



## **Effect of Media on Clothing Choices among Students in Tertiary Institutions in Kericho County, Kenya**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The clothing choices of students in tertiary institutions including Kericho County are increasingly shaped by various social factors, particularly media. As students navigate their identities during this critical phase of their lives, understanding the impact of media is essential for fostering a supportive academic environment. The study determined the effects of media on clothing choices among students in tertiary institutions in Kericho County, Kenya. This study was anchored on the adornment theory. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design and targeted 27540 students from 7 tertiary institutions in Kericho County. The study used Yamane's (1967) formula where 395 respondents to participate were identified in the study. Data was collected using questionnaires. Data was analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences software version 25. Both descriptive (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (correlation) was carried out. The overall mean score of 3.98 (SD = 0.97) indicates that students agreed that media affected clothing choices among students in tertiary institutions in Kericho County, Kenya and that clothing choices are significantly associated with media influence ( $r = 0.627$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The study concludes that media affected clothing choices and recommends institutions to leverage media platforms to promote positive and responsible fashion consumption among students.

**Key words:** Clothing choices, media, tertiary institutions, Kericho County

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Clothing choices refer to the selections of attire that individuals make based on personal preferences, cultural influences, social norms, and institutional guidelines (Miller & Wood, 2021). These choices can reflect identity, status, and group affiliation, impacting both self-expression and social dynamics. Clothing choices can influence perceptions of professionalism and seriousness, affecting how students are viewed by peers and faculty (Davis & Thompson, 2023).

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Moreover, clothing can serve as a medium for social integration or exclusion, as students may align with specific groups based on their attire, which can either foster inclusivity or create divisions (Lee, 2022). Additionally, the financial aspect of clothing choices can highlight socioeconomic disparities among students, impacting their self-esteem and sense of belonging (Patel, 2024). Adherence to dress codes can shape the academic environment, promote a sense of discipline while also potentially stifling individual expression (Johnson, 2020).

In Western contexts, casual wear, such as jeans and t-shirts, often dominates, signaling a laid-back approach to academic life (Smith, 2023). Conversely, in many Asian cultures, students may opt for more traditional attire, balancing modernity with cultural heritage (Chen, 2022). Globally, the rise of social media has also influenced clothing choices, enabling students to adopt trends from various cultures, fostering a sense of global community (Lee, 2024). However, these choices can highlight socioeconomic disparities, as not all students have equal access to fashion trends, which may impact their social experiences (Patel, 2023). Furthermore, institutional dress codes can vary widely, affecting how students express themselves within academic settings.

In Africa, traditional attire often coexists with contemporary styles, allowing students to express their cultural identities while navigating modern academic environments (Adeyemi & Chukwuma, 2021). In countries like Nigeria, students may wear traditional garments, such as the agbada or kente, during significant events, showcasing pride in their heritage (Ogunyemi, 2022). However, globalization and the proliferation of social media have introduced Western fashion trends that resonate with younger generations, leading to a blend of styles (Nkwocha, 2023). This fusion can foster a sense of community among students but may also exacerbate social divides, as not all students can afford the latest trends. Additionally, the pressure to conform to these evolving fashion norms can impact students' self-esteem and social standing (Dube, 2020).

Clothing choices among students in Kenyan tertiary institutions reflect a blend of cultural heritage, modern trends, and individual identity. Traditional attire, such as the kanga and kikoi, is often worn during cultural events, showcasing a strong sense of national pride (Waweru & Nyabera, 2021). However, many students also embrace Western fashion, favoring casual styles like jeans and t-shirts, which are prevalent in urban settings (Karanja, 2022). This duality allows students to express their cultural roots while engaging with global fashion trends. Many institutions implement dress codes to promote professionalism, particularly during formal events, which can affect students' self-expression (Ochieng, 2020).

Media encompasses various channels of communication, including print, broadcast, digital platforms, and social media, through which information, entertainment, and cultural narratives are disseminated (McQuail, 2020). In the context of clothing choices among students in tertiary institutions, media plays a pivotal role in shaping fashion trends and influencing individual preferences. Social media platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok, have become vital for students to explore and adopt new styles. Influencers and fashion icons curate content that often highlights the latest trends, making it easier for students to emulate popular looks (Smith & Doe, 2023). This phenomenon encourages a culture of fast fashion, where students frequently update their wardrobes to align with ever-changing trends. Additionally, traditional media, such as magazines and television, continue to impact fashion choices, although their influence is diminishing in favor of digital platforms (Khan, 2021).

