# IMPACT OF CUSTOM TAILORING ON READY TO WEAR MARKET IN GHANA

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## ABSTRACT

This is an exploratory study on the impact of custom tailoring on ready to wear market and mass customization with the goal of creating a fashion collection considering the demands of customers in Ghana. The paper seeks to promote customer preference for ready to wear clothing among Ghanaians. It further quest to suppress the interest in imported clothing and develop taste for ready to wear clothing made from fabrics produced in Ghana. This would help to create jobs and improve the Ghanaian economy. It is anticipated that this strategy will engender a paradigm shift from preference for custom tailoring to ready to wear clothing made in Ghana. The study employed a quantitative research design of which the exploratory research design was used. Convenient sampling technique was used to sample twenty (20) top fashion designers and questionnaire was used to solicit views of respondents. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The empirical findings of the study indicate that, females are more interested in fashion than males, Customer loyalty amongst fashion designers is not impressive, customer loyalty depreciates with years, and finally, female customers patronize fashion houses than their male counter parts. The study also recommends that, stakeholders in fashion industry should encourage upcoming fashion designers in their respective areas of study, to venture not only in custom tailoring but in the ready to wear market.

**Keywords:** Custom tailoring, ready to wear market, mass customization, globalization, fashion Industry.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

People have different attitudes to fashion. Some are indifferent - they do not care what they wear. Women especially are very choosy and particular about what to wear and like to spend a lot of money on clothes. Some people buy ready-made clothes, others prefer to have them made to measure or buy them at second-hand shops. Some people have excellent taste in dress and are always dressed perfectly, others are slovenly dressed. Others, want to be dressed according to the latest fashion at all cost even if it does not suit them. It seems that, it is a hobby for them to follow the fashion magazines and see what a few leading designers in Paris, Rome, London or New York present. For some people fashion is a matter of differentiation, the eagerness to distinguish oneself from one's fellows. For others it is a need to match their ideal model by imitating his/her appearance.

## 1.1 Fashion Industry

The Fashion Industry takes care of the production and sales of fashion products. Fashion industry plays very prominent role in the socioeconomic development of every nation by helping generate income for living and it is a means through which people acquire their clothing needs. Even though fashion change is intrinsic, today's fashion is being shaped by globalization. Jarnow and Dickerson (1997) assert that, globalization process is having tremendous impact on the fashion industry; the effect is that, where and how fashion is produced and marketed has changed. Jones (1998) describes globalization as a growing integration of the world's economy. To Walters (2002), it is a social process in which constraints of geography on economic, political, social and cultural arrangements recede and people become increasingly aware that they are receding. Hines and Bruce (2001) also assert that, globalization is the increasing internationalization of the production, distribution and marketing of goods and services, and the expansion of politics and cultures across the planet. It is apparent that, the common phenomenon of the term globalization is economic; thus the unit of economic activities and policies vis-a-vis political, social and cultural activities are expanding from nation to nation. Evidently, globalization is associated with technological advancement which facilitates the movement of people and goods worldwide. It can therefore be stated that, globalization is the key means through which manufacturers produce and distribute their economic wealth in exchange for economic gains.

## 1.2 Fashion Industry in Ghana

Ghana's income generated from fashion production is very low. Attempts have been made by Ghana's consecutive governments of the fourth republic to develop and improve the industrial sector of the country. Fashion education on the other hand is being studied at the tertiary level of Ghana's educational institutions, where graduates are expected to acquire quality demand-driven employable and marketable skills that will make them take their roles in the industrial sector, work and be economically productive (Amankwah, 2007). Yet the fashion businesses in Ghana are still dominated by ubiquitous roadside dressmakers whose market value is very low. Their main production is based on "custom-made" items. The main Ghanaian fashion export destinations comprising of EU countries, U.S.A. and some parts of the ECOWAS have declined due to competition with other African countries and poor finishing of products which make products not able to conform to standards required (Quartey, 2006). There is also an assumption that, producers

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face big competition from imports of surplus clothing rejected by the thrift shops of Europe and America, and cheaper clothes and textiles from Asia especially China and Indonesia.

### 1.3 Ready to Wear Garments

Ready-to-wear often abbreviated RTW; "off-the-rack" or "off-the-peg" in casual use is the term for factory-made clothing, sold in finished condition in standardized sizes, as distinct from made to measure or bespoke clothing tailored to a particular person's frame. Off-the-peg is sometimes used for items other than clothing such as handbags.

