CLOTHING AS A MEANS OF NON - VERBAL COMMUNICATION: TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TAKORADI POLYTECHNIC, GHANA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify clothing types and their given 'names', body part(s) exposed, the motivations behind the clothing worn and what they non-verbally communicate on the campus of Takoradi Polytechnic. In all, 555 male and female staff and students selected using cluster random sampling techniques were involved in the study. A mixed method approach was adopted. Semi-structured questionnaires (quantitative) and an interview guide (qualitative) were used. The quantitative data were analysed using SPSS (descriptive statistics and multiple linear regressions) and the qualitative data were analysed using thematic analyses. The findings showed that casual wears (23%) were the most frequently worn clothes on campus. Also, the body parts mostly exposed apart from the face were the breasts (15%) and upper part of the buttocks (10%). Additionally, the desire to; cover one's nakedness (15%), cave an identity (8%) and showcase culture (8%) often motivated what people wore. For stakeholders of the Polytechnic to communicate effectively through their clothing, decency according to the Ghanaian and biblical standards of dressing, were emphasized. It is hoped that this will help improve clothing decency on the campus of tertiary institutions.

Introduction

The way people dress today and the motivations behind them have become a source of worry to many. Even though many factors explain an individual's clothing, the modern media (magazines, television and internet) have been blamed for the current 'negative clothing'. Trends in fashion particularly, the designing of clothes that expose sensitive body parts with impunity is also believed to be responsible for the gradual corrosion of the Ghanaian way of dressing. It is also important to note that, current fashion which is dynamic and favoured more by frivolous rather than practical, logical, or intellectual reasons (Weber, 1990) has contributed to this corrosion. This has especially become a matter of concern considering the fact that clothing is no longer just an external shield but also a very important physical, psychological and social aspect of life – an integral part of individual self-realization.

Unwritten records from Takoradi Polytechnic suggest that earlier students of the Polytechnic wore uniforms. Nevertheless, this stopped long before the Polytechnic attained tertiary status in 1994. Currently, the students' handbook (2003) section 44 (i) implores students to dress decently at all times. However, what constitutes decent dressing is not defined. Similarly, there is no dressing code for staff except for those working at the teaching saloon and security men. These imply that both staff and students have to use their own

discretion to choose what is decent to wear. No wonder, the spectrum of clothes worn and appearances put on, on the Polytechnic's campus is quite wide – different hair styles, haircuts, earrings, trouser styles and length, skirt lengths, necklines, colours, and designs to mention but a few. To make matters worse, the staff has very little power if any to correct colleagues or students on indecent dressing.

Consequently, there are many unspoken 'sufferings' and discontentment lingering on the minds of many especially, for those who are bordered by such clothes and those who are shy. Perhaps, this might have informed the decision of one of the departments in the past to unofficially introduce dressing code for students; however, the attempt failed because prescribing clothing for tertiary students is not encouraged in tertiary education.

Worth considering is the fact that the majority of the Polytechnic's students are just about to enter adulthood. Hence, they are susceptible to wearing clothes incidental to youths. Besides, they might have left homes without parental control or control from school authorities for the first time. Subsequently, the urge to enjoy the new found 'freedom' is strong and has led many to succumb to peer pressure which seeks to encourage indecent dressing. Fortunately, tertiary education is not only meant for knowledge acquisition but is also meant for mentoring and preparing students for responsible adulthood. Therefore, the issue of clothing and its impact on others are important for discussion in the context of the Polytechnic.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:
1. What clothing types are worn on the campus of Takoradi Polytechnic and what body parts are usually exposed?
2. What are the motivations behind what people wear and what do they non-verbally communicate?
3. What is the relationship between the type of clothes worn and what is exposed, motivations and what is communicated; and how much of what a person wears is predicted by what is exposed and what is communicated?
4. What is decent dressing in the Ghanaian context and how can it be improved?

Various researchers have attempted to explain the motivations or reasons underlining clothing and body adornment and what they communicate (Sabath, 2008, John and Foster 1990 Langner, 1959). However, this research is important because the challenge of clothing appropriately in context faces all and sundry including staff and students, males and females, old and young, rich and poor alike. Besides, little if any has been done in the area of communicating effectively through clothing in the context of Takoradi Polytechnic. It is therefore hoped that the study would assist Ghanaians in general and stakeholders at Takoradi Polytechnic in particular, to be conscious of what they wear so that they can communicate effectively and meaningfully through their clothing.

