



## **THE PLACE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICTS) IN FASHION PREFERENCES OF YOUNG ADULTS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA**

**Isidienu, Jennifer Onyinye and Ekwenchi, Ogochukwu**  
Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences,  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria  
Emails: jennieisidienu@gmail.com; ekwenchi@yahoo.co.uk

\* **Corresponding author:** ekwenchi@yahoo.co.uk

### **Abstract**

The emergence of ICT has revolutionized different aspects of life, including fashion. Youths in particular are known for their dynamic and ever changing fashion preferences. It has become pertinent to investigate the place of ICT in fashion preferences among young adults. The major objectives of the study were to determine the extent young adults in Anambra State access/utilize ICT in their fashion preferences and how regularly they access/utilize various ICT outlets and digital sources. Diffusion of Innovation theory was used as theoretical framework that foregrounds the study because of the relevant tenets of the theory to the study. The study adopted survey research design. A sample of 400 respondents was selected through multistage sampling technique. Data were collected with structured questionnaire. Research questions were answered using mean score, frequencies and percentages. Results showed that 84% of the respondents have access to smart phones 7.4% of the respondents spend between 2- 4 hours on the internet while 45.3% of the respondents indicated that social media influence shapes their fashion ideas. It was concluded that factors like peer influence, cost/affordability and availability aided the preference of foreign styles over local styles, particularly through use of social media. Developing and promoting mobile apps and platforms that will be dedicated to African fashion will provide space for youths to explore and engage in African fashion content.

**Keywords:** Fashion preferences, young adults, information, communication, technology

### **Introduction**

Fashion plays an important role in youth identity development and culture. It acts as a cultural marker that signifies trends and styles viewed as popular or fashionable at a given time (Davis, 2015; Giorcelli, 2017). Fashion influences have organically spread through social processes of observation and imitation as individuals emulate those perceived to lead in style and presentation (Kaur and Grover, 2022). The social transmission of fashion over generations has embedded it firmly into youth subcultures worldwide.

Scholars define fashion as the symbolic presentation of the self through certain styles of clothing, accessories, hairstyles and overall appearance that connote a particular social meaning or identity meaningful to others (Reddy-Best, 2020). Fashion preferences allow youths to affiliate with peers of shared interests or set themselves apart from others. Aspers and Godart (2013) consider fashion largely as a form of manipulated social symbolism targeted by the capitalist fashion industry at female consumers. However, fashion influences today extend far beyond just clothing and superficial adornments to encompass broad lifestyle trends and cultural movements (UK Essays, 2021).



In Nigeria, evidence indicates strong preferences among youths for western over indigenous fashion styles. Everyday street fashion in major cities demonstrates domination of western inspired casual and formal wear (Sereyraksmey, Maryneth & Chansreyneath, 2018). A survey of 100 secondary school students in Taraba State University, Jalingo by Oberiri (2017) found that exposure to western films and media significantly influenced their conceptions of ideal dress norms. Additionally, Venter, Chinomona and Chuchu (2016) observe that globalization and rising international trade have intensely accelerated the cross-cultural diffusion of new fashion trends worldwide in recent decades.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. Determine the extent to which youths in Anambra State Nigeria access or utilize ICT in their fashion preferences.
2. Ascertain how regularly youths access or utilize various ICT outlets and digital fashion sources.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are formulated to help realize the objectives of this study:

1. What are the different ways in which youths in Anambra State Nigeria access or utilize ICT for their fashion preferences?
2. How often do youths interact with various ICT platforms for fashion information?

### **Theoretical Framework**

To give focus and direction to this work, Diffusion of Innovation theory was selected. The Diffusion of Innovation theory was developed by Everett Rogers in 1962 to explain how, why and at what rate new ideas and technology spread. He defined diffusion as the process an innovation is communicated over time among the members of a social system through certain channels. According to Rogers, adoption is a decision of using an innovation fully as the best course of action available and rejection is a decision not to adapt to innovation (Yusuf & Umar, 2018). In the context of fashion preferences of youths, the theory suggests that innovative fashion products or ideas are adopted by a small group of trendsetters, who are then imitated by early adopters, early majority and late majority and finally, laggards. Information and communication technology have played a significant role in shaping the fashion preferences of youths by providing them with access to social media platforms, online shopping and fashion blogs. ICT facilitated the diffusion of innovative fashion products and ideas by connecting trendsetters with larger audience and by providing consumers with easy access to information and new products.

### **Materials and Method**

This study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey design. This research design involves collecting data on more than one case and examining the inter-relationships between various variables of interest at a single point in time.

The study was carried out in Anambra State, South East Nigeria. South East region is one of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria representing both a geographic and political region of the country.