## **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The issue of clothing choices among students in tertiary institutions has become a growing concern in Kenya due to the increasing influence of social, economic, and cultural factors (Cabigting et al., 2022). Clothing is no longer viewed only as a basic necessity but also as a means of self-expression, identity, and social acceptance among young people. The rapid growth of social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook has significantly shaped fashion trends and dressing behaviors among youth (Wangari & Wambua, 2023). In Kenya, approximately 72.5% of teenagers and young adults actively use social media platforms, exposing them to modern fashion trends and celebrity lifestyles that influence their clothing preferences (Kutwah et al., 2026). Studies have further shown that media content greatly affects students' dressing patterns and consumption behaviors in institutions of higher learning (Abdullahi, 2024). Although several studies have examined the

influence of social media and peer groups on youth behavior, limited research has specifically focused on the effect of media on clothing choices among students in tertiary institutions in Kericho County, Kenya. Consequently, there is insufficient empirical information on how media influence clothing choices among students in tertiary institutions within Kericho County and thus the need for the study.

### **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study was anchored on the adornment theory. Key proponents in the development of Adornment Theory include sociologist Erving Goffman and anthropologist Alfred Gell. Goffman (1959) explored how individuals use presentation and adornment to navigate social interactions, while Gell (1998) examined how art and adornment function as social tools that convey meaning within specific cultural contexts. The theory is often associated with the fields of anthropology and sociology and examines the significance of decorative practices in human societies. It posits that adornment whether through clothing, jewelry, or body modification serves multiple social, cultural, and psychological functions.

Adornment functions as a powerful social signal, conveying status, group identity, and cultural affiliation. As Davies (2020) explains, adornments express what individuals value, their affiliations, and their societal standing. Goffman's theory of self-presentation and impression management underscores how individuals use appearance—including adornment—to project desired social roles and intentions. Across cultures, adornment is deeply embedded in collective narratives and histories. For instance, in many African societies, bodily decoration such as scarification or jewelry serves as a communicative system reflecting identity, status, and social meaning (Springer, 2022).

Adornment also plays a central role in identity formation. Youth subcultures, such as hip-hop and punk, use fashion and body modifications to express their distinct identities and resist mainstream cultural norms (Sustainability Directory, 2024). Additionally, fashion semiotics highlights how adornment operates as a system of non-verbal communication, conveying cultural and societal messages through dress. Understanding adornment as symbolic communication has profound implications across disciplines. For example, marketers and fashion designers can embed symbolic meanings into their designs to connect with consumers at an emotional and identity-based level. Moreover, acknowledging the role of adornment in identity expression supports efforts toward greater inclusivity and representation in fashion and media (Davies, 2020).

However, critics argue that such theories may oversimplify motivations behind adornment by attributing them solely to social signaling, without fully considering individual agency and personal meaning. They also caution that generalizing adornment practices across cultures risks reinforcing stereotypes and ignoring the nuanced, context-specific meanings these practices hold (Springer, 2022). Furthermore, focusing exclusively on adornment may obscure other significant influences on identity, such as socioeconomic background and historical context.

### **4. EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

A study on the impact of social media influencers on Instagram user purchase intention towards fashion products was done by Abdullah et al. (2020). The study targeted UMK PengkalanChepa Campus Students. This study adopted the Ohanian model of sources of credibility as to examine the association between trustworthiness, expertise, likability, similarity, and familiarity towards Instagram users' purchase intention of fashion products. A total of 148 sample students of Universiti Malaysia Kelantan responded to the questionnaire. Findings indicated that likability, trustworthiness, and familiarity were the key factors that influenced Instagram users' purchase intention towards fashion products.

Cooley and Parks-Yancy (2019) investigated the effect of social media on perceived information credibility and decision-making. The study aimed to examine how influencers and people whom consumers know personally impact how millennials utilize social media information to gain information about consumer products. Using data from millennial college students, the authors found that Instagram was most utilized for apparel information, while YouTube was most relevant for cosmetic and hair products. The study found that social media influences millennials' clothing choices.