In the fashion industry, designers produce ready-to-wear clothing, intended to be worn without significant alteration because clothing made to standard sizes fits most people. Standard patterns, factory equipment, and faster construction techniques are used to keep costs low, compared to a custom-sewn version of the same item. Some fashion houses and fashion designers produce mass-produced and industrially manufactured ready-to-wear lines but others offer garments that are not unique but are produced in limited numbers.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a qualitative analytical approach for analysing the data. The data was then analysed under the thematic areas based on the responses. The various themes that emerged were used to answer the research questions. Information gathered were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Convenience sampling – a non-probability sampling technique was used in arriving at the sample size. Two samples were drawn for the study. The first sample was drawn from the top 20 fashion designers in Ghana. The second sample was drawn from the client list of these fashion designers based on availability and willingness to participate in the study.
A structured in-depth interview guide and questionnaires with open-ended questions were used. Twenty (20) top fashion designers in Ghana according to four out of the twenty brands were used for the study. This represents about 20% of the population. They are: Gregory Kankoh (Nallem), Abrantie The Gentleman, Sima Brew, Elikem The Tailor. Ten (10) customers from each of these designers were also considered for the study.

## 3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Demographic Profile

**Table 3.1 Sex Distribution of Respondents**

| SEX | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| FEMALE | 14 | 70 |
| MALE | 6 | 30 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100** |

***Source*-Field survey 2019**

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The table 3.1 reveals that 6 (30%) of the respondent are males while the other 14 (70%) are females. This buttresses the widely held conception that females are more interested in fashion trends than males.

**Table 3.2 Age Distribution of Respondents**

| AGE BRACKET | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 18-25 | 9 | 45 |
| 26-35 | 7 | 35 |
| 36-45 | 2 | 10 |
| 46 and above | 2 | 10 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100** |

**Source: Field survey, 2019**

The table reveals that 9 (45%) of the respondent are within the ages of 18-25, 7 (35%) are within the ages of 26-35, 2(10%) are within the ages of 36-45 and 2(10%) are of 45 and above.

**Table 3.3 Customer Loyalty Distribution of Respondents**

| YEARS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 3-Jan | 16 | 80 |
| 6-Apr | 2 | 10 |
| 9-Jul | 1 | 10 |
| 10 and above | 1 | 10 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100** |

**Source-Field survey 2019**

Table 3.3 shows that 16 (80%) of the respondents stick with one fashion designer for a maximum of 3 years. 2 (10%) stick with one designer for a maximum for 6years. 1 (10%) respondent each stick with one designer for a maximum of 9years and above 10years. This means that customer loyalty among fashion designers in the population considered for study is not impressive.

**Table 3.4 Patronage Frequency Distribution of Respondents**

| FREQUENCY | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Monthly | 11 | 55 |
| Quarterly | 7 | 35 |
| Bi-annually | 2 | 10 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100** |

***Source*-Field survey 2019**

Table 3.4 depicts that 11 (55%) of the respondents patronize products from fashion houses monthly. 7 (35%) respondents patronize quarterly and 2 (10%) patronize bi-annually. Analyses of the responses revealed further that female respondents are those who patronizes monthly and quarterly whiles the males patronize bi-annually.

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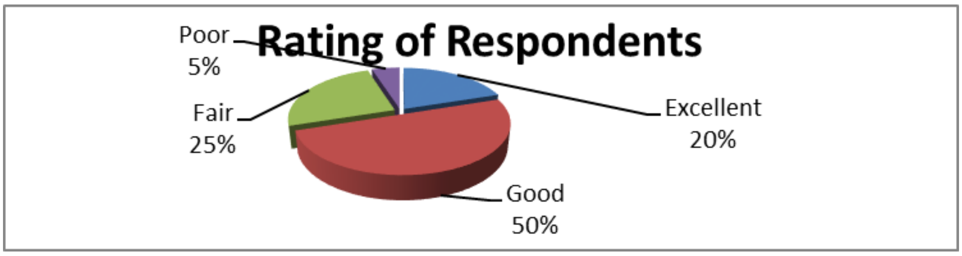
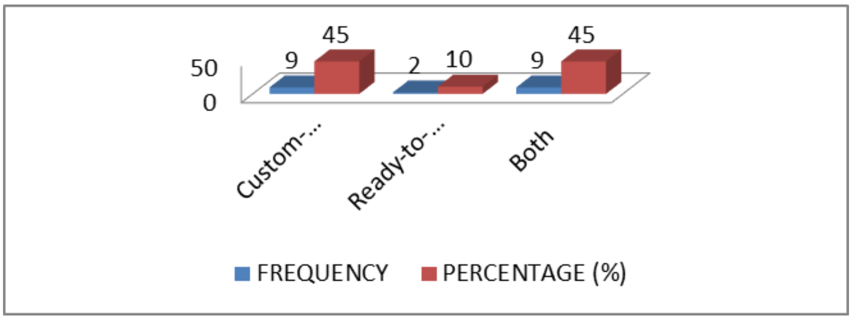
**Table 3.5 Industry Ratings Distribution of Respondents**