Literature Review

Choices of clothes in the past were influenced by the climate in which people lived, the materials available and the ideas they had about clothes and body decoration. According to archaeologists and anthropologists the first clothes were made from materials found in nature such as animal skins, leaves and fibres from plants. These were draped, wrapped, or tied around the body. Later, dyes and paints (from plants, feathers, bones, shells, fur etc.) were used to adorn the body and colour clothes (Vanderhoff, 1984). Today, clothing is known as anything placed on the body in order to protect, adorn or communicate an intent. Horn and Gurel, (1981) further argue that clothes are worn to cover nakedness, for decency, modesty and to create a body image.

Jones (1990) came out with six common reasons for clothing: protection, modesty, occupational/religious identity, attraction, social status and traditional identify. This classification falls within the four major clothing functions (protection, immodesty modesty and adornment) suggested by Marshal, Jackson, Stanley, Kefgaf and Touchine-Spectit, (2000). The protection theory contends that physical and psychological protection is the major reason for wearing clothes. For instance, winter coats are worn to get protection from harsh climate and environmental conditions. Similarly, Padded suits, helmets and protective aprons are worn for protection against accidents for example, in sports.

Vanderhoff (1984) further argues that clothes are sometimes worn for protection against evil spirits. For example, clothes worn by witch doctors, traditional people in war, dancers and spiritualists are believed to be protective against evil spirits. They also give psychological power and confidence to the wearers. Traditionally, people wear clothes that are old, new, borrowed or blue when it is associated with good fortune. Others wear lucky dresses, colours or favorite clothes especially when they have had a good experience with them (Kaiser, 1990). This might probably explain why it was believed that the Ghanaian Black Stars team lost to Zimbabwe 2-1 in the 2006 African Cup of Nation in Egypt because they wore black jerseys. Again, many people wear their team's color during a match to symbolize one spirit.

Clothing is also used to attract attention. Westermarck (1921) and Langner (1959) explain that clothing display or emphasize the attributes of the body rather than concealing them (immodesty theory). However, when the human body is totally exposed it is less interesting or erotic. The modesty theory has it that clothing is worn to make one appear decent, modest and to have a body image. Adornment as a function of clothing stresses beauty – to decorate or adorn the body according to a peculiar culture. Aesthetically, humans want to appear beautiful and attractive nevertheless, today's women have taken over this attractive role (Marshal et al. 2000).

Indeed, there are different ideas about which body parts should be covered and perceptions about beauty differ from society to society. Moreover, individuals have the freedom to wear whatever they want depending on the traditional, religious and occupational identities of the society in which they live. This notwithstanding, clothing communicates a lot about an individual's character and how society sees him. In fact, people are often judged based on what they wear and the symbolism theory has it that clothing influences the first impression people make about others when they first meet them (Horn and Gurel, 1981).

Vanderhoff (1984) contends that clothes communicate without words and may even suggest how a person feels about himself. For instance, in the Ashanti region a woman wearing kente and blouse or black short wrapper and red cover shoulder cloth without a blouse indicates that she is mourning. Clothes may also be worn to signal interaction for the opposite sex. For example, a woman dressed in "hot pants" is probably looking for a sexual mate. On the other hand a Muslim woman dressed in "hijab" wants no interaction with men. Also, a person's state of mind, identity, mood, performance and confidence can also be deduced from his clothing (John and Foster, 1990). Others clothe themselves to express social status. For instance, distinguished personalities usually dress to stand out especially at state functions. The noble and the rich dress in designer labeled clothes made from quality fabrics so as to conform and depict their societal status. The upper socio-economic groups adapt fashion as symbols of distinction and exclusiveness (Simmel, 1973). Economically, clothing may also indicate productive or occupational role of who wears them.

