## UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACTORS INFLUENCING YOUNG WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN THE CHOICES AND USE OF PANTIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST.

MERCY EKUA MENSAH

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### BY

### MERCY EKUA MENSAH

Thesis submitted to the Department of Vocational and Technical Education of the Faculty of Science and Technology Education, College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Award of Master of Philosophy degree in Home Economics

### **DECLARATION**

#### **Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this Thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: Date:

Name: Mercy Ekua Mensah

## **Supervisors' Declaration**

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the Thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of Thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: ...... Date: ......

Name: Prof. Modesta Efua Gavor

#### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this research was to investigate the factors influencing young women's experiences in the choice and use of panties at the University of Cape Coast. A total of 217 respondents were conveniently sampled for the study. A questionnaire was used to collect the data from the respondents and data was descriptively analyzed. The result of the study revealed that Ghana young women have knowledge on the uses and functions of the different types of panties. Also, it was revealed that the comfort style of panties was noted to perform all the uses and functions of panties, except for sexual pleasure, for which thongs, string and tanga were preferred. The leading physical factor that influences their choice of panties was comfort with less attention towards fashion and brand. Also, with regards to the psychological factors, respondents' interest, confidence, comfort and feelings were highly rated. Moreover, the leading socio-economic factor that influenced respondents' choice of panties was occasion for which the pantie was worn. Lastly, it was revealed that panties in the Ghanaian market are not comfortable, wear out easily, spreads infections, cause itches, stains easily, show through outerwear and is not absorbent. It was recommended that erotic beading and embroidery works should be done on the comfort pantie to meet all demands.

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# **DEDICATION**

To my lovely family and friends

## TABLE OF CONTENT

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Background to the Study	1
Problem Statement	4
Purpose of the Study	6
Research Question	7
Significance of the Study	7
Delimitation of the Study	8
Limitations of the Study	8
Some Key Definition of Terms	9
The Organisation of the Study	10
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Theoretical Review	11
Protection Theory	12
Modesty Theory	13
Immodesty Theory	14

Adornment Theory	15
Empirical Review	16
Panties and their selection	16
Evolution of panties	17
History of pantie in Ghana	19
Basic types of panties	21
The Artistry of Female Panties	23
Factors influencing female choices of panties	27
Types of Panties	29
Boy Shorts	29
Thongs	30
G-String	31
Bikini	32
Tanga	32
Physical factors that influence the choice of panties	33
Fabric Type/ Fibre Type	33
Colour	34
Style	36
Comfortability	37
Socio-cultural factors that influence the choice of panties	38
Cost	38
Fashion	39
Psychological Factors	40

Interest	40
Values	41
Attitude	42
Conceptual Framework	43
Summary of Chapter	44
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS	
Introduction	45
Research Approach	45
Research Design	47
Study Area	47
The population of the Study	48
Target Population	49
Sample and Sampling Techniques	49
Data Collection Instruments	50
Pilot Test	53
Data Collection Procedure	53
Ethical Considerations	54
Data Processing and Analysis	55
Chapter Summary	55
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
Introduction	57
Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents	57
Age of respondent	58

Discussion	70
Ages of Respondents	70
Use and functions of panties	71
Physical factors that influence Ghanaian young women choice of panties	73
The frequency of wearing a particular style of panties	75
The level of comfort and the pleasure from the use of pantie styles	76
Fabric type to comfort	77
Fabric construction of the panties in terms of comfort	78
Brands of panties in terms of comfort	79
Panty style and the apparel they are best worn with	79
The psychological factors that influence GYW choice of panties	81
The socio-cultural factors that influence the GYW choice of panties	81
GYW experience with the use of panties	83
Panties in terms of consumer total preference	84
Chapter Summary	85
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND	
RECOMMENDATION	
Summary: Overview of the Study	86
Key Findings	86
Conclusions	88
Recommendations	91
Area for further studies	91
REFERENCES	92

APPENDIX 106

## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Age of Respondents	58
2	Respondents' perceived uses and functions of panties styles	60
3	Physical factors that influence Ghanaian young women choices	
	of panties	60
4	The frequency of wearing a particular style of panties	61
5	The level of comfort of the style of panties	62
6	The style of panties and the derived pleasure	63
7	The comfortability of different Fabrics	64
8	Fabric construction method of the panties in terms of comfort	64
9	Brands of panties in relation to comfort	65
10	Type of Outer Garment and the panty style that is most preferred	
	with it	66
11	The psychological factors that influence GYW choice of panties	67
12	The socio-cultural factors that influence the GYW choice of	
	panties	68
13	GYW experience with the use of panties	69
14	Style preference of respondents	69

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	3000 B. C. Egyptian Pantie	17
2	19 <sup>th</sup> Century Britain pantie	18
3	Fashionable Panties	19
4	Amosen	20
5	Types of panties according to Giongo et al., 2017	21
6	Embroidery of panties	24
7	Colours of panties	25
8	Panties with different patterns	27
9	Conceptual Framework	44
10	Geographical Area of the University of Cape Coast	47
11	Respondents' awareness that different style of panties has	
	different functions	58

#### CHAPTER ONE

#### INTRODUCTION

Panties for centuries has been part of the apparel industry. It is the basis for all clothes and supports keeping the outer garments clean by absorbing fluids (oils and sweat) from the skin. However, research in Ghana has downplayed the essence of panties and much effort has not been made to examine how women in Ghana choose their panties, how they use them and the experiences they have in the use of the panties. This research is meant to provide some benefits to Ghanaians, lingerie businesses and women, in general, to make rational decisions when patronizing and making choices on panties. To achieve the purpose of the research, the study investigated Ghanaian Young Women (GYW) knowledge of the uses and functions of different styles of panties, examined the physical factors that influence the GYW choice of panties, determined the psychological factors that influence GYW choice of panties, assessed the socio-cultural factors that influence the GYW choice of panties and discussed the experiences of GYW with the use of panties.

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

Panties have been part of the female wardrobe for centuries. The use of panties is highly related to women personalities (Giongo, Linden & Bernardes, 2017). These days every woman wants to feel secured, fashionable, sexy and comfortable in their outfit and that includes underwear. Underwear is varied and prolific, whether it is concealed or shown, discreet or provocative (Barbier & Boucher, 2003). According to Datta & Agrawal (2018) underwear relates to our

body, comfort, sense of self and sex appeal. Underwears are small and sometimes under things but are categories of apparel that gets us down to the bare bones of ourselves (Giongo et al., 2017). Usually this would include bra, panties, T-shirt, and briefs. Panties are just a subset of underwear worn over the crotch area (Chan,2017). Panties like any other undergarment are worn next to the skin, beneath a person's outfit. It is the basis for all our clothes and helps keep the outer garments in shape. It also helps to keep warm in cold climates (Datta & Agrawal, 2018).

Panties are believed to have been around since ancient times. Historians believe that ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans all wore panties (Tsaousi, 2011). However, panties were not attractive till the later 19th century where it became visually appealing (Loh, Hendricks, Hsiao & Shi, 2019). In the 19th century, panties were typically not spoken of in civilized society and bulky as well (Tsaousi, 2011). Up through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women selected panties for three major purposes: perfecting and enhancing shape, preserving modesty and for hygiene reasons (Banasam, 2019).

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century proceeded panties were made smaller and more form-fitting (Barbier & Boucher, 2003). In the 1960s, lingerie (light weight undergarment) producers began to adorn panties and the idea of panties having a sensual appeal slowly developed. The lingerie industry has developed in the 21st century with varied designs that double as outerwear (clothing designed to be worn outside other garments as opposed to underwears) by categorizing lingerie as an accessory (any item chosen to complete an outfit and complement the

wearer's look) with details such as straps and lace trim that should be layered and shown as part of one's outerwear (Datta and Agrawal, 2018). Considering panties closeness to the body and the role it plays in the lives of women, it seems rational to assume that it has some influence to how the body works (Craig & Gray, 2020). It gives identity to women and brings the idea of femininity across time and space. Femininty is the fact or quality of having characteristics that are traditionally thought to be typical of or suitable for a woman. Feminine women are more conscious of themselves. They understand that the world will judge them first according to their appearance.

Although mass culture talks about the association of panties with the erotic aspect of women's lives, however, it also demonstrates how to manage the body better (Tsaousi & Brewis, 2013). Before generation Y, most people hardly speak about panties. However, due to the spread of information and the internet, images of women wearing only panties had gone viral. Other companies use such pictures to attract their markets for other apparel products (Kojundzic, Grilec, Dolezal & Sabaric, 2018). Panties just like any other underwear cannot be underestimated in generation Z.

The baby Boomers generation was also revealed to wear panties for comfort and security, however the emergent generations "generation Y" and beyond "generation Z" had been widely documented to wear panties not only for comfort and security but also for fashion and the feel of being sexy (IPSOS-MORI, 2014). Currently, many of these emergent generations take images of themselves wearing fashionable sexy coloured panties occasionally. Whiles some

also wear transparent and translucent dresses to show what they are wearing underneath. Generation Z contributed over \$1.3 trillion in 2018 on underwears and is expected to increase by a wide margin in the upcoming years (Shahbandeh, 2020).

Gazzola, Pavione, Pezzetti & Grechi (2020) revealed that beyond generation Z, any apparel industry that wants to penetrate through the market cannot do so without involving the trending's needs and preferences of this generation. Tsaousi (2011) argued that this generation express their taste in underwear depending on their habitus and embodied cultural capital to support the element of femininity. Production of a good fit, proper design, comfort, better appearance and desirable look of panties for such generation has been a huge concern and struggle for the lingerie industry due to less research and attention.

The rapidly changing in advanced technology and the influence of virtualization in today's world has led to the rapid change in women needs, demands and preferences for panties, making it more complex for the pantie industry (Datta & Agrawal, 2018). To even understand the rapid needs of the women, their choice, use and experience on panties should not be ignored. Epstein, Lee, Kang, Agapie, Schroeder & Munson, (2017) stated that due to the opportunity as well as the complexity in the market of panties, more research needs to be done to help understand consumers preferences.

#### **Problem Statement**

According to Banasam (2019) panties are worn next to the skin and under outer garments to keep them from being stained by body secretions, to reduce the

abrasion of outerwear against the skin and provide concealment for private parts of the body. As a result, pantie are a great concern, hence it is prudent to know what goes into making them; the kind of fabrics used and how choices affect them (Datta & Agrawai, 2018). Therefore, the choices of the women that use them are very paramount.

The issue that underpins the study stems from the researcher's argument that if panties are so important to the womanhood and lingerie industry, then why do the choices, use and experiences about it seem to be undervalued in most developing countries, which Ghana is not an exception. Today only a few studies had been found in the literature on underwears and not specifically on panties in Ghana.

According to Pluse (2016), a certain style of panties imported into the Ghanaian economy possess health complications for young women. This may be attributed to second hand panties (used panties), type of pantie, fabric type or chemicals used for production. For example, in the study of Narins (2015) string style of panties speed up the spread of pubic infections. Recently the government of Ghana placed restrictions on the use of second-hand panties due to the rising health complications for example candidiasis, known as 'White' (Ezit, 2019). Chipambwa, Sithole & Chisosa, (2016) further explains that second hand undergarment coming into contact with bodily fluids which carry various infection and how they are been handled as these are packed into one big sack and heaped into a mountain at the flea market is the cause of the health complications women faces. Some fabrics especially synthetic fabrics are also noted to be very

lethal and increasing negative effects on our health because of the chemicals used in production. These chemicals is rivetted through the skin and creates health issues according to Singh & Bhalla, (2017). The Ghanaian markets are now saturated with different types and styles of panties that pose harm to the health of young women (Pulse, 2016). More so, a study that was done by Banasam (2019) on the selection, use and care of undergarment in Kwanyako Senior High School found out that there were frequent reports from the female students on some infections experienced around their urinary tracts. These conditions were believed to be associated with wrong choices, use and care of undergarments and insanitary conditions in the toilet (Banasam, 2019).

The issue of insufficient works of literature on panties in Ghana becomes very critical when studies revealed that there is no single lingerie industry in Ghana that produces panties and that all female panties available in the country are imported from the western world. In this regard, the fabric, colour, style, climatic conditions, settings, values, needs and preferences may differ. This makes it even more imperative for research to be done to evaluate the choices, use and experiences of Ghanaian women on panties in the country. Based on the above concepts and rising issues, the researcher's decision to research into the factors that influence GYW choice, use and experience of panties is very significant and should not be overlooked.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

To examine how young women in Ghana choose their panties, how they use them and the experiences they have in the use of the panties.

## **Specific Objectives**

The research seeks to;

- Investigate students' knowledge of the uses and functions of different styles of panties.
- ii. Examine the physical factors that influence the GYW choice of panties.
- iii. Determine the psychological factors that influence GYW choice of panties
- iv. Assess the socio-cultural factors that influence the GYW choice of panties.
- v. Identify the experiences of GYW with the use of panties.

### **Research Question**

- i. What knowledge do students have on the uses and functions of different styles of panties by GYW?
- ii. Which physical factors influence the GYW choice of panties?
- iii. Which psychological factors influence GYW choice of panties?
- iv. What are the socio-cultural factors that influence the GYW choice of panties?
- v. What are the experiences of GYW in the use of panties?

### **Significance of the Study**

At the micro-level, the research will benefits retailers and shops within the university community to provide the right panties that will fit student needs. At the macro level, Ghanaian lingerie businesses will benefit by knowing what

panties to imports into the economy. This study also informs the international lingerie industries of what to look out for when considering the taste and preferences of the Ghanaian market. The study would fill the gap of scarce research on panties and also unveil the most significant finding that can keep the lingerie businesses growing in Ghana. This study will not only help lingerie businesses but also help Ghanaian young women to get panties that fit their needs and purpose and would not pose a threat to their health. Finally, it will serve as a base for future research in Ghana.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

The scope of this study was limited to Ghanaian young women on the main campus of the University of Cape Coast. Also, only female students of level four hundred participated in the study. Again, the study only looked at the physical, psychological, socio-cultural and experiences of Ghanaian young women and their use of panties. These delimitations mean that the results of the research cannot be generalized to other settings. However, it will serve as a useful source of information for policy-making within the country, especially when considering issues about female panties.

