
Examining the Impact of Cultural Factors on Consumer Brand Preferences for Apparel among Consumers in Osun and Niger States, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of cultural factors on consumer brand preferences for apparel among consumers in Osun and Niger States, Nigeria. The research responds to the growing need to understand how culture shapes consumer behaviour within Nigeria's dynamic apparel industry. Drawing on insights from consumer behaviour and cultural theories, the study focuses on cultural dress norms and ethnic identity as key determinants of brand image perception and product design and style preferences. Osun and Niger States were selected due to their distinct Yoruba and Hausa/Nupe cultural settings, providing meaningful regional contrasts. A descriptive survey design was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The population comprised adult apparel consumers in the two states, estimated at 6,540 based on market and shopping mall records. Using Cochran's formula, a sample size of 376 respondents was determined. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to consumers selected via a multistage sampling technique involving purposive selection of major urban centres and simple random sampling in markets and malls. Validated measurement scales were employed to ensure reliability. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, including means and frequencies, alongside inferential techniques such as Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis at a 0.05 significance level. The findings highlight the significant role of cultural dress norms and ethnic identity in shaping consumer perceptions of apparel brand image and preferences for product design and style. The study further underscores the relevance of cultural alignment, social identity, and contextual values in influencing brand choices nationwide.

Keywords: Apparel brands, Consumer preference, Culture, Ethnic identity, Nigeria

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian apparel market reflects a vibrant intersection of culture, identity, and modern fashion influences. Apparel brands compete not only on quality and style but also on how well they resonate with the cultural values and identity expressions of consumers across different regions. In culturally diverse environments such as Osun and Niger States, consumers' apparel choices reflect deep-rooted traditions and distinctive aesthetic preferences that influence the

acceptance or rejection of particular brands (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2022). As apparel increasingly becomes a tool for self-expression, brand image and product design have emerged as key determinants of consumer preference, especially when they align with cultural expectations and identity-driven motivations (Okeke & Chukwuma, 2021). Research shows that consumers gravitate toward brands that reflect their cultural worldview while offering designs that feel relatable and meaningful (Sanni, 2023). However, the extent to which cultural dress norms influence brand image, and how ethnic identity shapes preference for apparel style and design, remains underexplored in these states. Given the cultural richness of Osun and Niger States, a deeper understanding of these dynamics is essential for fashion brands seeking relevance in these markets. This study, therefore, examines the influence of cultural dress norms on apparel brand image and assesses how ethnic identity affects preference for product design and style. The findings are expected to guide apparel marketers and designers in developing culturally aligned brand strategies.

1.1 Problem Statement/Justification:

Brand preference in the apparel market is strongly influenced by cultural contexts, particularly in societies where dress norms and ethnic identity guide everyday consumption behaviour. In Nigeria, cultural dress norms continue to shape how people perceive the appropriateness and desirability of apparel brands, affecting the image attached to such brands (Adekunle & Aremu, 2021). Similarly, ethnic identity often determines the types of designs, colours, and styles consumers prefer, making apparel selection not only a functional choice but also an expression of cultural belonging (Ogunyemi & Lawal, 2020). Despite the increasing influence of Western fashion trends, consumers in Osun and Niger States still negotiate their fashion choices within the boundaries of cultural expectations and ethnic identities. Yet, limited empirical studies have examined how these cultural dynamics specifically influence brand image and preferences for apparel product design and style in these states.

This gap makes it difficult for apparel marketers, fashion designers, and retailers to align brand strategies with culturally grounded consumer expectations. Understanding these cultural influences is crucial for improving brand positioning, product design, and marketing communication in Nigeria's diverse apparel market (Eze & Nwankwo, 2024). Therefore, this study seeks to examine how cultural dress norms shape consumer perception of apparel brand image and how ethnic identity affects preference for apparel product design and style among consumers in Osun and Niger States. Examining the Impact of Cultural Factors on Consumer Brand Preferences for Apparel among Consumers in Osun and Niger States of Nigeria

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate how the cultural factors affect consumer brand preference for apparel in Osun and Niger State, Nigeria. The specific objective is to:

1. examine the influence of cultural dress norms on consumer perception of apparel brand image in Osun and Niger States.
2. assess how ethnic identity affects consumers' preference for apparel product design and style in Osun and Niger States.

