



Framework for Understanding Factors Influencing Clothing Selection

Arubayi, D. O. (Ph.D.)^{1*}, Awowede, M. A. (Ph.D.)², Agadagba, J. E.³

^{1,2,3} Home Economics Education Unit, Department of Vocational Education, Faculty of Education, P.M.B. 1, Delta State University, Abraka

ABSTRACT

Published Online: 23 April, 2024

Clothing selection is a product of social construction that defines what people choose to wear. The choice of what, how, and when to select what individuals wear is based on the perception that surrounds their reality. For the purpose of this research work, factors influencing clothing selection have been organized into a framework to facilitate easier understanding. The factors influencing clothing selection have been arranged into a logical system of concepts grouped into four categories: Social/Psychological, Economic, Environmental, and Physiological Factors. A detailed deconstruction of each of these factors has been further conceptualized into smaller concepts and discussed in a nuanced context. Under the Social/Psychological factors are concepts such as culture, gender, occupation, personality, religion, socio-status, and fashion. Economic factors evaluated are concepts such as the Economic well-being of a Nation (GDP), the Economic status of individuals, Economic environment (availability of technology and raw materials and buying behavior). Environmental factors such as Location (Urban/Rural), Climatic conditions, protection from extreme weather conditions, and unconventional places like deep seas, and space were examined. Lastly, the physiological factors such as age, health condition, and figure were also evaluated. Developing a conceptual framework for understanding clothing selection is apt in filling the gap in Literature since most research works on factors influencing clothing selection may not have been organized into a framework for clothing selection, whether intrinsically or extrinsically motivated.

KEYWORDS:

Economic Factors, Environmental Factors, Social/Psychological Factors, Physiological Factors

1. INTRODUCTION

Thoughts or concepts are organized and structured in such a way as to facilitate good understanding. Arranging clothing factors into a logical system of concepts will simplify understanding. Clothing is one of the basic fundamental needs of man, what we wear and how we select what to wear are motivated by some intrinsic or extrinsic factors. From the intrinsic motivation, the clothes selected may range from one's religious belief systems, which dictate the morality of what could be worn by an individual, to personal interpretation about clothes that an individual can wear per time, for an occasion, or in a context. On the other hand, extrinsic motivating factors that determine what people wear, may range from celebrity, culture, mass and social media influence, economic status of an individual among others.

Corresponding Author: Arubayi, D. O.

**Cite this Article: Arubayi, D. O.*, Awowede, M.A., Agadagba, J. E.(2024). Framework for Understanding Factors Influencing Clothing Selection. International Journal of Social Science and Education Research Studies, 4(4), 303-307*

Arubayi (2019) opined that regardless of what influences our choice of clothes, clothing selection is a skill that can be learned or acquired through careful training and practice.

The act of careful selection of clothing acquired through training should be compatible with an individual's Social/Psychological, Economic, Environmental, and Psychological factors. For proper understanding, this paper will be conceptualized in a more nuanced context to provide a detailed deconstruction of the factors that influence people's choice of how they select what they wear. Factors influencing clothing selection is not a new area of discourse, however, there is a dearth of literature on the framework for understanding factors that influence clothing selection. Thus, the development of this framework facilitates understanding. The framework for understanding clothing selection will be discussed under Social/Psychological, Economical, Environmental, and Physiological factors. This is captured in Figure 1 as the framework for understanding clothing selection.

