



THE IMPACT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS ON CLOTHING
PREFERENCES AMONG MALE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF UYO.

By

IBOKETTE, M. U.
Department of Home Economics
Faculty of Agricultural Science
University of Uyo

ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the influence of social and psychological factors on clothing selection among male undergraduate students at the University of Uyo. Employing a qualitative research design and a descriptive survey method, the research engaged all male undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Uyo during the 2021/2022 academic year, amounting to a sample size of 815 students. Data collection was facilitated through questionnaires, utilizing the MCPZ (Male Clothing Preference Questionnaire) and employing a multi-stage sampling method. The findings revealed distinct insights into the factors shaping clothing choices among male undergraduates. Notably, the study identified the primary influential factors as sources of clothing information, self-esteem and social factors. Moreover, an examination of the respondents' academic levels indicated a significant distribution across different academic years. Furthermore, a comprehensive analysis of the respondent's agreement with specific items revealed intriguing patterns. While agreement prevailed concerning certain psychological and social factors, items such as (2, 4 and 6) were not unanimously accepted, indicated by mean responses below the cutoff mean response of 2.5. Moreover, statistical analyses involving the calculated *r*-value and the probability value (*P*-value) indicated a lack of significant correlation between clothing information sources and the clothing preferences of male undergraduates at Uniuyo. In conclusion, this study emphasizes the significance of educating the student populace on the importance of embracing modest clothing designs. Such measures not only counter indecency in clothing preferences but also contribute to fostering self-expression, confidence and inclusivity among male students, thus enriching the campus environment.*

KEYWORDS: Impact, Psychological and Social Factors, Clothing Preferences, Male Undergraduate Students, University Of Uyo.

INTRODUCTION

Clothing has been used as a social status indicator, a symbol of a person's affinity with a religion, and as a form of self-expression. Fast fashion and internet shopping have made it easier to buy attractive apparel. The history of fashion preferences reveals the interplay between societal norms, personal expression, and fashion. The influence of clothing choices extends beyond mere appearance. It covers various aspects such as ethnicity, color selection, shoe patterns, and height, which play a crucial role in shaping the perceptions and interactions of individuals (Lin & Fisher, 2018). Fashion is not just

about aesthetics but is also about identity, gender, and power, explored by Morris and Oates in the book (Morris & Oates 2018).

Clothing preferences are a complex component of self-expression that takes into account cultural influences, social trends, and societal impacts, enabling people to express their identities, fashion choices, and inventiveness visually. In general, clothing preferences refer to an individual's particular choices and inclinations about the clothing they wear. It is an essential component of self-expression and significantly influences one's identity, culture, and fashion sense. Research indicates that most individuals view having choices positively, as it provides a sense of empowerment and freedom. To explore the complex and dynamic relationship between fashion and psychology, look at how emotions, identity, and behavior are intertwined with our clothing choices. (Sirgy & Reedy 2018). The role of clothing in identity and difference, exploring the ways in which fashion can be used to create and communicate meaning (Burns 2015). Additionally, the belief that making a choice automatically grants control over the chosen object or course can have psychological and social ramifications.

Throughout history, human beings have utilized various materials such as skin, leaves, and dyes to cover their bodies for protection and adornment.

Clothing preference is influenced by self-expression, cultural influences, social and environmental factors, comfort and functionality, historical evolution, gender and identity, subcultures and fashion movements, and psychological and emotional elements (Mair, 2018).

Clothes provide satisfaction to human beings by fulfilling all kinds of needs. Famous fashion designer Michael Kors said that "clothes are like a good meal, a good movie, and good pieces of music" (www.harparbazaar.com). This statement clearly explains that clothes are deeply connected with us both physically and psychologically. The University of Uyo has distinctive opinions about dress and appearance.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The influence of social and psychological factors on clothing preferences among male students in tertiary institutions is an important research topic that requires exploration and understanding. Currently, there is limited research on this subject, which hinders one's ability to fully comprehend the underlying reasons behind male students' clothing preferences. By identifying the significant social and psychological factors that shape clothing choices among male students, one can gain a deeper insight into their individual preferences and the larger societal pressures.

