



A Study on Consumer Buying Behaviour towards Readymade Garments in Malawi

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ABSTRACT

Readymade garments are finished products such as shirts, blouses, skirts, trousers, hats, jackets, jerseys, shoes, stockings, underwear; made from various materials such as cotton, wool, animal fur and skins and rayon. Malawi imports nearly all its readymade garments from other African countries and elsewhere in the world. Hence the penetration of Kaunjika (second hand readymade garments) was very easy and faced no resistance from the textile industry market.

The purpose of this research project was to study and observe if there are any specific factors that influence consumer buying behavior towards readymade garments in Malawi. Data was collected through a survey that was conducted mainly using a well-structured questionnaire which was sent to different respondents online (50 questionnaires) and offline (100 hard copies and 70 on shop and local market live customer interviews): students, employees, lecturers and the general public from different parts of Malawi. The study is qualitative in nature and based on both primary and secondary sources of data. The study reveals that the principal factors are economic (buying power), psychological, personal, pride, peers, family, religious, social and cultural factors, which affect the buying pattern of readymade garments in Malawi mostly in urban and semi urban areas. Whereas in the villages it is largely the need for body covering to enhance self-respect and protection from the cold, harsh heat from the sun and diseases such as pneumonia and colds.

Price was considered to be the most important factor for a majority of the respondents.

Finally, it is revealed that irrespective of age and education levels urban respondents are mostly buying readymade and branded garments to enhance their style or show off celebrity attachment whereas villagers buy clothes for self-respect and cultural and religious loyalty.

Keywords –Kaunjika, Buying behavior, Pride, branded, Celebrity, Readymade, corpse, textile industry

Introduction

Clothing is essential and inseparable to mankind which begin from birth through to old age – even when dead, a corpse is clothed in readymade or tailor-made apparels upon burial. Hence clothing with readymade garments or otherwise is a part of life. Hence every small change taking place in human activities change the world in total. Innovating and evolving technologies revolutionize the existing clothing market. Manual tailoring and sewing skills are gradually dwindling due to rapid technological advancements in the textile industry. Fashions and designs which change with time also bring refreshed dressing tastes to generations. In any case all these point to one thing: readymade garments or tailor-made to owners' tastes of design and fashion.

Readymade garments are finished products made up of various materials such as cotton, wool, animal fur and skins and rayon. They are already sewn and ready for wearing use as clothes. Readymade garments comprise coats, jackets, suits, shirts, blouses, ladies' dresses, skirts, hats, caps, shoes and trousers. Some of these garments are attached to particular seasons whilst others are all timers. According to *Dr. N. R. Vembu, M. Dharani, S. Dhivya & R.Chandralakshmi (2018)* Readymade garments are a part and parcel of textile industry.

Malawi has a very poor textile industry with only one textile manufacturing company, **Mapeto David Whitehead** which manufactures one type of fabric: cotton which is produced from one raw material: cotton. However, Mapeto only produces loose draperies. She does not turn/make them into any readymade garment. The cloth need be sewn into clothes/garments. This means that Malawi imports nearly all its readymade garments from other African countries and elsewhere in the world. Tailor made is another source of garments in Malawi especially for women and children.

Malawi has the best manual sewing machine tailors to satisfy the clothing needs. All garments making and designing innovations are by these tailors with some coaching/guidance from the garment owners. These tailors sew garments locally from cloth by Mapeto David Whitehead or imported from elsewhere. The designs are suggested by 'to be owners' of the garments. They might also be engaged in changing designs of readymade garments from *kaunjika* or elsewhere.

Consumer behaviour research is the scientific study of the processes consumers use to select, secure, use and dispose of products and services that satisfy their needs. Knowledge of consumer behaviour directly affects marketing strategy. *Anderson et al, 2005*.

According to Blackwell, Minard and Engel, 2001, consumer behaviour is the activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming and disposing of goods and services. In the case of this study consumer behaviour relates to what motivates and influences individuals, groups such as *bank mkhonde (village bank)*, *traditional dancing troupes*, *wedding teams* or organisations to select, buy and use readymade garments in Malawi to satisfy their clothing needs. Factors which influence buying behavior include but may not be limited to:

- (i) Marketing factors such as product design, price, promotion, packaging etc.
- (ii) Personal factors such as age, gender, education and income level etc.
- (iii) Psychological factors such as buying motives, perception of the product and attitudes towards the product.
- (iv) Social factors such as social status, reference group and family background.
- (v) Cultural factors such as values and norms of the society, general attitude of the people, social class etc.

Adapted from Prabodh Kumar Panda (2018).

