SOCIOLOGICAL FACTORS AND CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS FASHION CLOTHING

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on sociological factors and consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing. It was carried out to determine the effects of family, peer group, reference group and culture on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing. The study adopted cross-sectional survey research design. A structured questionnaire was used to obtain primary data from 185 consumers of fashion clothing. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics, while hypotheses testing was done using multiple linear regression. Consequently, the findings of the study revealed that culture (β = .507; p-value = 0.000 < 0.05) had the highest significant positive effect on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing, followed by family (β = .244; p-value = 0.000 < 0.05), reference group (β = .238; p-value = 0.000 < 0.05) and peer group (β = .085; p-value = 0.005 < 0.05). The study concluded that sociological factors are key determinants of consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing and made practical implications to that effect.
Keywords: Sociological factors, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Fashion Clothing, Social Influence Theory.

INTRODUCTION

Fashion embodies popular and innovative styles, designs, trends, and variations in wears (clothes and shoes), accessories (perfumery, cosmetics, jewelries, etc.), hairstyles and any other aspect of aesthetic creative art (Kaiser, 2019). Nigerians are enthusiastic about fashion such that through their travels, social events, social media, and entertainment outlets, they are exposed to global fashion trends and designs that ultimately become massively adopted as the dominant fashion styles in the country (Oladejo, 2019). Similarly, Nigerians (especially the female population) spend a significant amount of money on a daily basis in the purchase of fashion accessories in order to stay in tune with latest trends, and styles as well as to enhance their appearance. In the view of Osaki, Isimama and Olawunmi (2019), Nigeria is one of the largest fashion markets in West Africa, with a sizeable proportion (at least 25 percent) of her youths engaged in fashion trade either as tailors, seamstresses, designers, fashion photographers, stylists, fashion accessories producers and traders. One way of encouraging the growth of the Nigerian fashion industry is to help manufacturers and dealers explore and understand the various factors affecting consumer buying behaviour towards their products so as to be in a better position to manage these factors for improved performance. According to Bashir, Mehboob and Bhatti (2015), consumer behaviour is the totality of the attitudes, predispositions, and behaviours of consumers while searching for, evaluating, selecting, purchasing, consuming and eliminating products, services and ideas required to satisfy their needs. The behaviour of consumers towards the purchase of consumer goods is predominantly influenced by key factors, such as cultural, economic, social, personal and psychological factors, which interact together to determine the pattern of consumer purchase decisions and behaviours (Sangroya & Nayak, 2017). However, this study centered on family, peer group, reference group and culture.

According to Joan (2018), family is a social unit of two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption and having a shared commitment to the mutual relationship. It comprises two or more people who share goals and values, have long-term commitments to one another and reside usually in the same dwelling. Peer group is both a social and primary group of people who share similar interests, age, background, or social status. The members of this group are likely to influence the person's beliefs and behaviour (Filade, Bello, Uwaoma, Anwanane & Nwangburka, 2019). In the view of Fernandes and Panda (2019), reference group is a group of people that individuals use as a standard for evaluating themselves and their own behaviour. Reference groups are used in order to evaluate and determine the nature of a given individual or other group's characteristics and sociological attributes. Whereas, culture is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behaviour and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups (Fandrejewska, 2017). Various studies have explored how these sociological factors may influence consumer buying behaviour towards products and services around the world (Lawan & Zanna, 2013; Al-Ghaswyneh, 2019; Nawawi, 2016). However, the nature of consumer buying behaviour is multifaceted as it is influenced by a variety of factors such as personal, social, economic, psychological and cultural factors (Ramya & Ali, 2016). With the advances of modern technology, consumer enlightenment and societal changes, the nature of consumer behaviour has become sophisticated, thereby making it harder for marketers to effectively appeal to and influence consumer behaviour in favour of their offerings (Qazzafi,

2020).