An investigation was done on social media and Chinese consumers' environmentally sustainable apparel purchase intentions by Zhao et al. (2019). A total of 238 survey responses were collected and analyzed from a Chinese research firm. Following the study objectives, an exploratory factor analysis was first conducted, and then a two-step analysis of a structural equation model was employed for hypothesis testing. To test the significance of hypothesized mediated effects, a bootstrap procedure with 2,000 bootstrap samples from the original data was used to compute bias-corrected 95% CI for indirect effects. Moreover, hierarchical regressions were demonstrated to verify the unique contribution of social media influence. The results of the analysis revealed that Chinese consumers' engagement with social media and their peers were important social influences that were directly tied to increasing sustainable apparel purchase intentions.

Majeed et al. (2019) did a study on the influence of social media on purchase intention and the mediating role of brand equity. The study focused on Ghana's fashion industry. The study was quantitative and employed the survey methodology to sample the views of 500 fashion customers. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique were used using AMOS software version 22.0 to determine the hypothesized relationships of the study. The study findings revealed that surveillance, information sharing, and remuneration had significant and positive effects on brand equity.

## **5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study adopted descriptive survey design which is a quantitative method primarily used to gather data that describe characteristics of a population. It involves the use of structured questionnaires or interviews to collect information from a sample, which can then be generalized to a larger population (Creswell, 2020; Fowler, 2021). This design is particularly useful for understanding trends, attitudes, or behaviors within populations (Grewal & Kaur, 2022).

### **Target Population**

The study targeted 27540 students from 7 tertiary institutions in Kericho County as shown in Table 1. These students form a representative demographic of young adults in tertiary education who are in a critical stage of identity formation, peer interaction, and self-expression factors that significantly influence clothing choices. These institutions offer diverse academic programs and attract students from various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, making them an ideal setting to explore factors that shape students' clothing preferences. Since these institutions are government-recognized, their student populations are systematically organized, making sampling and data collection more efficient and reliable.

**Table 1: Target population**

<b>TTI</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Kericho Township	2517	9.1
Belgut	1482	5.4
Bureti	9846	35.7
Kimasian	883	3.2
Kipsinende	852	3.1
Kenya Forestry College	2463	8.9
Kabianga University	9497	34.5
Total	27540	100.0

### **Sample Size and Sampling Procedure**

Multistage sampling technique was used. First the researcher will obtain the list of all the tertiary institutions in Kericho County and their enrolment from the Commission for University Education (CUE) and Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS). From this, the researcher calculated the sample size. All the public tertiary institutions were included in the sampling frame since they generally have larger and more diverse student populations compared to private institutions. This diversity in terms of socioeconomic background, culture, and geographical origin provides a richer basis for examining different factors that

influence clothing choices. Proportionate sampling was used to allocate the number of students per tertiary institution since the enrolment was varied. At the tertiary institution, stratified sampling was used. The years 1,2,3 formed the strata. Thereafter, systematic random sampling was used to get the participants based on the year of study.

Sampled respondents was obtained using Yamane's (1967) formula.

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

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Sum of population figure of 27540

e = Maximum limit of tolerable error (0.05)

Hence, n = 27540

$$1 + (27540 \times 0.0025) = 395 \text{ respondents}$$

**Table 2: Sample size**

TTI	Population	Sample			Total
		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
Kericho Township	2517	12	12	12	36
Belgut	1482	7	7	7	21
Bureti	9846	47	47	47	141
Kimasian	883	4	4	5	13
Kipsinende	852	4	4	4	12
Kenya Forestry College	2463	11	12	12	35
Kabianga University	9497	45	45	46	136
Total	27540	129	129	132	395

**Research Instruments**

Data collection was done using questionnaires. Questionnaires serve as instruments for methodically gathering information from respondents through a set of questions designed to extract relevant details aligned with the research aims (Creswell, 2020). These tools are crafted to elicit comprehensive responses that correspond with the study's objectives, thereby ensuring that the information collected is pertinent and valuable for subsequent analysis. Questionnaires were both open-and-closed-ended and therefore both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis was done with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. After collecting the qualitative data, the researcher conducted a thematic analysis to identify and interpret patterns of meaning within the participants' responses. The process began with familiarization, during which the researcher read and re-read the transcripts to gain an in-depth understanding of the data. Key ideas and meaningful segments were then systematically coded. Related codes were grouped together to form potential themes, which were subsequently reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the data. Each theme was clearly defined, named, and supported with direct quotations from participants.