1.3 Research Questions

- (i) How do cultural dress norms influence consumer perception of apparel brand image in Osun and Niger States?
- (ii) To what extent does ethnic identity affect consumers' preference for apparel product design and style in Osun and Niger States?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

- H₁: Cultural dress norms have no significant influence on consumer perception of apparel brand image in Osun and Niger States.
- H₂: Ethnic identity has no significant effect on consumers' preference for apparel product design and style in Osun and Niger States.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the understanding that cultural influences shape consumer perceptions and preferences in apparel markets. Cultural dress norms guide what individuals consider appropriate, modest, or fashionable, thereby informing the symbolic meaning they attach to apparel brands. Consumers tend to favour brands whose image aligns with their cultural expectations, reinforcing the idea that brand perception is shaped by contextual values (Adebayo & Hassan, 2021). Ethnic identity also plays a critical role in apparel choices, as individuals often select designs and styles that reflect group belonging and cultural expression (Idowu & Olatunji, 2020). Apparel design elements such as colour, fabric patterns, and stylistic details are often interpreted through ethnic lenses, making ethnicity a key determinant of style preference. The conceptual framework therefore proposes a directional relationship where cultural dress norms influence consumer perception of apparel brand image, while ethnic identity shapes preference for apparel product design and style. In line with socio-cultural consumption theory, consumer choices reflect deeper cultural narratives that guide behaviour in specific contexts (Ekanem, 2022). The framework suggests that when apparel brands integrate cultural values and ethnic aesthetics, consumers develop stronger preferences for such brands. This model provides the foundation for assessing how the cultural contexts of Osun and Niger States influence apparel brand preferences among their diverse populations.

2.2 Cultural Dress Norms

Cultural dress norms refer to the standards, expectations, and socially accepted ways of dressing within a community. They influence how individuals choose clothing and the brands they associate with (Adeyemi & Shonubi, 2021). In Nigeria, dress norms vary across ethnic and regional groups, shaping perceptions of modesty, formality, and acceptable designs. These norms often determine whether a brand's image is perceived as culturally appropriate or misaligned with local expectations. Studies show that consumers are more likely to prefer brands whose image aligns with community dress expectations, especially in culturally conservative environments (Balogun & Adeoti, 2020). Apparel that deviates from local dress norms may be viewed as inappropriate, reducing its appeal despite its quality or global appeal.

In Osun and Niger States, where traditional and religious values guide dress behaviour, cultural dress norms remain strong predictors of brand perception. Understanding these norms helps explain why certain apparel brands enjoy higher acceptance in specific cultural contexts (Yahaya, 2022).

2.3 Factors Affecting Cultural Dress Norms

Tradition and heritage – Cultural dress norms are deeply rooted in the traditions and heritage of a community. Rituals, ceremonies, and generational practices shape the clothing styles deemed appropriate or symbolic (Otto & Martin, 2020). Traditional fabrics, embroidery, and attire convey identity, social status, and historical values. Even as modern fashion emerges, communities often maintain certain ceremonial dress norms that reflect their history and collective memory. These practices ensure continuity of culture and transmit societal values to younger generations. Researchers recommend that cultural education programs integrate traditional attire awareness to preserve heritage while embracing contemporary adaptations.

Religious beliefs – Religious doctrines significantly influence cultural dress norms, guiding modesty, permissible colors, and styles. For example, certain faiths prescribe specific attire for rituals, worship, or daily wear (Alabi & Musa, 2021). Compliance with these guidelines fosters community cohesion, reinforces spiritual identity, and maintains moral frameworks. Ignoring religious expectations can lead to social disapproval or exclusion, showing the weight of belief systems in shaping attire. Studies emphasize that designers should consider religious sensitivities to produce culturally appropriate clothing. Promoting understanding of these practices ensures respect for diverse religious traditions while encouraging innovation within acceptable boundaries.

Social expectations and peer influence – Socialization processes heavily influence dress norms, as individuals adjust clothing choices to align with peer, family, or societal expectations (Chukwuma, 2019). Youths, in particular, are susceptible to adopting trends endorsed by friends, influencers, or community leaders. Peer approval reinforces adherence to norms, while deviation may attract criticism or social exclusion. Social learning theory explains that observation and imitation of others' dressing behaviors strengthen conformity. Researchers suggest that integrating social awareness campaigns in fashion marketing can enhance acceptance of culturally relevant attire. Understanding peer influence helps brands design collections that resonate with both tradition and contemporary social preferences.