Additionally, understanding these factors can contribute to the development of effective strategies to promote self-expression and confidence among male students, ultimately leading to a more inclusive and accepting campus environment. Therefore, it

is imperative to conduct research to address this gap of clothing preferences among male students in knowledge and provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers and stakeholders in tertiary institution.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of this study is the impact of psychological and social factors on clothing preferences among male undergraduate students at the University of Uyo. The specific objectives for the study are as follows:

- 1) Investigate the demographic characteristics of male undergraduate students at the University of Uyo.
- 2) Investigate the sources of clothing information and values by male undergraduate student at the University of Uyo.
- 3) Determine the psychological factors influencing clothing selection practices among male undergraduate students at the University of Uyo.
- 4) Investigate the social factors influencing clothing selection practices among male undergraduate students at the University of Uyo.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of male undergraduate students at the University of Uyo?
2. What are the sources of clothing information utilized by male undergraduate students at the University of Uyo?
3. What are the psychological factors that influence the clothing selection practices of male undergraduate students at the University of Uyo?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Concept of Clothing Preferences

Clothing preferences are a complex component of human expression that takes into account cultural influences, social trends, societal impacts, and psychological factors. The way one dresses is a complex aspect of one's identity that reflects clothing preference as well as cultural influences, societal conventions, and a number of other elements. Following are some specific observations about preferred attire. Clothing preference is influenced by self-expression, cultural influences, social and environmental factors, comfort and functionality, historical evolution, gender and identity, subcultures and fashion movements, and psychological and emotional elements (Mair, 2018).

Factors influencing Clothing Preferences



There are various factors that affect clothing preferences. On the basis of a literature review, an attempt has been made to classify these factors in two ways: motivating factors, which influence clothing preferences, can be majorly classified on the basis of three human needs, namely, physiological, psychological, and environmental. These have further various factors that affect clothing preferences. All these factors are interrelated and multidimensional in nature, as no single dimension is solely responsible for the clothing preference of any individual at a given time.