Clothing has been and continues to be used to deceive people. It is regrettable to say that some people adopt extreme styles of clothing just to create a false image - they may dress to appear too old, too young, too extreme and bizarre (Watkins, 1977). These often lead to denial of attention or rejection in interpersonal relations (Bimbo and Pala, 1997). The power

of clothing should therefore not be underestimated; because false impression about an individual due to his clothing may mean the difference between success or failure; not only in interpersonal relations and professional careers but also in educational pursuit and marriage (Weber, 1990). Furthermore, clothes potentially affect the movement of the wearer and distract his attention by shifting or causing some discomfort. It may even hinder academic performance in schools.

Methodology

A case study design using mixed-method approach (semi-structured questionnaire and interviews) was adopted. Indeed, case studies are very useful in understanding the dynamics present within a single setting (Yin, 1994; Eisenhardt, 1989) and mixed-methods take advantage of the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches and are able to complement the weaknesses inherent in each method (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Both male and female staff and students of different ages from the Polytechnic were involved in the study because the issue of clothing concerns all, irrespective of status, gender and age. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling techniques to ensure that representative samples were drawn from all the four schools of the Polytechnic. One department was selected from each school depending on the possibility that professionals from the department are likely to have clothing as an issue during practice (Fashion, Catering, Civil Engineering, and Secretaryship). Students from the selected departments were divided into males and females strata and proportions were used to draw students from each stratum. The same method was used to select staff from the same departments and the main administration (clustered into departments and units). In addition, the respective heads of departments; two staff members and students (a male and female in each case) were selected randomly from the clusters for the interviews.

The data collection instruments i.e. the semi-structured questionnaire which was filled by both staff and students and interview guide used to interview the randomly selected few were developed after an extensive literature review in accordance with the research questions. They were further piloted using the same procedures but different departments and smaller samples within the same polytechnic. The questionnaires covered all the research questions however, the interviews focused only on the 'names' given to the various clothing worn on campus and how decent clothing can be improved in the Polytechnic. Six hundred copies of the questionnaires were administered however, 555 copies were returned and analysed.

The data from the questionnaires were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS 16.0). Descriptive statistics (percentages and graphs) and multiple linear regressions were used to analyze the data collected. The reliability of the quantitative data was also measured using slit-half reliability (Cronbach's alpha coefficient). The interviews were analysed using thematic analyses. Thematic analysis was appropriately chosen considering the fact that Crabtree and Miller (1999), argue that it is a useful tool in any analysis and interpretation regardless of the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher and allows data to be used in a systematic manner so as to increase the accuracy and sensitivity in the understanding and interpretation of data.

Methodological issues concerned with the study included: validity (trustworthiness), reliability and relevance. The first two issues demonstrate integrity and legitimacy of research (Aroni, Goeman, Stewart, Sawyer, Abramson & Thein 1999). Relevance however, 'ensures that research does not only provide true information but also information that is relevant to issues of human concern' (Hammersley, 1992 p.85). Indeed, the study has the potential of improving decency on our campuses. To ensure validity, the study employed data triangulation (qualitative and qualitative data) and methodological triangulation (involvement

of different participants - staff, student, males and females, different ages) so as to cross-check information gathered. Additionally, data entry checks were made to identify wrongfully inputted and missing data.

To address the issue of 'fit' between respondents' views and the researchers' representation of them, interviewees were engaged for an adequate period of time depending on how the interviews went to ensure that all necessary informations were collected. Additionally, they were given a simple written summary of the qualitative findings at end of the first draft (after peer review by a colleague) to cross-check and confirm the summaries made.

Findings
Demography of the Respondents

The research involved 485 (87%) students, and 70 staff members of the Polytechnic. Together, the participants totaled 555. Also, due to the constitution of the departments selected (dominated by females) and the fact that all the Heads of Departments were females with the exception of Civil Engineering; the females constituting 65% outnumbered their male counterparts who constituted 35% (Table 1).The Cronbach's Alpha reliability value for the raw responses to the scaled items on the questionnaire (quantitative data) was 0.77 and that for the standardized items was 0.86; an indication that the instrument used to collect the data was highly reliable.