**Source-Field survey 2019**

From Figure 3.5 above, 4 (20%) of the respondents rated the Ghanaian fashion industry as excellent. 10 (50%) rated it as good. 5 (25%) rated it as being fair and 1 (5%) rated the Ghanaian fashion industry as being poor. This illustrates confidence in the Ghanaian fashion industry. Efforts ought to be made to sustain and improve this confidence.

**Table 3.6 Customer Preference Distribution of Respondents**




**Source-Field survey 2019**

Table 3.6 represents that, 9 (45%) respondents prefer custom-tailored clothing, 2 (10%) prefer ready-to-wear, and 9 (45%) prefer both custom-tailored and ready-to-wear clothing. This means a whopping majority of the respondents prefers custom-tailored to ready-to-wear clothing.

**Table 3.7 Quality ratings of Distribution of Respondents**

| RATING | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 8 | 40 |
| Good | 7 | 35 |
| Fair | 5 | 25 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100%** |

**Source-Field survey 2019**

The Table above reveals that 8 (40%) rated the custom-tailored clothing they patronize as excellent, 7 (35%) rated it as good, and the remaining 5 (25%) rated it as fair. This is an impressive outlook of the quality of custom-tailored clothing.

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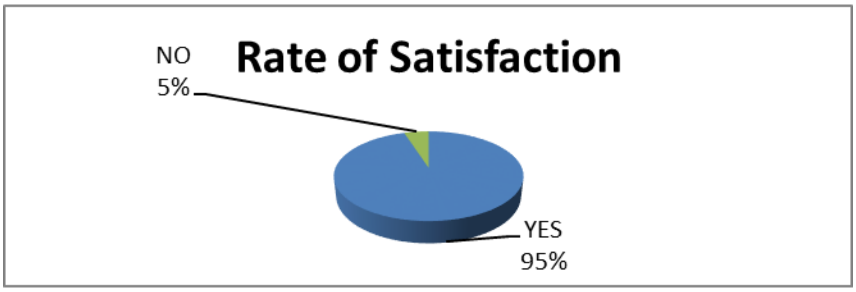
**Table 3.8 Satisfaction ratings Distribution of Respondents**




**Source-Field survey 2019**

According to the findings, more than 95% of the respondents responded yes to the response whether the custom –tailored products they buy meet their expectations as compared to the 5% who responded no.

**Table 3.9 Quality of Service Ratings Distribution of Respondents**

| RATING | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 5 | 25 |
| Good | 15 | 75 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100%** |

**Source-Field survey 2019**

From table 3.9, it is evident that, the quality of services rendered was good with the majority percentage of 75 as compared to the remaining 25 percent who responded that the quality of services was excellent.

**Table 3.10 Prefer Custom-tailored Clothing**

| REASONS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Affordable prices | 5 | 25 |
| Accessibility | 1 | 5 |
| Product Variety | 3 | 15 |
| Product quality | 11 | 55 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100%** |

**Source-Field survey 2019**

The majority, 55% prefer custom –tailored clothing because the product is of good quality, while 25% said the product was affordable. 15% of the respondents were of product variety and 5% said because of accessibility.

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**Table 3.11 Challenges Distribution of custom-tailored Shops**

| REASONS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Poor Customer Services | 1 | 5 |
| Poor quality of work | 2 | 10 |
| Poor delivery time | 15 | 75 |
| Rude and unruly reception | 2 | 10 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100** |

**Source-Field survey 2019**

This table reveals that, almost ,75% were of the view that the main challenges they faced was poor delivery time, 10% were of the view of rude and unruly reception from the services provided, and a further 10% said there was poor quality of work done, while poor customer services were recorded for the remaining 5%.

