RESEARCH ARTICLE

UNIVERSITY FEMALE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON FACTORS INFLUENCING THEIR DRESS CODE

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	There have been several investigations using social science approaches into the impacts of fashion on how other people perceive us, as a result of the clothes we wear. Clothing is the most important feature in people's lives. When we buy any article of clothing we consciously or unconsciously think about its relationship with our personality type. Dress, a visible symbol for fundamental beliefs, can be influenced by several factors. Swaziland, through print media has published concerns on female students' dress code, especially during graduation ceremonies, asserting that students dressed inappropriately. This descriptive study therefore, was conducted to ascertain factors that influenced University of Swaziland (UNISWA) female students' dress-code; and, also to determine types of clothes students perceived as modest. Furthermore, the study sought to determine how respondents prioritised purposes of clothing. A closed-ended questionnaire was validated, pilot-tested with UNISWA students, at Mbabane Campus; a reliability coefficient of 0.881 obtained. Questionnaires were distributed to ninety six 3rd and 4th year Luyengo Campus female students' residents. SPSS version 17.0 was used for data analysis. Study results indicated that students' dress code was influenced by competition among friends (32.3%), celebrities' lifestyles (32.7%), while self-confidence (35.0%) was the most influential factor. With reference to purposes of clothing, protection (46.8%) was the most important, and modesty (23.0%) being the least important to respondents. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents considered protecting themselves from the harsh weather conditions and the environment whenever making clothing selections, with little consideration on modest clothing in their clothing selections.

INTRODUCTION

Clothing, a tool used for self-expression sends messages about a person, thus expressing one's spersonality, emotions and individual style (Weber, 2008). Clothing choices are also believed to influence our self-perception in different ways; and therefore, enhances people's self-perception of a range of "occupational attributes" including responsibility, competency, professionalism, reliability, intelligence, and efficiency. Thus, by wearing appropriate clothes, a person's sense of these traits is believed to be augmented (Kwon, 1994). Clothing is referred to as a "second skin" in establishing the physical boundaries of the self (Horn and Gurel, 1981); and, clothing can affect body image perception and functions to strengthen or weaken the body image boundary (Tondl and Henneman, 1994).

Dress codes

Many people have certain clothing expectations or thoughts about what is reasonable or justified for people to wear; hence knowing the clothing customs of a society is helpful in making

decisions about what to wear for different occasions. Whenever a majority of people in a society share same expectations, standards are formed, and those standards are guidelines and principles that set forth what's appropriate or suitable to wear; but standards can change over time (Weber, 2008, p.42). In Japan it's not acceptable for women to show cleavage or to allow any part of their breasts to show through tight tops hence all their bras have a layer of foam to prevent this (Jen, 1997). A statement and a sign such as "No shirt, no shoes, no service" which is sometimes found on doors of businesses serves as a simple dress code, a set of rules that describe acceptable or required clothing. A lot of restaurants require customers to wear shoes and shirts because of health laws or they risk being refused service. Similarly, many schools and offices also have dress codes, with a list of clothing items that may not be worn; this is helpful for students and employees respectively(Weber, 2008, p.43).

Influential factors on clothing selection

Basic functions of clothing

Throughout history, clothing has been seen to fulfill basic functions such as: protection, identification, modesty, status

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and adornment (Weber, 2008). This is affirmed by another author who saw dress as serving three main purposes; decoration, modesty, and protection. Until quite recently, it was almost universally agreed that the fundamental reason for wearing clothing was modesty; although, there is no general definition for modesty, because it is based on belief of sub-cultures. Culture has much diversity influenced by ideas, ideals, values, and knowledge, which vary with each community and region (Damhorst, Miller-Spillman, and Michelman, 2005; Sproles and Burns, 1994). In a recent study, it was pointed out that fashion serves at least *four* different purposes, and the meaning conveyed may be different depending on the purpose sought. The four purposes included *fashion as wearable art*, as a way of *forming or maintaining identity*, as a *commentary on the body*, or as a *reflection of the body* (Anonymous, 2014). Another source listed four reasons to explain specific uses of clothing as indicated by theorists on why people began to wear clothes. First is the *modesty theory* that explained modesty as a basic function of clothing. The second theory explained the use of clothing to *attract attention*. A third theory is related to the *protection and utility* aspect of clothing. And finally, the fourth theory included such aesthetic functions as: *a sexual lure; indicator of status, bravery and skill; a means of identification of group membership; and as an extension to self* (Sancheti, 2009; Weber, 2008, p.28).