This certainly includes makers and dealers of fashion clothing, in the sense that, some of them are yet to fully comprehend the behaviour of consumers of fashion clothing and the factors, particularly sociological factors, that affect them. In light of this knowledge gap, various studies have been conducted on the sociological factors affecting consumer buying behaviour towards coffee brands (Lautiainen, 2015); online shopping (Durmaz & Durmaz, 2014); mobile phones (Mohan, 2014; Nawawi, 2016); electronic appliances (Łatuszyńska, Furaiji & Wawrzyniak, 2012); eco-friendly green appliances (Al-Ghaswyneh, 2019); Islamic banking (Awan & Azhar, 2014); and a host of others. However, there is inadequate empirical evidence on the sociological factors affecting consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing in the Nigeria context. The implication is that majority of consumers and especially, producers and dealers of fashion clothing in Nigeria lack empirical evidence to reliably identify the important sociological factors that can potentially affect consumer behaviour towards their products. As such, they are likely not to have the capacity to monitor these sociological trends and adjust their marketing mix strategies to align with them so as to favourably influence consumer buying behaviour towards their fashion brands and accessories. Consequently, this study was carried out to explore the effect of sociological factors (family, peer group, reference group and culture) on consumer buying behaviour in the context of fashion clothing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the social influence theory propounded by Kelman (1958). The social influence theory was propounded by Kelman (1958) to explain how the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of individuals can be determined by communication from other individuals. The basic premise of the social influence theory is that an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and subsequent actions or behaviours are influenced by others through three processes: compliance, identification, and internalization. Social influence refers to the way in which individuals change their behaviour to meet the demands of a social environment. It takes many forms and can be seen in conformity, socialization, peer pressure, obedience, leadership, persuasion, sales, and marketing. Typically, social influence results from a specific action, command, or request, but people also alter their attitudes and behaviours in response to what they perceive others might do or think. Kelman (1958) posited that social influence brings about changes in attitude and actions, and that, changes may occur at different "levels." This difference in the level of changes can be attributed by the differences in the processes through which individuals accept influence. Kelman (1958) delineated three primary processes of influence namely, compliance, identification and internalization.

The social influence theory is relevant to this study because it makes assumptions that resonate with the purpose of this study, which was to examine the effect of sociological factors on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing. The social influence theory asserts that the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of fashion clothing consumers can be determined by their interaction with social factors such as family, peer group, reference groups, culture, celebrities, among others. The theory further maintains that the attitudes, beliefs, and subsequent actions or behaviours of fashion clothing consumers are influenced by social factors (such as family, peer group, reference group and culture) through three processes: compliance, identification, and internalization. Therefore, the hypotheses of this study sought to verify the relevance of

the social influence theory by testing whether or not social factors (such as family, peer group, reference group and culture) significantly affected consumers buying behaviour towards fashion clothing.

Family and Consumer Buying Behaviour

In its most basic terms, family is a group of individuals who share some legal or genetic bonds, but for many people, family means much more, and even the simple idea of genetic bonds can be more complicated than it seems (Melissa, 2019). Basically, a group of people who share some legal bonds or blood bonds is a family. However, families are legally bound through marriages, adoptions, and guardianships, including the rights, duties, and obligations of those legal contracts. Legal bonds can be changed, expanded, or dissolved to change the composition of a family. Family can also be held together by genetic bonds; these are individuals who are directly related through a common ancestor. This includes both close and distant relatives such as siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins. Researching a family tree or genealogical records can reveal family blood bonds (Melissa, 2019). A consumer's immediate and extended family can have a substantial influence on their purchase decisions and patterns, thereby determining what products they buy, when they buy, and from which supplier they buy (Ramya & Ali, 2016). This implies that family has a significant effect on consumers' buying behaviour. This premise is substantiated by the study of Razhan and Khan (2018), which revealed that family had a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour towards household products in Mumbai. Similarly, the premise is supported by the study of Singh and Nayak (2016), which revealed that family had a significant effect on adolescent buying behaviour in India.