#### **Limitations of the Study**

Simon & Goes (2011) said, "every study, no matter how well it is conducted and constructed, has limitations". The current study had some limitations that should be held in reserve when considering its findings. Firstly, the study adopted quantitative research design, that is, it lacks the subjective interpretation of the study findings. Secondly, the study was restricted to the

sample drawn at the University of Cape Coast, thus, its results may have limited external findings from young women outside the University of Cape Coast.

Thirdly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only the final year students were on campus at the time of the data collection, hence, the study was limited to only level 400 students at the University of Cape Coast. More so, the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions affected the data collection as only 67.4 percent of the questionnaires were retrieved. Again, due to the sensitivity of the research, some respondents were not willing to fill the questionnaire, making the data administration and collection difficult.

Finally, financial and time constraints made it difficult for the researcher to increase the scope of the study. Despite these limitations which may affect the generalisation of the study findings, the study implications and recommendations can be used for policy making and serve as a basis for future research in the area of female panties in Ghana.

## **Some Key Definition of Terms**

These are the key terms that were adopted for the study

- i. *Apparel*: This is another term for what a person wears.
- ii. *Underwear:* clothing worn under other clothes, typically next to the skin
- iii. *Panties:* short underpants worn by women and girls.
- iv. Young Woman: an adult human female.
- v. *Fashion:* a popular or the latest style of clothing, hair, decoration, or character.

- vi. Attitude: a settled way of thinking or feeling about something.
- vii. *Generational Y*: they are known as Millennials, typically thought of as those born between 1984 and 1996.
- viii. Generation Z: is the latest generation born between 1997 and 2015.
  - ix. Baby boomers: the generation born between 1946 and 1964.

#### The Organisation of the Study

This research consists of five main chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction to the study and constitutes the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, the significance of the study, research methodology, delimitation of the study as well as the organisation of the study. Chapter two of the study constitutes the conceptual framework, theories underpinning the studies and some empirical literature by other studies. Chapter three focused on research methodology, followed by data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings in chapter four. The final chapter that is Chapter five concludes the study by summarizing the main findings and their broad theoretical and policy ramifications for development.

#### **CHAPTER TWO**

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

The study examines the factors influencing the GYW choice, use and experiences of panties. This chapter review literature on three thematic areas, which are: the theoretical framework, empirical framework and conceptual framework. The conceptual framework shows relationship among ideas and how they relate to the study. The theoretical framework reveals the underpinning theories backing the study. The empirical framework focuses on the various research objectives of the study.

#### **Theoretical Review**

Undergarments, to be specific, panties are worn by people for numerous reasons that are not too clear in general terms, as there are differences in terms of their settlements, their bodily make-up, their social orientation and environmental settings that exist in the locality. Even people in the same society have different tastes, perceptions, affiliations, activities and then backgrounds. All these conditions affect the way people think, act and make choices. Sujatha and Sarada (2016) listed six common reasons for wearing clothing among which underwear cannot be left out: protection, modesty, occupational identity, attraction, social status and traditional identity.

Four major theories have been propounded to explain the reasons behind individuals' clothing choices and decisions. The theories are modesty, immodesty, protection and adornment theories (Rose, Cho & Smith, 2016). Hence, these theories have been used to explain the motivating factors underlying clothing

choices and decisions. These three theories of clothing formed the theoretical framework for the study. It was adopted for this study for the reason that it figures out the underlining factors that influence an individual's choice and usage of clothing, which includes undergarments (panties). These theories identify clothing as a symbol that conveys information in human relations and settings, and which also helps clear people's reasons for their choices. The hypothetical basis for this research explains the factors that influence GYW in their choice of panties.

#### **Protection Theory**

The protection theory advocates that clothing protects persons from the elements (weather conditions), faunae or even weird forces. According to Marshall, Jackson, Stanley, Keffgen & Tochie-Specht (2000) highlighted that clothes are worn for two major reasons that are physical protection and psychological protection. Physical protection involves making body covering and items to facilitate an individual's survival in an environment. Clothing is worn to protect the body against weather conditions; make one warm in cold weather and cool in warm weather (Shycart, 2020).

For instance, undergarments keep outer garments from being stained or damaged by bodily secretions such as sweat, keep the body dry and free from infections and reduce the abrasion of outerwear against the skin (Banasam, 2019). Panties, as an undergarment, have the potential of absorbing fluids such as semen and vaginal discharge, to keep the private part dry after the moisture is absorbed (Laliberte, 2017). According to Ryan (2017) underwear forms extra layer of clothing helping to keep the wearer warm by acting as an insulator beneath the

outer garment against coldness and skin irritations. It is also worn to support the genital organs and keep them in place (Burse, 2017). Humans have always been conscious of protecting themselves against various phenomena.

In the Ghanaian setting, there is the myth that a girl's refusal to wear an undergarment especially the pantie allows air to enter into her private part, which can cause infections, thus, making the pantie important clothing for protection (Banasam, 2019).

#### **Modesty Theory**

Etymologically, the word "modesty" comes from the Latin word "modestus" meaning "keeping within measure". Modesty is deemed by most people as the appropriate way for clothing since it suggests that clothes should cover the body (Gavor, et al., 2015). Ermarth (2012) described modesty as covering the body according to standard which is determined by culture, environment, age, location and situational factors. Modesty theory places emphasis on wearing clothing to conceal our nakedness.

Thus, the modesty theory is geared towards concealing the body according to the standard of dressing in a locality. Clothing style approved and accepted in one society or culture may be rejected in another society or culture. Hence, Modesty theory has been arraigned for three major reasons (Gaba, 2020). For example, an Indian woman would try not to expose her breast and legs revealing her waist and belly while a Saudi Arabian woman is supposed to dress to cover all her body leaving only her eyes. Again, there is indication that modesty is not an

inherent aptitude but a culturally-induced practice that varies depending on the time and place.

To this extent, the author agrees that clothing in and of itself cannot be modest or immodest, it is the intention of the wearer which matters, hence rules are inadequate to define modesty. Lastly, the concept of modesty changes over time. For example, at the adolescent stage, what one feels is appropriate to wear might differ from preferences in the adulthood stage. In this study, the modesty theory proposes that panties conceal human nakedness which is the primary use of panties. Panties are to cover the private parts of the body for decency. Panties sometimes save one from embarrassment under shameful incidents such as forgetting to close the fastenings and/or accidental seams tears of outer garments in public, thus preventing her from granting a free view of her private part to the public.

### **Immodesty Theory**

The immodesty theory contradicts the modesty theory. This theory is also known as Sexual attraction theory (Gaba, 2020). It states that clothing is worn to attract attention and not to cover nakedness. The immodesty theory argues that an individual's first mindset for wearing clothing is to attract attention, rather than to conceal any part for decency (Banasam, 2019). "Dress Is A Powerful Sexual Tool", adopted as a maxim or mantra, this theory was geared towards using dresses to draw attention to erotic part of the body making the wearer a greater object of sexual interest (Banasam, 2019).

According to Gavor et al. (2015), the wearing of a garment is for an erotic purpose than going without them. Hence, the immodesty theory states that clothing is not the result of modesty but rather the cause of immodesty. It further argues that when people get used to seeing the nudity of the opposite sex, the importance attached to their sex differences disappears. The philosophers believe that the body was first concealed as a sexual lure and clothes were used to call attention to the parts of the body covered. For instance, certain types of pantie may be worn to arouse sexual interest or for sexual titillation such as thongs. People may put on transparent panties like lace panties for sexual attraction especially in intimate situations. In the view of Gavor, et al., (2015), the wearing of clothes is more stimulating and erotic than going without them. Thus, the immodesty theory also reveals another aspect of why people may wear panties and for what purpose they wear them.

### **Adornment Theory**

Adornment theory asserts that clothing is worn to beautify one's body according to the standard of one culture (Gaba, 2020). It emphasizes that clothing is used to decorate the body according to the standard or culture (Cordwell, J. M., & Schwarz, 20 11). Thus, clothing is chosen to enhance one's appearance or look at the body. Undergarments may be worn to provide shape to the body and outer garments, enable e outer garment drape better, fit well, and provide fitness at the bust, buttocks and genitals (Forster, 2014). Human beings are naturally susceptible to change and desire to change their looks from time to time therefore, they choose clothes to enhance their body (Gavor, et al., 2015).

Traditionally, people may find it difficult to associate adornment with panties since adornment implies admiration by a second person mainly; and panties being worn under outer garments are not usually exposed. Beyond that panties can be exposed during wear either above a skirt or trouser or through a transparent dress where it becomes visible to a second party. It is embarrassing when the pantie exposed is not attractive, tidy and beautiful as compared to the impression created by the individual.

#### **Empirical Review**

#### Panties and their selection

Panties are undergarments that cover the lower section of the body. Panties come in different shapes, fabrics, styles and colours which offer varying degrees of coverage (Burse, 2017). Undergarment products range from true performance with additional characteristics; moisture management, temperature control and antimicrobial qualities for comfort like heat-transferred tags and seamless silhouettes (Shouli , 2007). The choice of underwear mostly depends on the circumstances of wearing them. Therefore, the decision to choose a particular type of panty differs from person to person but the ultimate is to ensure that they leave no uncomfortable health complications.

According to Ryan (2017), the right panties depend on both its primary function of usage, style and the material used therefore, the pantie should offer its user the optimum support, fit and comfort. This is an affirmation that inappropriate panty design or style and colour may cause discomfort and loss of preference to consumers. Sujatha and Sarada (2016) stated that some panties are

disposable, re-usable, and seamless and others with seams but they all have different designs, sizes and lengths. Shycart (2013), described disposable panties as lightweight briefs for women, which are used just for one time and then thrown away. Hence the name, use and throw panties.

Disposable panties are mostly used during maternity periods and also used as menstrual panties. The re-useable panties are used till they become worn out. Such panties are briefs, boyshorts, thongs, G-strings, comfort, bikini (Sujatha & Sarada, 2016). Re-usable panties are mostly made with notions like lace, ribbons, threads and elastics to make them presentable and appealing to consumers for repeated use. They are made with fibres like cotton, polyester, wool, nylon, silk, lace, rayon, spandex (Ghosh, Das & Bhattacharyya, 2014).

## **Evolution of panties**

Throughout history, women underwear, including panties, has undergone rapid changes (Cox, 2020). Each era develops its artistic idea that substitutes the preceding design. Records indicate that underwear originates from ancient Egypt around 3000 B.C. and Europe adopted Egyptian fashion and renovated it within a short time (Barbier & Boucher, 2003).



Figure 1: 3000 B. C. Egyptian Pantie

Source: charmofthecarolines.com

The French revolution led to the emergence of the pantaloon which was derived from an Italian comedian called Pantalone. His garment to shows and stage were always to his ankles. In the 19th century, the term Pantalone was rephrased to pants. In Britain, pants came to mean long drawers that covered the entire leg. The garments worn over them became known as trousers as shown in figure 3.



Figure 2: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Britain pantie Source: charmofthecarolines.com

Due to the scarcity of fibres in the 19th century, panties that were made longer were shortened to save fibres. From the outset of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, people began to realise and appreciate panties as innerwear. Fashion and modernity gradually affected changes in panties. Now, women whose occupation deals with sexual activities and shape, texture and colours gave a sexual impression of it and attached great importance to their preferences. Today, people buy panties that match with their brassieres and other underwear in terms of styles, designs,

patterns and colours. They also take pictures with their panties and wear them for certain occasions (figure 6).





Figure 3: Fashionable Panties

Source: zivame.com

Development in these three areas; hygienic, supportive and aesthetic qualities lead to improved 21st-century underwear (Barbier & Boucher, 2003). Because of this, women became more selective and conscious of their choice of panties.

### History of pantie in Ghana

Ghanaians trace the use of panties from the era of using 'amosen and lanta'. Amosen is a pant used by females whereas the males make use of lanta. Amosen is made from a specific fabric; any fabric cannot be used for that purpose. The fabric is very firm with strength to withstand the frequent washing and make them feel tighter. It is reddish in colour or has a shade of red, some were patterned with white designs but has it base colour to be red. Red is the

preferred colour so blood stains does not become obvious especially during menstruation period. Amosen is worn by wrapping the cloth in between their thighs, folding and locking it with beads which was one functional reason for the use of beads. It can also be held stable with a strand of fabric. In their menstrual cycle, the fold is doubled and made heavier beneath the private part based on how heavy their flow is. The elite were seen using gauze the same way as the amosen. It migrated to the use of 'Essamtam'. The fabric used for packaging flour. Panties were made at home using essamtam. Essamtam was the common and available fabric to be used for making panties with less cost. The western fabrics were very expensive. Apart from the use of lanta by the males, they were wearing 'ndwedzo' under cloth (traditional way of wrapping cloth around their body). Fashion and modernity lead to the use of 'Jokoto'. Jokoto is up to the knee level. Casing was used for the waistline, mainly fabric casing but later the elastic casing was adopted.



Figure 4: Amosen Source: Fieldwork

#### **Basic types of panties**

Panties are produced from a variety of fibres, including cotton, acetate, lycra, rayon, nylon, PVC, polyester and silk. Construction normally consists of two parts (front and back) that are joined by seams at the crotch and sides. Figure 5 below shows the basic types of panties and their required measurement.

