

**AKENTEN APPIAH-MENKA UNIVERSITY OF SKILLS TRAINING AND  
ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**THE IMPACT OF FASHION TREND ON ETHNIC CLOTHING IN GHANA:  
CASE STUDY OF THE UPPER WEST REGION OF GHANA**

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submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the award of Master of Technology in Fashion  
Design and Textiles degree**

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## **DECLARATION**

### **STUDENT'S DECLARATION**

I, RUKAYA YAKUBU, declare that this dissertation with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

**SIGNATURE:** .....

**DATE:** .....

### **SUPERIOR'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development.

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**DATE:** .....

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my dear children; Shabrat Junuo, Shauka Numbu, and Fauzia Iddrisu.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

FI	Fashion Industry
ATL	Akosombo Textile Limited
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTMCT	Ghana Textile Manufacturing Company Limited
GTP	Ghana Textile Printing
ICT	Information Communication Technology
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to explore how fashion trend has affected ethnic clothing in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The study was guided by the achievement of four specific objectives. It used an exploratory qualitative research method and semi-structured interviews to collect data from fifty-five (55) respondents chosen through a combination of accidental and snowball sampling techniques. The study found that fashion trend has led to the sinking and dwindling of interest of the people in the Upper West Region in the ethnic clothing and the cultural significance and ideals that go along with it. The study also found that fashion trend on the hand has enhanced the creative ingenuity of the ethnic clothing fashion designers by encouraging the development of new ideas, styles, and trendy looks in ethnic clothing designs. Based on the outcomes of the study, the researcher makes a recommendation. It is apparent that ethnic clothing can have a unique look, but before that can happen, the government needs to show that it cares about the business of ethnic clothing by making policies that regulate the textile industry. Individual designers and companies that make ethnic clothing must come together to form a well-run institution with a governing body that keeps an eye on the established industry. again, by introducing academic courses and programs in fashion design, ethnic clothing fashion designers and trend watchers can be trained in our academic institutions.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Clothing has been a big part of shaping human cultures all over the world since the time of Adam (Adampsey, 2015). The first people to wear ethnic clothing were the native Ghanaians, who used animal skins and tree bark to make their clothes (Adu-Akwaboa, 1994). Traditional ethnic clothing has done two things: kept people comfortable and kept them safe from the elements (Marshall, et al, 2012). In addition to this main function, ethnic clothing is a powerful way to show one's personality, feelings, religious beliefs, and whole culture (Anku et al. 2018). Clothing is unique not just because of what someone wears, but also because of when, why, where, and what it says about the person wearing it. Hristova (2014) says that clothing is a form of nonverbal communication that shows what a group's cultural beliefs are. The clothes people wear are the best way to judge how moral they are and what their culture is really like (Adom, 2017). People have used some kind of clothing to tell others who they are in almost every society (Anku et al. 2018).

Ghana as a country has a lot of cultural traditions, and ethnic clothing is an important part of them. Ghana's traditional clothes, such as the adinkra, kente, and fugu (smock), are important symbols of the country's rich cultural history. They are worn at important events, such as funerals, weddings, and naming ceremonies. For example, the Adinkra cloth is a type of loose clothing made from strips of cloth that are woven on traditional looms in southern Ghana (Essel and Amissah, 2015). It is mostly worn by Akans at funerals and weddings (Adom, 2017). In the same way, most Northerners wear Fugu, a type of loose clothing made from strips of cloth that are woven in Northern Ghana during festivals. Ghanaian men wear traditional clothes in which they wrap ten (10) or six (6) yards of fabric

around their bodies and hang it from one shoulder, usually the left. Most men in the southern parts of Ghana seem to wear clothes that fit this description.

Before colonization, chiefs and nobles wore traditional clothes that were highly valued (James and Kent, 2019). During the time of colonization, they were seen as backward and primitive, and "elite" Western-style clothing was favored and accepted. In Ghana's fourth republic, different governments have tried to set up ways to make it easier for people to wear clothes from their own culture. People say that at least since the early 2000s, wearing clothes from different cultures has become more popular. In general, Ghanaians are now more open to wearing this kind of clothing every day instead of just for special occasions. Programs like the National Friday Wear Programme, which tells businesses to ditch their Western suits and ties in favor of clothes made from locally made materials, show how the Ghanaian people's views on these traditional clothes are changing (Ghana News Agency, 2020).

Buying ethnic clothing gives you a sense of cultural identity, but it also helps you make money, as several authors have shown (Adom 2017; Marshall, et al, 2012). For example, Nordas (2014) says that women who had no way to make a living before now have a lot to gain from the labor-intensive requirements of ethnic clothing and the job development opportunities that come with it. Asare (2012) says that the industry could hire a large number of people without skills. Many of these people would come from rural agricultural areas. Due to its low initial investment costs, expansion is a good way to start making money. Quartey and Abor say that there are over 2,000 young and old people working in the fashion industry in the ethnic clothing subsector (2011). So, many authors have urged governments to put a lot of money into improving ethnic clothing to change the fashion trends of the society. This would be good for both cultural and economic growth (Anku et al. 2018; Quartey and Abor, 2011; Adom, 2017; Marshall, et al, 2012).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In general, the fashion industry in every country makes a big difference in the economic growth and development of that country by giving people the clothes they need and bringing in money to pay for their daily needs (Anku et al. 2018). Anku et al. (2018) say that globalization is having a big effect on the fashion industry in Ghana these days. Because of this, the place and ways of making and selling clothes have changed. The surprising result is that fashion producers, marketers, consumers, and designers are all expanding their global reach. So, since making clothes takes a lot of work, it has moved from industrialized countries with high wages to emerging countries. Asian countries like India, China, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and others are making a lot of money by selling clothes and textiles to developing countries like Ghana (Anku et al. 2018).

Ghana is made up of many different ethnic groups, and each of them has its own culture, worldview, and social norms. All of these things are thought to have an effect on fashion trends. People's community values and cultural norms change over time in Ghana and all over the world, and the same is true of fashion and other forms of art. When it comes to clothes and style, these changes are caused by both inside and outside forces. Some of these drivers are the media, which gives people quick access to global events, more travel around the world, and better ways to communicate. Civilizations are becoming less different because of this. But in Ghana, many people have said that the westernization of Ghanaian fashion is a form of colonialism and that if it keeps going, it could make current and future generations want to adopt western culture (Idang, 2015).

Cultures are mixing more and more, and clothes and fashion trends from different groups are being mixed together. Even though there is a lot of mixing of ethnic and cultural clothing in Ghana, many Regions and ethnic groups still have their own unique ethnic clothing. For example, Ghana's Asante, Northern, and Volta Regions are known for making

certain types of traditional clothing. Most Akans make and wear Adinkra and Kente clothing, which is made from strips of fabric that are woven on traditional looms in southern Ghana (Essel and Amissah, 2015). In the same way, the Ewes in the Volta area make kete fabric. Fugu, a type of loose clothing made from strips of cloth, is mostly made by people in the north.

According to Anku et al. (2018), the governments of the fourth republic of Ghana have tried to improve the growth and development of ethnic clothing and the textile industry in general, but they haven't had much success because they don't have enough information about how ethnic clothing affects fashion trends. People have said that knowing how ethnic clothing affects fashion trends could give important information for strategic planning and policy decisions, which could lead to a complete change in the textile industry. This is one of the first studies to look at how fashion trend affects ethnic clothing in Ghana. It looks at the clothing of the Upper West Region as an example.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The objectives that guided this research are:

1. To identify the ethnic clothing of the Upper West Region of Ghana.
2. To identify the factors influencing developmental changes or leading to new styles of the ethnic clothing in recent times.
3. To find out the extent of impact of ethnic clothing on fashion in the Upper West Region of Ghana.
4. To identify the guiding principles for fashion dynamism as well as for cultural preservation and promotion.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

The research questions for this study are:

1. What are the ethnic clothing of the Upper West Region of Ghana?
2. Which influential factors have been impacting changes in styles of the ethnic clothing of the Upper West Region of Ghana?
3. To what extent has fashion impacted the indigenous clothing of the Upper West Region of Ghana?
4. Which guiding principles have helped to control the fashion dynamics with respect to the ethnic clothing and also preserved and promoted the cultural heritage of the Upper West Region of Ghana?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The present study is significant in a number of ways:

First of all, its results will help fashion market researchers find new target markets, find out how existing customers of ethnic clothing brands feel about them, learn more about how much people spend on fashion, and look into how marketing campaigns can change people's buying habits. This will make it easier for investors to put money into the part of the textile industry that deals with ethnic clothing, which will increase its influence on fashion trends.

Again, the study will give information that will be used to make strategic plans and policy decisions about how to include the ethnic clothing subsector in Ghana's plans for the textile trade and industrial development. Knowing about these things could also give important information for strategic planning in both the public and private sectors.

The study will add to what has already been written about ethnic clothing, fashion trends, and ethnic clothing by providing theoretical references that could help create a set of effective processes and strategies for boosting the growth and development of ethnic clothing. It could be helpful for other scholars who want to do research on similar topics.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study is the research boundary. In terms of geographic scope, the study was undertaken in the Upper West Region of Ghana.

In terms of content scope, the study investigated the impact of ethnic clothing on fashion trends in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The study concentrated on the characteristics and nature of ethnic clothing and the impact on fashion trends. The study is limited to the Upper West Region because it is one of the Regions that serves as the hub for the production of ethnic clothing, and fashion products.

### **1.7 Organisation of the Text**

The study is made up of five chapters. Chapter One comprises the background to the study, the problem statement, the research objectives and questions, and the scope of the research. Chapter Two consists of a review of previous literature that is relevant to the subject under investigation. Chapter Three presents the methodology of the research and consists of such components as study design, population, sampling technique, the type of research methods employed, the data collected, and the methods used to analyze the data. Chapter Four consists of the presentation and discussions of the findings. Chapter Five presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the existing literature that pertains to the subject under investigation. It begins with an overview of the study's primary theoretical framework. Additionally, it conducts a review of the relevant literature using the keywords listed in the study objectives. This chapter also looks at the dynamics of the ethnic clothing subsector of the textile industry, fashion trends and the challenges bedeviling the ethnic clothing subsector. The chapter concludes with a conceptual framework that directs data collecting and analysis.

#### **2.2. Theoretical Framework**

##### **2.2.1 The fashion theory**

The study is based on Steele's fashion theory from 1997, which says that a people's fashion system is part of their material culture. So, the theory says that fashion is a cultural construction of how people see themselves. The main idea behind this investigation is in line with the ideas in fashion theory. In this study, ethnic clothing is used to show a group's identity, which needs to be at the center of its fashion systems and trends. So, it is important to keep looking at how ethnic clothing affects fashion trends. In other words, this study will help us learn more about how the Upper West people's rich cultural values affect fashion trends.

##### **2.2.2 The Fashion Adoption Model by Sprole from 1979**

The main goal of Sprole's (1979) Fashion Adoption Model is to figure out what makes someone like or dislike a new fashion trend. The idea behind this theory is that a person's

decision to change their look is affected by six traits: perfectionism, value consciousness, brand consciousness, fashion consciousness, shopping avoidance, and support-seeking.

The first characteristic, perfectionism, shows how much a person wants the best products. Others who do well on this question seem to be looking for the best, while those who do poorly seem to care less about quality. People with high levels of perfectionism are more careful about what they buy and spend more time and energy comparing prices.

Worth consciousness is the second trait of people who look for "value for money" in the things they buy. People think of them as the perfect example of a consumer who cares about money, and they tend to pay more attention to prices.

Third, brand consciousness measures how likely a person is to buy the most expensive and well-known brand. People who do well on this question tend to think that the price of a product shows how good it is. They tend to be very fashion-conscious and like to shop at high-end department stores and specialty shops.

People who like new things have a high level of fashion awareness, which is the fourth trait. They know about the latest fashion trends and put a lot of value on looking good. Also, these customers usually don't care as much about price.

Fifth, people who don't like to shop may only buy a few things when they do go shopping. They don't enjoy shopping and are willing to skip out on some purchases to save time.

The last thing that was noticed about Sproule was that he was always looking for help. People like these often have trouble figuring out how the market works, and before they buy something, they often ask their friends for advice and permission. This study's conceptual model combines two parts of Sproule's paradigm, namely fashion consciousness and support seeking (susceptibility to interpersonal influence).

## **2.3 Ethnic Clothing in Ghana**

### 2.3.1 The concept of ethnic clothing

The word "ethnic" is being used more frequently in fashion terminology. In the words of Idang (2015), the mention of "ethnic clothes," "ethnic style," "ethnic accessories," or "ethnic fashion," brings to mind, a picture of brightly coloured products, organic materials, and exotic patterns. However, the word "ethnic" acquires a considerably more significant meaning when used in relation to clothing (Idang, 2015). The Greek term *ethnos*, which means "race" or "nation," is where the adjective "ethnic" originates. Usually, it refers to a group of individuals who have similar religious, cultural, and linguistic traits.

A dress worn by members of a specific ethnic group or nation is referred to as ethnic clothing (Idang, 2015). During the Colonial era, references to ethnic clothing first appeared in a number of different places of the world. The colonialists shared their culture and fashion with the natives, which led to the development of their own distinctive clothing style that the natives later adopted (Idang, 2015; Eicher 2018). The culture, religion, and history of the people who inhabit a Region are frequently the sources of inspiration and influence for the ethnic dress. Additionally, ethnic clothing is characterized by its own style and distinguishing features.

Members of a group may also wear ethnic clothing to set themselves apart from those of another group, particularly in the face of strong homogenizing factors (Adom, 2017). Thus, clothing is the only part of material culture that may provide light on social change and the interactions between nature, the individual, and the socio-cultural environment (Eicher 2018). Additionally, studies repeatedly demonstrate that individuals with high levels of ethnic identity identify with clothing that matches their background (Chattaraman & Lennon, 2017).

### **2.3.2 Characteristic features of ethnic clothing**

Herman (2010) notes that the natives of the Gold Coast used a variety of weaving techniques before being exposed to woven cloth and cotton fibers. For instance, the Ewes produced textiles they called Logo from tree bark. According to Herman (2010), people eventually learned to twist animal fibers and hair together with their fingers before rolling them against the thigh, as is still done by certain traditional weavers today. People discovered that plant fibers and animal hair could be spun into yarns for clothes weaving. According to Baah (2010), expensive foreign silks that had been unraveled and woven with many shades of colour and intricate designs were used to create Asante textiles. Similar to the Roman toga, these garments were worn and thrown over the shoulder. According to Adler (2015), Kente weaving is a method of producing textiles that involves using very small looms to create long, narrow lengths of cloth that may subsequently be linked edge to edge to create a square or rectangular coverings. Numerous size and compositional changes are possible with this method.

