

# Consumers' Preferences for Wax Prints for Ceremonial Occasions in the New Juaben Municipality

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## Abstract

Wax prints play an important role in ceremonies and they have a significant communicative value, indicating status of an individual. Different fabric types of wax print fabrics, and different colours and designs are worn by consumers for different ceremonial programmes, including naming, marriage and funeral ceremonies. The study aimed at examining consumers' preferences for wax prints for ceremonial programmes. It included the fabric type of wax prints preferred by consumers for ceremonial programmes, the design of wax prints preferred by consumers for ceremonial programmes, and the colour of wax prints preferred by consumers for ceremonial programmes. The study adopted a cross sectional and descriptive study designs. A total of 100 respondents were sampled for the study. Accidental sampling was used to sample respondents for the study. Interview schedule was used to collect data from the respondents. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were used to describe the data. The study found that the main factor for the preference of fabrics from particular wax prints for certain ceremonial programmes was the communicative function of fashion, and while consumers preferred wax prints of high social class and relatively more expensive to outdooing and wedding programmes, they preferred wax prints of low social class and less expensive wax prints for funeral programmes. Designs and colours in wax prints had influence on the selection of fabrics by all the respondents for ceremonial programmes. The study recommends that textile manufacturing companies should consider the function of fabrics in the selection of their colour and designs for particular fabrics.

**Keywords:** Wax prints, ceremonial occasions, fabric colour, fabric design

## 1. Introduction

For centuries, wax print fabrics have remained highly desired fabric that have become an integral part of the vibrant culture of West Africa and more recently designers around the world are seen embracing it (Wayne, 2009). According to Wayne (1995), these wax print fabrics hold a special meaning in the hearts of the wearers and admirers because they each tell a story to the wearer as well as its admirers. For these reasons, wax printed fabrics are worn as clothes by men, women and children for ceremonial programmes such as naming (outdooing), marriage and funeral ceremonies.

The fabrics play an important role in daily life and ceremonies and they have a significant communicative value, indicating status or wealth, conveying messages as a means of non-verbal communication (Relph & Irwin, 2010). They are also widely used as a powerful mass communication media, for commemorative, political, religious, social and other message conveying purposes. It is interesting to find the different fabric types of wax print fabrics, different colours and designs worn by consumers of the fabrics for different ceremonial programmes, including naming, marriage and funeral ceremonies. Different wax prints that come in different styles, colours, design and materials are worn by consumers for various occasions and functions, such as formal wear for formal occasions, casual everyday wear and even exotic African wear. Consumers also love specific designs, fabric type and colours for elaborate weddings with exquisite designs for bridal parties. The study, therefore, examined consumers' choice of specific wax print fabrics, colours and designs for naming, marriage and funeral ceremonies as well as the reasons behind their choices or selections.

## 2. Wax print colours and communication

Wax patterns are a universal part of human life and they play a rich part in the lives and traditions of people and culture. They fill an endless number of roles in the practical, personal, emotional, social, communicative, economic, aesthetic and spiritual lives of people (Gillow, 2009). The colours of wax prints to a greater degree have great communication value. They serve as a medium of expression on a variety of different levels that can be read by members of the community. They also serve as a practice of an effective form of non-verbal communication (Braithwaite, 1971). The colours as well as the intensity they create on wax print fabrics are admired by their wearers. Cobb (1998) argues that people should be mindful of the colour of the fabric they wear. The colours hold different cultural meanings based on village or family affiliations. The colours of wax prints are deeply embedded in the social fabric of African society (Gillow, 2009). Symbolism through textiles is used in the formal setting, such as the en-stooling of a chief, but can also be used in the family environment to commemorate the completion of school by a child (Cobb, 1998).

Table 1: Colours and their meanings

Yellow	represents the yolk of the egg as well as certain fruits and vegetables. The colour is a symbol for things that are holy and precious.
Pink	is used to symbolise gentle qualities such as calmness, sweetness, and tenderness.
Red	stands for blood and for strong political and spiritual feelings.
Maroon	is associated with the colour of Earth, the mother. It represents healing and protection from evil.
Blue	stands for the sky and is used to symbolise holiness, peace, harmony, good fortune and love.
Green	is associated with plants and stand for growth and good health.
Gold	like the metal gold, is a symbol of royalty, wealth and spiritual purity.
White	represents the white of an egg as well as the white clay that is used in certain rituals. It stands for purity and healing.
Black	stands for ageing because in nature things get darker as they get older. Black also stands for strong spiritual energy, and the spirits of the ancestors.
Grey	represents ashes, which are used for spiritual cleansing.
Silver	stands for the moon and represents serenity, purity and joy.
Purple	like maroon, is associated with Earth and with healing.