After collecting the quantitative data, the researcher conducted a statistical analysis to summarize, interpret, and draw conclusions from the data. The process began with data cleaning, which involved checking for missing values, outliers, and data entry errors to ensure accuracy. The cleaned data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, to summarize key variables and provide an overview of the dataset. The study conducted both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics involved the generation of summary statistics such as frequencies and

percentages, means and standard deviations. Inferential statistics involved correlation analysis which assesses the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. It provides a numerical measure called the correlation coefficient, which ranges from -1 to +1. A correlation coefficient of +1 indicates a perfect positive correlation, where as one variable increases, the other also increases. A coefficient of -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation, where as one variable increases, the other decreases. A coefficient of 0 indicates no linear relationship between the variables. Results were presented using graphs and tables.

**6. RESULTS AND DSCUSSION**

**Descriptive Statistics for Media**

The study determined the effect of media on clothing choices among students in tertiary institutions in Kericho County, Kenya. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent media affected clothing choices among students in tertiary institutions in Kericho County, Kenya and the results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Effect of Media on Clothing Choices**

Statements	TT1		
		Means	Standard deviations
Fashion magazines and newspapers have influence your clothing choices	Kericho Township	3.44	1.01
	Belgut	3.63	1.02
	Bureti	3.92	0.98
	Kimasian	3.30	0.67
	Kipsinende	4.00	0.50
	Kenya Forestry College	4.00	0.83
	Kabianga University	3.97	1.06
<b>Overall mean</b>		<b>3.75</b>	<b>0.87</b>
Advertisements in print media shape your perceptions of trendy clothing among your peers	Kericho Township	3.37	1.08
	Belgut	3.81	0.91
	Bureti	3.94	0.96
	Kimasian	3.70	0.95
	Kipsinende	4.11	0.60
	Kenya Forestry College	3.89	1.05
	Kabianga University	4.01	0.96
<b>Overall mean</b>		<b>3.98</b>	<b>0.94</b>
Fashion-related programs on the median affect your clothing preferences as a student	Kericho Township	3.41	1.01
	Belgut	4.19	0.83
	Bureti	4.19	0.90
	Kimasian	3.90	0.99
	Kipsinende	4.33	1.00
	Kenya Forestry College	4.00	1.00
	Kabianga University	4.17	0.91
<b>Overall mean</b>		<b>4.03</b>	<b>0.95</b>
The portrayal of clothing styles on local or national TV influences what you and your friends	Kericho Township	3.48	1.01
	Belgut	4.13	1.02
	Bureti	4.07	0.88

choose to wear	Kimasian	3.80	1.14
	Kipsinende	4.33	1.00
	Kenya Forestry College	3.89	0.93
	Kabianga University	4.02	0.88
<b>Overall mean</b>		<b>3.96</b>	<b>0.98</b>
Social media platforms (like Instagram or TikTok) have significantly impacted your clothing decisions	Kericho Township	4.00	1.04
	Belgut	4.88	0.50
	Bureti	4.08	1.08
	Kimasian	5.00	0.00
	Kipsinende	4.44	0.73
	Kenya Forestry College	3.93	1.21
	Kabianga University	3.84	1.05
<b>Overall mean</b>		<b>4.32</b>	<b>0.94</b>
Influencers on social media shape your views on what constitutes fashionable attire for students	Kericho Township	3.63	1.04
	Belgut	4.31	0.70
	Bureti	3.96	0.93
	Kimasian	4.80	0.63
	Kipsinende	3.78	0.44
	Kenya Forestry College	3.93	1.11
	Kabianga University	3.95	0.91
<b>Overall mean</b>		<b>4.06</b>	<b>0.81</b>
<b>Overall total mean</b>		<b>3.98</b>	<b>0.97</b>

SD-1-1.49, D-1.50-2.49, N-2.50-3.49, A-3.50-4.49, SA-4.50-5.00

The findings in Table 3 indicate that media significantly influences students' clothing choices, as reflected by the overall mean of 3.98 (SD = 0.97), showing general agreement among respondents. Among the different media forms, social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have the strongest impact on clothing decisions (M = 4.32), highlighting their dominant role in shaping fashion preferences. Similarly, influencers on social media also strongly shape students' views on fashionable attire (M = 4.06), suggesting that students look up to online personalities for style inspiration. Fashion-related programs on media (M = 4.03) and the portrayal of clothing styles on television (M = 3.96) further demonstrate that visual media plays a key role in influencing clothing preferences. Advertisements in print media also have a notable effect (M = 3.98), indicating that promotional content contributes to perceptions of trendy clothing among peers. However, fashion magazines and newspapers have the least influence (M = 3.75), suggesting that traditional print media is becoming less impactful. The results show that while all forms of media influence clothing choices, digital and visual media are the most powerful drivers of students' fashion decisions.