- (vi) Religious factors: ones position at a mosque, church; values and norms of the religion; at religious gatherings; at religious funerals and weddings.

In Malawi, social and cultural factors would include funeral gatherings where people have specific garments. Black is the general color for funerals across Malawi although garment designs might be different.

The researcher had adopted descriptive research design to undergo the study in reaching out to adequate number of questionnaire respondents. The study emphasis on how consumer evaluate readymade garments including branded garments on the basis of style, texture, price, color, advertisement and celebrity attachments, preferences towards readymade garments and reasons for purchasing readymade and branded garments.

Objectives of the study

Main objective

To analyze consumer buying behavior towards ready-made garments in Malawi.

Specific objective

- ❖ to identify reasons for and factors affecting the buying behavior of consumers of readymade garments either online or offline (traditional means)
- ❖ to examine whether or not the nature and status of garments (new or kaunjika) affect the pattern of buying.
- ❖ to assess the advantages and disadvantages of buying readymade garments

Literature review

According to John Biggam 2008, Collecting literature sources is an accumulative process that requires patience and perseverance in equal measure. Seeking out and unearthing literature sources is also an investigative skill. Whereas Prof. Kumar B. Pawar, April 2019 states that A brief literature would be of immense help to the researcher in gaining insight into selected problem. The researcher would gain good background knowledge of the problem by reviewing certain studies. A reference to these entire studies will be related in the contest of the shaping the present study.

In this study the researcher reviewed literature works of 25 authors but included here are literature by ten (10) authors who had researched and wrote on the same topic: *Customer Behavior Towards Buying Readymade Garments*.

Susana Azevedo and Madalena Pereira and Jo-ao Ferreira and Vilma Pedroso (2008) Consumer behaviour research is the scientific study of the processes consumers use to select, secure, use and dispose of products and services that satisfy their needs. Knowledge of consumer behaviour directly affects marketing strategy (Anderson *et al*, 2005). This is because of the marketing concept, i. e., the idea that firms exist to satisfy customer needs (Winer, 2000). Firms can satisfy those needs only to the extent that they understand their customers.

Sharma & Pathan, (2011); Subhani *et al*, (2011); Zeb *et al*, (2011). The brand name and colour of cloth mostly affects the customers while purchasing.

Mittal & Aggarwal, (2012); Pandian *et al*, (2012); Kanthi & Kumar, (2013), The customers purchase readymade garments mostly during discount period. Price, Quality and design are the important factors considered by them while shopping.

L Jenefa, *et al* (2013); modern shoppers buy this to reward themselves, to satisfy psychological needs or to make themselves feel good. Modern shoppers purchase things to make a statement, to show off their personality or to boost their self-esteem. Purchased item have become an affirmation of the psyche.

J. Farm Sci., 29(1): (149-150) 2016 This result is in line with the results of the study conducted by Vivek (1992) who found that, preferences was for readymade garments and the reasons stated was easy availability and variety of designs. Shweta *et al*. (2012) in the study on "Clothing preference for

children among rural and urban mothers” in Hubli- Dharwad twin cities opined that, readymade garments were preferred always by both rural and urban mothers, but sometimes option was for tailor-mades.

Once the decision is made to purchase the garment, it becomes important to analyze how often the purchasing is to be made. In fact, the categories of garments purchased may be monthly, quarterly, half yearly, yearly, during festivals, during birthdays and whenever required.

Syed Ahamed. S, Dr. A. Ravi (2016) Therefore, it is become necessary to study the consumer behaviour towards various branded men`s garments. The study emphasis on how consumer evaluate branded garments on the basis of style, texture, price, colour, advertisement and celebrity endorsements, preferences towards branded garments and reasons for purchasing branded garments.

Sunday C. Eze and Bello Adenike O. Bello (2016) The paper aims at exploring the sociological factors influencing consumers purchasing behaviour in the clothing industry. The finding revealed that age, quality, income and fund shapes consumers purchasing behaviour.

S. Muthukumar and Dr. T. R. Gurumoorthy (2016)* This paper attempts to identify the significant relation between socio-economic factors of the consumer and purchase of branded readymade garments during festival season and examine the factors which influence the selection of branded readymade garments. It is observed that, brands have played a vital role in buying behavior of the consumers in buying of readymade garments.

Dr. N. R. Vembu, M. Dharani, S. Dhivya & R. Chandralakshmi (2018) Readymade garments are a part and parcel of textile industry and accounts for about half of India`s garments exports. Indian Textiles industry plays a pivotal role on second largest employment provider after the agriculture and foreign exchange earner for the country. At this juncture, a study on attitude of consumers on buying readymade garments through online mode paves a vision on identifying the hidden variable which facilitate the growth of this sector in general, garments industry in particular.