Peer Group and Consumer Buying Behaviour

Peer group is both a social and primary group of people who share similar interests, age, background, or social status. The members of this group are likely to influence the person's beliefs and behaviour (Filade, Bello, Uwaoma, Anwanane & Nwangburka, 2019). According to Uzezi and Deya (2017), a peer group is a social group that consists of individuals of the same social status who share similar interests and are close in age. Furthermore, Olalekan (2016) maintained that peer pressure is the direct influence on people by peers, or the effect on an individual who is encouraged and wants to follow their peers by changing their attitudes, values or behaviours to conform to those of the influencing group or individual. For the individual, this can result in either a positive or negative effect, or both. Social groups affected include both membership groups - in which individuals are formally members (such as political parties, trade unions, schools), and cliques, in which membership is not clearly defined. However, a person does not need to be a member or be seeking membership of a group to be affected by peer pressure. The relationship between peer group and consumers' buying behaviour has been studied and confirmed by various researchers to be significant. According to the study of Nawawi (2016), which revealed that peer group (social factor) significantly and positively influenced consumer purchasing decisions towards BlackBerry Smartphones in Jakarta. Similarly, the study of Buazzizi, Muhammad and Afhaz (2016) also revealed that peer group had a significant impact on consumer purchase of fashion wears in Tunisia.

Reference Group and Consumer Buying Behaviour

Reference group is a group of people that individuals use as a standard for evaluating hemselves and their own behaviour (Fernandes & Panda, 2019). Reference groups are used in

order to evaluate and determine the nature of a given individual or other group's characteristics and sociological attributes. It is the group to which the individual relates or aspires to relate himself or herself psychologically. They become the individual's frame of reference and source for ordering his or her experiences, perceptions, cognition, and ideas of self. Shareef, Mukerji, Dwivedi and Rana (2019) maintain that reference groups are groups that consumers compare themselves to or associate with. They are similar to opinion leaders in that they can have a profound influence on consumer behaviour. Reference groups are considered a social influence in consumer purchasing because they are often groups that consumers will look to to make purchasing decisions (Shareef, Mukerji, Dwivedi & Rana, 2019). So, if a reference group endorses a product, either through use or statements about the product, those that look to the group will often purchase that product. On the other hand, if a reference group disapproves of a product, those that associate with that group will probably not purchase the product. Like other sociological factors, reference group has been confirmed by previous researchers to significantly influence consumers' buying vehaviour towards products and services. The study of Razhan and Khan (2018) revealed that reference group had a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour towards household products in Mumbai. Similarly, the study of Buazzizi, Muhammad and Afhaz (2016) also revealed that reference group had a significant impact on consumer purchase of fashion wears in Tunisia.

Culture and Consumer Buying Behaviour

Culture is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behaviour and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups (Fandrejewska, 2017). Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving (Schütte & Ciarlante, 2016). Nawawi (2016) argued that cultural factors comprise of set of values and ideologies of a particular community or group of individuals. It is the culture of an individual which decides the way he/she behaves. In simpler words, culture is nothing but values of an individual. What an individual learns from his parents and relatives as a child becomes his culture. Cultural factors have a significant effect on an individual's buying decision (Lawan & Zanna, 2013). Every individual has different sets of habits, beliefs and principles which he/she develops from his family status and background. What they see from their childhood becomes their culture. Across countries and industries around the world, culture has proven to be a dominant social factor determining and shaping consumers' buying behaviour towards products and services. Various empirical studies affirm that consumers' buying behaviour is significantly influenced by consumers' culture. The foregoing assertion is supported by the study of Al-Ghaswyneh (2019), which revealed that cultural factors significantly influence consumer purchase decision. Similarly, the foregoing assertion is corroborated by the study of Nawawi (2016), which revealed that cultural factors significantly and positively influenced consumer purchasing decisions towards BlackBerry Smartphones in Jakarta.

Empirical Review and Conceptual Model

Razhan and Khan (2018) conducted a study on Assessment of the social factors influencing consumer purchase behaviour towards household products in Mumbai, India. The study aimed

at demonstrating the effect of social factors (reference group, family, peer group and social class) on consumer purchase behaviour towards household products in Mumbai. Primary data were collected from 152 buyers of household products around supermarkets and shopping malls in Mumbai using structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using simple linear regression in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 23). Subsequently, it was found that all social factors tested (reference group, family, peer group and social class) had a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour towards household products in Mumbai. Hence, the study concluded that social factors had a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour towards household products in India. Buazzizi, Muhammad and Afhaz (2016) conducted a study on the Impact of social factors affecting consumer purchase of fashion wears in Tunis. The aim of the study was to determine the impact of social factors (family, peer group, reference group, and social class) on consumer purchase of fashion wears in Tunis, Tunisia. The study collected primary data from 121 respondents in Tunis using a multiple-item questionnaire. The data obtained were analyzed using multiple regression with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 18). Subsequently, the findings revealed that family, peer group, reference group, and social class had a significant impact on consumer purchase of fashion wears in Tunisia. Hence, the study concluded that social factors had a significant impact on consumer purchase of fashion wears in Tunisia.