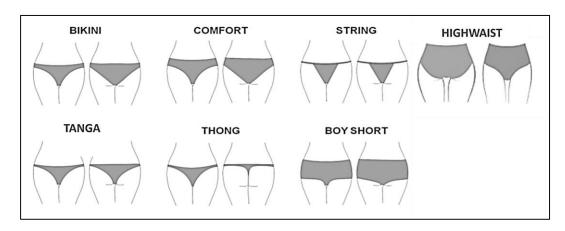


Figure 5: Types of panties according to Giongo et al., 2017

- a) Bikinis rest at hip level and look narrower at the side sections. In the string bikini type, the side sections disappear altogether and the waistband consists of only string-like material. The standard measurement for bikinis pants: 10cm below the waistline, 4cm on the side, 2cm to 3cm on the back section.
- b) Comfort pant rests at the hip level, but the side section is broader or wider than the bikinis. The standard measurement for comfort pants: 8cm below the waistline, 4cm to 6cm on the side, front section 2cm to 3cm more open than basic.
- c) String pants have a vertical string at the back, which connects the crotch to the waistband, featuring a triangle of fabric. String pant does not cover the buttocks completely or no coverage while still maintaining the basic

- hygienic underwear functions. Standard measurement: stretch stripes on the side or whole waistline of 2cm in maximum, front and back patterns composed by triangles of 10cm to 15cm.
- d) Tanga pant provides a moderate to minimal coverage at the back that is less than a bikini, and the waistband is reduced to a thin strip at the sides. Standard measurement: 10cm below the waistline, 2cm to 3cm on sides, 3cm to 5cm on the back section.
- e) Thongs pants have a waistband similar to tangas, but the back cover is mostly cut away. The crotch is lengthened to the back of the wearer and a narrow strip of fabric fits between the buttocks, becoming wider towards the upper part. Standard measurement: 3cm to 4cm crotch, 1cm to 4cm on the side, big open cut on the back, forms a 1cm to 3cm strip on the back.
- f) Boy shorts were adapted from men's boxer briefs and have short legs extending below the crotch. Standard measurement: 6cm to 8cm below the waistline, 6cm to 15cm on the side, cuts are downgraded.
- g) High waist (retro) pantie: This style of pantie provides total coverage. A high waist pantie provides the perfect fit and tends to flatten the stomach or make it look leaner. It is good for women who are conscious about their figure form (Yashita, 2019). Standard measurement: 12cm to 15cm below the waistline, 6cm to15cm on the side. Similar to the boy short, the difference is the distance from the waistline to the hip level is longer than the boy short.

#### **The Artistry of Female Panties**

#### **Materials**

Panty is near to the skin and easily weaken and fade when in contact with body fluids. As dyeing technology was relatively poor in ancient times, panties were mostly made of natural coloured fabric. Amongst such fabrics cotton did not die out, still in use with the growing trend due to its properties, it became a symbol of fresh, pure lingerie and was the preferred underwear material (Barbier & Boucher, 2003). It is still in use today and more blends of cotton fabric too exist. Protein fibres such as wool, mohair, alpaca were less used for panties and still not preferred because they are brittle and difficult to care for and maintain (Crisnaro, 2014).

In the later 20th century, technology and advancement led to the development of more synthetic fibres. Nylon which was the first synthetic fibre was used to make sports underwear that was firm and fit the body (Barbier & Boucher, 2003). Sport panties were made of polyamide, elastane or blends of these fibres. Panties needed to have some elasticity so fabrics made from latex or rubber were used to produce panties. The changes in fashion affected the construction and designs of panties. Machines were used to construct lace panties which took over the commercial manufacturing of panties (Giongo et al., 2017). Nowadays ribbons, beading and embroidery are added to adorn and beautify panties.



Figure 6: Embroidery of panties

Source: (Barbier & Boucher, 2003).

## **Colours**

Colours were invented from the combination of pigments from the soil, animal fats, burnt charcoal, chalk, blood and plants (Mariem, Wissal, Faouzi, Boubaker & Adolphe, 2020). Women's pantie was of the natural colour white, a mark of purity, transparency, virginity and decency. Hot or warm colours were linked with prostitution, apart from stockings in soft colours like pink, and blue, and patriotic colours which were used during the French Revolution (Barbier & Boucher, 2003). In the 19th century, fashionable and high-class women wore grey or black colours. The use of colours continuously changes from one season to another.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, colours took over undergarments. "Young" fashion also meant colourful underwear (Tsaousi, 2011). Unified pastels

were displaced by bright, loud, mood-altering colours and overall prints. Panties were floral-patterned, polka-dotted or striped in magenta, orange, turquoise and light green. Gradually, skin colour for panties is becoming common today. This invention was linked to the new concept of panties being the next skin and the desire for it to be as inconspicuous as possible. The colour of panties has become diverse and women can now select the colour based on their mood, occasion and reason for wearing the pant. A woman might select red panties since it signifies love to feel attracted to the opposite sex. Again, a woman selecting cool-coloured panties for the beach gives a calming effect and comfort (Gremillion, 2019).



Figure 7: Colours of panties

Source: Stylesatlife.com

The style of pants reflects the social atmosphere, mood and people's ideological situation in different periods. A particular pantie style may be chosen because of the figure type, taste, experience and style of outerwear or costume (Mariem, et al., 2020). Panties styles came into light in the 20th and 21st centuries

where people needed them to match their outer garment and also to serve purposes other than the basic use of panty.

Some panties may be visible in your outer garment when worn whiles others will be hidden and will not be seen (Barbier & Boucher, 2003). Truly it all depends on the kind of style of panties chosen. For example, the thong style of panty is best worn under skinny trousers where it does not show panty lines in the outer garment. The boy short style also looks great under dresses or skirts and can be easily be worn under fitted garments.

### Patterns in panties

The decoration and patterns of women's panties were entirely restricted by social and moral factors and no philosophers would study and criticize women's pantie (Tsaousi, 2011). Young youth in today's generation would like to affably display all sorts of ideas, landscapes, optimistic patterns, immortals, myths, characters in their panties. The patterns used for beautification have positive meanings, for example, pomegranate means many descendants, peony flower, which is endowed with stunning beauty and love, is the symbol of affluence (Stone, 2019).

All these motifs express the desire and pursuit of a lovely and happy lifestyle. The creative art of the patterns in panties was not only expressed by the independent patterns or symbols, but also by the originality of the pattern layout. These patterns enriched the humanistic atmosphere of panties and increase beauty, decoration, and add more fun to them as well. Some of these panties are shown in figure 9.



Figure 8: Panties with different patterns

Source: JollyChic.com

## Factors influencing female choices of panties

Rose, et al. (2016) explored the area of female consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions toward underwear brands. The rationale for the research was to understand female consumers' buying behaviours for intimate apparel clothing. The study aimed at drawing the interrelationships among brand familiarity, perceived risk, attitudes and purchase intentions toward brands of intimate apparel. The adopted pre-survey methodology seeks to identify the most conversant and common underwear brand to young women consumers. The majority of the respondents (66 female college students) selected Victoria's Secret as the topmost intimate apparel brand.

Hence, Victoria's Secret was the chosen brand used to examine the possible effects of brand familiarity on purchasing intentions (perceived risk and attitudinal and behavioural responses) towards intimate apparel (Barbier & Boucher, 2003). The results of the study were positive, statistically significant

relationships among these four variables (brand familiarity, perceived risk, attitudes, and purchase intentions).

The findings proposed that young female consumers who are glued to a particular intimate apparel brand are likely to perceive a lower risk, leading to positive, strong attitudes with purchase intentions toward that particular intimate apparel brand (Banasam, 2019). Young female consumers of a particular brand of intimate apparel have difficulty in selecting other brands of intimate apparel during shopping. Because of this, establishing brand familiarity through advertisement and comprehensive marketing communication is essential for risk reduction strategy in intimate apparel shopping.

Sujatha and Sarada (2016) surveyed knowledge on the selection and usage of underwear among adolescent girls. The reason behind the study was the fact that women's clothing always reflected the dynamic changes in society cannot be denied easily. For example, a situation where an adolescent will select clothing following the fashion trend and an elderly person might buy clothing that offers more physiological comfort. The study gathered data through a survey on 90 adolescent girls between the ages of 16 to 18 years, studying pre-degree courses in Tirupati and Chittoor towns.

The study asserted that a simple pattern or non-decorative design was common among consumers rather than ornate styles. This brought to light that variety in designs may not be the only key factor people consider when making purchasing decisions on underwear. The majority of the respondents consider comfort when selecting lingerie. Again, adolescent girls said they value quality

most over colour and style because underwear undergoes constant washing, it is important that the quality of the underwear is prioritized over style or colour as it is not visible outside and close to the skin and absorbs bodily fluids.

Research conducted by Jain and Kharabanda (2014) explored the "Elements of purchasing intention for panties in the Italian market" using a laddering approach. The study probed into the latent determinants of the purchasing intention for panties. A total of 40 respondents who were Italian consumers in a fashion shop were interviewed for the study. The findings indicated that female consumers buy panties mainly to reflect their lifestyle, thus deriving maximum satisfaction. Self-confidence and self-fulfilment are the key values female consumers consider when buying panties (Jain & Kharabanda, 2014). The study also figured out that brand values and advertisement are considered by producers and marketers but consumers seek internal satisfaction (inner drive) to external drives.

## **Types of Panties**

### **Boy Shorts**

Yan (2016), described boy shorts as modelled-like men's brief that comes in a rectangular shape with a thong-style base as well as full coverage on the sides and front butt and hips, and extend a little below the hip, unlike regular panties. Yan said the style got its name from a traditionally "male" attributed underwear style: the boxer short. In recent years, boy shorts simply mean a particular "short" like the silhouette. Some boy shorts underwear is made like a real "short" and may extend longer on the hip and have full back coverage.

Kimmay (2017), recounted the pros and cons of using boy shorts. He said these panties also have some advantages to offer the consumer that they provide full coverage of the butt, more side coverage on the hip area for comfort and modesty. On the other hand, however, its wider side sometimes digs into the top of the thigh and cause a bulge or discomfort. The back coverage can sometimes move around – trying to "become a thong, provides bulkiness underneath tight pants and may cause panty lines to show through clothes when not made seamless.

### **Thongs**

Sudit (2015) described this type of panty as one that provides minimal butt coverage with a triangular patch at the front and back. The sides rest almost on the hip bone. Thongs is just like the normal panties but have a very narrow strip that runs from the front to the back. Cheng and Chen (2019), added they are unconventional underwear however, they are one of the most sought-after undies for most women as one would not worry about any panty line. They can be worn with bodycon dresses and pencil skirts to avoid panty lines. On the other hand, frequent use of thongs could increase the risk of suffering urinary tract infections as they make it easier for bacteria to move from the anus to the vagina.

Along similar lines, Rajapaksa (2013), asserted that some women report an increase in the urinary tract or yeast infections when they make use of thongs; this is because thongs are tight against genital and anal areas, so they may inflame sensitive skin there. They may also slide back and forth, especially during exercise, which could, at least in theory, transfer faecal bacteria from the anus to

the urethra, possibly resulting in a urinary tract or vaginal infection. Ryan (2017) added that some panties are not necessarily healthy for consumers, especially in certain situations. One of the most notable style of panty is the thong, which eradicates visible panty lines but can cause health problems. The risk of complications is high when they are used during exercising or on sweaty days.

### **G-String**

Ati (2020) described a G-string as a type of thong consisting of a thin piece of fabric that covers the genitals, passes between the buttocks, and usually attached to a string around the waist. It provides minimum coverage. The front and back fabric is directly connected to the waistband. Burse (2017) added that a G-string pantie is usually worn under leggings, body-con dresses and skirts and under a pair of trousers to prevent panty lines from showing. Burse stated further that they also fit perfectly under delicate fabrics like chiffon and lycra making them ideal panties in such cases. Due to the sexy and stylish look of G-strings, most ladies are attracted to own them to feel and look appealing. However, El Crema (2020) asserted that G-strings may appear very sexy and fitting, research has proven that wearing them causes more harm than good to consumers because they are exposed to some health hazards such as genital inflammation, intestinal infections, yeast infection, skin irritation, and unpleasant odour.

Furthermore, Banasam (2019) affirmed that underwear was created for a reason, which is to protect our outer clothing from being soiled by body secretions, therefore, having a string passing through the buttocks may make the user feel sensual, but it may also injure the skin around the genital area if it is

made of coarse fabric. Those that are too tight may cause chafing and irritation at the string part that is in persistent contact with the skin. Others sometimes cause rubbing by outer clothing due to the lack of protection at the private parts. This then suggests that consumers are less likely to spread bacterial infection, reduce skin irritation and unpleasant odour if they could minimise the frequent use of G-strings and cultivate the habit to wear kinds of clothes that do not require the wearing of G-string underwear.

## **Bikini**

It is a popular type of pantie. It comes in different styles and designs. Bikini briefs offer greater coverage at the back than a thong but have a shorter rise than a brief. Bikini panties can be a high cut and a low cut (Banasam, 2019). The front of these panties has a triangle of material with the back piece also triangular but larger than the front piece. The amount of its coverage depends on the style of the bikini but usually covers 1/2 to 3/4 of the rear area. Bikinis are more stylish than regular briefs. This is a pantie style with a thin waistband and rests on the hips. The sides can be anything from a string to a thicker sideband.

## Tanga

Tanga has thinner back coverage than a traditional pantie but a bit wider than thongs. They provide moderate to minimal back coverage. Women who are not conversant to the wearing of thongs and strings and want to make the swifts to the wearing of thongs and strings can first start with the using of tanga pantie (Lee, Damhorst, Lee, Kozar & Martin, 2012). This will make them feel okay with the thongs. Tanga is been rated to be between the bikini and a thong.

## Physical factors that influence the choice of panties

The appearance of clothing articles seems to be the first thing that catches the attention of the consumer. The total appearance includes all the visible features such as the texture, colour and style. People will look at the appearance and looks before they make choices. Below are some features of physical factors and their explanations.

# Fabric Type/ Fibre Type

Fibre is a thin or tiny hair-like structure with characteristics that allow them to be constructed into a fabric (Ghunney, 2013). The different fibre types have peculiar characteristics that affect the product been made, thus the durability or quality of the fibre affect the performance of the pantie There are different fabrics used for panties. The comfortability of the fabric is crucial for panties because it is close to the skin. Fibres are generally classified as natural and manmade. The natural fibres include cotton, jute, sisal, hemp, asbestos, silk, linen, cashmere, mohair and wool while polyester (terylene), polyamide, rayon, olefin, viscose and acrylic are man-made fibres (Ghosh et al., 2014). Natural fibres breathe more than synthetic fibres and have a higher absorbency level therefore able to absorb perspiration making the wearer feel cool and comfortable.

Also, synthetic fibres are not absorbent and feel warm on the body when worn and shares its toxic element with the wearer (Forster, 2014). When different fibres are combined that is blended or mixed, fibres combine their strength and minimize their weaknesses giving fibres desirable properties for the manufacturing of panties. Datta and Agrawai (2018), affirmed that advancement

in technology brought a lot of innovations in the textile industry because fibres were blended to improve quality, comfort and durability. The blending of cotton and polyester produces fabrics that are cool to wear, wrinkle-resistant and easy to launder. Cotton generates coolness properties whereas polyester generates wrinkle resistance properties.

