MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED EDUCATION

TOPIC

ANALYSIS OF HOW FEMINISTS' VIEWS HAVE AFFECTED FASHION AND DRESS: A

Case of Female Students at a Tertiary Institution in Gweru

By: Shirley Banda

R13027J

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED
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ANALYSIS OF HOW FEMINISTS' VIEWS AFFECT DRESS AND FASHION: A Case of Female Students at a Tertiary Institution in Gweru

SUBMITTED BY

SHIRLEY BANDA (R13027J)

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE MASTER OF EDUCATION DEGREE IN FASHION AND TEXTILES AT MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY.

……………………………..   …………………………

 Supervisor   Date

……………………………..   …………………………..

Moderator   Date

……………. ………………..   ………………………

Chairperson   Date

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my family, both nuclear and extended, who tirelessly encouraged

and supported me financially as well as with insights into improving the presentation of the

research. My love to them all!

DECLARATION

I, Shirley Banda, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety, or in part, been submitted to any other university for a degree

…………………………………

Shirley Banda

NOVEMBER 2016

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ABBREVIATIONS

IP: Interpretivist Paradigm

SIT: Symbolic Interactionist Theory on Dress

CT: Cognitive Theory on Dress

FT: Feminist Theory on Dress

WHO: World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

This research sought to find out how the views of feminist female students at a tertiary institution in Gweru affected their choice of fashion and dress as well as how to minimize friction resulting from female students' freedom of choice of dress being infringed upon. It aimed to establish the underlying reasons for students' views that affected their dress, in answer to the main research question which was, "How have feminists' views affected dress and fashion?" It also meant to come up with strategies for minimizing any friction on views on dress and fashion, in answer to the second research question – "How can freedom of dress and fashion be made more acceptable by female students at a tertiary institution in Gweru?" The study adopted the Interpretivist paradigm and the qualitative approach and employed a case study design. The eclectic theoretical framework encompassing the cognitive, the symbolic interactionist and feminist theories on dress informed the review of literature related to the study. Eight hundred and forty female students at the campus comprised the population (N=540) from which a convenience sample of eighty-two (n=82) participants was drawn. A questionnaire with both open-ended and closed questions was self-administered. The findings were analyzed thematically, without software. The study revealed that feminist female students' views regarding patriarchy, power, identity, self-expression and freedom of expression affected their choice of dress in varying degrees. It revealed that friction on views on dress and fashion could result from meanings attached to dress, since dress communicates information about the wearer. It also emerged that increasing awareness on human rights, as well as providing androgynous styles could help ease the tension on views on dress and fashion. The research concluded with recommendations to educators to include WHO Life Skills such as communication, self-awareness, self-management and self-esteem, into the syllabus. In addition, Emotional Intelligence modules could also be taught from an early age to instill conflict-management skills into both males and females. Respect for human rights also needs emphasis. Fashion designers need to come up with unisex designs to cater for females who need the power they view is associated with masculine dress. Lastly, the researcher hopes that the study may stimulate interest in other researchers to carry out a comparative study on how male views have affected fashion and dress and if men also feel that their freedom of choice of dress is in anyway infringed upon, and how any such friction may be alleviated.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT

1.0 Introduction

This chapter gives the background to the study and then explains the research problem including the questions which the study seeks to answer, in line with the stated objectives of the study. The researcher's envisaged significance of the study is given, as well as the geographical and theoretical delimitations. Key terms used in the study are defined, and then a summary of all this is given at the end of the chapter.

1.1 Background of the Study

Motivation for the study came mainly from the module on The Social Psychology of Dress in Fashion and Textiles, which included topics on the various perspectives, or theories on dress. The Feminist Perspective on dress largely portrays women's antagonism with fashion and dress because women, in particular, feel that there is no equality between men and women in society's expectations of how men and women dress; they feel that women are oppressed by society's dress code for them. The researcher's interest to pursue this study was further stimulated by the Cognitive and Symbolic Interactionist Theories on dress. The Cognitive Theory (CT) on dress states that humans are thinking beings who do not dress randomly, but that they put thought into what they wear, as they are aware that their dress sends messages to observers and also affects the way they feel about themselves. Kaiser (1985) alludes to the fact that CT focuses on thought processes and appearance perception through the use of visuals. Davis (1992) points out that how a person perceives his/her body, or body image, is a cognitive function of an individual. Feminists viewed dress as an artefact that had been used to oppress them, but which they realized they could use to make a statement on equality among the sexes.

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Comment [P1]: I totally agree ☺

The Symbolic Interactionist Theory (SIT) suggests that humans simplify complex issues in life through the use of symbols like dress which are given a common meaning through humans interacting with each other and agreeing on the meanings of the various symbols. It is a two-way interaction between people that focuses on appearance perception as well as appearance management. Stone (1962) shows that appearances of individuals in social interactions possessed communication equal to discourse. An interesting dimension to this communication aspect of dress was added by Twigg (2007)) by including that visual communication reflects prevailing norms, values and beliefs. This is clearly 'articulated' in feminists' views which have affected dress and fashion over the three Feminist Waves since the late 19th century to date. Their views are different, depending on the gender values of each era.

This study sought to analyze the views of feminists that have affected fashion and dress. Feminists are people who support feminism, and feminism is about equality between the sexes. Hoffmann (2010) defines Feminist Theory as a way of looking at the social world through the lens of gender inequality. One would assume that, since feminists embrace feminism, which, simply put, is about equality between men and women, they would therefore be on the lookout for any discrepancy between the way society views men's and women's dress, and whether the discrepancy adversely affects women, and consequently, seek ways of redressing the perceived inequality, partly through dress.

It is interesting to note the particular views held by each wave of feminism and how they used dress and fashion to try and bring about equality between the sexes in terms of fashion and dress, as shown by the three waves of feminists from the late nineteenth century to date.

Comment [P2]: I'm not sure how you structure your studies at MSU but once you start discussing your theory in detail you may want to talk about the main protagonists of this theory. In the case Of Symbolic Interactionism it was George Mead.

Comment [P3]: You may have to define feminism for the purposes of your study because the term means a lot of different things in different studies.

1.1.1 First Wave feminist views which affected dress and fashion (late nineteenth century to mid-1960s)

The late nineteenth century marked the beginning of Feminism Movements. The impetus for the movements was the perceived inequality between men and women, in favor of men, and the desire on the part of women to liberate themselves from this perceived oppression. Dress became the method and form of feminism revolutions. This is partly because dress communicates one's status in society. Davis (1992) argues that we cannot separate the concept of identity from interaction with others, because through expressions of identity, individuals symbolically communicate personal attributes to others.

The feminists' argument, as put across by White (2003) was that woman's efforts to develop her appearance made her a dupe and game for men, and therefore a collaborator in her own oppression. This was partly because the Victorian fashion emphasized a body shape that was not attainable to most women, which was unfair as it made many women who did not have that body shape, feel less feminine and less desirable than the ideal woman, who also had to wear tight, and unhealthy corsets to come up with the ideal hour-glass body shape. The women this era squeezed into corsets and were burdened with many fabrics and ribbons in one dress, which impeded their movements, although this was considered to be a mark of class and good dress taste then. Davis (1992) notes that as a result of the perception held by women regarding equality between men and women, the feminists discarded corsets and adopted a more masculine look with flattened breasts and hips and bobbed hair, closer to what men wore then.

Figure 1.1 shows images from the Victorian era which feminists viewed as oppressive and therefore opted for less cumbersome, utilitarian dress and fashion.

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Figure 1.1: Victorian era restrictive dress

Fashion Plates from the 1860s and 1870s. The volume of the skirt shifted all around to the back. Waists remained tiny, enhanced by corsets.

Source: www.katetattersall.com/victoria-feminine-ideal-the-perfect-silhouettte-hygiene-grooming-body-sculpting/

Figure 1.2 is an example of Coco Chanel's elegant black and white dress launched in 1923 to replace the cumbersome, Victorian era dress and fashion.

Figure 1.2: Coco Chanel's elegant black and white dress

Source:http://twitter,com/LuLuFashion_Ind/status/644107082350903297/photos/1

Coco Chanel, a feminist fashion designer, came up with her symbolic "little black dress" at this time, to replace the corsets, frills and many layers of the Victorian era which women viewed as

oppressive and restricting their body movements. In this way, Channel totally changed the definition of fashion to something simple and elegant – black and white. The change in dress symbolized women's emancipation from men's restrictions on them, bringing them out of the private sphere in the home, as noted by Hoffman (2010).

1.1.2 Second Wave Feminists and their views which affected dress (Mid 1960 to 1990)

Friedman (1963), an American writer and activist, paved the way for the advent of Second Wave Feminism, which was visible soon after the Miss America Beauty pageant of 1968. Indignant at the pageant dress code of skimpy clothing, the feminists did not want to be viewed as the plaything and objects to entertain men, which they viewed as demeaning them. They thus threw away cosmetics, high heels, bras and other female objects which they deemed oppressive. Engs (2000) and Kesselman (1991) state that women started to embrace change through wearing trousers, which symbolized their independence from male governance and also conveyed messages of equality between the sexes. The women wore their hair either very short, or let it grow long and straight – no curls. They mostly dressed in blue jeans and T-shirts and sturdy shoes. The clothes were intentionally made gender-neutral and in this way, the gap between gender and class was intentionally narrowed, as far as dress was concerned. Butler (1993) observes that women of the second wave feminism, through dress, broke down the definition of sex and gender, assigning sex to the biological range, and gender to social meaning. They emphasized that while sex is innate, gender is not and can thus be redefined (Davis, 1992 & Hoffmann, 2010). Their aim was to reinforce gender equality in society, through dress reform for women.

Feminists' view of being objectified and being the plaything of men led to protests over the 1968 Miss America Beauty Pageant, resulting in women's fashion being modified to resemble men's

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fashion. Figures 1.3 and 1.4 show the Miss America Pageant and the protests, respectively, illustrating women's disgruntlement with the way women were being objectified through fashion and dress.

Miss America Beauty Pageant

Figure 1.3: Miss America Finalists, 1930s. Hulton Archive / Getty Images.

Source: https://womenshistory.about.com/od/feminism-second-wave/a/womens-liberation.htm

Protesters against the 1968 Miss America Pageant.

Figure 1.4: Protesters against the 1968 Miss America Pageant.

Source: https://womenshistory.about.com/od/feminism-second-wave/a/womens-liberation.htm

The women who came to the Miss America Pageant Protest had several complaints against the pageant, which included the following: (source: http://womenhistory.about.com/od/miss-america-protests/a/miss-america-as-dream-equivalent.htm)

- The pageant judged women on impossible standards of beauty. The protesters called the standards "ludicrous."

- The pageant objectified women and consequently harmed all women.

- The protesters did not like the hypocrisy of the pageant, in particular, the double standards of the Madonna/whore fantasy, in which men irrationally demanded that women be innocent and beautiful, while also satisfying the men's lust.

- There was a blatant inequality in encouraging girls to grow up to become Miss America, while grooming boys to grow up to be presidents. Why not women as well? Why was Miss America supposed to be their equivalent dream, without an equivalent dream for boys?

Morgan (1970) and Butler (1990) among others, posit that fashion and feminism began to have an intricate and significant bond with immense tension. In an attempt to quell the tension, Yves Saint Laurent mixed female garments with masculine characteristics and pushed female garments to a powerful, tough and independent modesty, as depicted by figure 1.5.

Source:https://womenshistory.about.com/od/feminism-second-wave/a/womens-liberation.htm

Figure 1.5: **Yves Saint Laurent's female garments mixed with masculine characteristics**

Following the second wave feminism was the third wave feminism, with divergent views, which are reflected in divergent dress codes as well.

1.1.3 Third Wave Feminism and their views which affected fashion and dress (1990s to date)

From the gender-neutral clothing of second wave feminism, came a wave of feminists whose views were that they needed to emphasize (almost flaunt) their femininity without being judged by society. Song (2010) observed that the "too girly and too ascetic" garments and accessories which the second-wave feminists *threw away* because they deemed them to debase women, came back in fashion, with a vengeance, as the dressing was now even more alluring and sexy, than before the rise of the second wave feminism. The view of Third Wave feminists was basically a celebration of their femininity, and they thus sought dress and fashion that flaunted this femininity. The fashion was thus characterized by miniskirts and low-cut necklines.

The Third wave feminism is marked with great ambivalence, but some dress scholars such as Sika (2014) regard it as a successful feminism revolution that has freed women from conservative social restrictions, opting for dress that showed off their uniqueness and personalities as women. One of the leading designers for this wave is Alexander McQueen, who came up with the 12-centimeter lobster claw shoes, birdcages, butterflies and feathered wings.

The division among feminists which showed up in the Second wave when some feminists were turned away from attending a demonstration in Baton Rouge in the United States, by fellow females, because they were wearing pants (Engs, 2000) continues today, although not because of the wearing of pants per se, but mainly on the basis of what constitutes modesty. Some feminists feel that they should be left to expose their bodies, if they want to, and if anyone has a problem with that, then it is *their* problem. Song (2010) posits that conservative, or utilitarian feminists,

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on the other hand, feel that exposure of women's legs and breasts is not modest. Radicals do not like this, accusing these feminists of complicity with what they regard as oppressive patriarchal standards. The different views result in the adoption of divergent fashion and dress styles.

Figure 1.6 illustrates a variety of dress that illustrates women's differing views on what constitutes modesty, which invariably affects choice of fashion and dress.

Ambivalence among Third Wave Feminists regarding what constitutes modesty.

Figure 1.6: Ambivalence among Third Wave Feminists regarding what constitutes modesty

Figure 1.7: Ambivalence among Third Wave Feminists regarding what constitutes modesty

Song (2010) emphasizes the point that the message which the Third Wave feminists wanted to convey was that they wanted to be liberated to make their own choices on what to wear, not a dress code that society dictates to them, which does not apply to males.

The narration on the waves of feminism dress revolutions demonstrates that the fashion trend followed by each wave greatly demonstrated women's views on beauty and life styles: the first wave liberated women from corsets and colonial restrictions, symbolizing their sense of equality with men who did not have to wear restrictive clothing. The second wave continued with this trend, pushing it to extremes where female garments resembled men's styles, thus creating a sense of roughness and rigidity, symbolizing the view which they held that masculinity is powerful and carries a lot of significance in society which they desired to gain also, according to Butler (1993). They wanted to be liberated from what they viewed as ludicrous beauty standards. The third wave feminists kind of awakened to the fact that the biological fact of male and female

is a reality that needs to be celebrated by women through dress. They thus broke fashion boundaries and made fashion more innovative and inspiring, albeit with contrasting extents of that feminine expression of the self.

Dress is an integral part of human behavior which Hoffman (2010) refers to as our second skin, which can be a conduit that relays information about the individual and his/her society within which the individual lives. The freedom of choice on how to adorn ourselves lies at the root of feminists' credo – to be who and what they want to be through the symbol of dress. Crane (2000) argues that this is because dress communicates messages about individuals which we inevitably react to, such as identity and status.