Ginning, baling, bale breaking and mixing, carding, spinning, sizing, and dyeing are pre-weaving procedures (Adler, 2015). Women and kids tend to do the ginning. The cotton is then placed in specially woven baskets or sacks with covers and kept in storage until it is needed. The process of breaking and mixing bales entails removing fibers from various bags or baskets and thoroughly mixing them in order to produce a uniform yarn when these fibers are spun into yarn (Adler, 2015). The next step is carding, which involves purifying the blended cotton by removing very short fibers, twigs, and other extraneous components from it (Adler, 2015).

The process of carding, the initial step in turning fibers into yarns, involves vigorously combing a mass of fibers to remove any abnormal ones from the strands. The process of carding involves gathering a certain amount of cotton at once, laying it on a curved wooden bowl with strings attached to it, and then running another bowl through the fibers to collect

the necessary amount of cotton onto the string on the bowl (Adler, 2015). Repeat this process until the cotton is fluffy, well opened, and has partially straightened strands. The wet cotton is carefully taken out of the bowl and placed into a large calabash so that it is ready for use once the "carder" is satisfied with the fiber's state (Adler, 2015).

According to Adler (2015), cotton fibers in the lap form are spun to create silver, roving, and eventually yarn with a certain amount of twist. Typically, during spinning, the spinner takes some fibers from the distaff, twists them, and fastens them to the end of the spindle. The spindle is elevated a few millimeters from the calabash with the right hand, and the cotton is initially given a twist by the spindle's whirling motion. The whirling spindle is permitted to slowly drop. The spinner is still pulling several threads through the spindle with the right hand while simultaneously checking the length and diameter of the yarn they are creating with their right hand for evenness. Sizing is the process of giving the yarn extra weight. The yarn is steeped in cassava starch to achieve this. Sizing is done to make the yarn more durable (Badoe 2017).

Horizontal looms are a distinctive feature of Ghanaian weaving traditions. These result in thin fabrics that must be stitched together to generate cloth that is the desired size. The two most widely used indigenous looms in Ghana are the Ashante Nsdua Kofi and the Ewe Agbati (Badoe 2017). The classic weaver's looms in Europe, the foot-power looms are larger varieties of horizontal hand looms, the majority of which have English roots. Although they share many characteristics, the fundamental distinction between them has been the number of harnesses mounted on them. Some plain weave structures only have two. For design purposes, some have four, six, or even eight harnesses (Badoe 2017).

Idang (2015) came to the conclusion that our intricate kente and fugu needed to be modernized after analyzing a few indigenous weaves in Ghana. Finally, he created a brand-

new loom that, while comparable to all other Ghanaian native looms, was a notable improvement. Weavers can pick from a variety of weaving methods. Plain, twill, sateen, and satin weaves are on the list. To create a coherent structure, two or more sets of pieces are systematically interlaced, typically but not always at right angles. Although no one is certain of the exact origins of the weaving technique, it is believed that civilizations have been evolving through weaving for as long as there have been artifacts of civilized life — Wynne (2011).

The foundation of natural fiber weaving is described by Adjabeng (2022), who claims that "basketry materials come exclusively from certain Regions, at certain times of the year. Such information is as crucial to the survival of the craft as weaving itself, along with strategies for obtaining and processing materials. According to Wynne (2017), plain weave is the most straightforward and widely used of all woven structures. For the same set of yarns, a fabric made from plain weave will have better stability and hardness than fabrics made from any other weave because it permits the largest amount of warp and weft interlacing.

### **2.3.3 Ethnic Clothing in the Upper West Region**

The Upper West Region is made up of different ethnic groups including the Dagaabas, Waalas, Sissalas, Brifors among other minor tribes. However, the Dagaabas are the largest ethnic group that occupied most parts of the Region, accounting for about 70% of the total population of the Region (PHC 2021). The fugu, smock, or batakari, is the main ethnic clothing of the people. The word "Batakari" is slang for "outer robe" in the Hausa language (M. Issah, pers. communication, November 26, 2014). This suggests that it is an outer garment that resembles a robe that is worn over inner garments. The exquisite embroidery motifs on the clothes, especially at the front, indicate that Nupe or Hausa likely fashioned

it (Renne, 2004), and some of the fabric's colouration is reminiscent of guinea fowl feathers. The three-piece outfit, often referred to as *batakari*, comprises a flowing outer gown, an inner robe with long sleeves, and a pair of pants. On the other side, the Mossi term for fabric is "fugu" (Ahiabor, 2013). A vast variety of loose garments created from fabric strips and woven on old-fashioned looms in Northern Ghana is what it is known for. However, among Ghanaian fashion experts and users, the terms *Batakari* and *Fugu* have come to be used interchangeably in modern Ghanaian English to denote smocks.

There are various schools of thought on the precise genesis of smocks in Ghana. Some claim that the 'Tang' people of the Karaga Region were originally weavers who moved to Kpatinga village in the Gushegu district of the Northern Region (S. Alhassan, pers. communication, November 27, 2014). They continue by saying that the first form of the craft was a woven stripe of clothing used to cover their nakedness. Others contend that some of the Mossi people who traveled to Northern Ghana from Burkina Faso carried the craft with them. Before moving, the Mossis participated in a barter trade system from Upper Volta to the north, according to Ahiabor (2013).

As early as the eighth century A.D., according to Heathcote (1979), the Hausa people of Nigeria were well established in the commerce exporting of hand-woven fabrics in areas of West Africa. The Talensi, Builsa, Nankanni, Dagara, and other peoples, according to Allman (2004, p.146), did not produce fabric; instead, they used skins, waist beads, and leaves to hide their genitalia. They were viewed as naked by these nations who traded in woven fabrics since they "passed from west to east, bisecting the complex of Mossi Dagomba kingdoms to the north and south." Allman asserts that Mossi traders and settlers were probably the first guardians of the smock weaving technique.

Despite the many differences in tracing the precise historical account of smock production and usage culture in Ghana, the general truth is that Ghana is "composed of a mosaic of

ethnic cultures that trace their origins within and outside Africa" and that it was possibly settled with that artistic prowess in weaving and other artistic legacies remain (Essel and Amissah, 2015). In Ghana's savannah north, notably the Upper East, Upper West, and Northern Regions, smock weaving is believed to have gained popularity through acculturation, enculturation, and transculturation.

In the olden days, the men used to wear leather (gane) and a special pant called "paregantaa". For the men, the leather they wear also served as their seat. That is to say, it was serving a dual purpose. The women also wore leaves (vaare). They also used a piece of cloth called (mungante and kyoli) to cover their private parts serving as their pants and blouses. As the world advances, the people in the Upper West Region have developed the taste for ethnic clothing and this is portrayed in the products to which the ethnic clothing is put. Today, the people of the Upper West Region have developed different kinds of smock including the dankyisi, tago (long sleeves), daalee (wide smock), munkyara, toro (singlet), and suntaala (talisman). They also have different types of shorts which include; tabalagyu, bente,pieto, paragantaa (for funerals) and nungbogli. The traditionally hand woven clothes are very expensive as compared with modern ones and are very difficult to come by.

The ethnic clothing is considered dignified and reserved for special occasions such as festivals, gatherings, funerals, durbar of chiefs etc. During festivals and other special occasions, they use some local materials like horns, bagri-zupili, tails (zuuri) of some animals such as horses, cows, land squirrels (kyee), and other wild animals to display with. During funerals, the tails of animals are also used to drive away flies when they stage their corpses. The people also use beads and cowries in making necklaces, bracelets, bangles, castanets, and many others. Cowrie and beads are also used in designing the edges of smocks and blouses, especially for dance groups which make them look more beautiful and are worn during special occasions

## **2.4 Clothing and Culture**

Every civilization is built on culture since it distinguishes one group of people from all the others (Idang, 2015). Since culture is considered to be one of the debatable notions that are challenging to define, it lends itself to different definitions (Adom, 2017). There are numerous different disciplines that use it, and they all define it differently to match their needs. Culture is the collection of unique accomplishments, beliefs, and traditions that make up the background of an ethnic, religious, or social group, according to Denis (2018). Earlier, Kaiser (1990) holds the same view, believing that culture is a taught set of knowledge, behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, values, and standards that a group of people shares. Culture is the distinctive works of art and ceremonial attire of a particular social group.

Culture, in its broadest definition, refers to people's beliefs, behaviors, and means of subsistence. The conservative aspects of culture link the previous generation to the current and future generations (Soini and Dessein, 2016). Some civilizations place a lot of importance on how individuals in their society dress. Clothing adds complexity to our daily activities by signaling the emotions and culture of a group (Dogoe, 2013). There are numerous cultural traditions that have distinct, universally recognized methods of wearing. Some of these are the Middle Eastern burqas and headscarves, the Indian saris, the European dirndls, and the Japanese silk kimonos (Anawalt, 2007; Dogoe, 2013).

Even though some of these clothes or other items have lost their cultural significance over time, they nevertheless serve as good reminders of each culture. According to Adamptey (2015), a group's clothing conveys its cultural beliefs, and language is a component of culture. The most picturesque window into a certain social environment's way of life is provided by clothing. Additionally, it displays a number of cultural processes, borrowings, or specificities, as well as universal constants that typically illustrate the resemblance

between culture and physical attributes over time. The treatment of clothing as both a collective and an individual visual medium allows for the successful decoding of a particular group in contemporary culture. It is among the most effective ways for someone to express themselves visually (Bennet, 2005; Shete, 2013; Eicher, 2018). Clothing that reflects a person's culture promotes social interaction. According to Akinbileje (2017), clothing is a key factor in determining a people's cultural environment. In traditional institutions, wearing clothes is a practical way to uphold a society's traditional ideals (Eicher, 2018). Being a member of their organization makes one feel encouraged and satisfied. When it comes to a person's viewpoint, their dress choices, which reflect their culture, have an impact on how they think about themselves and the world around them (Eicher, 2018). Sometimes, the clothing people wear make their sex, age, and class known. Even their occupation, place of origin, personality, and taste might be revealed by it. In the Siltie community in Southern Ethiopia, Ahmed (2017) observed that clothing is utilized to gauge women's ages and marital status. Here, it is evident that clothing does not exist in a vacuum but is instead a part of the social and historical environment of everyday life

## **2.5 Fashion and Fashion Trends**

### **2.5.1 The concept of fashion**

The term "fashion" refers to consumers' varying preferences or decisions on any item (Barnard, 2002). Fashionable clothing is typically a consumer good that reflects the wearer's status and personality (Dodd et al, 2000). In general, fashion is a practice that is well-known among the populace. It covers things like clothes, shoes, jewellery, watches, and hairstyles, among many other things. When applied to an item, the term "fashion" incorporates the elements of change, uncertainty, novelty, and benefit (Kawamura, 2005). According to Crewe (2001), fashion is like a book cover that is constantly changing. Numerous disciplines, including sociology, psychology, the arts, and others have examined fashion. However, because dressing is the most important aspect of a person's life, the majority of people confuse the dress code with fashion. Dress reflects the world's educational and material characteristics and is crucial in both financial and social dimensions (Workman & Lee, 2011). Adopting fashionable clothing is not easy, though; one must first navigate a challenging period of social ideals and customs that are entwined with the community. Fashion is a process that is influenced by consumer attitudes, beliefs, and habits (Entwistle, 2002). For instance, the increased participation of women in the labor force has sparked a covert fashion competition between men and women. The fashion markets saw a distinctive twist because of sportsmen. Sportsmen are becoming a fashion symbol and can be seen walking in fashion shows, which boosts the latest fashion trends (Bakewell et al, 2006).

In the modern period, fashion is emerging as a source of delight and confidence. It is now recognized as a value that has changed consumers' preferences, and they increasingly see fashion as a crucial component of their life (Meneses and Rodriguz, 2010).

### **2.5.2 Fashion in Ghana**

Ghana has always been ahead of the fashion curve. Although there has been significant Western influence in the fashion industry, the country has made every effort to maintain its unique identity. Since there are no written records of Ghana's fashion history, the history of fashion is only talked about. Ghana's fashion history can be traced back to the time before the country was colonized, when people dressed in the bark of trees and animal skins. Fashion includes clothing, furniture, housing, toys, and cars, among other things. However, in Ghana, fashion is narrowly defined as a style of clothes, makeup, and dress accessories that are popular or admired and worn by a lot of people at a certain time or season (Essel, 2019). The Ghanaian fashion industry is in charge of making and selling fashion products. It is an important part of the country's economic growth because it helps people make money to live and gives them a way to get the clothes they need (Sarpong, Howard, and Osei-Ntiri, 2011).

Dressing well is an important part of Ghanaian culture, so most Ghanaian fashion has to do with clothes (Adjabeng, 2022). In the 1700s, most people in Ghana wore traditional clothes that had not been changed by western culture. In Ghana in the 18th century, a person's rank and status in the community were shown by what he or she wore (Amankwah et al, 2012). Clothing was usually wrapped around without stitches so that it hung from the navel down and covered half of the legs. It was also sometimes wrapped around the neck and shoulders (James and Kent, 2019).

In addition, individuals would wear a loincloth between their legs, which was then looped over a leather bead belt and hung lower in the back than it did in the front (Adjabeng, 2022). The garments were larger clothes that served as blankets at night and as lounge dresses in the morning. They were typically worn by wrapping them around the body in such a way

that one arm was left uncovered. This practice was common among the people living in the southern part of Ghana. Those who lived in the northern Region wore multiple layers of clothing, typically between five and six, that were wrapped around their bodies in an elegant manner. Additionally, the young men and women of this Region wore a cap made of goat's skin atop their heads, a staff in their hands, and a chain of coral around their heads (Amankwah et al., 2012).

Despite this, the influence of colonialism began to take the lead, and the Ghanaian traditional mode of dressing began to give way to the western style of dressing. This gradual influence of clothing started along the coastal lands, which came about with the arrival of the first Europeans, the Portuguese and later the Dutch and English, through the trading of European clothes and other goods in exchange for gold. This gradual influence of clothing began along the coastal lands because of the arrival of the first Europeans, the Portuguese, and later the Dutch and English (Nyarko et al, 2022). Both along the coast and in the central parts of Gold Coast, loincloths were used. However, a significant change in their use predominated when Europeans gained access to the hinterlands, particularly Akwamu, Asante, and Bono around the year 1700.