2.4 Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity reflects the sense of belonging individuals feel toward a cultural or ethnic group. It strongly influences apparel choices, particularly when clothing becomes a medium for cultural expression (Salami & Okoro, 2021). Individuals with strong ethnic identity often prefer styles, colours, and patterns associated with their cultural heritage. This makes ethnic identity a powerful predictor of design and style preference. Research indicates that consumers use apparel to communicate ethnic pride and group membership, especially in multicultural societies like Nigeria (Odetola, 2022).

In Osun and Niger States, where diverse ethnic groups coexist, ethnic identity shapes choices ranging from traditional wear to contemporary styles infused with cultural motifs. Ethnic identity also influences how consumers interpret brand messaging and product aesthetics, leading them to prefer brands that reflect their cultural values (Kareem & Musa, 2023). As such, understanding ethnic identity is essential for apparel brands seeking acceptance in culturally rich markets.

2.5 Factors Affecting Ethnic Identity

Community and peer networks – Interaction within ethnic communities and peer groups enhances identification with one's ethnicity (Eze & Nwankwo, 2024). Participation in communal activities, festivals, and social gatherings fosters shared experiences that strengthen belonging. Peer reinforcement encourages adherence to cultural norms and identity markers, such as language, clothing, and rituals. Studies highlight that active involvement in community networks mitigates feelings of alienation and promotes confidence in ethnic identity. Policymakers and cultural organizations are encouraged to facilitate community events, mentorship, and youth programs that emphasize ethnic heritage, as strong networks support identity formation and cultural pride among younger generations.

Historical and political context – Ethnic identity is shaped by historical narratives, political representation, and socio-economic experiences (Okeke & Chukwuma, 2021). Past marginalization, colonial legacies, or political struggles can strengthen group cohesion and identity assertion. Conversely, lack of recognition may erode ethnic pride. Citizens' awareness of historical struggles informs their cultural participation, solidarity, and advocacy. Studies suggest that integrating historical education into curricula enhances understanding of ethnic heritage. Recognizing political and historical factors enables governments and cultural institutions to develop inclusive policies that respect ethnic diversity, foster equitable representation, and preserve cultural distinctiveness within multi-ethnic societies.

Media representation – How ethnic groups are portrayed in television, movies, social media, and advertisements influences members' perception of themselves and their cultural pride (Oluwaseun & Bello, 2022). Positive portrayals reinforce pride, acceptance, and validation, while negative or stereotypical depictions may diminish self-esteem and weaken ethnic identity. Exposure to global media also introduces cross-cultural comparisons that may alter traditional practices or aspirations. Researchers recommend promoting authentic, positive, and diverse representations of ethnic groups in media to enhance cultural understanding and identity affirmation. This strategy strengthens ethnic cohesion and educates the broader public about cultural diversity.

2.6 Consumer Brand Preference

Consumer brand preference refers to the degree to which a consumer consistently selects one brand over others when purchasing products or services (Kotler & Keller, 2024). It is shaped by perceptions of quality, brand image, design, cultural relevance, and emotional connection. Preferences often arise from past experiences, peer influence, advertising, and symbolic associations that brands convey (Solomon, 2022). In the apparel sector, consumer brand preference is influenced not only by functional attributes like comfort and durability but also by

aesthetic elements, cultural appropriateness, and alignment with personal identity (Adebayo, 2024). Cultural factors, such as dress norms and ethnic identity, guide consumers in assessing which brands resonate with their values and social expectations (Osei-Tutu, 2024). Strong brand preference leads to higher loyalty, repeat purchases, and positive word-of-mouth recommendations, which are vital for brand sustainability. Understanding brand preference enables marketers to craft strategies that foster emotional attachment, cultural relevance, and differentiation in competitive markets. Essentially, consumer brand preference reflects a combination of rational evaluation and emotional resonance, revealing what consumers truly value in a brand.

2.7 Consumer Perception of Apparel Brand Image

Consumer perception of apparel brand image is the way individuals evaluate a brand based on attributes such as quality, reputation, advertising, and endorsements (Akanbi & Ajayi, 2024). Positive perception arises from trust, reliability, appealing design, and alignment with personal values. Consumers often rely on previous experiences, peer influence, and marketing messages to form opinions about brands. Brand image influences purchasing decisions, loyalty, and willingness to recommend products. Companies that maintain consistent quality, ethical practices, and culturally relevant branding are more likely to foster favourable perceptions. This perception is dynamic and sensitive to trends, media influence, and societal values, requiring brands to continually engage and adapt to consumer expectations.