All three waves of feminism revealed feminists' core view, which is basically a quest for freedom to choose to be whom they want to be. They communicated this desire through dress and fashion. However, the third wave feminism revealed a lot of ambivalence as noted by Church-Gibson (2000). The researcher was eager to find out if this friction on views on dress and fashion that the third wave feminists have is also present among female students at the campus of a tertiary institution in Gweru and what strategies could be carried out to bring gender balance into the sphere of dress and fashion. The researcher also wondered if this friction could be among women in Zimbabwe as a whole as well as in Africa, through checking what literature offers on this issue, and if the strategies could be applied to the population under study.

Equality between men and women is the credo of feminism. Seeing then, that feminists have raised concerns about an infringement of their right to freedom of choice on what to wear, it is important to understand the underlying causes of this view by females and analyze it, to get a

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better understanding of this integral part of human behavior – dress. That is the thrust of this study.

1.2 Identification of gap in knowledge as revealed by literature:
Keay (2000) asserts that Richards is one of the few writers to have examined feminist attitude to dress. Similarly, to the researcher's knowledge, there has not been much research done on feminists' views that have affected dress from an African context, and especially in Zimbabwe. As such, the researcher seeks to fill the gap in the knowledge on how female students' views at a tertiary institution in Gweru affect their choice of dress and fashion. Although it is a relatively small population, eight hundred and forty students, the researcher, however, hopes that the study will serve the purpose of stimulating further research to be carried out, from an African perspective, and on a larger context as well. The researcher is especially interested to find out if these various views are also present among Black Africans, even though the population under study is small, because most of the work in books is based on the experiences of women in the west. This is the gap that the researcher hopes to fill.

1.3 Research Problem
Crane (2000) assets that clothes are the most visible markers of class and gender and therefore useful in maintaining or subverting symbolic boundaries in society. Sika (2014) notes that some feminists view fashion as superficial, sexist and oppressive, while Church-Gibson (2000) argues that third wave feminists' view on dress is fraught with ambivalence. Feminists such as Sika (2014) view fashion and dress as oppressive to women's liberation in that society imposes a dress code on females which is not imposed on males. This mixed view towards fashion and dress leads to tension which might infringe on people's freedoms. This research is concerned with analyzing feminists' views on gender boundaries that are set by society and expressed through fashion and dress, and further seeks to find out if this infringement on people's freedom

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of choice in terms of fashion and dress is also experienced among female students at a tertiary institution in Gweru, and if there is a way that this tension can be reduced.

1.4 Objectives of the study

1. To study and explore how feminists' views have affected fashion and dress.

2. To examine why these views have resulted in some women not liking dress and fashion.

3. To investigate the reasons underlying acceptance of dress and fashion by some women.

4. To discover ways of minimizing tensions that some of the female students may have on views on fashion and dress.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How have feminists' views affected fashion and dress?

2. How can freedom of dress and fashion be made more acceptable by female students at a tertiary institution in Gweru?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study seeks to scrutinize the diverse views of feminists that have affected fashion and dress, tracing these views as expressed by the first-wave, second-wave and currently third-wave feminists. The aim is to add to the existing body of knowledge on how these diverse views have affected the fashion and dress of female students at a tertiary institution in Gweru, and hopefully, young African feminists, who, the writer hopes, are, to some extent, represented by this group. In view of that, the researcher hopes that this study will be of benefit to the following:

The researcher is looking forward to getting an in-depth understanding of the apparent friction on views on dress and fashion, so that she may relate with empathy to feminists who are passionately against fashion and dress. The researcher also hopes to gain a wealth of information on the underlying cognitive and symbolic meanings of dress as interpreted by feminists and society and how the two views can merge amicably.

Student dress psychologists may better appreciate that fashion and dress have the potential to be used as a weapon of exclusion by the dominant group or class. Bourdieu (as cited in Taylor (2002) asserts that this then has the possibility of causing tension in society. Tracing the roots of such tensions may be instrumental in easing the tensions, something which student psychologists may find interesting and helpful in understanding the relationship between women and dress.

Student dress sociologists to get a broader understanding of the fact that dress invariably communicates non-verbal information that relates to the development of our social identity, sexuality and social status, among other things. This study will try to explore the social forces that work in dress and fashion which provoke anti-fashion stances among some feminists, according to Davis (as cited in Taylor (2002), and extending this to the African feminist context.

Feminists, especially radical feminists, may come to the realization that they have too easily accepted the male view that women's interest in dress is frivolous, and therefore got themselves into what Wilson (as cited in Taylor (2002), terms "patriarchal cage" and that women are on display for men's pleasure, which resulted in the feminists' hate of the stiletto heel, beauty parlor and glamor. The aim of this study is to argue that this need not be the case; that while feminists rightly fight for equal rights between men and women, they need not look down upon innate differences between the sexes. Fashion and dress is one way of expressing this identity, as Davis (as cited in Taylor (2002) notes, and that fashion and dress can be legitimately manipulated to exhibit aesthetic pleasure.

> **Comment [P4]:** I love this Tete ☺

Future Researchers: it is hoped that this study could stimulate interest in further research on feminists and dress, or maybe, a comparative study which will also look into male views which have affected their choice of dress.

Fashion designers / Fashion and Textiles students: To highlight the possible tension that emanates from certain styles, because dress, as observed by Davis (as cited in Arvanitidou (2002), is semantically more ambiguous and indeterminate than language in its communication, as it suggests and implies much more than it optically states. Therefore designers should try and find gender-neutral styles that try to minimize such strains, at least among fashion designers in Fashion and Textiles at the tertiary institution where the study was carried out.

Fashion and Textiles and Gender Studies Lecturers at the tertiary **institution** may also glean additional information from the study, to their already existing body of knowledge, on how the views of female students at the institution have affected their choice of dress and fashion, and share this information with their students, and may use the information for discussions in their lectures, for example, on topics such as The Social Psychology of Dress and The ABC of Gender, respectively.

1.7 Assumptions
Based on the feminist, cognitive and symbolic interactionist theories which state that thinking human beings consider what they wear because they know that there are meanings attached to the symbol of dress which affect them and others, the researcher's assumption is that the views of female students on issues of equality between the sexes and modesty would influence their choice of dress.

1.8 Delimitation of the study
Theoretical:

This study explored how feminists' views have affected dress and fashion, from the first-wave to the third-wave feminists, in order to get a historical background of where feminists and their views stem from, to where they are at the present. The communicative role of dress was studied to try and understand the basis of the feminists' perceptions of dress through three theories on dress namely, the cognitive perspective, the symbolic interactionist perspective and the feminist

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perspective of clothing which formed the theoretical framework against which the feminists' views that have affected fashion and dress were analyzed.

Geographical:

The research was carried out among female students at a tertiary institution in Gweru, from which a sample was drawn, whose findings were used to deduce the population's perceptions that have influenced fashion and dress. Female students were chosen because research by Arvanitidou and Gasouka (2012) revealed that females are the ones mostly affected by fashion and dress, than men, and feminists are largely women.

Time Frame:

The study ran from October 2015 to November 2016.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Dress: Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992) consider dress to include both body supplements and body modifications. Because Roach and Eicher's (1992) definition is neutral in terms of cultural hierarchies, this concept of dress allows for cross-cultural research, and is therefore appropriate globally. Roach and Eicher's (1992) concept of dress as body supplements and body modifications also changes the focus from the material things that clothes the body to bodily practices, grooming and sanitary practices, and the role dress plays in social interaction. With this definition, dress is a multi-sensory phenomenon, engaging the senses of hearing, touch and smell, but especially vision.

Dress can thus be said to be a form of bodily adornment which can be achieved through additions to the body such as clothing, as well as through alterations to the body itself as in tattooing and make-up.

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> **Comment [P5]:** I really suggest you also consider including Erving Goffman's work. He draws from George Meads symbolic interactionism theory and comes up with the theory of Identity Management. He purports that we use dress to manage different identities in different contexts.

Fashion, for its part, is a term with two rather distinct meanings, namely, clothing and something that is popular (and usually short-lived) Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary online (2008). Fashion is usually seen as a geographically specific system for the production and organization of dress. Edwards (2010) argues that fashion should be viewed beyond dress and adornment, for it to not be viewed as socially inconsequential, and shallow. He contends that fashion is more about the construction of consensus around taste that then determines what is, or is not, acceptable as fashionable.

Fashion then can thus be simplified to mean a form of dress that is generally accepted and agreed upon to be in good taste at any given period of time.

*Feminists***:** The Cambridge Advanced Dictionary online (2008) defines 'a feminist' simply as 'An advocate or supporter of the rights and equality of women'. Yet the term 'feminist' has always been fraught with contentious connotations. This is partly because it connotes militancy and an 'anti-men' stance, but also because it has come to be associated with elite groups of women. Cash (2012) observed that some women hesitate to identify themselves as feminists, despite having a commitment to equal rights between the sexes in principle. The Fawcett Society's ongoing t-shirt campaign, 'This is what a feminist looks like', (featuring both men and women) is an attempt to strip the word of its narrow inferences and remind people that the actual meaning of feminism is a commitment to equal rights, opportunities and choices for people of all genders.

Thus feminists are people, men and women alike, who advocate for equal rights between men and women. However, because women are historically the ones on the receiving end of gender inequality, the majority of feminists have been women.

Feminism is basically about having the same rights between men and women and treating both sexes with fairness, and also sharing the notion that wrong doings can be made on either side, according to Hoffman (2010). Feminism should give individuals the freedom to educate themselves on subjects that they may have a distorted view on. Feminists feel that one such subject is fashion and dress, and they seek to redress any notions on fashion and dress that they feel are misrepresented by society. This definition brings out two main points which are, striving for fairness between the sexes and then taking steps to correct any perceived unfairness.

Feminism can be summarized as a concept of impartiality in viewing and treating males and females in society, which leads to measures being taken to remedy any perceived or observed partiality in the treatment given to males and females.

View: The Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary online (2008) defines view as an opinion, belief, or idea, or a way of thinking about something.

In the context of this study, view is an outlook, observation or assessment of a given phenomenon.

1.10 Summary:

This chapter gave the background to the study by going through the first, second and third waves of feminism starting from the late 19th century to date, in order to show the development of feminists' views   and the changes that each view brought to fashion and dress. The chapter also stated the research problem and research questions, as well as clarified the importance of the study to various people. The geographical, theoretical and time limits were also explained. Definitions of the major terms used in the study were given. Chapter Two gives the theoretical framework that guides the review of literature done in that chapter. The views of feminists that have affected dress and fashion are studied under the feminist, the cognitive and the symbolic interactionist theories on dress.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

Chapter one gave background to the study, explained the research problem and questions that this study sought to answer, clarified the significance of the study, as well as the delimitation of the study, in order to inform the direction that the review of related literature should take. In this chapter the eclectic theoretical framework that guides this study is outlined and explained first, which includes three theories on dress, namely, the Feminist, the Cognitive and the Symbolic Interactionist theories. In order to get some answers to the questions raised in the previous chapter, as well as to get a deeper understanding of the feminists' views that affect fashion and dress, this chapter reviews literature on reasons why some feminists view fashion and dress with antagonism and why others embrace fashion and dress. A summary of the discussion closes the chapter.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study assumes the eclectic theoretical framework, in order to try and address the multidimensional focus of this research, namely, feminists and their views on one hand and fashion and dress and what that can communicate, on the other.

Botha, van der West and Swardt (2005) assert that a theoretical framework should be present in all qualitative research because no study could be complete without some questions being asked directly and indirectly. Adding to this notion Winegardner (2000) posits that a theoretical framework addresses the problem to be investigated by the study, reviewing what is known about the topic, appraising what is not known, and highlighting the specific purpose of the study. In view of these assertions, the researcher chose to adopt the eclectic theoretical framework

approach in which three theoretical concepts are employed. This is because Botha, van der West and Swardt (2005) stress the importance of identifying the theoretical framework that forms the "scaffolding" or the fundamental structure of the study. The study is multidimensional, that is, feminism on one hand and fashion and dress on the other hand. The theoretical concepts that the researcher believes addresses the problem of feminists' views and how that affects fashion and dress are the cognitive perspective on dress, the symbolic interactionist perspective on dress and the feminist perspective on dress.

This eclectic framework is summarized diagrammatically in figure 3.1, followed by a discussion on the relevance of each theory to the study.

2.2 The Eclectic Conceptual Framework to Analysis of How Feminists' Views Affect Fashion and Dress

FEMINIST
Perspective on Clothing

COGNITIVE
Perspective on Clothing

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONIST
Perspective on Clothing
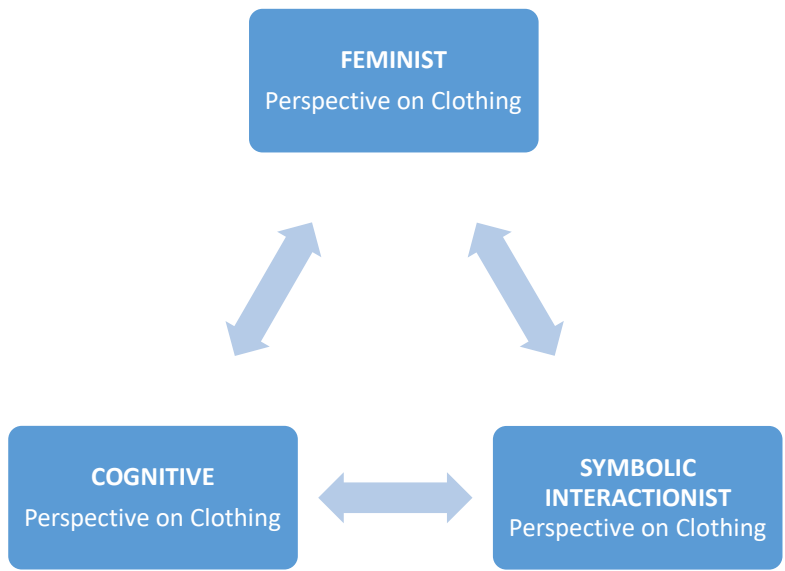
Figure 2.1: The Eclectic Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 The cognitive perspective

The cognitive perspective one of the fundamental structures of this study because it states that humans, as thinking beings, plan their wardrobes with the understanding that what they wear affects them as well as the observers. The wearer is aware that clothes affect the wearer's thought patterns called "Enclothed Cognition", a term coined by Adam and Galinsky (2012). Thus the wearer chooses clothes that boost their self-concept and self-image. Feminists therefore, it would be assumed, would want to dress in a way that seeks to bring out their core beliefs and endeavors, namely, equality between men and women, so that they boost their feelings of self-worth. The cognitive perspective further asserts that the way people dress also affects observers' attitude and behavior towards them. Affirming this notion Twigg (2007) posits that clothing and identity have been theorized in terms of performativity, stressing its role in the process of self-realization and presentation. She further argues that such an analysis has the advantage that it brings out the dynamic nature of the self, body and dress, recognizing the embodied nature of clothing as it both expresses identity to the outside world and acts back on and underpins it for the individual at an implicitly physical level. This perspective was considered to be relevant to this study because both the First and Second Wave feminists viewed fashion and dress as conveying an inferior identity to women, as compared to that of men, as Crane (2000) observed. As cognitive beings, these feminists tended to be critical of the fashion system and what they considered to be its malevolent impact on the lives of women, because they saw fashion as enforcing oppressive forms of gender identity, symbolizing practices that objectified and limited women. Twigg's (2007) observation is that feminists argued that fashion and dress sealed women into defensive and inauthentic forms of presentation, and so strengthened their cultural association with vanity and triviality. As cognitive beings, the First and Second wave Feminists realized that the fashion trends of their times called for body shapes

Comment [P7]: This is very true.

that were unattainable naturally, which Foster (2010) noted resulted in women resorting to wearing health-threatening undergarments like corsets to create the thin waists of the Victorian era. Scott (2005) asserts that women who failed to attain this ideal symbol of beauty suffered from self-loathing, clinical depression and eating disorders like bulimia and anorexia nervosa. We may recall that Lady Diana, who appeared to have this "ideal body," paid a high health price to get it, as she suffered from bulimia, as reported by Bollington (2016). Bulimia is an eating disorder where one eats food, but then forces it out immediately after eating Bollington (2016). In the Bollington (2016, p.2) report, Diana is quoted as saying, "My husband made me feel so inadequate in every possible way." Diana is an example of women who felt oppressed by what they perceived to be demands made on them by patriarchy to comply with a figure that is not naturally attainable to them. Using this 'thinking' theory, the researcher sought to find out if these tensions also exist among female students at the tertiary institution under study in Gweru.