Other researchers were of the view that the selection of a fibre depends on the climate, occupation, fashion trends, comfort and durability (Sujatha et al., 2016). Forster (2014) confirmed that the climate affects the comfortability of fabrics when worn. For instance, wool feels better when worn in a cold climate whereas cotton is comfortable worn in a warm climate. Some researchers indicated that synthetic fibres emit electrostatic forces so not good to be used for panties. On the contrary, Forster (2014), stated that synthetic fibres can be used to produce underwear. This makes fibre type an essential factor when making panties as it aids in comfort.

#### Colour

Colour enables us to express our feelings and moods. It is the most important aspect of fashion. It is usually the colour of an item that attracts a customer. Sujatha et al., (2016) said panties are not visible and are mainly worn beneath outer garments unless for other purposes like wearing pantie to the beach. Even though it is hidden, it is important to the wearer because colours have meanings that carry messages. Also, colour is the first thing that attracts viewers or consumers attention as reported by Banasam (2019). It is interesting to know how different colours can make panties perform different functions. Wallace

(2019), asserted that normally, nude, white and dark colours were used for underwear. It was on the basis that black underwear does not show through both dark and light-coloured garments whereas the nude ones are best worn under white garments. With panties, the colour does not only depend on one's preference but also the outer garment being worn. The chosen colour of the pantie must blend with the outerwear or should not be visible through the outerwear. There are however occasions where it is fashionable for panties to be seen through outer garments. In this case, the colour of the pantie and that of the outer garment should resonate.

Studies have also indicated that for hygienic reasons panties should not be selected based on the outfit for some colours hide dirt especially the dark-coloured panties than the light-coloured ones (Jrajssati & Douven, 2018). Furthermore, Jrajssati & Douven (2018) asserted that people use colours to express their moods and emotional feelings and even for identification. Arguably, colours are related to sexuality or sensuality and also the connotation of morality — the association of black panties for men and white for women and also denotation of morality. Colours make panties serve different purposes. The colours red, brownish-red and black are stimulating colours and have a more erotic appeal (HerWorld, 2010). This is evident in pornographic videos and images of sensual women Schultz (2004). According to Bottom Drawer (2014), a festival was organized named "New Year's Eve" where people wore different colours of underwear. The idea behind it is that the colour of underwear worn at

the beginning of the year will be an indication of what will happen within the year.

The red colour means passion and erotic appeal; white signifies joy and happiness; blue conveys good health; pink is for luck in love; and yellow signifies wealth and prosperity; black is a symbol of bad luck (The Bottom Drawer, 2014). On the contrary, other studies stated different meanings for colours. In their view, red signifies life, courage and self-confidence; green is balance, love and self-control; yellow means knowledge, intellect and wisdom; blue is for good health and positiveness; violet is beauty, creativity and inspiration (Kumar, 2017). The meaning of colours is society bound. Societies may have different meanings for different colours. The choice of colour affects individuals emotionally, physically, and mentally. Therefore, wearers need to select colours carefully to reflect them, meet the demands of the day and create the right impression.

# **Style**

Different styles of panties are worn by women for different reasons and occasions. Sujatha et al., (2016), affirmed that in terms of styles for a special occasion, people purchase panties of known brands and styles. For instance, Ati (2018) stated that some panties are worn to stimulate one's feeling for sex, other studies have shown that the wearing of panties is for hygienic reasons; some styles minimize the spread of infections and even provides support in regulating the body shape; others easily spread infections (Datta & Agrawai, 2018). Thongs and tanga are noted to speed up the spread of infections because of the thin strings

connected from the waist to the crotch. This makes it easy for the spread of bacteria from the anus to the vagina area (Ryan, 2017).

The choice of style of panties mostly depends on the style of the outer garment, social situations and weather conditions, comfort and hygiene. Datta and Agrawai (2018), added that boys short pantie provides more comfort, support and does not restrict freedom, especially around the genitals. The loose nature of boyshorts permits free movement of air making the wearer feel extremely comfortable. Also, the abrasion-free pouch of boyshorts prevents rubbing against the skin, thus reducing skin infections such as rashes, itchiness and irritation (Datta & Agrawai, 2018). Therefore, a consumer needs to pay attention to the choice of styles when buying panties.

## Comfortability

Panties have direct contact with the skin so must be comfortable when worn (either it is psychological comfort or physical comfort). In terms of comfort, panties should fit properly, a poor fit can cause discomfort. A woman pushing her hands into her buttocks and pulling her pantie is a disgusting scene, this happens when she is not comfortable in what she is wearing. For this reason, people ought to wear comfortable panties. Alves, Martins and Martins (2013) asserted that wearing the wrong size (too tight or over-size) of panties will not give the maximum comfort needed by the wearer.

Sujatha et al., (2016) said wearing fitted panties does not only provide relief but there are health benefits. Tight panties can leave blood marks on the skin. Datta and Agrawai (2018), outlined small, medium, large and extra-large as

standard measurements that conform to certain underwear waist sizes, all in the quest for comfort. Then suggests that the choice and selection of an undergarment is largely dependent on the size or fit since comfort from the use of underwear makes it easier to endure a long day at work, and makes it possible to relax better.

## Socio-cultural factors that influence the choice of panties

Socio-cultural factors are mainly concerned with the relationship between social practices and commercial activities within a society. Its attempts to describe how a group of people behaves within a society, including their actions as consumers. The socio-cultural factors that influence panties selection include cost, fashion, suitability, convenience and association.

#### Cost

How much one can afford determines what one purchase. The cost of a pantie influences consumers to select a particular type, quantity or quality (Kumar, 2020). Kumar stated that affordability greatly influences one to go in for a type of pantie. Giles (2007) also noted that perhaps in light of the culture of excess; the 1980s, for instance, was renowned for woman's newfound careers which generated income for them and that played a part in the purchases of undergarments. The consumer assesses the total cost of all the fashion appeal aspects of a garment or accessory and their relationship to the retail price and their budget (Sujatha et al., 2016). Studies suggest that the higher the income level, the more one spends on clothing. This means that those with high income buy expensive and quality products (Tweten, 1980) whereas those with low income will patronize inexpensive products according to Komasi (2017). This is an

indication that the price of a pantie influences a consumer to buy based on number and quality.

#### **Fashion**

The style in vogue or the trending style is termed fashion. Gavor *et al.*, (2015), described fashion as the style that is most popular or accepted at a given time by a social group to serve their purpose. According to Kaiser, (1990), fashion promotes creativity because it is through the process of fashion that original styles are formed, introduced and accepted publicly by consumers. Some styles in vogue last for a short period; others take a longer period before they die out of the system.

Consumers are influenced in the selection of undergarments when there are new or latest styles in vogue to belong to or associated with a social class and not old fashioned. The design or style of an undergarment is linked to its appropriateness in terms of fitting body size, shape and performance suitability. This is in line with the view of Zhanga, Xua and Songb (2016) who stated that body size and "appropriateness" are linked issues that women seem to care about when it comes to underwear and how it affects their self-esteem. Jantzen, Østergaard, and Vieira (2006), suggested that wearing fashionable panties transform women's self-image, makes them look more attractive, impress others and fulfil an emotional need.

A study interviewed a group of women on the use of panties, some said they wear fashionable and the best of their panties when they know that they will be with their fiancé. This is to make them look fashionable and also to create a good impression of themselves. Wearing fashionable panties tend to give a feeling of security and boost their confidence. According to Riungu (2009), young youth follow fashion more than the adult. For instance, at the point of purchasing panties where the elderly person is considering physiological comfort and adolescent paying more attention to the latest fashion.

# **Psychological Factors**

Psychological factors are the elements that discuss the psychology of an individual that drives his actions to seek satisfaction. It includes interest, self-esteem, attitude, values and mood. Below are some of the psychological factors and their explanations.

#### **Interest**

Psychologically, the emotional and mental perception of one's self influences the choice of panties. Clothing is used as a means to communicate the intentions of the wearer and a representation of the individual's personality as asserted by Riungu (2009). Researchers have attempted to explain the psychological theories used to describe the clothing behaviour of consumers. One of them is self-concept. Riungu (2009) states that self-concept is the individual's psychological or emotional way of organising his or her perception and concept about self. Clothing is a major force in the enhancement of the self and when used positively it contributes to one's feeling of self-acceptance and self-respect.

The self-concept involves a person's perception of his or her abilities, including all the aspect that makes his or her personality. It is in this perspective of self that the individual uses clothing to depict a particular image to others. So, individuals will purchase undergarments of the symbiotic meanings they will have on themselves and others.

#### Values

Values are intrinsic cognitive structures that guide choices of basic principles of right and wrong, a sense of priorities, and a willingness to make meaning and see patterns (Oyserman, 2014). Values are not the actions themselves nor are specific specifications of what to do and when to do it. Values can be studied at the individual level or the group level. That is societies, cultures, and other social groups have value-based norms, primacies, and guiding principle, which describe what people must do if they are to do the 'right,' 'moral,' 'valued' thing (Oyserman, 2014).

Values are desirable and enduring end-states that influence both attitudes and behaviour (Aride & Pamies-Pallise, 2019). Values may originate from one's culture, environment, family, peers and social experience. This indicates that family members, peers and media influence values. Clothing is used as a tool for communicating one's values (Geiger & Keller, 2018).), rich in psychosocial and emotional consequences (Orlenius, 2005). Clothing is a predictor of values (Tang, He, Shao & Ji, 2016), and personal values are related to clothing involvement (Manchiraju & Sadachar, 2014)

In clothing, values also guide one's perception and purchasing trends of clothing to one self-concept. It can enhance the appearance, beautify one's self making it more attractive, increase acceptance or rejection by the group (Tang, et al., 2016). However, the impression created may clash with the perception created by others through the use of clothing.

This is the outcome of individuals perceiving clothing in terms of their self-concepts. Psychological factors are more closely related to individual values and belief systems and tend to provide an explanation or reasoning for an individual's perception of self as a social object (Oyserman, 2014). Psychological factors include self-consciousness and self-confidence. The same way individuals attach their values to the choice of intimate apparel like pantie. Research has shown that values affect the consumption pattern of consumers (Giongo et al., 2017).

#### **Attitude**

Attitudes are manners, dispositions, feelings and evaluations associated with a representation of an object in memory (Richard, 2006; Shropshire, Warkentin & Sharma, 2015). According to Albarracin and Shavitt (2018) attitudes are stored evaluations of or feelings towards persons, objects, events, situations, goals, positions, issues, ideas and behaviours which takes different forms. They may be stored in explicit memory or implicit memory (Gawronski & Brannon, 2019). It is usually difficult to swing from one attitude or change attitudes. Consumers may exhibit a different attitude towards the same thing (Gawronski & Brannon, 2019).

Attitude had been seen to be a contributing factor to consumers behaviour towards their clothing selection. The attitude was the key factor in reflecting clothing behaviour (Jacobs, Petersen, Hörisch, & Battenfeld, 2018; Lee, 2007). The reason has been that choice making involves the perception and appraisal of the situation or object and evaluation and selection of the preferred option or choice. This is in line with attitudes where it is stored evaluations that guide these judgements (Jacobs, et al., 2018).

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework is an illustration of what a study expects to unravel. It outlines the variables relevant to the study and shows how they are related. The study looked at the factors influencing young women's experiences in the choice and use of panties at the University of Cape Coast. To achieve this objective, the study looked at four major factors which helped in achieving the purpose of the study. The factors included psychological factors (such as values, mood, confidence, comfort, interest, etc.), physical factors (style, colours, brand, fashion, pattern, garment, etc.), sociocultural factors (religious background, family, ethnic, perceptions, etc.), and experiences after usage (comfort, wear out, infections, itches, etc.). From the framework, the four factors will reveal the GYW choice of panties. The physical, psychological, socio-cultural factors and their experiences on the use of the panties will determine their choices. This is demonstrated in graphical form in figure 1.

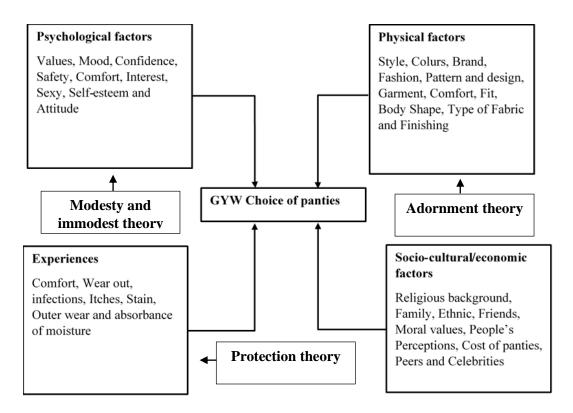


Figure 9 Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's Construct

## **Summary of Chapter**

Chapter two reviewed literature on three thematic areas; conceptual framework, where a pictorial diagram demonstrated the aim, variables and structure of the study. Also, the chapter reviewed four theoretical frameworks that underpinned the study concept. It included modesty theory, immodesty theory, protection theory and adornment theory. The theory explained the core purpose of wearing panties and for what reason women choose them. This theory enabled the study to avoid criticism of the purpose by which women wear panties. The last section of the chapter looked at some empirical literature of the study. This empirical review looked at each objective; physical, psychological, socio-cultural and experiences of women on panties.

#### CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### Introduction

The study looks at the factors influencing young women's experiences in the choices and use of panties. Broadly, chapter three of the study discusses the procedures for the conduct of the present study. Specifically, it discusses the research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, validation of research instruments, reliability of the instrument, data collection procedure, ethical considerations, and method of data analysis.

## **Research Approach**

The research approach plays a vital role in any scientific research. According to Ishtiaq (2019) which was based on Cresswell stated that research design is a plan that pertains to the assumptions to the methods of data collection, analysis and discussions. Creswell stated that a study can take three major forms, which includes qualitative, quantitative and mixed approaches respectively. A qualitative research approach explores insights and understanding about an individual's subjective interpretation of the phenomena and events. It is an inductive data analysis from themes and patterns, and from particular to general (Creswell, 2014).

The quantitative research method is a type of approach in which quantitative techniques are used in form of descriptive and inferential statistics to describe events (Creswell, 2014). This approach allows the study to collect and analyse data in numerical and quantifiable terms to achieve its purpose. It is

therefore appropriate for examining the strength and magnitude of relationships likewise the effect of a variable on another. The mixed research approach combines the quantitative and qualitative methods in one research study (Gay, May & Airasian 2009). It is used to provide a more in-depth understanding of the research problem than either of each (qualitative or quantitative) alone.