Prof. Kumar B. Pawar (2019) The study provides “frame of mind” of people, what are the expectations and desires of consumers and up to how much level this expectation is met. The study also shows the opportunities and challenges for readymade garment business in respect of both internal and external environment. This study will understand those emotional or rational appeals, which drive the purchase decision towards the readymade garments.

Bratin Maiti (2022) Consumer behaviour is the study of how individuals select and use products/services and takes into account psychology, motivation and behaviour traits. The sole purpose of the study is to identify the different factors and their influence on the purchase pattern of a consumer with respect to readymade garments both in the traditional and online modes of shopping. The study reveals that the principal factors namely economic, psychological, personal, social and cultural factors affect the buying pattern of readymade garments.

Research Methodology

A research methodology is a specific procedure or technique which is used to identify, select, process and analyze information, and data about a topic to make decisions. It may include publication research, interviews, surveys, and other research techniques and could include present and historical information. The methodology helps to find the result or outcomes of a given problem. It allows the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability. The selection of research methods plays a vital role in the outcome of the research. There are two research methods of studying consumer behavior: **quantitative and qualitative**. Quantitative methods gather insights with numerical data. Qualitative techniques get insights on consumers' behavior and interactions with a product. Surveys are used to collect both types of data. www.peekage.com. Qualitative research aims to understand why consumers behave in a certain way or how they would react to a change or a new product. In order to perform productive qualitative consumer insights research, it is important to get the right people, instead of a high number of them.

Research Design

The research design adopted in this research study is descriptive research design.

A self-structured questionnaire was prepared by the researcher and were given to 150 respondents: 50 of these were given soft copies through WhatsApp and Emails whereas 100 were given hard copies. The researcher also used questions on the questionnaire to interview 70 respondents who visited public garments market and PEP stores (20 at PEP stores whilst 50 were at various open markets). The total number of questionnaires sent were 300 but only 220 were received back. All these were meant to identify the buying behavior and what influences buying and the reasons for preferences on either Kaunjika or new garments. The researcher adopted descriptive research design for the study. Quantitative techniques the researcher used to test and analyse data were simple percentages and various graphs.

Sampling

A sample is a representative of the whole. In this study only few people (220) were interviewed by the researcher to represent the population of specific areas and towns in Malawi. The respondents were identified and picked at random. Random Sampling.

When selecting a sample, you should attempt to achieve two key aims of sampling the avoidance of bias in the selection of a sample; and the attainment of maximum precision for a given outlay of resources. *Ranjit Kumar (2011)*

Data was collected from different locations in Lilongwe at Tsoka Public Second Clothes Flee Market and PEP store; and by online survey from the towns and cities of Blantyre, Mangochi, Zomba, Lilongwe, Salima and Mzuzu. A total of 220 respondents were interviewed.

A random sampling method was used to collect data Primary Data.

Both primary and secondary data was collected. Primary Data is data which were collected by the researcher through personal interviews with a structured questionnaire and face to face with respondents whereas Secondary Data sources included different web sites, books, journals, annual report and published and unpublished research works.

Significance of the study

Consumer behavior focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, effort) on consumption-related items. In addition consumer behaviour may be defined as the process and activity when the consumers use to evaluate, purchase or dispose goods and services to satisfy their needs. J. Farm Sci., 29(1): (149-150) 2016.

Much as consumption is a similar activity elsewhere in the world, matters of geographical position, regions, cultural and religious beliefs, purchasing power; etc. may affect consumer behavior and reactions differently. Fashions can also be based on regions, culture and peoples' tastes. It is therefore of significant importance to study the specific consumer behavior (for Malawi) towards readymade garments. Even in Malawi alone, the small ethnicity/origins available may affect consumer tastes and behavior differently. Hence not all people of the world or Malawi may react the same way to readymade garments and, different people react and behave differently and have different tastes.

Limitations

1. Not every district in Malawi has been covered. Some buying behaviors may be largely affected by district location and its access to garments markets
2. The sample selected comprise only 220 respondents not the whole Malawi population.
3. The responses given by the respondents may not be true or accurate.
4. Some people did not even respond at all whereas others took long to respond and following many reminders
5. Due to lack of education some respondents demanded a fee to respond.

Analysis

A total of 300 questionnaires were sent to possible respondents. Of these only 220 respondents successfully responded and returned the filled questionnaires to the researcher. This represents 73.33% which is a very good rate of responses for research of this nature. Hence the analysis is based on 220 respondents.