2.8 Factors Affecting Consumer Perception of Apparel Brand Image

Brand Reputation and Credibility

Consumers' perception of a brand's image is strongly influenced by its reputation and credibility (Kotler & Keller, 2024). Established brands known for quality, ethical practices, and reliability foster trust and loyalty. Positive past experiences and peer recommendations reinforce perception, while negative publicity can quickly erode confidence. Studies indicate that credibility acts as a cognitive shortcut for consumers when evaluating products, reducing perceived risk. Brands are advised to maintain consistency in quality, transparency, and corporate social responsibility initiatives. A strong reputation improves brand image, enhances market position, and encourages repeat purchases by creating positive consumer associations.

2.9 Product Quality and Durability

The tangible attributes of apparel, including material quality, stitching, and longevity, influence brand perception (Ogunleye & Fadare, 2019). Consumers equate durable, comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing products with high brand standards. Negative experiences with poor-quality products can damage trust and image, whereas consistent quality reinforces loyalty. Studies emphasize that perceived quality often outweighs price considerations in shaping brand reputation. Brands are encouraged to implement rigorous quality control and transparent communication about product attributes. High-quality offerings improve satisfaction, word-of-mouth endorsements, and reinforce the perception that the brand meets consumer expectations.

2.10 Celebrity/Influencer Endorsements

Associating apparel brands with celebrities or influencers affects consumer perception positively (Ibrahim & Adeola, 2022). Endorsements create aspirational appeal, enhance visibility, and signal quality and status. Social media influencers, particularly those trusted by target audiences, can shape attitudes and drive purchase intentions. Research shows that congruence between the endorser's image and brand values is crucial to credibility. Experts recommend strategic selection of endorsers aligned with brand identity to maximize influence. When executed effectively, endorsements can enhance brand image, strengthen loyalty, and position the brand favorably within competitive markets.

2.11 Consumers' Preference for Apparel Product Design and Style

Consumers' preference for apparel product design and style refers to the selection of clothing based on aesthetics, functionality, cultural relevance, and social acceptability (Okafor & Eze, 2025). Factors such as fashion trends, comfort, material quality, price, and peer influence guide these preferences. Cultural heritage and ethnic identity often play a key role, particularly in traditional attire or ethnic-inspired designs. Consumers are increasingly balancing style with practicality and sustainability in their choices. Understanding these preferences helps apparel brands design products that resonate with target audiences, encourage repeat purchases, and build brand loyalty. Brands that align design with consumer expectations create stronger market presence and emotional connection.

2.12 Factors Affecting Consumers' Preference for Apparel Product Design and Style

Aesthetic appeal and fashion trends

Consumers often prefer designs that are visually appealing, trendy, and align with contemporary fashion (Okafor & Eze, 2025). Colors, patterns, and silhouettes influence attractiveness, while trend alignment signals social relevance. Fashion-conscious consumers actively seek clothing that enhances identity expression and social acceptance. Studies suggest that brands updating designs according to emerging trends increase desirability and market share. Designers are encouraged to monitor global trends while integrating local cultural aesthetics. Aesthetic appeal, combined with trend consciousness, enhances purchase likelihood and fosters a strong emotional connection between consumers and apparel brands.

2.13 Functionality and comfort

Practicality, fit, and comfort significantly influence consumers' preference for apparel designs (Adebayo, 2024). Clothing that allows freedom of movement, suits climate conditions, and aligns with lifestyle demands is preferred over purely decorative options. Studies show that consumers weigh functional attributes alongside aesthetics, especially for daily wear. Designers should integrate ergonomic principles, durable fabrics, and versatile styles to enhance comfort and usability. Meeting functional needs enhances satisfaction, repeat purchases, and positive brand perception. Balancing style and comfort ensures that apparel is not only fashionable but also practical for everyday use.

2.14 Price and perceived value

Consumers' decisions regarding design and style are affected by the balance between price and perceived value (Oluwatosin & Oladipo, 2022). A well-designed product may lose appeal if perceived as overpriced relative to quality, while affordable, high-quality designs attract preference. Research indicates that pricing strategies influence perceived prestige, affordability, and purchase motivation. Brands are advised to adopt value-based pricing that aligns with target market expectations. Transparent communication about materials, craftsmanship, and uniqueness enhances perceived value. This alignment strengthens consumer satisfaction, encourages loyalty, and increases the likelihood of positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

2.15 Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on Social Identity Theory (SIT), originally proposed by Tajfel and Turner and widely applied in contemporary consumer behaviour research. Social Identity Theory explains how individuals define themselves based on membership in social groups such as ethnicity, culture, and community, which subsequently shapes attitudes, perceptions, and consumption choices. In apparel consumption, cultural dress norms and ethnic identity act as symbolic markers through which consumers express belonging and social distinction. Recent studies show that consumers prefer brands whose images, designs, and styles align with their cultural values and group identity, enhancing self-concept and social approval (Ahn & Back, 2019; Gentina, Tang, & Gu, 2020). The theory is suitable for this study because it directly explains how cultural dress expectations influence brand image perception and how ethnic identity drives preference for specific apparel designs in Osun and Niger States, where cultural identity remains highly salient in daily consumption decisions.