Source: Picton and Mack (1989)

### 3. Wax print designs and communication

Wax print fabrics are known for their colourful fabrics and distinctive designs. They have become an integral part of West African life, having the latest designs, and wearing carefully chosen, meaningful patterns, communicates social status. The colours and patterns in the designs aim at incorporating life and standard in the designs. The designs are elegant and adaptable for all its wearers. They are produced to fulfil the needs and demands of customers, along with providing them innovation and modernity, that helps them in gaining a better marketplace. The designs produced totally fit into the standards of culture and traditions of nations, and are also fabricated with the modern and latest trends of the world. Wax printed fabrics therefore provide the best out of fashion and class to their customers. However, few people take time to examine the symbolic significance of the fabrics. According to Algotsson, Davis and Lamb (1996), a good textile design is one that has a unified composition, serves the purpose intended for and represents the culture for which it is created. It may echo the past or anticipate the future, but it must all above all else, reflect its actual origin.

Wax printed textiles are carefully designed with beautiful motifs of unusual colours by designers steeped in the tastes and traditions of a nation or continent. The designers may be traditional or non-traditional. A wax print design is declared traditional by manufacturers when, in the course of time (after three or more years), it has been purchased regularly by the market in varying quantities (Algotsson et al., 1996). Such a design is at one time or another named by some of the consumers of the textiles and is then marketed under that name. Usually, the names of the design or motif reflect their meanings (Polakoff, 1980). In Africa, when a consumer buys a cloth, it is kept throughout his or her life and often exhibited after death as commemoration of the life and status of the deceased. Therefore, the three criteria for designating a textile as a traditional design were (1) that it was sold regularly over a course of years; (2) that it was given a name; and (3) that it was kept and valued. Some traditional designs date back over 100 years.

Wax prints function as language or as a facilitator of the spoken or written word. The messages one conveys in the printed fabric one wears are likely to say something about one's identity, beliefs or set of values. The designs on many fabrics draw on African proverbs, customs and aesthetics, but they are also used for social commentary. The function of wax prints and their designs are associated with wax print occasions during which some sort of communication takes place. Thus, wax printed fabrics use designs that enable the wearer to convey specific messages. The designs combine written proverbs with visual forms to express certain people's beliefs, values and social relations. Sometimes it is simply the visual form on the cloth that elicits the spoken proverb. The designs may also indicate taboos as producers take great care not to offend the customer by violating such beliefs. Besides using the surface of the cloth to convey messages, either through written or representational imagery, some woman's dress designers also shape the garment itself to convey some messages. The manner in which the cloth is worn can also be used for very expressive communication.

Fabric names reflect on a wide range of issues, including women's issues, politics and everyday life. Luke-Bonne (2001) indicates that it is interesting to note that ordinary people who have limited access to media outlets can express their opinions publicly through the cloth they wear. Cobb (1998) also reports of other unique ways in which wax prints are used to convey messages. Wax prints are used as a form of identity with each tribe having their own unique patterns which also makes it easy to spot outsiders. Chiefs would wear specific and unique designs of prints to show their prestige and importance. Usually, the patterns are believed to have

spiritual meanings behind them. Textile is manipulated in such a way that a meaning separate from the individual meaning of each design is created. Specific designs are chosen to communicate the family's grief and need for mercy or joy during that time of mourning depending on how the death happened. According to Arthur (2010), some of the designs show vibrancy and boldness. Wax prints have patterns which tell stories of relevance and traditional African fables.

#### **4. Wax print textiles and industries**

GTP creates, manufacture and distribute beautifully crafted authentic African textiles and prints. Designers, dressmakers, seamstresses and tailors turn GTP's original, high-quality fabrics into sumptuous dresses, shirts and accessories for a wide fashion-conscious consumer market in Ghana, and abroad. GTP is a trading name of Tex Styles Ghana Limited (TSGL) formerly known as Ghana Textiles Printing (GTP) Company Limited. The company was incorporated in January 1966 as a wax printing business and remains the foremost textile company in Ghana and a leader in the wax prints market.