Although clothing conveys meaning, the meanings it conveys are not easy to untangle – they are determined to a great extent by context, but also by so-called sub-culture. Anonymous (2014)indicated that images of a person wearing conservative or casual clothing styles, were seen as of people who were more self-controlled and reliable; and, people clothed in dressier style(s) conveyed a sense of social unease, while those people dressed in a daring style were found to be attractive and individualistic (Adam and Galinsky, 2012).

Modesty, Immodesty and Religion

The meaning and interpretation of modesty varies culturally and across historical periods; and, modesty generally pertains to the covering of body parts that, according to certain belief systems have a sexual implication when exposed in public. Historically, in African countries women's dress code became much more modest after Christian missionaries introduced the concept of sin and shame associated with a nude body. Religion, as a set of beliefs, symbols, and practices based on the idea of the sacred unites believers in a socio-religious community governed by religious principles. Clothing can be a statement of religious beliefs (e.g. English Puritans believed in humility and simplicity in life and chose very plain clothing styles to show that they didn't conform to worldly standards (Damhorst *et al*, 2005; Weber, 2008, p.86). The more fundamental the religion, the greater the degree of modesty required, especially for women, who are frequently targets of modesty rules; and, certain religious groups feel that through women's behaviour, including their dress, modesty morality is maintained. These beliefs lead to the religious practice of prescribing modest and proper dress for female members, regarding "female sexuality as dangerous if left unharnessed and uncontrolled" (Damhorst *et al*., 2005).

Negative mass media messages that bombard women on a daily basis encourage women to constantly compete with each other. When women compete for attention, even among the best of friends out of desperation women end up wearing something more revealing in order to be noticed too. "When a woman dresses explicitly, it is for the purpose of gaining admiration and attention from both men and women" (Sturges, 2007). It's important to find own style and wear clothing items that make one feel comfortable and confident. One does not have to dress provocatively and expose skin that makes them uncomfortable. "Showing that you are comfortable in your clothes makes disproportions and all the figure flaws one may have deep down insecurities about, less noticeable" (Anonymous, n.d.). As the old adage goes "Clothes make the man" therefore the clothes one wears can make or break one's self-confidence, hence it's important to choose wisely (Anonymous, 2013a). Today's designers have continually altered the location of attention on the female body, keeping the continuous cycle of fashion alive through an ever changing focus of interest, exposing certain parts of the body. Women's clothing now tends to reveal a lot of flesh, with the introduction of mini-skirts, bare back tops, shorter hems, and lower style lines around the neckline resulting in 'cleavage' (Damhorst *et al.,* 2005).

Familial and peer influences

Family is a constant presence in most peoples' lives; and therefore, it goes without saying that clothing decisions and choices made are often influenced by family members. Invariably therefore, with clothing choices primarily being influenced by family, the same serves as prime socialisation agents, with family activities often influencing those choices (Weber, 2008, p. 28).It is a known fact that throughout their lifespan, children are influenced by their family members, with mothers usually having the most influence from which daughters learn values related to attraction and self-image. Although, peers and family members have been considered prime social lisation agents in consumer socialisation; peer influence plays a major role in clothing selection for young people. With increased age, older students were reported to shift and pay greater attention to friends' opinions and less to their parents'; study results further show that while girls were more influenced by their peers, boys were more influenced by their families (Sancheti, 2009, p.62).