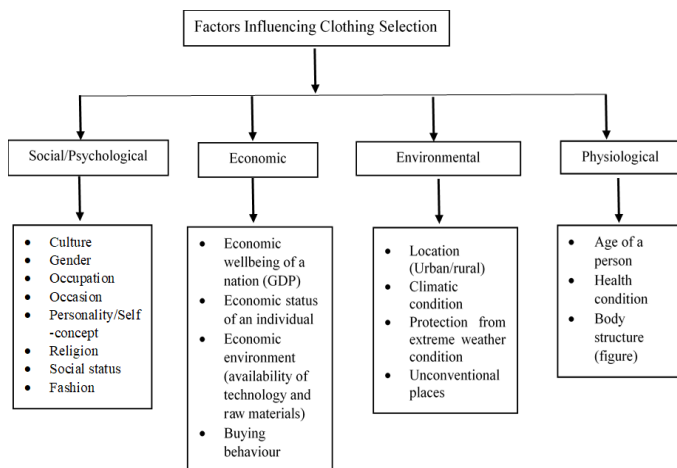


Figure 1: Framework for understanding clothing selection

II. REVIEW ON THE FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING CLOTHING SELECTION

Social/Psychological Factors

Social/Psychological factors are embedded aspect of consumer behavior that reinforces clothing selection. Clothing is seen as a way of seeking individuality and the adornment of the body to display and emphasize social status. Weber (2008) envisions clothing selection as a product of social construction that defines what people choose to wear and the perceptions that surround this reality. He further contends that the social construction that determines what people select to wear is defined by their identity, values, personality, occasion, occupation, culture, moods, and attitude. Ikem (2015) stated that the choice of clothing people make provides a medium of self-expression that gives clues about an individual’s cultural heritage and social standing. Given that, the social factors that determine the clothing choices people make are embedded in their belief systems, which is an aspect of human psychological thinking. The assertion by Asare, Ibrahim, and Kwesi (2016) that there is a thin line between Social and Psychological factors, thus, thinking and knowledge influence a person’s clothing choice. Asare et al (2016) are of the opinion that motivation, perception, learning, belief, and attitude are psychological factors that affect clothing selection. Motivation for instance, whether intrinsically motivated by a person’s psychological thinking and belief system or extrinsically motivated by social-cultural and environmentally specific factors, is a propelling force that enables individuals to make decisions based on what they have learned and their perception of an event. Perception has to do with the ability to see, hear, or become aware of how something is understood. No wonder, Thompson and Vanden Berg (2007) explained that the perception of an individual about themselves determines their self-worth, self-image, self-esteem, and physical attractiveness which motivates clothing selection. Debatably, a person’s feeling about self-worth is largely the result of his psychological setup. Other social and psychological factors that influence clothing selection include; culture, occupation,

occasion, personality, social status, gender, religion, and fashion.

Culture is a socio-psychological factor that influences clothing selection. Arubayi (2019) defined culture as shared patterns of behavior, interactions, cognitive conduct, and understanding of what is learned by socialization. Culture influences the development of styles that are unique to a particular group of people and the way they dress which is acceptable to the norms and beliefs of the people. For instance, in Nigeria, there are three major ethnic groups: Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa/Fulani. These groups of people dress according to their cultural background. The influence of culture on clothing selection cannot be overemphasized. Based on the history and traditions of the different groups that are represented in Nigeria, Oyedeji (2016) opined that there are general belief systems that strive to uphold modesty. Modesty in clothing as Adebisi & Abdulsalam (2018) contends, is not universal in all cultures, but rather subjective. For instance, wearing a “swimsuit” as beach wear will be adjudged as “modest” in Western cultures, while it will be adjudged as “immodest” in some African cultures. However, there has been a generational disconnect between what is modest to the older generation whose cultural belief systems are “cast on iron”, to the present generation whose ideology on what modesty is, has been influenced by Western cultural norms under the influence of social media.

Apart from culture, occupation is another factor that influences clothing selection. The job a person does determines what they wear. Hence, Aldrich (2008) opined that it is easy to identify different professionals by what they wear. For instance, a Nurse in her uniform, a Medical Doctor in an overall white coat, and a Lawyer in a black suit, white shirt, and wig. The Police, Army, School children, Hawkers, and even Mechanics select clothing items based on the job they do.

Another factor that influences clothing selection is occasion. Arubayi (2019) opined that the occasion or an event determines what to select, whether formal or informal, traditional or Western. Indeed, different occasions and events require an appropriate selection of clothing items to suit the event or occasion. For instance, special occasions like marriages; traditional/church/court weddings, dinner/cocktail parties, graduation, sports, and burial ceremonies require different types of clothing. Importantly, the clothes selected should be suitable for various occasions whether formal, casual, sports, church, or parties.

Another factor that influences clothing selection is personality. Personality as a psychological factor is not fixed or static, but it is subjective and ever-changing to fit the demands and changes in the environment. Personality is the sum of the behavioral pattern of an individual and it plays a big role in clothing selection as it represents an individual’s character and a form of self-expression. No wonder, Arubayi (2021) opined that the choice of clothes people wear “reveals” or “tells” about their personalities, whether the individual is

an “extrovert” or an “introvert”. By implication, the clothes people select speak a lot about who they are. To support this opinion, Khare and Rakesh (2010) stated that the clothes people wear are a powerful signal that projects a self-image of what they want to display. Invariably, clothing choice can affect self-image and create an impression that conveys messages about the personality types of an individual.

Apart from Personality, Religion is another Social/Psychological factor. Religion is a social structure that reflects people’s belief systems and their relationships with the supernatural. Religion provides the moral barometer of the “dos and don’ts” of dressing and plays a significant role in the clothing selection of people in any society. This could be seen in the conservative Muslim countries of the Middle East and Asia, and the Liberal countries like the US and Europe in the West. In many societies as opined by Lisa and Fornara (2018), religious laws regulate personal clothing choice, which may permit only an elite class to wear certain prestigious garments. For example, in the Christian Religion, a Bishop’s robe with special designs can only be worn by a Bishop and these clothes are different from those worn by the priest from the same religious convents. Similarly, Al-matawa (2013) stated that, in the Muslim religion, the clothes the chief Imam wears are different from the clothes worn by the average Muslim cleric. Religion has a strong influence on what people wear. No matter the religion, whether Christianity, Islam, Traditional, or other forms of religion, the clothes selected by an individual are defined by the restriction and freedom permitted by the religion.