Nawawi (2016) conducted a study on Factors of consumer behaviour that affect purchasing decisions on blackberry smartphone. The aim of the study was to determine the factors of consumer behaviour that affect consumers' purchasing decisions towards BlackBerry Smartphones in Jakarta. Primary data were obtained from 200 students of Tarumanagara University in Jakarta using a structured questionnaire. Data analysis was executed using Multiple linear regression in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 23). Consequently, the study found that cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors significantly and positively influenced consumer purchasing decisions towards BlackBerry Smartphones in Jakarta. Based on these findings, the study concluded that cultural, social, personal and psychological factors have a significant positive influence on consumer purchasing decisions. Furthermore, Lawan and Zanna (2013) conducted a study on the Evaluation of socio-cultural factors influencing consumer buying behaviour of clothes in Borno State, Nigeria. The study was specifically carried out to examine consumer buying decision making process and assess cultural, economic as well as personal factors influencing consumer buying behaviour towards clothes. The study obtained primary data from 174 clothes buyers in Borno State using a structured questionnaire. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Chi-Square, Analysis of Variance and Multi-stage regression. The findings of the study revealed that cultural, economic, and personal (age) factors had significant influences on consumer buying behaviour towards clothes in Borno State, Nigeria. Therefore, the study concluded that culture, either acting independently or in conjunction with economic and personal factors significantly influences buying behaviour towards clothes.

Also, Durmaz and Durmaz (2014) conducted a study on the Impact of social factors on consumer buying behaviour and an empirical application in Turkey. The aim of the study was to determine the impact of family, references groups, roles and statues on consumer buying behaviour in Turkey. Primary data were obtained from 1400 respondents in Turkey using a

structured questionnaire. The data obtained were electronically analyzed using descriptive statistics. Consequently, the findings revealed that family, references groups, roles and statues affect consumer buying behaviour significantly. Finally, Al-Ghaswyneh (2019) examined the Factors affecting the consumers' decision behaviour of buying green products. The aim of the study was to examine the factors affecting customer's behaviour in making decisions regarding the purchase of eco-environmental-friendly energy-saving green appliances in countries that moved to clean energy. The study used structured questionnaire to obtain primary data from 232 customers of electronic appliances. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Analysis of variance, Exploratory factor analysis, Confirmatory factor analysis and Multiple regression). The findings of the study revealed that there is a strong positive correlation between social, cultural, personal and psychological variables and consumer purchase decision. Existing studies reviewed have shown that sociological factors could significantly enhance consumer buying behaviour towards products and services. Therefore, we have developed the conceptual model in Figure 1 to hypothesize the causality between sociological factors (family, peer group, reference group and culture) and consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing.
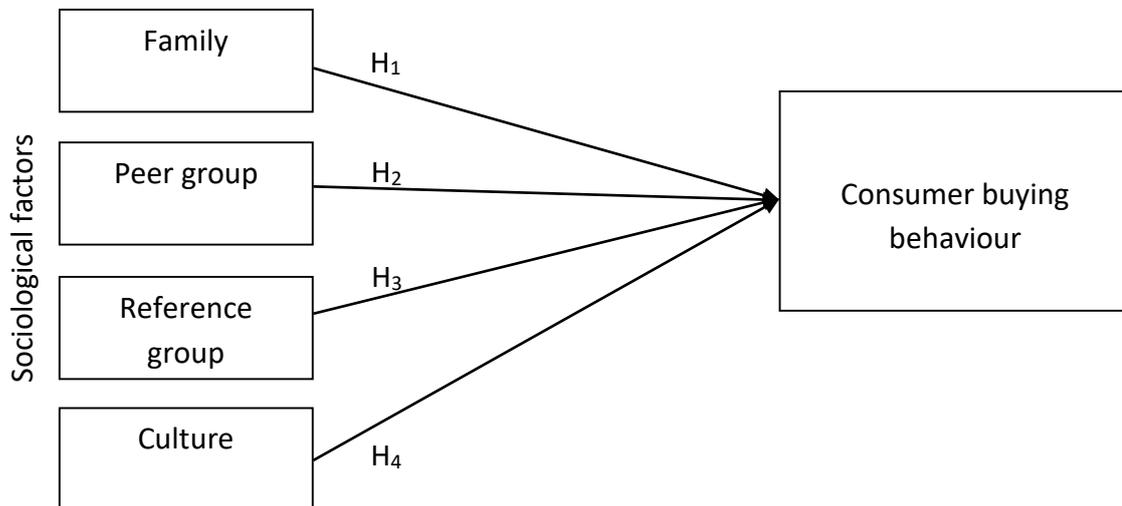