The cognitive perspective of clothing thus helps to unearth the root of some of the feminists' reaction to fashion and dress, as it shows that thinking human beings give meaning to what they wear – dress is not just the covering of nudity, but actually conveys messages to both the wearer and the observer, as stated by Goffman (2005) hence the feminists' concerns.

2.2.2 The symbolic interactionist perspective

The symbolic interactionist perspective emphasizes that humans, as social, cognitive beings, assign meanings to symbols such as dress and language to convey messages that each culture has assigned the particular symbols, through interaction with each other, as Tracy (2013) states. Alluding to this notion Flick (2009) posits that symbolic interactionism is concerned with studying subjective meanings and personal meanings of symbols. Goffman (2005) further asserts that the symbolic interactionist viewpoint is an outstanding interpretive perspective from which a

researcher may examine society and individual behavior within a specified social and cultural world. This perspective fits well into this analytical study because dress scholars such as Twigg (2007), Tracey (2013) and Arvanitidou (2002) among others, have shown how dress is assigned meaning, ranging from identity to classification. These meanings are social constructs which therefore vary from culture to culture, and from time to time. Therefore feminists may have different views on patriarchy and modesty, and will thus assign meanings to dress and fashion that fit into their various worldviews. This might help to explain Church-Gibson's (2000) observation that the Third Wave Feminism is marked with ambivalence.

The symbolic interactionist perspective therefore, fits well into the interpretive paradigm that this study has assumed, because the interpretive paradigm, according to Dudovoskiy (2003) views reality as a social construct which is alterable, based on various meanings at social and experiential levels. This is in line with one of the basic assumptions of the symbolic interactionist perspective, as espoused by Cohen et al. (2006) and Duduvoskiy (2003) that attribution of meaning to objects through symbols is an ongoing process, therefore, not static, but dynamic. In relating this perspective to this study on feminists' views that affect fashion and dress, the researcher based this choice also on Fisher & Loren's (2003) reference to the fluidity and ever-changing nature of fashion. Kawamura (2005) further refers to the dynamic nature of fashion and dress. The eclectic theoretical framework that guided this study referred to the symbolic interactionist perspective on dress in order to better understand the meanings that the feminists assign to dress and fashion, which may make them either abhor, or embrace, fashion, or maybe remain nonchalant.

2.2.3 The feminist perspective

The third perspective factored into the study is the feminist perspective on dress, which Radford (2007) defines as a way of looking at the social world through the lens of gender inequality. This perspective is appropriate because it takes cognizance of the meanings attached to symbols such as dress and language and interprets these meanings with reference to the basic tenets of feminism which is socio-economic emancipation of women through gender equality. 0ne of the feminists' bone of contention is what they view to be the sexist nature of fashion and dress which they claim objectifies women by emphasizing styles and body types that are solely for the pleasure and gaze of men, an emphasis which is not reciprocated in men's fashion Sika (2014) argues. Feminists such as Welters (2008) also view fashion as constraining women from being who they want be, in the sense that fashion has, for decades, emphasized and favored one body type – the slim and tall figure, thus limiting women's choice of being who they want to be in terms of body size. This perspective is very appropriate to this study, because the researcher seeks to analyze how feminists' views have affected dress and fashion. Therefore, knowing feminists' worldviews is pivotal to answering the study's question of whether this view is also evident among female students at the tertiary institution in Gweru, and if so, what can be done to alleviate any strain that may exist on views on dress and fashion.

All the three theories on dress work together in the analysis of feminists' views that influence dress, because dress is a *symbol* that communicates non-verbally, a person's identity, which is translated into meaning through the *thinking* process among females, and is to be viewed from a *feminist* perspective on dress. That is the rationale that the researcher followed in coming up with this eclectic theoretical framework.

> **Comment [P8]:** Perhaps find another word. I am not sure tension is the best.

24

The researcher was thus be guided by this heterogeneous theoretical framework in analyzing the feminists' views that have inspired fashion and dress. The eclectic approach helps to address the various facets of this study to include that thinking human beings simplify complex issues of life by assigning them symbols, which have meanings that vary with culture and time. Breward (2000) sheds light on the feminist theory when he argues that within the feminist perspective on dress, is the historically-based tension between fashion and feminism in the sense that fashion seeks to objectify women and also because feminine fashionable dress and beautification of the self are viewed as symbols of subordination, while masculine dress carries the symbol of power. Stressing this assertion Kabaji (2005) adds that the feminist theory focuses on relations of dominance and subordination. With this framework, the researcher is thus able to make a more balanced analysis of the feminists' views and the resulting fashion and dress styles.

2.3 Feminists' Views That Resulted in Women's Negative Stance towards Fashion and Dress

2.3.1 Patriarchy and Power

Many middle and upper-class women's status during the Victorian era, it is argued by Arnold (2001) was a mirage, as this was dependent upon their father's or husband's wealth. Arnold (2001), concurring with Bourdieu (1985) affirm that fashion kept women of elegance pinned to a superficial life, away from matters of importance and further contends that the middle and upper-class woman focused her energies into the creation of very high taste, unreachable by the working class. However, Arnold's (2001) assertion is that patriarchy orchestrated this as a way of sedating the woman's alienation from actual power through the allure of very fine clothing. Morgan ((1970) states that feminists viewed patriarchy as oppressive to women as it left women with no choice, no freedom and no independent thought on what they should, or should not, wear. This assertion is also voiced by Laver (1969) cited in Skov and Rigels (2008), who argues

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that high class women have allowed themselves to become passive objects of the male gaze, as he believed the seduction principle to be governing women's fashion. In the Victorian era – 1880s to end of the century, women wore tightly-fitting corsets and many layers of fabric to give them the desired silhouette, but Crane (2000) noted that this was not good for the health of the women and also kept women in the private domain in the home.

Arnold (2001) further notes that feminists of this era also leveled their disgruntlement towards women who, through fashion and dress, excluded other women, and were thus accomplices in the oppression of housewives and working class women through fashion and dress. Soft fabrics, lace and corsets, were seen as symbols of submission, hence women wearing these were symbolizing their submission to men who wore sturdy fabrics, jackets and trousers. A typical example of this restrictive and therefore subordinating type of dress was the many-layered Victorian era dress, illustrated in Figure 2.2.

Victorian Fashion

Figure 2.2: Victorian Fashion

Fashion plates from the 1880s and 1890s. The desired silhouette became top-heavy, the bustle grew thinner and shrank.

Feminists regarded this form of dress as hampering them from active participation in lucrative activities outside the home and this attitude towards patriarchy led them to seek fashion and dress that freed them to be actively involved in activities even outside the home. Feminists of this era therefore, sought to do away with the laces and the soft fabrics, in favor of sturdy fabrics, in an attempt to *symbolize* equality in power and status, with men.

An example of this paradigm shift in dress is that of Dietrich (1935), who fearlessly wore what was considered then to be men's fashion. Dietrich took a strong fashion stance. The Hollywood actress wore trousers and men's suits during a time when it was considered extremely scandalous and taboo to do so. She famously was quoted saying, "I dress for the image. Not for myself, not for the public, not for fashion, not for men,**"** (Fisher, 2016, p**.1)** Figure 2.3 shows Dietrich in pants in 1935, a taboo at that time.

Marlene Dietrich – dressing for the image

Figure 2.3: Marlene Dietrich – dressing for the image

This research sought to find out if the female students under study also viewed patriarchy as oppressive and what steps, if any, they have taken to redress the situation, through dress.

Feminists' outlook on modesty and sexuality in dress also affected fashion and dress.

2.3.2 Modesty and Female Sexuality in Dress

Feminists' view on modesty influenced their choice of dress, as Arthur (2000) argues that when society enforces certain dress codes for women pertaining to modesty, this constitutes a dictatorial concept forced upon women whether they agree with it or not. Other feminists (Sika, 2014) among them, echo this notion by stating that modesty is patriarchy – men dictating to women what to wear and what not to wear, restrictions that are not extended to men. Arthur (2000) further assets that the control of female sexuality is of great importance in patriarchal religious groups, a notion that feminists reject because they feel that it infringes on their freedom of choice of clothing.

Another bone of contention is the fact that modesty is imposed on women, in order that men are not distracted by women's revealed body parts, like thighs, or the breasts. Feminists' argument (Hoffmann, 2010 and Sika, 2014) among others, is based on the question of why women should be made responsible for men's behavior, instead of men being socialized to control their sensual appetites. Najumi (2013) a feminist, argues that if a man is distracted by a woman's clothing, he is the problem, not the woman, which often happens in rape cases. Figures 2.4 - 2.7 are images declaring the perceived unfairness in putting the blame for rape on a woman's dress and not on the rapist – a bone of contention with feminists.

SLUTS DON'T
CAUSE RAPE
RAPISTS DO

THIS IS WHAT
I WAS WEARING.
TELL ME I ASKED FOR IT
I DARE YOU.

Fig. 2.4   Fig.2.5

IF YOU SAY THAT A WOMAN WEARING
REVEALING CLOTHES DESERVES TO BE
SEXUALLY ASSAULTED, YOU ARE
SAYING THAT A WOMAN'S BODY IS
INHERENTLY DESERVING OF RAPE.
THAT WOMEN ARE INHERENTLY
DESERVING OF RAPE. THAT WOMEN
HAVE TO MAKE SURE THEIR BODY IS
HIDDEN IN ORDER NOT TO DESERVE TO
BE RAPED. THAT IS MISOGYNY IN ITS
PUREST FORM.

(Source: introspectivestardust)

A WOMAN
dressed
like this
still Gets
raped

Fig. 2.6   Fig. 2.7

Figures 2.4 - 2.7: Protest against rape-victim blaming

Source: http://knowyourmeme.com/photos/475113-slut-shaming

Both Arthur (2000) and Scott (2005) point out that dress codes are conflated with gender and power issues - the root of which is the control of female sexuality, perceived to be necessary as a means of maintaining social order. Feminists ask why the onus is on women to maintain social order, and not men as well. Feminists thus view dress as being used by patriarchy as a symbol of

oppressive control over women by men, and Lynch (2016) observes that women then seek to use dress and fashion to redress that stance by wearing what the feminists themselves view as power dress.

Goffman (2005) and Arthur (2000) conclude that visible symbols such as dress therefore shed light on the way bodies can communicate social values, as dress can be used to facilitate social and ideological agendas such as establishing and maintaining personal and social identities, social hierarchies, and systems of control and power. Through symbolic devices such as dress, the physical body exhibits the normative values of the social body. Symbols such as dress help divide the social unit and visually define its boundaries because they give nonverbal information about the individual. Feminists such as Najumi (2013) are cognizant of this function of dress and feel that the demarcation that patriarchy imposes on females, by restricting what they should, or should not, wear, in the name of modesty, is oppressive to women as it infringes on their freedom of choice on what to wear.

Judd (2010) wrote an essay in which she contends that the level of "respect" a woman receives is inextricably linked with how "modest" the woman is dressed, or looks. Feminists argue that "respect" should be linked with intellect, intelligence, or the ability to hold an intriguing conversation. They question why respect should have to do with the tightness of a woman's dress or the shortness of her skirt. They feel that it is oppressive to measure respect for women on the basis of how well they fit society's standard of "modesty" and "decency."

The researcher used a questionnaire to find out female students' views on modesty, to see if the students also felt this kind of infringement of their right of choice and how their views have, if at all, affected their choice of dress.

Comment [P9]:

Comment [P10]:

Comment [P11]: This is true.

2.3.3 Separate Spheres or Domains

Women were relegated to the private sphere in the home, with its limitations on activities through the type of dress assigned to them, while men wore trousers which allowed them to ride on horses, and be out there in the public domain. Crane (2000) points out that this dates back to the Victorian era, and that this form of dress suited the subordinate and passive social roles women were expected to perform. Observations made by dress scholars Butler (1993), Gligorovska (2011) and Sika (2014) also note how this view affected women's clothing. By the same token though, dress can also be manipulated to challenge the stereotypically assigned roles of women, which feminists in the First wave attempted through doing away with restrictive clothing in favor of less fabric for their dresses, to allow them free movement, equal to men's freedom of movement. Coco Chanel introduced comfortable women's fashion in mid 1930s, illustrated in Figure 2.8

Coco Chanel's black and white elegant and freer women's styles
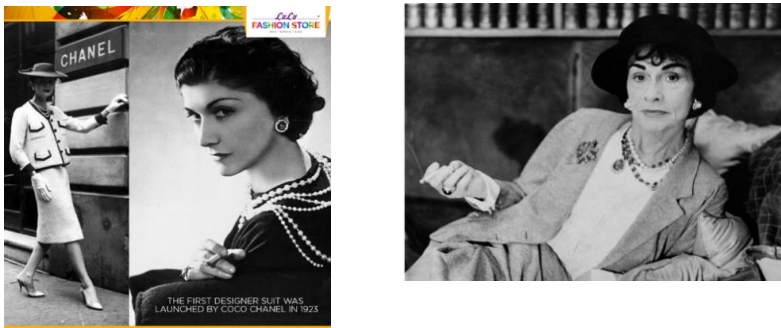
Figure 2.8 Coco Chanel's elegant
black and white dress

Source:www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/feature/g4201/famous-feminists-throughout-history/?slide=2\

Channel brought the comfort of men's apparel to women's fashion, at a time when society's expectation was for women to wear nothing but skirts and dresses. These designs helped to bring dress liberation through fashions that have stood the test of time.

2.3.4 Lack of Equality in policing

Feminists such as Najumi (2013) and Sika (2014) are against the dress code that is imposed on women by men, but not directed to men as well**.** This lack of parity in dress expectations is what feminists are against. They argue that men are not subjected to these kinds of standards. The quest for modesty is reserved almost exclusively for women. Feminists argue that if modesty is simply about avoidance of dressing in a "revealing" manner, why is it predominantly directed at women? Pham (2012) adds to this contention by observing that all women's fashion choices are more carefully policed than men's**,** and feminists are thus up in arms against fashion. This view is especially held by Third Wave feminists, who thus dress in defiance to society's dress code. The researcher's assumption was that the population under study was likely to be divided in this regard, possibly leaning on conservatism and was really keen to find out their stand and how that had affected their choice of dress, and if they felt stifled by the dress code, what could be done to mend that.