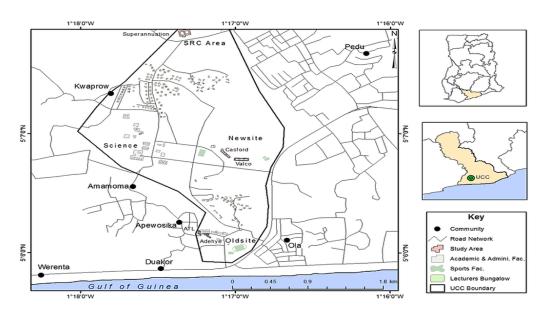
With the current study, a quantitative research approach was adopted since the researcher intended to remain objective to the study. Creswell and Creswell (2017) added that the quantitative approach allows the use of quantitative tools such as descriptive and inferential statistical tool in describing vital issues in the study. The study, therefore, employed this approach because it sought to aid in the investigation of the study objectives, that is student knowledge of the uses and functions of panties, factors that influence the choice of panties (either physical, psychological or socio-cultural) and the experiences encountered with the use of panties.

A quantitative approach was adopted due to its ability to translate the use of statistical analysis to make the connection between what is known and what can be learned by research. Also, analyzing data with quantitative strategies requires an understanding of the relationships among variables by either descriptive or inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics helps to draw inferences about populations and to estimate the parameters. On the other hand, inferential statistics are based on descriptive statistics and the assumptions that generalize the population from a selected sample (Gravetter & Forzano, 2018).

# **Research Design**

From the above discussion, the approach enabled the adoption of a descriptive research design. The descriptive design has the advantage of producing great amount of responses from a large number of respondent (Creswell, 2014), and it can also be used with greater confidence with regards to particular questions of special interest or values to a study. Also, some of the major strengths of the descriptive design include an increase in understanding of the factors that influence the choices of panties and aid in answering questions such as how do physical factors influence the choices of panties, what are the socio-cultural factors that influence the choices of panties, what are the uses and functions of panties and how does the experience of GYW affect their choices of panties.

# **Study Area**



Map of the University of Cape Coast Source: Department of Geography and Regional Planning, UCC (2019)

Figure 10: Geographical Area of the University of Cape Coast

The study area is the University of Cape Coast and its surroundings as shown in Fig. 1. It is bounded on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, on the West by the Komenda-Edina-Aguafo Abrem District, East by the Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District and North by Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. It lies between longitude 1°00! -1°15! West and Latitude 5°30! North. It has a total land area of 9826 km2. The University is a public collegiate research university located in Cape Coast, Ghana. The university is made up of six colleges and the total student population as of 2020 is 72,366 (Undergraduates 66,030 and Post-Graduate 6,336) (UCC Basic Statistics, 2020). This comprises both regular and distance students. However, the study focused only on the regular undergraduate students.

### The population of the Study

Creswell (2014) defined a population as a group of entities sharing particular features or characteristics. It is the larger group upon which a researcher wishes to generalise and it includes members of a defined class of people, events or objects (Creswell, 2009). The study focused on the regular students from level hundred to level four hundred who attend class on the main campus in Cape Coast. Information gathered from the academic office of the university indicates that as of the 2019/2020 academic year, there were a total of 21,439 regular students on the main campus of which 12,419 are males and 9020 are females. The minimum age of the students is 17 years and the maximum age is about 45 years.

### **Target Population**

The target population of the study were female level, 400 students (1,980). The level 400 students were used for the study because at the time of data collection, which was the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak season, level 100 to 300 students were sent home and only the final year students (level 400) were on campus. Hence the study changed its target population which was supposed to focus on the entire student population and was centred on the level, 400 female students. However, the change in the target population did not affect the study process in any way.

## Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for the study was derived using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula as shown in equation 1. The derivation of the sample size was based on level 400 female population size of 1,980.

$$SS = \frac{X^2 N P (1 - P)}{d^2(N - 1) + X^2 P (1 - P)}$$

Equation 1: Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Formula

Where

SS = sample size of finite population size,

X = z-value or confidence level of 95%

N = population size (1,980),

P = Population proportion (expressed as decimal) (assumed to be 0.5 (50%) and

d = Degree of accuracy (5%), expressed as a proportion (.05); It is a margin of error.

The above formula is for calculating the sample size of a finite population.

$$S = \frac{(1.96)^2 (1980)(0.5)(1 - 0.5)}{(0.05)^2 (1980 - 1) + (1.96)^2 (0.5)(1 - 0.5)}$$

$$= \frac{(1901.592)}{(0.0025)(1979) + (3.8416)(0.25)}$$

$$= \frac{1901.592}{4.9475 + 0.9604}$$

$$= \frac{1901.592}{5.9079}$$

$$ss = 321.87ss \approx 322$$

Though the University of Cape Coast constitutes of faculties, departments and directorates with their respective students, the schedule for lectures and interdepartmental activities coupled with students taking courses outside their department and faculties made it very difficult to get access to female students of a particular faculty or department at a time. Thus, the study adopted a convenient sampling method to get the respondents. Convenient sampling was appropriate for the study because it was difficult to get students from various faculties at the time. It was however easy to locate them at their places of residence so those who were readily available were used. It also allowed respondents to freely get involved in the study at their own will and convenience.

#### **Data Collection Instruments**

Based on the objectives of the study, a structured questionnaire as a primary data collection instrument was employed to collect data from respondents. A structured questionnaire is a method of data collection in which each member is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a prearranged

order (Akinci & Saunders, 2015). According to Geisinger (2010) the benefit of using questionnaires include increased speed of data collection, low cost and higher levels of objectivity compared to many alternative methods of primary data collection. However, there are some disadvantages with the use of questionnaires such as the selection of random answer choices by respondents without properly reading the question. Moreover, respondents cannot usually express their additional thoughts about the matter due to the absence of a relevant question (Shekhar, Prince, Finelli, Demonbrun & Waters, 2019).

It is the major collection instrument used in a quantitative study and thus is the most appropriate as compared to the others such as observation and interviews which are appropriate for the qualitative study. it is to note that, the questionnaire was self-constructed from reviews of related literature about the study's objectives. For this study, the questionnaires were used to collect data for the study.

The items of the questionnaire were developed to reflect the key themes raised in the research questions. The questionnaire consisted of sections: A, B, C, D, E and F. Section 'A', was on the personal data of the students. Section 'B' was on the knowledge of the uses and functions of panties. Section 'C' captured items on the physical factors that influenced the GYW choice of panties. Section 'D', also captured the psychological factors that influence GYW choice of panties and contained questions on care methods of undergarments. Section E looked at the socio-cultural/economic factors that influence the GYW choice of panties. The last section, 'F', was on the experience encountered by GYW with the use of

panties. The questions were concise, brief and demanded short answers as seen in pages from 101 to 112.

The physical indicators influenced female students' choice of panties. The following variables were used to assess the physical factors: colours, brand, fashion, patterns and designs, garment type, fitness, comfort, body shape, type of fabric, finishing and health. Psychological factors are defined as intrinsic and emotional indicators that influence the GYW choice of panties. The following variables were used to assess the psychological factors: values, mood, confidence, safety/protection, comfort, interest, sexy, feelings, self-esteem and attitudes. The socio-cultural factors looked at the social indicators that influenced GYW choice of panties. These indicators include religious background, family influence, ethnic background peers influence, moral values, societal perception, impression creation, cost of panties, activities, occasion and celebrities' influence.

To ensure validity, the instrument was tested through construct validity, face validity and content validity. With face validity, the instrument was developed based on literature, focusing on the main findings of previous studies. Face and content validity was determined through inspection by the supervisor. After concluding on the face and content validity, the questionnaire was pilottested using 20 form threes female students in Mankessim Senior High School because they were in the age group of young women. This was done to validate the instrument by verifying the viability of the data collection instrument and to identify problems with the instrument. All the questions on the questionnaire had variables measured under the nominal and ordinal scales.

### **Pilot Test**

A pilot test is a small-scale primary assessment conducted to evaluate the viability, duration, cost, adverse event, and improve upon the study design before embarking on a full-scale research project. Pilot test enables the researcher to detect problems with the study plan before making a major investment of time and resources. The pilot test was done with 20 female respondents in Mankessim Senior High School to check the reliability of the study. The 20 female respondents were form threes about to enter into the tertiary education and are of the same age range to the tertiary students (young women). Their aspirations and fashion sense are not that different from the tertiary students.

#### **Data Collection Procedure**

Before the data collection exercise, permissions were sought from the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Cape Coast. Upon being granted permission, the questionnaires were then distributed and collected with the help of a proficient and well-equipped assistant. The data collection exercise took one week to complete. However, the exercises were flawed with several challenges such as difficulty in allocating respondents, the unwillingness of some of them to participate in the exercise and delays in returning completed questionnaires. Moreover, much efforts were made to overcome the major problems in a bid to attain a reasonable amount of data for analysis and generalisation of findings.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical consideration in research refers to the standard or norms for conduct that differentiate between right and wrong. Ethical considerations, therefore, help to determine differences between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in research (Creswell, 2014). According to Patten and Newhart (2017), the major ethical issues that need to be considered in every research comprise willingness to participate, right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of information. As such, all efforts were geared towards ensuring that all these ethical issues were attended to. For instance, with voluntary participation, all respondents were allowed to participate in the data collection with no force. Also, the possible issues of the right to privacy were ensured by allowing respondents to answer the questionnaires on their own and they were informed to leave unclear statements unanswered for further explanations through their convenient medium.

Respondents were assured of anonymity by restricting them from providing their names and contact numbers on the questionnaire. Respondents were therefore sure that none of their identities would be exposed to the public domain nor used for any purpose other than this study. Finally, the study ensured the confidentiality of information by assuring respondents that all information provided would be kept confidential. They were assured that none of their information would be used against them nor found in the public domain. Because of these, all major ethical issues/considerations were met in the study.

Participation in the study was voluntary such that respondents were not coerced to participate. Responses to questionnaires were not disclosed. The questionnaire did not contain the names of respondents thus guaranteeing respondent anonymity throughout the study. Finally, professional competence in the data collection and analysis coupled with independent objectivity was maintained to ensure that the interpretation of the survey findings was upheld (Muposhi, Dhurup & Surujlal, 2015). As part of the ethical consideration, the ethical committee at the University of Cape Coast approved for the study to be conducted.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

Data collected from the exercise underwent rigorous scrutiny via face validity to ensure that any error arising from unfinished and inaccurately filled questionnaires were eliminated. The error-free data were then carefully coded and edited to avoid missing values. The data were then entered and processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (v.25) software and the results attained were displayed in tables. Also, the processed data were analysed using descriptive statistical tools. The descriptive statistical tools consisted of frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations.

### **Chapter Summary**

The chapter discussed the research methods employed to achieve the study's purpose. The chapter, therefore, discussed key elements of research methods to approach. This included the research approach, research design, population and target population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection

instrument, among others used in the study. The descriptive research design was adopted because the study employed the quantitative research approach. The study was analysed using percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviations in a bid to answer the research questions of the study. All ethical issues were observed and convenient sampling was used to collect the data.

**CHAPTER FOUR** 

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION** 

Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion section of the study. The

purpose of the study was to examine the factors influencing the choices, use and

experiences of panties by GYW. The study used descriptive analysis to present

the study results and findings and data was collected using a questionnaire. The

chapter entails the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, explores the

physical factors that influence GYW choice of panties, determines the

psychological factors that influence GYW choice of panties, assesses the socio-

cultural factors that influence the GYW choice of panties and discuss the

experiences of GYW with the use of panties.

**Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents** 

A total of 322 questionnaires were administered and 217 were retrieved. In

calculating the response rate, the formula below was considered:

Total response rate = total number of valid responses

total number in approached – Out of scope

Using this formula, the total response rate = 217\*100%

(322-0)

= 67.4%

Source: Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009) (Move to results, chapter 4)

57

The study, however, did not get the overall sample size, yet the response rate was satisfactory to continue the study. According to Fincham (2008), 60% and above response rate is acceptable to proceed to data coding and analysis.

# Age of respondent

**Table 1: Age of Respondents** 

Age	Frequency	%
23-28 years	115	53.0
17-22 years	83	38.3
29-34 years	12	5.5
35 years above	7	3.2
Total	217	100.0

Source: Field survey (2020)

The age of the respondents as shown in table 1 indicates a little more than half (53.0%) were in the 23–28-year group with the lowest number of respondents being 35 years and above (3.2%).

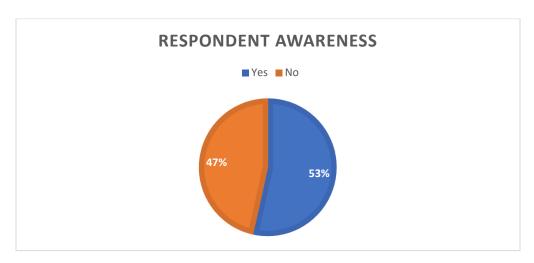


Figure 11: Respondents' awareness that different style of panties has different functions

Source: Field survey (2020)

When respondents were asked if they were aware of different panty styles having different functions, 53.5% of the respondents answered in the affirmative. They were further asked to indicate their perceived functions of different panty styles.

Table 2: Respondents' perceived uses and functions of panties styles

	Prevent	Keeps	Comfort	Avoid exposing	Protection	Hygiene	Modesty	Sexy	Keep menstrual
	soiling	private dry	%	private part	%	%	%	%	cups
	%	%		%					%
COMFORT	41.9	38.5	48.7	26.5	32.7	45.9	31.0	22.3	34.2
BOYSHORT	11.1	15.4	14.5	29.9	23.9	16.2	14.2	3.6	6.3
G. high waist (Retro)	24.8	7.7	11.1	17.9	12.4	11.6	8.8	3.6	25.2
BIKINI	12.0	12.8	8.5	12.8	16.8	14.4	16.8	14.3	12.6
STRING	4.3	12.8	8.5	7.7	4.4	8.1	15.0	25.0	7.2
TANGA	5.1	3.6	6.8	3.4	8.0	3.4	7.1	11.6	10.8
THONG	0.9	9.4	1.7	1.7	1.8	0.0	7.1	19.6	3.6

Source: Field survey (2020) N=116

Table 3 shows the perceived usefulness and functions of pantie styles. As shown in table 3, functions based on literature were used for rating the seven different panty styles. Looking at the functions individually, the comfort style of panties had the highest ranking for almost all the functions except for sexy where the highest was taken by the string style and avoiding exposure of private part which was taken by boy shorts. For the lowest rankings, thong style had the least for all the functions except for modesty where it shared the lowest ranking with tanga, keeping the private parts dry where tanga had lowest and sexy where the lowest ranking went to boys shorts and high waist styles.

