FACTORS INFLUENCING COLOR SELECTION IN CLOTHING FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS: A CASE OF LUANGWA DISTRICT IN LUSAKA PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

Clothing is a factor in every day human life and interactions with others. Clothing is a systematic means of transmitting information about the wearer. Adolescent girls dress to succeed role of attraction to their opposite sex. This study was designed to find out factors influencing the way they dress. The purpose of this study was to determine factors influencing clothing selection among primary and secondary school learners in rural areas with reference to Kataro secondary school, Luangwa primary school and Feira day secondary school in Luangwa district. The main objective in this study was to identify the physical, psychological and socio-economic factors influencing pupils 'clothing selection. The study was confined within 3 random sampled schools in Feira constituency, Luangwa district of Lusaka province, in which a total of 200 learners were selected at random. The study established that sources of information on clothing that learners use includes family members, friends, tailors, and window shopping and fashion magazines. The physical characteristics of the clothes influencing clothing selection include item construction and finishing,

fabric quality, and cleaning and care. Psychological factors such as smart looking, acceptable style personal beliefs and values, latest style and unique outfit influenced clothing selection.

To adolescents, clothes serve a wide variety of functions. Adolescents use clothing to express themselves and to obtain social approval. It is also part of their self-image and a means to declare their self-importance. Further, clothing is a key way to identify with and compare oneself to peers. Of all age groups, adolescents are most likely to devote a disproportionate amount of time and attention to clothing and appearance, McCabe & Ricciardelli, (2011).

Keys words: *Adolescents, Clothing, Color, Fabric, Factors, Fashion, Influencing, and Selection.*

INTRODUCTION

This research involved the study of materials and methods of data collection, Literature Review, Results of the findings, Discussion of findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations.

The human sense of sight is very powerful. So it is not surprising that color is very important in our decision about what we want to wear. Colour is often the first element you notice. Colour is very important to the response each of us feels when we see any item, such as a garment or a room. We can only see colour when there is light (that's why everything looks black at night).

Cash, (2014) stated that clothing is a factor in everyday human life and interactions with others. Clothing is a systematic means of transmitting information about the wearer. Teachers should dress in order to succeed as role models to their pupils. When adolescent girls dress decently, they obtain the respect and credibility necessary from parents, and the community in general. The colour of clothes is very paramount to a human being, especially to young people. Colour is often the first element you notice. Colour is very important to the response each of us feels when we see an item such as a garment or a room. We can only see colour when there is light (that's why everything looks black at night). Some colours make you feel different. One way to group colours is by their feel. Warm colours are red, orange and yellow. They seem warmer in temperature. Cool colours are green, blue, and violet. These colours seem cooler. You can use colour in what you wear to make you look cheery and glow, while other colours may tend to drain the colour from your face and make you look drab. Look at the garments in your closet. Is there one basic colour for most of the items? If so, this is probably a good choice as your wardrobe's basic colour. But there are some steps you can take to make sure the colours you wear are the best for you and give you that glow., Gloede, (2011).

It is important when we are selecting what to wear that we put pieces together to create pleasing colour coordination. Some colours go better together than others. To discover how to identify colours that coordinate well, we must first know a little about colour. It's important to realize the difference in a need and a want in clothing. We can often accumulate lots of clothing items and still say, "I have nothing to wear." A little planning can help you know what you have, what you need, and then know when you go shopping that you are buying something you need or buying something just because you want something new, Elkind, (2018).

Educational environments have a significant effect on the way adolescent girls behave as a result of interaction with different colours. For example, dark girls' uniforms in single-gender schools will impact their social behaviour by causing depression, less physical activity, and mental happiness. Children in a classroom where the walls have been pained in dark blue or greenish yellow will learn better in comparison with ones in the classroom with grey walls or a book with colourful pictures will have more learning effect on kids than a book with black and white colours. Inappropriate colour selection will make the learning environment more tedious, boring, and depressive. Therefore, this study endeavored to identify the factors influencing clothing selection and buying practices among primary and secondary school adolescent girls in Luangwa District.