2.3.5 Sexist / Objectification nature of female fashion and dress: The Male Gaze

The view that fashion was used to objectify women for male gaze was prominently sparked by the 1968 Miss America pageant. Feminists were up in arms against the skimpy dress that the contestants wore, which made them to feel objectified as sex objects for male gaze. They also objected to the fact that it was men who judged the contestants, as can be seen in the image below, which reinforced the view that fashion was predominantly for male gaze. They

consequently did away with bras, high heels, and make-up and settled for blue jeans and t-shirts, dress symbols which they felt exuded the power that men had. Figure 2.9 exemplifies the skimpy dress at American beauty pageants.

Miss America Beauty Pageant (1968)

Figure 2.9 Miss America pageant

Source: https://womenshistory.about.com/od/feminism-second-wave/a/womens-liberation.htm

Sika (2014) argues that this objectification can be blamed on what drives and motivates most designers: sex appeal. Models will often present designs worn without bras, extremely short skirts, transparent clothing, backless dresses, pelvis-high slits and 'barely-there' blouses, which would not be a problem in a 'perfect society'. However, it is important to note that these body revealing designs are solely for the pleasure and gaze of men, which is the argument of feminists like Laver (as cited in Fisher (2016). Thus the sexist nature of the fashion industry aggravates feminists, who struggle to curb the objectification of women. Women are forced to believe that

unless they resemble as much as possible the ideals advertised in magazines, advertisements and runway shows, they are simply not attractive.

2.3.6 Infringement on women's freedom to body shape and size

Part of this politics stems from the debate about women's fashion and notions of female beauty, with culture again used as the key determinant of what is beautiful, what is fashionable and what is acceptable. Sika (2014) argues that fashion has shaped women's identities and makes a case for using fashion to achieve feminist objectives, while pushing for a feminist body of knowledge around the subject to allow this to happen. Similarly, Fisher and Loren (2003) track the historical transformation of what is defined as an 'attractive' woman's body, from tubular to slender and many other shapes in between, and tries to address the central question – what is beautiful? They conclude that these 'attractiveness' trends have damaged women's self-esteem, self-confidence and self-worth, as was prominently revealed in Lady Diana's case (Bollington, 2016). That report raises the important point that the problem with fashion is its link to the notion of beauty, which invariably creates friction. Wolf (2002) contends that beauty standards are unrealistic and even inhumane, where women endanger their health through poor eating habits resulting in conditions such as bulimia and anorexia nervosa, in a bid to attain a trim body. She further argues that fashion on its own is alright, but when fashion is integrated with beauty, which it invariably does, then it influences our perception of beauty and body and that raises problems.

Some feminists argue that the fashion industry has for decades favored one ideal female body over all others and peddled the notion that a woman is not much if she is not adorned in the latest fashion. Sika (2014), says that indeed, it is easy to understand how and why most people think of

feminists as being anti-fashion and of fashion as being anti-feminist. This is mainly because of how fashion models tend to be objectified – and how they represent only certain body types.

The researcher was keen to find out if this view of being restricted to an ideal body is also experienced by the female students and how that affected their choice of dress.

2.3.7 Frivolity

Vogh (2012) asserts that the 10- to 15-cm heels make fools of women, and so she is totally against such fashion, which restricts women's movement. Such high heels, she argues are meant to accentuate parts of the body that men deem sexually attractive for their own gaze. A woman so dressed is restricted in movement and is thus relegated to the private domain, like being a secretary, with little remuneration as it was in the Victorian era and should be avoided. These heels are prevalent in today's fashion and the researcher set to find out the female students' view towards such fashion, and if they feel in any way pressured to wear such heels, and if so, what can be done to alleviate such pressure.

2.4 Feminists' Views That Made Them to Embrace Fashion and Dress

2.4.1 Identity and Self-expression

Feminist scholars such as Skov and Riegels ((2008), have analyzed the relationship between dress and gender as a way of questioning the asymmetrical relationship between men and women. This analysis has given rise to the debate of whether it was necessary for women to discard the old symbols of femininity in order to liberate themselves. Simmel (1988) laid a foundation for this debate when he analyzed the concept of fashion which he saw as bringing together two contrasting social forces, namely, the need for conformity and the need for individual distinction. This is a very interesting debate as it has the potential for dividing women,

who, as social beings would feel the need to conform to society's norms, while at the same time there is also this innate need to self-express. It would therefore depend on which need overrides the other at any given time that would depend on the woman's choice of dress. The researcher sought to know which view was stronger among female students at a tertiary institution in Gweru, and whether their view and consequent resulting choice created any friction within themselves and in the community as well, and what could be done to ease such a friction.

2.4.2 Expression of women's right to sexuality and Aesthetics

Mary Quant's fashion led to the expression of sexuality and freer clothing for women. Adam and Galinsky (2012) observed that feminists who felt the need to express their sexuality, embrace fashion that is body revealing, and want to do so without any reprisals from society. Similar to that view Wilson (1985) gave a framework for seeing fashion as a form of everyday art. In this approach, fashion is not repressive to women, but rather, dress offers the tools of creative self-expression which is especially crucial for those who have been excluded on whatever grounds - be it economic, gender, class, ethnicity or sexuality. Feminists, Sika (2014) argues, felt that they were excluded from making their own choices on what to wear, and now want to demonstrate this freedom by embracing fashion and in the process put across who they are - females with unique body sizes and shapes.

2.4.3 Freedom of Choice

Coco Chanel, as was pointed out earlier, after the First wave of feminism, opened the way to women's freedom to choose what to wear and what not to wear. By bringing to the fashion industry pants for women at a time when it was taboo for women to wear pants, she declared this freedom and empowered women to do the same. Chanel says she did it to break patriarchal hold

on women's choice of dress and fashion. Chanel's typical black and white outfits as well as Yves Laurent's masculine styles were styles which women chose to wear. In this way, feminists chose fashion to also explode the myth that feminists have to wear ill-fitting clothes and carry a briefcase in order to be taken seriously (Najumi, 2013).

2.4.4 Explosion of the misogynist (chauvinist / sexist) view that beautiful women can't be intelligent (Elson, 2013)

Feminists such as Hillary Clinton embrace fashion to explode the myth that feminists cannot be fashionably dressed and that women are beautiful faces with no brains. She has both beauty and brains and embraces fashion as a feminist, and hopes that other feminists may follow her example – dress well, aim for high posts that are predominantly occupied by men. Figure 2.10 shows Hillary Clinton – a symbol of feminism.

Hillary Clinton - a feminist with beauty and brains

Source: www.geckoandfly.com

Figure 2.10

The notion that one's conscious decision to pay attention to how one looks like, is demeaning because that is done to please men, was championed by freedom feminists such as Chanel and Dietrich (Edwards 2010). Chanel designed clothes that brought out a woman's femininity, without any need to apologize for looking feminine. Such feminists embraced fashion because

through it, they expressed their desires, without feeling repressed for doing that. That was the thought clearly articulated by Dietrich (1923) when she declared that she dressed for the image and not for anyone. In this twenty-first century, what is it that motivates feminists' choice of dress? The researcher sought to find out the views of the students on what they believed was the driving force behind fashion and how that interpretation affected their choice of dress.

2.4.5 All-embracing in size

Pham (2012) posits that feminists' want to be who they are – unique, with different body shapes and sizes and not having to apologize for it, since men do not do that. Size discrimination is a feminist issue because it is linked to defying the expectations placed on women to shrink, so to speak, to shy away from cameras, to hide, if their bodies do not fit the tall and slim ideal body set by most fashion designers. This view led Gabi Gregg to come up with truly cute and fashionable two-piece suits for the plus-size women in 2012. Feminists who embrace fashion view fashion as a means to self-expression, regardless of the size that the woman is, as illustrated in Figure 2.11.

Style that is All-embracing in size

 Fig. 2.11 – Styles that embrace all sizes

2.4.6 Carefree Styles

Some feminists want to wear their chosen styles without any reprisals or repercussions. But the claim to wearing whatever style without any repercussions poses serious contradictions in the sense that feminists, for example, when they were against the 1968 Miss America pageant,

realized that what they wore sent certain messages to observers which they did not like, because they interpreted it to look like they were being objectified as sex objects (Sika 2014). How then can the third wave feminists cry foul when what they wear causes stirs? As social, cognitive beings, people assign meanings to symbols of dress and it is a bit presumptuous to expect no repercussions from what people wear. The caption in Figure 2.11 brings out the point very clearly when it states that wearing a cop's uniform, does not make one a cop. However, people may go to one so dressed asking for the kind of help that one expects from a cop. Similarly, dressing like a whore, does not make a woman a whore, but then the woman is likely to be treated in the way that people treat a whore. Notwithstanding, though, as one of the participants pointed out, even whores have rights – men do not force themselves on a whore; there should be agreement, not rape. Therefore women's views are that they should be given freedom to wear whatever they like, and society should not punish them for that. Figure 2.11 elucidates the contradiction of third wave feminism clothing.

Figure 2.12 Third wave dress ambivalence

source:https://www.google.c0.zw/search?q=body+revealing+clothes+for+feminists&rlz=ICIVSNA_en

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Figure 2.13 is an example of body-revealing clothing acceptable to some women in third wave feminism

Fig.2.13 Third Wave Feminism quest for freedom to wear body revealing clothes without reprisals

source:https://www.google.c0.zw/search?q=body+revealing+clothes+for+feminists&rlz=ICIVSNA_en

This is part of the third-wave feminism ambivalence observed by Church-Gibson. This research sought to unearth any such contradiction among female students' view on wearing revealing dress, and how that affected their choice of dress.

2.5 Androgynous styles

Figure 2.15 is an example of androgynous styles which combine masculine and feminine features in appearance, worn by Grace Jones.
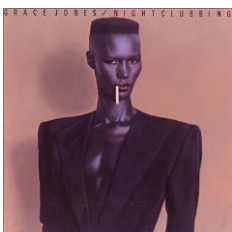
Figure 2.15 - Androgynous style (Source: https://lovelace-media.imgix.net/uploads/112)

Grace Jones is a feminist who embraced fashion because she viewed it as a conduit for conveying the image of equality between men and women. Jones, a singer in the 1980s, traded locks and pretty dresses for rough suits, a short haircut, and all-around experimentation, she was a trailblazer – an emblem of the many ways there are to exist as a woman or feminine person. The researcher sought to find out if female students viewed androgyny as part of a solution to quelling conflicting views on fashion and dress.

2.6 Summary

This chapter explained the rationale for the eclectic theoretical approach encompassing the cognitive, symbolic interactionist and feminist perspectives on dress, in order to try and get reasons underlying the feminists' various views on dress. Feminists who did not embrace fashion and dress, felt that dress symbolized an inferior and unfair status to women, compared to men's. On the other hand, some feminists such as Jones and Beyoncé used fashion to further the main goal of feminism, which is equality between the sexes, through their dress. This literature review informed the researcher's analysis of the data obtained from female students at a tertiary institution in Gweru. Chapter Three gives the methodology to be followed in order to try and get answers to the questions articulated in these preceding chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Chapter Two reviewed related literature on how feminists viewed fashion and dress historically as well as currently, including related theory on feminism, fashion and dress which informed the choice of methodology to be used for this research. This chapter deals with methodology for this study. The Interpretivist Paradigm is explained and related to the study. The qualitative approach and the case study design are described and justified for the research. The instruments chosen for this research and how the data was collected and managed, are discussed, as are the population and the sample and sampling methods used. An outline of how the data was analyzed is given, ending with a summary of the whole methodology adopted for this research

Methodology refers to how the researcher goes about collecting information on whatever he/she believes can be known. It is a plan for carrying out an inquiry, which starts from the fundamental assumptions to research design and data collection (Myers, 2009).

Kuhn (1977) and Olsen, Lodwick and Dunlop (1992) both refer to research as some form of design or pattern that is agreed upon by a group of scholars which they come up with in order to be able to carry out a research. This pattern includes beliefs, values, assumptions, structure and framework of academic ideas which helps to direct how the research is to be carried out. It is a combined cluster of substantive concepts used to examine a problem and find solutions. This research adopts the Interpretivist Paradigm, (IP) because one of the tenets of this pattern of research is that there is no absolute reality, but multiple ones, according to individuals' experiences and worldviews. IP is very suitable for this research because the literature reviewed revealed that there is a range of interpretations that feminists have, over the years, assigned to

fashion and dress, which have consequently resulted in diverse reactions to fashion and dress. Figures 3.1 gives an overview of the research approach.

Figure 3.1 Research Approach Overview

PARADIGM
- INTERPRETIVIST

ONTOLOGY
- Reality as we know it, is constructed intersubjectively through the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially.
- Reality is thus fluid.

EPISTEMOLOGY
- Knowledge is transactional and subjectivist, as it assumes that we cannot separate ourselves from what we know.
- There is therefore, a link between the investigator and the object of investigation so that how we understand the world and who we are is a pivotal part of how we understand ourselves, others and the world.

APPROACH
- **QUALITATIVE**

DESIGN
- Case Study: An intensive analysis of an individual unit.
- Describes what happened, when, to whom and with what consequences.

INSTRUMENTS
- Quetionnaires
- Analysis of Existing Texts

3.2 The Interpretivist Paradigm

The IP refers to research in hermeneutic (the study of the methodological principles of interpretation) tradition which seeks to unearth meaning and understanding of the poignant implications revealed in data about people, as observed by Somekh and Lewin (2008). The same idea that IP is used to group together diverse approaches, including social constructivism, phenomenology and hermeneutics is also expressed by Collins (2000). Collins, though, adds the interesting and very important detail that IP involves social constructivism, a crucial aspect in this study, because feminists in different eras have constructed the meaning of fashion and dress in different ways, according to the various societal influences that they experienced. Myers (2009) assenting to the idea of social construction, brings the idea that reality is obtained through social construction.

The IP states that reality is multiple, based on individuals' as well as society's interpretations of any given phenomenon, and specifies the form and nature of reality and what can be known about it. In this study it is the phenomenon of dress and fashion among feminists that is being investigated, and analyzing how feminists have, over the years since the late 19th century, held various views that have affected dress. Feminists are people who support feminism, which is simply, a commitment to equal rights, opportunities and choices for people of all genders. Traditionally, feminists have serious conflict with fashion and dress (Song, 2010) because they find it oppressive of females. That is their experience, their nature of reality. But some post-modern feminists like Beyoncé embrace fashion and find ways of making fashion and dress help them in their fight for equality with men; that is the meaning they have assigned to dress, and thus their experiences with dress differs from other feminists. Third-wave feminists in particular, have this ambivalent relationship with fashion, poignantly put across by Church-Gibson (2000), who suggests that feminists oscillate between celebration and repudiation of fashion.

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This is another reason why the researcher chose the IP, because knowledge is transactional and subjectivist, since we cannot separate ourselves from what we know. As the researcher carried out this research, she already had ideas on who feminists are and some of their views on dress. The feminists themselves have been influenced by the society in which they live, for them to formulate ideas which have affected fashion and dress. The findings of the research therefore are, to some extent, influenced by both the investigator and the object of the investigation, as pointed out by Hirschheim, Klein, and Lyvtinen (1995). This nature of human knowledge and understanding can be acquired through different types of inquiry and various methods of investigation.