Up until the 1960s, the process of developing new fashionable cloth styles was a highly centralized one, and the styles that originated in Paris were the ones that were most popular. The majority of how fashion works is derived from this time period and continues to be used today, despite the fact that the way fashion works today is very different. The French might have been the best at what they did because of the political climate in France at the time. This could be linked to the fact that Paris had a large textile industry that competed with Lyon for a long time, the fashion of the "hundred years," and the part that Paris played

in Christian Dior's New Look in 1947, which put French style back on the international stage (Huang, 2022).

In France, there was a close connection between the fashion industry, haute couture, and political power, which helped the fashion industry grow. Local political and business players work with association players at the national and sometimes international level to help the local economy grow. This activity can sometimes be seen internationally. Today, the fashion industry is controlled by four oligarchies: London, Milan, New York, and Paris. These are the four major cities that are known for hosting "Fashion Week" shows.

The word "fashion" refers to the process of changing styles. Throughout history, fashion has always looked very different at different points in time. Fashion changes over time because people want new and different styles and because they interact with people from other societies. Traditional institutions in Ghana dress themselves in garments that are symbolic of their values and heritages. These garments also display the institutions' identities. The history of fashion identifies the various costumes that different cultures have used as a means of communicating personal and social statuses, from the most basic to the most complex. Clothes and adornments were used as a means of conveying one's personal and social statuses because clothes continue to be an important mode of operation for the non-verbal communication of the fashion language (Nyarko et al, 2022).

Clothing is an essential component of the Akan and Dagomba fashion cultures, and it plays an important role in determining a person's social status. Costumes are, in most cases, the most expressive and fundamental component of a society's civilization. Not only does this have an effect on the individual, but it also reflects the larger culture of both the past and the present. The nature of costumes has been shaped by sociopolitical and religious factors, which regulate which body parts should be covered and which should be exposed by

clothing. This has led to the development of elaborate costumes. The majority of products sold in the fashion industry fall under the categories of textiles and garments. Wax prints came into existence as a result of colonization, which had an effect on the indigenous Ghanaians' mode of dress and contributed to its evolution.

The Ghanaian fashion industry has grown over time, making a large market that designers, retailers, and producers can all sell their clothes on. Companies such as Akosombo Textiles, Vlisco, and Woodin produce materials on a daily basis. These materials have become useful and very important to the local fashion designers, and the local fashion designers in turn produce styles that are worn by people. Fabrics, clothing styles, and accessories are created in Ghana by fashion designers who take inspiration from a variety of hues, tones, and ideas found in their environment. The fashion industry in Ghana provides an escape from the day-to-day in order to embrace and celebrate the country's rich traditions. At its core, the fashion industry in Ghana is about preserving a sense of history and pride while also embodying a purpose that makes a lot of sense.

Ghana's fashion industry also makes a wide range of fashion accessories, like handbags, shoes, jewelry, and belts, to go with the clothes that are made. The rise of locally produced textiles and garments in clothing reached its zenith during the Kufuor administration, which saw the introduction of Friday Wear as an incentive for workers in both the public and private sectors. The goal of this incentive was to project the singularity of the Ghanaian identity through the extensive use of locally produced fabrics and designs. The Adinkra symbols that are worn by the numerous ethnic groups that can be found in the southern portions of Ghana are embossed on the majority of the textiles that are produced in Ghana.

From 1977 to 2005, the total number of yarns used in fabric manufacture fell from 129 million to 39 million. This marked a significant decrease. In addition to the presence of

huge commercial manufacturing enterprises that dominated the textiles industry, there were also areas available for small-scale textiles firms to operate. These firms largely consisted of screen printers, batik fabric producers, and dressmakers; they also produced traditional hand-printed clothing like fugu and kente (Aboagyewaa-Ntiri, et al, 2016). Although shifts in style are inevitable, the way they take shape is mostly determined by globalization.

The standard operating procedure of where and how fashion is made and sold has changed as a result of globalization. Globalization has become a purely economic phenomenon because it is the way that companies make and share their economic wealth in exchange for economic benefits. It is related to advances in technology that make it easier for people and things to move between states. Globalization has also become synonymous with globalization (Sarpong et al., 2011).

Even the fashion industry isn't safe from the effects of globalization, since fashion has become an important part of the global economy. More than 3.38 billion people work in the industry, and the value of its products, which is estimated at \$3 trillion, makes up 2% of the world's GDP (Fashion United, 2022 cited in Huang, 2022). Even though exporting fashion products only brings in a small amount of money, the Ghanaian government has taken a number of steps to grow and improve the fashion industry.

Ghana's fashion education has also improved. It is now taught at the University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Koforidua Technical University, and the University of Education, among others, at the tertiary level. The goal is to give graduates marketable skills that are in demand so they can take on their roles in the industry, find jobs, and become successful.

### **2.5.3 Dimension of Fashion**

## **1) Footwear/Shoes**

The shoe is one of the most essential components of apparel. The average American owns ten pairs of shoes, and the world produces 20 billion pairs of shoes annually, according to a survey conducted in the United States (Albers et al., 2008). There are a variety of shoe designs and categories, including high heels, athletic shoes, and sandals. Designer, bespoke, or mass-produced footwear may be available. Robinson (2014) report that people view their footwear as an extension of their identity. He continued by stating that individuals consider shoes to influence how they perceive themselves and others, as well as to serve as an extension of their personality. For instance, image-conscious women in Ghana and Nigeria buy shoes with a greater emphasis on aesthetics and less on quality (Prempeh, 2022). But, American women exclusively purchase branded shoes because they view them as an extension of their individual style and individuality (Tarlo and Moors, 2013).

Shoes, sometimes known as footwear, are intriguing articles of clothing that allow individuals to express themselves and reveal who they are and what they are capable of (Koda, 2017). According to Koda (2017), women's footwear is an indicator of social position and authority. In addition, Goodman (2017) suggested that women are more attracted to and conscientious about the footwear they choose due to comfort and personal preferences. The manner in which a woman interacts with footwear illustrates how essential footwear may be for women. Women's diligent efforts to have attractive footwear illustrate that it is not just a reflection of fashion, but also the psychological pleasure of making a favorable first impression.

## **2) Cosmetics and Makeup**

When it comes to managing one's appearance, it is not sufficient to simply wear the right clothes. It can also involve the usage of cosmetics, handbags, watches, and other

accessories to improve one's appearance. To enhance their social standing, individuals want to purchase additional clothing from a variety of companies in dazzling hues and styles. People purchase cosmetics from a variety of companies to enhance their personal style and appearance (Jan and Abdullah, 2015). According to Joelle (2016), women frequently buy makeup after purchasing clothing. To achieve a flawless, alluring appearance, women purchase cosmetics that coordinate with their attire. "Makeup is something that stamps who we are and our personalities onto our bodies," wrote Jan and Abdullah (2015). In other words, cosmetics act as a "positive affirmation of an individual's own self" in addition to improving our appearance. Women in Western cultures routinely use cosmetics to enhance their physical beauty. According to Mulhern et al., (2003) cosmetics are essential for enhancing one's appearance since they promote facial symmetry. Foundation and concealer, for instance, help to conceal all flaws and irregularities on the face, leaving the skin flawless and smooth; lip gloss and eye makeup aid to accentuate and tone the lips and eyes; and so on.

According to Jan and Abdullah (2015), both sexes are deemed naturally attractive if their general physiques and faces are uniformly balanced. This consistent symmetry can aid both men and women in projecting a self-assured, vivacious, and confident demeanor, which can help them flourish in the corporate world. According to Joelle (2016), when women wear makeup, they are more confident and have a greater capacity for positive expression than when they do not. In discussing clothing as a "adaptive function," Koda (2017) suggested that it can assist an individual in enhancing their look and self-esteem. Like clothing, cosmetics offer women with a sense of security and self-esteem.

### **3) Attire and accessories**

All aspects of the fashion process pertain to the management of a person's outside appearance or external looks. Dressing, according to experts such as Workman and Lee

(2011), is "the act of selecting and deciding how and with what products/items a person can accentuate his or her unique appearance". Women are more interested in fashion than males since clothing contributes to a person's feeling of self. According to Workman and Lee (2011), women are more worried than men with their beauty and personality. Men are viewed as being less concerned about their beauty than women. Moreover, according to Jan and Abdullah (2015), women wear fashionable attire to strengthen or increase their sense of self-identity and self-image.

Adolescent girls lay a greater emphasis on striving to stand out and be distinctive from other women. Other study, such as Rocha et al. (2005), completely contradicted this finding, indicating that women of all ages—young and old—have the same preoccupation with attractive clothing and fashion awareness, and that this passion does not diminish with age. Kozar and Damhorst (2018) hypothesized that in the majority of instances, family and close friends of older and senior women assist them in selecting clothes that highlights self-esteem and sense of self.

No discussion about fashion would be complete without including accessories. Accessories consist of everything from stockings to gloves, headscarves, sunglasses, hats, belts, and jewelry (Kozar and Damhorst, 2018). According to Kozar and Damhorst (2018), clothing is the first thing that comes to mind when fashion is spoken. Yet, as the fashion discourse expands, it becomes clear how significant accessories are, as they only serve to enhance the beauty of an outfit (apparel). In addition, according to Koda (2017), many women believe that accessories play a crucial part in enhancing their beauty, as opposed to believing that clothing alone is sufficient to make them appear beautiful. Hence, just as we might argue that fashion is more than just clothes, we can also claim that accessories are significantly more than simply clothes.

#### **2.5.4 The fashion industry**

The fashion industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the world; each day, new trends are introduced by manufacturers. According to a Sistema Italia research, the turnover of the textile and fashion industries climbed from the middle of 1990 to 2002, and then again from 2003 until the time of the global financial crisis. 2008 was a notable year for the fashion industry. After enjoying a pleasant era, this industry is currently thriving once more. For fashion marketers, this industry is worth billions (Adom, 2017). The product life cycle is shorter in the fashion business. The main cause is the regular alteration in consumer behavior as a result of embracing new trends. Consequently, it is challenging for businesses to survive in this sector.

Businesses should concentrate on observing and forecasting the fashion life cycle. Particularly in the garment business, there is too much competition among fashion brands (Anku et al, 2018). According to some, the fast-paced developments in the fashion industry could determine whether a corporation succeeds or fails. Global fashion brands are now present in every market due to local consumers' preferences, and their sales are rising throughout Asia's expanding economies, particularly in Korea, Japan, India, and China (Anku et al. 2018).

People now find fashionable lifestyles to be quite appealing, which helps the fashion sector produce its best products. The attitudes, opinions, and interests of those who buy fashion are referred to as a "fashion lifestyle" (Marshall, et al, 2012). Men's and women's impressions of the fashion industry's innovativeness, expertise, involvement, and opinion leadership are all favorably correlated with these factors (Marshall, et al, 2012). Since the fashion cycle changes more quickly than the life cycles of other items, it might be challenging to accurately characterize innovative consumers (Anku et al. 2018).

### **2.5.5 Fashion trends**

Fashion is constantly evolving and being reinvigorated by designers. A set of styles that are popularly worn by many people is referred to as a trend (Eicher 2018). Fashion trends are specifically regarded as the prevalent types of attire and accessories at a given time. Some micro-trends, like small sunglasses and high-waisted jeans, come and go from the style in a matter of months to a few years. However, when macro-trends are taken into account, they have a longer time horizon and are more closely related to lifestyle and demographic changes than the most recent fashion designs (Eicher 2018). It is simply a certain fashion trend or uniquely created clothing, jewelry, shoes, handbags, etc. that is fashionable at the time. The majority of individuals, especially the younger generation, are absolutely obsessed with the current trend. However, because it affects society as a whole and large groups of people, it has an impact on society that could be both beneficial and harmful.

### **2.5.6 Brief Historical Account of Fashion and Clothing in Ghana**

According to a history of clothes in Ghana in the 1700s, the locals may not have been influenced by western fashion in terms of clothing patterns or dressing habits. At that time, clothing was intricate and complex in design. It was based on the person's standing and status within the community. It frequently wrapped around without being stitched, hanging from the navel down and covering half of the legs. Occasionally, it also wrapped around the neck and shoulders (Owusu, 1999). The Gas wore a leather bead belt and a loincloth between their legs in the eighteenth century. The "danta" waist-girdle that the Akans wore in the past was described as having a back end that often hung lower than the front. The Garments, according to Ahiabor (2013), were bigger garments that were worn as lounge dresses in the morning and blankets at night. They were typically wrapped around the body,

leaving one arm exposed. This description is also reminiscent of the way that Akan men traditionally dress, which involves wrapping the body in around 10 yards of fabric and hanging it from one shoulder, usually the left arm. The majority of males in the southern area of Ghana wear this type of men's clothes, which has essentially evolved into the standard for all Ghanaian men today (Ahiabor, 2013).

According to reports, people from the North wore five to six layers of clothing that were neatly wrapped around their bodies (Amankwa et al, 2012). The youth, on the other hand, wore merely a cap made of hart's skin on their heads, and staff in their hands. They were not as ostentatious in their clothing. Additionally, they wear a coral string or necklace around their heads as well as this outfit every day.

## **2.6 The Beginning of Foreign Fashion in Ghana**

According to Bosma et al (2014), the entrance of the Portuguese and other foreign travelers had a progressive impact on the clothing patterns throughout the coastal lands through the exchange of European clothing and other products for gold. Although loincloths were worn in both the coastal and the interior of the nation, the Europeans' access to the hinterlands had a significant and greater influence on loincloth use. Since then, Ghanaian fashion has evolved to reflect western trends in clothes. European influence has spread so widely and so intrusively that it now permeates practically every aspect of life, including politics, religion, and social change, and fashion is no exception..

In his research on national and international fashion trends, Aishwariya (2019) named some of the international fashion trends that have been adopted by several developing nations, including Ghana. These trends include large earrings, embellished shoes, the logo frenzy, and various styles. He points out that, until very recently, 100% denim fabrics and side-slit clothing remained timeless fashions on the global stage. This season, sheer socks that were

translucent in nature and adorned with tiny designs of the same colour are popular. To generate a plastic-like effect since they are transparent by nature, lucite/acrylic and patented leather materials were extensively researched in the market. The introduction of a wide variety of shoes created chances for producing footwear that looks like leather. One of the top-selling accessory categories on foreign websites was neck bands made of black leather, black velvet, or black leather with pearls and stones. According to Amankwa et al. (2012), foreign influence has stolen our country, particularly the youth, of our sense of identity.