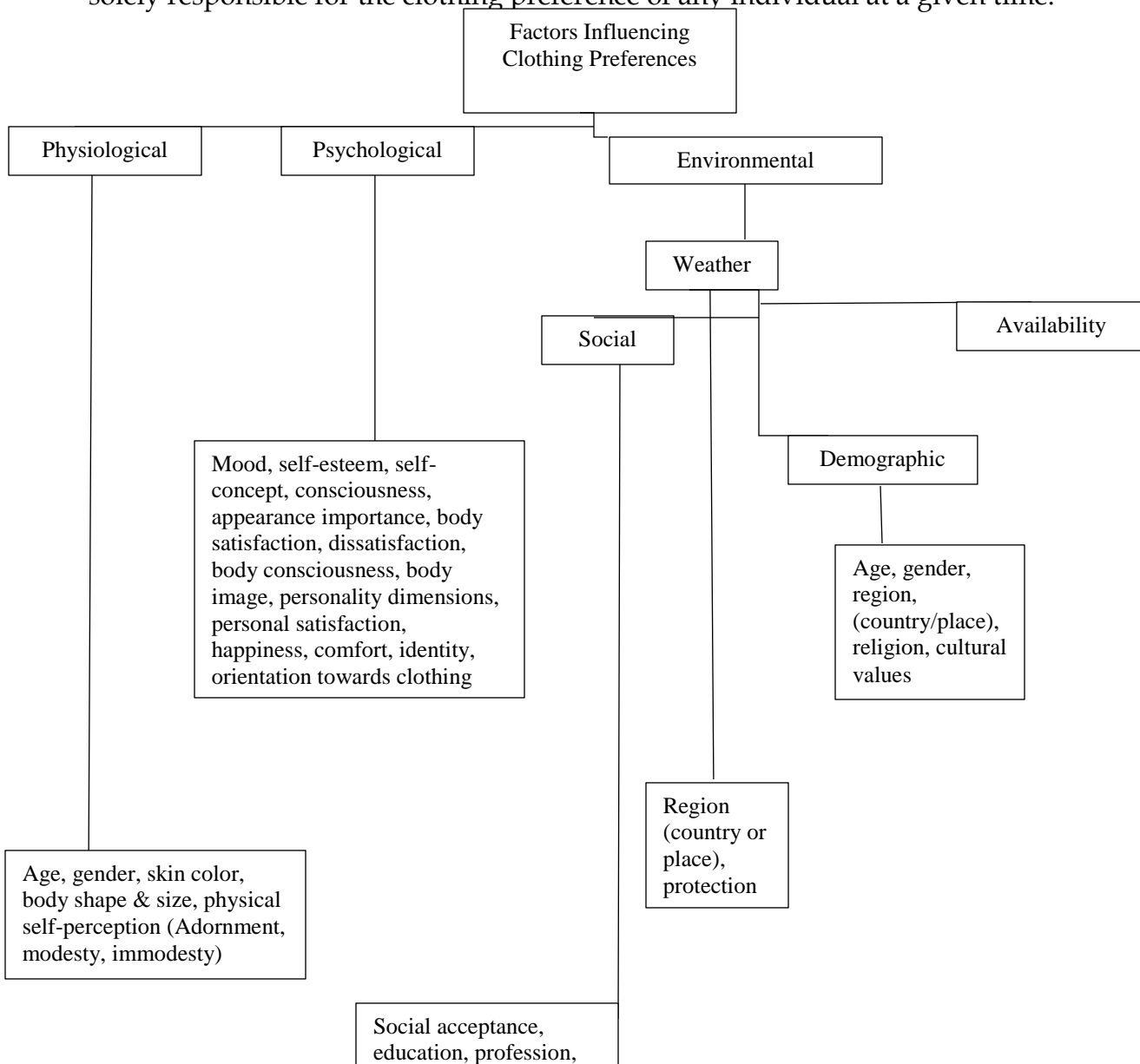


Fig. 1: FACTORS INFLUENCING CLOTHING PREFERENCES

SOURCE: Google

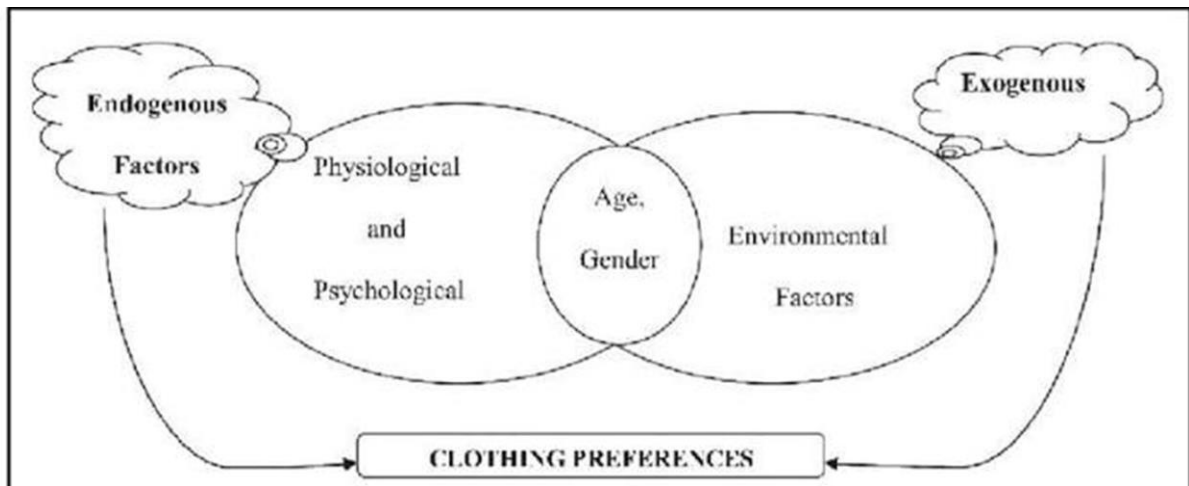
According to cosmopolitan, motivating factors affecting clothing preferences can also be classified as exogenous and endogenous factors. Exogenous are



the external factors, while endogenous are the internal factors that affect clothing preferences. It is termed that motivating factors are under two categories: temporal and constant. Factors that are at a certain time, i.e., situational in nature and change with time or vary from one day to another, are considered temporal factors, and those that remain the same (invariant) throughout all days and times are called constant factors. It was found that all the endogenous factors were constant and exogenous factors were temporal, except mood, which was endogenous but temporal in nature.

This classification of motivating factors are limited to only few factors in Kwon’s research as per his research requirements. Later, Kwon again classified these motivating factors as exogenous and endogenous factors only which affect person’s daily choice of clothing. On the basis of Kwon classifications and other researchers’ work done on other factors influencing clothing preferences, a new classification on factors affecting clothing preferences under exogenous and endogenous factors can be understood as described in fig 2. This classification is based upon previous classification Kwon’s classification.