With a high market share of between 35 and 40 in the wax segment, GTP is a very strong brand and has four sub-brands, namely: GTP Nustyle, GTP Adepa, GTP Safoa, and GTP Nsroma with each addressing the peculiar needs of various segments of the textile market. GTP Nustyle is the flagship brand targeted at the young and young at heart. It is characterised by bright colours and fresh designs. GTP Adepa is targeted at the more matured and conservative consumer. This fabric is characterised by classic designs and comes in one or two colour prints; GTP Safoa is targeted at the discerning consumer who wants a simple African print and people who celebrate the birth of a child or some other joyous occasion. It is a wax print that comes in just the base colour. GTP Nsroma, which happens to be the only Fancy print among the four brands. It is for special occasions such as funerals. Then, there is GTP Institutional for users such as churches, educational establishments and corporate bodies.

Woodin has become a label of outstanding quality and fashion, continuously offering new collections with designs reflecting original values of African Culture. The brand products are essentially warm, naturally toned and well blended to reflect adorable exotic experiences. They are used for various purposes, including dressing and furnishing. The popularity of the Woodin Brand amongst the youth has gained grounds and even become a delight for young and the old alike. Founded in 1985, Woodin is probably the most recognised textile manufacturer in Ghana and has over the years been celebrated for its youthful fashion collection (Opoku-Gyimah, 2012). Woodin has worked to connect global trends to modern African life, transforming ethnic symbols into modern African design. Woodin print cloths are renowned for their quality and originality. The designs are mostly presented in geometric shapes using some tone-on-tone and some gradation of colours to create a harmonised look. The serenity of the colour shades makes it appealing to the eye, whilst the metallic gold colour presents a charming effect making this segment liked by most consumers. It is a product of Vlisco where the authentic Woodin is manufactured solely in African countries like Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana.

Akosombo Textile Limited (ATL) fabrics are real wax products and are produced using wax printing techniques. The ATL wax fabrics are sepia prints, indigo print 1 and 2, and cracko print 1 and 2. The ATL wax cotton printed fabrics have universal acceptance among Ghanaians, for the very fact that they are made from cotton fabrics, and cotton does well in the Ghanaian weather condition.

Dutch wax print is a kind of resin-printed fabric that has long been designed and manufactured in the Netherlands for a West African market. The real Dutch wax prints are designed and produced by the Vlisco Company in Grey ol' Holland. In Africa, where Real Dutch wax carries a well-regarded brand authority, consumers care about the difference between the European quality and the cheap Asian imitations and knock-offs that are produced throughout Asia. This is because the Asian products are of lower quality fabric and print (Picton & Becker, 1995). Although the authenticity of the print being African is only in its truly interesting cultural, commercial and historic melange, Brien (2013) believes that its quality, design and spirit will continue to keep this particular Euro-African relationship alive in African countries. The finest quality of Dutch wax print is the famous 'Superwax' as the product uses an extra densely woven fine cotton fabric. The designs generally feature three colours, two of which show the natural crackling effect, whereas the third one is a solid colour. Many Superwax Dutch fabrics are characterised by the use of bright vibrant solid colours. Originally introduced by the Dutch in and around Congo (Kinshasa), these Superwax fabrics have now become popular in countries such as Ivory Coast, Benin and Nigeria and are becoming increasingly seen in European and American fashion landscapes.

Dutch company, Vlisco, has been designing and producing colourful African-inspired wax fabrics since 1846 and their fashion images are gorgeous. Vlisco is a textile company that designs and produces printed fabrics that are a huge part of the West and Central African culture. Using batik and their new technology of the printing press, Vlisco began to produce colourful African textile on a large scale, becoming the first to commercialise African textile. Today, Vlisco is a very popular brand in Central and West Africa, selling fabrics inspired by African textile design. A lot of the time, their designs have nothing to do with Africa, but they are

still very popular and reflect the tastes of different regions of Africa. Each textile, designed by the Dutch, is named by local market women and tells a story about their culture. Vlisco has long been known as the Rolls-Royce of African wax print textiles and is now starting to become a fashion label as well. They are creating funky haute couture looks in addition to selling their textiles. It can be bright, expressive, strong and makes an impact. Vlisco wax print fabric is praised for its colourfastness and its strength. Above all, it is beautiful and Vlisco are recognised as the forerunners in authentic production of this fabric. Their image (designs) from their latest Funky Grooves collection is inspired by global urban culture and couture craftsmanship. It is a collection of contrasts, with edgy street wear influences reinterpreted through a lens of pure glamour.