Every society has a fundamental need for change. The willingness of people to adopt new items mostly expresses the change and adaption of clothing. Like all other civilizations around the world, Ghanaian culture is affected by other cultures. Interaction with the outside world gives rise to cross-cultural influences, which have a significant impact on changing the Ghanaian way of life and culture. Negative international fashion trends have significantly influenced the locally produced Ghanaian garments, which are the pinnacles of the rich Ghanaian cultural heritage, as a result of trade liberalization, formal education, and technological innovation (Adampsey, 2015).

The detrimental impact of some foreign fashion trends is so blatant that it is not surprising to find Ghanaians, especially students, dressed in a way that makes others wonder if they are in a learning atmosphere or a commune of harlots (Dogoe, 2013). It has been argued that any nation's progress rests on its educational system. In order to have a beneficial impact on pupils' behavioral patterns, it is concerned with the overall development of their personality qualities.

Without creating conditions in tertiary institutions of learning that are favorable to successful teaching and learning, the lofty goals and purposes of education cannot be accomplished. Discipline is unquestionably a necessary component of such a supportive

operational learning environment. The level of discipline at the institution is heavily influenced by the attitudes and values of the pupils. In order to be able to make informed judgments in society, students require assistance in refining their values and changing their attitudes (Dogoe, 2013). However, it is becoming more and more evident that students at Ghana's higher education institutions are steadily dressing inappropriately. According to Egwim (2010), indecent dressing refers to the mentality of a person to dress in a way that exposes delicate body parts like the breasts, buttocks, or even their underwear. This conduct transgresses socially acceptable standards and values in Ghana (Adampsey, 2015).

## **2.7 Factors Influencing Developmental Changes or Leading to the Adoption of Fashion Trends in Recent Times**

Over the past few decades, a significant discussion point in fashion literature has been fashion adoption (Rahman et al 2014). Studies on fashion innovativeness are a recurring issue in the literature on fashion adoption. For instance, Jun and Rhee (2009) did a study to determine the impact of style innovation and fashion innovativeness on female fashion adoption in Korea. The impact of fashion innovativeness on fashion adoption was the subject of another study by Jun & Rhee (2009). Rahman et al. (2020) also looked at the influence of consumer and fashion involvement, as well as opinion leadership and status, on Pakistani consumers' purchasing intentions.

Additionally, a small number of research have looked into how personality traits, cultural differences, and gender concerns affect how people embrace fashion. The sex of a garment is established by custom or tradition. In the western world, people have come to associate skirts with femininity and pants (trousers) with masculinity. The traditional roles of men and women in society were largely established on the basis of life patterns that emerged during the period before the industrial revolution, when women's energies were focused on raising the children, they had given birth to and caring for their homes, while men's were

used to provide for and defend themselves through activities requiring physical strength. Each sex's clothing typically had some purpose in playing these kinds of roles, if not to the point that it was impossible to play the part. Women initially marched off to salaried employment during World War II. The uniform for teenage girls at this time was jeans and shorts, which their fathers, brothers, or boyfriends had discarded. For women, pants (trousers) were traditionally regarded as appropriate work and play attire. However, they were not regarded as suitable for most social occasions or casual wear. However, modern menswear is acceptable for women to wear to practically any occasion. The opposite would be deemed abnormal (Kefgen and Touchie-Specht, 1986).

Again, consumer behaviour and generation-Z consumers have been discussed in literature. The behavior exhibited while "looking for, purchasing, using, assessing, and discarding products and services that are supposed to deliver a specific level of satisfaction" is referred to as "consumer behavior" (Schiffman et al., 2010). Gen Z is becoming more prevalent. People who were born between 1995 and the present see these customers as empowered, edgy, and on the verge of changing the world (Leshilo, 2015). In order to improve their "personality, social position, recognition, affinity, or to fulfill their demand of originality and newness," young people are becoming more brand conscious consumers while choosing the apparel they wear. However, this group's lifestyles, characteristics, and purchase choices vary (Fernandez, 2009).

Also, according to existing research, customers' decision to purchase a product is driven by their self-connection concept's to a brand's image. This is clear from Sirgy's self-concept theory from 1982, which claims that "product-image needs be in sync with the actual self for the consumer to feel inspired enough to make the actual purchase" (Park & Lee, 2005). This idea has been validated via research done by different thinkers over the years. Congruity may have an impact on consumers' product preferences and buy intentions,

according to Ilaw (2014). Belk in 1988 (cited in Ilaw, 2014) found that buying preferred goods that aligned with one's self-concept served as a method of self-expression. This is particularly apparent in Ghana, where the younger generation frequently expresses itself through dress (Adom, 2017). It's crucial to remember that marketers frequently judge a brand based on how effectively it enhances the consumer's sense of self. Brand loyalty and recurring business are more likely to occur if customers can relate to the brand.

Furthermore, reference group has been noted as a factor that influence the decision to adopt a fashion. A reference group can be defined as a person or group that offers a context for an individual's values, beliefs, and outward behavior (Xu and Pratt, 2018). The concept of reference groups in respect to a certain generation cohort is crucial for marketers to comprehend because brands use reference groups to create brand associations that support a consumer's ideal self-image (Xu and Pratt, 2018). Marketers will be able to create a strong stimulus toward things that will assist Generation Z to be their "ideal self" by understanding their aspirations and how they would like to be perceived (Atkinson, 2014). This was made clear by the research done by Akir and Othman (2010), who discovered that their respondents regarded buying clothes for the latest trends as their most significant purchase.

Again, as the saying goes, "We don't see things as they are," we view them as we are," gives the phrase "perceived quality" meaning (Somma, 2014). When customers consider a product or brand to be superior, they do so utilizing both intrinsic and extrinsic cues to help them make a decision. This is known as perceived quality (Schiffman et al., 2010). According to research done by Ting and Foong (2014), consumers' opinions of a product's quality had a favorable impact on their selections to buy at clothing stores. Undoubtedly, individuals are more likely to buy when they think they are receiving a good deal, and this is a major factor in their decision to buy.

Last but not least, social media has revitalized business and changed the meaning of the phrase "customer involvement." Since Generation Z has never known a time before the internet, they are referred to as "digital natives." In order to provide insights into consumer purchasing behavior and to create successful marketing communication strategies, it is critical to comprehend the channels via which customers communicate and acquire information. Consumers rely on social media as a source of accurate, concise, and up-to-date information, claims Marbry (2008) (cited in Ramnarain, 2011). In contrast, a study by Turcinkova & Moisisdis (2011) discovered that the target demographic, aged 13 to 19, seldom ever utilizes the internet to research new clothing. Given that social media is a common tool among the younger generation, this is an intriguing observation.

## **2.8 The Ethnic Clothing Subsector of the Ghanaian Fashion Industry as A Tool of Economic Empowerment**

A county's growth is based on the textile industry because it creates jobs and raises living conditions for locals (Ndesaulwa et al, 2017). According to Khan and Khan (2010), the textile sector in Pakistan contributes 8% of the GDP, employs 11% of the workforce, and earns up to 65% of export income. World economic giants like the United States, the European Union, India, China, and Pakistan substantially rely on textile manufacture and marketing, according to a 2004 assessment from the International Trade Organization. About 2.1 million people are employed by the textile sector, which has annual sales of E200 billion in Europe and about US\$450 billion globally in 2001 (WTO, 2004 cited in Nordas, 2004). According to Howard (2016), trade liberalization has boosted the import and export of textiles and apparel, which is an excellent opportunity for producers to profit from.

The ethnic apparel sector is one of the most significant sources of employment in Ghana's textile industry. Women who previously had no way of making a living have benefited significantly from its labor-intensive requirements and job development opportunities (Nordas 2004). Asare (2012) asserts that the industry may take on a sizable number of unskilled workers, many of whom come from rural agricultural areas. A foundation for earning money is provided by expansion because of its low initial investment costs.

There is ample evidence that the Ghanaian people struggle every day with a wide range of Regional and international problems, such as poverty, disease, and conflict. Over 2,000 people, both young and elderly, are currently working in the ethnic apparel sub-sector of the fashion industry, according to Quartey and Abor (2011). Quartey and Abor (2011) stresses that the ethnic apparel subsector is one in which many people are involved in numerous ways, from manufacture to marketing to consumption, despite the lack of specific data. Many people participate, which helps them get ready for a profession. To

reduce the tension they have been experiencing recently, smock weavers have demanded that the government build a smock factory that would produce raw materials. They further assert that the facility will help local youngsters develop their business skills in the weaving industry by hiring more of them (GNA, 2021).

For instance, smock weavers in Bolgatanga have recently urged the government to project and promote the local smock industry in order to draw in a larger market. The weavers argued that smock weaving has a lot of potential for youth employment in addition to being a craft that young people might undertake. They urged the government to create policies, such as market access, that would open up the world market to indigenous smocks, enabling the smock sector to grow on a national and worldwide scale.

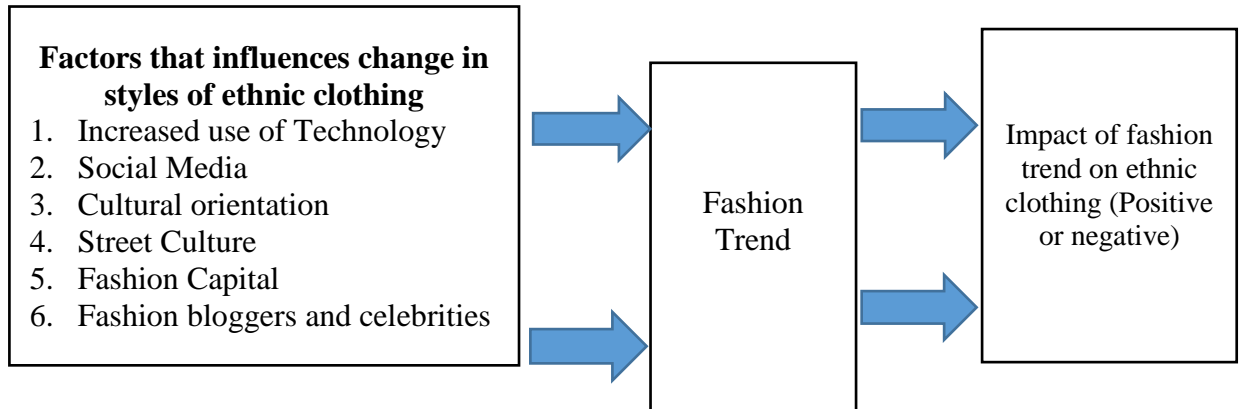
A person's capacity to contribute to society productively and for the benefit of both themselves and society is enhanced by acquiring skills in the entire value chain. Due to the system's deliberate setting to concentrate on the development of sound human beings necessary for development, this will demand extra attention (Ocho 2005). According to the Ghana News Agency (2021), despite the COVID-19 outbreak, the smock sector had economic growth and the youth were able to make enough money to sustain their family.

## **2.9 Conceptual Framework**

Figure 2.1 shows the conceptual framework that guides the study. In figure 2.1, the factors that influences the adoption of fashion trends include among others; increased use of technology, social media, cultural orientation, street fashion, fashion capitals and fashion bloggers and celebrities. These factors creates fashion trend. The results of the trend, which can be positive or negative becomes the impact of fashion trend on ethnic clothing.

**Independent Variable**

**Dependent Variables**



**Figure 2. 1: Conceptual framework of the study**

Source: Authors' construct, 2022.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Research methodology is the procedure used to set up a study so that information is acquired and analyzed in a systematic way (Polit and Beck, 2012). The presentation of research methodology is covered in this chapter, with a focus on the research paradigm, research approach, research design, study setting, study population, data collection, data management, data collection process, data analysis, validity and reliability, ethical considerations, and dissemination of findings.

#### **3.2 Research paradigm**

One of the most important tasks in preparing for a research study is selecting the proper research design to examine the subject of ethnic clothing and fashion trends. Creswell (2018) identified three types of study designs: mixed techniques, qualitative, and quantitative. The nature of the research problem, the intended audience, the techniques of inquiry, and the specific procedures for data collecting, analysis, and interpretation should all be considered when selecting a research design.

To evaluate objective hypotheses using quantitative research, one needs to be aware of the factors underlying a phenomenon (Creswell, 2018). A quantitative approach is not suitable for this study since the variables have not yet been identified due to a lack of pertinent research. A qualitative approach is best suited for an exploratory study with the goal of investigating and understanding the significance of an event (Saunders et al, 2012). When there hasn't been much research done on a topic or with a particular target demographic and the researcher wants to learn more about the issue by hearing the participants' perspectives, the study is often labeled as exploratory (Creswell, 2018). This study meets the criteria for

an exploratory study because the majority of academics in the field of ethnic clothing and fashion trend have concentrated on how these trends have increased cross-border trade and created jobs. There haven't been many studies focused on the impact of ethnic clothing on fashion trends, particularly in the case of Ghana and the upper west Region in particular.

Because there hasn't been much research on this topic or with this group, the planned study, which is exploratory in nature, would use in-depth interviews (Creswell, 2018) to evaluate the impact of ethnic clothing on fashion trends.

### **3.3 Research Design**

A research plan details all of the steps a researcher will take to look into a topic or test a theory (Creswell, 2018). It was conducted using the narrative inquiry research method, which entails asking questions about people's experiences over time, contextualizing them, and structuring the study so that there is relational connection between the researcher and the participants (Clandinin & Caine, 2008). One method of conducting narrative research is to use the stories that research participants have lived and told, analyze them through narrative analysis, and then retell the stories of the individuals chronologically while adding social, cultural, and historical context and keeping an eye out for the key themes in the lived experiences (Creswell, 2007).

In order to present not only a more ordered rendering of life but also one that is aesthetically rich, narrative inquiry can transform fragments of gathered data into well-plotted, artistic forms that use the conventions of fictional literature. This aids in understanding and remembering the information (Saldana, 2011). The respondents' accounts were organized and combined with the scant field text that was already available (existing documents). The fashion designer respondents' lived experiences were understood narratively as a result of the usage of the narrative inquiry method.

### **3.4 Target Population**

A study population is a collection of individuals or things that make up the research topic. Simply said, it is made up of all components, individuals, things, or objects whose properties are being investigated (Saunders et al., 2012). The Upper West Region serves as the research site with ethnic cloth producers, designers, marketers, and consumers as the research population.