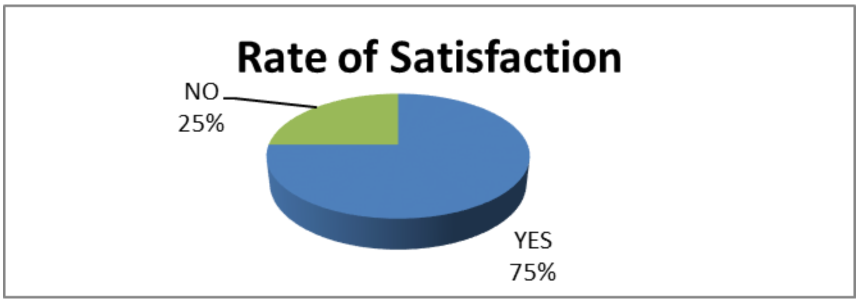
**Table 3.12 Quality of ready to wear clothing ratings**

| RATING | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 4 | 20 |
| Good | 11 | 55 |
| Fair | 5 | 25 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100%** |

**Source-Field survey 2019**

The majority of the respondents, 55%, rated the quality of ready-to-wear clothing as good whilst 20% rated it excellent and 25% of the respondents rated it as fair.

**Table 3.13 Satisfaction ratings Distribution of Respondents**




**Source-Field survey 2019**

According to the findings, more than 75% of the respondents were in favour of the ready-to-wear products meeting their expectations while 25% of the remaining respondents were not in favour to that response.

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**Table 3.14 Quality of Service Ratings Distribution of Respondents**

| RATING | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 5 | 25 |
| Good | 11 | 55 |
| Fair | 2 | 10 |
| Poor | 2 | 10 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100** |

**Source-Field survey 2019**

Table 3.14 presents a summary of the rate of quality of services received from ready-to-wear shops they patronized as found in this study. More than 55% of the respondents said it was good, 25% reported excellent, 10% reported fair while 10% reported poor.

**Table 3.15 Reasons for Preference Distribution of respondents**

| REASONS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Affordable prices | 4 | 20 |
| Accessibility | 9 | 45 |
| Product Variety | 5 | 25 |
| Product quality | 2 | 10 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100** |

***Source*-Field survey 2019**

The majority, 45% were of the view that, prefer ready-to-wear clothing because the product is accessible, followed by 25% who said the product comes with variety.
20% of the respondents believed the product had affordable prices and 10% said because of the quality of the product.

**Table 3.16 Challenges with ready to wear Shops**

| REASONS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Poor Customer Services | 5 | 25 |
| Poor quality of work | 8 | 40 |
| Poor delivery time | 7 | 35 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100%** |

***Source*-Field survey 2019**

This study reveals that almost, 40% mentioned that, the main challenges they faced was poor quality of work, 35% felt delivery time was poor, while poor customer services were recorded for the remaining 25%.

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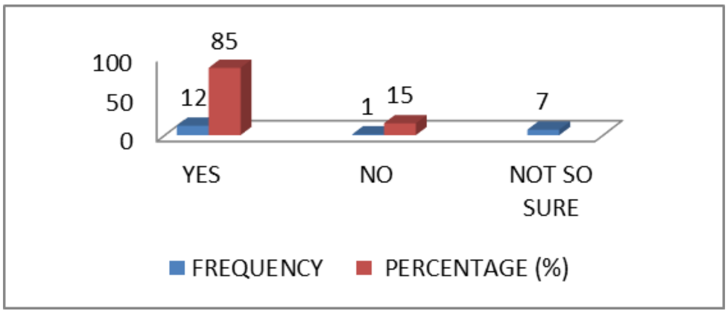
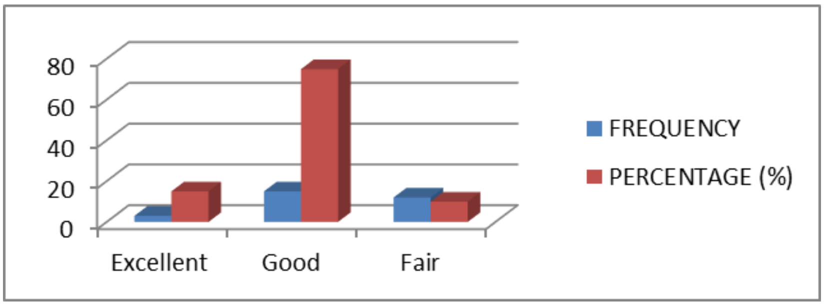
**Table 3.17 Distribution of respondents on the direction of the fashion industry**




***Source*-Field survey 2019**

According to the findings, more than 85% of the respondents were in favour of the view of the industry being headed to the right direction, while 15% of the remaining respondents were not in favour to that response.