### 5. Methodology

The study adopted a cross sectional and descriptive study designs. The population of the study comprised all adults (18 years and above) in the New Juaben Municipality. One hundred respondents were sampled from a population of 87,429. The study first selected 20 fashion houses in the Municipality. The criterion for selecting the fashion houses was the housing of the fashion business. The housing criterion was used because they determined the sizes of the fashion houses and the types of clients that patronise services from them. The study used this criterion to get views from clients with different financial statuses and backgrounds on their selection of wax prints for particular ceremonial programmes. Four categories were obtained through the criterion. Thus, fashion businesses operating as schools with many structures, those operating from built store, fashion houses operating from containers and kiosks, and those operating from private homes. Five fashion houses were randomly sampled from each category of fashion house. The first five adult clients that were accidentally met by the researcher at the selected fashion houses were sampled for the study. Interview schedule were used to collect data from the respondents. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages generated from Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS) were used to analyse the data.

### 6. Fabric type of wax prints preferred by consumers for ceremonial programmes

Table 1 shows that the majority (62%) of the respondents were concerned about the type of fabric of wax print selected for ceremonial programmes, while 38% were not. The Table further shows that majority (88.7%) of the respondents who were concerned about their fabric type of wax prints selected for ceremonial programmes were females, whereas 11.3% were males. The results show that more females than males were concerned about the fabric type of wax prints selected for ceremonial programmes. The results agree with the finding of Gillow (2003) that more females than males pay particular attention to the fabric type of wax prints selected for special programmes and occasions. Gillow (2003) attributed it to higher interest of females than males for fashion.

Table 1: Sex and consideration of fabric type in selecting wax prints for ceremonial programmes

Response	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Yes	7 (11.3)	55 (88.7)	62 (62.0)
No	24 (63.2)	14 (36.8)	38 (38.0)
Total	31 (31.0)	69 (69.0)	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2014

Some of the issues raised as to how fabric type influences the selection of wax prints for particular ceremonial programmes were designs, colours, brand names, and local names for some fabrics as a form of communication. The results show that consumers' preferences for wax prints for ceremonial programmes are based on the type of the programme. This implies that the consumers selected wax prints to suit a particular occasion. This could be attributed to the communicative aspect of fashion. Thus, the selection of colours, designs, brand names, and local names of wax prints is largely based on the communicative function of fashion. Fashion communication is, therefore, very crucial in the selection of wax prints for ceremonial programmes.

Table 2 shows that 21% of the respondents preferred GTP wax print for outdoor programmes, 12% preferred ATL wax print, 34% preferred Woodin wax print, 9% preferred DaViva, whereas 5%, 8% and 11% preferred Vlisco, Printex, and Dutch wax prints, respectively. The results show that consumers had varied preferences over the selection of wax prints for outdoor programmes. The implication is that the textile manufacturing company that could adequately meet the taste of consumers could increase its customer base. None of the respondents preferred Chinese wax prints for outdoor programmes.



Table 2: Educational level and preference of wax prints for outdoor programmes

Wax print	None (%)	Basic (%)	SHS (%)	Tertiary (%)	Total (%)
GTP	4 (19.1)	7 (33.3)	5 (23.8)	5 (23.8)	21 (100.0)
ATL	3 (25.0)	5 (41.7)	3 (25.0)	1 (8.3)	12 (100.0)
Woodin	-	5 (14.7)	12 (35.3)	17 (50.0)	34 (100.0)
DaViva	-	1 (11.1)	5 (55.6)	3 (33.3)	9 (100.0)
Vlisco	-	1 (20.0)	3 (60.0)	1 (20.0)	5 (100.0)
Printex	2 (25.0)	1 (12.5)	4 (50.0)	1 (12.5)	8 (100.0)
Dutch wax prints	-	1 (9.1)	7 (63.6)	3 (27.3)	11 (100.0)
Chinese wax prints	-	-	-	-	-
Total	9	21	39	31	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2014

The majority (66.7%) of the respondents who preferred ATL wax print for outdoor programmes had low levels (none and basic) of education. The implication is that the preference for ATL wax print for outdoor programmes were more popular among consumers with low levels of education. The majority (85.3%) of the respondents who preferred Woodin had high levels of education. The implication is that the preference for Woodin fabrics for outdoor programmes were more popular among the highly educated people of the society. The majority of the respondents who preferred Vlisco wax prints for outdoor programmes had attained middle level (SHS) of education.