Research objectives

i.   To identify the socio-economical, psychological and physical factors that influence clothing selection and practices among the adolescent girls in three schools of Luangwa district.

ii. To determine the physical characteristics of clothing that influence clothing selection and practices among the adolescent girls of Luangwa district.

MATERIALS AND METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher administered the instruments to the adolescent girl students in the three secondary schools through personal contact and with the help of two research assistants. The research assistants were given instructions on how to administer the questionnaire to the adolescent girl students at Luangwa primary school, Kataro Mission secondary school and Feira day secondary school. The copies of the questionnaire were collected back a week later by the researcher's assistants and the researcher herself, Cresswell, (2013).

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Items from the questionnaires were arranged and grouped according to individual research questions. Responses received from the questionnaires was organized, tabulated and analyzed using frequencies and percentages and presented in form of frequency, Percentage, tables and figures on the computer software called SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), Denzin, (2015). Percentages have a considerable advantage over more complex statistics. The information from the document analysis was analyzed qualitatively by sorting out data into various themes according to the objectives of the study. The information was discussed and this helped in drawing of conclusions and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims at providing knowledge of previous literature and theory relating to the colour selection of clothes by adolescent girls. Literature is reviewed as global, regional and local views.

Theories relating to Clothing selection

The first theory was the biblical one of modesty, that is clothes were worn to cover nakedness and because of shame. However, this theory has been disputed on the grounds that modesty is not the same in different cultures. A part of the body covered by those in one culture may be left exposed without any shame by those in a different culture. Whatever amount of clothing is in general use in a given culture seems modest to the people in that culture while any subtraction from the customary amount is felt to be immodest, Kaya, (2004).

The second theory to explain the origin of clothes is the opposite of the first theory. According to this theory, clothing was first worn to call attention to the parts of the body covered.

A third theory states that man first wore clothes as protection against the elements of insects, beasts and enemies or against harm or supernatural forces.

The fourth and final theory of the origin of clothing is that it was one means of aesthetic expression. This theory has been called the decoration or ornamentation theory.
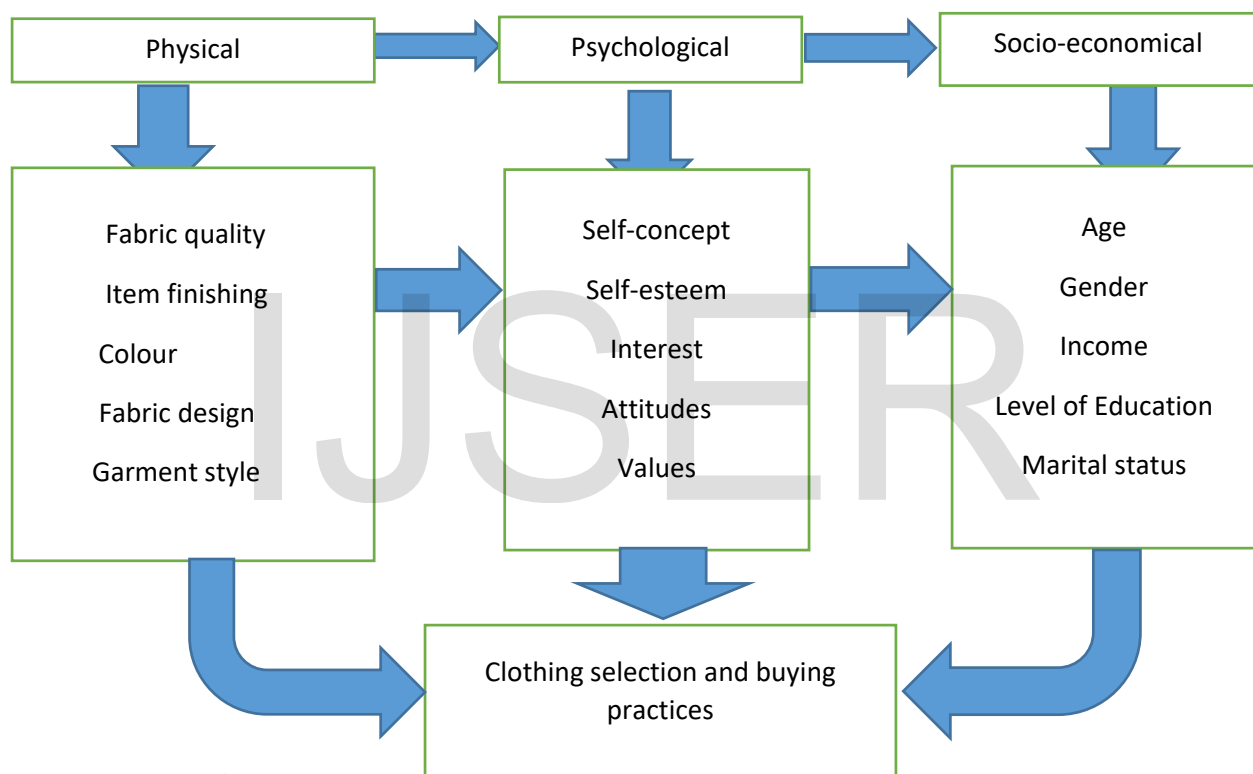
Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework as a hypothesized model identifies the concepts under study and their relationships. It expresses the independent variable which influences the dependent variables. If one variable depends on or is a consequence of another variable it is termed as a dependent variable