Demographic Results

Table 1: Gender Profile based on data sourcing platforms

S. No	Gender Profile	Data Sources	Frequency	Percentage (sub-totals)	Percentage (Grand Total)	Total Frequency
1	Male	Online	31	39.24	14.09	79
		Offline	34	43.04	15.45	
		Interviews	14	17.72	6.36	
2	Female	Online	19	13.48	8.64	141
		Offline	66	46.81	30.00	
		Interviews	56	39.72	25.45	
Sub-Totals	Male		79			
	Female		141			
Grand Total					100	220

Source: Researcher Analysis (Primary Data)

Percentage on sub-totals: male is 100 and female is 100. The numbers show online male respondents as a percentage of total male respondents (online + offline + interviews) 39.24% for males against 13.48%; and online male respondents as a percentage of total respondents 14.09% for men against 8.64%

for women online respondents. Going beyond the bounds of objectives of this research study, we can see that men use technology more than women based on the *online* respondents in this aspect. More men responded to online questionnaire than women.

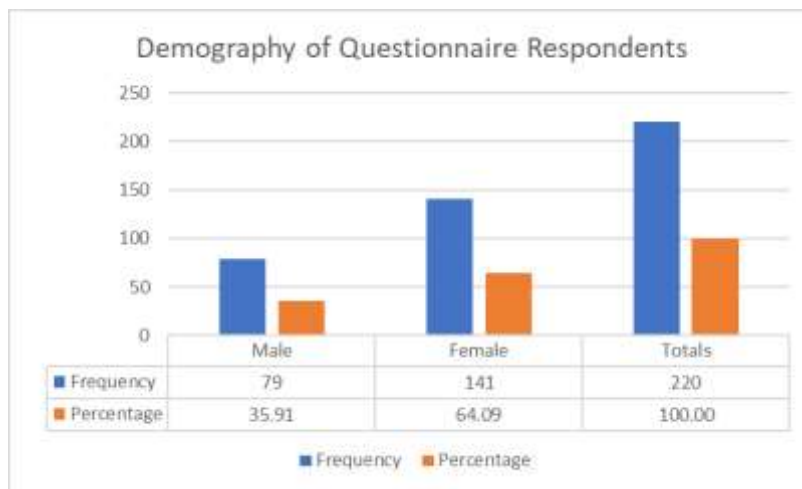
Table 2: Gender Profile

S. No	Gender Profile	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	79	
2	Female	141	
Totals		220	

Source: Researcher Analysis (Primary Data)

Women and girls are good shoppers and love shopping. In Malawi, they are the best target for clothing. In this study, in general, there were more women respondents than men. From table 1 (interviews) women frequented the readymade garments local markets and shops than men.

Graph 1: Demography of Respondents



Source: Researcher Analysis (Primary Data)

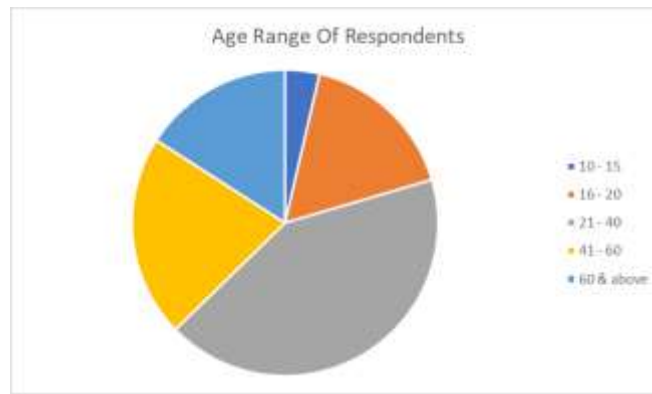
This is a highlight that women have more reasons for shopping than men. Their belonging to many communal groupings, their desire and taste for fashion and fashion changes, their want to fill and regular refills of wardrobes e.t.c. This shows that there is a strong relationship between the gender differences of the respondents and their buying behavior for both readymade and tailormade garments. Traditionally in Malawi garment tailors located on various shop verandas at *Bwalo La Njovu* in Lilongwe or any place elsewhere in the districts, are over occupied by women dresses. PEP shop keeper commented saying at any point of the day in their shop there would be more women customers than men; hence most stocks are for women and children. And children’s garments are best bought by women.

Age of Respondents

Age Range	10 - 15	16 - 20	21 - 40	41 - 60	60 & above
Number	8	37	93	47	35
Percentage	3.64	16.82	42.27	21.36	15.91

Source: Researcher Analysis (Primary Data)

In terms of age the range that have the love for buying garments are those between 21 – 40 years old as 93 of the 220 responded to the questionnaire representing 42.27% seconded by 41 – 60 age band at 21.36%. Although the 16 – 20 age range might be expected to love fashion and is energetic in patronizing readymade garments markets, they were at 16.82%. they are mostly secondary school students. They like things but lack purchasing power hence can not afford to buy for their own. Hence affordability influences customer buying behavior.