Table 1: Demography of the Respondents

Respondent		Male	Female	Total	%
Students		152	333	485	87.4
Staff:	Departments	21	17	38	6.8
	Administration	18	11	28	5.1
	Heads of departments	1	3	4	0.7
Total		192 (35%)	363 (65%)	555	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2010

Types and Names of Clothing Worn on the Campus of Takoradi Polytechnic

To the ordinary observer, the variety in clothing types worn on the campus of Takoradi Polytechnic appears quite varied and intriguing. However, the findings revealed that when these are grouped, the most commonly worn clothing type is casual wear (23%). This was followed by formal and occasional wears (20% each). Comparatively, traditional and occupational clothes (18% each) were not often worn (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Types of Clothes Worn on Campus

Type of dress	Frequency	Percentage
Casual	130	23.4
Formal	112	20.2
Occasional	111	20.0
Tradition	103	18.6
Occupational	99	17.8
Total	556	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2010

Names Given to Some of the Clothes Worn on Campus

Some of the 'names and descriptions' given to various cloths on the campus of Takoradi polytechnic are given below:

Oto Pfister – The description is associated with a German coach, *Oto Pfister, who coached the Ghanaian Junior National Team (Under-17 team) in the early 1990s and was fond of dressing that way. The pair of* trousers is worn such that the trouser flap drops down almost to the knee showing the person's underwear or panties and affecting the way the person walks. A belt may or may not be worn on the trousers. It is usually worn by males.

I am aware – Intentionally or consciously dressing immodestly: exposing the breast, panties, stomach etc such that onlookers are tempted to think it is a mistake. However, when the female's attention is drawn to it, she confidently responds, 'I am aware'.

"Acapoco" – An old time way of dressing put up by current generations, usually by the youth e.g. old clothing designs, hair styles, shoes, etc.

Hipster - Short skirt, gathered and pointed at the edge usually, at the knee.

Pencil – Normal trousers or skirt very tight on the body but especially, as it narrows down the feet.

Skinny – Skin-tight trouser that is so tight at the legs that others have to aid in its removal.

High waist – The waist of a dress, skirt, trouser or in some cases a belt is put slightly above the waist or sometimes directly under the breast of the person.

"Abagbashie" (exposing part of the breast) – 'Pumping' or pushing up the breast with the aid of half-caped brassieres or wearing low-cut neck dresses. Sometimes the two lobes of the breast are oiled and the locket of a necklace is placed directly in-between the two lobes so as to direct and keep attention to it.

Ma tricky Jesus – A long slit (opening) made in front of long skirt, dress or slit. The dress appears decent from the back and at a distance but when the person sits down, the area between the thighs is exposed. It is believed that those who wear such clothes intentionally sit in the front at church to 'trick' Jesus (pastors).

Pusher – Knee-length tight shorts worn by ladies.

Accident – A dress or top with one hand.

Me kon ado owu (I am yearning to die) – A dress with designs covering the neck.

Book top – A very short petty coat at the armpit length worn by ladies.

Body Parts Usually Exposed

The study further considered the body parts commonly exposed. As expected, the face (16%) emerged as the most frequently exposed body part. This is understandable considering the fact that Ghana is not a Muslim country (is composed of Christians, Muslims, Traditionalists and people with other beliefs) where covering the face is a requirement.

especially for women. Unfortunately, the next most frequently body part exposed were the breasts (15%), legs (14%) shoulder blade or area around the neck and the arm (12% each) respectively. Others exposed their thigh or buttocks i.e. the back waistline or the upper part of the two lopes of the buttocks (11%). The body part that was least exposed was the stomach which constituted only 9%.

The Motivations behind People's Clothing

The motivations behind the respondents' clothes were quite varied. However, the most common motivation was the desire to cover one's nakedness (15%) and sexually attractive parts (9%). Others clothed themselves to carve an identity for themselves (8%) perhaps, to be unique or to be associated with a popular personality in an industry (entertainment, sports, etc). In some cases, the type of clothing worn was informed by the need for protection from physical (8%), psychological (2%) or spiritual (2%) harm. Other clothes were motivated by culture, (8%), religion (5%), tradition (3%) and tribe (0.9%). Details can be found on Figure 1.