and the variable which is antecedent to the dependent variable or that makes a change is termed an

independent variable, Kasomo, (2016).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Physical	→	Psychological	→	Socio-economical

Fabric quality Item finishing Colour Fabric design Garment style	→	Self-concept Self-esteem Interest Attitudes Values	→	Age Gender Income Level of Education Marital status

Clothing selection and buying practices

Dependent Variables

Chola, 2022

The conceptual framework shown in Figure 1. illustrates the relationship between the independent

and dependent variables of the study. The independent variables were physical, psychological, and

socio-economical factors. The selection of clothes was the dependent variable. The clothes

selected included categories like fashionable clothes, new clothes, old fashioned clothes and

second hand clothes. The selection of clothes was influenced by economic, social and

psychological factors. This concurs with Goffman, (2019) who indicated that physical, psychological and socioeconomic factors influenced the way people select clothing.

Under the economic factors, income, type of employment and prices were the independent variables. Income was important because decisions made for clothing expenditure depended on the funds available. Families with high income were able to spare more money for clothing as opposed to those with low income, thus, income influenced the choice of clothing that professional women bought. The choice of fashionable styles of clothes was influenced by the level of income, depending on the occasion. Psychological factors that influence the choice of clothing designs include self-esteem, ego, desire to please others, and acceptance. Social factors also influenced the choice of clothing. Occasion, marital status and religion were considered as the main factors under social factors, Jones & Kim, (2013).

The ultimate effect of clothing motivations and behaviour of the adolescent girls in universities and schools can be seen as an indication of poor parental upbringing, a low level of cultural, and religious values and practices. It is also attributed to a lack of established school uniforms or dress codes guiding students in schools and the community at large.

Clothing for Adolescents

To adolescents, clothes serve a wide variety of functions. Adolescents use clothing to express themselves and to obtain social approval. It is also part of their self-image and a means to declare their self-importance. Further, clothing is a key way to identify with and compare oneself to peers. Of all age groups, adolescents are most likely to devote a disproportionate amount of time and attention to clothing and appearance. Why is this so? Adolescents are extraordinarily sensitive to the opinions of their peers. Generally, they want to be accepted and belong to a group. Physical appearance is an integral part of this process. Adolescents worry constantly about their physical appearance. It is not uncommon for the tiniest detail to become a major concern. So, while the eight-year-old younger sister may dress quickly and run out of the door, the sixteen-year-old older sister takes the time to select just the right clothing. And, she may carry a comb to ensure that her hair remains exactly where it should throughout the day, Salvy Sarah-Jeanne, (2012).

Characteristics and Influencing Factors

Basic tensions addressed by fashion in Western culture are status, gender, occasion, the body, and social regulation. Elkind, (2018) suggests potential fashion instabilities, such as youth versus age; masculinity versus femininity; androgyny versus singularity; inclusiveness versus exclusiveness; and work versus play. Fashion systems generally establish means for self-formation through dress, decoration, and gesture that attempt to regulate such tensions, conflicts, and ambiguities.