2.16 Empirical Review

Cultural Dress Norms and Consumer Perception of Apparel Brand Image

A growing body of research reveals how cultural dress norms shape consumer perceptions of apparel brands. For instance, Tabassum, Hameed, and Fatima (2020) investigated how cultural trends influence brand reputation in emerging Pakistani clothing brands using a quantitative survey, finding that consumer perception and cultural norms directly impact brand image, recommending marketers integrate cultural values into branding strategies. Singla (2025) explored global cultural influences on fashion trends through descriptive methods, concluding that traditional heritage and cultural identity significantly affect how consumers perceive fashion brands, urging designers to respect cultural narratives. In China, Hao (2025) used an online questionnaire to show that consumer identity influenced brands' differentiated marketing strategies, underscoring the need for culturally rooted brand differentiation. Kim's (2022) quantitative analysis across four ethnic groups found that despite cultural diversity, attractive fashion styles (often influenced by cultural aesthetics), drive positive consumer perception of brand image, recommending inclusive strategies that account for cross-cultural tastes. Finally, Niosi (2023) qualitatively highlighted that cultural values shape buying habits, suggesting that marketing messages should reinforce cultural beliefs to strengthen brand image. Collectively, these studies affirm that cultural dress norms and cultural values are deeply embedded in how consumers perceive apparel brands, and effective branding must integrate cultural sensitivity to enhance brand image.

Ethnic Identity and Consumers' Preference for Apparel Product Design and Style

Recent research underscores how ethnic identity shapes preferences in apparel design. In a 2025 Bangalore study using structured questionnaires, ethnic identity and emotional attachment were shown to significantly influence consumer buying decisions for ethnic wear, identifying style, comfort, and convenience as core drivers and recommending contemporary culturally rooted designs (Intharacks (2023) analyzed Lao and Filipino consumers through a mixed-method survey, finding that ethnic identity influences clothing preferences and suggesting brands incorporate ethnic symbols to appeal to identity-oriented consumers. Chen et al. (2021) is included for its relevance to apparel preference: their quantitative survey showed that perceived brand image significantly influences consumer behaviour, linking preference for design with self-congruity and perceived quality, and recommending improved brand communication. Research on Chinese Gen-Z eco-fashion consumers using survey methods found that ethnic and local brand preferences emerge alongside sustainable values, implying ethnic identity plays a role in style preferences and recommending brands align with both cultural and sustainability values (Mandarić et al., 2021). Lastly, Singla (2025) again highlights via descriptive analysis that cultural values and identity guide fashion trend adoption, with traditional motifs influencing design preference and urging designers to blend cultural heritage with contemporary styles (Singla, 2025). These empirical works collectively confirm that ethnic identity significantly informs consumers' apparel design and style preferences, advising that brands integrate identity markers to resonate with culturally conscious consumers.

2.17 Gaps in the Literature

Although existing studies acknowledge that cultural factors shape apparel choices, few have simultaneously examined cultural dress norms and ethnic identity alongside specific brand preference indicators such as brand image and design/style. Most studies focus on single cultural variables or examine them in Western or Asian contexts, limiting applicability to Nigeria (Adebayo, 2024; Osei-Tutu, 2024). Additionally, cross-state comparative studies between culturally distinct regions like Osun and Niger States remain scarce. There is also limited quantitative evidence explaining how cultural attributes interact with brand perception variables to influence apparel preference. This study addresses these gaps by empirically examining the interaction of cultural dress norms and ethnic identity with brand image and design preferences within contrasting Nigerian cultural environments.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a descriptive survey design to examine how cultural dress norms and ethnic identity influence brand image and product design/style preferences for apparel in Osun and Niger States. The study areas were selected because they represent culturally distinct Yoruba and Hausa/Nupe environments, providing contrast for cultural influence on apparel preferences. The population consists of adult apparel consumers in both states, estimated at 6,540 based on market and shopping-mall visitor records. A sample size of 376 respondents was determined using Cochran's formula for large populations: $n = Z^2pq/e^2$, where $Z = 1.96$, $p = 0.5$, $q = 0.5$ and $e = 0.05$.