Some of the reasons for the preference for GTP and ATL wax prints for outdoor programmes were having traditional designs, quality fabric brands, and well accepted and recognised wax prints in the country. Reasons for consumers' preference for Woodin and DaViva wax prints included having unique design, having foreign and youthful designs, having bright colours, and ability to make fabric combination with plain designs to create unique patterns for special occasions. Thus, the study found that the ability of consumers to combine different fabrics of Woodin and DaViva to create unique patterns was a major factor for their consideration for ceremonial programmes. The results agree with Opoku-Gyimah (2012) that Woodin has over the years been esteemed high for its youthful fashion collection. The implication is that the preference of the target population should always be inculcated into the designing of fabrics. Reasons for respondents' preference for Vlisco wax print included having unique designs and worn by matured people. Similarly, some of the reasons for the preference for Printex for outdoor programmes were having unique black and white fabrics for celebration, and less costly. Furthermore, reasons for people's preference for Dutch wax prints for outdoor programmes included unique wax print, having class, highly recognised, and giving indication of one's wealth and fashion closet.

Table 3 shows that 19% of the respondents preferred GTP wax prints for wedding programmes, 6% preferred ATL wax prints, 37% preferred Woodin wax prints, while 22%, 3% and 13% respectively preferred DaViva, Vlisco, and Dutch wax prints. The results show that more respondents preferred Woodin wax prints for wedding programmes. None of the respondents preferred using neither Printex nor Chinese wax prints for wedding programmes.

Table 3: Religion and preference of wax prints for wedding programmes

Wax print	Christian (%)	Moslem (%)	Others (%)	Total (%)
GTP	8 (42.1)	9 (47.4)	2 (10.5)	19 (100.0)
ATL	2 (33.3)	3 (50.0)	1 (16.7)	6 (100.0)
Woodin	32 (86.5)	3 (8.1)	2 (5.4)	37 (100.0)
DaViva	19 (86.4)	2 (9.1)	1 (4.5)	22 (100.0)
Vlisco	1 (33.3)	2 (66.7)	-	3 (100.0)
Printex	-	-	-	-
Dutch wax prints	7 (53.8)	3 (23.1)	3 (23.1)	13 (100.0)
Chinese wax prints	-	-	-	-
Total	69 (69.0)	22 (22.0)	9 (9.0)	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2014

The results show that more Moslems than Christians and members from the other religions preferred the use of the traditional local wax prints (GTP and ATL), whereas more Christians than Moslem preferred Woodin and DaViva wax prints for wedding programmes. Some of the reasons for the preference of GTP and ATP wax prints for wedding programmes were having beautiful designs, well recognised in the society, brands having social class, and having fabrics to suit every occasion. Reasons for the preference for Woodin and DaViva for wedding programmes included having unique and beautiful designs, availability in single yards for special apparel patterns, and having foreign touch in their designs. Similarly, some of the reasons given for the selection of Dutch wax prints for wedding programmes were that Dutch wax prints are for special occasions like

that, associated with high class people, and making one unique.

From the study, 14% of the respondents preferred GTP wax prints for funeral programmes, 19% preferred ATL wax prints, 8% preferred Woodin wax prints, 4% preferred DaViva wax prints, while 33%, 5% and 17% respectively preferred Printex, Dutch and Chinese wax prints. The results show that the respondents had varied preferences of wax prints for funeral programmes. However, more respondents preferred Printex wax prints to other wax prints for funeral programmes. None of the respondents preferred Vlisco wax prints for funeral programmes. The implication is that the respondents preferred Vlisco for other ceremonial programmes apart from funeral. Some of the reasons cited for the preference for GTP and ATL wax prints for funeral programmes were having well-known traditional designs for funerals, and to show maturity. Reasons for the preference of Woodin and DaViva wax prints for funeral programmes included having plain designs to make one's own unique apparel style, and bringing modernity into traditional fashion. Further, reasons for the preference for Printex wax prints included having special black, red or black and white funeral fabrics, well-noted for funeral fabrics, and having local names and designs for funeral programmes, and less costly compared to other wax prints. The main reason for the preference for Dutch wax prints for funeral programmes was showing class. In addition, some of the reasons for the preference for Chinese wax prints for funeral programmes were less costly, and not wearing funeral clothes frequently.