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Cosmopolitans are defined as individuals who adapt and interact with people of different cultures, imbibe diverse cultural values, show candor, and favor associating with multiple cultures (Hannerz, 1990; Cannon and Yaprak, 2002; Cleveland et al., 2009). Economic, cultural, and political factors affect cosmopolitanism. Theorists say cosmopolitans are further of two types: cultures, too. While global cosmopolitans are those who imbibe global culture and values. Along with this, they believe their cultural values to be superior to local cultural values (Khare, 2014). De Mooji (2004) found the



younger generation is more engaged in cosmopolitan activities than the older. Han and Won (2017) found that a cosmopolitan attitude is more individualistic and present in developing countries. But when it comes to gender, there is still controversy about who is more cosmopolitan, males or females. Cleveland et al., (2011), found females as more cosmopolitan than men. While no such gender difference was found by Riefler et al., (2012).

High Public Self-Consciousness - High Clothing Interest

But, when it comes to different mood states, especially in females, it was found that PV. S.C. plays a more important role than P.S.C. in the selection of clothing in females, i.e., perceived moods influence clothing selection in females. Also, a significant correlation was found between males' and females' P.S.C. and positive mood states but not with negative mood states (Kwon, 1991). This concludes that females with high Pv. S.C. tend to utilize clothing to manage their different mood states than females with low Pv. S.C.

Appearance consciousness

This cannot be separated from body consciousness; it is another construct that was also investigated by various researchers to understand its impact on clothing behavior. Previous research has suggested that individuals tend to choose certain types of clothing to either emphasize their attractive body parts or downplay their unattractive body parts in order to feel confident with their overall appearance (Lunceford, 2010; Roux et al., 2017). Majorly, adolescents were the main target group for understanding the relationship of appearance and clothing behavior. It is because adolescence is the age group where appearance consciousness is at its peak and grabs researchers' attention. Various different clothing constructs in different studies were considered to understand the same amongst adolescents.

Clothing and Self-esteem

Self-esteem is another psychological factor that affects clothing preferences. It is the affective component of the self. The word 'esteem' comes from the Latin word 'aestimare,' which means 'to estimate or appraise' (Brahm and Kassin, 1990). According to Rosenberg (1979), self-esteem is defined as people's feelings about their own worth or value, i.e., it reflects a large part in people's perceptions of the way others feel about them. Feelings about one's personal appearance, along with other dimensions of self, shape the self-esteem of an individual (Joung and Miller, 2006). In other words, evaluation of oneself based upon his/her overall feelings (Hobza et al., 2007). Clothes are very closely related to self-esteem. Various researchers have studied the relationship between clothing and self-esteem. To understand the self-esteem level, another study



was conducted on adolescents to determine any differences in the importance of clothing comfort in three situations (social, school, and leisure).

The result showed that adolescents preferred comfortable clothing during school and social situations to leisure situations. No difference in self-esteem was found with the students who gave importance to comfortable clothing in three situations than to those who considered comfortable clothing unimportant in three situations, i.e., social, school, and leisure. However, it was observed through investigation that both factors, i.e., appearance management and fashion involvement, had a positive direct effect on self-esteem through social participation. This shows that participation in social gatherings acts as a moderator between appearance management and self-esteem; it's not limited to women only. A recent study by Sung and Yan (2017) showed that self-esteem level affects men's body satisfaction level too, and this was confirmed through their clothing behavior.

Clothing and Mood

"Mode" is defined as a temporary state of mind or feeling. It varies from unhappy to pleased and from low to high, which includes different kinds of feelings like excited, bored, mournful, sad, angry, annoyed, depressed, delighted, calm, relaxed, etc. (Hu, 2009). Researchers, in relation to clothing preferences, generally consider all feelings that come under happy and high mood as positive mood states and other feelings as clothes. With this we could say, "Individuals use clothes to satisfy themselves psychologically and to divert their minds from a particular situation, say:" negative mood.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study was a descriptive survey design. The area of study was the University of Uyo. The population of the study consisted of all registered undergraduate male students of the University of Uyo who actively participated in academic activities during the 2021/2022 academic year. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 815 registered male students. A research instrument titled Male Clothing Preferences Questionnaire (MCPQ) was used for data collection. Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation in order to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration.

RESULT PRESENTATION



Research Question One: What are the demographic characteristics of male undergraduate students at the University of Uyo?

Table One: Marital Status of Respondent

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	779	95.6
Married	36	4.4
Total	815	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 shows that 95.6% of the student respondent were single while 4.4% were married

Table Two: Age Distribution of Respondent

Age (in years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 20	256	31.4
Above 20	559	68.59
Total	815	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 shows that 31.4 of the student respondents were below the age of 20 years while 68.59% were above the age of 20 years.