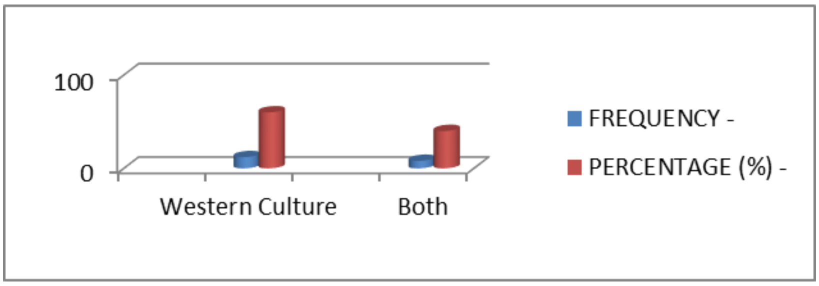
**Table 3.18 Ratings of patronage of local trends**




**Source-Field Survey 2019**

The above table shows 75% of the respondents were of the view that, the patronage of the local trends was good, 15% reported excellent to the patronage of local goods while the remaining 10% responded to the patronage of local trends as being fair.

**Table 3.19 Reasons for the strongest influence of fashion**




**Source: Field Survey, 2019**

Almost 60% reported that the reason for the strongest influence of fashion distribution was as a result of western culture, local culture was not recorded, while 40% of the remaining was for both.

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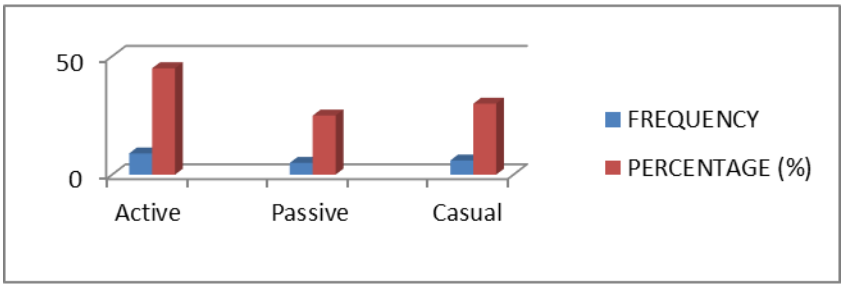
**Table 3.20 Reasons for quick design adaption**

| REASONS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Custom tailored shops | 9 | 45 |
| Ready to wear | 11 | 55 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100** |

**Source: Field Survey, 2019**

Forty-five (45%) of participants, were of the view that, custom tailored shop was a reason for quick design adaptation while the remaining 55% said ready to wear as reflected in table 3.20.

**Table 3.21 Distribution of respondents of the rate of participation on designing**




**Source: Field Survey, 2019**

Table 3.21 reflects the rate of participation in the designing of the clothing they patronized. Most of the respondents who chose active were 45%, followed by25% that was passive and 25% were casual.

**Table 3.22 Distribution of respondents on the influence of tailors on design**

| RESPONSE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 6 | 30 |
| Good | 12 | 60 |
| Moderate | 2 | 10 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100** |

**Source: Field Survey, 2019**

The Table above reveals that 12 (60%) feel that our local tailors and designers are doing enough to influence the style and design of clothing as excellent, 6 (30%) rated it as good, and the remaining 2 (10%) rated it as moderate.