Social change and fashion

Social change is defined as a succession of events that replace existing societal patterns with new ones over time. This process is pervasive and can modify the roles of men and women, lifestyles, family structures, and functions. Fashion theorists believe that fashion is a reflection of social, economic, political, and cultural changes, but also that fashion expresses modernity and symbolizes the spirit of the times. Fashion both reflects and expresses the specific time in history. The tension of youth versus age has influenced dress in the twentieth century.

Appearance and identity

Clothes are fundamental to the modern consumer's sense of identity. That criticism of one's clothing and appearance is taken more personally and intensely than criticism of one's car or house suggests a high correlation between appearance and personal identity.

Culture, observer, and wearer

Fashion favors the critical gaze of the knowing observer, or the one "in the know," and the wearer who arranges the body for his own delight and enjoyment. Perceptions of the observer and wearer of fashion are sharpened based on the many potential variations in lines, shapes, textures, and colors. For example, clothing of French inspiration and origin emphasized contour and cut of dress historically. Fashion changes occurred in the layout of the garment, which in turn focused attention on the silhouette and details, such as bias cutting and shaping.

Africa is a vast continent with a great diversity of nations and cultures that grace its beautiful land. And with each of those cultures comes a mixture of customs and traditions that make them all unique. One Instagram user, Chinyanta Kabaso, (2021) decided to spotlight the rich heritage of each African culture by highlighting the beauty of their traditional dress. The Zambian dancer, creative, and former Miss Africa Great Britain started out by styling a collection of outfits inspired

by traditional African clothing worn by women in several regions of the continent. Then, she posted a reel of herself transforming flawlessly into each gorgeous style, and the video quickly went viral.

Factors that Influence Clothing Decision-making

Decision making is the action taken, in selection from an alternative course of action Nyang'or, (2014). It is the decision made and taken by adolescent girls on how to spend on clothing items, when making clothing choices and categorized these influences into internal and external influences:

Internal factors

Internal factors are those that are inside of an individual. These are the sociological and psychological influences that influence individuals' clothing choices/decisions. They include individuals, values, need, wants, belief, age, body shape/image, personalities and lifestyle etc. these aspects of the individual are always changing as the individual grows and matures. As a result, the style of dressing changes over the year.

External Factor

External factors are those influences that are outside the individual that affects the clothing decision and choices. These factors can be controlled by an individual, culture and cultural contacts, geographical location, economic position, group membership/ peer group influence, mass media, fashion in vogue etc.

Culture and Cultural Contact

Foster, (2014) pointed out that culture and family factors affect the way individuals select clothing for themselves. The type of clothing selected and worn and the meaning associated with them within society are determined by the cultural environment of contributory members. Firmly established in this environment are knowledge and belief from the past that are remolded in the present. Cultural traditions, values and beliefs are passed down from one generation to another. An individual's clothing is a symbolic aspect of people's culture which gives them identity. In Nigeria, the ethnic groups differ in their mode of dressing, the choice of fabrics and in their attitude to fashion generally.

Group Membership/Peer Group Influence

Social approval is of great importance to the adolescents as well as the individual peer group standards. Through dress the adolescent girls are affiliated to a social peer group. Every individual belong to a group which may be either family group, school group, community group, prayer group etc. these group may have clothing requirement or uniforms which may give members a sense of identification or belonging as they try to conform to the group standard of clothing, Gloede, (2011).

Environment

The type of environment one lives in influences one's clothing choices. McCabe & Ricciardelli, (2011) contends that college/ students clothing choice may reflect campus tradition, local culture or urban centres or in school institution has much influence on the type of clothes worm at any point in time. The weather or atmospheric condition of a place also influences the choice of clothes made by people. Types of clothes chosen should suit the climate of the geographical location. The clothes should be able to insulate the body during cold season and let the body heat escape during the hot weather.

Mass Media Advertising

New clothing, styles gain their popularity through the mass media advertisements. People are motivated and copy the clothing styles they like from television, fashion catalogs, magazines, newspaper, journals, films shows as well as through fashion shows and demonstration. Fashion shows and demonstrations are used by garment manufacturing industries to show latest styles on attractive models. People look and admire clothes when its worn by somebody.