It is also worth noting that some of the clothes were worn just to correspond with the occasion or to depict current fashion (8%). A person's educational level and position (5% each); and his financial status (0.7%) further informed the type of clothes he wore. Clothes were also worn to reveal a persons' mood (2%) e.g. that of happiness, mourning etc; and his occupation (2%). The clothing of some participants was motivated by their intentions - to appear scary, decent or honest (1%). The study further showed that some clothes were put on to: ward off evil spirits (3%), attract the opposite sex (1%), expose sexually attractive parts (0.7%) and invoke some spiritual powers (0.2%). Interestingly, a minority constituting 4% indicated that the clothes they wore were often motivated by the desire to please their peers or to be 'accepted' by them.

Figure 1:

The Motivations behind the Clothings

Mean =10.88
Std. Dev. =5.228
N =555
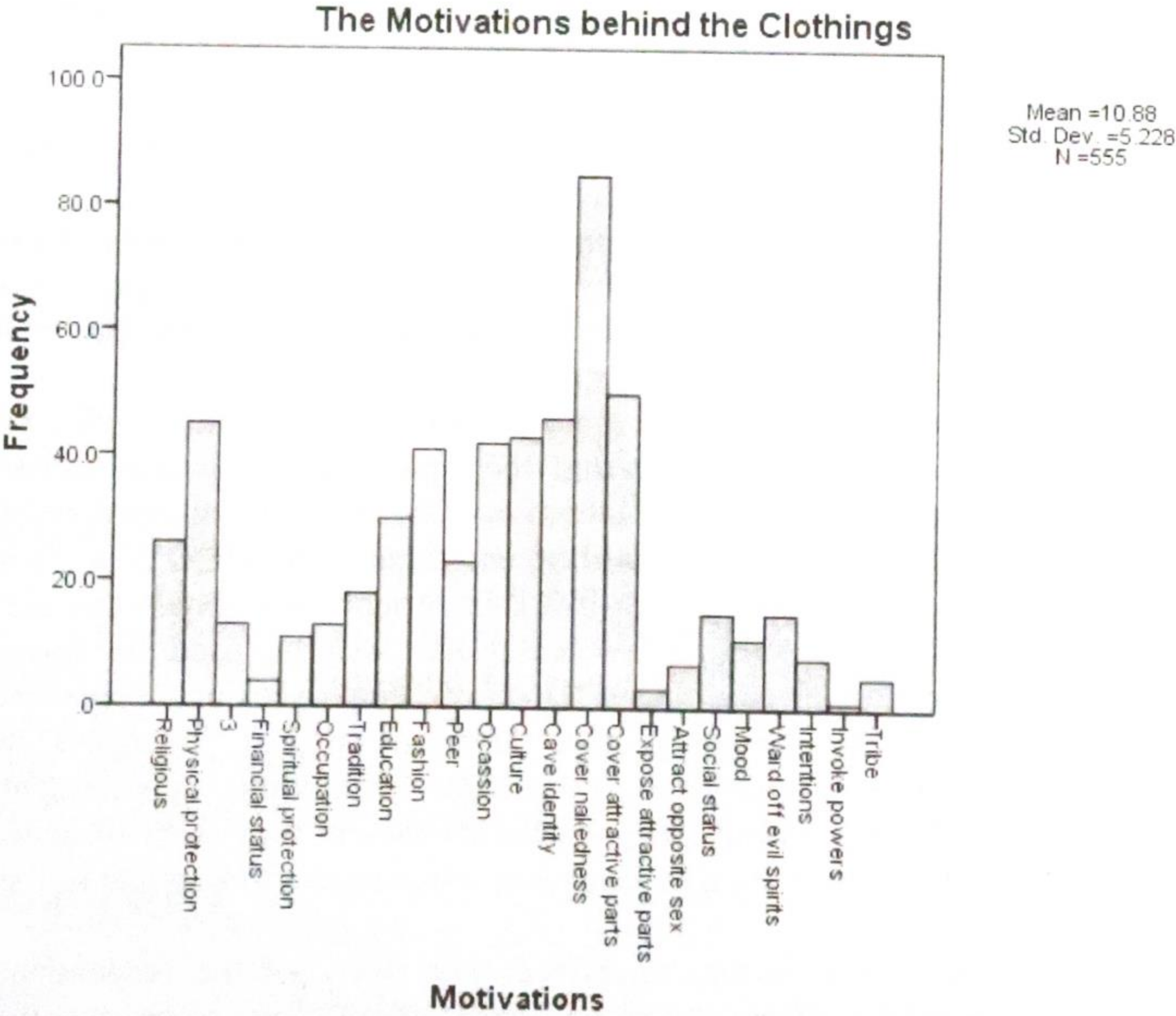
What the Clothes Non- verbally Communicate