Table 3: Physical factors that influence Ghanaian young women choices of panties

Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation
Comfortability	1.41	0.664
Fit	1.58	0.820
Garment type	1.6	0.807
Type of fabric	1.62	0.886
Style	1.66	0.831
Health	1.7	0.933
Colours	1.76	0.845
Body shape	1.88	0.52
Patterns and design	2.0	0.945
Finishing	2.16	1.008
Brand	2.32	1.187
Fashion	2.47	1.131

Source: Field survey (2020) (Strongly Agree=1, Agree=2, Undecided=3, Disagree=4, Strongly Disagree = 5).

Table 4 shows the physical factors that influenced the respondent's choice of panties. The respondents were asked to rate the items using the Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The respondents considered all the physical factors as relevant, however, given priority to comfortability (1.41) and fit (1.58) as the most important physical factor when selecting panties and brand (2.32) and fashion (2.47) as the least important physical factor.

Table 4: The frequency of wearing a particular style of panties

Panties	Mean	Std. Deviation
Comfort	3.80	1.190
Boyshort	3.05	1.323
Highwaist	3.04	1.346
String	2.13	1.191
Bikini	2.12	1.267
Tanga	2.06	1.186
Thong	1.87	1.454

Source: Field survey (2020) (Never = 1, Rarely=2, Neutral=3, Often=4, Very often=5).

Table 5 shows the frequency of wearing the style of panties. The details show comfort, boyshorts and highwaist as the styles frequently worn with a mean above 3. String, Bikini, tanga and thong with a mean below 3 is considered not to be used frequently.

Table 5: The level of comfort of the style of panties

Level of comfort	Mean	Std. Deviation
Comfort	4.11	1.068
Boyshort	3.72	1.335
Highwaist	3.55	1.387
Bikini	3.04	1.329
String	2.71	1.312
Tanga	2.58	1.309
Thong	2.25	1.314

Source: Field survey (2020) (very uncomfortable= 1, uncomfortable=2, indifferent=3, comfortable=4, very comfortable = 5).

Table 6 shows the level of comfort in wearing the styles of panties. The comfort, Boyshorts, highwaist and Bikini styles have means above 3, therefore, were the ones deemed comfortable with the comfort style (4.11) being the most comfortable of the panties. On the other hand, string tanga and thong were the not comfortable styles to wear with thong (2.25) being the least comfortable.

Again, when asked how pleasant they felt in the different styles of panties the rankings were almost the same as that of how comfortable the panty style is. The results are shown in Table 7, where the comfort, Boyshort, highwaist and bikini had a mean above 3 whereas string, tanga and thong were below the mean of 3, with thong having the least.

Table 6: The style of panties and the derived pleasure

Style of Panties	Mean	Std. Deviation
Comfort	3.99	1.048
Boyshort	3.71	1.117
Highwaist	3.71	1.186
Bikini	3.21	1.197
String	2.82	1.293
Tanga	2.66	1.206
Thong	2.2	1.121

Source: Field survey (2020) (very unpleasant= 1, unpleasant=2, indifferent=3, pleasant=4, very pleasant = 5).

To further look into other details related to comfort respondents were to state the comfortability of different fabrics used in making panties. The results as shown in table 8 showed cotton being the most comfortable with a mean of 4.67 and rayon being the least comfortable (2.47). The details of the table indicate that pure cotton, a blend of cotton and polyester, a blend of cotton and lycra, pure silk and wool were all found to be comfortable having a mean above three. Fibres that were deemed by respondents not to be comfortable and registering a mean below three were a blend of spandex and nylon, pure lycra, nylon, polyester and rayon.

**Table 7: The comfortability of different Fabrics** 

Fabric type	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cotton	4.67	0.983
Cotton/polyester	3.79	1.160
Lycra/Cotton	3.54	1.170
Silk	3.08	1.158
Wool	3.02	1.193
Spandex/Nylon	2.78	1.096
Lycra	2.59	1.044
Nylon	2.57	1.036
Polyester	2.50	1.030
Rayon	2.47	0.999

Source: Fieldwork 2020, (very uncomfortable= 1, uncomfortable=2, indifferent=3, comfortable=4, very comfortable = 5).

Another factor that was investigated about the panty comfort was the details of fabric construction. Lace fabric recorded the highest mean of 4.55 while woven fabrics (3.24) was the least. It is however noted that all the fabrics construction methods provided comfort to the respondents.

Table 8: Fabric construction method of the panties in terms of comfort

Fabric construction	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lacing	4.55	1.172
Netting	4.53	1.104
Knitting	4.25	1.071
Woven	3.24	1.024

Source: Fieldwork 2020 (very uncomfortable= 1, uncomfortable=2, indifferent=3, comfortable=4, very comfortable = 5).

**Table 9: Brands of panties in relation to comfort** 

Brands	Mean	Std. Deviation
Calvin Klein	3.6	1.141
Tommy John	3.23	0.52
Knix	3.23	0.962
ThirdLove	3.20	2.257
Chantelle	3.16	1.056
Wacoal	3.15	0.953
Natori	3.11	0.957
Skims	3.11	0.974
Everlane	2.98	0.956
Naja	2.96	1.041
Athlete	2.95	1.006
Yummie	2.92	0.904

Source: Fieldwork, 2020 (very uncomfortable= 1, uncomfortable=2, indifferent=3, comfortable=4, very comfortable = 5).

Table 10 shows the brands of panties in terms of their comfortability when worn. Calvin Klein had the highest mean of 3.6 and Yummie the least with (2.92).

Table 10: Type of Outer Garment and the panty style that is most preferred with it

	Skinny/	Jean's	Gather	Pencil/	Smock	Slit and	Sport
	Stretch	trouser	ed/flare	close-	%	Kaba	wear
	y outfit	<b>%</b>	d dress	fitting		%	%
	%		%	dress			
				%			
COMFORT	11.6	35.1	26.7	7.6	8.4	7.6	3.0
BOYSHORT	16.2	28.1	28.1	8.0	6.3	5.3	8.0
G. high waist (Retro)	13.8	23.8	26.4	14.7	7.6	4.9	8.8
BIKINI	26.0	27.7	18.2	9.3	4.4	8.0	6.4
STRING	22.9	31.3	19.6	15.1	6.2	3.1	1.8
TANGA	20.9	33.8	16.4	19.1	6.2	2.7	0.9
THONG	23.2	28.1	19.7	20.1	6.2	1.8	0.9

Source: Fieldwork 2020

When one looks at the individual garment styles and the various panty styles worn, it is noted that with stretchy garments the panty style used most is bikini, whereas comfort style was the least used. Comfort panty style is mostly worn under jeans trousers and less with highwaist. Boyshort is noted to be worn more under gathered and flared dresses (full garment) and tanga the least. Thong is frequently used under pencil or fitted dress and less with comfort. Again,

comfort panty style appears to be worn more under smocks and less with bikinis. Slit and kaba are used with bikinis regularly and rarely with thongs. In regards to the use of sport wears, highwaist was the most used, while the least used was tanga and thong.

Table 11: The psychological factors that influence GYW choice of panties

Psychological factors	Mean	Std. Deviation
Comfort	1.70	0.939
Feels good	1.79	1.010
Safety/Protection	1.82	1.052
Confidence	1.94	1.022
Interest	1.95	1.053
Experience with a particular style	2.11	1.144
Self Esteem	2.17	1.126
Sexy	2.25	1.125
Attitude towards the style	2.33	1.149
Experience with a particular brand	2.35	1.144
Moods	2.37	1.087
Values	2.38	1.139
Attitude towards the brand	2.44	1.167

Source: Field survey (2020) (Strongly Agree=1, Agree=2, Undecided=3, Disagree=4, Strongly Disagree = 5).

Table 12 displays the psychological factors that influenced GYW choice of panties. All the psychological factors were relevant to GYW choice of panties, however, the most dominant factors included feeling good (1.79), safety/protection (1.82) and confidence (1.94), as well as the least concerned factors, included attitude towards the brand (2.54), values (2.38) and moods (2.37).

Table 12: The socio-cultural factors that influence the GYW choice of panties

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Occasion	1.96	1.072
Activities	2.05	1.020
Figure type	2.21	1.208
Cost of panties	2.25	1.146
Impression creation	2.67	1.321
Latest fashion	2.71	1.384
Moral values	2.76	1.303
Peer influence	2.81	1.339
Societal perception	2.94	1.289
Religious background	3.00	1.432
Family influence	3.18	1.388
Celebrities influence	3.21	1.433
Ethnic background	3.31	1.305

Source: Fieldwork, 2020 (Strongly Agree=1, Agree=2, Undecided=3, Disagree=4, Strongly Disagree = 5).

Table 13 presented the socio-cultural factors that influenced GYW choice of panties. The most significant factors included occasion (1.96), activities (2.05), figure type (2.21), cost of pantie (2.25), impression creation (2.67), latest fashion

(2.71), moral values (2.76), peer influence (2.81) and societal perception (2.94) and the least significant factors were ethnic background (3.31), celebrities influence (3.21) and family influence (3.18). Respondents were indecisive about their religious background (3.00).

**Table 13: GYW experience with the use of panties** 

Experience	Mean	Std. Deviation
Wear out easily	2.22	1.134
Visible through outwear	2.29	1.250
Not comfortable	2.31	1.339
Not absorbent	2.31	1.251
Itchy	2.38	1.250
Allow more infection	2.53	1.292
Stains easily	2.60	2.102

Source: Field survey (2020) (Strongly Agree=1, Agree=2, Undecided=3, Disagree=4, Strongly Disagree = 5).

Table 14 shows the experiences GYW encountered when using panties. It was observed in the table that all the respondents had experienced most of the items listed, however, the most noted experience was wearing out easily (2.22).

**Table 14: Style preference of respondents** 

Preferences	Percentages (%)
Comfort	73.3
Highwaist	59.6
Boyshort	56.9
Bikini	21.3
String	20.4
Tanga	12.4
Thong	12.4

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Table 15 shows the ranking of panties in terms of respondent's total preference. It was observed that the comfort, highwaist and boyshorts style of pantie was mostly used by the respondent with a percentage above 50 whereas bikini, string, tanga and thong pantie was the least preferred to the respondents. The highly preferred pantie was comfort (73.3%) and 12.4% to tanga and thong as the lowest.

#### **Discussion**

#### **Ages of Respondents**

It was realised that most students enter into the tertiary at the teenage or usually between 16 to 23 years. With our population being level 400 students, it is assumed that their age as of the completion of their programme of study will be between 20 to 27 years that lead to the majority of the respondents falling within the age group between 20 to 27. Age has unarguably been among the variables that affect women's choice of panties and the fashion arena as a whole. The older the age, the lower the preference in selecting or purchasing certain types of panties or using them (Zhang, 2019).

As university students, the respondents have eyes for fashion, and the flair to look as fashionable as practically possible (Riungu, 2009). This is in line with the assertion of Sinha (2002) and Tai (2005) that the desire to be fashionable, attractive, impress others, be accepted by friends, peer groups or colleagues has been "sine qua non" factors for the fulfilment of the emotional and aesthetic need of the age group of these university students. Similarly, buying behaviour also depends on the age group. The features the younger consumers look for in clothes

may not be the same as older consumers. Researchers in fashion have found age to be a particularly useful demographic variable, largely because clothing products needs and interests often vary with users' age (Alooma & Lawan, 2013).

### **Use and functions of panties**

The results showed that comfort pantie is highly effective for serving almost all the functions as revealed in table 3. The comfort style of the pantie was ranked first in preventing soiling, keeping private parts dry, providing comfort, giving protection, hygienic and modest. Comfort pantie rests at the hip level, but the side section is broader or wider (Giongo et al., 2017). It also has linings or a base at the crotch which provides the extra feature for absorbing fluid, stains and soiling (Ryan, 2017). Comfort pantie was preferred because its style performed the basic functions of panties. According to Datta and Agrawal (2018), one of the foundations of panties is the aspect of keeping the outer garments clean by absorbing sweat and oils from the skin.

Boyshort style of pantie was also preferred second to comfort when it comes to keeping the private part dry, comfortability, avoiding exposing private, protection and hygiene. Boyshort style of panties was adapted from men's boxer briefs and have short legs extending below the crotch (Giongo et al., 2017). It also covers fully the private part and does provide enough space. Similarly, highwaist which has a comparable structure to boyshorts pantie was also ranked high in preventing soiling and avoiding exposure of private part. According to Giongo et al., (2017), these styles of pantie, such as comfort, boyshorts and highwaist do not

expose the private part and allow free air circulation. This could be the reason for its functions and uses as indicated by the respondents.

Further to the uses and functions of panties, the bikini style of pantie was also discreetly preferred by respondents especially concerning preventing soiling, keeping private dry, protecting and modesty. The bikini rests at the hip level and looks narrower at the side sections (Giongo et al., 2017). The bikini was preferred to string, tanga and thong in all the functions except the aspect of feeling sexy.

Lastly, table 3 revealed that string, tanga and thong were least preferred considering preventing soiling, keeping the private part dry, comfortability, avoid exposure of private part, protection, hygiene, modesty and keeping menstrual. It is noted that these least preferred panty styles cannot perform the functions for which they are least preferred due to their very designs. By design, they have very little coverage for the vagina area and they ride into the anal area. Narins (2015) noted that such a style of pantie speeds up the spread of pubic infections since it is not able to cover the vagina entirely. These styles leave most private part open whiles some goes deep into the private part, making it uncomfortable, unable to keep fluid and hygiene (Banasam, 2019). Although these panties not considered as comfortable, the string, tanga and thong were seen by respondents to be sexy. According to Banasam (2019) panties that leave some parts of the private nuddy are meant to look erotic and sensual and as such these panties were highly indicated by respondents for such purpose.