Economic Position / Cost

The cost of clothes and the financial position of individuals have a great influence on the choice of clothes made. The money available determines the quality and quantity of garments possessed by an individual at any point in time. It also determines whether the adolescent girls should rely on ready-to-wear garments, Nyang'or, (2014).

Ways of Enhancing Clothing of Adolescent girls

A person's appearance profoundly affects the way she is treated by others in the home, in the social gathering, in job area or office etc. when an individual's clothing and appearance send a message that do not correspond with their personality, cognitive, dissonance or what is called disintegrated personality McCabe, (2011). This does not only lead to negative impression and value judgment on the wearer that a false impression created of an individual due to his clothing could change person's life. They can mean the differences between success and failure not only in interpersonal relation but also in educational pursuit and professional careers.

Poor clothing hinders good/excellent academic performance Foster, (2014). Tight fits are uncomfortable and lead to lack of attention and concentration during lesson. Kaya, (2004) stressed that those who wear it can be seen in class pulling their skirt to the kneel, many of them have to change their sitting position several times just to cover their nakedness. In this way lack of concentration hinders effective teaching and learning.

To adolescents, clothes serve a wide variety of functions. Adolescents use clothing to express themselves and to obtain social approval. It is also part of their self-image and a means to declare their self-importance. Further, clothing is a key way to identify with and compare oneself to peers. Of all age groups, adolescents are most likely to devote a disproportionate amount of time

and attention to clothing and appearance. Why is this so? Adolescents are extraordinarily sensitive to the opinions of their peers, Goffman, (2019).

Generally, they want to be accepted and belong to a group. Physical appearance is an integral part of this process. Adolescents worry constantly about their physical appearance. It is not uncommon for the tiniest detail to become a major concern. So, while the eight-year-old younger sister may dress quickly and run out of the door, the sixteen-year-old older sister takes the time to select just the right clothing. And, she may carry a comb to ensure that her hair remains exactly where it should throughout the day. Still, while adolescents want to belong, they also have a strong desire to assert some form of individuality and independence. So clothing may well be used to demonstrate one's own unique personality. Yet, the line between conforming to some dress code and asserting one's own desires is rather thin. And, when a teen is taunted or ridiculed for some clothing "error," the pain may be quite profound, Nyang'or, (2014).

RESULTS OF FINDINGS

Psychological Factors influencing the selection of Clothing among adolescent girls

Psychological factors of an individual have varying effects on the choice of clothing. In towns where there is a wide range of the clothing design available to them, the psychological factors are key determinants on the choice of clothing, Chen-Yu, (2012).

Therefore, indicated the respondents that these were never important psychological considerations when choosing clothing. The study established that the young girls' attitude towards styles (70.8%) and the attractiveness of clothing itself (65.8%) were important considerations in choice of clothing designs. These findings concur with those which indicated that a beautiful fashion was a psychological factor that influenced the choice of clothing designs. The findings were also in line with Kaya, (2004), who observed that psychology of clothing, expresses peoples' attitudes towards themselves and their society, through what they wear and how they wear it. Suitability of clothing to figure, self-esteem, attitude towards style, attractiveness of clothing and uniqueness of designs, were crucial psychological factors that adolescent girls considered most often, in the choice of clothing.

Table 1. Psychological Factors Influencing the Choice of Clothing

Psychological Factors	Always		Sometimes		Never		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clothing that suits one's figure	170	85.0	20	10.0	10	5.0	200	100
Satisfying self esteem	160	80.0	25	12.5	15	7.5	200	100
Attitude towards the style	150	75.0	30	15.0	20	10.0	200	100
Looking Attractive	135	67.5	40	20	25	12.5	200	100
Uniqueness of designs	128	64	52	26	20	10.0	200	100
Acceptability by the society	123	61.5	42	21.0	35	17.5	200	100
Latest styles	25	12.5	145	72.5	30	15.0	200	100
Pleasing others	32	16.0	28	14.0	140	70.0	200	100
Popularity of the designer	40	20.0	50	25.0	110	55.0	200	100
Prestige of the store	26	13.0	40	20.0	134	67.0	200	100

Table 1 gives details related to the psychological factors that influenced the choice of clothing among adolescent girls in the selected schools. The most outstanding psychological factor was clothing that suits one's figure as indicated by most of the respondents. This was always important as supported by 85% of the respondents.