The majority of the respondents shared the view that clothes non-verbally communicate a lot about a person. However, a few constituting 4% indicated that it does not matter what a person wears outside the home. Others constituting 12% further stated that a person's clothes suggest how he feels; for instance, white clothing expresses joy and, black cloth indicates bereavement. Similarly, a tight shoe may affect how a person walks and further suggest how he feels inside the shoes. This has something to do with confidence (11%). A well arranged dress and accessories often make person feel good, comfortable and add to his self-esteem in public. The opposite is true of appearances that are sloppy and inappropriate. Clothes may also communicate a person's social status (10%). Politicians, the elite and the rich wear brands well acclaimed and very expensive to buy to display their position and financial status. Similarly, chiefs dress in traditional regalia (fugu, kente, amulets, anklelets, beads, diadems etc.) to showcase their position and culture.

Clothes may further be used to non-verbally communicate a person's occupation, rank, educational level (e.g. nurse, teacher, police, student etc.) and sometimes religion (10%). For instance, Christian, Muslim and Buddhist leaders dress differently to communicate their status in society. Other clothes non-verbally communicate what the occasion is (3%). Typical examples are: weddings and naming ceremonies (white), funerals (red and black), sports (team colours), political gatherings (party paraphernalia) etc. In a similar way, traditional priests and chiefs wear special clothes during festivals and other festive occasions to communicate the occasion and their mood. Moreover, where an individual lives, comes from or even his tribe can be deduced from his clothes (6%). A case in point is the wearing of smock which is often associated with people from the northern part of Ghana (this is difficult to say in our current dispensation). Similarly, a woman in 'takuwa' may be assumed to be a Fante or from the Central region of Ghana.

The way an individual clothes himself may further be used to determine his moral upbringing (10%) and age (6%). Ghanaians believed that an individual 'brought up well in a home' by his parents or guardian would mostly 'dress well' (though this may not always hold because some children may put up double faces and some parents themselves may be indecent). In fact, responsible parents are expected to ensure that their children are decently and appropriately dressed for all occasions. Additionally, as a person grows and matures he is expected to exhibit maturity through his clothes. In other words, conclusions may be drawn on the up-bring of an individual and his age and maturity merely based on the way the person appears. Though such conclusions may be false, that is what perhaps, their clothes non-verbally communicate.

It is also important to note that some people dressed to just impress others (9%). For instance, some individuals non-verbally communicated their piety, decency and honesty through their clothes. Such ones may do so with the intention of winning the trust and favour of subordinates, colleagues and bosses. Their 'supposed decency' may even affect how others treat them – ranging from courtesies to opportunities (6%). Experience has shown that such appearances may be very deceptive. Clothes may sometimes also be used to portray intentions (7%). The case of a prostitute is an example. However, employees may sometimes use their clothes to communicate their sexual or other intentions to their colleagues and bosses so as to gain favour in various forms (9%) – privileges, promotions, appointments, scholarships, contracts, elections etc. Similarly people who are violent may want to appear huge, fearsome and scary so that the mere sight of them may force others to kowtow to their demands.

The qualitative component was further examined. For many of the respondents, indecent dressing worried, annoyed or made them ashamed. Nevertheless, some remained

indifferent. Some were worried about the kind of image those who dressed indecently built themselves. This is because Ghanaians believe that what a person wears shows the kind of person he is (decent, brought up well, his morals etc.). To some, indecent dressing makes women loose their dignity and womanhood – they appear horrible and annoying. Others feel very uncomfortable walking with such ones on the street. A person who is indecently dressed distracts the attention of others and brings undue attention to self thus, shaming the person walking next to him. As such, some decent people do not want to associate with those who are indecent as indecent dressing is generally frowned upon in Ghana. The following are some of the extracts from the respondents:

Male 1: *'I feel pity for people who expose their bodies'*
Female 1: *'It upsets me'*
Female 2: *'Indecent dressing makes me ashamed of womanhood'*

Nevertheless, some respondents saw indecent dressing differently. They indicated that they sometimes get emotional and spiritual inspiration from them. Others used them to boosts or improve their own way of dressing. To some, such clothes brought a day to day fashion challenge to them i.e. to either dress decently or not considering the fact that everybody wants to be fashionable and modern.