Given that a peer group consists of people with similar background, social status and age, a peer group can have a big influence on how people dress and act, resulting in conformity especially for teens; as most of them like the feeling of security and belonging that come with wearing similar clothing. This is further affirmed by Sancheti's (2009) study results wherein girls who participated, showed a tendency to use clothing as a means of self-expression and also approval from their friends. Problems arise though, when the group's idea of "right" conflicts with the individual's beliefs as well as the family's (Weber, 2008, p.28), and girls with extreme clothing behaviour reported to be ignored by their peers (Sancheti, 2009). Clothing that doesn't fit the groups standards may be criticised; a person can be talked about, laughed at, or teased. Resisting negative peer pressure, requires self-confidence that comes from a clear

understanding of own self-concept and values. When imposing a dress code, a peer group can be highly critical, sometimes thoughtlessly so, of anyone who fails to meet the code, name-calling, labelling, and exclusion from the group and its activities can follow. Although, almost everyone has a strong desire to be part of a group, on the other hand people feel the need to be original in some way. As a teen's self-confidence grows, the need to express individuality increases, but the desire to express individuality can conflict with the desire to conform (e.g. one may want to dress like peers in order to belong; and yet at the same time, may want their clothes to represent self, and not everybody else (Weber, 2008, p.66-67). Clothing, hairstyle and behaviour are used by adolescents, in their desire to belong to an identifiable peer group. This is of great importance in their need for conformity in order to avoid isolation, alienation and ridicule from the peer group. From their four-year longitudinal study, Kelley and Eicher (1970) cited by Sancheti (2009, p.34) concluded that appearance and clothing was an important factor for teenagers in their choice of friendship with conformity to clothing highly related to peer acceptance.

Psychological factors

Clothing is the most important feature of our lives. "Psychological factors greatly affect women's clothing choices; this results in consciously or unconsciously thinking about the relationship of the clothing with one's personality type. Bright colours are usually associated with happiness while light and dark colours are usually used in a state of depression, sadness and gloominess. Some people prefer to buy a comfortable dress even if it may be out of fashion, whereas teenagers, especially, are more interested in wearing something trendy even if it creates uneasiness for them (Ijaz, 2012). Clothing items are products that have symbols associated with them. Both intrinsic and extrinsic attributes of clothing affect the emotional and psychological development of individuals. Older girls compared to younger girls were involved with brand and store specific shopping, expressed specific style preferences, and were less satisfied with their bodies as satisfaction with various parts of their bodies decreased with age. Thus, late adolescents were more dissatisfied with their clothes and bodies, suggesting that as one matures internalisation of cultural standards of attractiveness become stronger (Sancheti, 2009, pp.70-71).

Self-esteem and clothing: Self-esteem, a psychological concept, is the attitude and feelings of an individual towards oneself; further seen as a value and favourable opinion of oneself; and therefore, is considered an important dimension of self-image. Positive evaluation conveys higher self-esteem whereas negative evaluation conveys lower self-esteem depending on how an individual evaluates himself/herself. Clothing, as a personal component that communicates information and aids in the establishment of self-identity; and, as a part of the individual's identity and a non-verbal communication symbol, could be related to self-esteem (Sancheti, 2009). Furthermore, it is stated in the same study that "an individual is seen as having clothed himself/herself for an audience whose response would in turn establish one's self; furthermore, the self of a person is validated when the

programs (responses made about the wearer of clothes by the wearer), and *reviews* (responses made about the wearer of clothes by others) coincide (Sanchet, 2009, p.47, 51).

Technological factors

Media influences on clothing selection

Through media, various product messages are communicated to a large audience as a means of promoting those products (Weber, 2008). "Today's youth live in a technologically savvy world"; and therefore, are better at using computer technology than the previous generations (Sancheti, 2009). This modern age known as a "technological era" has seen even children equipped with latest information, and so are their mindsets. The provision and easy access of internet, through various web sites, enables keeping in touch with the latest happenings in the fashion world regarding the upcoming trends. Technology provides many new ways of introducing a new product to the customer that immediately captures the attention of the customer; for example, styles, designs, and cuts that suit the woman's personality are easily available (Ijaz, 2012).