The study population comprises young adults between 15-29 years residing in Anambra State. In 2012, National Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with Federal Ministry of Youth Development conducted a baseline survey and reported a total of 64,086,798 youths in Nigeria with 47,405,580 falling within the age bracket of 15-29 years. The report further showed a total of 1,535,962 youths in Anambra state within the ages of 15-29 years (National Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2012). The sample size was determined using the 'Taro Yamane' formula for a finite population (Yamane, 1967). The formula is

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where

n = the sample size sought

N = population size

e = level of significance (0.05)

1 = Unity (a constant)

Since N = 1,535,962,

$n = 1,535,962 / 1 + 1,535,962(0.05)^2$

$n = 1,535,962 / 3,839.905$

n = 400, hence, the sample size for the study is 400

Multistage sampling technique was adopted to select the sample from Anambra state. Anambra has a population of over 1.5 million young adults within the age of 15-29 distributed across 3 senatorial zones and 21 local government areas.

At the first stage, simple random sampling was used to select 3 local governments, one from each senatorial zone (Awka South, Nnewi North and Onitsha south).

At the second stage, stratified random sampling based on gender was applied to select young adults proportionately from the list of communities in the selected local governments obtained from the National Population Commission. Awka South Local Government Area comprises nine distinct towns, namely Amawbia, Awka, Ezinato, Isiagu, Mbaukwu, Nibo, Nise, Okpuno, and Umuawulu. In contrast, the Nnewi North Local Government Area consists solely of the town of Nnewi, while the Onitsha South LGA similarly encompasses only the town of Onitsha.

The third stage involved random selection of young adults each in the chosen communities. Questionnaires were administered to the 400 randomly selected young adults across the 3 local governments.



## Results/Findings

### Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents by their socio-demographic characteristics**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>GENDER</b>		
Male	171	43.5
Female	222	56.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>AGE BRACKET</b>		
15-19	54	13.7
20-24	248	63.1
25-29	91	23.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 show that 43.5% of the respondents are males, while 56.5% are females. This may not be surprising because women generally have more interest in fashion than men. 63.1% of the respondents are aged between 20-24 years, while 13.7% of the respondents are aged between 15-19 years.

#### Research Question 1

What are the different ways in which youths in Anambra State Nigeria access or utilize ICT for their fashion preferences?

**Table 2: Respondents' views on the ICT gadget they have access to**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Smartphone	332	84.5
Laptop	38	9.7
Desktop	15	3.8
Tablet	8	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Field Survey, 2023

The data in Table 2 showed that 84.5% of the respondents had access to a smart phone, while 2.0% had access to a tablet. The portability and relative affordability and popularity of smart phones may be responsible for this.

**Table 3: Respondents' responses on the fashion styles they prefer**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Local/Nigerian styles	88	22.4
Western/International styles	108	27.5
Combination of both	197	50.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Field survey, 2023

The data in Table 3 showed that 50.1% of the respondents prefer a combination of both western and Nigerian fashion styles, while 22.4% prefer local/Nigerian fashion styles.

**Table 4: Respondents' responses on where they buy most of their clothes**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Physical shops	97	24.7
Online stores	38	9.7
Both physical and online	258	65.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>100</b>

**Field Survey, 2023**

The data in Table 4 showed that 65.6% of the respondents purchase from both online and physical shops, while 9.7% of the respondents purchase from online stores.

**Research Question 2**

How often do youths interact with various ICT platforms for fashion information?

**Table 5: Respondents' responses on the number of hours they spend on ICT daily**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 2 hours	45	11.5
2-4 hours	29	7.4
4-6 hours	311	79.1
More than 6 hours	8	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>100</b>

**Field Survey, 2023**

Data in Table 5 shows that 79.1% of the respondents spend between 4-6 hours on their ICT gadgets, while 2% spend more than 6 hours on their gadgets. Students constitute a bulk of the youthful segment of the population, which is generally perceived to be social media enthusiasts.

**Table 6: Respondents' responses on how often they access ICT sources for fashion**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	124	31.6
2-3 times a week	39	9.9
Once a week	99	25.2
Once in two weeks	88	22.4
Rarely	43	10.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>100</b>

**Field survey, 2023**

Table 6 above shows that 31.6% of the respondents agreed that they access ICT sources daily for fashion; while 9.9% of the respondents indicated that they access ICT sources 2-3 times a week for fashion.

**Discussion of Findings****Research Question 1: What are the different ways in which youths in Anambra State Nigeria access or utilize ICT for their fashion preferences?**

Result for research question one indicated that respondents had access to a smart phone than other devices. This can be likened to its portability, affordability and popularity. This is in line with the study of Gapsiso and Wilson (2015) to access the Impact of Internet on Teenagers Face-To-Face Communication in Comprehensive College of Education Hong, all



respondents indicated that they have access to the internet; some have the facilities at home while some use their mobile phones.

It further indicated that the respondents prefer a combination of both western and Nigerian fashion styles and purchase fashion items from both online and physical shops. This is in contrast with the study of Arruda (2021) on Generation Z's Online Shopping Behavior towards Clothing in a Pandemic Era where it was concluded that a post-pandemic era would have to deal with a younger consumer force way more open to purchasing clothes online.