There is therefore, a link between the investigator and the object of investigation so that how we understand the world and who we are is a pivotal part of how we understand ourselves, others and the world.

IP can thus be summed up as the model of research which seeks to unravel the various realities that individuals and societies experience with regards to any given phenomenon, because IP adopts the view that there is no absolute, or universal truth that applies 'blanketly' to all people, with regards to any given phenomenon, such as dress. The knowledge that people have about themselves, others and the world around them all contribute to their worldview. Since people have different experiences, their views of the world also varies. This paradigm fits perfectly into this research because the study seeks to interpret social actions which can only be comprehended by understanding the meaning of various actions and symbols used in society, a point brought clearly by Bhattacharya (2004). The first, second and third wave feminists demonstrated this principle of multiple realities for the same phenomenon in very poignant ways, which were discussed in the previous chapter,

Thus the IP helps to bring out these multiple realities and the knowledge that each wave of feminists have held to be true to their era.

3.3 The Approach: Qualitative

Since the study adopts the Interpretivist Paradigm, an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of fashion and dress and the feminists' view of the phenomenon was best obtained through the qualitative approach to research, as suggested by Reeves and Hedberg 2003). Denzin and Lincoln, (2003) add to that notion by stating that qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the subject matter that it attempts to make sense of, or to interpret. Qualitative research methods were developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena. Myers (2009) further asserts that qualitative research is designed to help researchers understand people, and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. Feminists have, over the years, displayed diverse world-views, hence this approach enabled the researcher to get a clearer understanding of these varying world-views.

The qualitative research strategy was applied in order to get a comprehensive understanding of feminists' views and how these views have influenced dress and fashion. This approach assisted the researcher by providing in-depth descriptions of the phenomenon of dress. This assertion is supported by Barthes (2006) who add that qualitative research is full of important details which are frequently essential to the qualitative researcher. He further states that the qualitative method is a good tool for analyzing a phenomenon, as it is a dynamic reality. May (2003) upholds the same notion as he points out that qualitative research endeavors to give answers to the *How* and *Why* questions, describing non-quantifiable relationships between existing variables, applicable in this qualitative research.

This study analyzed *how* and *why* feminists' views influenced dress and fashion. This calls for an in-depth study of the topic, requiring descriptions of the feminists' views on dress and fashion, hence choice of the qualitative approach to the study.

3.4 The Research Design: Case Study
A research design sheds light on how the study is to be conducted. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2006) point out that a design serves to plan, structure and execute the research to maximize the validity of the study's findings, as it gives direction from the foundational philosophical assumptions.

Gillham (2000) defines a case study as an investigation to answer specific research questions which seek a range of different evidences from the case settings. Yin (2003) adds the dimension that a case study is an empirical investigation that explores a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. This is one of the reasons why the researcher chose this design, since the investigation was carried out in the students' natural settings at the tertiary institution where they were studying. Another important reason for opting for this design is because Ritchie and Lewis (2003) perceive the primary features of a case study as being an array of viewpoints which are rooted in a specific context. All the collected evidences are collated to arrive at the best possible responses to the research questions. This helped the researcher to gain a sharpened understanding of why some women's views made them to dislike prevailing fashion, while others embraced it.

A case study examines a bounded system or a case over time in detail, time and place. The research studied current female students' views at a tertiary institution in Gweru. Their experiences were recorded for future comparisons and may not necessarily be generalized to

another population, either at the same place, or a different place and time. But an in-depth understanding of what applies currently will have been gained through this design.

3.5 The Population
The subjects in this study were female students at a tertiary institution in Gweru, across the four departments there, and formed the population for this study. Sampath (2008) defines population as a set containing objects, individuals and events of interest to the researcher. Information obtained from the Students Admissions office indicated that there were five hundred and forty female students at the campus under study at the time of carrying out the research. The research was designed in such a way that the population comprised students from various parts of the country, which helped to give a wide representation of views. Since the subjects were from many parts of the country, this also helped to give a large cultural representation among the subjects, which assisted in getting a broader understanding of the phenomenon.

Young female students were chosen because Arvanitidou and Gasouka (2012) observed that young females are generally more interested in following fashion than do older females and men.

The researcher sought participants who viewed themselves as feminists. This is not observable, therefore the researcher used a set of questions adapted from Oliver (2012) to ascertain how many of the respondents viewed themselves as feminists.

3.6 The Sample
A sample, according to Somekh and Lewin (2008) are individuals or objects selected from the population and are included in the data collection process of a study. The convenience sampling technique was used, where the researcher approached groups of students, introduced herself and her mission. All those who were interested to participate were given questionnaires to fill in while the researcher either waited, or moved to other groups nearby to distribute more

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questionnaires, until a total of eighty-two participants were given. Waiting for the questionnaires helped the researcher to get one hundred percent returns of the questionnaires distributed. Eighty-two participants made up fifteen percent of the population under study, which the researcher is confident gave a fair representation of the views of the population under study.

3.7 The Instruments: Questionnaire

Somekh and Kumar (2005) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2006) state that research tools are instruments that researchers use to collect data necessary for a researcher to obtain solutions to problems under study. Myers (2009) suggests the inclusion of data sources for qualitative research such as observation, participant observation (fieldwork), interviews, questionnaires, documents and texts. Questionnaires can be designed and used to get in-depth information on a phenomenon from respondents. Punch (2009) affirms that in interpretivist paradigm, emphasis is on uncovering the truth historically and contextually. The researcher therefore used both closed and open-ended questions in the questionnaire to get to the bottom of the views of feminists and how these views influenced fashion and dress.

The researcher opted for this instrument because it enables one to interact with a wide range of respondents at the same time, at little cost.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Scandura and Williams (2000) suggest that researchers carrying out social research, should use triangulation, which involves the use of multiple sources to collect data, in order to overcome problems related to validity and bias. Triangulation arose from an ethical need to confirm process validity. Adding to this suggestion Yin (2003) notes that triangulation can be achieved by using multiple sources of data, multiple informants, and multiple methods in an attempt to understand a phenomenon. The researcher gathered information on the views of eighty-two female students at a tertiary institution through questionnaires. In an attempt to validate the

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informants' responses, the researcher also used secondary sources of data. There is a wealth of information on feminists and their stance towards fashion and dress, emanating from their views on gender equality, from over a century ago in numerous books and articles. The researcher was thus in a position to compare the primary data with the secondary data, which was especially useful in this analytical research. This is echoed by Creswell (2009) who posits that triangulation is used to compare data as well as to ascertain whether it corroborates, and in that way, validate findings. Triangulation is one of the most important methods of improving the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings, as it provides a wider insight into a phenomenon, through giving a more complete picture of a phenomenon though not necessarily a more certain one, as argued by Richie and Lewis (2003).

3.9 Data Management

White (2003) states that data management involves keeping the information obtained from respondents safe and secure at all stages of the research, as well as after the initial research is completed. After collecting the hard copies from the respondents, the researcher went through each one, entering the information received onto tables on the laptop according to the different categories in the questionnaire. The raw data were then kept in a safe place at the researcher's home. The soft copy was kept on the laptop, on a memory stick, as well as on the researcher's email address. This helped to ensure that the information that the respondents took time to give was not lost, to avoid having to go back to them again, which also wastes time.

3.10 Validity and Reliability of the Research

Qualitative research especially requires that the researcher pays special attention to ensuring that the data and analysis thereof are believable and trustworthy. Validity is described by White (2003) as that quality of data gathering instrument or procedure which enables it to measure what it is supposed to measure. The researcher took care to avoid ambiguous questions in the

questionnaire, which would affect validity of the research and also included both closed and open-ended questions, to avoid limiting the participants' responses. Qualitative research has a high concern for internal validity according to Kumar (2011) and so to prevent that from happening, the researcher was extra cautious.

The researcher took steps to ensure internal validity by comparing the data received from the students with similar ones in secondary data among feminists. This may also lead to external reliability which Delvin (2006) defines as the degree to which a study can be replicated and generalized to other populations and to the broader world. Although case studies cannot be generalized to other populations and at different times, however, corroborating findings even with secondary data helps in ensuring external reliability, especially if there are no outliers in the research findings, unless, of course, if there are valid reasons to explain the divergent findings.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Strydom (2005) defines research ethics as moral principles that guide the researcher in the gathering and storage of data. This study is qualitative in its approach, which implies that the researcher interacted deeply with the informants, entering their personal domains of values, as well as their clothing preferences, to collect data to come up with valid findings. Silverman (2006) reminds researchers that while a researcher is carrying out his/her research, he/she is entering the private spaces of their informants, which, naturally, raises ethical issues that should be addressed before, during, and after the research has been conducted. The researcher therefore, obtained a written permission from the school administration to carry out the research, before talking to any participants. Creswell (2012) concurs with Miles and Huberman (1994) that the researcher has to respect the respondents' rights, needs, values, fears and any desires of the informants. These concerns were met by observing ethical considerations stated below.

Informed consent is very important as it relates to honesty. The researcher informed the participants of the purpose of the research, its nature, methods of collecting the data and the extent of the research, prior to giving out the questionnaires. The participants were told what the information they gave would be used for, for how long, and by whom. The researcher also made it very clear to the respondents that they filled the questionnaire only if they wanted to, and that they could stop doing so whenever they felt like it.

Voluntary Participation: The respondents were informed that they were at liberty to not fill in the questionnaires if they so desired, and that they could stop at any point should they feel like quitting.

The researcher was *honest and truthful* to tell the respondents the reason for the research and the extent of the use of the information that they gave.

Anonymity was another crucial ethical consideration that the researcher observed. The questionnaire did not ask the respondents to write their names anywhere. This helped in that the participants knew that they would not be identified at all, so they were in a better position to state their actual views which affected their choice of dress and fashion.

The researcher also guaranteed the participants *freedom from physical and emotional harm*, as far as was feasible, since they were not coerced in any way, and were free to say only what they wanted to say, and were in no way coerced to give information that they did not feel like giving.

3.12 Data Analysis:
Kumar (2011) suggests that analysis of data in a qualitative study depends on how the findings are communicated. He further states that the analysis can be done through developing a narrative

to describe the episode, scenario or event. This is followed by identification of the main themes that emerge from one's field or transcription, quoting where necessary.

Data analysis is a way of making large amounts of information manageable. Strydom (2005) states that the aim is to search for commonalities, which will lead to categorization through coding the information. The researcher also searched for contrasts and made comparisons. The data was conceptually reduced, thinking through meaning by coding, memo-ing, re-coding for meaning, as suggested by Hesse-Bieber (2011) who posits that qualitative data can be analyzed with or without software.

The researcher analyzed the data without software. The following steps guided the researcher in the analysis, as suggested by Hesse-Bieber (2011):

- *Data Reduction:* the responses from the participants were jotted down per content, going back to the research questions to determine analytical rationale. For example, to find answers to feminists' views that affect dress and fashion, the researcher reduced data from *fifteen questions, each question with five alternative answers.*

- *Coding Styles:* After jotting down the responses, starting with pre-set themes derived from those suggested by the review of literature and the supervisor, the data were grouped into responses that resulted in negative and positive opinion, respectively, on dress and fashion. The codes provided direction in the analysis.

- *Developing Grounded Themes:* The researcher then analyzed data under the pre-set themes of positive and negative outlooks on dress, to come up with sub-themes. As a result, under negative opinion, for example, the researcher deducted lack of freedom and culture dominance. Then the researcher further analyzed the data under each sub-theme, so that under lack of freedom, for example, there was lack of choice of dress, lack of self-

expression and lack of self-identity, and culture encompassed patriarchy. The same was done for the positive view as well. In a nutshell, during and after coding, the researcher looked for connections between codes; beginning with descriptive themes, looking for subcategories, relationships and cause-effect. A matrix of codes and themes was then developed. This assisted the researcher to draw conclusions on the findings more decisively than if the data had remained jumbled up.

3.13 Summary

The chapter explained that the Interpretivist paradigm was suitable for this research because there are diverse feminists' views that have affected fashion and dress, and also showed how the qualitative approach helped to get an in-depth understanding of the views of the female students at a tertiary institution in Gweru. All female students at the campus formed the population under study. Convenience sampling technique was used and data from the respondents was obtained through questionnaires. Relevant ethical considerations observed were stated. An outline of how the data was analyzed without software, but through the coding system as suggested by Hesse-Biber (2011) was given. The next chapter presents the data collected, its analysis, and lastly, a discussion on the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

Chapter three discussed the relevance of the Interpretivist paradigm and the qualitative approach

to this research, in order to get an in-depth understanding of feminists' views that have affected

fashion and dress. A questionnaire was used to collect data. This study sought to analyze the

opinions of female students at a tertiary institution in Gweru, with a view to identifying any

conflicts that might exist on views on fashion and dress, and to find ways of minimizing any

such friction. A questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions was used. This chapter

presents data findings from the questionnaires in both diagram and narrative form. Bar graphs,

pie charts and tables were used, starting with demographics, then a chart that clarified if

participants viewed themselves as feminists or not, followed by the respondents' views which

were likely to affect their choice of fashion and dress and lastly, their suggestions on how to

minimize friction that might have existed on diverse views on fashion and dress. These findings

are analyzed, followed by a discussion as guided by the research problem and research questions

as well as what literature says on the issue. A summary of the findings concludes the chapter.

4.1 Demographics

There were four departments at the campus that the research was carried out and it was the

researcher's aim that within the convenience sampling, an attempt would be deliberately made to

incorporate all the four departments into the study, by approaching students in their various

rooms where their lectures are held, and as a result, all the four departments are represented in

the study. However, while there were participants from different areas of the country, there were

no participants from Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South provinces, as shown by the bar

graph below. But the researcher is confident that the participants from Bulawayo were a good

representation of the two provinces to present a valid view of the students from that area.

4.1 Demographics
Figure 4.1 presents data on percentages of respondents by department and by province.
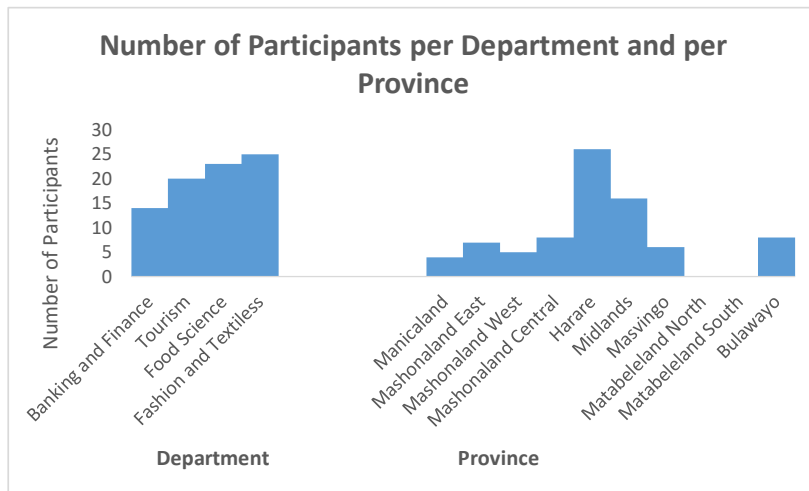
Figure 4.1 **Participants per Department and per Province**

Convenience sampling was carried out at an annex of a tertiary institution in Gweru, where core

lectures for four departments are held, namely, Banking and Finance, Tourism and Hospitality

Management, Food Science and Fashion and Textiles. A total of eighty-two respondents

answered the questionnaire which the researcher personally gave out to groups, or classes of

students. The largest number of respondents came from the Fashion and Textiles department, at

twenty-five, followed by Food Science at twenty-three, Tourism and Hospitality Management at

twenty and lastly fourteen participants from the Banking and Finance department. It was

necessary to get the views of respondents from departments other than Fashion and Textiles, in

order to get views of females in general, and not only of those who have the advantage of

studying the theories of fashion, so as to get a more valid view of females in general in terms of fashion and dress.