With most people watching television, listening to the radio, going to movies or renting videos, reading magazines and newspapers, browsing through catalogues and surfing the internet, it goes without saying that clothing choices are impacted (Weber, 2008). Almost, two-thirds of youths have easy access to cable televisions in their bedrooms, making television their number one source of influence on brand information given that approximately 85% of tweens' brand information was from television (Lindstrom and Seybold, 2003). Furthermore, study results (Lindstrom and Seybold, 2003; Siegel, Coffey and Livingston, 2004) showed additional sources of influence have been noted as radio, magazines, newspapers, taped shows, videos, movies, music videos, internet and digital cable. This is further supported by Weber (2008, pp.320-323) wherein youth learn about fashion through advertising media encompassing magazines, newspapers, radio and TV, infomercials, the internet, and catalogues; with the unrealistically thin bodies portrayed through contemporary media images as attractive characteristics and cultural standards of beauty; thus, resulting with adolescents using these media images to learn about self-expression and self-image (Damhorst *et al*., 2005; Jung and Lennon, 2003).

Advertising on television, fashion magazines and movies was seen as a powerful source of fashion information for tweens as indicated by Sancheti (2009, 58-59) wherein media was the second most influential factor for tweens (23.6%), with magazines (13.7%) ranked as the highest among different modes of media followed by television (6.4%), movies (2.0%) and the internet (1.5%). However, these tweens, who read and watched clothing advertisements, were more influenced by their friends and family. Results reports on the relationship of media influence and clothing buying behaviour shows media as influential, probably due to respondents watching clothing-related advertisements, portraying a thin ideal, more frequently than they actually bought clothes similar to the advertisements. The reason might be that these respondents looked at clothing

advertisements more frequently than they actually bought clothes similar to advertisements.

Celebrities and status symbol

"Family is the primary institution in individuals' lives, but celebrities start to appeal to teens mainly when they are attracted towards the opposite gender and overly concerned with feelings of wanting to look good. Teenagers then look up to celebrities for every minor update from the fashion world in the lust to look good, attractive and current" (Anonymous, 2013). "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery" when admiring someone, it's very easy to allow that person to influence the choices one makes, often about clothing. Clothing, hairstyles and make-up are often influenced by entertainers especially on stage, screen, and television, through the styles they wear themselves or the costumes of the characters they portray. Designer gowns worn by celebrities to the awards shows greatly influence today's prom gowns. Most commonly, celebrities from the sports world also inspire trends (e.g. Michael Jordan for Air Jordan shoes and Tiger Woods for Nike sportswear). Moreover, models, politicians, religious leaders, television and film personalities, have also motivated people to copy and adopt their style of clothing, with many fashion designers, sports figures, and other celebrities having their names, initials, or symbols on clothes and accessories; such items become status symbols through exposure in the media, thus giving the wearer a special feeling of importance or wealth (Weber, 2008, p.29).

Environmental Factors

Environment means "the totality of circumstances surrounding an organism or group of organisms, especially the complex of social and cultural conditions affecting the nature of an individual or community" (American Heritage Dictionary, 2001); thus environment could be considered a sum total of surrounding things, place and cultural norms. From Roach-Higgins, Eicher and Johnson's (1995) study, Sancheti (2009) reported that their investigation was on cultural and time and place constructs that influence dress and identity. According to them, cultural constructs include technological resources, moral standards, health and hygiene, aesthetic expression and rituals. Time and place constructs included fashion, ethnic groups as well as a cosmopolitan dress defined as one worn across national boundaries (Roach-Higgins *et al.*, 1995) cited in Sancheti (2009, p. 54). Wilson and MacGillivray (1998) indicated that adolescents make clothing choices primarily influenced by residence, ethnicity and grade.