#### Physical factors that influence Ghanaian young women choice of panties

Table 4 revealed the physical factors that influenced the respondent's choice of panties. Physical factors considered in the choice of clothing, of which panties are part, include comfortability, fit, type of fabric, style, health, colours, body shape or figure type, patterns and design, finishing, brand, and fashion. It was seen that all the factors were considered by respondents to influence their choice of panties, however, comfortability as a factor was highly considered by young women when selecting panties. Tsaousi and Brewis (2013) posited that people select underwear that will create the sensation of comfortability in their skin both physically and psychologically.

Physical comfort refers to a feeling of well-being that is brought about by internal and external or environmental conditions that are experienced as agreeable and associated with contentment and satisfaction. In clothing, this comfort is influenced by the fabric, the style and the fit. In terms of fabric, the contributory factors to comfort are fibre and yarn types and fabric construction. Being next to the skin the comfort of panties is very important and as such ranked first. Negative Physical sensations, like itching and sweating, caused by the fabric could lead to a lot of discomfort. Style of a pantie which do not conform to the body in a particular manner could be uncomfortable, a panty that does not fit well gives sensations that lead to discomfort. These contributing factors of comfort could give strong reasons for comfort placing first although all the other physical factors were also important.

Second to comfortability was the fit of the panty. The fit of a panty relates not only to the style of the panty but also to how it conforms to the body. Fit in terms of panty does not mean it should be close but suit the human figure. Panties that do not fit generally lose their functionality. Tight-fitting panties will give a lot of stress to the area, restrict movement and therefore discomfort, while loose-fitting panties may not conform to the area of the body thus exposing the pubic area.

Even though panties are not seen, their fits can affect the wearer to the extent that sometimes observers can sense it. Panties need not be too tight or too loose on the body; a perfect fit should be selected. Women exhibit signs like pulling up their panties, inserting their fingers into their buttocks cleavages to pull out panties that are ridding up, fidgeting when panties do not fit well thus making them uneasy and very uncomfortable.

Apart from comfortability and fit, the type of garment and type of fabric were also seen to be of great concern to the respondents. According to Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello (2009), underwear gives great support to outerwear therefore wearing inappropriate underwear can affect the outer garment. This supports the responses from this study, considering the respondent strong concern for the display of the panties in the outer garment. Also, the type of fabrics was of concern after garment type. Some fabrics used for panties weaken and fade due to their contact with body fluid (Barbier & Boucher, 2003; Crisnaro, 2014). Other fabrics also provide heat naturally and do not allow free circulation of air (Crisnaro, 2014). Beyond fabric not being absorbent, it can be irritating to the

skin. This could be why respondents highly consider the type of fabric before selecting panties.

The least concerning factors are fashion and branding. Respondents considered fashion and brand but not as compared to comfortability, fitness, garment type and fabric type. According to Tsaousi (2011), fashion and branding have become one important factor for the young adult in their outer wearing. However, the study revealed that it was not of major concern to respondents when it comes to panties. This could be that it is worn and hidden under the garment and people may not necessarily see it. Thus, any brand or how fashionable it will be was not a priority when considering panties. The relative unimportance of brand in panty choice could also be because the young women in the study look more at the other physical characteristics than the brand. It is the physical characteristics that determine the quality of the garment. Although some brands may be associated with quality (Maynes,1976), the young Ghanaian woman seems to base their choices more on the other measurable physical qualities rather than brand.

#### The frequency of wearing a particular style of panties

The author believed that people wear what they like most and feel comfortable in, thus, how frequent the respondents wear a certain style of panties would provide enough evidence of its use. It was revealed in Table 5 that the Comfort style of the pantie was worn frequently. This support the outcome in Table 3 where the comfort style of the pantie was revealed to perform almost all the fundamental functions and uses of panties (Datta & Agrawal, 2018). Also,

boyshorts and highwaist were noted to be worn occasionally. This is also seen in Table 3 that these panties covered most of the body and supported the basic functions and uses of panties. On the other hand, string, bikini, tanga and thong were rarely worn. According to Sujatha et al., (2016) such a style of panties is worn on special occasions. The panty styles that were mainly worn were those that have designs that cover most of the buttocks area and also have a wide under the area to cover the vaginal area and also do not usually ride up into the cleavage of the buttocks. On the other hand, the panties which are scarcely worn are those that are generally scanty in the amount of fabric used therefore do not cover much of the buttock and the vaginal area.

## The level of comfort and the pleasure from the use of pantie styles

In Tables 6 and 7, respondents were asked to rank each style of panties concerning their comfortability and pleasance. It revealed that comfort, boyshorts and highwaist were comfortable and pleasant, respectively. This was affirmed in Table 3, which is their functions and uses and Table 5 is their frequency of use. Similarly, string, tanga and thong, as revealed in Table 5 that they are rarely worn, respondents noted in Tables 6 and 7 that they were also uncomfortable and unpleasant. This account for the responses as shown in Table 3, string, tanga and thong were not able to perform all the basic functions and uses of panties such as preventing soiling, keeping private part dry, providing comfort, giving protection, hygienic and modest (Datta & Agrawal, 2018).

# **Fabric type to comfort**

Table 8 revealed fabrics that were used in the manufacturing of panties and their relation to comfort. It was seen that cotton pantie alone was very comfortable when worn. According to Ghunney (2013), panties produced from natural fibres provides more comfort than synthetic fibres. Cotton which is a natural fibre was noted to be more comfortable. Dogbey, Kpobee, Dedume and Osei (2015) in their study on the effect of fabrics and designs on the physical comfort of children clothes revealed that cotton was the preferred fabric when making children clothing because it allows air circulation around the body which helps absorb body moisture, making it cool to wear. According to Dogbey, et al., (2015) cotton fabrics are soft, washable and durable and was noted as the best choice for apparel. Also, in a country like Ghana where the weather is warm, for undergarments, one needs very absorbent fibres and cotton ranks among the highly absorbent fibres.

Similarly, other fabrics that were blended with natural fibres were considered too. These fabrics were cotton/polyester and lycra/cotton. These fabrics alone such as lycra, nylon, polyester and rayon were noted to be uncomfortable. It could be attributed to the fact that they do not breathe, are sensitive to heat and hold odour as compared to natural fibres but when it was blended with cotton, it was rated comfortable. Blended fabrics are formed by combining different fibres to form a new fabric with unique properties. Fabric blends enhance the performance of the fibres and offer desirable properties (Ghosh et al., 2014). Blends of fibres combat the weaknesses of the fibres and

strengthen their good characteristics (Riungu, 2009). It is however noted although the properties of rayon are similar to cotton; soft, comfortable to wear, absorbent, wrinkle-free, and retains shape, rayon was not one of the fabrics chosen. It is possible that respondents were not familiar with rayon as a fabric.

# Fabric construction of the panties in terms of comfort

In Table 9, respondents were asked to rank the construction of panties with their comfortability. It was revealed that lacing, netting and knitting were noted to be comfortable. McLoughlin and Paul (2018) described fabric construction as the process by which yarns or fibres are composed into a fabric that can be used for production. The construction of the fabric affects the texture, appearance and durability of fabric (Dogbey et al., 2015). It is therefore an ideal factor to consider when selecting panties. It plays a significant role in determining comfort, wearing qualities of the fabric and many more qualities of an item. For example, loosely woven fabrics are prone to sagging contrary to the close-woven ones that stand firm when worn (McLoughlin & Paul, 2018).

The construction of lacing and netting leaves spaces or holes in the fabric, this permits the free flow of air around the skin and thus prevent heat which makes people feel comfortable (Dogbey et al., 2015). This might account for the comfortability of using laced, netted and knitted panties. Strictly woven fabrics on the other hand have very little elasticity, therefore, do not stretch(restrictive) to conform to the shape of the buttock. It is also not soft, wrinkles easily and can be laborious to launder and as such not the best for making panties.

# **Brands of panties in terms of comfort**

In Table 10, it was revealed that Calvin Klein was the dominant brand when it comes to comfort. There was a great gap between the Calvin Klein brand and the other brands. The majority of the respondents were comfortable with the Calvin Klein brand and the assumption is that people normally stick to the first brand and shifting to the use of other brands becomes like a trial to them (Singh, 2014). According to Caru & Cova (2007), high switching from a brand is less when consumers have positive experiences and are satisfied with the product. Apart from Calvin Klein, the respondents were indifferent to the other brands when it comes to comfort. This support what was revealed in Table 4 where the branding was not a priority when it came to physical factors that influenced their choice of panties. This is in agreement with the statement that consumers expect much more than a product or even a brand (Ismail, Melewar, Lim & Woodside, 2011). The study opposes the findings by Brakes et al., (2009) which states that consumers purchase products for their functionality, quality and positive brand image.

# Panty style and the apparel they are best worn with

Table 11 revealed the type of panties and their best-worn apparel. It was seen that comfort, boyshorts and highwaist were preferred when jean's trousers and flared apparel are worn whereas string, tanga and thong were preferred under skinny, stretchy, pencil and close-fitted outfits. According to Schofield and LaBat (2005) panties with great amount of fabric like comfort, boyshorts and highwaist have their outlines seen when worn with skinny, stretched and fitted outfits and it

is then become part of scrutiny and monitoring by others. Warren and Brewis (2004) asserted that a person is termed indecent when the pantie is shown through outerwear and this might be the reason why most respondents selected the panties that do not fully cover the buttocks for skinny trousers or stretchy outfits.

Also, it is noted that panties are underwear and should remain as such and not allowed to show through the outerwear in any form to spoil the beauty of the underwear. Unless intentional good dressing does not allow for panties to be seen through or mark through outerwear. Apart from marking through garments panties that by style come to the waistline tend to show partly above the waistline of trousers generally which is not acceptable. The study concludes on the issue that people chose thongs, tanga and string with the view that they do not want their pantie lines to show through their outfit, especially if the outfit is close to the body and contrary to that, people go in for comfort, highwaist, boyshorts and bikini for loose outfits and fulled garment.

It was also observed from the study that jeans trousers were dominant in almost all the styles of the panty. This can be related to the point that GYW wears jean trousers often especially tertiary students. Studies by (Atencah, Agyei & Aggor, 2018) proved that most students usually put on casual wear. Jean's trousers are perfect for casual wear. Jean's trousers are convenient, comfortable, versatile, easy to maintain, fun to wear and long-lasting. It is also fashionable to be worn with any top or blouse (Ciurana, 2015). Jean's trousers seem to be everyday wear for them. This could be the reason for the selection of jeans trousers for all the panty styles.

#### The psychological factors that influence GYW choice of panties

It was revealed in table 12 that all the psychological factors influenced the respondent's choice of panties. However, in terms of ranking, comfortability, feeling good, safety and protection were considered the top priority. This also shares light on Tables 4, 6 and 7 where comfortability and pleasances were very significant. On the contrary, attitudes towards brands, values and moods were not so much concerned by the respondents. This could also be seen in table 4 where the branding was not of interest to the respondent. Again, in table 10, respondents were indifferent to brands. Mair (2019) conducted a study on the psychology of underwear. It was revealed that people perceive underwear as more appealing when it makes them feel good about themselves and comfortable when worn.

### The socio-cultural factors that influence the GYW choice of panties

Table 13 showed the socio-cultural factors that influenced the respondent's choice of panties. It was revealed that the occasion, activities, figure type and cost of panties were considered before their selection. Studies show that people considered the occasion to which they must attend before selecting their outerwear but this study confirms that not only outerwear but panties are considered too. The average mean of activities and occasion symbolises that there is a relationship between them. Mostly the occasion determines the activities to be done.

Also, respondents indicated that to feel good in what they wear, they need to choose what will fit their figure type or form. Figure type was next to occasion and activities. How the person is made up of and what will fit exactly the way

they are as important. Also, respondents considered the cost of panties. People are sensitive about price and as such the respondent considered the cost after identifying the occasion, activities, and the figure type. Arguably, it was attested that the cost of the product (prices) influences consumers choices as demonstrated in the studies of (Dickson 2001; Shaw & Tomolillo, 2004).

Again, from the study, respondents were undecisive considering ethnic background and celebrities influences, family influence, religious background, peer influence which are all external forces when it comes to the selection of the choice of pantie. According to Saeed (2015); Farah and El-Samad (2014) religion have a remarkable influence on consumers behaviour and choices in apparel. However, the study did not show any sign of respondents being influenced by such factors. This difference in panties as a garment could be because they are undergarments and are not seen by observers therefore does not seem to have any religious connotations nor restrictions for the respondents. Unlike garments where some style is peculiar to some tribes. Smocks and fugu are noted to be used by the northerners whiles slit and Kaba is associated with *Fantes*. Panties are general and no style is associated with ethnicity. Celebrities are used in advertisements to help attract more consumers (Das, Dash & Padhy, 2012). Studies have shown a high rate of celebrity endorsement to influence consumers (Hameed, Qayyum & Awan, 2018). GYW not considering celebrities influence is reasoned to the fact that panties are intimate apparel and therefore need to be personalised to define them.

Throughout the study, respondents were so much concerned about their comfort, how they will feel when they wear the panties rather than any external pressure or benefits.

### GYW experience with the use of panties

The last objective of the study was concerned with the experiences Ghanaian young women go through when they wear the panties available on the market. It was revealed that the respondent experiences with the use of the panties on the market were not comfortable enough, it wears out easily, allow for more infections, itchy when worn, stains easily, show through their outerwear and do not absorb moisture. The term experience can have different meanings depending on the approach due to unclear clarification (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009). It can be used to describe the using process, the effect and the outcome. Experiences are events that engage individuals in a personal way (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). It can be direct and indirect. This study emphasized direct experiences. Direct experiences generally occur when consumers purchase and use goods and services (Meyer & Schwager, 2007).

The respondents made it clear that the panties on the Ghanaian market do not perfectly suit their taste and are not durable but these are the options they find on the market. They had negative experiences from the use of the panties on the market. negative experiences are a sign of dissatisfaction from usage. It happens when the performance is lower than expected (Choi, Lee & Kim, 2003). It tends to shake consumer's trust. This may infer that sellers do not store or display the product at the right place or products that are imported into the market are

inferior. Also, it can be inferred that some consumers do not know how to care for and maintain the panties. Again, it was noted that respondents were concerned about the panties in the market showing through their outerwear. This could also be an indication that most GYW chose to wear any of the panties without considering the effect on their outerwear.