Similarly, the fact that there were respondents from eight out of the ten provinces, namely, Manicaland, (4.87%) Mashonaland East (8.53%), Mashonaland West, (6.09%), Mashonaland Central, (9.75%), Harare, (31.7%), Midlands, (19.51%), Masvingo, (7.31%) and Bulawayo, (9.75%), gives the study a balanced view of female students from nearly all the provinces in the country. Harare and Midlands had the highest representation, with the least from Manicaland. There were no respondents from Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South provinces. But the larger part of the country was covered, which was important for this study because there is a diversity of cultures in the different provinces, and culture plays a vital part in shaping an individual's beliefs and values, as well as the meanings assigned to different artefacts such as dress, as stated by Lynch (2016). So it is important that views of women from different provinces are expressed, to give a more balanced outlook on the study, and thus increase the validity of the research.

Figure 4.2 presents data on percentages of participants who viewed themselves as feminists.

Do You Regard Yourself As a Feminist?

Key
- Definitely Yes
- Yes, with reservations
- No
- Undecided

16%
63%
11%
10%
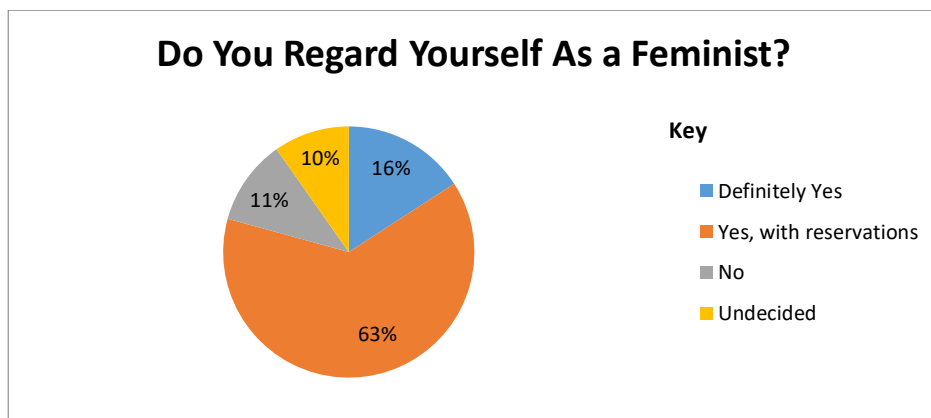
Figure 4.2   **Participants' decisions on feminism**

Participants responded to ten questions to help them ascertain whether they were feminists or not. While the majority of the participants, seventy-nine percent, declared that they were feminists, that is, that they advocated for equal rights between men and women, only sixteen

percent expressed no dissent on all the ten questions which the researcher used to determine if the respondents were feminists or not. Sixty-three percent viewed themselves as feminists, but did not agree with some of the points on the questions presented. Ten percent were undecided as to whether or not they would regard themselves as feminists, while eleven percent did not consider themselves to be feminists, even though they agreed with some of the points which determined whether one was feminist or not.

This information was necessary for this research because the researcher sought to analyze how feminists' views affected fashion and dress, and believes that if nearly eighty percent declared themselves to be feminists by definition, the views expressed in the findings are thus a good representation of different feminist views.

4.2 How have feminists' Views Affected Fashion and Dress?

Below is data that depict the respondents' various views that have influenced dress and fashion presented thematically.

4.2.1Theme One: Lack of Freedom

Participants expressed different ways in which they considered lack of freedom of choice as one of the actors that influence dress and fashion.

Figure 3 presents data on percentages of participants who viewed lack of freedom in choice of dress and fashion, lack of self-expression as well as self-identity, as affecting fashion and dress.
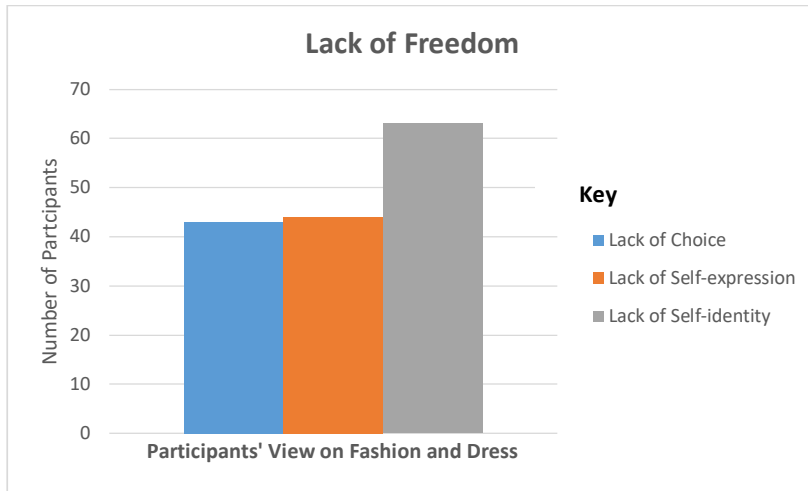
Figure 4.3 **Lack of freedom of choice**

Out of the eighty-two participants, half of them had a negative view of fashion and dress because they felt that women's fashion and dress infringed on their right of freedom to choose the styles that they would like to wear. Fifty-two percent felt that society's dress code for women deprived them of the right to self-expression through dress. As many as over seventy-five percent of the respondents were of the view that women's fashion and dress deprived them of the freedom to self-identity, as they dressed according to an identity deemed appropriate by society.

4.2.2 Theme Two: Culture Dominance

Another aspect on the respondents' views that guides fashion and dress is culture dominance as it relates to patriarchal dominance, objectifying of women, erosion of culture and lack of equality between the sexes.

Figure 4 shows percentages of participants' views on culture dominance and its impact on dress and fashion.
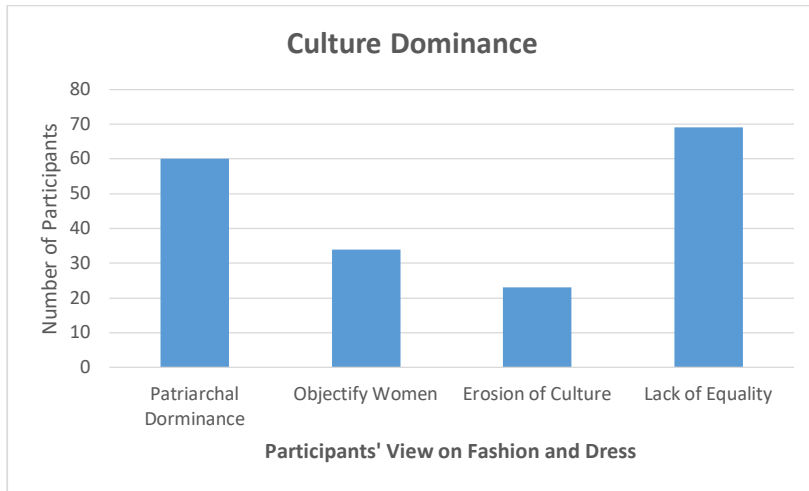
Figure 4.4 **Culture Dominance affecting dress and fashion.**

On the aspect of culture dominance over what the participants wore, seventy-three percent of the participants expressed the view that patriarchal dominance over what they wore was oppressive as it limited their choice of dress. Eighty-four percent of the respondents had a negative view of fashion and dress because they felt that there was lack of equality in terms of society's expectations and policing of men's and women's fashion and dress. Thirty-nine percent did not like the fact that women's fashion tended to objectify women for male gaze. A small percentage of the participants, twenty-six, did not like the fact that women's fashion and dress eroded culture through body-revealing styles.

4.2.3 Theme Three – Communication

Participants regarded communication as a role that could be played by dress and fashion and that outlook therefore inspired their choice of fashion and dress.

Figure 4.5 gives the percentages of participants who believed that communication of one's individuality, personality and sexuality is a factor that influences dress and fashion.
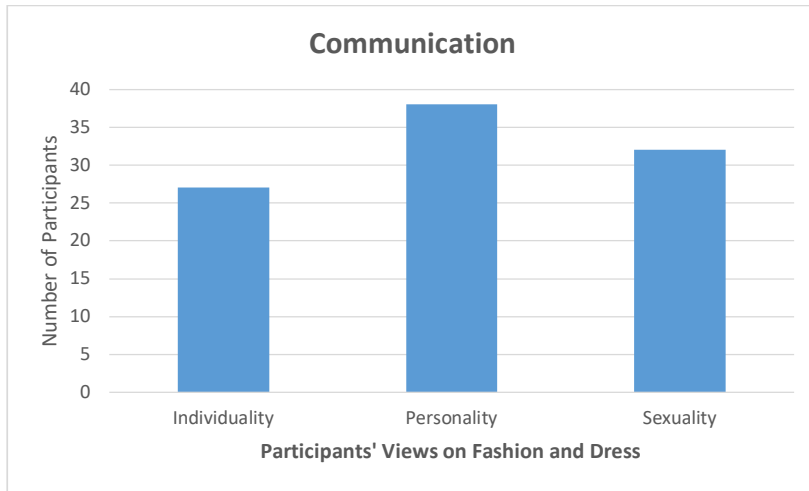
Figure 4.5 **Communication as one of the influences on fashion and dress**

Among the respondents there were those who embraced women's fashion and dress because they regarded fashion and dress as useful tools for them to communicate non-verbally, their individuality, at thirty-two percent, personality at forty-six percent and lastly, sexuality at thirty-nine percent.

4.2.4 Theme Four – Self-Actualization

The last aspect articulated by respondents that they believed affected dress and fashion trends was the desire for self-actualization with regards to self-improvement, self-satisfaction and self-confidence.

Figure 4.6 depicts the percentages of respondents who desire self-actualization in terms of self-improvement, self-satisfaction and self-confidence which can inspire dress and fashion trends.

Self-Actualisation

Figure 4.6 **Need for Self-actualization likely to affect dress and fashion trends**

Another aspect expressed by respondents that is likely to make women embrace fashion and dress was self-actualization in terms of self-improvement, (sixty-two percent), self-satisfaction (seventy-one percent) and self-confidence (fifty percent).

4.3 Research Question 2: How can fashion and dress be made more acceptable by women?

4.3.1 Theme Five - Participants' Suggestions on How Fashion and Dress Can Be Made More Acceptable by Women

Participants responded to an open-ended question, where the subjects were asked to give suggestions on how they thought the friction between some women's views on fashion and dress could be minimized. From their responses three main areas of reference were identified, namely, education, fashion designs and lastly society, and the responses are listed below, presented also as tables to help make the responses more easily identifiable.

4.3.1.1 Education

Listed below are participants' suggestions on how education can be used to make fashion and dress more acceptable to men and women.

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- *Educate women to dress according to their structure*

- *Women to help each other, advise each other on ways to dress especially with the type of clothing meant for certain body types; see each other as a team, and not to compete against each other*

- *Education and to equip people with the right knowledge about fashion*

Table 4.1 shows a grouping of the suggestions listed above that was given by participants on how education can be instrumental in lessening the tension between some women's view on dress and fashion.

EDUCATION – instrumental in lessening dress tensions		
Different Figure Types	Suitable Styles for Different Figure types	Ways of Camouflaging Figure Irregularities

Table 4.1**Education as instrumental in lessening tension**

Participants suggested that female students be advised on different figure types and the styles suitable for each figure type, as well as on ways of camouflaging figure irregularities. In this way, those who felt that women's fashion was biased towards the tall and slim figures, may also be able to find styles suitable for their own figure types, and so are less likely to be antagonistic towards women's fashion and dress.

4.3.1.2 Fashion Designs

Fashion Designs   was the second strategy that came up which could be implemented to reduce the tension on views on fashion and dress, as listed below.

- *Fashion designers to come up with unisex designs*

- *Fashion designers to come up with attractive styles for everyone, whether tall or short*

- *Fashion designers should cater for the larger figures as well in attractive styles*

- *Fashion designers to find out what women would like to wear*

Table 4.2 presents the suggestions on Fashion designs listed above, grouped for easier analysis of the submissions.

FASHION DESIGNS		
Androgynous Styles	Attractive Styles for All Figure Types	Fashion Needs Analysis to be Done

Table 4.2 **Fashion Designs strategy**

Participants also suggested more interesting unisex styles, in a bid to bridge the gap between men's and women's fashion and dress, where some women were against women's fashion because they regarded it as frivolous, like the ultra-high heeled shoes and flimsy tops and miniskirts. They also advocated for attractive styles for all figure types, especially the shorter and fuller figures. In this way, those with less than ideal figures may also feel included, and not excluded, as is the feeling of some female students. Some suggested that fashion designers should ask women what styles they want – some kind of fashion needs analysis, or market analysis. They felt that this might minimize the tension that is experienced by some women towards fashion and dress.

4.3.1.3 Society

 Was the last category of proposals offered to try and decrease the tension between some women's views on dress and fashion, which included the ones listed below.

- *Women should just choose clothes that please them and at the same time should not affect the society as a whole*

- *It's a free world. Times are changing. You only live once, therefore you do what you want and like!*

- *Give them freedom to choose clothes they feel comfortable in*

- *Society to let people dress as they like without criticizing them*

- *Society should leave women to dress in ways that women feel comfortable and attractive in*

- *Women should be left to make their own choices so that they respect other women's dressing by arranging expos and meetings to raise awareness*

Figure 4.3 displays the data on how society can contribute to curtailing the tension resulting from some women's views on fashion and dress.

SOCIETY		
Equality Between Men and Women	Allowing Women Freedom of Choice of Dress	Less Criticism of Women's Dress

Figure 4.3 **Society's role in diminishing the tension between women and fashion and dress**

The third area suggested for minimizing tension between some female students' views on fashion and dress was with regards to societal expectations of women's fashion and dress. They felt that there should be equality in the way society monitors men's and women's dress, and that women should be allowed freedom to choose what they want, or do not want, to wear, and that society be less critical of women's fashion and dress, as they are with men's fashion. Participants expressed the desire for freedom of choice of their own fashion and dress, as they thought men had. In this way, the respondents felt that more women could embrace fashion and dress.

4.4 Discussions on the Findings

4.4.1 Demographics

Seventy-nine percent of the respondents viewed themselves as feminists, based on the rating that the researcher adapted from Oliver (2012). This exercise was necessary because the research sought to analyze the views of feminists on fashion and dress. A nearly eighty percent representation of the respondents who are feminists by definition, is deemed by the researcher to validate the findings as those coming from feminists.

