffman et al. (2004), “college students are the heaviest internet users when compared to the general population” (p. 41). The internet is viewed as an essential enhancement to a college student’s educational experience because it is used in both their academic and social life Hoffman et al. again confirmed. Academically, students use the internet for class discussions and research purposes. Socially, it offers certain means of entertainment and a way to connect people for discussion (Al-Obaidi et al., 2004).

The internet has influenced the way fashion changes. The internet is credited for speedier fashion cycles because it allows young people opportunities to discover the most peculiar budding trends. Neuborne (1999) states that the rise of the internet, which has sped up the fashion life cycle by letting kids everywhere find out about even the most obscure trends as they emerge. Neuborne believes internet is responsible for varied and faster-changing fashions of today’s college students.

The internet is the medium of choice for this age group and highly important and useful in their daily life. The internet has influenced the daily activities of society so much so that it is becoming indispensable. College students’ use of the internet suggests that its content can be highly influential in certain aspects of their lives, particularly those areas concerning fashion and appearance.

Print Media

Print media such as magazines, news papers have an advantage over other forms of media because they are tangible items that can be held and passed around while electronic forms of media are considered perishable (Cusic, 2001). “New ideas for fashion may first be introduced by designers or innovative individuals. Fashion magazines may promote the style as “fashionable,” “the latest thing,” and “attractive” (Damhorst, 1999, p.11). Reading print media are a leisure activity among college students, however compared to previous years; the reading of newspapers and weekly news magazines has decreased (Hendel & Harrold, 2004).

Family Influence

Through socialization, family and peers play an important role in influencing young people’s choice of clothing and appearance. According to Meyer and Anderson (2000) social influences are strong variables in the susceptibility of individuals to peer and reference groups. The day to day social activities allow individuals the opportunity to interact and communicate with others, particularly family, peers lecturers and workers of the polytechnic community. This daily interaction is known as socialization, which is essential in shaping both the individual’s social and psychological basis needed to function in society. It is assumed that family socialization transmits values, norms, morals, and beliefs from one generation to the next. The family’s influence can be identified in various areas of an individual’s life. “Positive support and influence from family can lead to academic achievement of college-aged individuals (Hall & Rowan, 2001), while negative influence and a single-parent family, may contribute to materialism and compulsive

consumption behaviour by young adults” (p.10). The influence of students’ family on their choice of clothing is important in this study due to the role families play in value development. Africans are believed to conform to the standards set forth by their cultural group and in doing so they participate in socialization – lead by the family and supported by the ethnic group.

In the African culture, the family functions by transmitting values and beliefs that support the beliefs and behaviours of the culture. According to Stevenson (1994), cultural transmission of values and beliefs has long been a factor in understanding effective African family functioning. Clothing is a form of expressing one’s culture. This behaviour suggests that the values instilled by family at an early age continue to influence individuals into adulthood. The family, particularly parents, has a significant influence on students’ choice of clothing. According to Gravely (1999), studies of buying practices show that women are the principle purchasers of apparel. Women put special emphasis on apparel and may in many cases influence their husbands or boy friends when they purchase apparel. “During preadolescence (8-12 years old), the role the parent plays in shopping and selecting apparel decreases while the friend/peer role in shopping increases” (Meyer & Anderson, 2000, p. 243). The family’s role in influencing clothing diminishes significantly during adolescence and into young adulthood as the young person begins to conform to peers while developing an identity for themselves. Damhorst, et al., stated.

Peer Influence

Peer acceptance or approval of an individual's apparel is important. A peer group is made up of members who have equal standing within the group. (Weber, 1986) Most people feel a strong need to fit in with other members of their peer group. Some will even adjust their habits and clothes to conform to the standards of the group. This is because clothing that does not conform to the group's standards and expectations may be criticized. Persons as young as 11 and 12 years old have expressed the importance of peers liking the apparel they purchased (Meyer & Anderson, 2000). At this age there is also evidence of group affiliation and conformity in apparel behaviour. According to Meyer & Anderson, "as pre-adolescents age, they become more sensitive to others' opinion and will try to conform to those in the peer group, at least in clothing behaviour" (p. 250). During tertiary school level, students become obsessed with their appearance and begin to make independent apparel choices and shop alone or with friends, as a matter of fact, students prefer to shop with friends; they need the social consensus of help in making clothing choices (Damhorst, 1999) but there again the final decision is taken by them. In Weber opinion, this dual drive contributes to a conflict: the strong desire to be part of a group, and a growing urge to be recognized as an individual in your own right.

When students enter tertiary schools, needs and choice of apparels change. During this stage, students become more autonomous and self-reliant in making apparel choices. A significant percent of polytechnic students can be classified as fashion leaders and an even larger percent as fashion followers. Based on the results of Workman and Kidd (2000); Stanforth

(1995), undergraduate fashion leaders are non-conformist and seek to use apparel to express their own unique identity. Undergraduate fashion followers are conformists and seek to adhere to the apparel standards of a comparison group within the college community. Workman & Kidd (2000, p. 236) found that “college fashion leaders strived to be unique in comparison to other individuals or groups in their surroundings” (campus). The moment a college fashion leader perceived their dress and appearance to be similar to others on campus they would quickly adopt a newly introduced style. College fashion followers were labelled conformist because once this group perceived their dissimilarity to a comparison group, presumably college fashion leaders, they quickly adopted the new style. Stanforth also found a difference between undergraduate fashion leaders and fashion followers in using clothing to express individuality.

The study suggests that undergraduate fashion leaders use apparel to differentiate themselves from others and to create a unique public identity (Stanforth, 1995, p. 120). It seems fashion leaders desire to use apparel to establish individuality. Stanforth’s results are based on a sample of 142 undergraduate students where 36 were identified as fashion leaders and the remaining 106 were labelled as fashion followers. However, there were no results reported on the use of clothing for fashion followers. The study supports the influence of family on apparel selection. It is clear that college students are interested in being unique from or conforming to others in the college community. In either situation, “students are constantly faced with influences from reference groups” (McKinney et al., 2004, p. 389). It will appear that college students’ choice of clothing and appearance are internally

influenced. However, one can assume that the internal influence is based on the values and beliefs developed in childhood from various sources including family, peers, media and even school. Schools provide the type of environment that transmits values and provides a setting for the exchange of ideas within peer groups (Horn & Gurel, 1981). College campuses are ideal for this type of social exchange. Nevertheless, during childhood and pre-adolescence, the influence from family and peers on apparel behaviour is evident.

Adolescence and adulthood limit the amount and type of influence family has on certain areas of an individual's life. Other sources of influence exert different levels of influence that are negotiated internally by the student. The results of Wilson and MacGillivray's (1998) study on adolescent clothing choice revealed that "when ranked in rank order of most influence on apparel choice, Black adolescents had the highest score for media influence" (p. 443). Parental and friend influences were the next highest influence on apparel choice for Black adolescents, while siblings had the least influence.

Social/Economic Class Influence

According to Weber 1986, if a person value wealth, then the symbols of wealth may be important to him or her and will probable select clothing that look expensive. "Social class is an informal ranking of people in a culture based on their income, occupation, education, dwelling, and other factors" (Gravely, 1999). Previous studies that focused on clothing of women found that apparel choices were related to social class. One of the studies of Lunt and Livingston cited by Gravely (1999), indicated that, Black, regardless of their

social class status, put special emphasis on apparel. However, it is observed that there are some people who place emphasise on the cost of clothing to make clothing choices. Another study (Stone & Form), as reviewed by Gravely (1999), found that among students from all socioeconomic levels, students from the middle class knew what they wanted to purchase when shopping for apparel while the upper and lower class groups were unsure of the apparel items they wanted.

Realizing an increasing number of students in the work-force, Apple (1986) focused on the clothing choice practices of students by identifying and examining lifestyles, types of retail outlets shopped, fashion information sources used, desirable store attributes, and the relationship of these factors to specific demographic variables. Gravely - 1999 therefore asserted that differences in lifestyle had an impact on apparel buying habits. but has the design of an apparel any effect on one's choice of clothing?

Design Details of Clothing

It is important to achieve a goal of distinction in dressing. Distinction, in the context of this study, means individuality: dressing in the manner which will flatter a figure and express the wearer's temperament and personality. Knowing how to make the most of your looks means knowing yourself, studying your physical and personality characteristics so that you can make your clothes work for you. Studies have shown that generally people want to look good in their appearances, but they do not know the right outfits that are suitable for their body proportions and figure types. (Osei-Poku & Adu-Agyem, 2008) Some of the common complaints are "my legs are too skinny";

"I am thin and flat chested"; "my shoulders are too broad"; "my waist is very large"(p. 135) etc. These proportion problems justify that clothes should be carefully selected to harmonize with the wearer's silhouette or shape, occasion and personality.

Ideal silhouette is a unique system of analyzing figure proportionality and identifying styles that are flattering, pleasing and satisfying. Most fashion mistakes happen when garments are chosen because of the way they appear "beautifully" on fashion models, dummies and/ or friends (Corley, 2007). Such mistakes can convey uncertainty and confusion in the look of the wearer. Making sure that your clothing fits you properly is the first step in dressing for success. One's choice of clothing should ensure appropriate size, shape, style and colour. The key points that are very significant for consideration are knowing your body shape and the physical characteristics to emphasize and those not to. Again, examining how clothes fit; in terms of colour harmony, line, balance, proportion, emphasis and rhythm should be a concern.

Without a doubt, clothing is the most prominent facade of our well being in the society. It can camouflage, it can cover up and it can build as much as it can destroy our image (Corley, 2007). Whether it is fair or not, a person's first judgment of the other is based on clothing. The rest including intellectual appreciation comes only second. Osei-poku and Adu-Agyem (2008) indicates that few people have the perfect proportions that would allow them to wear almost anything, but they can create the illusion of average proportion by applying fashion illusion to allow the eye to see good appearances and minimize body faults.

Basic design concepts used throughout an apparel create a strong foundation for a successful market. Constructional details such as the effective used of elements and principles of design in both sketching and sewing plays a major role in influencing the customer. Design is about the arranging of various section of a garment to create a design pleasing to the eye (Bell & Ternus, 2002). A designer uses various elements to bring unity or a sense of wholeness and completeness to design work such as colour, balance, line, shape, proportion, harmony and emphasis.