Figure 1: Conceptual model of the study
Source: Etuk, Anyadighibe, James and Ukpe (2022)

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted cross-sectional survey research design, by using a structured questionnaire to obtain primary data from consumers of fashion clothing in Calabar Municipality at a single point in time for analysis and findings generation. The target population of this study comprised all consumers of fashion clothing resident in Calabar Municipality Local Government Area of Cross River State. Using the Topman sample size determination procedure, a sample size of 185 consumers of fashion clothing was statistically determined, then, cluster random sampling technique was adopted to select respondents to participate in the questionnaire survey. The study relied on primary data elicited directly from consumers of fashion clothing using a structured questionnaire, which was confirmed for validity through content validity and reliability through the Cronbach's alpha procedure. The instrument was considered reliable because its measurement scales produced Cronbach Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.7 and above, indicating an acceptable level of reliability as shown in Table 1.

Furthermore, the data obtained in this study were analyzed with the aid of descriptive statistics (simple percentages, and frequency tables), while the null hypotheses developed for the study were tested using multiple linear regression. The multiple linear regression model states thus:

$$CBB = a + \beta_1 FAM + \beta_2 PERGP + \beta_3 REFGP + \beta_4 CLT + e$$

Where:

CBB =   Dependent variable (consumer buying behavior)

a =   The intercept

FAM =   Family

PERGP =   Peer group

REFGP =   Reference group

CLT = Culture

$\beta_1 FAM$ =   Coefficient of family

$\beta_2 PERGP$ =   Coefficient of peer group

$\beta_3 REFGP$ =   Coefficient of reference group

$\beta_4 CLT$ =   Coefficient of culture

e =   Error margin (5 percent)

Table 1
Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha coefficients
Family	3	.704
Peer group	3	.811
Reference group	3	.736
Culture	3	.755
Consumer buying behaviour	3	.825
	15	

Source: Authors' Analysis through SPSS 2022

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 185 copies of the questionnaire were administered to consumers of fashion clothing, out of which 168 copies representing 90.8 percent were correctly completed and returned, while 17 copies representing 9.2 percent were not returned, thereby resulting in a total response rate of 90.8 percent.

Table 2
Summary of Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Age	Frequency	Percent
18 – 24 years	71	42.3
25 – 31 years	56	33.3
32 – 38 years	14	8.3
39 – 45 years	19	11.3
46 years or above	8	4.8

Total	168	100.0
Gender		
Male	48	28.6
Female	120	71.4
Total	168	100.0
Educational qualifications		
SSCE	92	54.8
OND/NCE/HND/B.Sc.	56	33.3
Post-graduate degree	20	11.9
Total	168	100.0
Marital status		
Single	126	75.0
Married	42	25.0
Total	168	100.0
Occupation		
Student	120	71.4
Businessman/woman	16	9.5
Civil servant	32	19.0
Total	168	100.0