#### Panties in terms of consumer total preference

The respondents were asked to finally rank the panties style based on their preferences. It was revealed that comfort, highwaist, boyshorts and bikini were the top preferred panties of the respondents. In Table 3, these top four styles were noted to prevent soiling, keep the private area dry, comfortable, modesty, hygienic and protective. It was also indicated as those worn frequently. In terms of comfortability and derivation of pleasure, these same styles were chosen. From the study, one's preferences are determined by the ultimate level of satisfaction derived from the use of the pantie style.

The GYW ranked the pantie styles based on the level of satisfaction derived, where comfort, boyshorts, high waist and bikini were noted to offer the maximum utility. The higher the utility the more likely a consumer may prefer to use it. It is argued that preference for a style of pantie does not mean that there is a dislike for the other choices. For instance, a consumer preference for comfort pantie does not mean she dislikes string; its only indicate that she derives more satisfaction as compared to the others. There was also some level of consistency in their choice for these pantie styles. According to Mahmoud (2017), there must be consistency for the choice before it can be considered as the preferred option of

the consumer, which this study also affirms. Thus, it is clear to find out in Table 15 that it was the preferred choice of panties of the respondents.

# **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the results of the table and then proceeded to discuss each table. The purpose of the study was to examine the factors influencing the choices, use and experiences of panties by GYW. The study used descriptive analysis to reveal the study results and findings. The chapter entailed the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, examined the physical factors that influence GYW choice of panties, determined the psychological factors that influence GYW choice of panties, assessed the socio-cultural factors that influence the GYW choice of panties and discussed the experiences of GYW with the use of panties.

#### **CHAPTER FIVE**

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

### **Summary: Overview of the Study**

Generally, the study was to find out the factors influencing young women's experiences in the choice and use of panties. The study was also interested in finding out the experiences with the use of the various types of panties worn by GYW. The research design was descriptive. The Sample was made up of 217 female final year students (LEVEL 400). Convenient sampling was used. The research sought answers to five main issues:

- i. GYW knowledge on the uses and functions of the different styles of panties
- ii. Physical factors that influence GYW choice of panties
- iii. The psychological factors that influence the GYW choice of panties
- iv. The socio-economic factors that influence the GYW choice of pantie
- v. GYW experiences with the use of panties.

Following the issues raised in the research questions, the questionnaire was used for data collection in this study. To ensure the validity and reliability of the research questionnaire, a pilot testing of the instrument was conducted at Mankessim and the responses generally satisfied the research study. Descriptive analysis used mainly percentages and mean.

#### **Key Findings**

Most GYW were aware of the uses and functions of the different styles of panties, however, it was disclosed that a large population of these young women

do not also know the different uses and functions of the different styles of panties. Out of the styles of panties, comfort pantie was the best model to serve all the uses and functions of the panties stated in our work. Thongs, string and tanga were considered to give the sexiest look when worn whereas comfort, bikini, boyshorts and high waist keeps or stabilize menstrual cups very well. However, GYW who feel bad about wearing string and thongs prefer to use bikinis whenever they want to look sexy. Considering fabrics that provides much comfort was cotton. In all, it was seen that the natural fibres were greater in the provision of comfort than the synthetic fibres. GYW not only considered cotton fabric but blends of cotton are comfortable too.

The preferable construction method which seems to make consumers more comfortable was lacing, netting and knitting. Calvin Klein brand is the most preferred brand for GYW in terms of comfort. When it comes to the physical factors that influence GYW choice of panties, the most important things that young women lookout for are styles, colours, outer garments, comfort, fit, body shape, fabric and health-wise reasons. They took the following factors; brand, fashion, patterns and designs, and finishing's as secondary matters. The greatest of them all was comfort: feeling comfortable in their choice of pantie. Evaluation of the mean suggested that young adults with regards to the psychological factors that influence their choice of panties, placed these factors first; interest, confidence, comfort and feeling good which imply that their innate self is rated first before the external drives such as brand and style.

On the part of factors influencing GYW choice of panties, high-ranking socio-economic factors recorded was the occasion. GYW change the style of their pantie to fit the occasion. The next in line factors were moral values, societal perception and impression creation, cost of pantie, figure type and the latest fashion whereas fewer regards were given to family influence, religious background and peer influence. The young adult said they do not consider ethnic background and celebrities influences when purchasing panties.

Panties on the Ghanaian market per their experience are not serviceable; not able to derive satisfaction from its use. The panties are not comfortable, wear out easily, spread infections, are itchy, stain easily, show through outerwear and are not absorbent.

#### Conclusions

The result of the study revealed that GYW are aware that panties have different uses and functions but a great number of them were also ignorant about it. Those ignorant about the different uses and functions of the styles of pantie may make use of few styles to serve all purposes. None of the models can serve all uses and functions but Comfort dominant in more of the function and uses with its falling short in its sex appeal. Young adults put on thongs, string and tanga to make them look sexy or express sexual pleasure.

Thongs, string and tanga did not have strength in making provision for the other uses and functions of the panties. On a hygienic basis, the thong was rejected by the respondents concluding that constant use of thongs can be dangerous to one's health or there is a high risk of getting infections with the use

of thongs. In terms of keeping menstrual cups too 'thongs' do not best do that; this gives us the impression that the nature of thongs having a tiny strip at the back and do not have panty liner is the causal factor for this reason.

The leading physical factor that influences their choice of panties was comfort with less attention towards fashion and brand. It can therefore be concluded that people greatly consider how they feel that is the inner self which was on the highest rank. In addition, it could also be concluded that panties been worn undergarment and not exposed is the reason for not paying attention to physical factors like patterns and designs, finishing, brand and fashion. These factors tend to attract viewers or are complemented by others. In regards to panties, consumers do not see them fit for external appeal or appraisal.

GYW again prioritized psychological comfort above all measures. It is in line with their choice for physical comfort under the physical factors that influence their choice of panties. The physical factors seem to have a close relationship with the psychological factors too where GYW are driven by internal satisfaction such as psychological comfort, feeling good, safety and confidence. It can be concluded that people's choice of panties is for self-fulfilment: to impress themselves first.

The leading socio-cultural factor is occasion. It is in balance with the second-highest factor which is activities. Mostly the occasion determines the activities to be done in the setting. It can be concluded that even though panties are beneath the outfit but there are some occasions where panties are exposed so demands to choose to fit the occasion and activities. It could also mean that

whether it is exposed or not people choose depending on the occasion and activities because they do not want to feel out of place during the event and also the feeling for making good choices or prevent people from judging them for poor taste or wrong choices. Next to it was considering their figure type and cost of the pantie. This points out that even though their choices should match with the occasion and activities, they still chose what will flatter their figure and be within their strength in terms of price. The least considered factors were religious background, family influence, celebrities influence and ethnic background. It concludes that these socio-economic factors that are the religious background, family influence, celebrities influence and ethnic background could be a factor influencing their choice of panties but they do not pay much attention to it when making pantie choices. Peer influence is noted to influence them, to be able to flow with their friends and stick better in the group with similar preferences and characteristics, they go in for the choices of their friends (group).

Regarding their experiences with the use of panties on the market, they generally had poor experiences where they stated clearly that the panties easily wear out, visibility through outerwear, uncomfortable, low absorbency, cause itches, promote the spread of infections and easily stained. It can be concluded that the panties on the Ghanaian market are not durable and does not meet the standards of GYW. This could be attributed to the fact that manufacturers produce the panties according to the standards in their settings or solely on a basic standard neglecting the differences in other localities. It could also mean that the

exposure of the panties on the market reduces the quality of the product like exposure to sunlight and dust, thus resulting in poor experiences by consumers.

#### Recommendations

Based on the factors influencing the choices, use and experiences of panties by Ghanaian young women, the following recommendations are made;

- i. Middle men should brief consumers to inform them.
- ii. Erotic beading and embroidery work should be done on the comfort model to give it a sexy look to meet all demands.
- iii. Producers emphasise should be on producing comfortable panties using cotton and cotton blend.

#### Area for further studies

The research can be carried out in a different setting, among people of different religious or ethnic backgrounds.

Further research is suggested on:

- i. Factors that influence pantie choices among adult.
- ii. The different methods of fabric production and how it affects the use of panties.
- iii. Comparing the Ghanaian young men choices of panties to GYW.
- iv. Considering the impression created about the various styles of panties.
- v. Figure types and their best-matched panties.

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## **APPENDIX**

## UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

## DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

This questionnaire is designed to seek information on the factors that influence the choice of panties by Ghanaian young women. This research is part of the fulfilment of my MPhil in Home Economics. Please note that the information is solely for academic purposes only and for the purpose of anonymity, please do not write your name on the questionnaire. This exercise is voluntary and therefore you are free to decline participation at any time. It is estimated that answering the questionnaire will take 10 to 15 minutes hence feel free to seek clarification if there is a need.

## **SECTION A**

## **Demographic Information**

	•	· ·			
a.	17-22 years [	] b. 23-28 years [	] c. 29-34 years [	] d. 35 years above [	]

1. Please tick your Age

#### **SECTION B**

# Ghanaian young women's knowledge on the uses and functions of different styles of panties.

2.	Do you l	kno	w the diffe	erent styles of panties have different functions?	
a	. Yes [	]	b. No [	1	

(If no, move along and answer Section C and if yes continue with question 6)

3. Please select the use and functions of each style of panties (you can tick more than one)

Use and functions of panties styles										
	IKINI	COMFORT	STRING	TANGA	THONG	BOYSHORT	Retro)			
Prevent soiling										
Keeps privates dry										
Comfort										
Avoid exposing										
privates										
Protection										
Hygiene										
Modesty										
Sexy										
Keep menstrual										
cups										

4.	State the uses and functions of wearing the different styles of panties if not stated
	above

# **SECTION C**

# Physical factors that influence Ghanaian young women choice of panties

5. Please indicate the extent to which the following influence your choice of panties.

SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

Description	SA	A	U	D	SD
Physical Factors considered in panty choice					
Style					
Colours					
Brand					
Fashion					
Patterns and designs					
Garment type am wearing					
Comfort					
Fit					
Body shape					
Type of fabric					
Finishing					
Health					

6. Please indicate how frequently you wear the following styles of panties (you can tick more than one)

	Frequency of Use									
	Never	Rarely	Eventually	Frequency	Daily					
A BIKINI										
B COMFORT										
C STRING										
D TANGA										
E THONG										
F BOYSHORT										
G. high waist (Retro)										

7. Please indicate the level of comfort you feel or experience in relation to the style of panties used (you can tick more than one)

	Very	Uncomfortable	Indifferent	comfortable	Very
	uncomfortable				comfortable
A BIKINI					
B COMFORT					
C STRING					
D TANGA					
E THONG					
F BOYSHORT					
G. high waist (Retro)					

8. Please indicate the extent to which the style of panty appeals to you at the point of purchase. (you can tick more than one).

Style of panties									
	Very	unpleasant	Indifferent	pleasant	Very				
	unpleasant				pleasant				
A BIKINI									
B COMFORT									
C STRING									
D TANGA									
E THONG									
F BOYSHORT									
G. high waist (Retro)									

9. Please indicate how the fabric feels in terms of its level of comfort (you can tick more than one)

Fabric type in relation to comfort									
	Very	Very							
	uncomfortable	ortable			comfortable				
Cotton									
Silk									
Nylon									
Polyester									
Rayon									
Lycra									
Wool									
Cotton and									
Polyester									
Spandex/Nylon									
Lycra and									
cotton									

10. Please indicate the extent to which the structure of the fabric used will influence your selection of panties.

	Structure of the fabric for panties									
	Very uncomfortable	Uncomfortable	Indifferent	comfortable	Very comforta					
					ble					
Lacing										
Knitting										
Woven										
Netting										

11. Please indicate the level of comfort in relation to your brand of panties (you can tick more than one)

	Brand of panties in relation to comfort									
	Very	Uncomfortable	Indifferent	comfortable	Very					
	uncomfortable				comfortable					
Chantelle										
Thirdlove										
Skims										
Wacoal										
Natori										
Tommy										
John										
Knix										
Calvin										
Klein										
Naja										
Athleta										
Yummie										
Everlane										

12. Please select the type of panties and its best-worn apparel (you can tick more than one)

		Fi	t undergarm	ent			
	Skinny	Jeans	Gathered	Pencil/	Smoc	Slit	Sport
	Stretchy	trousers	/Flared	close-	k	and	wear
	outfit		dress	fitting		kaba	
				dress			
A BIKINI							
B COMFORT							
C STRING							
D TANGA							
E THONG							
F BOYSHORT							
G. high waist (Retro)							

# **SECTION D**

# The psychological factors that influence Ghanaian young women choice of panties

13. Please indicate the extent to which the following influence your choice of panties.

SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

Description	SA	A	U	D	SD
Experience with a particular brand					
Experience with a particular style					
Values					
Mood					
Confidence					
Safety/protection					
Comfort					
Interest					
Sexy					
Feels good					
Self-esteem					
Attitude towards the style					
Attitude towards the brand					

# **SECTION E**

# The socio-cultural/economic factors that influence the Ghanaian young woman choice of panties.

14. Please indicate the extent to which the following influence your choice of panties.

SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

SA	A	U	D	SD
	SA	SA A	SA A U	SA A U D

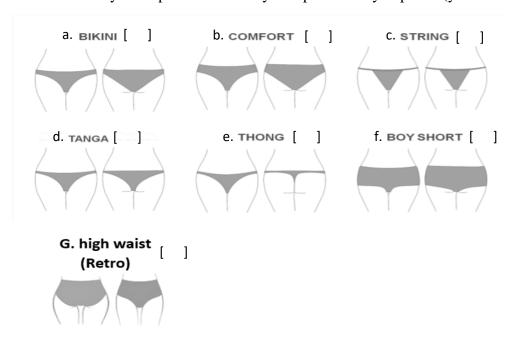
## **SECTION F**

- 15. Please indicate the extent to which the following experiences influence your choice of panties.
- SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

# Ghanaian Young Woman experience with the use of panties

Description	SA	A	U	D	SD
Not comfortable					
Wear out easily					
Allow more infections					
Itchy when worn					
Stain easily					
Show through your outerwear					
Do not absorb moisture easily					

16. Based on your experience what style of panties do you prefer (you can tick



THANK YOU