Colour Influence in Choice of Clothing

The first and most critical of the design elements is colour. However, colour is a private experience, Bell and Ternus (2002) claimed. That is someone may see the sky to be blue or grass green but would not actually know that the shade of blue in view is the same precise shade that another person with normal colour vision sees. Human physiology and the viewing environment determine what each of us perceives at any given time and place. The choice of colour is therefore based on individual tastes.

Colour Combination in Clothing

The designer coordinates colour in eye pleasing arrangements to enhance clothing selection. According to Verdanhoff (1984), colour harmony is a combination of colours that look good with each other. The selection of fasteners, trimmings, notions and fabric must exist in harmony. This according to Bell and Ternus (2002) is based on six variations. The first point is complementary schemes which consist of two colours that are directly opposite each other on the colour wheel. For example, yellow trimmings on violet background attire or red belt on green dress. Split complementary

scheme consists of three colours with one central colour plus the two colours on either side of its complement. For instance, yellow blouse with red-violet and blue-violet striped skirt. This creates an interesting effect that could be a factor in clothing selection. Similarly, double complementary scheme consist of four colours-two colours plus their complements like yellow with violet and green with red. A garment made up of fabric, sewing threads and fasteners resulting from this scheme could be a factor in one choice of clothing. Triadic scheme is also another form of colour combination where three colours that are equidistant from one another on the colour wheel are made. Colours could be arranged side by side to form a design through the use of various decorations. Another interesting effect that could influence choice of clothing is when colour is coordinated through colour families, where a design is made up of two or more colours next to each other on the colour wheel. Such blend has one common colour. A person interested in the common colour turns to like such combination. The sixth form of a colour scheme is monochromatic. It consists of single colour in different values and intensities (more white or grey blended into the basic colour) e.g. navy blue with medium blue and light blue outfit.

Colour Interpretation in Clothing

Much common wisdom has evolved from the study of colour. Bell and Ternus (2002) stated that some colours related to red, yellow and orange are 'warm' while blues, greens and some purple shade are spoken of 'cool' colours. In the language of colour they make a statement. They call up feelings that don't have to be said aloud; they are simply understood because we share common experiences as humans. Warm colours are said to be aggressive

reminding us of fire and sun. They pop out at us to make strong colour strong colour statements. However, if red is the colour of passion, blues speaks to us of cool restraint. Cooler shades like the blues and greens are said to be recessive, relaxed and calm, reminding us of skies and grassy meadows at a distance. The idea that warm colours advance and cool colours recede comes to play in an individual choice of clothing. As much as the outgoing person would go in for warm colours, the reserved individual would prefer the opposite in order to hide 'him or herself'.

Colour used as a Communication Factor

Colour has a spoken language of its own. It is often used to add emphasis and flavour to our thoughts. An individual may choose a particular colour of clothing in order to communicate an intention. To Bell and Ternus expressions like 'true blue' suggests loyalty; 'royal purple' suggests a colour once worn by only kings, queens, and members of the courts; 'seeing red' denotes angry/strong feelings; black represents depression or mourning. However, remember that how a particular colour relates in western cultures, other cultures may apply different significance to certain colours. Again the students world may also have various meaning to colours which could influence them in their choice of clothing. For example, black is a traditional festive colour for Ashantis' mourning in Ghanaian culture while in the school environment it could be used for different reasons. Students could also associate special meaning to the various colours. Needless to say, school authorities and designers must beware of these factors.

Bell and Ternus again stated that colours may take on names of their own over time. This generally occurs through association with something that

people who share a language recognize as universal. Colour is a powerful visual element. It can set mood, emphasize features, and high light a product. In print advertising, research indicates that colour increases an ad's attention-getting. Certain colour combinations is been used for so long a time that viewing them makes us automatically think of a specific season or occasion. Students dressed in red are assumed to be demonstrating, mourning or celebrating a particular event like hall week. However, colour can be fickle, too. One fashion seasons' 'in' colour can be 'out' in the next.

Balance used in Defining type of Clothing

In the art world and fashion designing, the term composition means balancing various elements in an artful format. As artists plan the composition and design of their works, fashion designers compose and design apparel using colour, trimmings, patterns/motifs, texture to present an outfit. Designers combine every thing they know about art in producing a garment. A particular piece of blend could influence one's choice of clothing when the design is well balance to the admiration of the customer. Balance is therefore used as a merchandising strategy. Dressmakers seek a harmonious and eye-pleasing balance of elements in their designs such as using suitable zip fasteners in skirt, button and buttonhole in pyjamas and positioning them at the place. According to Bell and Ternus (2002), balance can be defined as an equality of optical weight and importance that creates a unified presentation. It could either be formal where two items of equal size or weight balanced equidistant from a centre point or informal the opposite (balancing away from the centre). An informal design creates an interesting effect.

Rhythm as a Feature in Clothing

Musicians are not the only ones who use rhythm in their art. Just as you find yourself tapping your foot to a compelling drum beat, some dress designs can impart feeling of movement and rhythm to those who see them. Rhythm can be defined as a sense of visual movement from one design feature to another in a single apparel presentation. This movement can come as a result of the effects of lines, shapes, or colours as well as varying length, lines and forms used in the overall display's design. Items like lace, braids, fringes, buttons, bias strips, buckles and other decorations are used for such arrangement. The arrangement of these things could result in the desire for such clothing. A designer also uses stitches to develop a sense of movement following the patterns established by the composition of a design.

Proportion as an Influential Factor

Proportion can be defined as a relationship between the apparent size or optical weight of two or more objects. In fashion designing, proportion could relate to an oversized sleeve used with normal-sized blouse or, it could describe the contrast (extreme difference in scale) between large and small items in display.

Bell and Ternus iterated that proportion has its place in fashion coordination, too. Imagine placing a big button in front of small size blouse, cutting a very low neckline for a busty figure. Not only is the design inappropriate, the proportion of button and neckline to the entire outfit is incorrect. However, a busty woman who wants to expose the breast would go in for such dress even though design may be out of the norm.

Texture as an Influential Factor

Today more than ever, people buy things based on trial and touch. If a product's tactile qualities are its most important feature, shoppers must know for themselves how the product feels. While some textures are easy to visualize, some require hands-on experience. Bell and Ternus stated that touch and trial are more important than ever to the world of shopping because of changes in how store function.

It is important to realize that texture can be seen as well as touched. How fashion designers use textural contrasts in dress designing can influence the appearance of clothing. In artistic and aesthetic terms, texture can absorb or reflect light, provide contrasts that enhance the features of the garment, and actually invite a shopper to touch. Remember, the more contact shoppers have with certain types of products, the more likely they are influenced.

Emphasis as a Feature in Clothing

Emphasis is presented last for a reason. Any of the art principles and elements discussed so far can be manipulated to emphasize specific features or focus attention on certain areas of a design. Bell and Ternus (2002) asserted. When the principle of emphasis is employed, a particular feature of the garment is highlighted. It is stated in the book of complete sewing that, sewing particular seams can be used to add decorative detailing. The run and fell seam, with its distinctive double stitching, adds style to casual clothes made from denim or drill cotton. Top stitching adds definition and sharpness, particularly on jackets and coats which could be the source of one's choice of clothing. What the designer chooses to emphasize depends on what he or she wants to communicate to the customer. A customer may also buy the garment

depending on the message intended to carry across when the dress is worn. If it is the importance of a new fashion colour, then emphasis is on that colour.

Cutting /Sewing Factors and Choice of Clothing

The importance of the cutting/sewing room in relation to the overall achievement level of a company cannot be overstated. In fact it would be true to say that the performance level of the cutting room is the key factor in one choice of clothing. The factor distinguishing the operation of the cutting room is the level of technology employed (Cooklin, 2006). This is because of the skills involved in the assembling of a garment and while each skill has a relatively small effect, if left uncontrolled these factors can together create very serious losses to a company.

Co-ordination in the Cutting and Sewing Room

Co-ordination plays an essential role in clothing construction. Generally a garment is made up from a number of materials such as fusibles, linings, pocketing, and decorations. These have to be cut, apart from the actual top cloth. The cutting and sewing room must co-ordinate each pattern and shape well to ensure a perfect match in a garment.

Defects

The beauty of a garment depends on the appearance. An outfit free of defects enhance its approval by the buyer. Cooklin (2006) reaffirmed the fact that readily visibly cloth defects must be eliminated during spreading in order to avoid its rejection because of a damaged component. Again, matching of patterned fabrics require matching during assembly, this should be possible with minimum degree of manipulation during sewing. Badly aligned components would almost certainly result in distorted garment as well wrong

shading. Where differing shades of the same colour are cut together, accurate shade marking in the cutting room is essential to prevent mixing up. Mixed up shades in garment can create marketing problems. An individual who value accuracy consider all these when choosing clothing.

Accuracy

Accuracy of cutting is of supreme importance because of its influence on the shape and more importantly, on the sizing. Apart from quality problems, inaccurate cutting not only cause hold-ups in production Cooklin (2006) again iterated. Rejection of some finished garments because of faults could be prevented when quality in ensured in the cutting and sewing room.

Sewing

For Cooklin (2006), the central process in the manufacturing of clothing is the joining together of multiple two-dimension fabric pieces to form a three-dimension garment-operation that involve sewing in one form or another. A garment that is poorly sewn has a short life span. A seam which unites two or more pieces of materials with sequence of stitches should be suitable for the purpose for which a garment is intended. The seam type is dependent upon the product. It must combine the required standards of appearance and performance.

Summary of Major Findings of Related Literature

The review of theoretical as well as empirical literature was done to throw more light on the factors that influence students' choice of clothing. The chapter was discussed in eight main sections and sub sections. The first section studied social adaptation theory as related to choice of clothing: A

theory which states how individuals adapt to various life roles through values development and fulfilment. It also defines the social and psychological aspects of an individual's thinking and reasoning in making choices. A conceptual framework was developed out of this theory linking social and psychological factors to choice of clothing. An empirical model was also given to support the framework.