Male 2: *It affects me because sometimes I get emotional and spiritual inspiration from them*
Female 3: *Its boosts my dressing.*

Correlation and Regression Analysis

It is clear from Table 3 that there are strong correlations between what is worn, the part of the body that is exposed, the motivations behind the clothes worn and what it is communicated. For example, there is a very strong relationship (.907) between what a person wears and the part of the body that is exposed. Similarly, the body part a person exposes is very strongly correlated (.912) with what the person non-verbally intends to communicate. Also, the motivations behind what is worn also correlates strongly (.834) with what is to be communicated non–verbally.

Table 3: Correlations

	Wear	Exposed	Reason	Effect
Pearson correlation				
Wears	1.000	.907	.806	.912
Exposes	.907	1.000	.814	.912
Reasons	.806	.814	1.000	.834
Effects	.912	.912	.834	1.000

Source: Field survey, 2010

Using the adjusted R, from the model summary, the variance explained by the model was very high (87%). However, from the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Table, the total variance that was to be explained was 1049.82. The model explained 909.817 out of this leaving only 140.003 unexplained. The F-ratio was 1193.569 and highly significant ($p < 0.001$), implying that the prediction was very unlikely be by chance (Table 4).

Table 4: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F

Regression	909.817	3	303.272	1193.569	.000[a]
Residual	140.003	551	.254		
Total	1049.82	554			

Predictors: (Constant), effects , reasons , exposes Dependent variable: wear

The intercept (constant) was .386. The other b-values indicate a positive relationship between what is worn and all the predictors. For instance, an increase of 1% in what a person intends to expose increases the probability of wearing a particular type of dress by .249% whereas an increase of 1% in the motivation behind wearing particular clothing increases the probability of choosing a particular cloth by .020%. All t-values were significant ($p < .001$) except that of motivation which was not significant ($p < .011$); indicating that all predictors made significant contributions to the model.

Table 5: The coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	.386	.051		7.619	.000
Exposed	.249	.023	.425	10.869	.000
Reasons	.020	.008	.074	2.560	.011
Effect	.183	.016	.462	11.225	.000

Dependent Variable: wears

The body part exposed (2.49) and what it communicates (1.83) made the most contributions to the model. However, the motivation for wearing a particular type of clothing (.20) made the least contribution to the model. The details and specifics of these can be found on Table 5.

Decent Dressing in the Ghanaian Context

The study further sought participants' views on what decent dressing was. Generally, the respondents indicated that decency is related to modesty in presenting oneself publicly or to others. In the view of some, decent clothes do not expose vital body parts such as: the breast, thighs, chest and buttocks etc (all private parts are covered) but at the same time; the person appears presentable, attractive and appropriately dressed for an occasion. On the other hand, the wearer feels comfortable and creates a positive impression for himself. From the perspective of others, a decent person puts on clothes that conform to the moral and social standards of his immediate society in particular and the general society at large such that onlookers are not compelled to negatively speak about the wearer. In other words, decency in the Ghanaian sense refers to dressing in a way that is acceptable to the Ghanaian populace - befits the Ghanaian culture and norms. It should also portray the Ghanaian heritage.

Others further argued that decency goes beyond what is acceptable to society. In fact, decent clothes must additionally conform to Biblical standards. Therefore, clothing considered appropriate and decent in the Ghanaian context included: designs and styles made from African print and other fabrics that suit the Ghanaian climate and covers the most sensitive parts of the individual. These may include traditional African wears for males and females (men's clothes, smock, 'fugu', skirt and top, 'kaba' and slit, 'bubuu' etc.) and some well arranged foreign cloths and designs such as male and female suits.