Cultural and demographic influences on clothing selection

Cultural and demographic factors such as ethnicity, place of residence and income of family may also affect the clothing behaviour of adolescents. Clothing, when viewed through the cultural perspective, is a product of cultural norms and values that transform one's identity to create a picture and provide meaning to social life. Area and cultural norms associated with clothing are seen as affecting the way individuals respond to each other (MacGillivray and Wilson, 1997; Kaiser, 1997; and Sancheti, 2009, p.66). Society influences what people wear, as

researchers have found that strong ethnic identification leads to particular choices of apparel, and these choices are matched by strong feelings (Anonymous, 2014; Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008). Although in each society, together, these people share certain traditions, institutions and interests, each society has its own culture, the collected ideas, skills, beliefs and institutions of a society at a particular time in history. Cultural differences are what set one society apart from another. Every culture has something special and unique about its clothing. Many cultures have a distinctive clothing style or costume that has been developed over the centuries (Weber, 2008, p.30). Another author (Kaiser, 1997, p.393) saw 'tradition and cultural aesthetics as valued and preserved through folk costumes and much information being conveyed visually in the process of social life'.

Residential influence on clothing selection

Geographic locations and climatic conditions often determine the type of clothing; the assumption is that urban dwellers have a better and more extensive wardrobe than rural dwellers. MacGillivray and Wilson's (1997) study showed significant differences between urban and rural adolescents, with the latter more influenced by friends in their clothing choices. Media influences were seen to affect urban adolescents nearly twice as strongly as they did for those in the rural areas; although it should be noted that "today's rural consumers are less passive than they were in the past and are more like their urban counterparts with the increasing awareness and education" (Bishnoi and Sharma) all because of the impact media has, as it can be accessed even in the rural areas. Furthermore, rural adolescents were less likely to use clothing for social approval and distinction than their urban counterparts. More homogeneity in rural populations was therefore, seen as making them somewhat different than urban dwellers (Sancheti, 2009).

Dress as a visible symbol for fundamental beliefs can be influenced by several factors. Female students' dress code at the University of Swaziland (UNISWA) seems to have been influenced by these factors. Peer groups start at a young age and are important throughout life. Johnson's (2012) study defined peer group influence as 'the force of people who share similar social characteristics, such as age, class, occupation, education and interact on a level of equality, and thus significantly influencing the behaviours of those individuals. The more cohesive the peer group is, the greater the influences on its members as individuals need to relate to their peers because of the dependence relationship on their attitudes, feelings, and expectations so as to help them construct their own views of the world' (Johnson, 2012). The author (2012) further indicated that the consumer socialisation theoretical framework describes the interaction of personal and environmental causes on behavioral outcomes; with the latter and attitudes being influenced through peer communication, familial communication, and online social networking usage which are the main socialisation agents. With technological developments, social networking sites provide platforms for users to share ideas and comments (for example, prices, the quality, and the overall opinions of a product or service). Communication with friends in an online context is seen at a

growing rate as a tool utilised by a majority of college-aged students to reach their friends from different geographical areas (Johnson, 2012).

Problem Statement

The historical and developmental factors such as industrialisation and urbanisation shape societies. These factors influence the types of clothing styles that are worn. Similarly, the culture of a society expresses its ideas and values about appearance and fashion. Women in Swaziland have been banned from wearing mini-skirts, crop and skimpy tops or other dress codes exposing suggestive parts of their bodies at risk of being arrested and thus face a six-month jail term. This was a directive by Swazi police in reaction to a march by young women, some wearing mini-skirts, in the city of Manzini seeking equal rights and safety. The ban also applies to low-slung jeans and tank tops. However, authorities declared that the "indlamu" costume, a tiny beaded belt worn when young women perform the cultural reed dance for King Mswati topless was permissible as there was no known record of maidens' abuse while wearing the costume (Anonymous, 2012a; Anonymous, 2012b). To further support these sentiments, a speaker at a UNISWA student gathering indicated that the general dress code of women was important and called for females to make sure that their bodies were not exposed (Dlamini, 2009). Thus, with reference to the above sentiments, the Swazi newspapers have been publishing a lot of stories pertaining to harassment on girls with a dress code considered inappropriate for public places such as bus ranks; and similarly, this coverage did not spare graduation ceremony candidates seen to belong to the same category.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study therefore, was to ascertain factors that influenced UNISWA's Luyengo Campus female students' dress code, in an attempt to find out what drove students to dress in a manner considered inappropriate by some members of the society; and, to explore students' perception on modest and immodest clothes, so as to get insight on types of clothes students perceived as proper to be worn. It is envisaged this awareness would be helpful to students' day-to-day choices of clothing, ensuring that what they wear defines who they really are and what they believe in. The specific objectives addressed were as follows: Identify factors that influence female students' dress code; Determine female students' perception on modesty and immodesty; Determine how students prioritise modesty, protection, and decoration as purposes of clothing; and to, Compare means of selected demographic characteristics with perception on modesty and immodesty.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Sample Selection