It was interesting to note that some participants responded 'Yes' to virtually all the questions which determined that they were, by definition, feminist, but when the final question asked whether they were brave enough to call themselves a feminist, they then responded in the negative. This could be because of the negative connotation generally associated with feminism, as women who are radical, and anti-social, according to Wilson (1985) and Cash (2012). This is also expressed another way by Simmel (1988) in his observation on the concept of fashion, that fashion brought together two divergent social forces, which are, the need for conformity and the need for individual distinction, which incorporates self-identity. This conflict was evident in this study as well, since participants appeared to oscillate in their views on some of the aspects, as analyzed below.

Supporting the rights of men and women:
Virtually all the respondents supported the rights of men and women. It appears that the desire for human rights is imbedded in society, possibly because both the social media and schools in Zimbabwe are raising awareness on the issue.

Taking Women's studies in order to make a difference: This did not seem to be the case, possibly because of Guidance and Counselling lessons that learners are exposed to these days which broaden their views on choice of subjects to take up.

Paying special attention to how gender roles are portrayed in the world and taking offense at being assigned tasks specific to gender: The general view was to accept the status quo in society, in terms of patriarchal authority, an indication of how culture has a stronghold on the participants' views. Christianity, according to Song (2010), also supports the division of labor along gender lines. Therefore, if a respondent strongly believed in Christian values, they would not be offended if assigned tasks specific to their gender.

Taking self-defense against a possible rape attack:

This appeared to be no issue at all with the respondents – the majority did not see any need for them to take self-defense classes. This could be because rape is not so prevalent in their various societies, to warrant them thinking of taking self-defense classes. Or maybe a culture of silence may make it appear as if there is no need for it. Chamunorwa (2016) seems to support the latter view in her observations on the Kereke and Magaya rape cases. She noted that survivors / victims of rape are likely to be very reluctant to report rape to the police because of a number of reasons which include not being taken seriously by the police and society, lack of privacy and the courts' insensitive way of handling the cases. She asserts that this culminates in the survivor / victim worrying about being exposed and taunted for "asking for it," because of what she was wearing among other factors, when the rape occurred as was the case in the Magaya case. This handling of rape cases prompts placards such as the ones portrayed in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7 shows protests against rape-victim blaming.

Figure 4.7 Protest against rape-victim blame

Source: http://herzimbabwe.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/victim-blaming.jpg

Preferring to be recognized for one's talents and not for one's looks: Virtually all the respondents responded in the affirmative on this point. This notion is very much in line with feminism right from the first wave feminism through to the third wave feminism. First wave feminists fought against being their husbands' or their fathers' appendages and dared to stand on their own, and be recognized for who they were, and not by what they wore - clothes which had been provided by the males in their lives, as stated by Arnold (2001). In Victorian times, the first wave feminism arose as a result of women no longer wanting to be mere appendages of their husbands or fathers, to look pretty in corsets and long, restrictive clothing. They therefore chose to wear plain clothes, which allowed them to also participate in the public sphere. The second wave feminism, in like manner, did not want to be objectified as sensual beings, there for the male gaze, as was seen at the 1968 Miss America beauty pageant, but to be recognized for who they were, and what they could achieve as human beings. This seems to be the view of the respondents in this study as well.

Finding nothing wrong with women running their own households: From the colonial era, when men went to work in the mines or in the towns, women stayed at home virtually running the households. Mazingi and Kamidza (2001) note that the majority of the players in the home were women and that since that time women continue to play a leading role in running the home and the informal market sector. With this background, it is not surprising that the majority of the respondents found nothing wrong with women running their households.

Finding patriarchy to be an unjust system that is oppressive to women: Three quarters of the participants did view patriarchy as an unjust and oppressive system to women. Hagen (2010) posits that women who are governed in a patriarchal society had to adhere to patriarchal rules in terms of dress. This is what Kesselman (1991) and Volo and Dorothy (cited in Chingono, 2015) point as the reason for dress reform movements such as what happened during the first and second wave feminism. White (2003) adds that dress reform movements encompassed a time in which women started to reject the notion of an ideal feminine look imposed on women by patriarchy. At the root of this rejection of patriarchy is the notion of lack of freedom of choice of what women should, or should not, wear, which, according to Sika (2014), is the credo of feminism – freedom of choice. This appeared to be the driving force behind the participants' view of patriarchy as oppressive to women – the lack of freedom of choice.

Finding the idea of getting married and having children in one's twenties, undesirable: The majority of the respondents did not find the idea of a woman getting married in her twenties undesirable. This is possibly because of a Zimbabwean culture noted by Majaka (2014) that people in Zimbabwe generally value marriage because marriage gives woman status: a woman finding a man to be married to is considered to be a virtue. Traditionally, a woman who 'failed' to get married, was considered to be a disgrace to the family, and this appeared to be the case

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still. Majaka (2014) further shows how Zimbabwean parents frown upon cohabitation which occurs often especially among college students according to his observation.

Almost eighty percent of the participants declared themselves to be feminists, although they did not agree on all points. Main points of departure related to cultural practices where some viewed patriarchal influence of dress as oppressive, while others did not find anything wrong with that.

It emerged from the data collected that there are two main feminists' views on fashion and dress, a positive view and a negative view – an ambivalence noted by dress scholars such as Davis, (1992) and Church-Gibson (2010). Davis (1992) poses the question of whether fashion stifles the self, or releases the self and allows it to reinvent or transform its own identity. Davis (1992) further argues that viewing women as victims of fashion is crippling as it misses important ways in which fashion operates a creative arena for self-expression. But as Church-Gibson (2010), noted, this oscillation, especially among third-wave feminists exists. This oscillation was evident in two ways in the research findings in the sense that for example, a participant disliked fashion for objectifying women as sex objects, but embraced it as a way of self-expression. It was also evident in some participants embracing styles such as the ultra-high heeled shoes, while others disliked the impractical nature of such styles. However, on this point, the majority of the respondents embraced fashion because they felt that, as Davis (1992), suggested, they could use fashion for expressing the identity that they wanted to portray, and this appeared to be that of 'elegance', as one respondent expressed

4.4.2 Participants' views resulting in negative stance towards fashion and dress

4.4.2.1 Lack of Freedom

Sika (2014), supporting Najumi (2013), states that the overarching credo for feminists is that women must be allowed the right to be who and what they want to be and to do whatever they want to do, as long as they are not breaking any laws, nor infringing on anyone's rights. Respondents expressed this view as well. On the negative view on fashion and dress, some of the respondents cited lack of freedom of choice experienced by women in their choice of fashion and dress as possible reasons for some women viewing women's fashion as oppressive. This lack of freedom triggered the very first and second waves of feminism. Sika, (2014) argues that fashion models were objectified, because the driving force for the models' fashion was for sex appeal. She further points out that the sexist nature of the fashion industry aggravates feminists who struggle to curb the objectifying of women. Some of the participants expressed the same view, as more than half of the participants stated that they would not wear body-revealing clothes if their society frowned upon it, and they felt that this limited their *own* choice of what to wear and what not to wear.

Participants especially felt this as oppressive because they felt that men had greater freedom of choice of dress than women. This was also the concern of Burfeind (as cited in Chingono, 2016) and Simeon de Beauvoir (as cited in Chingono, 2015) who have questioned the relationship between dress and gender in order to question the asymmetrical relationship between men and women, and so advocate for equality of the sexes in realms of feminist life, including dress. Fashion is a non-verbal way of communicating to others one's chosen identity, and participants wanted the freedom of choice to do just that.

4.4.2.2 Culture Dominance

Begum (2012) asserts that fashion is intrinsically oppressive, but argues that the oppression that some women experience when interacting with fashion comes from cultural ideologies that may be transmitted through fashion imagery and rhetoric, and not from fashion itself. It is therefore interesting to note that another reason expressed by the participants for viewing fashion and dress with antagonism was related to culture, patriarchy in particular, a term that is used to describe a society characterized by current and historical unequal power relations between men and women, whereby women are systematically disadvantaged and oppressed. It is interesting to note that when a woman is scantily dressed, it is usually the men who take the first steps to taunt the woman or girl. Yet on the other hand the participants, in agreement with Sika (2014) also felt that men are the ones who initiate scanty clothing so that they may have a chance to gaze at the women for their own sensual pleasure. It is probably because of this conflicting view that some of the participants viewed fashion and dress with disgruntlement.

Well did Church-Gibson (2010) note that third wave feminism is marked with ambivalence, because even in this study, some women felt oppressed, regarding society's measurement of modesty in dress, because of what they believed to be patriarchal values, while some women, especially Christian women with a utilitarian attitude, as espoused by Song (2010), found fashion to be frivolous and totally a waste of resources. This is because a human being is influenced by various factors that mold his/her attitudes, values and norms. This also confirms the cognitive perspective on clothing, which states that we both send and receive non-verbal messages to others through dress, which is expressed by Kaiser (1985) and supported by Cash (2012) who divides human appearance into physical and biological anthropology, which is diverse due to cultural amplifications, and interpretations of beauty ideas. The cognitive perspective further

points out that when people dress differently from our expectations of them, this leads to cognitive dissonance in the observers. No wonder therefore, that there may be a clash between culture and eccentric fashion that is body-revealing, especially in a largely conservative culture. This makes women with a strong conservative culture view eccentric fashion and dress with dislike.

Some of the participants also found fashion and dress immodest, as they did not want to reveal their bodies, and they felt that this would be against their culture. This notion is supported by the symbolic interactionist perspective on dress, also supported by Davis (1992) who states that we cannot separate the concept of identity from interaction with others, because humans use symbols to communicate non-verbal messages that they agree upon. One participant observed how it was difficult, at some point, for her to find a top that did not reveal part of her breasts. Another, a mature woman, said she had problems finding a pair of jeans which did not have a short crotch. The antagonism arose from the fact that the message they would send to observers - the objectification of women by men whom they felt initiated such styles for sensual reasons when some parts of the body are revealed, would be contrary to who they are, resulting in cognitive dissonance. Such participants thus had a negative view of fashion and dress.

4.4.2.3 Communication

The ability of fashion and dress to communicate a person's personality and individuality was expressed by participants who felt that they chose fashion and dress which brought out their personality and individuality. One young participant said that putting on high-heeled shoes made her feel elegant, a feeling which she valued. This notion was noted by Goffman (2005) when he stated that the phenomenon of dress is a noteworthy symbol of communication in society which can work as a window into understanding the individual and indeed even society as a whole.

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Even as pertaining to culture, participants' responses revealed how fashion and dress could communicate the subjects' attitude towards culture in that some stated that they were against fashion because the culture of patriarchy dictated to women what to wear and what not to wear. On the other hand, there were those who did not like fashion, because to them, fashion and dress eroded their culture by promoting body-revealing clothes which they felt was not good, according to their culture. This is what Pham (2012) referred to when she posited that our dressing and fashion choices have psychological, social, political and economic meanings with consequences. The consequences include both the individual's feeling of self-confidence, or otherwise, as well as observers' evaluation of the wearer. Kamla-Raj (2011) observed that the moment someone walks in through the door, observers make mental interpretations of the person's personality, or ability to do a certain job, in the event of an interview, because he argues that dress is like a person's second skin. This partly explains why the participants, and feminists in general, take fashion and dress seriously, reacting either positively or negatively to it, depending on the meanings that they attach to the fashion and dress in question. Knapp and Hall (2010) share the notion that the phenomenon of dress as a symbol of communication is a pivotal element in the construction and management of an individual identity. This was well expressed by the participants when they stressed that they wanted to dress for self- satisfaction.

Another important aspect of communication through fashion and dress is put across by Sika (2014) who argues that fashion has shaped women's identities and makes a case for using fashion to achieve feminists' objectives, by pushing for a body of knowledge on fashion and dress to allow this to happen.

Fashion also communicates society's value of beauty – the tall and slim figure. But not all women are tall and slim, so what happens to them in terms of fashion and dress? Wolf (2002)

brings out this dilemma very clearly when she states that fashion on its own is neutral but if fashion is incorporated with beauty and body ideals, it invariably influences our perception of beauty, body age and race, and herein lies potential disagreements. This partly explains the ambivalence in the participants' view on fashion and dress – some felt that fashion and dress portrayed their identity, while others felt stifled by it.

4.4.3 Participants' views resulting in acceptance of fashion and dress

4.4.3.1 Self-Actualization

Some participants showed that they embraced fashion because they said that they could dress in such a way as to bring out who they wanted to be as well as how they wanted to be considered. For them, the driving force behind women's fashion was for self-satisfaction and self-identity. This is in line with the assertion made by Delog (1986) that the cognitive theory of dress could describe people's formation of schema that affect their responses to an apparel product; that individuals use cues such as dress to perceive ideas about others as well as themselves. Damhorst (1995) also states that individual cues were found to provide personal and social information within a social context. These cues are what the symbolic interactionist theory refers to as symbols. Kaiser (1985) is in agreement with this assertion as she indicates that recognizing the use of symbols and impressions to form views of other people and ourselves is part of human interaction which occurs in social settings and context.

Some participants' view on dress and fashion was that they could manipulate dress to accentuate their self-confidence, by wearing clothes which they felt brought out who they believed themselves to be. Among the participants, less than thirty percent expressed explicitly the fact they would dress in whatever way that they wanted to dress in, regardless of what society deemed acceptable for them to wear. This showed that among the participants there were not

many who agreed with Douglas (as cited in Hoffman, 2010) who argued that because young women feel like they have equality with men, they now found it permissible for them to turn themselves into sex objects without repercussions. The majority of the participants specifically stated that they would not disregard society's expected dress code for them. Maybe this is partly because of cultural differences in the west and here in Zimbabwe, where it would appear that young people are more conservative as far as outlandish fashion is concerned.

Having said that though, it is interesting to note that more than half of the participants viewed the driving force behind fashion as self-identity and self-satisfaction, and only twenty nine percent thought that the driving force was for sex appeal and male gaze. This could be due to different interpretations of the question, as well as the different options given as possible responses to the question. Or it could simply be because the messages that the artefact of dress is conveying has shifted over the years, as Lynch (2016) pointed out that dress is a social process in human behavior and that it evolves with time.

Respondents who showed that they could use the symbol of dress and fashion to enhance their individuality, sexuality as well as for self-improvement, and self-satisfaction had no qualms with fashion and dress. However, over half of the participants expressed some friction with dress and fashion, either because they felt that their freedom of choice of fashion and dress was being infringed upon, or that the styles promoted overstepped their social values.

4.4.4 Suggested Ways of Reducing Possible Tension on Views on Dress and Fashion

There were three main areas suggested as ways of alleviating friction between some female students' views on fashion and dress, namely, education, fashion designs and society.

4.4.4.1 Education

Educating fellow females on styles that suit their particular figure types and how to camouflage figure irregularities were suggestions given to alleviate some women's negative views towards dress, especially those who felt that women's fashion was biased towards the tall and slim figure over the short and fuller figure. This is in line with Sika's (2014) argument that fashion has shaped women's identities and therefore makes a case for using fashion to achieve feminists' objectives, while pushing for a body of knowledge around the subject of fashion and dress for this to happen.