Clothing Designs for Evening Wear

In response to the question on preferred choice of clothing for evening wear, the findings are presented in figure 3.

Figure 3. Clothing Designs for Evening wear
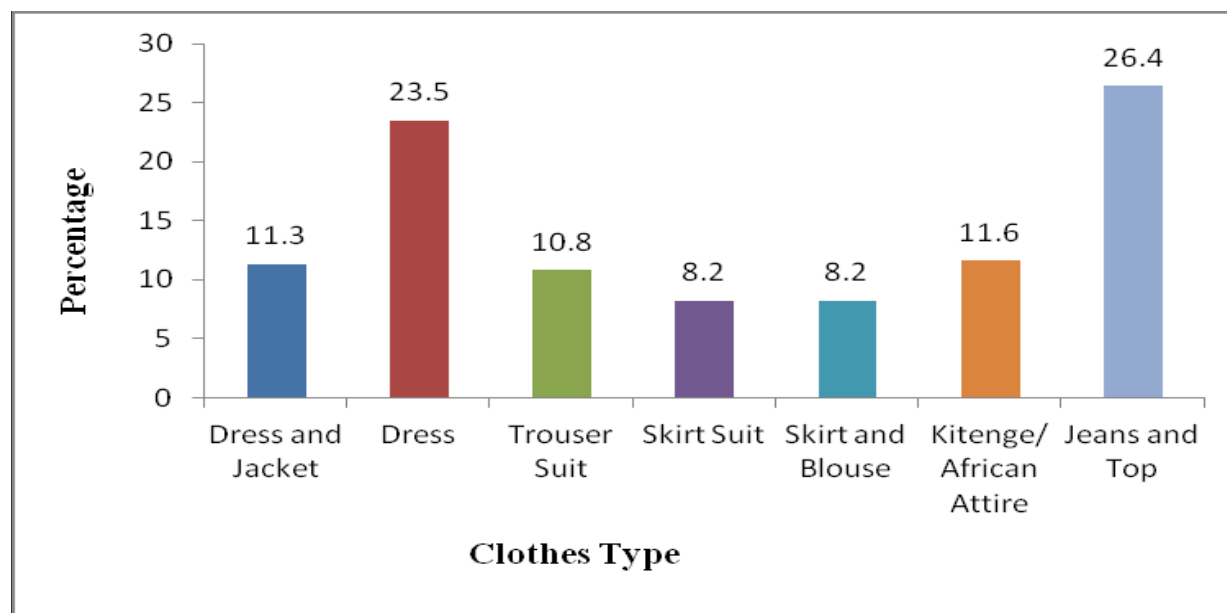
Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The study established that adolescent girls preferred wearing jeans and tops for evening wear as indicated 26.4% followed by full dresses 23.5%, 11.6% Kitenge, 11.3 % dress and jacket, 10.8% trouser suits, 8.2% skirt suits and 8.2% skirt and blouse. However, this was mostly determined by the type of function one is attending in a particular evening. There are those who prefer jeans and a top especially for more casual events like discos and careers and Independence Day. For more formal dinner events, young girls prefer skirts and dresses and especially for parties. Skirt suits and skirts with blouses were least preferred for evening wear.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Table 1 depicts the percentage distribution of psychological factors that influenced respondents' clothing selection. It is not surprising that 85% of the respondents indicated that clothing that suits one's figure were the most important psychological factor that influenced their clothing selection. Personal observation by the researcher revealed that cotton and linen were the most frequently worn fabrics, Kline, (2019).

This may be because they are absorbent and cool to the skin and are therefore suitable for the inter-convention zone climate in Zambia. 85% of the respondents indicated that they considered size, length and fit, while 75% and 12.5 % respectively considered style of the clothing item. Satisfying self-esteem was considered by 80% of respondents. Uniqueness of design was mentioned by 64%

of respondents; 61.5% said acceptability by society influenced their clothing choice. Pleasing others and popularity of design was 16% and 20% respectively. Surprisingly, only 13% of respondents mentioned prestige of store as factors that influenced their clothing selection. Cross, (1970) pointed out that feeling right in one's clothes gives one a sense of security and confidence.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate the following:

(i)   Majority of respondents (32%) buy clothes yearly, (30%) after three months, (22%) after every six months and (16%) monthly.