Clothing and appearance and the various functions such as modesty, immodesty, protective, identity, adornment, and communicative were also discussed. Dress code on campus including various clothing styles used on the campus of Takoradi Polytechnic was viewed.

Values were studied in reference to students' choice of clothing. Various lists of values were illustrated as having influence on clothing. These were realised in an individual exhibiting the desire to be well respected, having warm relations, sense of belonging and that of accomplishment. Factors deriving from values were divided into social and psychological issues influencing choice of clothing. Psychological factors included internal values while social factors related to external influence such as friends, relatives and media. Media; television, internet and the print media were also examined.

Design details of clothing such as assembling of garments in terms of accuracy; colour and its combination and principles of a design were also viewed. Principles such as balance, rhythm, proportion, texture, emphasis were considered potential factors that could influence students' choice of clothing.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discussed the method adopted in carrying out the data collection. It discussed the factors influencing Takoradi Polytechnic students' choice of clothing. The main focus of the study was to find out social and psychological values and choice of clothing. It basically considered students from the Departments of Fashion and Accounting as its sample. Accounting department was chosen through random sampling (lottery method). Stratified random (proportionate) sampling procedure was used in both departments in selecting the respondents. This chapter also described the development and design of the instrument and gave details on how the study was conducted. The design of the study and the method used to administer the questionnaire was also presented. Finally, the procedure employed to analyze the data was described.

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey. Descriptive research design is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way (Shuttleworth, 2008). The survey research design is a very valuable tool for assessing opinions and trends. However, the trap of inaccuracy and bias exist even with unlimited budget, time and resources, there is no way of achieving 100% accuracy. Opinions, on all levels, are very fluid and can change on a daily or even hourly basis. However, Shuttleworth (2008) assured that despite these short comings, surveys are still a powerful tool and can be an extremely powerful research tool. As long as one is self-critical in designing a survey, an accurate

representation of opinion can be obtained to ensure the survey research design reflects the views of a genuine cross-section of the population.

This type of research is non-experimental and studies the relationships between factor influence and choice of clothing which are non-manipulated variables in a natural rather than an artificial setting. It basically inquires into the status quo (social and psychological factors) and attempts to measure what exist without questioning why it exists. The survey design is primarily concerned with the collection of data to test hypothesis or answer research questions concerning the current state of the phenomenon (Osuala, 1992). In relation to this study, there is a general perception that the western culture is influencing choice of clothing among the youth (students) and that there are other external factors influencing students' choice of clothing especially where there are no prescribed dress code, to which students must follow. Variables could be problematic in that, there are two ways of thinking about causes of a variable: deterministically and probabilistically. One can state that the social factors influenced students choice of clothing due to reasons mentioned earlier. This illustrates deterministic causation. Deterministic causation is where variable X (importation of western culture) is said to cause Y (unusual choice of clothing) if, X invariably produces Y. That is, when X is present then Y will 'necessarily, inevitably and infallibly' occur. Again, Probabilistic causation is illustrated by authorities who point to the increased chances of a factor promoting a particular choice of clothing among students (Cook & Cambell, 1979). This might sometimes place an impediment on which stand to take. This is in consonance with descriptive research, for which the event or

condition either already exist or have occurred and the researcher merely selects the relevant variable and analysis of their relationships.

Population

The target population for the study consisted of Higher National Diploma (HND) students of Takoradi Polytechnic in the Western Region of Ghana. The Polytechnic has four schools; School of Applied Arts (six departments with 1,690 students), School of Applied Science (four departments with 665 students), School of Engineering (four departments with 1,341 students) and School of Business (four departments with 1,631 students). (Takoradi Polytechnic Students 9th Congregation Report, 2010).

Research Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample for the study consisted of two departments: Department of Fashion and Department of Accounting. Fashion department was selected from the School of Applied Arts whilst Accounting department was selected from the School of Business. These two departments formed the sample population for the study. The study required two Departments for comparison purposes. The Department of Fashion in School of Applied Arts was purposely selected due to its link with the research topic. The Department of Fashion had 104 respondents.

School of Business was selected through random sampling from the three remaining schools (School of Engineering, School of Applied Science and School of Business) in Takoradi Polytechnic. Names of all departments under School of Business including the Accounting department were written

on pieces of paper. These were then folded and put in a basket for a colleague to randomly pick one which led to the Department of Accounting being selected. Agbeke and Denkyirah (1999) explained this technique as hand-picking the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their typicality. By using this, a sample that is satisfactory to the specific needs of the research is built. Department of Accounting had a sample population of 516 and 103 students responded. Table 1 below illustrates the required number of students sampled from both departments

Table 1: Research Sample/Participants

Department	Males	Females	Sample Population	Sample Size	
Accounting	44	59	516	103	
Fashion students	33	71	183	104	
Total	77	130			
			Male	Females	
Focused group	Accounting students		15	15	
	Fashion students		15	15	
Questionnaire Received it terms of Departments and Gender					
Classs	Fashion	Accounting	Males	Females	Total
HND 1	49	41	20	24	
HND 2	36	32	14	14	
HNS 3	19	30	10	22	
Total	104	103	44	60	207

There was a total of 183 students in the Department of Fashion out of which, 33 were males and 150 females. All males in the three classes of Fashion were selected through purposive sampling. This was due to the small number of males offering the HND Fashion programme.

The Department of Accounting had a total of 516 students made up of 410 males and 106 females (Takoradi Polytechnic's 9th Congregation Brochure, 2010). According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) cited by Sarantakos (1998), sample size is determined in accordance with population size. Two hundred and seven students participated, out of which 104 came from Department of Fashion and 103 from Accounting. Krejcie and Morgan's rule for sample size was applied when sample sizes of the two departments were put together. Equal number was required from each programme for comparison seek. Due to the higher number of students and the sample size required, systematic random sampling was applied in the Department of Accounting. The total number of students required in each class was in proportion to the class size. Gender was similarly considered. Accounting had a total of 44 male and 59 female respondents.

At the Department of Fashion, total number of men in each class formed part of the required percentage. Thirty three male and 71 female students participated. Pieces of papers were marked 'Yes' or 'No' and folded. 'Yes' pieces totalled up to the number of respondents needed for each class on both departments. Only female Fashion students who picked 'Yes' responded to the questionnaires since all males were automatically chosen. The same procedure was repeated for the focused group discussion.

Instrumentation

In accordance with the issues raised in the research questions, questionnaire was used to collect the required data for the study. The instrument was adapted and modified by the researcher from Dixon (2007) and Dibley (2004) studies, on “Social and psychological factors influencing fashion students’ choice of clothing”. Modification was based on the research questions.

The questionnaire used to elicit information from the respondents included open-ended and close-ended items. It was made up of six sections. The items in the section A, sought information on demography: gender, level and department and Section B, focused on seven basic factors that formed the background for both personal (psychological) and social (external) factors influencing students choice of clothing. Psychological factors formed the section C, whilst section D, discussed the social factors and comparism of the two factors. The various media channels that influence students’ choice of clothing were in the section E with clothing types discussed in section F. The dependent variables were choice of clothing whilst the independent variables were the social and psychological factors. Social factors such as media and referent (friends, peers and family) are driven by external values such as desire to be well-respected, warm relationships with others, and sense of belonging. Psychological factors like self-consciousness, self-confidence, self-expression in fashion resulting from one desire for respect, sense of accomplishment, fun and enjoyment, self-fulfilment, and excitement are internal factors. The close-ended questions seek to elicit the various types of clothing used by students of

Takoradi Polytechnic on various occasions and the parts of the body students desire to expose most often while being dressed.

Five points Likert scale type items based on the factors mentioned earlier was developed to reflect the focus of study. Respondents were asked to tick where applicable on the demography information. Students were required to respond to each item by choosing Important, Barely important, and Not Important to section two of the questionnaire. A rating scale such as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used in section C, (psychological factors). Very often, often, sometime, never were also used in response to social factors in section D.

The letter (x) was used to indicate the most frequent media used in students' choice of clothing. An open-ended question was again structured to find out various types of clothing students preferred during specified occasions.

To ensure the validity of the research questionnaire, the prepared questionnaires were submitted to my principal supervisor, an expert in quantitative research who went through and offered useful suggestions. Again, the instrument was pilot-tested on the Fashion students of the Cape Coast Polytechnic. The responses from the pilot test and the general test reflected the validity of test items due to the similarity in responses. On the part of reliability, the Cronbach Alpha's coefficient of reliability of the instrument was .806. However, few anomalies including asking students to rank a list of values in the order of importance when choosing clothing did not seem appropriate. These anomalies were however detected and reformulated for the actual study. Nine values (factors) were restructured into two main divisions

for students to choose most important factors group instead of ranking. Some questions were also eliminated due to their unsuitability. For instance, asking people if they choose clothing to ensure security, all received the same responses making it clear to assume every one put on clothing to achieve this was therefore not worth asking. It also became necessary to put questionnaire items of section two, three and four into tables for easy responding. Out of sixty questionnaires administered on the pilot study, fifty eight questionnaires were retrieved.

Items derived from the literature review on factors influencing the choice of clothing and appearance were measured against three, four and five-points scale. Each response coded with the value 1 standing in for each response like important, strongly agree and very often. Such as 5 = strongly agree 4= agree 3 = undecided 2 = disagree and 1 = strongly disagree.

Few selected questions were used for focussed group discussion based on main questions on the questionnaires.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires used for the pilot test was administered and collected the same day. Analyses and corrections were done within two weeks before the final questionnaires were printed. Once established, the questionnaires were administered to students in the various classes of the two departments. Participants were educated on how to provide response to each question. Sections that were not clear such as identification of unanswered items and terminological problems were explained and clarified.

Data was collected by research assistance and course secretaries. Duration of the data collection period was two weeks. Reminders were made to the participants who could not return questionnaire data after the initial collection of questionnaires was made till most are retrieved. A 3-day period was allowed between each of the reminders. Questionnaires were counted to ascertain total number collected through the survey. Return rate of questionnaires was 84%. Thirty students formed the number of samples from each department for group discussion making up of fifteen males and females from both departments. Two research assistances recorded the findings from the group discussion that was later used to support main findings. The researcher personally conducted the discussion.