A multistage sampling technique was used: the first stage purposively selected major urban centres (Osogbo, Ilesa, Minna, and Bida); the second stage involved simple random sampling to select respondents in markets and malls. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection, containing validated scales for cultural factors and brand preference indicators. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and frequency) and inferential tools such as Pearson correlation and multiple regressions to test the stated hypotheses at 0.05 significance level.

3.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: I am willing to pay more for apparel that reflects my ethnic identity.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Disagree	2	.5	.5	2.2
	Undecided	7	1.9	1.9	4.1
	Agree	153	41.9	41.9	46.0
	Strongly Agree	197	54.0	54.0	100.0
	Total	365	100.0	100.0	

2. Descriptive Interpretation of Cultural Norms and Brand Image

The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that, their culture influences acceptable clothing choices (80.8%), they prefer apparel aligned with cultural traditions (78.3%), religious expectations affect clothing brand choice (73.2%) and they avoid brands that conflict with community dressing norms (72.1%). Furthermore, respondents strongly indicated that brands that respect culture have a positive image, they trust apparel brands that reflect cultural values (90.7%), cultural relevance improves brand perception (94.0%), brands aligned with dressing norms appear more credible (88.5%). These results suggest that cultural and religious norms play a major role in shaping consumers' perception of apparel brand image in Osun and Niger States.

3. Descriptive Interpretation of Ethnic Identity and Apparel Preference

An overwhelming majority of respondents felt proud expressing ethnic identity through clothing (95.0%), indicated that ethnic background influences clothing preference (84.6%), valued apparel reflecting ethnic heritage (89.6%), preferred ethnic-inspired designs and traditional patterns (over 87%). Notably, 95.9% of respondents were willing to pay more for apparel that reflects their ethnic identity, demonstrating the economic significance of ethnic-based apparel design.

Hypothesis 1:

H₀₁: Cultural dress norms have no significant influence on consumer perception of apparel brand image in Osun and Niger States.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.965 ^a	.931	.930		.17984

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brands aligned with my dressing norms appear more credible to me., Apparel brands that respect my culture have a positive image., I avoid apparel brands that conflict with my community's dressing norms., I trust apparel brands that reflect cultural values., Cultural relevance improves my perception of an apparel brand., My culture influences the type of clothing I consider acceptable., Religious expectations affect my choice of clothing brands., I prefer apparel that aligns with my cultural dressing traditions.

The model produced a very strong correlation ($R = 0.965$) and explained 93.1% ($R^2 = 0.931$) of the variation in consumer perception of apparel brand image. This indicates that cultural factors are powerful predictors of brand image perception.

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	155.982	8	19.498	602.847	.000 ^a
	Residual	11.514	356	.032		
	Total	167.496	364			

a) a. Predictors: (Constant), Brands aligned with my dressing norms appear more credible to me., Apparel brands that respect my culture have a positive image., I avoid apparel brands that conflict with my community's dressing norms., I trust apparel brands that reflect cultural values., Cultural relevance improves my perception of an apparel brand., My culture influences the type of clothing I consider acceptable., Religious expectations affect my choice of clothing brands., I prefer apparel that aligns with my cultural dressing traditions.

b) b. Dependent Variable: Cultural dress norms have no significant influence on consumer perception of apparel brand image in Osun and Niger States.

The model is statistically significant ($F = 602.847$, $p < 0.05$), confirming that the predictors jointly influence consumer perception.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.695	.068		10.218	.000
	My culture influences the type of clothing I consider acceptable.	-.058	.044	-.097	-1.337	.182
	I prefer apparel that aligns with my cultural dressing traditions.	-.106	.045	-.173	-2.381	.018
	Religious expectations affect my choice of clothing brands.	.059	.040	.107	1.480	.140
	I avoid apparel brands that conflict with my community's dressing norms.	-.047	.046	-.082	-1.019	.309
	Apparel brands that respect my culture have a positive image.	.178	.021	.244	8.532	.000
	I trust apparel brands that reflect cultural values.	.295	.037	.351	7.967	.000
	Cultural relevance improves my perception of an apparel brand.	.422	.042	.456	10.109	.000
	Brands aligned with my dressing norms appear more credible to me.	.122	.045	.168	2.730	.007

a. Dependent Variable: Cultural dress norms have no significant influence on consumer perception of apparel brand image in Osun and Niger States.