To be eligible to participate in this study, a respondent must be:

1. Ethnic clothing producers/designers that have a minimum of ten (10) years in active practice.
2. Marketers of ethnic clothing that have minimum of ten (10) years in active practice
3. Must be resident in the three Municipal/districts that are selected for the study

### **3.5 Sources of data**

Primary data were gathered and used for the study. Primary data were the main source of information used. It contains data with semi-structured interviews, video films of fashion shows and field notes. The respondents offered their first-hand knowledge of both ethnic dress and fashion trends throughout the semi-structured interviews. Open-ended questions were set to enable respondents to tell their own stories with regard to the difficulties they encounter at work. During the interview sessions, follow-up questions also helped to elicit further clarity.

## **3.6 Sampling**

### **3.6.1 Sample size determination**

The choice of sample size from a population for a study has no hard and fast rules. There are two methods that can be used to solve the sample size problem. The researcher can start by making assumptions and then determine the sample size with the aid of other statistical methods. In addition, the researcher can employ the "rule of thumb" approach (Neuman, 2007). According to Kothari (2005), the sample size alone does not guarantee the accuracy of the estimate. He urged researchers to evaluate the characteristics of the research population and the homogeneity factor. According to Sandelowski (1995), sample sizes for qualitative research should be both substantial enough to enable the development of "new and richly textured knowledge" about the topic being studied and manageable enough for an in-depth, case-oriented investigation" of the qualitative data. According to Green and Thorogood (2013), the majority of qualitative researchers who conduct an interview-based study with a fairly specific research topic discover that little new information is produced after interviewing 20 or so. The aforementioned backs up Morse's (2015) prior position, in which she urges qualitative researchers to choose fewer participants while taking homogeneity and representation into consideration (see Creswell, 2018).

The sample population in the current study, which consists of producers, marketers, and consumers of ethnic clothing, has similar occupational characteristics. It is impossible to understate the likelihood of receiving the same information repeatedly when a bigger sample size is used in the investigation. This typically results in data saturation. Nwana (1981) asserts, however, that "if the population is a few hundred, a 40% or more sample will do; if the population is many hundreds, a 20% sample will do; if the population is a few thousand, a 10% sample will do; and if the population is several thousand, a 5% or less

sample will do. In light of the aforementioned, the researcher chose 55 persons to serve as sample population.

### **3.6.2 Sampling procedure**

The researcher used cluster sampling to divide the Upper West Region into three clusters. Simple random sampling technique was used to select two communities in each of the three clusters for the study. In each community, the snowball sampling was used to select respondents, beginning with contacts formed during the researchers' initial visit to the study area. Snowball sampling was used in the research to find ethnic clothing manufacturers who have substantial knowledge and competence in the creation of ethnic clothes. The researcher asked respondents to direct the researcher to another person who are involved in the manufacture of ethnic clothes for interview. The research selected respondents up till the needed number was obtained. The researcher will employed convenience sampling to select respondents who patronized ethnic clothing products. Potential respondents in this category were selected through observation.

### **3.7 Data collection instruments and procedure**

The study will use questionnaires, and observation to collect data. The use of these research instruments in the study enabled the researcher to make a comparative analysis of primary data collected from the selected respondents to draw conclusions and recommendations. Specifically, semi-structured questionnaires was used to collect qualitative data from the respondents of the study. The questionnaire consisted of five sections. The first section focused on the demographic details of respondents. The second section focused on a description of ethnic clothing of the people of the Upper Region of Ghana. The third section focused on the factors influencing developmental changes or leading to new styles of the ethnic clothing in recent times. In the fourth section, the researcher investigated the extent

of impact of fashion on indigenous clothing of the Upper West Region of Ghana. The last section explores the guiding principles for fashion dynamism as well as for cultural preservation and promotion.

Again, the researcher conducted interviews with designers/producers of ethnic clothing, marketers as well as users of ethnic clothing. She also conducted interviews with individuals who are in the fashion business in the study area. Consequently, the qualitative data included among others views, opinions, and suggestions and is intended to aid in identifying the elements that promote or obstruct the adoption of ethnic clothing as fashion. The respondents were given 15-20 minutes to complete and submit the questionnaires. For the illiterate population, the questionnaire were administered by a research assistant, trained by the researcher. Data were collected over a two-week period. Only information from those sources confirmed, analyzed and evaluated by the researcher accepted and used in this research.

### **3.8 Validity of the research instruments**

Validity is the degree to which data analysis findings accurately depict the phenomenon under study (Omona 2013). In this study, the extent to which the instruments achieved their goals is referred to as validity. The validity of the instruments were evaluated by my thesis advisors and other departmental lecturers, who also critically evaluated the instrument's items and offered professional guidance that was helpful in modifying and refining the questionnaires.

### **3.9 Data Analysis and Processing**

To ensure that the data collected are accurate, consistent with other information gathered, uniformly entered, and well-arranged, the raw data were closely examined to look for errors

and omissions. The information gathered were then coded by labeling responses with numbers or other symbols in order to group them into finite number of categories or classes.

Based on the data gathered, thematic analysis, a flexible and content-sensitive tool (Harwood & Garry, 2003) will be used to generate categories, themes, and explanations that were derived from phrases, behaviors, patterns, and incidents. This helped in analyzing the major challenges they face as ethnic clothing producers and patronizers.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

This research duly prioritized a number of ethical considerations which included among others;

**Ensuring Confidentiality:** The researcher assured the respondents and interviewees of immense efforts to treat data generated with the utmost anonymity and confidentiality. To assure them further, the researcher used alphabetical letters to represent the names of the research respondents.

**Academic honesty:** The researcher is well aware of the protocols involved in sourcing information from an author, which requires duly acknowledging the source, and that to fail to do so is a form of academic dishonesty which is punishable by law.

**Declaration of false information:** The study refrained from declaring false information or information that cannot be verified.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

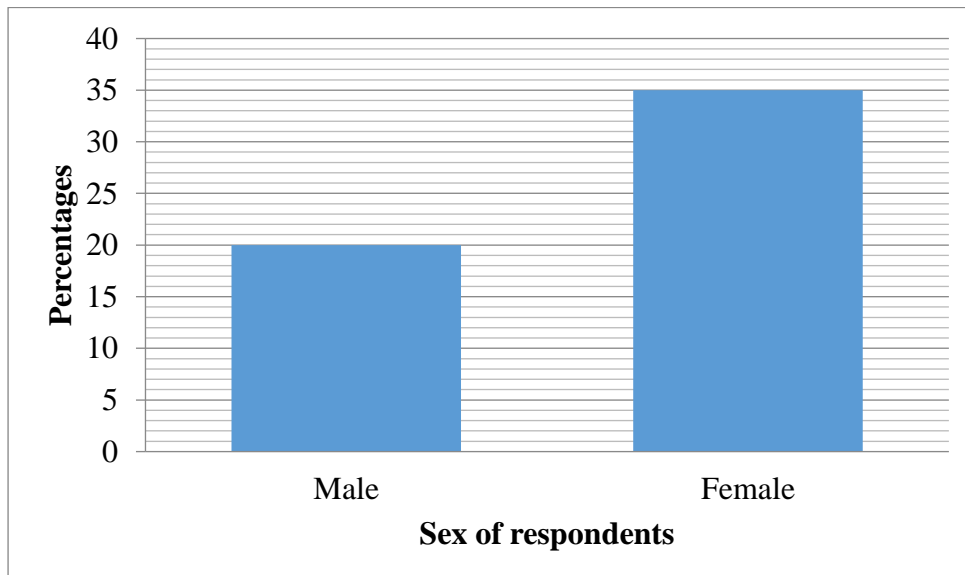
This chapter presents the outcomes and analysis of the data obtained during the administration of the questionnaire to the respondents. It details what occurred at each stage of the data collection procedure, as well as the data collected. In the study, graphs and tables were used to provide a quick visual impression and understanding of the qualitative data.

#### 4.2 Background Characteristics of Respondents

In this section, the demographic characteristics of the study's respondents are provided and examined. The section also provides helpful data that complements the findings and enables a more thorough study of policy.

##### 4.2.1 Respondents' Gender

The study was structured to elicit information on the gender of the respondents. Figure 4.1 show the details.



**Figure 4. 1: Sex of Respondents**

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

As depicted in Figure 4.1, male respondents make up 20, representing 36% of the overall research respondents, while female respondents make up 35, representing 64% of the total respondents. Both male and female respondents are a mix of fashion designers and non-fashion designers who were selected using varied methods as detailed in the previous chapter. The female respondents outnumber the male respondents because females are noted to be more fashion conscious than their male counterpart (Amankwa et al, 2012). Specifically, the female respondents outnumber male respondents by 28 percent.

#### 4.2.2 Age of respondents

The research proceeded to identify the age status of the respondents. Figure 4.2 shows the results.

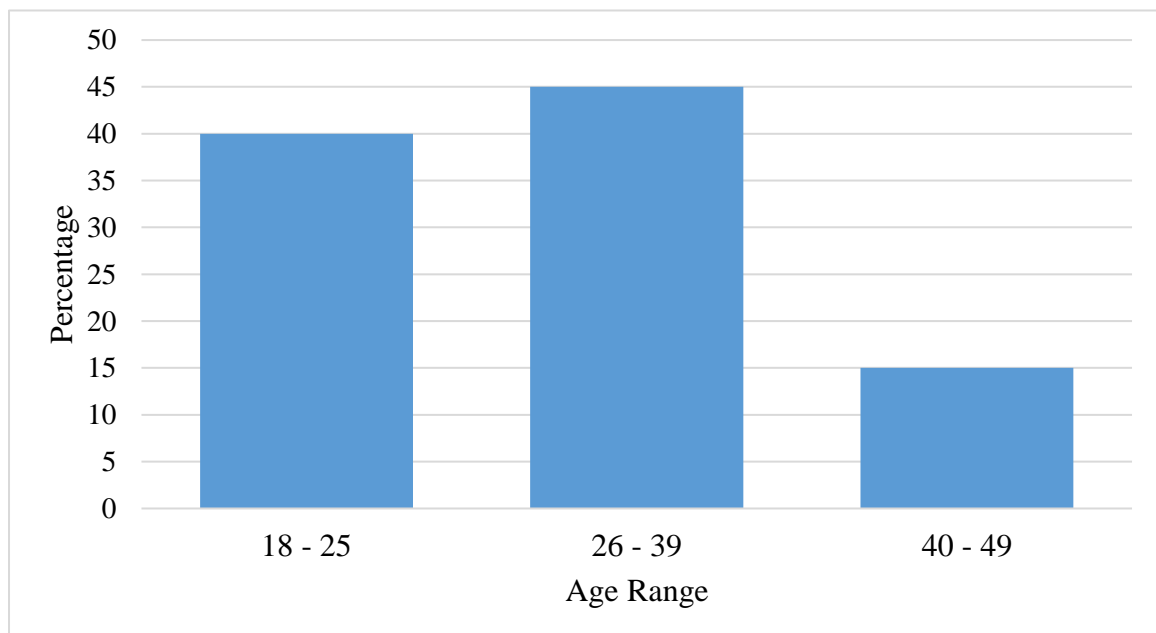


Figure 4. 2: Age of Respondents

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The survey revealed that 40% of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 25, 45% were between the ages of 26 and 39, and just 15% were between the ages of 40 and 49. It

may be observed that 85 percent of responders are between the ages of 18 and 39. This could be due to the fact that women in these age groups have left the teenage category and entered a new era of life, and consequently have a tendency to be excessively fashion aware.

#### 4.2.3 Educational Status of Respondents

The study further sought to know the educational status of the respondents. Table 4.1 shows the detail.

**Table 4. 2: Educational Level of Respondents**

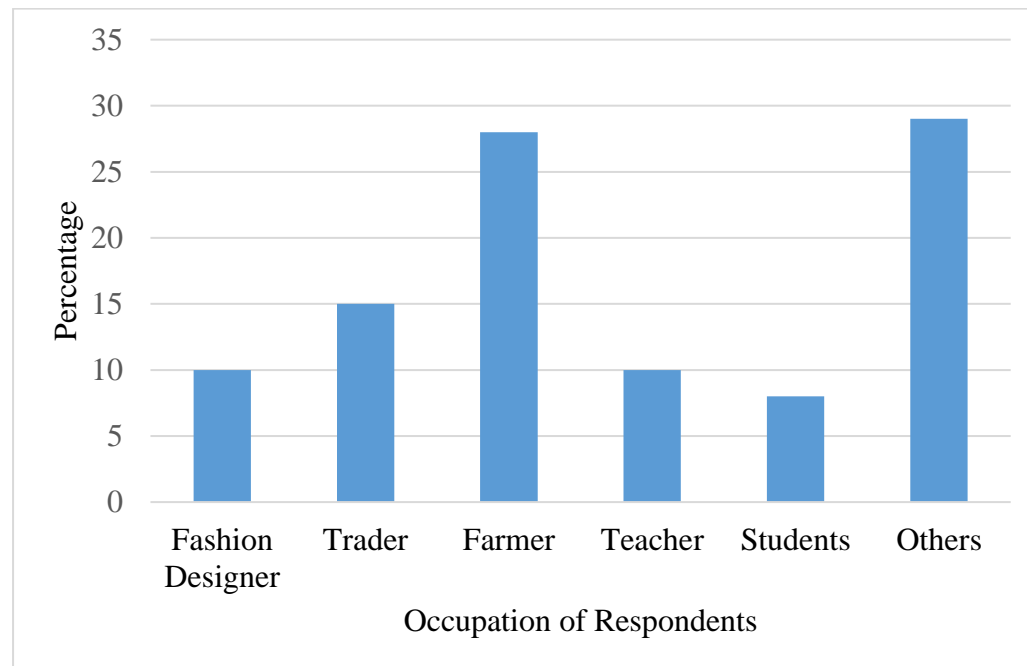
<b>Highest Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>No Formal Education</b>	6	11
<b>Basic School</b>	16	29
<b>SHS, O' Level, Diploma</b>	20	36
<b>First Degree</b>	8	15
<b>Masters</b>	5	9
<b>Total</b>	55	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

According to Table 4.1, 11% of all respondents had no formal education, 29% had completed elementary school, 36% had attained SHS, O' Level and Diploma certificates, and 15% held a bachelor's degree. Nine percent (9%) of respondents also held a master's degree. It is evident from the statistics in Table 4.1 that the vast majority of respondents have at least some formal education, which provides as a basis for learning basic arithmetic, reading about fashion trends, and interpreting fashion.