Such knowledge can be given at the school level during Guidance and Counselling lessons, and at the community level through concerts which showcase styles worn by all figure types, especially the fuller and shorter figures who are generally not catered for in the social media such as TV and fashion magazines.

4.4.4.2 Information on dress and fashion

They say that knowledge is power, so sharing knowledge on how fashion can be utilized by women to communicate what their values and aspirations are, may go a long way in lessening the tension that some women have in their views on fashion and dress. Feminists feel that information on fashion and dress is essential in redressing any notions on fashion and dress that they feel are misrepresented by society.

4.4.4.3 Society

More than half of the participants felt that there is need for society to let up, so to speak, on expectations on women's fashion and dress, because they felt that society's control over their choice of dress infringed upon their freedom of choice of dress. However, Boslo (2015) warns

that changing the meaning of traditional feminine and masculine symbols is a complex and complicated process; it is not a one-person business. This therefore seems to indicate that this route of bringing about change in society's meanings attached to the symbol of women's fashion and dress is not easily achievable. Nevertheless, the same researcher, Boslo (2015) also notes that the symbols related to femininity and masculinity are in a constant flux. Therefore the route to take to ease the tension between the views of some feminists on fashion and dress may be through the use of symbols related to femininity and masculinity, which seems to be gaining good ground, as seen in the suggestion that follows of the use of androgynous styles.

4.4.4.4 Fashion Designs

Some respondents suggested the use of unisex styles, where male and female fashion blends into one, in a bid to achieve equality between men and women. It is interesting to note how graphically Noyes (as cited in Robertson, 1970, p. 296) argued for androgynous styles when he says, "Women's dress is a lie if it proclaims that she is not a two-legged animal, but something like a churn standing on castors. When a distinction is reduced to the bonds of nature and decency, a dress will be adopted that will be at the same time the most simple and the most beautiful; it will be the same, or nearly the same, for both sexes." He further discouraged women from wearing uncomfortable clothes that convey a message of submission, but that they should wear comfortable clothing that allowed them to move and express themselves freely. This is similar to what Gligorovska (2011) alludes to as the use of androgyny, in which male and female co-exist in one form, as an original state of power. The image of androgynous brand, especially as portrayed by Calvin Klein, gives the message that in fashion there is a new gender fluidity in which traditional male and female attitudes are less relevant. This might satisfy the feminists in the study, as well as others, who feel the need for portraying power through dress.

Maeland (2016) observes that traditionally a man in a suit exuded the stature of a leader. He further states that politics and private enterprise are occupational areas in which women have had to adjust their style of clothing to the masculine dress code, by dressing in a way that copied the styles of men, especially in the west. The suggestion of androgynous styles may help ease the negative view some women have towards fashion and dress, especially those women who felt that feminine dress spelt inferiority to men.

Having said that though, Lynch (2016) argues that the majority of third wave feminists are seeking to also exude authority even when dressed in feminine attire; they seek 'authority' in make-up and high heels – women's expression of power. This is evidenced by women leaders such as Hillary Clinton and Theresa May, for example, who dress in a feminine version of the masculine suit, but also in typically feminine dress at times, and still convey the authority that they do when dressed in masculine styles. Maeland (2016) and Lynch (2016) hope that such pace setters in terms of both power and dress and fashion, may pave the way for feminists' positive views on fashion and dress, seeing that it is a tool that they can use to self-actualize. Researchers on dress, for example, Boslo (2015) believe that in the long run, this may alter gender symbolism.

4.5 Summary

This chapter presented data on demographics and participants' views that have influenced their choice of fashion and dress. The responses revealed a common need for women to have freedom of choice on what they want, or do not want, to wear. This was a core need, even though there was a division on what they wanted to wear, especially in terms of modesty, where some participants felt that they would not think of wearing body-revealing clothes, while others were comfortable with that as they felt that that was a way of celebrating their femininity. The

findings seem to suggest that as long as freedom of choice is given, the respondents will generally embrace fashion. The next and last chapter in this study gives an overview of the research, the conclusions the researcher has drawn from the study and suggested recommendations to ease the tension emanating from different views that affect feminists' choice of fashion and dress.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

Chapter four presented, analyzed and discussed data collected from participants, which was presented in narrative and diagrammatic form. This chapter gives a synopsis of the research, through highlighting and reflecting on what emerged during the whole research. It also gives conclusions by reviewing the major findings to answer the research problem. The chapter concludes by giving social and academic recommendations based on the findings.

The study consists of five chapters.

5.1 Summary
Chapter One

Chapter one gave the background to the study which sought to build a foundation that helped the researcher in finding out if female students at a tertiary institution in Gweru felt that there was an infringement on their freedom of choice of dress and if there was a way of minimizing the resulting friction. The main research question probed how the views held by feminists affected dress and fashion, and the second asked for ways of minimizing friction on views on dress. The background to the study comprised a historical outline of how the views of the First, Second and Third Waves of feminism affected dress and fashion. This was largely marked by antagonism over patriarchy, power and the objectification of women, which resulted in women altering the prevailing dress and fashion to suit their views. The researcher did not find much research done directly on how feminists' views have affected fashion and dress in Zimbabwe and this was the gap the researcher hoped to fill.

The researcher hopes that the study will benefit the researcher, future researchers on dress and fashion, Fashion and Textiles students at the tertiary institution under study as well as fashion designers.

Chapter Two

Review of relevant literature focused on how feminists' views have affected dress and fashion over the years from the late nineteenth century to date. These views were related to patriarchy, modesty, and objectifying of women as sex objects. The eclectic theoretical framework that guided the research included the feminist, the cognitive and symbolic interactionist perspectives on dress.

Chapter Three

This chapter outlined the research methodology which directed the study and the chapter looked at the following sub-headings:

- Research paradigm and approach – Interpretivist and qualitative, respectively
- Research design – case study
- Population and sampling technique – Female students at a tertiary institution in Gweru; convenience sampling technique
- Research instruments – questionnaire
- Explanation of data collection procedures, data management and analysis that were used.

Chapter Four

This chapter presented findings from the study, analyzed the findings and then discussed the findings. The data was extracted from the self-administered questionnaire. The findings revealed

that the respondents appeared to comply more with society's dress norms, than did the Third Wave feminists. They also considered self-satisfaction and self-expression as the driving force behind fashion, and not sex appeal, as is commonly held by other feminists.

5.2 Conclusions

5.2.1 How Feminists' Views Have Affected Dress and Fashion

The first research question sought to find out how the various views that feminists held have affected fashion and dress. These views related to perceived inequality between the sexes, search for desired identity, patriarchy and self-actualization.

Inequality: Feminists' perceptions of inequality between the sexes expressed through dress led them to abandon any form of dress which they perceived to be perpetuating that notion of inequality, rooted in the identifying role of dress. This ran through the First, Second, and Third Wave feminists, and also among the female students under study.

Identity: The question of identity was also strongly viewed by participants partly because of the accompanying power associated with a given type of dress. The female students in the study wanted to be respected for who they are, and not for just their looks.

Patriarchy: The participants also viewed patriarchy as oppressive, because they felt obliged to comply with society's dress code for them. Hoffman's (2012) observation of the friction between compliance with society's norms and self-expression was evident among the respondents. Even though virtually all the respondents felt oppressed by patriarchy, more than half of them said that they would not dress as they would like to, but would factor society's expectations into their choice of dress.

Ambivalence: The study confirmed the ambivalence among women's views on fashion and dress. Some respondents were of the view that fashion eroded culture in that it promoted body-revealing clothes, which was contrary to the respondents' culture. Consequently, these respondents' choice of dress was one that conformed to society's dress code for them. Other participants, though, felt that as long as what they wore was *their* choice and what they felt comfortable in, then it really did not matter what society thought about what they wore. For these participants freedom of choice was the guiding factor in choosing what to wear.

The sum of this antagonistic view is the perceived lack of equality between men and women in their choice of fashion and dress. Women felt that society, especially men, did not allow them freedom to wear what they wanted to wear, thus infringing on their right of choice, which they detested. The participants in this study expressed the same view.

Self-Actualization: It was truly interesting to note in the participants' responses that more than half of the respondents cited self-satisfaction and self-identity as the driving force behind fashion. Some of the female students therefore embraced fashion because they found it a useful conduit which could transmit their identity and values.

5.2.2 How dress and fashion can be made more acceptable by female students at a tertiary institution in Gweru

Education: Giving information on the need for equality in society, dressing to suit different figures and occasions were some of the ways suggested as having the potential to affect women's views, in order to minimize any friction that may be present with regards to dress.

Different views that the participants held were social constructs, and the school is part of the social institution that impacts social values. It is therefore fitting that the respondents brought up

education as a possible channel to transmit values of equality in gender, which would result in women having the freedom to choose their own dress code.

Unisex designs were deemed to be useful in reducing the tension on views on fashion and dress that some feminists hold. This is because androgynous designs blur the distinction between men and women's fashion, which would give feminists the symbol of power that they contend males exude in their dress.

Dress does not, indeed, turn women into sluts, but the symbol of dress can convey that meaning, and cognitive beings react accordingly. However, what the researcher has learnt from the research is that women, feminists in particular, advocate for freedom of choice and for equal dress codes for both sexes. They feel oppressed because society expects them to take responsibility for boys' and men's behavior through their dress, instead of training boys and men to control their sensual appetites. Consequently, this view made some of the participants to dress with abandon, leaving it up to men to deal with the consequences!

Another important point that the researcher learnt was what Ang (2000) expressed by stating that appearance is a metaphor for identity, which is complex in that it includes physical features such as the skin, bodily shape and dress which are susceptible to change, fluctuation and fluidity. This thus helped to explain the ambiguity in views and thus in choice of fashion and dress among the participants.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 How Feminists' Conflicting Views on Fashion and Dress Can be minimized

Based on the findings of the research, the researcher recommends the following:

- *To female students* – education on how to dress for different occasions, different figure types, as well as how to camouflage figure irregularities, in the hope that views of being stifled by certain dress styles may be reduced.

- *To educators* - starting from primary school – lessons on respecting human rights, including the right of choice of dress.

- *To educators* – lessons on Emotional Intelligence, which help people to deal with conflict and anger in amicable ways. This is expected to help female students to deal with conflicting views in less militant ways, and thus reduce friction.

- *To educators* – lessons on WHO Life Skills such as communication, conflict management, self-awareness and self-management, as a way of empowering people, and women in particular, to deal with conflicts in life and to build self-esteem, and thus hopefully minimize any friction that may arise regarding fashion and dress.

- *Fashion designers* - may also be encouraged to design and make more androgynous styles which are exciting, to meet the needs of those females who perceive that masculine dress exudes power, which they aspire to have.

- *To future researchers* **–** a comparative study on male views that have affected dress – have they also felt oppressed by society in terms of their choice of dress? How did that affect their choice of dress? How does that compare with women's views? The debate continues with interesting possibilities!

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Shirley Banda. I am a student at Midlands State University doing a Master of Education (M Ed) degree in Fashion and Textiles. I am carrying a study on Feminists' View on Fashion and Dress". A Case Study of MSU female students: Batanai Annex, in partial fulfilment of the M Ed requirements to complete the course. The research is purely for academic purposes and no parts of your responses shall be made public outside the university.

If you are willing to take part in this research, kindly fill in the questionnaire to the best of your knowledge. Thank you.

Part A: Demographics

1. Which is your area of study at MSU? …………………………………………………...

2. Which year and level are you in? …………………………………………………….

3. Which is your home area? ………………………………………………………………….

Part B. Please read the statements below and answer Yes or No

Statement	Yes	No
1. You are a supporter of the rights of men and women		
2. You took a women's studies course and it motivated you to make a difference		
3. You pay special attention to how gender roles are portrayed in the world.		
4. You prefer to be recognized for your talents and not for your looks.		
5. You are highly offended when you are given specific tasks		

based on your gender.		
6. You do not see anything wrong with women who run their own households.		
7. You are interested in advocacy and have strong opinions about issues that affect everyone.		
8. You have thought about taking self-defense classes in order to protect yourself.		
9. you believe patriarchy is an unjust system that is oppressive to women.		
10. The idea of getting married and having children in your twenties is not desirable.		
11. Are you bold enough to call yourself a feminist?		

Source: Adapted from "15 Signs You Are Actually A Feminist" Oliver (2012).

Part C. As a woman, what is your view on the following? Put a tick on your chosen column

1. Patriarchal, or male expectations of women's of dress?

oppressive	dictatorial	Infringing on women's freedom of choice	Good	Supportive of women's needs

2. Equality of society's expectation of women's and men's dress?

Oppressive to women	Infringing on women's freedom of choice	Equal to both men and women	Oppressive to men	Infringing on men's freedom of choice

3. Women's fashion choices are more carefully policed than men's. (Pham 2012. If the Clothes fit: A Feminist Takes on Fashion)

Absolutely	Sometimes	I haven't noticed	Not at all!	Men's ones also

4. The ten- to fifteen-cm heels basically make fools out of women, putting women into the same category as Chinese feet binding.

Totally agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Totally disagree

5. Do you think that women are given respect in accordance with the level of modesty society thinks she displays, i.e. on how well a woman fits society's standard of modesty.

Totally agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Totally disagree

6. Do you view women's fashion as being designed to objectify women, so that male may gaze at them? (Sika 2014)

Totally agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Totally disagree

7. What do you think is the driving force or motivation for today's women's fashion?

For sex appeal	For male gaze	Not sure	For self-identity	For self-satisfaction

8. Do you think that women's fashion is biased towards the tall and slim figures?

Definitely	Sometimes	Not sure	No	Not at all

9. Do you think that if women's fashion is predominantly designed for the tall and slender figure, that puts pressure on women to attain that standard?

Mostly, yes	Yes	Not sure	No	Mostly, no

10. If women's fashion puts pressure on women to be tall and slim, what effect does this have on women who fail to reach that standard? (Loeto, 2014. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Feel unattractive	Feel oppressed	Not sure	Feel slightly oppressed	No effect

Part D Please read and then tick the box that best describes your view on dress and fashion.

1. I like high-heeled shoes because they help to accentuate my curves and contours as a woman.

Definitely yes!	Yes	Not affected	No	Definitely no

2. Body revealing clothes like low-cut necklines and very short skirts make me feel more feminine.

Definitely, yes!	Yes	Not affected	No	Definitely no.

3. I like to wear whatever I want, regardless of society's pressure on women to dress in 'modest' manner.

Definitely yes!	Yes	Indifferent	No	Definitely no

4. Heavy make-up, accentuated eye lashes and fingernails bring out who I am.

Definitely yes!	Yes	Indifferent	No	Definitely no

5. Who has the problem: a rapist, or the raped girl who was wearing body-revealing clothes?

Definitely the rapist	The rapist	Both	The girl	Definitely the girl

Part E: Please feel free to express your personal thoughts on the following.

Feminists are people who believe in, and fight for, equality between men and women. Some feminists find fashion to be oppressive to women, while other feminists find dress to be an opportunity to express their identity and femininity.

1. Why do you think some feminists find women's fashion and dress oppress?

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2. Why do you think other feminists embrace women's fashion and dress?

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What do you needs to happen to reduce the tension that females have with fashion and dress?

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Thank you for your time and effort in answering these questions.