Source: Authors' Analysis through SPSS 2022

Table 2 above presents data on respondents' demographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, educational qualifications and occupation. With respect to age, the data shows that out of the 168 respondents surveyed, 71 respondents representing 42.3 percent were between the ages of 18 – 24 years, 56 respondents representing 33.3 percent were between the ages of 25 – 31 years, 14 respondents representing 8.3 percent were between the ages of 32 – 38 years, 19 respondents representing 11.3 percent were between 39 – 45 years, while 8 respondents representing 4.8 percent were 46 years or above. With respect to gender, out of the 168 respondents surveyed, 48 respondents representing 28.6 percent were male, while 120 respondents representing 71.4 percent were female. On highest educational qualifications, the data shows that 92 respondents representing 54.8 percent were SSCE holders, 56 respondents representing 33.3 percent were OND/NCE/HND/B.Sc. degree holders, while 20 respondents representing 11.9 percent were post-graduate degree holders. Similarly, on marital status, the data shows that 126 respondents representing 75.0 percent were single while 42 respondents representing 25.0 percent were married. Finally, with respect to occupation, the data revealed that 120 respondents representing 71.4 percent were students, 16 respondents representing 9.5 percent were businessmen/women, while 32 respondents representing 19.0 percent were civil servants.

Test of Hypotheses

H1:   Family has no significant effect on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing.

H2:   Peer group has no significant effect on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing.

H3:   Reference group has no significant effect on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing.

H4:   Culture has no significant effect on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing.

Test statistic:

Multiple linear regression

Decision criteria: Accept the alternative hypothesis if (P-value < .05) and reject the null hypothesis, if otherwise.

Table 3

Model Summary of the Effect of Sociological Factors on Consumer Buying Behaviour towards Fashion Clothing

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.975[a]	.951	.949	.19892

a. Predictors: (Constant), Family, peer group, reference group and culture

Source: Authors' Analysis through SPSS 2022

Table 4

ANOVA[a] of the Effect of Sociological Factors on Consumer Buying Behaviour towards Fashion Clothing

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	123.965	4	30.991	783.200	.000[b]
	Residual	6.450	163	.040		
	Total	130.415	167			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer buying behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), Family, peer group, reference group and culture

Source: Authors' Analysis through SPSS 2022

Table 5

Coefficientsa of the Effect of Sociological Factors on Consumer Buying Behaviour towards Fashion Clothing

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.016	.090		.183	.855
	Family	.264	.031	.244	8.426	.000
	Peer group	.092	.032	.085	2.857	.005
	Reference group	.189	.023	.238	8.135	.000
	Culture	.456	.034	.507	13.227	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer buying behaviour

Source: Authors' Analysis through SPSS 2022

Interpretation

Tables 3, 4 and 5 present the multiple linear regression results of the effect of sociological factors on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing. The model summary presented on Table 3 shows that the relationship between the independent variable (sociological factors) and the dependent variable (consumer buying behaviour) is 97.5 percent (as can be seen in the R column), thereby indicating that there is a very strong degree of association between the study variables. The R^2 (coefficient of determination) value of 0.951, signifies that up to 95.1 percent of the variation in the dependent variable (consumer buying behaviour) can be explained by the independent variable (sociological factors). Hence, a unit change in sociological factors will affect consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing by up to 95.1 percent when other factors are held constant. The F-test (783.200, $P < 0.05$) statistic in Table 4 signifies that the overall prediction of the dependent variable by the independent variable is statistically significant; therefore, implying that sociological factors have a significant effect on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing. Table 5 (the coefficients table) provides information

on the capability of each sociological factor to explain or predict consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing. As can be seen on Table 20 above, all the sociological factors tested (family, peer group, reference group and culture) were found to significantly predict or explain consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing, because their p-values [family (p-value = 0.000), peer group (p-value = 0.005)], reference group (p-value = 0.000), and culture (p-value = 0.000)] were less than the error margin of 0.05, with positive t-test values indicating that the relationship between these sociological factors and consumer buying behaviour is a direct and positive one. Furthermore, the standardized beta coefficient column in Table 5 shows the individual contributions of each sociological factor to the model. As can be seen on the column, the highest contributing factor to the model is culture, with a beta coefficient of 0.507 (50.7 percent). The second highest contributing factor to the model is family, with a beta coefficient of 0.244 (24.4 percent). Also, the third highest contributing factor to the model is reference group, with a beta coefficient of 0.238 (23.8 percent). The fourth highest contributing factor to the model is peer group, with a beta coefficient of 0.085 (8.5 percent). Finally, since the p-values of all the sociological factors tested are less than the error margin of 0.05, we reject all null hypotheses, accept all corresponding alternative hypotheses and conclude that family, peer group, reference group and culture have significant positive effects on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing.

Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis test revealed that family has a significant positive effect on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing. This finding is backed by the study of Razhan and Khan (2018), which revealed that family had a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour towards household products in Mumbai. Similarly, the finding is supported by the study of Singh and Nayak (2016), which revealed that family had a significant effect on adolescent buying behaviour in India. The implication of this finding is that as a sociological factor, family has been confirmed through substantive empirical evidence to significantly influence consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing. The second hypothesis test revealed that peer group has a significant positive effect on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing. This finding is reinforced by the study of Nawawi (2016), which revealed that peer group (social factor) significantly and positively influenced consumer purchasing decisions towards BlackBerry Smartphones in Jakarta. Similarly, the finding is substantiated by the study of Buazzizi, Muhammad and Afhaz (2016), which revealed that peer group had a significant impact on consumer purchase of fashion wears in Tunisia. The implication of this finding is that through substantive empirical evidence, the study has been able to confirm that as a sociological factor, peer group significantly influences consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing.

The third hypothesis test revealed that reference group has a significant positive effect on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing. This finding corresponds with the study of Razhan and Khan (2018), which revealed that reference group had a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour towards household products in Mumbai. Similarly, the finding is backed by the study of Buazzizi, Muhammad and Afhaz (2016), which revealed that reference group had a significant impact on consumer purchase of fashion wears in Tunisia. The implication of this finding is that through substantive empirical evidence, the study has been able to confirm that as a sociological factor, reference group significantly influences consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing.

Finally, the fourth hypothesis test revealed that culture has a significant positive effect on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing. This finding is reinforced by the study of Al-Ghaswyneh (2019), which revealed that cultural factors significantly influence consumer purchase decision. Similarly, the finding is supported by the study of Nawawi (2016), which revealed that cultural factors significantly and positively influenced consumer purchasing decisions towards BlackBerry Smartphones in Jakarta. This finding implies that as a sociological factor, culture has been confirmed through substantive empirical evidence to significantly influence consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Consumer buying behaviour is the result of several internal and external influences; this entails that the buying behaviour of consumers is influenced by several internal and external factors which ultimately shape how and why consumers purchase products and services (Al-Ghaswyneh, 2019). According to Durmaz and Durmaz (2014), consumer buying behaviour towards a typical consumer good is affected by personal, sociological, psychological, marketing, economic, and political factors. However, this study was concerned with sociological factors (family, peer group, reference group and culture) and how they influenced consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing. To that end, primary data were obtained from 185 consumers of fashion clothing and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study revealed that family, peer group, reference group and culture had significant positive effects on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing. These findings imply that the buying behaviour of consumers towards fashion clothing is significantly influenced and shaped by sociological factors such as family, peer group, reference group and culture. Therefore, the study concludes that sociological factors have a significant and positive influence on consumer buying behaviour towards fashion clothing. Subsequently, the study recommends that manufacturers and dealers of fashion clothing should recognize the influence of family on consumer buying behaviour by targeting their promotions towards families who will eventually recommend them to their members for purchase. The second recommendation is that manufacturers and dealers of fashion clothing should encourage members of peer groups to recommend fashion clothing and accessories to their friends, colleagues and co-workers in order to improve customer patronage. The third recommendation is that famous celebrities, artistes and movie stars with credible public images should be used to endorse and promote fashion clothing brands in order to enhance customer attraction and patronage. Finally, the last recommendation is that manufacturers and dealers of fashion clothing and accessories should consider the religious beliefs, traditions and local norms of the target market by ensuring that products made align with the culture of consumers in order to enhance product acceptance and patronage by consumers.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors are in full agreement with respect to the manuscript; hence we declare no conflict of interest.

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