#### 4.2.4 Occupational distribution of respondents

The study probed the occupation of the respondents. Figure 4.3 show the results.



**Figure 4. 3: Occupational Distribution of respondents**

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The data in Figure 4.3 shows that respondents who are farmers constitute 28% of the total respondents. Another 10% and 15% of the respondents are into fashion design and trading respectively. 10% were teachers whiles students constitute 8% of the total respondents. Respondents in the other category also constitute 29% of the total research respondents. Specifically, respondents in the ‘other’ category includes those in civil service, apprentices, and unemployed individuals. Knowledge of the occupational distribution of the respondents is necessary because it helps the researcher and the research process to appreciate the respondent perspective and appreciation of the research questions.

### 4.3: Ethnic clothing of the Upper West Region of Ghana

#### 4.3.1 Nature of ethnic clothing of the Upper West Region

The study considered the nature of ethnic clothing worn in the Upper West Region. The smock, which is the most recognizable dress, is considered to be the ethnic clothing of the people of the Upper West Region of Ghana. With time, the smock has changed from being worn by the royal family on ceremonial occasions to becoming a versatile item of formal and leisure clothing. Interesting colour stripes in a rhythmic pattern can be seen on Smock. The smocks are available in a range of styles. Its expressive sartorial style, vertically striped pattern, and thicker plain weave structure set it apart from other hand-woven fabrics. Images of smock, the ethnic clothing of the Upper West Region, are shown in Plate 4.1.



**Plate 4. 1: The ethnic clothing of the Upper West Region**

Source: Field Survey, 202.3

Plate 4.1 depicts images of smocks in various colours and fashions, which gives the appearance of ethnic clothing. Again, ethnic clothing is framed in various ways depending on the gender of the wearer.

Historically, hand-spun yarns were used to make smock fabrics, but due to their decreasing output, machine-spun yarns are now utilized instead. To achieve the fuzzy and hefty smock fabric impression caused by the reliance on handspun yarns, weavers used plied yarns or mixed two or more stands of yarn in the fabric. When compared to using handspun yarns, this adds weight to the garment and ensures evenness. However, because of their uniqueness and authenticity, most respondents favor and take into consideration smocks made from handspun yarns.

The respondents believe that the residents of the Upper West Region wear their smocks in a certain way to demonstrate their practical eclectic and aesthetic impulse. In the past, an indigenous person may wear two or more (occasionally as many as six), with the smaller sizes on the bottom and larger ones on top. This could denote wealth, authority, royal status, or tenacity. Wearing numerous smocks at once helps to shape the draperies in the smocks. No matter how many smocks are worn at once, the indigenous people of the Upper West prefer to wear them with the round points at par instead of the front or rear drooping abnormally low or high.

Respondents observe that the colours used in smock manufacturing have no symbolic significance. Therefore, colours are used randomly regardless of the situation. For a funeral or celebratory event, any colour of smock may be worn without regard to colour preference or aesthetic effect. One of the respondents said;

*Weavers choose colours based on their aesthetic appeal. The colours we use have no symbolic significance to us... and regardless of colour, the smock can be used for a variety of events. Some of our customers prefer that the hat match their smock*





*in terms of colour. Others choose hats made of a different colour and material.*

*Everything depends on the customers' preferences.*

One of the most recent trends in the use of colours in the fabrication of smocks, according to the respondents, is the propensity to use political party colours in smocks. Smocks with the party's colours—red, blue, and white—may be worn by New Patriotic Party activists, whereas red and white smocks are worn by Progressive People Party members.

In addition, the responses demonstrated that smock hats and their connotations enhance the attractiveness of the wearer. Its deep, majestic folds draw closer examination and awe when worn with coordinating smocks, demonstrating greater aesthetic ties between the entire dressing set. Even though they are admirable, the set convey symbolic information whose decoding could land the user in trouble, particularly at the durbar or when in the presence of a traditional leader or superior. There are four different ways to wear the caps: firmly standing, in an oblique position (either to the right or left), skewed toward the front of the head, or tilted toward the back. Each of the four fashions has a symbolic meaning. Table 4.2 illustrates these interpretations.

**Table 4.2: Smock cap styles and their meanings.**

Cap Style	Illustration	Symbolism/Meaning
Stiff standing position		"I stand tall", except God, supremacy, superior ruler, no co-equal
Oblique postures (either towards right or left)		"no trouble", peace, harmonious living, unity
Skew towards the front		Leadership, no coequal
Skewed posture towards the back of the head		"I have followers", strength, spiritual powers, spiritual resiliency, good wrestler

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

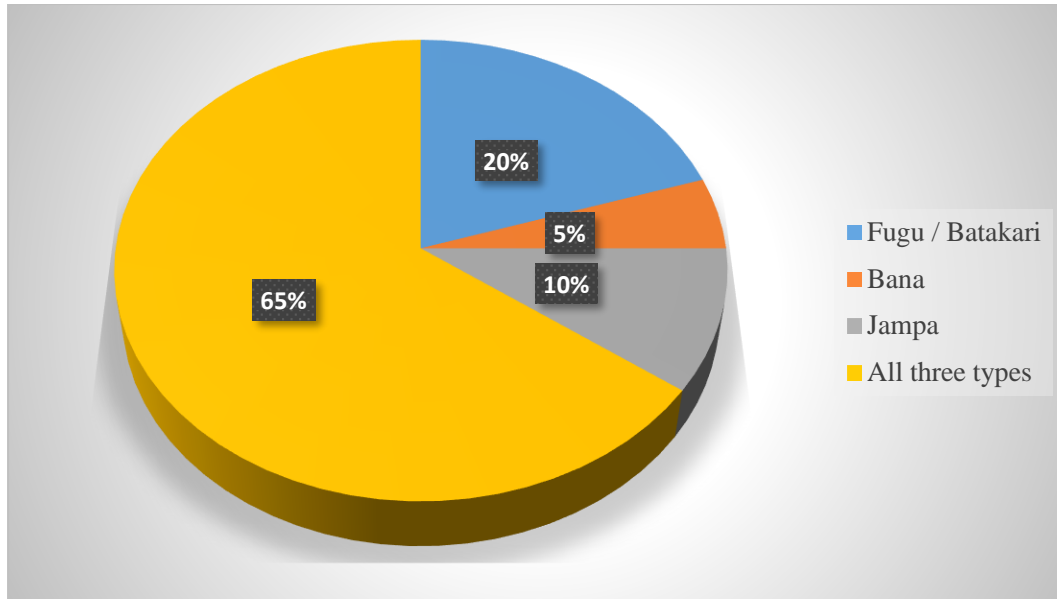
In Table 4.2, the different types of cap styles and their meaning are shown. While the oblique style to the right or left of the cap represents peace, the strong and upright attitude signifies supremacy. A frontal skew in a cap denotes humility or submission, whereas a rearward skew in a cap denotes strength or spiritual abilities. According to the respondents, wearing specific cap types is often the domain of certain authorities in the traditional environment. For instance, it was stated that wearing the cap with the slant toward the rear of the head indicates that the wearer is highly powerful and has a large following. One of the responders makes the following observation:

*When people wear the cap with the slant toward the rear of the head, what they are indicating is that they have a large following and are leaders of communities. One who is not a chief could get into trouble if he wears the smock hat in this manner in the presence of chiefs. That is, by wearing a hat similar to the chiefs' and going to places where chiefs are present or going to a chief's palace, you are indirectly letting them know that you are one of them. There will be a lot of consequences if you are not one of them.*

Individuals who fail to wear smock caps correctly, according to the responses, are fined heavily for committing abominations. In other cases, these people are told to bring goats, sheep, or even a cow.

#### **4.3.2 Type of ethnic smock produced by ethnic clothing designers**

The study investigated the types of ethnic smock produced by ethnic clothing designers in the Upper West Region. Figure 4.4 show the details.



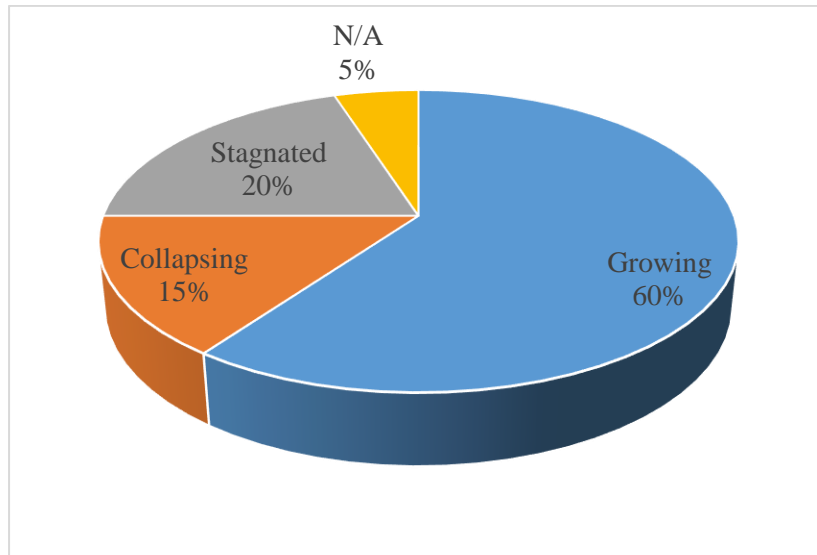
**Figure 4. 4: Types of ethnic smock design in the Upper West Region.**

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The study found that ethnic smocks of three different types—the Fugu/Batakari, Bana, and Jampa—are produced in the study area by ethnic fabric designers. The most popular style of smock is the Fugu/Batakari smock (see Figure 4.4). According to the responses, the Fugu/Batakari smock's rising production may be due to the product's relative simplicity of construction, minimal material requirements, and growing consumer demand. Men, children, and women all wear the Fugu/Batakari smock as informal attire. The second most popular type of smock made in the research area is the Jampa, which is connected to chieftaincy and position. The third most prevalent variety is the Bana. This type requires a higher level of technical knowledge and skills in order to obtain a totally suitable design.

### 4.3.3 State of the ethnic smock industry

The study probed the views of the respondents on the state of the ethnic smock industry in the Upper West Region. Figure 4.5 show the details.



**Figure 4. 5: State of the smock industry in Wa Municipality**

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

According to Figure 4.5, 60% of the respondents say that the research area's possibilities for ethnic fabric production have improved over time. They observe that almost everyone, of all ethnicities, wears the smock, which has become a universal article of apparel. The Dagaabas, Walas, Mo/Dega, Akan, Gonja, and Dagomba tribes, among others, wear the smock in the Upper West Region and beyond. Smocks are now highly valued, and prominent non-indigenous individuals even wear them on significant occasions. This has increased demand for ethnic smocks and ensured the local industry's survival. In other words, the distinctiveness of ethnic smocks serves as the industry's foundation. Smocks are highly sought after items of high fashion that are worn on special occasions. The ethnic smocks are desired because they are thick by nature and appear to be durable for the wearer. The connection between the garment and the locals' culture has helped to keep the local industry alive.

Another 20% of the respondents note that the ethnic production industry is stagnated over the years. They cited the influx of foreign clothing coupled with the domination of the local clothing industry with foreign fashion. They contend that because people are arranged into networks, awareness of what is happening in the fashion world is bridging cultural and social boundaries due to the rate at which globalization is occurring as well as the use of the internet and social media. The internet disseminates fashion news, converting local desires into global desires and vice versa.

Furthermore, another 15% of the respondents note that the ethnic clothing production industry is collapsing. They cited the increasing adoption of foreign fashion trend by the local people and the economic implication of sticking to local fashion. They also mentioned that local fashion designers incorporate a lot of foreign influences into their designs. Many of the local designers wants to get Regional and international recognition rather than sticking to the design of ethnic clothing.

#### **4.3.4 Provision of cultural values in appropriate forms of ethnic clothing**

The study sought to pinpoint the key characteristics and components of ethnic clothing in the Upper West. Out of the total respondents (55), 41 or 75% said that ethnic attire reflected cultural values. On the other hand, 14 respondents—or 25%—mentioned that the ethnic clothing does not reflect cultural values. The findings demonstrate that the residents of the Upper West have a distinct clothing that reflects their cultural standards. This backs up the claims made by Anawalt (2007) and Dogoe (2013) that many civilizations have distinctive clothing that is well-known and conforms to their cultural norms.

As seen in Figure 4.5, 45 out of 55 respondents, or 80%, agreed that the Batakari (smock) was the article of apparel that best represented their ethnic background. However, 10% of respondents—10—said that the Slit and Kaba were indicators that the wearer was local. The findings demonstrate how these traditional ethnic clothing reflect the rich cultural

values of the local people. 73% and 69% of those who responded stated that their ethnic culture discourages wearing clothing that exposes delicate body parts and urges people to cover all delicate body parts. Thus, according to cultural norms, it is rude to wear clothing that exposes delicate body areas. Many people erroneously believe that this is how their society expects them to appear when they wear these revealing garments to attract the other sex. The study's findings demonstrated that these garments do not adhere to the ethnic group's moral standards.

#### **4.3.5 Factors that influences the choice of clothing in the Upper West Region**

The study's findings demonstrated that a variety of factors influence the respondents' choice of clothing. These considerations include the garment's quality and colour as well as how well it matches the occasion, how quickly it absorbs moisture, and how cold it feels against the skin. The majority of respondents (82%) stated that they made clothing decisions based on how well the items matched the occasion, situation, or event. Thus, the kind and style of clothing to wear varied depending on the occasion. Some of the respondents said that clothing for private settings, such as performing household duties at home, should protect the public from seeing everything, whereas clothing for public settings should cover the entire body. Additionally, the researcher's own findings supported what 73% of survey respondents claimed: that the kind and makeup of the fabric also influence the choice of apparel.