The descriptive research design study used convenience sampling and targeted all 3rd and 4th year female students, residents of Luyengo Campus, and in the different programmes on offer by UNISWA Faculty of Agriculture.

Instrument Development

A four-part, closed-ended questionnaire was designed according to the study's objectives, and with illustrations of different outfits for respondents to select their preferences. Section A of the questionnaire consisted of demographic questions. Section B had questions relating to prioritisation of modesty, protection, and decoration as purposes of clothing. Section C contained questions that were based on students' perception on modest and immodest clothes, and lastly, Section D with questions relating to factors that influence dress code.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability of the instrument (Isaac and Michael, 1995) were conducted. The questionnaire was reviewed and attested to its content and construct validity. For consistency, clarity, suitability and appropriateness of the instrument, Pilot-testing using (n=30) students from UNISWA's Mbabane Campus who were not part of the main study was done. The Cronbach's alpha was calculated on the domains of the questionnaire to test for reliability coefficient, with results shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability Testing of the Instrument

Domain	Number of Items	Reliability Coefficient
A. Prioritisation of purposes of clothing protection, modesty, and decoration	6	0.869
B. Perception on modesty and immodesty	9	0.942
C. Factors influencing dress code	5	0.831
Overall reliability coefficient	**20**	**0.881**

Data Collection and Analysis

Ninety-six questionnaires, hand-delivered to the respondents' rooms were all successfully collected after two days. Data were analysed using SPSS version 17.0 programme to yield descriptive statistics such as means, correlation, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to describe the differences between variables for the study's three objectives. Responses were grouped and represented in frequency tables showing the frequencies of responses and percentages. One Way ANOVA was used for the fourth objective, which was to compare means of selected demographic characteristics with perception on modesty and immodesty.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors that influenced female students' dress code

From findings, respondents' preferred dress code was mostly influenced by peers (41.7%) than by celebrities (34%), while 59.4% respondents learnt about new fashion or trends from the media. A majority of the respondents (64.4%) indicated that "no one" influenced their choices of fashion styles. Trends only influenced 26.0% respondents, while 56.3% indicated that trends sometimes had an impact on their choices. Furthermore, friends' complements on respondents' dress code (49.0%) mattered more than that of the general public (30.2%). Figure 1 shows overall responses when grouped into three categories for each question, according to the three main factors, considered

to influence females' dress code and ranging from 32.3% – 35%, with 'having self-confidence' (35.0%) as the most influential factor.
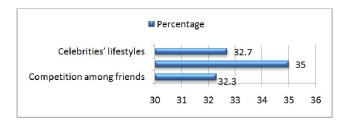

Figure 1. Factors influencing respondents' dress-code categorized

Respondents' perception on modesty and immodesty

A majority of respondents perceived wearing pants as proper (76.0%), with a preference of casual pants (87.5%); and, mostly close-fitting pants (93.8%). Close-fitting skirts were favoured (83.3%) and mostly above-knee length skirts (72. 1%) while 77.1% viewed above-knee skirts as proper, and 70.8% preferring loose-fitting short summer skirts. With regards to wearing leggings (83.3%) respondents preferred them with a long top than a short top, while 92.7% respondents settled for short summer shorts rather than the very-short ones. Results further indicate that 58.3% chose a conservative summer top.