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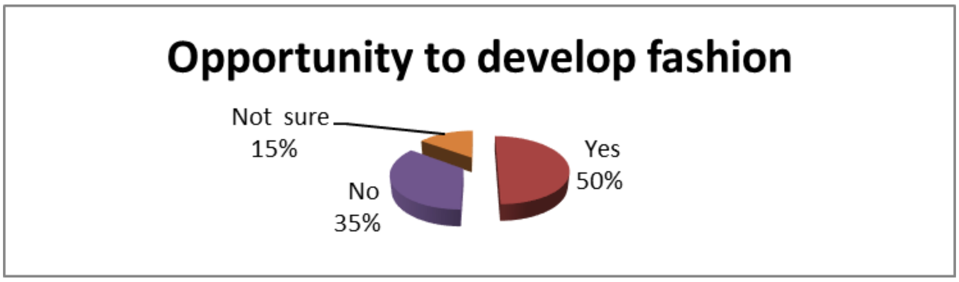
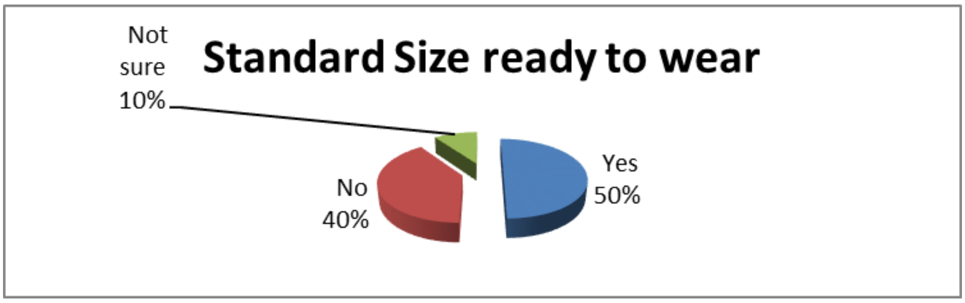
**Table 3.23 The opportunities to develop fashion industry**




**Source: Field survey, 2019**

According to the findings, more than 60% of the respondents responded no to the response whether there are enough opportunities to develop upgrade and raise the standard of the fashion industry, 10% said they were not sure, 5% responded no.

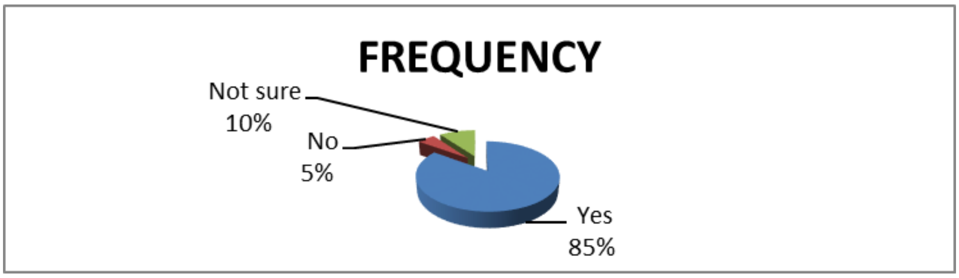
**Table 3.24 The standard size ready to wear/custom tailored**




**Source: Filed survey, 2019**

According to the findings, more than 50% of the respondents responded yes to the response whether they wish to buy more standard size ready to wear/custom tailored, 2% said they were not sure, 5% responded no.

**Table 3.25 Patronize of ready to wear or custom tailored**




**Source: Field Survey, 2019**

According to the findings, more than 85% of the respondents responded yes to the response whether they will sell patronize custom tailored shops, 2% said they were not sure, 10% responded no.

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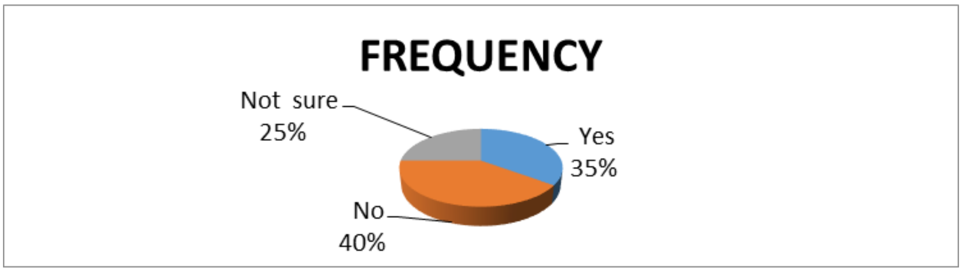
**Table 3.26 Improvement in the patronage of ready to wear clothing**

| RESPONSE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Proper Marketing and Advertisement | 5 | 25 |
| Government Support | 1 | 5 |
| Product quality on affordability | 14 | 70 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **100** |

**Source: Field survey, 2019**

Table 3.26 reflects the response that will lead to improvement in the patronage of ready to wear clothing. Most of the respondents think product quality on affordability will lead to improvement in the patronage of ready to wear clothing (70%), followed by 25% with the respond on proper marketing and advertisement. Nearly 5 % of the respondents said government support and none was of the view of opening more outlets.