Data Analysis

Questionnaires were coded for identification before it was input into a semi-pre-coded data on the variable view set available in Social Programme Statistical Scientists file. The responses in line with research questions raised for the study was analysed. First, the validity and reliability of the quantitative data was checked through Social Programme for Statistical Sciences (SPSS) software. The reliability co-efficient was checked using split-half reliability (Cronbach's alpha) programme. Data generated from the survey was completely coded for analyses. Missing data was addressed accordingly and attention given to descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, etc.) as well as descriptions indicating the spread and variations in the data. Analysis was done with reference to the theories stated in literature review and supported by results conducted on Social Programme for Statistical Sciences

(SPSS) software. Factor analysis was conducted on choices of clothing and appearance items.

Scoring of data in Section A which contains demographics was compiled to ascertain the totals of each division, for instance total number of male respondents. Various divisions were compared against factors to determine the most dominant one through the independent t-test. Each response was rated numerically from 1 – 5 on each item. A respondent who indicated “Strongly disagree” to a negative item obtained a score of one just as when indicated “strongly disagree” to positive statement. A response of “strongly disagree” to a positive statement attracts the same scoring process as above. Responses for positives as well as negatives would be summed up respectively in order for the various analyses to be made using the SPSS software. Research question one finds out the various types of clothing worn and the body parts mostly exposed by students in Takoradi Polytechnic through descriptive frequencies where percentage score of each item is given.

Research questions two and three sought to respectively find psychological and social factors influencing students’ choice of clothing in both departments of Takoradi Polytechnic. It is analysed using the descriptive statistics (frequencies) in order to determine the different percentages in factor influence on choice of clothing. Prediction of the most influential factors and students’ choice of clothing are also determined. Finally, independent t-test inferential statistics was employed to compare factors’ influencing choice of clothing in relation to gender and departments as required for research question four A and B. Data was summarised in tables according to the requirements of each research questions.

Data was first put into group statistics to obtain the number of participants, means score, standard deviation. The Levena's test for equality of variance (significance) was used to determine the spread of responses. Where equal variances were assumed the top role was traced to two tailed significance on the independent t-test, where scores were compared at the significance level of .05. A significance level below .05 indicated a significant difference while a figure above .05 meant no difference in responses. All significance factors were used in the independence t-test. The degree of freedom and the calculated t-test value in addition to the value scores of the two means were then used to determine the direction of difference. The variable with the greatest value dominates (males score greater than females or vice verse).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to investigate Takoradi Polytechnic students' choices of clothing. In particular, the study explored the social and psychological factors that influence the various clothing types worn by students on campus, the body part(s) often exposed, and the motivations behind such clothing. Also, the study tries to find out whether differences in tastes for clothing were dependent of students field of study (Fashion or Accounting), or the gender of students. More over, various channels which students are influenced were examined and the most influential channels identified.

In support of this, a questionnaire was designed, piloted and finally administered based on the objectives indicated in the preceding paragraph. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What types of clothing do students of Takoradi Polytechnic Fashion and Business departments wear?
2. What psychological factors influence students' choice of clothing and appearance in Takoradi Polytechnic?
3. What social factors influence students' choice of clothing and appearance?

Question 4 was answered by testing the null hypothesis, **H₀**, that:

1. **H₀**: "There is no significant difference in factors influencing Takoradi Polytechnic students' choice of clothing relating to gender.

2. **Ho:** “There is no significant difference relating to factors influencing Fashion or Accounting students’ choice of clothing in Takoradi Polytechnic.

Research Question 1: What types of clothing do students of Takoradi Polytechnic Fashion and Business departments wear?

The rationale behind this research question was to find out the various types of clothing worn by students of Takoradi Polytechnic. It includes all type of clothing used on campus at every occasion; Lectures, Hall/School Week celebrations, Church Service and formal occasions. Responses are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Types of Clothing Worn Most Often by Students on Various Occasions

	Formal	Traditional	Occasional	Casual	Total
ITEM	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)
Lectures	40(19)	42(20)	2(1)	124(60)	207(100)
Church Service	63(30)	46(22)	50(22)	58(26)	207(100)
Congregation/					
Matriculation	56(27)	47(22)	76(37)	28(14)	207(100)
Leisure time	23(11)	0(0)	0(0)	184(89)	207(100)
Hall Week					
celebration	12(6)	53(26)	36(17)	106(51)	207(100)
Total	194(19)	188(18)	159(15)	494(48)	1035/100

Numbers in parentheses are percentages

The variety in clothing types worn on campus was quite interesting. The most commonly used clothing type on campus is casual wear (48%) This

was followed by formal clothes (19%) and traditional (18%). The least type of clothes worn was occasional wear this is understandable because occasional wears are used on special occasions.

During an interaction with some of the young students, one of them said, they dressed decently but casually. Students dress for lectures casually instead of formally because casual wear could take any form; from provocative to the exposure of sensitive body parts. Okwu (2006) stated that certain types of dressing in public places such as school campuses are considered not only unsuitable but impede learning process. Clothing for lectures which is supposed to be formal is overtaken by casual garments due to the individual perceptions about clothing. While some use clothing for self-fulfilment, excitement and fun (Dixon, 2007), others do not actually care what they put on. Clothing performs various roles and functions. According to Weber (1990) an impression created of an individual due to his or her clothing could change a person's life. Weber therefore, warned that clothing can affect a wearer's performance potential and can potentially distract his or her attention by shifting or causing some discomfort. Students should maintain a clear and well cared for appearance in all settings on campus, Okwu (2006) concluded.

The patronage of traditional wear seemed improving in the finding of this research since students' desire for traditional wear has recorded (20%) and taken second position in the total ranking on choice of clothing for lectures. Gone are the days when students found in traditional clothing were considered old timer. Probably, the reason could be that traditional wears have now taken a different dimension. Various prints (Fabrics) are now used in designing

desirable styles for youth suitable for all occasions. The fact that students are now opting for traditional clothing is an indication that Ghanaians and for that matter, Africans are beginning to be conscious of their own cultural values. This finding is contrary to Hansen's (2004) view that, something that is associated with 'mothers' and 'grandmothers' wear is considered old fashioned and looking best in "traditional clothing" therefore evokes a level of maturity. Hansen continues to emphasise that students' attitude to wearing traditional outfits revolves around beliefs and age.

On the campus of Takoradi Polytechnic various types of clothing are used with names attached: In a Focussed group discussion students confirmed styles listed in questionnaires and went on to give meanings to the various types of clothing identified on campus as follows;

Otto Pfister – The wearing of trousers usually by males such that the waist and under wear or pants show and the trouser flap drops down.

I am aware – Intentionally or consciously dressing immodestly; exposing the breast, panties, stomach etc. such that onlookers might think was inadvertent. However, when attention is drawn to it, the person immediately responds "thank you, 'I am aware'".

Acapoco – Old time way of dressing e.g. old designs, hair styles, shoes, materials etc.

Hold my thigh and leave my leg trouser - the trouser or skirt is very tight at the hip but flares out down the leg.

Bare back – The back of the neck down to the level corresponding to the base of the breast is exposed.

Hipster - Short skirt, gathered and pointed at the edges.

Pencil – A normal pair of trousers or skirt but very tight at the knee or legs.

Skinny – Skin tight trouser that is so tight that others have to aid in its removal.

High waist – The waist of a dress, skirt, trouser or belt is put slightly above the waist of the person.

Show your stomach – Exposing the stomach such that the navel shows.

Abagbashie (exposing part of the breast) – ‘Pumping’ or pushing the breast up by using half cap brassieres or wearing low neck dresses.

Pusher – Knee length tight shorts worn by ladies.

Three quarters – Three – quarter trouser worn by ladies.

Accident – A dress with one sleeve.

Ma tricky Jesus – A long slit made in front of long skirts and slits. The dress appears decent at the back and at a distance but when the person sits down, the area between the thighs is exposed. It is believed that those who wear this intentionally sit in front at church to ‘trick’ Jesus (pastors)

Me kon ado owu (I am yearning to die) – A dress with designs covering the neck.

Again, a closer examination of the various types of clothing suggested casual wear was dominant on campus. According to Tortora (2003), “casual wears are, clothing designed to be worn on occasions that do not require more formal dress such as leisure and sportswear” (p. 63). However, most of these clothing mentioned are used on campus irrespective of the occasion.

Some of the clothing types mentioned included clothing that exposed parts of the body. Table 2 shows students’ views of body parts that they liked to expose most often.

Table 3: Body Part Exposure

Type of dress	Frequency	Percentage
Breast	54	26
Chest	19	9
Upper part of Buttock	22	11
Shoulder blade/ Upper arm	24	12
Thighs	30	14
None of these	58	28
Total	207	100

The study revealed that, students, (28%) do not mostly expose any of their body parts mentioned in Table 3. However, the next body parts students exposed were the breasts (26%), followed by thighs (14%) and shoulder blades and upper arm (12%). Few male students exposed their chest and the back waistline or the upper part of the two slopes of the buttocks (11%), Table 3.

The exposure of breasts and thighs is not appropriate for the school setting especially during formal activities even though, it might literally be in line with the views of Westermarck's stand, cited in Dibley (2004) that, the role of clothing is to display or emphasise the attributes of the body rather than concealing. In contrast, Langner (1959) cited in Ryan (1991) claimed that the human body is less interesting or erotic when it is totally exposed. Clothing that exposed sensitive parts is found in Kaiser's (1998) immodesty theory which states that clothing is used not to cover but to attract attention. However, the question is, should clothing used for lectures in the school setting be chosen mainly to attract? In a Focus group discussion, one female

student said she feels good and confident when part of the sensitive parts of the body is exposed and usually wish others would appreciate that. Another student said, “This is our time and we should be allowed to enjoy it”. A school is an academic institution with well defined guidelines, whose main aim is to ensure academic decorum with successful operation of the educational system and maintenance of school discipline (Fayokum et al., 2009). The choice of students’ clothing should be founded more on cogent and tenable reasoning such as: upholding academic standards, enforcement of morality, decency and security awareness. Fayokum et al., declared.