Also, the respondents agreed that social media influence shapes their fashion ideas and style. It implies that promoting fashion through social media is very important for African fashion and through awareness of African fashion on social media; their ideas/styles can be influenced. This agrees with the study of Srinivas (2019) on Generation Z preferences in Branded Fashion where it was concluded that growing companies experience massive growth from the high social, cultural and psychological change in the generation z consumers due to the digitalization.

### **Research Question 2: How often do youths interact with various ICT platforms for fashion information?**

Findings for research question two revealed that the respondents spend between 4-6 hours on their ICT gadgets and it showed that 7.4% of the respondents spend 2-4 hours on the internet for fashion and this agrees with the study of Gapsiso and Wilson (2015) where 19% of the respondents spend 2 hours a day.

Moreover, this study showed that 31.6% of the respondents access fashion daily and 2.5% access once a week and this agrees with the study of Yusuf and Umar (2018) on Youths and Fashion: Is ICT a Yardstick where greater percentage of the respondents access ICT sources for fashion.

The study showed that they engage more with Instagram and prefer a combination of western and Nigerian fashion styles. Also, factors like peer influence, cost/affordability and availability were cited as contributors to the preference for foreign styles over local styles and ICT exposure was not regarded as a negatively impact over local fashion/culture. The study provides evidence that social media influence shapes fashion ideas and style but suggested that indigenous fashion can be preserved through cultural heritage and identity. The findings give direction for collaboration with brands to help make the fashion industry a better market for local fabrics/designs.

### **Conclusion**

This research provides evidence those factors like peer influence, cost/affordability and availability aided the preference of foreign styles over local styles, particularly through use of social media. However, these factors alone may not be sufficient for the fashion preference because influence from social media shaped their ideas.

### **Implications of Findings**

The findings of this study have several key implications:

- Youths have access to smart phones and spend between 4-6 hours on their ICT gadgets but they use it mainly for news/information, fashion/style and other unspecified reasons.



## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Promote African fashion and culture by encouraging the use of ICT gadgets.
- Develop and promote mobile apps and platforms that will be dedicated to African Fashion to provide a space for youths to explore and engage African fashion content.

## References

- Arruda, R. (2021). Generation Z's Online Shopping Behavior Towards Clothing in a Pandemic Era. Retrieved from <https://norma.ncirl.ie/5454/1/rachelpaixotoarruda.pdf>.
- Aspers, P. & Godart, F. (2013) Sociology of Fashion: Order & Change Retrieved from [https://www.icos.umich.edu/sites/default/files/lecturereadinglists/godart\\_13.pdf](https://www.icos.umich.edu/sites/default/files/lecturereadinglists/godart_13.pdf).
- Davis, K. (2015). What are the Effects of Fashion Trends on Teens? Retrieved from [http://www.answers.com/Q/What\\_are\\_the\\_effects\\_of\\_fashion\\_trends\\_on\\_teens](http://www.answers.com/Q/What_are_the_effects_of_fashion_trends_on_teens).
- Gapsiso, N. & Wilson, J. (2015). The Impact of the Internet on Teenagers Face-to-Face Communication. *Journal of studies in social sciences*. Volume 13, number 2, 2015, 202-220. ISSN 2201-4624
- Kaur, M. G., & Grover, K. L. (2022). Changing Scenario of Fashion Communication in the Digital Era. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJIRSET)*. Volume 11, Issue 2. DOI:10.15680/IJIRSET.2022.1102100
- Oberiri, D.A, & Kwase, A.D. (2017). Influence of Television programmes on youth dressing Pattern in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions, *International Journal of International Relations, Media and Mass Communication Studies* Vol.3, No.2 pp.32-45.
- Reddy-Best, K. (2020). Dress, Appearance and Diversity in U.S. Society. Retrieved from <https://iastate.pressbooks.pub/dressappearancediversity/chapter/fashion-theories/#navigation>.
- Sereyraksmey, C., Maryneth, H. & Chansreyneth, P. (2018). The Influence of Western Fashion on Cambodian Teenagers. Retrieved from <http://uc.edu.kh>PDF>.
- Srinivas, N. (2019). Generation Z Preferences in Branded Fashion: A Study. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, ISSN:2349-5162.
- UK Essays. (2018). Influence of Culture on Global Fashion Consumerism. Retrieved from <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/fashion/influence-of-culture-on-fashion.php?vref=1>.
- Venter, M., Chinomona, R. & Chuchu, T. (2016). Factors Influencing Fashion Adoption among the Youth in Johannesburg, South Africa. *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies*. DOI:10.22610jebbs.v8i4(J).1366.
- Yusuf, I and Umar, M. (2018). Youths and Fashion: Is ICT a Yardstick? A Case Study of University of Maiduguri. *Journal of Mass Communication and Journalism*, doi: 10.4172/2165-7912.1000379.