Table Three: Academic Faculty Distribution of Respondent

Academic Faculty	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agric	118	14.5
Art	54	6.6
Basic Medical Sc.	43	5.3
Clinical Sc.	27	3.3
Bus. Admin.	84	10.3
Education	103	12.6
Engineering	78	9.6
Env. Studies	61	7.5
Law	49	6.0
Pharmacy	33	4.0
Natural and Applied Sc.	101	12.4
Social Sciences	64	7.9
Total	815	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The result from table 3 showed the faculty distribution of student respondents. Agric. accounted for 14.5%, Art accounted for 6.6%, Basic medical accounted for 5.3%, clinical science accounted for 3.3%, Business Admin accounted for 10.3%, Education accounted for 12.6%, Engineering accounted for 9.6%, Environmental studies accounted for 7.5%, Law accounted for 6.0%, Pharmacy accounted for 4.0%, Natural and Applied Science accounted for 12.4% and Social science accounted for 7.9% of the student respondents.



Table Four: Academic Level of Respondent

Academic Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
100 Level	346	42.5
200 Level	161	19.8
300 Level	98	12.0
400 Level	113	13.9
500 Level and above	97	11.9
Total	815	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The results from table 4 showed the academic level of student respondents. 100 level students accounted for 42.5%, 200 level students accounted for 19.8%, 300 level students accounted for 12.0%, 400 level students accounted for 13.9%, student from 500 level and above accounted for 11.9%.

Research Question Two: What are the sources of clothing information utilized by male undergraduate students at the University of Uyo?

Table 5: Clothing information sources of male undergraduate students

Clothing Information Sources	Mean (x)	SD	Remark
Current designs of clothing items I prefer are available in fashion magazines	3.36	0.92	A
I am confident of the clothing information received from my family members	3.21	0.89	A
My friends regularly update my clothing knowledge	3.00	0.76	A
The UNIUYO Collectible is a more dependable outlet to receive clothing information	2.90	0.86	A
I regularly watch television shows to obtain clothing information	2.55	0.75	A
I prefer to receive clothing information from Fashion designers	3.33	0.86	A
I prefer clothing information received from tailor	2.90	0.89	A
Sales personnel at the stalls give me current clothing information	3.03	0.82	A
The internet is a veritable tool for clothing information	3.07	0.83	A

Source: Field Survey, 2023



The result presented in table 5 shows that all the students respondent agreed to all the items clothing information sources. This confirmed by the mean response of 2.5 (cut off mean response)

Research Question Three: What are the psychological factors influencing the clothing selection practices of male undergraduate students at the University of Uyo?

Table 6: Psychological factors influencing clothing preferences by male undergraduate

I select my clothing items to satisfy the following Remark	Mean (x)	SD	
Psychological needs			
To look smart	3.84	0.36	A
To indicate my own belief and values	1.79	0.64	D
Based on my level of awareness	3.11	0.67	A
For safety	1.59	0.29	D
To look attractive	3.58	0.71	A
To gain high self-esteem	3.39	0.74	A
To be influential among my colleagues	3.57	0.70	A
To be comfortable	3.48	0.74	A
To cover my nakedness	3.59	0.65	A
In line with my professional requirements	3.65	0.63	A

Source: Field Survey, 2023

In table 6, the result showed that the students respondent accepted items (1, 3 and 5-10) while item (2 and 4) on the psychological factors that influence the clothing preference of student respondents were disagreed to. The items disagreed to had the mean response less than 2.5 (cut off mean response).



Research Question Three: What are the social factors influencing the clothing selection practice of male undergraduate students at the University of Uyo?

Table 7: Social factors influencing clothing preferences of male undergraduate students

I select my clothing items to satisfy the following social needs	Mean (x)	SD	Remark
I wish to be like my fashion model	3.54	0.82	A
To portray my interest areas	3.16	1.10	A
It is my lifestyle to dress that way	3.31	0.86	A
To show-off my masculinity	2.87	0.81	A
To portray my position in school	2.40	0.81	A
To showcase my culture	1.50	0.63	D
To depict my religion	2.51	0.75	A
In line with my financial standing	3.86	0.94	A
To showcase my social class	3.04	0.75	A
To be acceptable by my colleagues and friends	3.51	0.85	A

Source: Field Survey, 2023

In table 7, the result showed that the students respondent accepted items (1-5, 7 and 9-10) while item (6) on the social factors that influencing the clothing preference of students was disagreed to. The items disagreed to had the mean response less than 2.5 (cut off mean response).