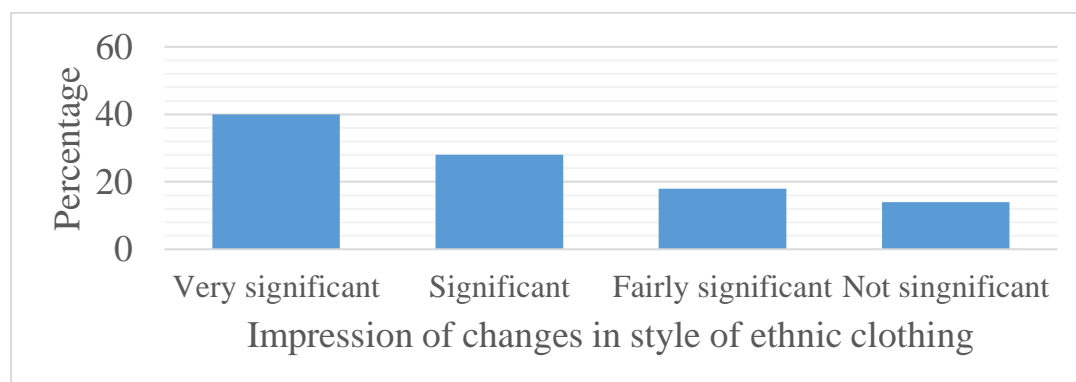
The chosen textiles were commended mainly for their ability to absorb moisture and for how cool they felt against the skin. This can be due to the fact that these materials are suitable for the hot, muggy weather of the Upper West. Ninety-five percent of those who responded said that while deciding what to wear, comfort and safety came first. However, the results revealed that 82% of those who responded said that the brand name or designer's name of a particular style of apparel had no bearing at all on their choice.

The study's findings also revealed that respondents gave quality a high priority (93% of respondents), but they also gave price a high priority (96% of respondents). According to 71% of study respondents, colour is a crucial factor to consider when selecting a fabric. However, just 36% of respondents felt that religious expectations did influence clothing choice, and 64% of respondents thought they were a less significant effect. It was evident from what people said that picking what to wear had a lot to do with being modest or decent. Of the 55 respondents, 48 agreed that choosing clothing with modesty in mind played a significant role in their decision-making. The ethnic culture encourages modesty and decency in how individuals dress and/or select their clothes, despite the fact that not all cultures have the same definition of modesty when it comes to clothing.

#### 4.4 Things that have changed or brought about new styles of ethnic clothing in recent years

##### 4.4.1 Perception of changes in styles of ethnic clothing

The study sought to find out what the respondents think about changes that have occurred in ethnic clothing in recent years. Respondents were thus made to use single words to indicate their impression. The results have been presented in Figure 4.6.



**Figure 4. 6: Perception of changes in style of ethnic clothing**

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The data in Figure 4.6 shows that majority of the respondents believe that the changes to the style of ethnic clothing is significant (68%). They alluded to the fact that the way and

manner the ethnic clothing was held in awe and esteem has completely diminished. While some of the respondents cited the increasing influence of foreign fashion, others notes that the popularity of the ethnic clothing is what has led to a reduction in its aesthetic and trending value. Another 18% opined that the changes that has occurred is fairly significant. 14% of the repondents notes that there has not been significant changes. The later cited the increasing popularity of the ethnic clothing among both genders, and the fact that it has become a clothing that is patronised by almost everyone in the locality.

#### 4.4.2 Preference of foreign clothing versus ethnic clothing

The researcher was interested in identifying the respondents preference of ethnic clothing as against foreign clothing. The responses reveals that the people of the respondents have been influenced by foreign clothing as against ethnic clothing. This is evident in the responses of respondents with regards to preference of ethnic clothing and foreign fashion as shown in the chart in Figure 4.7.

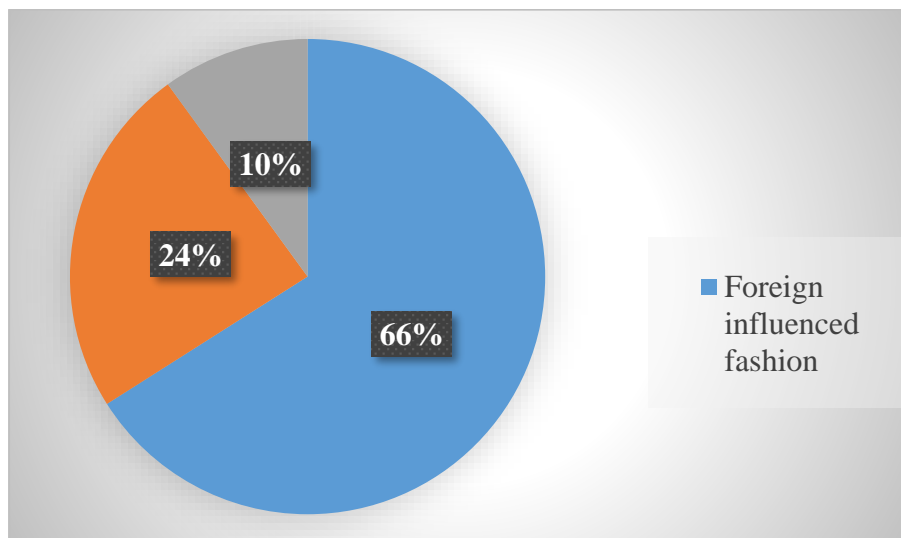


Figure 4. 7: Preference of Ethnic and Foreign Fashion

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Inferring from Figure 4.7, 24% of the respondents prefer ethnic influenced clothing, 66% prefer foreign influenced clothing whereas 10% went for a blend of the two. The researcher further sought to know which type of clothing respondents would buy, given

that they have the needed resources to make purchasing decision. The responses are shown in figure 4.8.

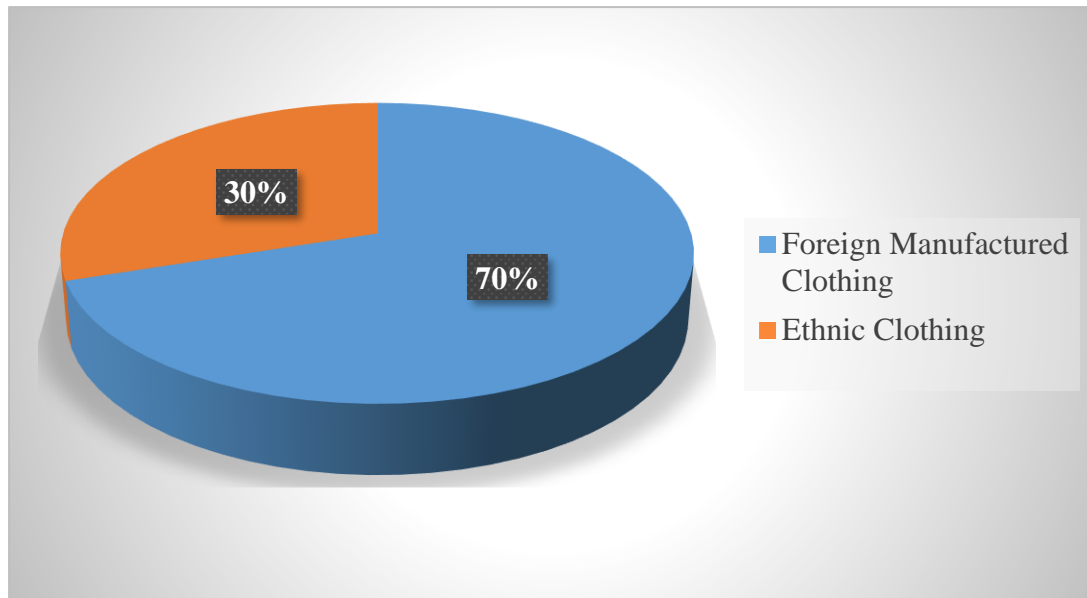


Figure 4. 8: Buying of locally and foreign manufactured clothing

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The data in Figure 4.8 shows that 70% of the respondents will chose foreign manufactured clothing with 30% going for locally manufactured clothing.

With regards to the use of fabric for locally made garments, 40% of the respondents stated that they buy locally made fabrics while 60% said they buy imported fabrics. The responses are shown in Figure 4.9.

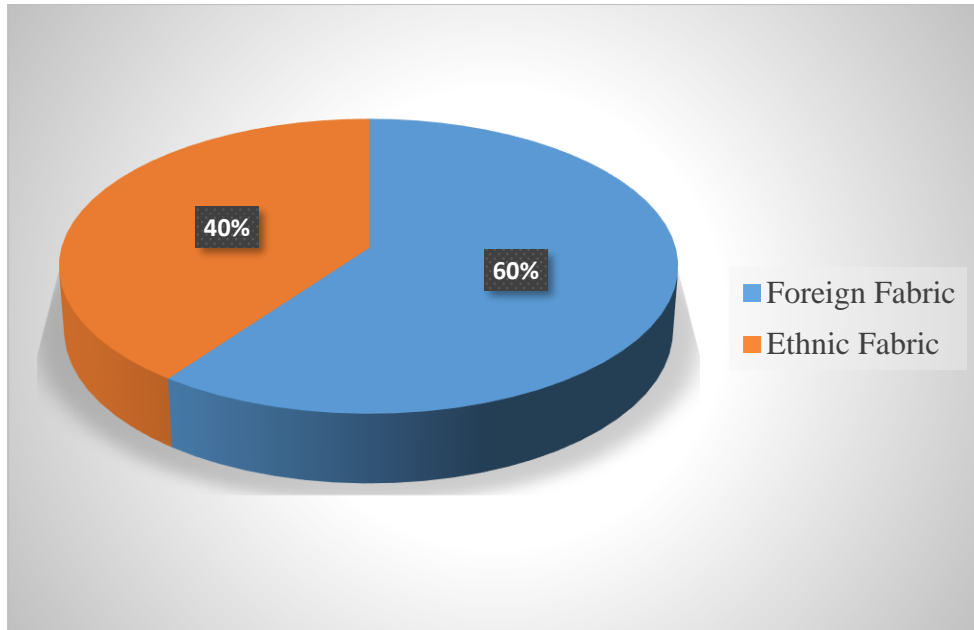


Figure 4. 9: Type of fabric used by respondents

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Results in Figure 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 clearly show that ethnic clothing fashion are highly influenced by foreign fashion. The responses from the questionnaire were corroborated by views expressed by five selected renowned local fashion designers interviewed.

#### **4.4.3 Local fashion designers and the creation of fashion trend**

The study probed to know the extent to which ethnic fashion designers are able to create a trend in the study area. A number of fashion designers expressed their views concerning this subject. According to one of the fashion designer respondents, the ethnic clothing industry has provided some of the most influential fabrics that are sold around the world adding that, with the ethnic fabric getting all the exposure around the world there has been the rise in more Ghanaian designers bringing a flare of eclectic and fresh designs to the fashion industry. He further note that never in the history of the country have it seen clothes made using ethnic fabrics than it is presently. The trend has been to use the fabrics for '*slit and kaba*' but recently fabrics are transformed into fashionable dress that could be worn

anywhere. He further expressed that he sells his own designs - vibrant cocktail dresses in bold beautiful colours made with ethnic clothing. He concluded that he sews local fabrics into Western-style garments as shown in Plate 4.2.



**Plate 4.2: Ethnic clothing designed into different styles**

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The designer further added that his clothes have “slight ethnic accents.” He blends synthetic materials and sometimes with traditional woven cloth, using the ethnic prints as inserts or facings. The whole purpose is to make designs that appeals to everybody which even foreigners can wear outside Ghana and not feel awkward when they go back to their home countries.

One of the fashion designers stressed on the fact that the local people are not very trendy and when they adopt a trend they stick to it for so many years before they change. Talking

about the fact that fashion designers incorporate a lot of foreign influences into their designs, the designer said, being an ethnic fashion designer does not mean everything you design must be totally ethnic or local. To get an international recognition as a fashion designer your designs must be comfortable to both the local people and outsiders (foreigners). The designer also highlighted that, the local people do not follow fashion much, and believes that the local people cannot claim to have certain trends they follow in fashion. He further notes that most of the fashion that trends in Ghana is what is passed down from Europe and America.

Another fashion designer gave a holistic vision of most fashion designers and the place of ethnic clothing on the list. According to him:

*What we all want to be is to become great designers with international recognition. Interestingly, if we want to concentrate on the local level, then we are going to be local designers. And it will surprise you to know that the very local people who should patronize ethnic clothing rather prefer fashion trends.*

The respondents note that the people of the Upper West Region prefer to buy cloths based on brands, quality and origin among other factors. And like Tungate (2005) puts it, '*you don't buy cloths – you buy an identity*'. The people would want to be associated with products whose origin is deemed to be of high quality but also fashionable with identifiable and recognized style. One of the respondents highlighted that the people of the Upper West Region- like the people of nearly every Region in the country - predominantly wear second-hand clothes from Europe and North America. They consider the second-hand clothes fashionable simply because they evoke America, London or France. They admit that there are other local fashion designers who are working tirelessly to give the ethnic clothing industry a new face lift through their brevity in design approach. However, much more can

be done, rather than just copying western styles in African fabrics as is the practice of majority of designers interviewed.

#### **4.4.4 Factors that affect fashion trend and decide what is in style in the Upper West Region**

In the fashion industry, trends determine what people want to wear, what styles are popular, and what the "it" look is that everyone wants to get. Fashion trends are set by a number of things, such as the availability of fashion supplies and new ideas. The study sought to know the factors that set the trend and decides the style of fashion to adopt in the study area. The respondents mentioned a number of factors that affect change trends. These factors include among others, technology, famous people and fashion models, fashion bloggers, and street styles.

According to the respondents, technology is one of the most important factors that creates and sets trends, and decides on the preference for foreign fashion or ethnic fashion. They note that the digital age has brought many changes and improvements to people's lives. It gave people a new place to meet people, get information, and share. The digital age through its social media platforms has made it faster than ever for trends to spread and come back around. As style goals change all the time, digital trends change the fashion industry. Designers and clothing markets try to keep up, and it only takes a second to share and get information. Social media uses technology's wide reach and speed to quickly spread information, such as trends. It brings some fashion basics or looks to light and gives them a digital runway. One of the respondents gave a brief statement of how contents are spread on social media:

*If someone posts a fashionable outfit that gets a lot of attention, the social media platform will promote and share that post across the site or app. This will start a*

*fashion trend that many people will want to copy... People on social media also sell different clothes and styles that get clicks and money. When their posts go viral on the web and get other people to do the same thing, this is called a trend.*

In short, the respondents note that social media has an effect on fashion trends because it gives a trend a place to grow and then keeps its popularity going up. It gathers the newest fashion looks and style tips and shares them with everyone who can get on the web. Without the influence of social media, trends wouldn't spread as quickly or change as often as they do now.