The above results show that consumers have varied preferences for the selection of wax prints for particular ceremonial programmes. The main factor for the preference of fabrics from particular wax prints for certain ceremonial programmes was the communicative function of fashion. In other words, the preference for particular wax prints for certain ceremonial programmes should meet the colour suitable for the mood of the occasion, have designs presentable for the occasion, and possess certain level of social class. The implication is that the colours, designs and social class associated with wax prints communicate information about consumers, which influence their preference for selecting wax prints for ceremonial programmes. The results corroborates the assertion of Cobb (1998) that the wearing of particular wax print communicates about the role of a person in a programme. Cobb continues that the wearing of the wearing of wax print designs to a programme highlights or communicates the control the wearer has over the wax prints as a language.

Table 4 shows that Woodin wax print was ranked as the most preferred wax print for outdoor programming, GTP wax print was ranked second, while Chinese wax prints were ranked last. The ranking of Woodin wax print as the most preferred wax print for outdoor programming could be attributed to its combination of foreign and traditional designs, as well as the ability of consumers to purchase different pieces to make unique apparel styles. The ranking of Chinese wax prints as the least preferred wax print for outdoor programming was attributed to the perception of low quality generally among the populace. The implication is that the perception of consumers about a particular wax print is crucial for their use for a particular programme.

Table 4: Ranking of wax prints over preference for ceremonial programmes

Wax prints	Outdoor programming		Wedding		Funeral	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
GTP	582	2 <sup>nd</sup>	603	1 <sup>st</sup>	388	4 <sup>th</sup>
ATL	375	4 <sup>th</sup>	431	3 <sup>rd</sup>	529	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Woodin	629	1 <sup>st</sup>	557	2 <sup>nd</sup>	340	5 <sup>th</sup>
DaViva	511	3 <sup>rd</sup>	252	5 <sup>th</sup>	237	6 <sup>th</sup>
Vlisco	263	6 <sup>th</sup>	218	6 <sup>th</sup>	146	7 <sup>th</sup>
Printex	294	5 <sup>th</sup>	183	7 <sup>th</sup>	675	1 <sup>st</sup>
Dutch wax prints	178	7 <sup>th</sup>	366	4 <sup>th</sup>	129	8 <sup>th</sup>
Chinese wax prints	138	8 <sup>th</sup>	124	8 <sup>th</sup>	610	2 <sup>nd</sup>

Source: Field survey, 2014

Table 4 further shows that GTP wax print was ranked first as the most preferred wax print for wedding programmes, Woodin wax print was ranked second, ATL was ranked third, while Chinese wax prints were ranked last. The ranking of GTP as the most preferred wax print for wedding programmes was attributed to its traditional designs coupled with its NuStyle designs. Thus, the NuStyle designs are created to suit the preferences of the youth, while the traditional designs with local names for communication are created for the adults. The good performance (ranked second for outdoor programming and first for wedding) of GTP wax prints for outdoor programming and wedding could be due to their ability to meet the fashion needs of consumers of different age cohorts. On the other hand, Table 4 shows that Printex wax print was ranked first as the most preferred wax print for funeral programmes, Chinese wax prints were ranked second, ATL was ranked third, whereas Dutch wax prints were ranked last. The ranking of Printex as first was attributed to their specialisation in the production of funeral fabrics (black, red, and black and white) with local names as well as their relatively low prices compared to other wax prints. The ranking of Chinese wax prints for funeral programmes was mainly attributed to their low prices and perception of low quality. Similarly, the ranking of Dutch wax prints as the last preferred wax

prints for funeral programmes was attributed to their relatively high prices, high affection attached to such wax prints by consumers, and esteemed to be of high quality.

The implication is that while consumers preferred wax prints of high social class and relatively more expensive to outdoor and wedding programmes, they preferred wax prints of low social class and less expensive wax prints for funeral programmes. Thus, consumers did not prefer using expensive wax prints to funeral programmes. This was attributed to the sorrowful mood attach to funeral programmes and the fact that people may not be in the mood to send complements or acknowledge the fashion of others. Some respondents indicated that it was not necessary to wear high class wax prints to funeral programmes, while other added that fashion for funeral programmes is more about tailoring and not wax prints.