Source: Researcher Analysis (Primary Data)

Condition of Clothes

Condition	New Garments	Kaunjika	Both
Number	53	97	70

Source: Researcher Analysis (Primary Data)

The study showed that most people in Malawi buy Kaunjika for their clothing irrespective of gender, education, status and employment. Kaunjika is in every home. This is because of mainly affordability. Also availability; kaunjika is readily available in larger quantities. There are many garment styles with kaunjika and various types of fabrics.

Major findings

It is discovered that in Malawi women buy readymade garments most frequently than men. This is because one woman may belong to several groupings to which meetings when attending she would want to show off fashion and be seen to dress different garments. Some women groups have uniforms. Larger numbers of women frequent wedding gatherings too than men. Wedding attires demand women to source garments which can be readymade or tailor-made.

Chisnall (1995) points out that human needs and motives are inextricably linked and that the relationship between them is so very close that it becomes difficult to identify the precise difference which may characterize them. People may buy new coats because it protects them against the weather, but the ideal underlying dominant need may be to follow the latest fashion trend. Buyers' characteristics are important theories from Kotler and Armstrong (2007) and it explains the way that the consumer interprets and receives stimuli from advertisements. The decisions of consumers are influenced by a number of individual characteristics that are linked to the consumer's specific needs (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007).

Economic factors which affect price and customer buying power also influence the extent to which buyers go for readymade garments including women despite having lots pressing needs to cause them to buy clothes.

Finally, it is revealed that irrespective of age and education levels urban respondents are mostly buying readymade and branded garments to enhance their style. Today, soccer has taken the world to new heights such that many urban residents in Malawi buy soccer celebrity branded garments more than decent clothes simply to show off their attachment to a soccer team such as Arsenal or Barcelona or Big Bullets in Malawi. People may also be attached to a particular player such as Lionel Messi or Sadio Mane of Senegal. Whereas many semi-rural and rural people in Malawi buy readymade garments mainly for protection of their self-respect, show loyalty to religion and culture.

Suggestions and Recommendations

A further study on *Kaunjika* and its popularity in Malawi

There seems to be more of motivating factors to buying behavior than covered in this study, hence there is need for further studies in this area.

Only a portion of few districts in Malawi were reached to in the study. Many deep villages and small towns were not included hence their buying behavior of readymade garments stimuli were not covered

Consumer behaviour is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological behaviour, these all factors can be understood in detail with an objective to study the consumer buying behaviour regarding purchase of readymade garments. P. M. Renuka, Sadhana D. K (2016). Other factors include economic such as price levels and buying power. People do buy because they can afford or even to show that they can afford. Hence affordability is a key factor,

too. Market segmentation by shop owners would help here by bringing in garments which can be afforded or by dividing the market based on levels of people income.

People also do buy based on information available. In this regard marketing plays a significant role. People also go for desired textile texture and type of fabric. Here materials supplied will woo people into buying. Also whether the clothes are for women or children will persuade buyers into buying. Garment markets and shops must therefore know what to include in their stocks of garments for sale. They must understand their customers in order to satisfy a variety of various needs.

Conclusion

Consumer behaviour research is the scientific study of the processes consumers use to select, secure, use and dispose of products and services that satisfy their needs. Firms can satisfy those needs only to the extent that they understand their customers. *J. Farm Sci., 29(1): (149-150) 2016.*

The study shows that women patronize garments markets and shops regularly than men. Women are involved in many groups and associations which may demand them to buy uniforms. Regular meetings at such groups would mean the woman would need garments for a change.

As a poor and underdeveloped country, Malawians mostly resort to buying second hand readymade garments because of affordability and availability. Almost 80% of Malawians rely on *Kaunjika* as their main source of readymade garments. However, a smaller percentage of the elite go for both new and second-hand readymade garments. The advent of the Chinese readymade garments in Malawi has affected the textile industry and market. Whatsapp and other online platforms have also brought in some impact on customer taste and behavior for readymade garments. It is therefore of high importance and need to study customer buying behavior over readymade garments and what influences such behavior.

Definition of unfamiliar terms.

KAUNJIK is the name, in Malawi, for second hand (used) garments for sale which are imported from various countries and are sold for re-use. They come in bales.

BANK MKHONDE is social bank for a group in the local communities. It is usually operated by women as a village bank; an *informal organization*.

BWALO LA NJOVU: Name of a place in Lilongwe city where there are many assorted shops

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