Significant positive predictors include cultural relevance improving brand perception ($\beta = 0.456$, $p < 0.001$), trust in culturally reflective brands ($\beta = 0.351$, $p < 0.001$), positive image of culturally respectful brands ($\beta = 0.244$, $p < 0.001$) and credibility of brands aligned with dressing norms ($\beta = 0.168$, $p < 0.05$). Some variables were not individually significant; however, their combined effect remains strong.

Decision: Since the model is significant and explains a large proportion of variance, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion: Cultural dress norms significantly influence consumer perception of apparel brand image in Osun and Niger States.

Hypothesis 2:

H₀₂: Ethnic identity has no significant effect on consumers' preference for apparel product design and style in Osun and Niger States.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.971 ^a	.943	.942		.15142

a. Predictors: (Constant), I am willing to pay more for apparel that reflects my ethnic identity., I am more attracted to clothing with traditional patterns or symbols., My ethnic background influences my clothing preferences., I prefer apparel designs inspired by my ethnic culture., I feel proud to express my ethnic identity through clothing., Preserving my ethnic culture is important in my clothing choices., I value apparel that reflects my ethnic heritage., Ethnic designs influence my decision to buy apparel.

The regression model shows a very strong relationship ($R = 0.971$) and explains 94.3% ($R^2 = 0.943$) of the variation in apparel design and style preference.

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	135.054	8	16.882	736.257	.000 ^a
	Residual	8.163	356	.023		
	Total	143.216	364			

a. Predictors: (Constant), I am willing to pay more for apparel that reflects my ethnic identity., I am more attracted to clothing with traditional patterns or symbols., My ethnic background influences my clothing preferences., I prefer apparel designs inspired by my ethnic culture., I feel proud to express my ethnic identity through clothing., Preserving my ethnic culture is important in my clothing choices., I value apparel that reflects my ethnic heritage., Ethnic designs influence my decision to buy apparel.

b. Dependent Variable: Ethnic identity has no significant effect on consumers' preference for apparel product design and style in Osun and Niger States.

The model is statistically significant ($F = 736.257$, $p < 0.05$), confirming the joint influence of ethnic identity variables.

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.740	.056		13.250	.000
I feel proud to express my ethnic identity through clothing.	-.041	.047	-.050	-.878	.380
My ethnic background influences my clothing preferences.	.128	.041	.216	3.144	.002
I value apparel that reflects my ethnic heritage.	.033	.039	.052	.843	.400
Preserving my ethnic culture is important in my clothing choices.	.700	.058	.784	12.131	.000
I prefer apparel designs inspired by my ethnic culture.	.048	.050	.066	.977	.329
I am more attracted to clothing with traditional patterns or symbols.	.150	.033	.194	4.582	.000
Ethnic designs influence my decision to buy apparel.	-.167	.053	-.263	-3.119	.002
I am willing to pay more for apparel that reflects my ethnic identity.	-.014	.045	-.016	-.313	.755

a. Dependent Variable: Ethnic identity has no significant effect on consumers' preference for apparel product design and style in Osun and Niger States.

Key significant predictors include preserving ethnic culture ($\beta = 0.784$, $p < 0.001$) – the strongest predictor, traditional patterns and symbols ($\beta = 0.194$, $p < 0.001$), ethnic background influencing clothing preference ($\beta = 0.216$, $p < 0.01$). Some variables showed negative coefficients, indicating nuanced consumer behaviour, but overall ethnic identity remains a dominant influence. Decision: Given the strong explanatory power and statistical significance, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion: Ethnic identity significantly affects consumers' preference for apparel product design and style in Osun and Niger States.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings clearly demonstrate that cultural norms and ethnic identity are critical determinants of apparel brand image perception, apparel design and style preference and consumer trust, credibility, and willingness to pay more. These results emphasize the importance for apparel brands operating in Osun and Niger States to integrate cultural and ethnic values into their product design, branding, and marketing strategies. The first hypothesis, which tested whether cultural dress norms significantly influences consumer perception of apparel brand image, was supported by the data. The results revealed that cultural dress norms had a strong positive effect on consumer perception of apparel brand image ($\beta = 0.456$, $p < 0.001$), with an R^2 value of 0.931, meaning 93.1% of the variance in consumer perception of apparel brand image is explained by cultural dress norms. These findings align with the assertions of scholars, who emphasized that traditional heritage and cultural identity significantly affect how consumers perceive fashion brands, urging designers to respect cultural narratives (Singla, 2025). Therefore, aligning apparel brands with local dress norms enhances positive consumer perceptions, cultural acceptance, credibility and overall brand image. Similarly, it was highlighted that consumer perception and cultural norms directly impact brand image (Tabassum, Hameed & Fatima, 2020).