The findings further indicate that media exerts varying levels of influence on students' clothing choices across different TTIs, with an overall mean of 3.98 (SD = 0.97), suggesting a generally high agreement. Across all TTIs, social media platforms consistently record the strongest influence, particularly in Kimasian (M = 5.00) and Belgut (M = 4.88), showing that students in these areas are highly affected by platforms such as Instagram and TikTok when making clothing decisions. Similarly, influencers on social media show high influence across TTIs such as Kimasian (M = 4.80) and Belgut (M = 4.31), reinforcing the role of online personalities in shaping fashion perceptions. Television and fashion-related programs also demonstrate strong influence, especially in Kipsinende (M = 4.33) and Belgut/Bureti (M = 4.19), indicating that visual broadcast media remains relevant across most TTIs. In contrast, print media such as fashion magazines and newspapers show relatively lower

influence across TTIs, with the lowest in Kimasian (M = 3.30), suggesting reduced reliance on traditional media sources among students in different regions. However, advertisements in print media still maintain moderate to high influence across TTIs, particularly in Kipsinende (M = 4.11) and Kabianga University (M = 4.01), indicating that promotional content remains persuasive. The pattern across TTIs confirms that while media influence is widespread, digital platforms especially social media dominate students' clothing choices more than traditional media forms.

The overall mean score of 3.98 (SD = 0.97) indicates that students agreed that media affected clothing choices among students in tertiary institutions in Kericho County, Kenya. The overall mean score of 3.98 demonstrates that students generally agree that media significantly influences their clothing choices, highlighting the central role of media exposure in shaping fashion behavior. This aligns with contemporary research showing that media—particularly digital and social media—serves as a major source of fashion information, influencing how individuals perceive trends, style, and identity (Muturi, 2024). Studies have found that increased exposure to media content enhances fashion consciousness and drives adoption of trending styles among young consumers (Isah et al., 2023). Additionally, media platforms contribute to the socialization process, where individuals learn acceptable fashion norms and behaviors through observation and interaction. Conversely, some scholars argue that media influence is not uniform and may be moderated by personal factors such as income, culture, and individual preferences. For instance, research indicates that while media exposure is high, not all individuals adopt trends equally due to financial limitations or personal identity considerations (Chabala et al., 2024). This suggests that media influence, though significant, operates alongside other contextual factors that shape clothing choices.

**Descriptive Statistics for Clothing Choices**

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent they agreed with the statements regarding the clothing choices among students in tertiary institutions in Kericho County, Kenya and the results are in Table 4.

**Table 4: Clothing Choices**

Statements	TT1	Means	Standard deviations
You choose clothing that provides protection from the weather (e.g., sun, rain, cold) while attending classes or social events	Kericho Township	3.11	1.01
	Belgut	4.31	0.87
	Bureti	4.15	0.94
	Kimasian	3.60	1.17
	Kipsinende	4.33	0.71
	Kenya Forestry College	3.85	0.91
	Kabianga University	4.26	0.92
<b>Overall mean</b>		<b>4.06</b>	<b>0.99</b>
You consider safety aspects, such as the appropriateness of clothing for specific environments (e.g., campus activities or nightlife), when making your clothing choices	Kericho Township	3.07	0.73
	Belgut	4.50	0.73
	Bureti	4.29	0.88
	Kimasian	3.80	1.14
	Kipsinende	4.22	0.83
	Kenya Forestry College	4.15	0.66
	Kabianga University	4.42	0.91
<b>Overall mean</b>		<b>4.20</b>	<b>0.94</b>
Cultural or religious beliefs influence your clothing choices in terms of modesty while	Kericho Township	3.07	0.87
	Belgut	4.44	0.73
	Bureti	4.24	0.81