Students’ choice of clothing today confirms Lynn’s (2004) finding that shifting dress styles in the early to mid-20th century, that exposed more skin and revealed a person’s figure, created new definition in beauty today. This is also substantiated by Okwu’s (2006) revelation that, tertiary institutions of learning have been bedevilled with obscene dressing particularly by female students. Most girls go bare, depicting size and shape of the private parts with minis that barely skim the bottom. It appears now that to be fashionable regardless of where or who you are, one has to become half nude, dressed in sleeveless/see-through tops without bra.

Research Question 2: What psychological factors influence Takoradi Polytechnic fashion students’ choice of clothing and appearance?

The rationale for this question was to find out the psychological (internal) factors that influence students’ choice of clothing, such as excitement, self fulfillment, self accomplishment, desire for fun and enjoyment. Sub-factors emanating from these main factors are also studied and discussed in Table 4.

Table 4: Rating of Psychological Factors Influencing Takoradi Polytechnic Students' Choice of Clothing (% Respondents)

Item	Important	Barely important	Not important
Excitement (to experience stimulation and thrills)	51.7	31.4	16.9
Self-fulfilment (to find peace of mind and to make the best use of your talents)	85.5	11.6	2.9
Fun and enjoyment in life (to lead a pleasurable, happy life)	45.9	40.6	13.5
A sense of accomplishment (to succeed at what you want to do)	77.8	17.4	4.8

Excitement which relates to experiencing stimulation and thrills through choice of clothing, approximately 52% indicated excitement as important, 31% claimed barely important whilst the remaining 17 suggested not important. In the school environment where entertainment is so much desired, some students would choose clothing to experience some joy.

With regard to self-fulfilment in the choice of clothing; finding peace of mind and making the best use of one's talent through careful choice of clothing, almost 86% stated self-fulfilment as important, about 12% claimed it as barely important and only three percent indicated not important. In a group discussion, most students emphasized on the desire to dress for self-fulfilment and being admired by others while some few students feel self satisfaction to them is very important. Dixon's (2007) study reveals that, a large portion of

African-American students were concerned about making a good impression; yet they were not overly concerned of what others thought of them.

In view of fun and enjoyment in the choice of clothing to lead a pleasurable and happy life, close to 46% respondents found it important and, about 41% suggested barely important. The remaining (13%) stated fun and enjoyment as not important. In assessing sense of accomplishment; to succeed at what you want to do, in students' choice of clothing, nearly 78% of respondents indicated sense of accomplishment as important, 17% saw it as barely important and, only five percent marked it as not important. This supports Dixon's (2007) finding which recorded a figure of 94% considering this factor important. An indication that the desire to succeed at what one wants to do is valued by students and this is exhibited through their clothing. Students who find themselves in an academic environment where choice of clothing should not have any relationship to academic achievement might therefore do so to accomplish their numerous intentions. Succeeding at what one wants to do could take various forms; positive to negative. Choice of clothing could consciously or unconsciously carry a message to viewers.

The study was also interested in finding out how students operationalised degree of importance attached to issues relating to excitement, self-fulfilment, fun and enjoyment, and sense of accomplishment. Therefore, students were requested to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning how they felt about the issues stated above. Table 5 summarises the students' views.

Table 5: Rating of Issues Relating to Excitement, Self-Fulfilment, Fun and Enjoyment, and Sense of Accomplishment

	Agree (A)	Undecided (U)	Disagree (D)
Try newest clothing to determine looks	51.2	22.7	26.1
More careful in my choice of clothing	95.7	2.9	1.4
Bored wearing same type of clothes	66.2	10.1	23.7
Wear clothing according to mood	58.9	20.3	20.8
Plan and prepare clothing days in advance	61.8	17.9	20.8
Avoid certain clothing, which do not make me feel distinctive	74.4	10.1	15.5
Spend a good deal of time coordinating colours in my wardrobe	43.0	23.7	33.3
Clothed to ensure safety and protection	83.6	11.1	5.3
Clothed to make an ordinary occasion exciting	59.4	19.8	20.8
Try colour combinations to make an occasion special	68.1	16.9	15.0
Buy clothes to boost my morale	44.4	16.4	39.1
Wear clothes that make me feel confident	92.2	3.9	3.9
Buy clothes with well-known labels	45.9	22.7	30.4
First to buy new styles in fashion	15.5	24.2	60.4
Wear styles even if friends are uninterested	28.0	22.7	49.3
Wear unusual clothing though, attract attention	24.6	17.4	58.0
Wear what society may not approve	26.1	13.5	60.4

Psychological factors influencing students' choice of clothing in this study comprised of four main items with sub-items; the main internal items are excitement, fun and enjoyment, self-fulfilment and sense of accomplishment.

Excitement which relates to wearing clothing to make an ordinary occasion seem more exciting, (58%) trying clothing for pleasing colour combinations to make an occasion special and, being the first to buy new styles of clothing that appear on the market, approximately 52% indicated excitement as important, 31% claimed barely important whilst the remaining 17 suggested not important. With regard to pleasing colour combinations for instance, to experience stimulations and thrills, 68% of respondents agreed, 17% were undecided but 15% disagreed. The excitement factor in choice of clothing has indicated an average percentage regarding students' decision-making in selection of dresses. However it is contradictory to Goldsmith et al.'s (1991) finding, that the value of excitement in United States and United Kingdom is more important.

In view of fun and enjoyment in the choice of clothing such as trying newest clothes each season to determine looks in new styles, 51% agreed while 26% disagreed. Spending a good deal of time coordinating colours in one's wardrobe was not quite important to students. 43% agree, 24% undecided and 33% disagree. On trying clothing with pleasing colour combinations to make an ordinary occasion special and, more exciting (leading a pleasurable and happy life), close to 68% respondents agreed, 17% were undecided. The remaining (15%) disagreed.

With regard to self-fulfilment in the choice of clothing; finding peace of mind and making the best use of one's talent through careful choice of clothing, 96% agreed, 3 undecided and 1% disagreed. 58% disagreed to wearing clothing that are distinctive and give satisfaction irrespective of public opinion. Forty four percent agreed to buying clothing to boost their morale,

39% disagreed and 16% were undecided. Citing careful choice of clothing as an example under self-fulfilment, nearly 96% agreed, three percent were undecided where as only one percent disagreed.

According to Dibley's (2004) study, high ranking values in students' choice of clothing were sense of accomplishment and self-fulfillment with the figures of 94% and 89% respectively. In assessing sense of accomplishment; to succeed at what one wants to do, through the avoidance of clothing that do not make the individual feel distinctive and wearing clothes that give a feeling of confidence, 92% agreed to this statement four percent disagree while the rest were undecided. In wearing clothes that give confidence as an example under sense of accomplishment, 92% of respondents agreed this factor influence their choice of clothing. Four percent disagreed while the other four were undecided. The study supports Dixon's (2007) views that psychological factors such as self-fulfillment and sense of accomplishment were significant and contributed to the influence on choice of clothing and appearance of students. However, the desires for which students clothed themselves to be fulfilled and for their aims, accomplished could be different from the normal.

Research Question 3: What social factors influence students' choice of clothing and appearance?

The rationale for this question is to find out social factors which influence students' choice of clothing and appearance. Social factors are derived from external values such as desire to have warm relationships with others: longing to be accepted and needed by family, friends and community and dressing to be admired by others and to receive recognition (being well-respected) and sense of belonging are studied in Table 6.

Table 6: Ratings of Social Factors Influencing Takoradi Polytechnic Students' Choice of Clothing and Appearance (% Respondents)

Item	Important	Barely	Not
		Important	important
Sense of belonging	68.2	15.9	15.9
Warm relationships with others	42.0	36.2	21.7
Being well-respected	79.7	15.0	5.3

There are three main components under social factors in this study namely; sense of belonging, warm relations and being well respected. In addition to these components are the channels in which students are normally influenced.

With regard to the sense of belonging, a social factor that deals with one being accepted and needed by the family, friends and community, about 68% of respondents claimed sense of belonging was important in their choice of clothing. An equal percentage of 16% was each recorded for barely important and not important in students' choice of clothing.

On the desire to have warm relationships with others as a factor for students' choice of clothing, 42% of respondents claimed that warm relationships was important in their choice of clothing, about 36% indicated barely important while the others estimated at 22% thought the factor as not important.

Eliciting responses from students with regards to the individual selecting clothing to be well-respected by others, almost 80% recognised the factor as important. Fifteen percent suggested barely important but five percent indicated the factor as not important. A high percentage of students indicated

that within the social factors, they would choose clothing to be well respected by the general public and again wish to belong. This affirmed that Students endorse Weber's (1990) view, which states that a false impression created of an individual due to his clothing could change a person's life. He went on to warn that one's clothing could mean a difference between success and failure not only in interpersonal relations and professional career but also in educational pursuit.

The study was also interested in finding out how the students operationalised the degree of importance that they attached to issues relating to sense of belonging, warm relations with others and being well respected. Therefore, students were requested to indicate their response rate in statements concerning how they felt about the main issues stated in Table 7. Table 7 summarises the students' views.

Table 7: Rating of Issues Relating to Sense of Belonging, Warm Relations with others and being Well Respected

	VO	O	S	N
Involvement of friends in making clothing choices.	5.3	6.8	52.7	35.3
Uncomfortable when my clothes are different from all others.	9.7	12.6	43.0	34.8
Choose clothing similar to that of friends on campus.	3.4	5.3	28.0	63.3
Acquire clothes on special occasion to suit that of my friends.	7.7	10.1	19.3	62.8
Dress like friends in order to belong to a group.	3.4	4.8	11.6	80.2
Feel more friendly and outgoing in certain clothing.	17.4	13.3	40.6	29.0
Feel more part of the family when dressed like relatives.	19.8	18.8	34.8	26.6
Family's opinion of my clothing more important than friends.	56.5	15.0	20.8	7.7
School environment does not influenced my choice of clothing.	26.1	10.1	34.8	29.0
Cost of clothing is not a hindrance to my choice of clothing.	18.8	11.1	42.2	28.0
Normally use cost of clothing to determine my status.	11.1	10.6	24.2	54.1
Keep my wardrobe up-to-date to be accepted.	13.0	10.1	30.0	46.9
Wear different clothes to impress	8.2	4.3	23.2	64.3

There are three main components under social factors in this study namely; sense of belonging, warm relations and being well respected. Actions relating to sense of belonging include selection of clothing to suit friends, family

members and the general public. For instance, on asking friends what they would wear to an event before the individual's choice of clothing, 53% responded they would sometimes seek friends' opinion. Contrarily, on choosing clothing similar to that of friends on campus and, dressing like friends, approximately 63% and 80% responded in the negative (never) respectively. In comparative terms of belonging, between friends and family, nearly 57% of respondents preferred selecting apparels suitable more to the family than friends. Also of interest was the influence of the school environment on students' choice of clothing. There was however no obvious opinion as responses were pretty close; very often – 26%, often 10%, sometimes – 35% and 29% for never.