The study further found that cost of fabrics affected the majority (60%) of respondents. This may explain their preference for Woodin, GTP and Dutch wax prints for joyful (outdoor and wedding) ceremonial programmes, and preference for Printex and Chinese wax prints for sorrowful (funeral) ceremonial programmes. Thus, consumers preferred wearing expensive wax prints to outdoor and wedding programmes, and preferred low cost wax prints for funeral programmes.

### 7. Influence of the design of wax prints on consumers' selection for ceremonial programmes

From the study, designs in wax prints had influence on the selection of fabrics by all the respondents for ceremonial programmes. Some of the reasons were that the beauty of fabrics are in the designs, the designs allow people to make unique apparel styles, the designs in fabrics demonstrates the mood of an individual, and the designs in fabrics communicate about the level of understanding of an individual on fashion.

The names of designs in wax prints did not influence the majority (68%) of the respondents on their preference for fabrics for ceremonial programmes. The reasons included no or poor knowledge about the names of fabric designs, more interested in the aesthetics of fabric designs than their names, and that most designs with local names are old designs. The results show that the names of fabrics designs are becoming less popular among consumers. This is likely to affect the patronisation of well-known fabric designs in the future.

From Table 5, 33 of the respondents preferred Woodin wax prints for outdoor programmes based on fabric designs, 26% preferred GTP wax prints, whereas 17% and 9% preferred DaViva and ATL wax prints, respectively. The Table further shows that 28% of the respondents preferred GTP wax prints for wedding programmes based on fabric designs, 26% preferred Woodin wax prints, while 13% and 12% respectively preferred DaViva and ATL wax prints. However, 26% of the respondents preferred Printex wax prints for funeral programmes based on fabric designs, 21% preferred GTP wax prints, whereas 15% and 12% preferred ATL and Woodin wax prints, respectively.

Table 5: Preference of wax prints for ceremonial programmes based on fabric designs

Wax print	Outdooring (%)	Wedding (%)	Funeral (%)
GTP	26 (26.0)	28 (28.0)	21 (21.0)
ATL	9 (9.0)	12 (12.0)	15 (15.0)
Woodin	33 (33.0)	26 (26.0)	12 (12.0)
DaViva	17 (17.0)	13 (13.0)	8 (8.0)
Vlisco	5 (5.0)	10 (10.0)	6 (6.0)
Printex	2 (2.0)	-	26 (26.0)
Dutch wax prints	8 (8.0)	11 (11.0)	7 (7.0)
Chinese wax prints	-	-	5 (5.0)
Total	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)

Source: Field survey, 2014

Some of the reasons for the preference for wax prints for outdoor and wedding programmes based on fabric designs were having nice designs, having designs to suit the occasions, and having more options to choose from. Reasons for the preference for wax prints for funeral programmes based on fabric designs included having local designs, having traditional or local names for designs, and ability to make one's own apparel patterns.

### 8. Influence of the colour of wax prints on consumers' preferences for ceremonial programmes

The colour of wax prints influenced the selection of fabrics of all the respondents for ceremonial programmes. Some of the reasons were associating one's mood with an occasion, looking colourful or presentable to suit an occasion, and preferring such colours because they are their favourites. The majority (54%) of the respondents preferred white coloured-fabrics for outdoor programmes, 13% preferred blue, while 12% and 10% preferred green and violet, respectively. None of the respondents preferred red, black or brown for outdoor programmes. This could be attributed to the communicative function of colours. Thus, bright colours such as white, blue green, and violet are associated with happy moment. In addition, 19% of the respondents preferred blue colour for

wedding programmes, 17% each preferred green and violet, while 14% and 13% respectively preferred white and pink colours. In addition, the majority (67%) of the respondents preferred black colour for funeral programmes, whereas 25% and 8% preferred red and brown, respectively. The results show that the respondents preferred black and red more for funeral programmes and other colours for other ceremonial programmes. The implication is that the various textile companies should factor colours in their designs to suit particular ceremonial programmes.

Table 6 shows that 27 percent of the respondents preferred Woodin wax prints for outdoor programmes based on colour, 24 percent preferred GTP wax prints, while 17 percent and 13 percent preferred ATL and Printex wax prints, respectively. The Table further shows that 28 percent of the respondents preferred GTP wax prints for wedding programmes based on colours, 25 percent preferred Woodin wax prints, whereas 21 percent and 17 percent preferred ATL and DaViva wax prints, respectively. Additionally, 29 percent of the respondents preferred GTP wax prints for funeral programmes based on colours, 27 percent preferred Printex wax prints, whereas 20 percent and nine percent respectively preferred ATL and Woodin wax prints.