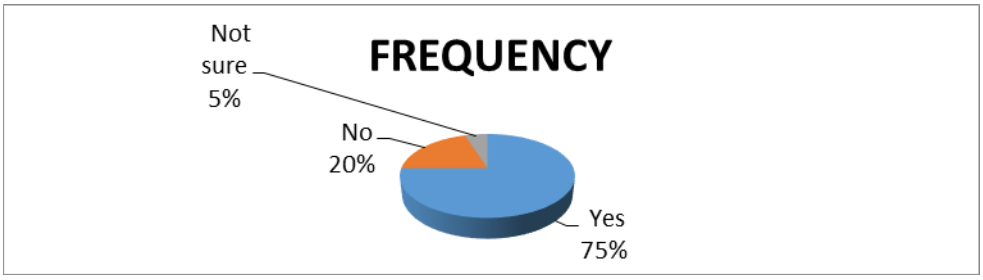
**Table 3.27 Distribution of response on efforts of action of stakeholders**




**Source: Field survey, 2019**

According to the findings, 40% of the respondents responded no to the response whether actions of stakeholders within the industry encourage ready-to-wear product adoption and penetration, 25% said they were not sure, 35% responded yes.

**Table 3.28 Competitiveness of custom tailoring and ready-to –wear**




**Source: Field survey, 2019**

75% of the respondents responded yes to the response whether they think that custom-tailored clothing have a competitive advantage over ready to wear clothing, 5% were not sure, 20% responded no.

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Custom tailoring is considered as the main source of clothing manufacturing in Ghana. Apart from custom tailoring, ready to wear shops also provides an avenue to purchase clothing and accessories. The obtained results after analysis of the data were presented as follows-
From the analysis, the main findings have been summarized as follows:

- Females are more interested in fashion than males.
- Customer loyalty amongst fashion designers is not impressive.
- Customer loyalty depreciates with years.
- Females patronize fashion houses than their male counter parts.

Majority of Ghanaians prefer custom tailoring to ready to wear clothing. Affordability is the key reason why people buy these goods. Fashion and consumer preferences also seem to be shifting away from traditional, 'African'-style to more 'Western'-style clothing.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Customer satisfaction of custom tailored products are overwhelmingly impressive. Even though satisfaction is overwhelmingly high, same cannot be said of the quality of services customers receive from custom tailored clothing shops. Product quality is the main reason people prefer custom tailored clothing. Custom tailored clothing appear to not be readily available meaning they have not been readily made. Poor delivery time is a major challenge with custom tailored garments. There is high rating of the quality of the ready to wear clothing than the custom tailored garments. Customer satisfaction of custom made clothing is higher than ready to wear clothing. People prefer ready to wear clothing because it is more accessible than custom made clothing.

The following were deduced from the analysis;

- Ready to wear clothing has more variety than custom made clothing.
- Ready to wear clothing is cheaper in terms of affordability than custom tailored clothing.
- Majority of the respondents believed that the fashion industry in Ghana is headed in the right direction.
- Patronage of local trends and styles in the Ghanaian fashion market is generally impressive.
- Western culture has the strongest influence on the Ghanaian fashion market.
- Ready to wear clothing adapts new designs and trends than custom made clothing.
- Majority of respondents wish to buy more standard sized Ready to wear clothing if they were readily available.
- Adequate Ready to wear shops would increase sales patronage of ready to wear garments.

According to respondents, ready to wear shops have the ability to gain fast leadership in the market with good product quality and affordable pricing. There is generally a high regard of the quality of custom tailored clothing.

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# 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of present study, some recommendations for customers and fashion designers are drawn as follows:

- It would be worthwhile for all stake holders in fashion i.e. designers, customers, parents, teachers and the government to encourage upcoming fashion designers in their respective areas of study, to venture not only in custom tailoring but in the ready to wear market.
- As education has been found to be a significant factor in developing study habits among students, there is the need for curriculum developers and teachers to take the availabilities of different markets into account when developing curriculum and designing instructions.
- Government should work on improving the economy which will therefore increase standard of living such that both markets will be affordable for customers and be at power so that customers can opt for both markets equally
- It is necessary for the government to also build factories where garments can be constructed on a large scale thereby increasing the ready to wear garments in the market.
- It is also important for existing designers to venture into the making garment to be sold in ready to wear shops creating more jobs, profit and revenue.
- Designers must also study the behaviours and characteristics of people and customers to be able to meet criteria as well as needs.

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