Another Social/Psychological factor that influences clothing selection is Social Status. One of the strong reasons for the choice of clothes is to show or display social status. Commonly, men or women of both sexes display status through their choice or selection of designer bags, shoes, suits, and ties among others. Oyedeki (2016) stated that the style of clothing worn by Kings and Queens depicts Royalty and Class. In Africa, among the Hausa community, members of the ruling aristocracy wear large turbans in layers of several gowns made from expensive imported fabrics to distinguish them from ordinary people whereas the ruling class in the Igbo tribe wears a traditional attire usually called the “Isiagu”. A type of soft shirt with patterns that are mostly gold or red. Apart from Social Status, another influencing factor is Gender.

Gender as one of the determinants for clothing selection is a product of culture, religion, and biology. Historical and scientific research suggested that gender biologically determines the human categorization of being male or female. Egun (2008) described Gender as a psychological experience of being male or female. There are different clothes for different genders. Although, in some cultures as opined by Advantidon & Gasouka, (2013) in Indonesia, parts of West Africa, and Scotland, men wore articles of clothing that closely resemble a skirt worn by women.

Apart from Gender, Fashion is another Socio-Psychological factor of importance. Fashion can be described as a popular trend in dresses, accessories, or ornaments. Arubayi (2021) described fashion as a stylish behavioral pattern or attitude toward popular trends. People are called “fashionable” when they follow the particular or latest trends in color, shapes, or dress designs. There are also people who follow fashion blindly and are regarded as “fashion faddists”. Singh (2011) stated that it is common for people to express their identity through fashion as a means of making a personal statement in selecting trendy clothes. The cost of fashion is determined by the economic status of the individual and this is another factor that influences clothing selection.

Economic factors

Economic factors determine the clothing item selected, when the per capita income of an individual or nation is high, the tendency to spend more on clothing is high. When the economic status of an individual improves, the desire to select clothing items to match the economic prowess increases. Consequently, individuals from wealthy families tend to spend more money on clothing and luxury items as compared to individuals from low-income families (Arubayi, 2019). There are important economic components that influence clothing selection, such as; the economic well-being of a Nation which is measured by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and multi-dimensional Poverty Index, the availability and accessibility to technology (like social media, internet, cable TV), raw materials and technological knowledge can influence the cost of production, cost of goods and services, thus inhibiting the buying and spending behavior of an individual, which may lead to impulsive buying. On the other hand, where per capita income increases, the tendency to spend more money on numerous brands, and high-quality clothing items increases.

Environmental Factors

Apart from Socio/psychological and Economic factors, Environmental Factors such as climatic conditions, and location among others influence clothing selection. Environmental factors as enumerated by Okonmah, Tiamiyu & Akande (2020) are climatic conditions that determine what individuals wear to suit the weather conditions. During the rainy seasons, clothes are worn to protect the body against cold weather conditions. When the weather is hot, individuals select absorbent clothing items that provide room for comfort. On the contrary, in Temperate regions where the weather is very cold, individuals select clothes that will protect the body against harsh weather conditions in unconventional places. Location is another environmental factor of importance.

The location of a person can be determined by many factors that include, but are not limited to place of birth, residence, rural or urban area, or a place determined by its weather (cold geographical location like the Arctic or a hot tropical region like Nigeria). Aguif and Irfan (2020) opined that the area and

place a person lives, determine the pattern, shape, and style of clothes selected. They further stated that the choice of clothes selected by individuals in an urban location is cosmopolitan in nature, while those selected by rural dwellers are usually influenced by regional factors.

Physiological factors

Other factors that influence clothing selection are physiological factors such as age, health condition, and body structure or figure.

Age is a physiological factor that influences clothing selection. Different clothes are required by different age groups. Arubayi (2010) stated that youths attach greater importance to the clothes they select as a means of gaining group approval and acceptance while adults select their clothes based on the work they do. Importantly, comfort and appropriateness should be considered when selecting clothing items for different age groups.

Body structure (Figure) is another Physiological factor that influences clothing selection. It is important to note that every individual is created differently and has a unique body structure (Figure). Some are short or tall, thin or fat. In this regard, individual knowledge of their figure differences makes it easier to select clothing items that work best for their body shape. Weber (2008) defined figure types as size categories determined by height and body proportion. It is therefore important to emphasize clothes that show good figure points when selecting clothing items. Anikwese (2013) identified some figure problems that will guide the choice of clothing such as abnormal body proportion, pot belly, large arms, heavy waist, big burst, small burst, and wide hips among others. It is imperative to select clothing items that cover figure flaws or camouflage those aspects of the figure that are problematic. Knowing the figure's flaws can be helpful in clothing selection that will meet the body structure of different figure types.