Modesty, protection, and decoration prioritised as purposes of clothing

Results indicate that when purchasing clothes, quality was more important to respondents (49.0%) than style, and brand (4.2%) being the least important. Respondents were more concerned with feeling comfortable (63.5%) than look beautiful (28.1%) or look acceptable to people (8.3%) and therefore, preferred making a few changes on the planned outfit (65.6%) in the event weather changed. Thus, respondents considered protection from adverse weather conditions as more important. Figure 2 shows results of respondents' responses when grouped into three categories for each question according to modesty, protection, and decoration as purposes of clothing; the majority of respondents considered protection (46.8%) as very important compared to other purposes of clothing.
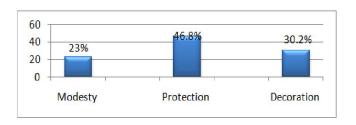

Figure 2. Respondents' prioritisation of purposes of clothing
Demographics and respondents' perception on modest and immodest clothing

Most of the respondents were in 3rd year (55.2%), with Consumer Science Education [COSE(25.0%)];Textile, Apparel Design and Management [TADM (12.5%)]; and Consumer Sciences [COS(7.3%)] enrolled in courses that involved

clothing and thus making respondents familiar with clothing styles and also better aware of purposes of clothing. Agricultural Education and Extension [AEE (18.8%)], Food Science, Nutrition and Technology [FSNT (14.6%)], and Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Management [AEM (10.4%)] had no clothing component. The other four programmes ranged from 2.1% - 4.2% and respondents' ages from 20 – 25 (95.8%). Manzini region had the highest participants (32.3%) and most of the respondents were from rural areas (45.8%). One Way Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine respondents' differences in their residential area and the perception on modesty and immodesty. From Table 2, the significance value (0.304) indicated that region had little influence on respondents' perception on modesty and immodesty; whereas, the significance value (0.001) for the location of respondents' residential area in the region, meant that the residential area had a significant influence on the respondents' perception on modesty and immodesty.

Table 2. Respondents' perception on modesty and immodesty based on residential area

Demographics	Freq	%	Mean	SD	F-value	Significance
Region						
Manzini	31	32.3	1.7563	0.12642	1.228	0.304
Hhohho	26	27.1	1.7607	0.14296		
Shiselweni	23	24.0	1.7488	0.17478		
Lubombo	16	16.7	1.8333	0.16229		
Area location						
Urban	31	32.3	1.7921	0.12420	7.899	0.001
Suburbs	21	21.9	1.6614	0.96070		
Rural	44	45.8	1.8030	0.16578		

Significance level=0.05
(n=96)

Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations

Factors that influence dress code

From results, respondents' dress code was influenced by all three factors, "celebrities' lifestyles", "competition among friends", and "having self-confidence" (35.0%) as the most influential factor, indicating that respondents' concern was more about pleasing themselves. From results clothes viewed as proper by some respondents were considered improper by others, as there is no general definition for modesty (Damhorst *et al.,* 2005). It can therefore, be inferred that respondents' paramount concern when dressing was mostly to protect themselves (46.8%) and how comfortable and content they were in their clothing choices. Thus, respondents primarily considered protection as a first priority, among other purposes of clothing.

Difference in perceptions of modesty based on demographic characteristics

Results of respondents' responses indicated that region had little influence on their perception on modesty and immodesty; but, the location of the residential area in the region had a significant influence to respondents' perception on modesty

and immodesty. Although, respondents may have been from the same region, but their perception on modesty and immodesty diverged, in relation to whether they came from urban, suburban, or rural part of that region. Thus, modesty cannot be generally defined because it is based on beliefs of sub-cultures. What may be considered modest in one society or sub-culture may be perceived as immodest by another (Damhorst *et al*., 2005). From reviewed literature consumer socialisation theoretical framework describes the interaction of personal and environmental causes on behavioural outcomes; with attitudes or behavioral outcomes being influenced through peer communication, familial communication, and online social networking usage which are seen as the socialisation agents. Therefore, it can be concluded that environments of upbringing played a significant role in respondents' perceptions of modest and immodest clothing.

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