On Table 6, warm relationships with others, a factor for students' choice of clothing recorded 42% of respondents claimed that warm relationships which involves having close companionship and intimate friendship with other students was important, about 36% indicated barely important while the others estimated at 22% thought the factor as not important. Warm relationship among students is highlighted in students asking their friends what they are wearing to an event, buying, getting new clothes for a special occasion when clothes are not similar to what friends are wearing. On these highlights however, between 62 and about 80% contradicted their stance about warm relationships in the choice of clothing as they claimed they never asked friends about what they would wear or buy clothing similar to what friends wear.

Eliciting responses from students with regards to the individual selecting clothing to be well-respected by others on table 5, almost 80%

recognised the factor as important. Fifteen percent suggested barely important but five percent indicated the factor as not important. However, when questioned about keeping a wardrobe up-to-date to be accepted and, wearing different clothes to impress people both of which explain the desire to be well-respected, approximately 47% and 64% respectively responded never. Similarly, on using cost of clothing to determine one's status for respect, students, close to 54% indicated never. A closer examination on the social factors and choice of clothing Table 5 confirmed being well respected (80%) as a cherished value in students' selection of clothing even though they would like to have warm relations (42%) and sense of belonging (68%).

An examination on social items in Table 7 shows that, 71% of students consider family opinion often more important than friends in their choice of clothing. Thirty eight percent feel more part of their family when dressed like family members. In the focussed group discussion, Students emphasised that they did not dress similar to friends, nor did they dress to belong or choose clothing to impress or suit friends. However, they would sometimes involve friends in making clothing choices. This could also mean students felt uncomfortable when their clothing was different from that of others. Again it was realised they felt more friendly and outgoing when dressed in certain clothing.

Table 8: Rating of the Influenced of the Media

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Television	74	35.7
Magazines/Newspaper	59	28.5
Internet	48	23.2
Others	14	6.8
None	12	5.8
Total	207	100.0

In addition to the social factors mentioned earlier in Table 7, Table 8 continues to present the influence of the media on students' choice of clothing. Television had the highest percentage influence of 36%, followed by print media (Magazines/Newspapers) 29%, and internet, 23%. The remaining estimated at 13% claimed they were not influenced by the media but through other sources. This confirms Moschis and Moore's (1979) research into decision-making among the young. That found some support for the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between the amount of television viewing and the extent to which an adolescent has brand preferences. Wyckham and Collins (1997) also indicated that there is a correlation between brand recognition and commercial television viewing. This could be explained in the fact that students spent time watching television and reading print media.

Table 9: Rating of Most Influential Group of Factors

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
Psychological factors	125	60.4	60.4	60.4
Social factors	82	39.6	39.6	100.0
Total	207	100.0	100.0	

Considering the two groups of factors influencing students' choice of clothing, psychological values considered by students recorded 60% while social factors is 40% on Table 9. This is an indication that most individuals' choice of clothing is determined from within. This supports Sybers and Roach, (1962) view in Kaiser (1997) that apparel is a manifestation of man's inner needs.

Psychological factors influence dominant social factors on student's choice of clothing in this study. Although, all factors contributed favourably, students were very self-conscious and aware of their appearance. They reported being more careful in their choice of clothing checking themselves in the mirror before leaving home. A large portion of this group was concerned about making a good impression; yet they were not overly concerned of what others thought of them. These findings support Furby's, view cited in Dibley (2004), that Clothing in particular, was seen as a symbolic expression of who one was.

According to the findings, importance was placed on internal values with self-fulfilment being the most important value while seeking warm relationships with others was the least important factor in the selection of

students clothing. In addition, students were very self-confident, suggesting high inner belief in themselves. Again, they were more independent and knew what they wanted. All these internal characteristics reflect in their choice of clothing (researcher's observation from group discussion).

Research hypothesis 1: This was answered by testing the null hypothesis, **H₀** that:

H₀ "There is no significant difference in factors influencing students' choice of clothing in Takoradi Polytechnic attributable of gender difference against the alternative hypothesis,

H₁, that. "There is a significant difference in factors influencing students' choice of clothing in Takoradi Polytechnic attributable of gender difference

The rationale for this question is to find out if there is any significant difference in factors relating to students choice of clothing with regard to the gender of students in Takoradi Polytechnic. The significant differences in both psychological and social factors are discussed in Table 10 and 11 respectively.

Table 10: Mean Ratings on Psychological Factors influencing Takoradi Polytechnic Students' Choice of Clothing in terms of Gender

Item	Male		Female		t-cal	Sig. (2 tailed)
	M	SD	M	SD		
Spend time co-ordinating colour	2.1	.83	1.8	.87	2.759	.006
Clothing makes occasion special	1.6	.81	1.4	.68	2.428	.016
Clothed according to mood	1.8	.83	1.5	.77	3.157	.002
Enjoy wearing unusual clothing	2.2	.87	2.4	.83	1.994	.048
Ensure safety and protection	1.4	.65	1.1	.41	3.076	.003
Wear clothing for confidence	1.3	.61	1.0	.23	2.876	.001

With regard to the four main psychological factors which include excitement, self-fulfilment, enjoyment and self-accomplishment relating to gender, equal variances were assumed for all except self-fulfilment (0.00) which was .05 less than recorded on the Levene's test for equality of variances. However, the t-test for statistical difference in gender with the two-tailed significance revealed a value which rendering it insignificant.

Again, various items under the self-fulfilment factors were as follows: the mean score for males of spending good deal of time co-ordinating colours in wardrobe (M= 2.1, SD= .83) was greater than the mean score of the females (M= 1.8, SD=.87) with recorded significant differences of (t (205) 2.759, p =

.006). Selecting pleasing colour combinations to make an ordinary occasion more special for males again had the mean score of (M=1.6, SD=.81) against the females (M=1.4, SD=.68) with significant differences of (t (205) 2.428, p = .016). Male students wearing clothing according to mood had the greater mean score of (M=1.8, SD=.83) against their female counterparts (M=1.5, SD=.77). The differences in mean scores was significant (t(205) 3.157, p = .002). the females students however, enjoy wearing unusual clothing even though they attract attention. The mean score for males (M= 2.2, SD=.87) was less than the mean score of females (M=2.4, SD=.83). The differences in mean scores was significant (t(205) 1.994, p = .048). The mean scores of males exceeded those of females in three factors; clothing according to mood; Selecting pleasing colour combinations to make an ordinary occasion more special and spending good deal of time co-ordinating colours in wardrobe.

In assessing sense of accomplishment which involves succeeding at what the individual wants to do, the mean score of male students putting on certain clothing to ensure safety and protection (M=1.4, SD=.65) was greater than their females colleagues (M=1.1, SD= .41). The difference in mean scores was significance (t(205) 3.076, p = .003) while wearing clothes that give a feeling of confidence scored a significance of (t(205) 2.876, p = .001). Both factors were, thus, significant.

A closer examination of the means as stated in Table 10 implies that, the male gender dominates in the above factors that influence their choice of clothing as compared to their female counterparts. The outstanding psychological factor in which female students exceed the males is the wearing of unusual clothing (M = 2.4, SD=.87) against that for the males (M =2.2, SD

= .83) suggesting that males' choice of clothing is influenced by internal values, indicating individuality while females are sometimes externally directed. According to Miller (1999), an inner-directed person has an inclination to internalise standards in an effort to be a non-conformist in clothing and appearance.

The hypothesis that indicates no significant difference in gender on psychological factors influencing Takoradi Polytechnic students' choice of clothing is therefore rejected, and it is concluded that there is a significant difference on psychological factors attributable to gender regarding students' choice of clothing, specifically on colour combination, dressing according to mood, for confidence, safety and protection is retained. This supports Dixon's (2007) stance that psychological factors such as self-fulfilment, self-accomplishment, excitement and fun were significant and contributed to the influence on choice of clothing and appearance.

Table 11: Mean Ratings on Social Factors influencing Takoradi Polytechnic Students' Choice of Clothing in terms of Gender

Item	Male		Female		t-cal	sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	M	SD		
Warm relationship	1.7	.74	1.9	.78	-2.131	.034
Similar to friends	3.3	.85	3.6	.66	-2.834	.017
Dress like friends	3.5	.88	3.8	.56	-3.291	.000
Dress like relatives	2.5	1.10	2.8	1.04	-2.366	.019

Table 11 presents the results of the independent-samples t-test performed on social factors' influence on students' choice of clothing. The two independent groups of males and females were randomly selected. In respect of the social

factors, equal variance was assumed for all except the sense of belonging $p=.032$, dressing similar to friends $p=.017$ and putting on different clothing to impress $p=.006$. The test revealed that out of the sixteen factors presented for analyses, the independent sample t-test analyses determined four items having significant difference in students' choice of clothing socially. Among these items is one that belongs to the main factor of warm relationship. The warm relationship factor involves choosing clothing for close family companionship and intimate friendship with others.

The values for students buying/getting new clothes for a special occasion when clothes are not similar to what friends are wearing had means score of ($M=3.3$, $SD=.85$) for males and ($M=3.6$, $SD=.66$) for females with t-test significant difference value of ($t(205) = 2.834$, $p = .017$). Feeling more part of family when clothed like relatives had mean score of ($M=2.5$, $SD=1.10$) for males and ($M=2.8$, $SD=1.04$) for females with a significant difference figure of ($t(205) = 2.366$, $p = .019$).