Discussion

On the research question which sought to find the various clothing types worn on the campus of Takoradi Polytechnic and the body parts exposed, it is revealed that the most commonly worn clothing type were casual clothes (23%). This was followed by formal clothes and occasional wears (20% each). The predominance of casual clothes on the campus of the Polytechnic implies that most workers and students go to work or lectures in casual clothes such as jeans, strapless blouses, bare-backs, halter-necks, shorts, t-shirts, mini and midi skirts, etc. We find this worrying because Sabath (2008) contends that organizational staff needs to be appropriately dressed to represent their organizations at any time (e.g. when called on to a last-minute meeting) without feeling obliged to apologize for their appearance. The finding suggests that both staff and students have developed a liberal attitude toward conformity with corporate culture.

The finding that occupational and traditional clothes were comparatively least worn is very much understandable considering the fact that the Polytechnic is a tertiary institution where the prescription of uniforms for both staff and students is not encouraged. Perhaps, the cosmopolitan and discretionary nature of the institution and its staff may further explain this finding. This notwithstanding, the predominance of casual clothes in the institution suggests the need for the Polytechnic to give some clear guidelines on what it considers 'acceptable clothes' in its context.

The second research question considered the motivations behind what people wear and what they communicate non-verbally. The most common motivation was the desire to cover one's nakedness (15%) and sexually attractive parts (9%). However, this in our view sounds contradictory especially, with respect to the exposure of the breast with other sexually attractive parts. In the Ghanaian context, these body parts are considered private parts implying that they must not to be exposed. One explanation to this contraction may be that the respondents were not consistent in answering the items on the questionnaire or they did not see the said body parts as private – something that needs to be covered.

Another point worth considering is the way clothing non-verbally communicates. Even though the majority shared the view that clothing non-verbally communicates a lot about a person and actually suggests how he feels, a few thought otherwise (4%). We find the latter worrying because; to such ones exposing the breasts and the other sexually attractive parts seem 'normal' – they do not see anything wrong with it. Granted, it can be argued that they have the freedom to wear whatever they want and in whatever way they want it however; the finding suggests that our heritage, norms, culture and values are gradually rusting away among such ones. It may be possible that such ones intentionally dress to portray their intentions and do 'business' as it were even when going about their normal activities as students or employees. Nevertheless, it is important to note that some might have just followed fashion without really bothering about the impression they might have created about themselves as argued by Horn and Gurel, (1981).

The final research question which was on decent dressing in the Ghanaian context and how it can be improved received various responses. Generally, the respondents indicated that decency is related to modesty in presenting oneself publicly or to others. Additionally, decent clothes should conform to Biblical standards or the standards of other holy books such as the Koran. These responses go to confirm Westermarck (1921) and Langner's (1959) argument that the human body is less erotic when totally exposed. The implication of this is that the exposure of sexually attractive body parts does not always attract people. Instead, indecent dressing makes one look less erotic and those 'caught by such tactics' may not hang on for long.

Conclusion

From the discussions above, it could be concluded that casual clothes are the most commonly worn clothes on the campus of Takoradi Polytechnic though the term 'casual clothes' might have been misunderstood. Also, apart from the face, other body parts exposed were the breasts, legs, back of the neck and the buttocks which contrasted the indication that the main motivation for clothing oneself is the desire to cover one's private or sexually attractive parts. Even though, the majority agreed that a person's clothes non-verbally communicated a lot about him, others cared less about what they non-verbally communicated through their clothing. Additionally, it was revealed that decency in the Ghanaian context goes beyond what is acceptable to society – it should additionally conform to the standards of holy books such as the Bible and the Koran.

Recommendation

Based on the above results and discussions, it is recommended that:

> the polytechnic's staff and students must be educated through workshops, and communication of research findings to wear clothing that cover all sexually attractive parts like the breast, thigh, upper part of buttocks, etc; and to be conscious of what they non-verbally communicate through their clothes;

> the point – 'exposing oneself does not make one beautiful, attractive or erotic but rather the covering of one's nakedness' should be made clear to all;

> appropriate Ghanaians clothes to be worn on the campus of Takoradi Polytechnic should include designs and styles that suit the Ghanaian climate and are socio- culturally acceptable.

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