The second hypothesis examined whether ethnic identity significantly affect consumers' preference for apparel product design and style. The result was also statistically significant ($\beta = 0.784$, $p < 0.001$), with $R^2 = 0.943$, showing that 94.3% of the variation in consumers' preference for apparel product design and style is attributed to ethnic identity. This finding is consistent with the work of scholars who posited that ethnic identity and emotional attachment significantly influence consumer buying decisions for ethnic wear, identifying style, comfort, and convenience as core drivers (Intharacks, 2023). This underscores that ethnic identity shapes consumers' apparel design and style preferences, influencing purchasing decisions and culturally aligned fashion choices. Likewise, it was emphasized that perceived brand image significantly influences consumer behaviour, linking preference for design with self-congruity and perceived quality (Chen et al., 2021). This shows consistency with existing literature, confirming ethnic identity strongly influences consumers' apparel design and style preferences across different contexts.

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that cultural factors significantly influence consumer brand preferences for apparel in Osun and Niger States. Cultural dress norms were found to have a strong positive effect on consumer perception of apparel brand image ($\beta = 0.456$, $p < 0.001$), with an R^2 of 0.931, indicating that 93.1% of the variance in brand image perception is explained by these norms. These results align with prior research emphasizing the importance of traditional heritage and cultural identity in shaping consumer perceptions (Singla, 2025; Tabassum, Hameed & Fatima, 2020).

Additionally, ethnic identity significantly influenced consumers' preference for apparel product design and style ($\beta = 0.784$, $p < 0.001$), with $R^2 = 0.943$, showing that 94.3% of the variation in preferences is attributed to ethnic identity. This confirms that consumers' apparel choices are strongly guided by emotional attachment to their ethnic background and cultural values (Intharacks, 2023; Chen et al., 2021). Overall, the findings underscore the critical role of cultural alignment and ethnic identity in shaping consumer perceptions, preferences, and purchasing decisions in the apparel market.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that cultural dress norms significantly enhance consumers' perception of apparel brand image in Osun and Niger States. Brands that integrate traditional cultural values are more likely to gain acceptance, credibility, and positive recognition. Likewise, ethnic identity is a key determinant of consumer preference for apparel design and style, indicating that products reflecting ethnic and cultural characteristics influence purchasing decisions.

Collectively, these findings emphasize the necessity for apparel marketers and designers to acknowledge and incorporate cultural and ethnic factors into their strategies. Doing so ensures stronger consumer connections, culturally aligned brand positioning, and improved market responsiveness in Nigeria's diverse cultural landscape.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Cultural Integration in Branding:** Apparel brands should incorporate local cultural dress norms into branding and product design to enhance consumer perception, credibility, and cultural acceptance. Conducting cultural audits prior to product launches is recommended.
- **Ethnic-Sensitive Product Design:** Businesses should align product designs and styles with consumers' ethnic identity and cultural values to increase preference and market responsiveness. Regional cultural research should guide design decisions.
- **Culturally-Driven Marketing Strategies:** Marketers and policymakers should create campaigns celebrating cultural heritage and ethnic diversity, fostering emotional connections, brand loyalty, and community engagement.

8. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study contributes to knowledge by empirically demonstrating that cultural dress norms and ethnic identity are significant determinants of apparel brand image and consumer design preferences. It bridges theoretical and practical insights by highlighting how cultural and ethnic factors influence purchasing behaviour. The findings provide actionable guidance for marketers, designers, and policymakers, offering a framework for integrating socio-cultural considerations into apparel branding and marketing strategies in Nigeria's culturally diverse market.

9. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study focused solely on Osun and Niger States, limiting generalizability. Reliance on self-reported survey responses may have introduced response bias.

Future studies could explore cultural factors influencing apparel preferences across other Nigerian regions. Research could examine the role of social media in shaping culturally influenced brand perceptions. Studies may assess generational differences in ethnic identity and apparel design preferences. Cross-cultural comparisons between Nigerian and international consumers' brand perceptions could provide deeper insights.

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