As seen in Table 11, comparison of the means from the two independent groups suggests that there was statistically significant difference in the means with male students choosing clothing for warm relations ($M=1.7$, $SD=.74$) being less than female students ($M=1.9$, $SD=.78$). The difference in mean scores was significant ($t(205) = 2.131$, $p=.034$). This is an elaboration substantiating earlier findings on psychological factors that point the male gender dominating at internal factors. Here again, the female gender is being projected as fashion followers. This is because they would choose clothing for warm relations, similar to friends, dress to belong and at the same time wish to choose clothing to suit relatives.

This finding substantiates Hansen's (2004) view that the cultural norms on how to dress weigh down on women more heavily than men. In effect, women feel restrained in their freedom in their choice of clothing. The study also supports Dibley's (2004) assumption that an influential student of a different culture can easily affect the female colleagues with his or her values thereby causing them to choose similar clothing. That is, if these clothing would please people around.

Therefore, the research hypothesis that, there is no significant difference in gender on social factors (warm relations) was rejected and it was concluded that there existed a significant difference attributed to gender regarding choosing clothing for warm relations. This result contradicts the result of Odeleye's (2000) hypothesis which indicates that there is no significant difference in the perception of male and female as regards the factors that influence adolescent clothing habits.

Research hypothesis 2: This question was answered by testing the null hypothesis, H_0 , that:

H_0 : "There is no significant difference relating to factors influencing Fashion or Accounting students' choice of clothing in Takoradi Polytechnic" against the alternative hypothesis, H_1 , that "There is a significant difference relating to factors influencing Fashion or Accounting students' choice of clothing Takoradi Polytechnic".

The rationale for this question was to find out if there is any significant difference in factors relating to students' choice of clothing with respect of the two departments of Takoradi Polytechnic. Tables 12 and 13 present the summary statistics.

Table 12: Mean Rating of Psychological Factors influencing Fashion and Accounting Students' Choice of Clothing in Takoradi Polytechnic.

Item	Fashion		Accounting		t-cal	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	M	SD		
Excitement	1.4	.65	1.9	.78	- 4.606	.000
Self-fulfilment	1.1	.27	1.3	.56	-3.183	.002
Bored wearing same clothing	1.4	.76	1.7	.91	-2.450	.015
Clothed according to mood	1.5	.78	1.8	.82	-2.668	.008
Spend time coordinating colour	1.7	.81	2.2	.86	-4.317	.000
Clothing makes occasion special	1.3	.55	1.7	.84	-4.438	.000
Wear cloth for confidence	1.0	.28	1.2	.54	-2.674	.009
Style friends are not interested	2.1	.84	2.3	.86	-2.149	.033

In view of the four main psychological factors which include excitement, self-fulfilment, enjoyment and self-accomplishment to department, equal variances were assumed for self-fulfilment ($p=.000$) and sense of accomplishment ($p=.005$), less than .05 recorded on the Levene's test for equality of variances. The test revealed that out of the twenty-two items discussed, the t-test analyses suggested eight have significant difference in students' choice of clothing psychologically. Among these factors is the main factor of self-fulfilment. The mean score for Accounting students ($M=1.3$, $SD=.56$) was greater than the mean score of the Fashion students ($M=1.1$, $SD=.27$). The difference in mean score was significant ($t(205) -3.174$, p

=.002). Items supporting the self-fulfilment factor recorded t-test difference in mean scores significance as follows; students spending good deal of time co-ordinating colours in wardrobe ($t(205) = 4.317, p < .001$); selecting pleasing colour combinations to make an ordinary occasion more special ($t(205) = -4.438, p < .001$); wearing clothing according to mood ($t(205) = -2.668, p = .008$); enjoy wearing styles friends are not interested in ($t(205) = -2.149, p = .033$). With the exception of the factor (student spent time co-ordinating colour), Accounting students have higher means than those of Fashion students in the supporting items of self-fulfilment. This could be explained in the fact that Accounting students are business students who would choose clothing to fulfil the aims of their profession (succeed in business). Furthermore, it could be assumed that the assumption rate of clothing messages is not the same as stated in Kahle (1996) that, a person absorbs external information and transforms both the information and himself or herself in such a way as to promote adaptation or vice versa. The integration and specific meanings will be unique for each individual, but similarities in experiences and semantic environments, such as those shared by individuals within a particular demographic category, will lead to measurable similarities and patterns of response.

In assessing the sense of accomplishment which involves succeeding at what the individual wants to do, the mean score for Fashion students ($M = 1.4, SD = .65$) was less than the mean score of the Accounting ($M = 1.9, SD = .78$) relating to selecting clothing to excite self. The difference in mean score was significant ($t(205) = -4.606, p < .000$). With regard to students choosing clothes that give a feeling of confidence, the mean score for Fashion

(M= 1.0, SD=.28) was again less than the mean score of the Accounting students (M= 1.2, SD=.54). The difference in mean scores was significant ($t(205) = -2.674, p = .009$). Concerning students getting bored wearing the same clothing, the mean score for Fashion students (M=1.4, SD=.76) continues to be lesser than the Accounting students (M=1.7, SD=.91). The difference in mean scores was significant ($t(205) = -2.450, p = .015$).

A closer examination of the means as stated in the Table 11 implies that, Accounting students consider more the sense of accomplishment, self-fulfilment and excitement in choosing clothing as compared to the Fashion students. Accounting students were well inclined in internal factors (psychological) as far as clothing choices are concerned. Therefore, the hypothesis which indicates that; there is no significant difference attributable to programme of study on psychological factors influencing Takoradi Polytechnic students' choice of clothing was rejected. It was therefore concluded that there was a significant difference with regard to psychological factors (specifically, self-fulfilment and sense of accomplishment) influencing students' choice of clothing attributable to their programme of study, (Fashion or Accounting). This result supports the views of Shrum and McCarty (1997) who concluded that, the more individuals were aware of their inner feelings, the more differentiation they exhibited in their ratings of the personal values.

Table 13: Mean Difference in Social Factors Influencing Fashion and Accounting students' Choice of Clothing in Takoradi Polytechnic

Item	Fashion		Accounting		t-cal	S
	M	SD	M	SD		
Sense of belonging	1.7	.85	1.3	.58	4.062	.000
Warm relationship	2.0	.79	1.6	.72	3.329	.001
Similar to friends	3.6	.66	3.4	.82	2.540	.012
Dress like friends	3.8	.55	3.6	.85	2.245	.026
Cost to determine status	3.0	1.08	3.5	.92	-3.411	.001

Table 12 presents the results of the independent-samples t-test performed on social factors' influencing on students' choice of clothing of two independent groups of randomly selected students (Fashion and Accounting). In respect of the social factors, equal variance was assumed for sense of belonging ($p < 0.01$). The test revealed that out of the sixteen factors presented for analyses, the independent sample t-test analyses certified four issues as having significant difference in students' choice of clothing socially. Among these factors were, sense of belonging and warm relationships. Fashion had the mean score of 1.7 and standard deviation of .85 while Accounting recorded 1.3 with standard deviation of .58. The mean difference rating with regard to sense of belonging between Fashion and Accounting students was significant, ($t(205) 4.062, p < .000$). Furthermore, the mean score for Fashion students with regard to dressing similar to friends was 3.6, as against the score of 3.4 for Accounting students.

Another social factor for students' choice of clothing is to have warm relationships. Warm relationships had mean scores of 2.0 for Fashion and 1.6 for Accounting students. The mean difference in rating with regard to warm relations between the two programmes was significant, ($t(205) = 3.329, p = .001$). The results implied that Fashion students considered dressing to belong and to have warm relationship more important than their counterparts in the Business Department. This supports Kaiser's (1997) view that clothing is an important factor in the interpretation of body image that affects the response behaviour of the beholder. Simmel (1973) also concluded that students who want to belong choose clothing to fit the group they are associated with.

Regarding the use of cost of clothing to determine status, Accounting students consider it very necessary. They recorded the mean value of 3.5 for Fashion students. This could be explained in the fact that their course of study deals with finance and costing as against 3 and they know or appreciate more the values and importance of something on the cost or worth of it. Again, the African is always willing to spend money to acquire the best which may be perceived by others as a sign of success. Osei-Poku and Adu-Agyem (2008) are of the view that brand name apparel is important in enhancing individual's personal appearance. For the accounting students, it could also mean they believe they could use money to improve their outlook.

Comparison of the means from the two independent groups suggests that Fashion and Accounting students' choice of clothing for warm relations and sense of belonging showed a statistically significant difference. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in departments on

social factors was rejected due to the fact that there is significant difference in students' choice of clothing socially.

There is the assumption that as much as some students would choose clothing for warm relations or sense of belonging, however, all students wished to be well respected by all regardless of the groups they belong. Therefore, policies taken by school authorities would have to consider these disparities. This is partly supported in Munson's (1984) work on personal values. He argued that there are difficulties in linking factor influence and brand choice in that, different value systems may lead to the same formal behaviour and students dressing according to school environment/department traits or similar value systems may lead to different behaviour. Moreover, he argued that students from the same culture might choose clothing differently to suit associations or friends.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary: Overview of the study

Generally the study was to find out the psychological and social factors influencing students' choice of clothing in Takoradi Polytechnic. The study was also interested in the various types of clothing worn by students and body parts exposed. Research design was descriptive. The Sample was made up of Fashion students (104) and Accounting students (103). Random sampling was done. The research sought answers to four main issues:

- (i) Types of clothing of students of Fashion and Business departments
- (ii) psychological factors influence on students' choice of clothing and appearance
- (iii) social factors influence on students' choice of clothing and appearance
- (iv) the significant difference in factors relating to students choice of clothing with regards to:

The gender of students in both departments

Fashion and Accounting department students

Research item 4 involved the testing of two hypotheses:

- a) **Hypothesis:** There is no significant difference in factors influencing students' choice of clothing in Takoradi Polytechnic attributable to gender difference.

H₁: There is significant difference in factors influencing students' choice of clothing in Takoradi Polytechnic attributable of gender difference

b) **Hypothesis:** There is no significant difference relating to factors influencing students' choice of clothing attributable to the students' programme of study, Fashion or Accounting.