III. CONCLUSION

The research work has been able to develop a framework for understanding the different factors influencing clothing selection, For the purpose of this research, a gap has been filled by conceptualizing the factors influencing clothing selection into four categories: Socio/psychological, Economical, Environmental, and Physiological. A detailed deconstruction of factors influencing clothing selection has been fully explained whether intrinsically motivated factors ranging from culture or religion which determine the immorality of what is to be worn per occasion or extrinsically motivated factors such as economic status among others.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Researchers are encouraged to develop further frameworks in other aspects of clothing. This will not only offer protection to the consumers but also benefit families, society, and the public at large.

Empirical studies are also recommended to assess the factors influencing clothing selection among different population groups.

REFERENCES

1. Adebisi, T.T., Abdulsalam, A.O. (2017). Factors Influencing Colours in Clothing Selection. *Journal of ARAHE*, Vol. 24(2). 56- 63.
2. Aldrich, W. (2008). *Metric pattern cutting for women wear (fifth edition)*, Glasgow: Harper Collins publishers.
3. Al-Mutawa, F. S (2013). Consumer-Generated Representations: Muslim Women Recreating Western Luxury Fashion Brand Meaning through Consumption. *Psychology and Marketing*. 30 (3). 236-246. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20601>
4. Anikwese, G. U. (2013). Figure types and the challenges of making garments in Nigeria. *Production Agriculture and Technology (PAT)*; 9 (1):135-146.
5. Aquif, Y. K & Irfan, S. M (2020). Factors affecting clothing selection. *Textile Learner*.
6. Arubayi, D. O. (2010). Importance of proper dressing in modern living in Nigeria. *Academic Leadership*, the online journal. 8 (1). 1-6.
7. Arubayi, D. O (2019). Dress Sense: How sensible? 72nd in the series of Inaugural lectures of Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. Wednesday, 10th April 2019.
8. Arubayi, D. O (2021). Home Economics and the Actualization of sustainable development goal vision 2030. *Nigeria Journal of Home Economics*. 9 (5), 1-10.
9. Arvanitidou, Z., & Gasouka, M. (2013). Construction of Gender through Fashion and Dressing. *Mediterranean Journal of social sciences*, 4 (11), 1-5. <https://doi:10.5901/mjss.2013.v4n11p111>
10. Asare, T. O., Abdul-fatahi I., & Kwessi, A. D. (2016). Influence of socio and psychological factors on clothing selection among female students in Kumasi Polytechnic, Ghana. *International Journal of Engineering, Research and Reviews*. 4 (4), 20-29.
11. Ashong, E. L & Mensah, V. (2009). Clothing the family for quality living. *International Journal of Home Economics Research*. 2 (1). 94-99.
12. Ikem, A. (2015). Dress Sense. *The Pointer Newspaper*. Sunday. December 6th, 2015.
13. Egun, A. C. (2008). Making the male homemaker; the Home Economics situation in the College of Education in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*. 14 (1): 12-18
14. Khare, A. & Rakesh, S. (2010). Predictors of fashion, clothing involvement among Indian

- Youths. *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and analysis for marketing* 18 (3-4). 209-220.
15. Lisa M. & La Fornara. (2018). Islam's (In)compatibility with the West? Dress Code Restrictions in the Age of Feminism. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 25(1), 463–494. <https://doi.org/10.2979/indjglolegstu.25.1.0463>
 16. Oyedeji, (2016). Dressing in Yoruba Culture. Retrieved from <http://oyedejionline.blogspot.com/2016/10/dressing-in-ancient-yoruba-culture-and-moder-day-dressing.html>.
 17. Parevia, M. (2012). Factors that influence the clothing buying decision. Lahore, Pakistan.
 18. Okonmah, F. C., Tihamiyu, H. K., & Akande, M. A. (2020). Textile and Clothing Needs in Nigeria: Effects of Climate Change on Families. *International Journal of Management Science and Entrepreneurship*. 19 (7). 351-361.
 19. Singh, P. R. (2011). Consumer culture and post modernism. *Post modern opening*. 5 (5). 61-86.
 20. Thompson, J. K & Van den Berg, P. (2007). Measuring body image attitude among adolescents and adults in T. F Cash and Prunzinsky, T. T. (Eds). *A handbook of theory, research and clinical practice*. 142-154. New York. Guilford press.
 21. Weber, J. (2008). *Clothing, Fashion, Fabric construction*. New Jersey, Prentice Hall.