DISCUSSION

The result of the findings confirms that a higher number of respondents were unmarried students, which accounted for 95.6% compared to the 4.4% of undergraduate students who were married with families to take care of (Table 1).

The Uniuyo male undergraduate respondent's age is also a crucial consideration in the present study since it determines the individual's orientation in dressing. A higher number of respondents, which accounted for 68.59%, were above the age of 20. Age was of importance in this study because it is one of the main factors influencing a student's mode of dressing. Others include fashion consciousness and income, with family financial background as a key factor (Isika, 2006). The results also confirm that the majority of the respondents who were above the age of 20 were adults who, in the modern world, are quite conscious about many new fashion trends. When considering the academic level of the respondents, the study establishes the predominance of the Uniuyo male undergraduates in the following decreasing order (100L = 2.5%) > (200L = 19.8%) > (400L = 13.9%) > (300L = 12.0%) > (500L and above = 11.9%). The level of education of the respondent is an important factor since it determines the individual's self-awareness, which was found to directly influence the choice of clothing.



Furthermore, it could be said that the positive effect of education on clothing could result in clothing differences in taste and preferences

The Uniuyo male undergraduate student respondents in the study were asked to rate several sources of information they consume and how they affect their clothing preferences. The result of the analysis in table 4 indicates that, overall, the various sources of information for clothing, which include friends, family, the internet, and fashion magazines, to mention but a few, tend to influence the student's clothing preference. The higher mean responses of 3.36 and 3.33 for fashion magazines and fashion designers tend to update the respondents on the latest fashion trends. This finding agrees with Njeru (2002), who noted that the media is one of the veritable sources of fashion trends. It was observed that the mean responses of the respondent's clothing preference based on current trends were also related to their faculty of study, therefore creating class. This observation agrees with the finding of Njeru (2002), where a mean response of the respondents based their career clothing decisions on its sustainability for work.

From table 5, the most outstanding psychological factors that determine Uniuyo male undergraduate student clothing preference were related to looking smart. This factor was observed with a higher mean response value of 3.84. This was followed by other factors such as professional requirements, looking attractive, building high self-esteem, and looking influential among colleges. Most of the respondents also reported that being comfortable with the preference of clothing they wear, was also an important factor. This suggests that the respondents wished to have a sense of decency and acceptability in the community they find themselves in. It was also observed from the result that most of the respondents were sometimes influenced by acceptable style.

Self-esteem was also a significant psychological factor in the clothing choice of the Uniuyo male undergraduate. This finding agrees with those of Viera (2008), who asserted that clothing tends to enhance an individual's self-image. This implies that personal satisfaction was an important psychological factor in the choice preference by Uniuyo male undergraduates. It is also worthy of note that a good number of the respondents did not agree that belief system and safety were important psychological factors influencing their clothing preference.

From the result of the analysis in table 6, financial standing was considered the most important factor when determining Uniuyo male undergraduates' clothing choices; this was confirmed by a higher mean response of 3.86. The amount of money available for clothing expenditure was considered very significant to clothing preference by the majority of respondents.

This could be attributed to the amount of income an individual finances as well as other financial commitments. This finding is similar to Njeru (2002), who noted that



amount of income available was always important in making decisions on clothing selection.

Another important social factor was imitating fashion models, which had a high mean response of 3.54. This trend suggests the role social media influencers and entertainers play in promoting fashion trends for younger people (Riungu, 2009). Educational level also affects clothing selection and practices. This agrees with the higher mean response of 3.51 observed for the respondents who attested to the fact that they prefer clothing styles that will make them look acceptable to colleagues and friends in school.

CONCLUSION

From the present study, it can be concluded that while belief system and safety were not considered as important psychological factors influencing Uniuyo male undergraduates' clothing preferences, sources of clothing information (fashion magazines, fashion designers, and family and friends), psychological factors (looking smart and professional requirements), and social factors (financial standing, fashion models, and acceptability by colleagues and friends) were other important factors influencing the clothing preferences of Uniuyo male undergraduate students.

RECOMMENDATION

- There is a need to educate male undergraduates on the need to dress decently.
- There is a need to educate the masses on why it is necessary to put out only decent designs, as this will help air bin decency in clothing preference among male undergraduates.



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