H₁: There is significant difference relating to factors influencing students' choice of clothing attributable to the students' programmes of study, Fashion or Accounting.

The data for the study were provided by students Fashion and Accounting from the Takoradi Polytechnic. In accordance with the issues raised in the research questions, a questionnaire was developed in addition to a focus group discussion guide that was used to collect the required data for the study.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research questionnaire, a pilot testing of the instrument was conducted at Cape Coast Polytechnic and responses generally satisfied the research study. The combat alpha co-efficient was .806. A few anomalies were detected and eliminated in the actual questionnaire.

Key Findings

The variety in clothing types worn on campus indicated that the most commonly preferred clothing type used on campus was casual wear, followed by formal clothes and traditional. The least types of clothes worn were occasional. Occasional wear was used on special occasions. The study revealed that, some students did not mostly expose any of their body parts. However, the next body parts students exposed were the breasts followed by thighs and shoulder blades. Few students exposed their upper arm and the back waistline or the upper part of the two slopes of the buttocks.

On the part of factors influencing students' choice of clothing, high ranking psychological factors (values) recorded were self-fulfilment and sense of accomplishment.

Considering students' choice of clothing and the society (social factor), it was discovered that clothing are selected with intention of being well-respected having sense of belonging, with the least being warm relations. On the part of the Media, Television had the highest percentage influence, followed by print media (Magazines/Newspapers) and internet. The least claimed they were not influenced by any of the media channels mentioned. An observation of findings that solidifies Dixon (2007) illustration that, social and psychological factors had an equally significant opportunity in influencing the dependent variable, clothing and appearance. However, the level at which each operates is different in an individuals life.

The mean scores imply that, the male gender dominates in all the psychological factors that influence their choice of clothing as compared to their female counterparts. Males' choice of clothing is influenced from internal values indicating individuality while females are mostly sometimes externally directed. Female students were more inclined to wear clothing depicting warm relations, similarity to friends, sense of belonging and also choose clothing to suit relatives than male students.

Examination of the means suggested that, Accounting students considered psychological factors such as sense of accomplishment, self-fulfilment and excitement as more important in choosing clothing as compared to the Fashion students. Fashion students were influenced by social factors

(warm relations and sense of belonging) in the choice of clothing than Accounting students.

Conclusions

Results of this study revealed that students of Takoradi Polytechnic choose clothing to satisfy their own desire. Casual clothing was most frequently used by students on campus for most occasions which explains the free range of clothing types worn on campus. Students wished to have the liberty to put on anything regardless of its implications. Exposure of the breast by students was approved by more than 25% of the respondents. Therefore, it may be concluded that students do not consider the breast as a sensitive part of the body hence its exposure. It could also be concluded that the intent to expose part of breast could be purposive regarding the fact that they sometimes chose clothing for self-fulfilment and sense of accomplishment.

Self-fulfilment is the leading factor in making clothing decisions among students. It can therefore be concluded that internal values are ranked high by students. They also wished to be respected despite what they wear. It can be concluded therefore, that students did accept choice of clothing as a yardstick for judging other people but would not wish to be judged based on their clothing choice. They would not keep a wardrobe up to date to be accepted nor wear clothes to impress people.

It may be concluded that students' choice of clothing was purposeful, they were mostly internally-driven as far as their clothing choices were concerned even though, the female gender was occasionally externally-driven.

There is a significant difference in choice of clothing regarding gender psychologically. Female students were more likely to wear unusual clothing while males put on clothing according to mood. Socially, there existed a significant difference attributed to gender regarding choosing clothing. Female students would choose clothing for; warm relations, similar to friends, dress to belong and the same time suit relatives while their male counterparts would not.

Regarding choice of clothing in relation to programme of study, it is concluded that Accounting students selected clothing for self-fulfilment: to promote an environment conducive for their field of study. They chose clothing to conform while their counterpart Fashion students explored to come out with something new in order to impress. While Accounting students were internally driven in their choice of clothing, Fashion students searched around to come out with something new. The integration and specific meanings is unique for every individual, but similarities in experiences and semantic environments, such as those shared by individual students within a particular demographic category, lead to measurable similarities and patterns of response hence their choice of clothing.

Recommendations

Based on the most common type of clothing used by students, the factors that influence their choice of clothing, and the significant differences that exist in terms of gender and programme of study, the following recommendations are made:

School authorities should institute an orientation programme to educate students on the acceptable choice of clothing on campus. There should be seminars on various types of clothing and the suitable occasions to match. There should be seminars on individual's values and their impact on the society. Students should be encouraged to attend programmes from other departments in order to share common views including the choice of clothing. In addition, differences among individuals should be considered in policy making.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further research is suggested on:

The youth's understanding of messages sent through clothing they wear.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Questionnaire on Factors Influencing Takoradi Polytechnic Students'

Choice of Clothing

The researcher is investigating the above mentioned topic. Your opinion is of great value to this study. Please allow me to take few minutes of your time. You are guaranteed complete anonymity and your responses are for academic purpose only. Please tick (✓) to the appropriate response.

NB: Clothing in this research refers to anybody covering e.g. dresses, jewellery, shoes, etc related to personal adornment which encompasses all forms of body decoration or alteration in order to express, protect or communicate about the individual.

SECTION A

Thank you for your interest in this research.

Gender: Male ___ Female _

Department: Fashion ___ Accounting ___

SECTION B

Rate each item indicating how these relate to you personally when making clothing choices. Select each response by ticking (✓) the following, important, barely important and not important.

Item	Important	Barely important	Not important
1. <i>Excitement</i> (to experience stimulation and thrills)			
2. <i>Self-fulfilment</i> (to find peace of mind and to make the best use of your talents)			
3. <i>Fun and enjoyment in life</i> (to lead a pleasurable, happy life)			
4. <i>A sense of accomplishment</i> (to succeed at what you want to do)			
5. <i>Sense of belonging</i> (to be accepted and needed by our family, friends, and community)			
6. <i>Warm relationships with others</i> (to have close companionships and intimate friendship)			
7. <i>Being well-respected</i> (to be admired by others and to receive recognition)			

SECTION C

Psychological factors

Indicate your choice below by ticking (√) in the blanks provided to the right of each statement.

Legend: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Undecided (U); Strongly Disagree (SD); Disagree (D).

Statement	Scale				
	SA	A	U	SD	D
1. I try on some of the newest clothes each season to see how I look in the new styles.					
2. I am more careful in my choice of clothing.					
3. I get bored with wearing the same type of clothes all the time.					
4. I wear clothing according to the mood that I'm in that day.					
5. I plan and prepare clothing to wear several days in advance.					
6. I avoid wearing certain clothing, which do not make me feel distinctive.					
7. I spend a good deal of time coordinating the colours of items in my wardrobe.					
8. I wear clothing that ensure my safety and protect me from misfortune.					
9. I wear clothing to make an ordinary occasion seem more exciting.					
10. I try for pleasing colour combinations in my clothing to make an occasion special.					
11. I buy clothes to boost my morale.					
12. I wear clothes that make me feel confident of myself.					
13. I put on certain clothing to ensure security.					
14. I try to buy clothes with well-known labels.					
15. I am one of the first to buy new styles that appear on the market.					
16. I like to wear what is new in the market even if my friends are uninterested.					
17. I enjoy wearing unusual clothing even though I attract attention.					
18. I wear what I like even though society may not approve					

SECTION D

Social factors

Indicate your choice by ticking (√) in the blanks provided to the right of each statement.

Legend: Very often (VO); Often (O); Sometimes (S); Never (N)

Statement	Scale			
	VO	O	S	N
1. I ask my friends what they are wearing to an event before I decide what to wear.				
2. I am uncomfortable when my clothes are different from all others.				
3. When buying a new article of clothing I try to buy something similar to what my friends are wearing on campus.				
4. I get new clothes for a special occasion when my clothes are not the type my friends will be wearing.				
5. I try to dress like my friends so that others will know that I am part of the group.				
6. I am aware of being more friendly and outgoing when I wear certain clothing.				
7. I feel more a part of the family if I am dressed like my relatives.				
8. My family's opinion of my fashion is more important than my friends' opinion				
9. The school environment does not influence my choice of clothing.				
10. Cost of clothing is not a hindrance to my choice of clothing.				
11. I use the cost of clothing to determine my status.				
12. I try to keep my wardrobe up-to-date to be accepted.				
13. I wear different clothes to impress people.				

Tick (✓) to choose the most influential group of factors in your choice of clothing.

- a. Desire to be proud of self and confident with who you are, have peace of mind with self and to succeed at what you want to do. _____
or
- b. Long to be admired by others, receive recognition, accepted by family, friends, community, have close companionship and intimate friendship. _____

Indicate your choice by placing (X) in the spaces provided after each response.

18. Which media do you use the **most** when looking for information about clothing?

- 1) Television _____ 2) Newspapers/ magazines _____ 4) Internet _____
- 5) Others _____ 6) None _____

SECTION E

State and describe the type of clothing you prefer to wear most often during the following occasion.

- a. Lectures _____
- b. Church service _____
- c. Congregation/Matriculation _____
- d. Leisure time _____
- e. School/hall week celebration _____

19. I usually like clothing that expose my: (**you can underline more than one**) (a) Breast (b) Chest (c) Upper arm/shoulder blade (d) Upper part of buttocks (e) thighs (f) None of these

Appendix B

Focus Group Discussion Questions

1. Would you consider the following factors in your choice of clothing:
 - a) Self-fulfilment
 - b) Warm relations
 - c) Being well respected
 - d) Sense of belonging
 - e) Excitement
 - f) Sense of accomplishment
2. Is it necessary to choose clothing that are accepted by friends, family and community or dress to find peace of mind with self?
3. Do you choose clothing to stimulate your mood and live a pleasurable life?
4. Would you choose clothing to have warm relations with people or to be proud of yourself and confident with who you are?
5. Would you choose clothing to be admired by others and/or receive recognition?
6. State and describe various type of clothing mostly worn on campus.
7. Are there parts of the body you mostly like to expose when dressing.