(ii)   Information sources for clothing selections and practices include family members (65%), friends (61%), window shopping (58%), tailor (58%) and TV casters (52%).

(iii)   In addition, most fabrics' physical characteristics influence adolescent girls' clothing selection and practices. The most outstanding physical feature relates to item construction and finishing (86%), followed by fabric quality (80%), then work suitability (77%) and fabric design suiting one's figure type (73%).

(iv)   The most outstanding psychological factors that determine adolescent girls 'clothing selection and practices are related to clothing that suits one's figure (85%), styles acceptable by society (75%), satisfying self-esteem (80%) and looking attractive (67.5%), uniqueness of design (64%) and acceptability by society (61.5%).

(v)   Availability of money was rated the highest factor in determining adolescent girls 'clothing selection and practices (71%), followed by the cost of the item (62%) and age (58%).

The aim of this study was to investigate the factors influencing the selection of clothing by adolescent girls in selected schools of Luangwa district. The conclusions of the study were made within the conceptual framework of the scope of the research as follows:

i.   The study results indicated that there was a significant relationship between psychological factors and the choice of clothing among the adolescent girls in Luangwa district. This conclusion is drawn from the finding that psychological factors (such as clothing, that satisfy self-esteem adolescent girl's attitudes towards style, and attractiveness of clothing) were important considerations in the choice of clothing

designs. The computed Chi-square was 22.745 with the P-value of 0.004 which are greater than the tabulated Chi-square of 15.507 and p-value of 0.005, Chen-Yu, (2012).

ii.   The study concluded that social factors had less influence on the choice of clothing among adolescent girls. This is supported by the findings that respondents' religion, traditional culture and important occasion did not significantly influence the choice of clothing. The computed Chi-square of the social variables of the study was 13.360 with a P-value of 0.646 which were less than the tabulated Chi-square of 26.296.

iii.   It can be concluded that colour is used to express emotions and wearers identity. It is an extremely important and most exciting element of design. Colour can create several impressions on the wearer depending on clothing selection. Clothing selection involves deciding what to wear, how to purchase and when to wear the clothes for various occasions. The practice of any adolescents in colour in clothing selection includes all the procedure involved in planning and wearing of clothes. Several factors such as demographic characteristics, parental factor, peer group and mass media play vital roles in colour in clothing selection of the adolescents in the study area.

iv.   Majority of the students wore second-hand clothes since they were affordable and these came in styles that exposed their vital body parts. There was therefore the need to research into the perceptions of students toward campus fashion. Colour, durability, cost, religion and fashion were important factors that influenced respondents' clothing selection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the view of the various findings that emerged from this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Clothing producers should address themselves to psychological, socio-economic and clothing characteristics influencing teachers clothing selection.

2. Clothing producers need to constantly carry out research on the needs of teachers in order to improve the quality of clothes on the local market.

3. Teaching of Home Science and for that matter Textiles and Clothing be reintroduced and made compulsory at the basic level to equip children with knowledge and skills that will help them make right clothing choices in life.

4. The local clothing industry should put into consideration the psychological factors such as the attitude towards styles and attractiveness of the clothing in order to attract buyers / customers.

5. The clothing industry should be informed by the people's income while pricing clothes in order to address the diversity of income in the country.

6. Fashion designers should appreciate the dynamics of culture and religion while designing clothes, since most people are less restricted by these factors while choosing their clothing.

Recommendations for further research

1. Further research is hereby recommended with regard to adolescents' attitudes towards exotic styles of dressing.

2. Further research should also be done on Teacher Training Colleges.

3. Further research be carried out on the topic of this study in urban areas.

4. Further research be carried out on this topic using larger samples based on different cultural groups in Luangwa rural areas.

5. There is need to research into the views of students on campus fashion in attempt to tackle the problem of improper and indecent dressing.

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