Table 6: Most preferred wax print for ceremonial programmes based on colour

Wax print	Outdooring (%)	Wedding (%)	Funeral (%)
GTP	24 (24.0)	28 (28.0)	29 (29.0)
ATL	17 (17.0)	21 (21.0)	20 (20.0)
Woodin	27 (27.0)	25 (25.0)	9 (9.0)
DaViva	10 (10.0)	17 (17.0)	7 (7.0)
Vlisco	5 (5.0)	5 (5.0)	2 (2.0)
Printex	13 (13.0)	-	27 (27.0)
Dutch wax prints	4 (4.0)	4 (4.0)	3 (3.0)
Chinese wax prints	-	-	3 (3.0)
Total	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)

Source: Field survey, 2014

Some of the reasons for the preference of wax prints for outdoor programmes based on colour were having bright colours, having nice colours with beautiful designs, and giving more options to consumers to make a choice. On the other hand, reasons for the preference of wax prints for funeral programmes based on colours included to avoid fast fading of fabrics' colours, and preferring the brightness of the colours of the wax prints. The results show that the consumers consider the quality of dye or the proper bonding of dyes to fabrics as factors to prefer particular wax prints to others based on colours. The consumers, however, had their most preferred fabric colours for ceremonial programmes from GTP wax prints, followed by Woodin and DaViva.

## 9. Conclusion

The study concludes that the consumers' preferences and selection of particular wax print for ceremonial programmes is a function of a number of factors including the colour ranges, fabric designs, cost and social class associated with the wax print. These factors are mainly as a result of the communicative function of fashion. In other words, consumers' selection of colours, designs, cost of fabric, and fabric of a certain social class communicate about their mood, association with the programme and social status. As a result, consumers factor all such factor before settling on certain wax prints for particular ceremonial programmes.

The study found that while certain wax prints were associated with joyful ceremonial programmes such as outdoor programmes and weddings, others were more associated with sorrowful (such as funeral) ceremonial programmes. Thus, based on the above factors, consumers have associated certain wax prints more with particular ceremonial programmes. It is, therefore, very imperative that textile manufacturing companies consider such factors in the production of their wax prints to maintain and expand their shares of the market. Thus, the refusal by textile manufacturing companies to fuse the above factors in their operations could reduce their control of the market in the long term.

## 10. Recommendations

1. Textile manufacturing companies should consider the functions of fabrics in the selection of their colours and designs for particular fabrics. Thus, the consideration of the colour and design to suit a particular ceremonial programme would help to meet the tastes and preferences of consumers. Fabrics for joyful programmes should have bright colours with improved or unique designs to attract more consumers. Similarly, fabrics design for funeral programmes should be of more dark colours with designs associated with sorrowful moments.
2. Textile manufacturing companies who want to attract more customers for funeral fabrics should reduce the cost of their wax prints for funeral programmes. This is because consumers are reluctant to spend high for



funeral fabrics. The reduction could be done by reducing the quality of fabrics in terms of yarns count and weight to offset the reduction in prices. This would help to increase the profitability of such companies because consumers pay less attention to the quality of funeral fabrics, and prefer fabrics with low social class. The strategy would enable the local textile manufacturing companies to compete effectively with the imported fabrics from China.

3. Textile manufacturing companies should improve on their designs to attract more consumers. This is because fabric designs play a role in attracting consumers to procure a particular wax print. This could be done by producing more modern designs to attract the youthful population. The names of such designs should be associated with present socio-cultural issues to attract more consumers. This is important because the old design names were becoming less popular among the current generation.
4. The production of textiles should be segmented to meet the tastes and preferences of consumers of different social class. Thus, targeted population should always be factored into the production of particular colours and designs for certain ceremonial programmes. Each textile manufacturing companies should have units designing fabrics to attract youthful and aged population, designing fabrics for rich and poor consumers, and designing fabrics for males and females. Such segmentations would enable consumers of different socio-economic status to get their tastes and preferences for ceremonial programmes.
5. Textile manufacturing companies should improve on the quality of dye or colour bonding with fabrics to maintain the colour of their wax prints. This would help to attract more customers since consumers preferred fabrics whose colours would not fade over short time period.

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