The respondent also said that celebrities and fashion models have an effect on fashion and set trends. Celebrities have a lot of power, and people pay close attention to everything they do and say. Companies hire people to be brand ambassadors or spokespeople for their brands by using their image, fame, audience, or services. Over the years, many celebrities have become style icons and set new trends. In fact, the way these celebrities dress, walk, talk, and look are very important factors that influence people, especially young people, who want the same styles and brands. One of the respondents note that:

*Many young people in this society (referring to the Upper West Region) are easily influenced by movie stars, athletes, musicians, and other famous people. People tend to do, say, and think like what celebrities say, do, and tell them to do. If these people decide to make ethnic clothing fashionable, a lot of other people will follow suit, and it will become a trend. On the other hand, if they like western-style fashion, then everyone wants to be like them.*

Again, the respondents notes that fashion bloggers have shown over the years that they have great taste by starting fashion trends. Just like designers ask celebrities to wear and promote their clothing lines, they also ask bloggers to do the same. They do this because

they know how influential bloggers are. Bloggers set fashion trends by styling clothes in different ways, taking pictures of themselves, and sharing their pictures and thoughts with their audience. People look up to celebrities just because they want to, but they also look up to fashion bloggers for guidance and to see how trends are set. Before fashion journalists even open their laptops to start writing their articles, fashion bloggers can talk about what has been shown.

Again, other respondents mentioned that street style has an effect on fashion trend. The respondents used the term "street style" to describe everyday looks that can be seen on the street on any given day. These are looks that people wear every day, but they still stand out to people who see them and make them want to try something new. The respondents note that street styles are easier to copy, and people tend to follow trends that "everyday people" wear because they think they can do the same thing.

The respondents also mentioned that fashion trends in the study area have been affected by fashion capitals. The respondents used the term "fashion capital" in reference to big communities and towns in the Region that are known for fashion and whose style seems to be popular with people in the locality. They note that even though every community is different and can inspire and affect the fashion industry in its own way, not every town or city can be a fashion capital. At the local level, the respondents mentioned that the locals who come back from Kumasi and Accra with certain fashion styles seem to easily influence and change the styles that people in the local area wear. One of the respondents stated that;

*Most of the fashion trends we follow today were started by our brothers when they came back from Kumasi and Accra. Most people in our communities (in the Upper West Region) have such a high opinion of Accra and Kumasi that they accept any*

*fashion that someone who has lived there brings back with them. Most of the time, they say it's city life.*

In the local area, communities such as Wa (Regional capital), Kaleo, Nandom and Jirapa are noted as fashion capitals.

The respondents also mentioned other factors such as existing social norms, peer groups, social criticism, customs and traditions, religion, the work environment, and age as factors that have influenced fashion and the style that should be adopted.

#### **4.4.5 Impact of fashion trend on ethnic clothing**

The purpose of this section is to examine how fashion trends influence ethnic clothing. The study's respondents have discussed their positions from the standpoint of both positive and negative impacts. The respondents point out that new ideas, styles, and trendy looks have been encouraged by fashion trends in the ethnic clothing sector. The remarks made it clear that local fashion designers had put a lot of work into making designs that could start trends locally and Regionally in their quest to use ethnic apparel textiles. The introduction of many colours, styles, and designs resulted from this. These and other factors have made it possible for local designers to showcase their talent in the creation of ethnic clothes. Today, it's typical to find that practically all textiles used to make ethnic clothes have been given a branded, contemporary style.

A section of the respondents also point out that the current fashion trend does not just imitate and believe in the pictures of the sticky-skinny that the fashion industry projects. As a result, many individuals no longer remember the cultural significance of ethnic attire and the ideals that go along with it. Fashion lovers can today find out what's hot and what's not by looking at appealing advertisements for clothing and new trends. The remarks made

it clear that the younger generations prefer western attire to ethnic dress due to current fashion trends.

The respondents point out that there is such a significant western impact on the local culture that it has given rise to a difference in style. They observe that fashion will look significantly different in the future than it did in the past. The accessibility of cultures, the interconnectedness of individuals through the internet and mass media, and globalization will probably drive a convergence of fashion trends in clothing, music, architecture, and online presence.

#### **4.5 Guiding principles for fashion dynamism as well as for cultural presentation and promotion**

##### **4.5.1 The future of ethnic clothing in the Upper West Region**

The researcher probed to explore the perspective of the respondents concerning the future of ethnic fashion in the Upper West Region. Table 4.3 show the details.

**Table 4. 3: How will you describe the future of ethnic clothing in the study area**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Promising future	28	51
Challenging future	21	38
Neutral	6	11
Total	55	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The data presented in table 4.3 reveals that 28 respondents, or 51% of the total respondents, believe ethnic clothing has a bright future in the Upper West Region. Some respondents based this assertion on the increasing number of people who are purchasing ethnic clothing and attempting to establish a trend at the local level. It is believed that the next generation

of fashion designers are making attempts to create trends, which would lead to an increase in clientele.

Another 38% of the total respondents indicated that the future of ethnic clothing is uncertain. According to them, there are numerous issues plaguing the market, and unless these issues are rectified, it will be difficult to have a successful ethnic apparel business that will be supported by everyone. One person opined that:

*We as a people may not notice a substantial difference for the next two decades due to the fact that the government does little to prevent the entry of foreign fabrics. These imported fabrics will compete with those already available in the Upper West Region; however, because their producers have access to abundant, inexpensive resources, they will be able to lower their prices, and consumers will begin to purchase them. So, I believe that the government must take action if ethnic clothing is to stay as it is.*

In general, the majority of respondents (51%) are optimistic about the future of ethnic clothes once the appropriate processes are implemented.

#### **4.5.2 Way of promoting ethnic clothing**

The researcher further probed to explore the ways in which ethnic clothing can be promoted. Figure 4.10 show the details.



**Figure 4. 10: Ways to promote ethnic clothing**

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Out of the 55 respondents who took part in the study, 25 are of the opinion that we may promote ethnic apparel by limiting imported materials, accounting for 45% of the total respondents. Eighteen (18) respondents, or 33%, proposed that we promote ethnic clothing by patronizing ethnic fabrics compared to foreign ones. Furthermore, 5% of the respondents, stated that ethnic clothing can only be promoted by the government subsidizing ethnic apparel prices. Again, 15% of the total respondents, representing 15% indicated by extensive teaching on the importance of preserving the local cultural heritage, the community stand a good chance of promoting traditional ethnic clothing. As a consequence of the findings, it is apparent that the importation of foreign fabrics from the western countries has been the primary impediment to the growth and development of ethnic clothing in the study area.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of fashion trend on ethnic clothing in the Upper West Region of Ghana. There were four sub-objectives: to identify and describe the ethnic clothing of the Upper Region of Ghana; to identify the factors influencing developmental changes or leading to new styles of the ethnic clothing in recent times; to find out the extent of impact of ethnic clothing on fashion in the Upper West Region of Ghana, and to identify the guiding principles for fashion dynamism as well as for cultural presentation and promotion. Using both primary and secondary data, the research that led to the findings provided in the previous chapter was conducted. This chapter aims to summarize the research's findings, conclusion, and recommendations.

#### **5.2 Summary of Key Research Findings**

The first sub-objective was to identify and define the ethnic apparel of the Upper West Region of Ghana. The findings revealed that smock is the ethnic clothing of the people of the Upper West Region, and it comes in three main types: Fugu/Batakari, Bana, and Jampa. The study also discovered that characteristics such as occasion compatibility, high absorbency rate and skin cooling, quality, and colour influenced the selection of specific type of ethnic apparel. The potential for ethnic fabric production in the study area have improved over time. This is because the smock has become an article of clothing for everyone, and almost everyone, regardless of ethnicity, wears it. This has increased demand for ethnic smocks and helped to ensure the viability of the industry in the area.

The study also discovered that there are provisions of cultural values in ethnic clothing and that the smock reflects the cultural norms of the people, and that these traditional ethnic

clothes portray the rich indigenous cultural values, which primarily frowns on clothes that expose sensitive parts of the body but advocate total covering of the wearer's sensitive parts. As a result, cultural attitudes equate indecency with clothing that exposes the wearer's sensitive Regions.

The second objective was to discover the factors driving developmental changes or leading to new styles of the ethnic dress in recent times. The study discovered that social media, celebrities and fashion models, fashion bloggers, and street fashions have conspired to influence the evolution of ethnic clothing styles. While social media exploits technology's broad and fast outreach skills to instantly share information, such as trends, it also brings to light specific fashion mainstays or styles and provides them a digitized runway. Businesses have used celebrities' and fashion models' image, popularity, and audience to be brand ambassadors or spokespersons for their brands, and their dressing, walking, speaking, and appearance styles are very essential variables that impact fashion.

The third objective was to determine the extent to which fashion trend has impacted ethnic clothing in the study area. The study found that fashion trend have encouraged the development of new ideas, styles, and trendy looks by designers in the ethnic clothing sector. The remarks made it clear that local fashion designers had put a lot of work into making designs that could start trends locally and Regionally in their quest to use ethnic clothing fabrics. The introduction of many colours, styles, and designs resulted from this. These and other factors have made it possible for local designers to showcase their talent in the creation of ethnic clothes.

Again, the study found that fashion trend has led to the sinking and dwindling of interest of the people (in the Upper West Region) in the cultural significance of ethnic clothing and the ideals that go along with it. It became apparent that the younger generations that are

fashion lovers find out what's hot and what's not by looking at appealing advertisements for clothing and new trends. The increasing patronage of foreign fashion trends could eventually result in the gradual demise of the ethnic clothing of the people of the Upper West Region.

The fourth objective was to investigate the driving principles for fashion dynamism as well as cultural presentation and promotion. The study discovered that fashion trends have had a negative impact on ethnic clothing and that recommendations for promoting cultural representation of ethnic clothing should focus on limiting the importation of western fabrics. Western fashion is available in a variety of styles and at reasonable prices, and it serves the same functions as ethnic apparel. For the growth of the ethnic clothing sector, it has also been suggested that ethnic clothing be promoted by encouraging people to buy it for local and Regional occasions. The study also discovered that government subsidies for ethnic apparel pricing will, among other things, offer the ethnic clothing business the push to compete with western imported fabrics.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The study shows that the ethnic clothing industry isn't as active and visible as people thought it was because it can't even start local fashion trends. But local designers are working to build and promote an industry that they hope will be a force to be reckoned with. Foreign influences don't make things easier, no matter how hard it may seem, because they change the minds of fashion-conscious locals who could help build the industry. But it's possible that the ethnic clothing industry will do as well as expected, thanks to the work of local fashion designers and the fact that more and more people are wearing trendy dresses made from ethnic fabrics. The government needs to take a fresh look at the textile and fashion industries and come up with policies to make them strong and long-lasting. This is because the country stands to gain huge and huge benefits. A well-established fashion

industry could bring in money for the government, but it could also create jobs and lead to more households, which would also bring in money for the government.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Ethnic clothing can have a unique look, but before that can happen, the government needs to show that it cares about the business of ethnic clothing by making policies that regulate the textile industry. Individual designers and companies that make ethnic clothing must come together to form a well-run institution with a governing body that keeps an eye on the established industry. There needs to be a high level of fashion design institutions. At the moment, there aren't many courses on ethnic fashion at our public university. By offering courses and programs in fashion design, ethnic clothing fashion designers and trend watchers can be trained. Together, they can find a common element in the different cultures of the local population that could be a unifying factor in the designs made by the individual designers, who are also expected to have a signature look that makes their designs stand out. This can't be done in a day, but it can be done if the government, teachers, designers, and people who follow fashion trends are committed and keep at it. Once the look is complete, design lecturers should use it as a guide to teach their students, so that as the student develops his own style as a designer, he or she knows how the ethnic clothing industry looks. By the time the student is ready to work as a designer, he or she will be able to combine the two (ethnic look and personal style) to make a product that is both creative and has its own style.

Also, it's true that fashion in Ghana has turned into a serious business. The respondents think that trends should be made with the culture of Ghana in mind. People shouldn't just blindly follow the trends in Ghana and the Upper West Region. It might be hard to stop international brands from getting into the Ghanaian market, but it's up to the Ghanaians and other local people to decide to keep the tradition going.

### **5.5 Limitations and Areas of Further Research**

There is a chance that the current study's external validity and generalizability are limited because it only looks at one ethnic group in one of the sixteen Regions of the country. Future researchers could do the same thing by adding more Regions, especially those with a mix of different ethnic groups. Also, more research is needed to find out if the dynamics of ethnic clothing and fashion trends in the Upper West Region of Ghana are the same in other cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

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## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

### AKENTEN APPIAH-MINKA UNIVERSITY OF SKILLS TRAINING ENTREPRENEUR DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL

**Sir/Madam,**

This questionnaire seeks to explore and describe the impact of fashion trend on ethnic clothing in Ghana: Case study of the Upper West Region of Ghana. Your responses to this questionnaire will provide the needed data for the investigation. It is solely for academic purposes and you are assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The questionnaire is self-administered and may require 25-30 minutes of your time. You are free to partake or decline without any recrimination.

**NB:** Please tick [] the appropriate response where options are provided and write your response where spaces are provided.

#### SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Gender: a. Male [] b. Female []
2. Age [years]: .....
3. What is your highest educational qualification achieved?  
a. Basic [] b. Secondary/Technical [] c. Diploma [] d. Bachelors [] e.  
Master's Degree [] f. None [] g. Other(s) []

**Section B: Nature of ethnic clothing of the Upper West Region of Ghana**

4. What is the ethnic clothing of the Upper West Region?

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5. What are the key components of the ethnic clothing of the Upper West Region?

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6. How different is the ethnic clothing of the Upper West Region from the Ghanaian ethnic clothing?

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7. How often do people patronize the ethnic clothing of the Upper West Region?

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8. How will you describe the fit and quality of ethnic clothing made in the Upper West Region?

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**Section C: Factors influencing developmental changes or leading to new styles of the ethnic clothing in recent times**

9. What is the fashion trend of the people of the Upper West Region?

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10. In what ways have foreign fashion influenced fashion trend in the Upper West Region?

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11. How will you describe the creativity of the fashion designers of the Upper West Region?

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12. In what ways are the fashion designers in the Upper West Region able to create fashion trend?

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**Section 3: The impact of fashion trend on ethnic clothing in the Upper West Region of Ghana**

13. In what ways are the ethnic fashion designers in the Upper West Region able to create trend?

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14. In what ways have the ethnic clothing influenced fashion in the Upper West Region?

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15. What is the impact of ethnic clothing on fashion in the Upper West Region?

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**Section 4: Guiding principles for fashion dynamism as well as for cultural presentation and promotion**

16. How will you describe the future of ethnic fashion in the Upper West Region?

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17. In what ways can ethnic fashion be promoted in Ghana?

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Thank you