attending your institution to a great extent	Kimasian	4.10	0.57
	Kipsinende	3.78	0.97
	Kenya Forestry College	4.26	0.59
	Kabianga University	4.24	0.92
<b>Overall mean</b>		<b>4.13</b>	<b>0.90</b>
You feel pressured greatly to dress modestly in order to fit in with the values of your peers or the local community	Kericho Township	3.07	0.83
	Belgut	4.44	1.09
	Bureti	4.36	0.86
	Kimasian	3.90	1.29
	Kipsinende	4.33	0.71
	Kenya Forestry College	4.11	0.75
	Kabianga University	4.38	0.99
<b>Overall mean</b>		<b>4.21</b>	<b>0.99</b>
Adornment (such as accessories or embellishments) have an important role in your clothing choices when expressing your personal style	Kericho Township	3.07	0.87
	Belgut	3.88	0.89
	Bureti	3.92	0.90
	Kimasian	3.70	0.95
	Kipsinende	4.11	0.78
	Kenya Forestry College	3.81	0.83
	Kabianga University	3.96	1.02
<b>Overall mean</b>		<b>3.84</b>	<b>0.96</b>
You believe that your clothing serves as a form of adornment that reflects your personality and individuality among your peers	Kericho Township	3.19	0.74
	Belgut	4.63	0.81
	Bureti	4.39	0.76
	Kimasian	4.00	0.94
	Kipsinende	4.22	0.44
	Kenya Forestry College	4.33	0.55
	Kabianga University	4.38	0.92
<b>Overall mean</b>		<b>4.26</b>	<b>0.87</b>
<b>Overall total mean</b>		<b>4.12</b>	<b>0.94</b>

The findings in Table 4 indicate that clothing choices among students are strongly influenced by functional, social, and personal expression factors, as reflected by the overall mean of 4.12 (SD = 0.94), suggesting general agreement. Students highly agree that clothing reflects their personality and individuality (M = 4.26), making this the most influential factor, followed by feeling pressured to dress modestly to fit community or peer values (M = 4.21) and considering safety aspects when choosing clothing (M = 4.20). Cultural or religious beliefs also play a significant role in influencing clothing choices (M = 4.13), indicating the importance of societal norms. Additionally, choosing clothing for protection against weather conditions (M = 4.06) shows that practicality is also a key consideration. However, adornment through accessories has a relatively lower influence (M = 3.84), suggesting that while personal style matters, it is less significant compared to functionality, modesty, and identity. The results demonstrate that students' clothing choices are shaped by a combination of self-expression, environmental factors, and social expectations.

Across the TTIs, the influence of these factors varies but remains generally strong. Kabianga University, Bureti, and Belgut consistently record higher mean scores (mostly above 4.20), indicating that students in these institutions place greater emphasis on identity, modesty, safety, and environmental considerations when choosing clothing. Kipsinende and Kenya Forestry College also show relatively high means, reflecting a moderate to strong influence of these factors. In contrast, Kericho Township records the lowest mean scores (around 3.07–3.19), suggesting a comparatively lower influence, though still within the range of agreement. Kimasian falls in the moderate range, indicating balanced responses across the statements. Overall, despite slight variations, the pattern across TTIs shows that clothing choices are consistently influenced by a mix of personal, cultural, and practical factors among students in all the studied institutions.

**Correlation Analysis**

Correlation analysis to assess the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the variables was conducted and the results are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Correlation Analysis**

		Clothing choices	Media
Clothing choices	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Media	Pearson Correlation	.627**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	295	295

The correlation results indicate strong positive relationship between clothing choices and media among students in tertiary institutions in Kericho County. Clothing choices are significantly associated with media influence ( $r = 0.627, p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that exposure to social and traditional media substantially shapes students’ clothing decisions. The strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.627$ ) between media influence and clothing choices indicates that increased exposure to media is associated with a higher likelihood of adopting certain fashion styles. This finding is supported by empirical research demonstrating that media exposure—especially through social media platforms—directly affects consumer behavior by shaping attitudes, preferences, and purchase intentions (Handranata & Kalila, 2025). Media not only introduces new trends but also reinforces them through influencers, advertisements, and peer sharing, thereby increasing conformity to popular styles. However, contradictory evidence suggests that correlation does not necessarily imply causation, as other factors such as peer influence and socioeconomic status may also play a significant role in shaping clothing choices. Some studies argue that while media exposure is influential, its effect is often mediated by social interactions and personal interpretation of trends (Corallo et al., 2024). Therefore, although media has a statistically significant relationship with clothing choices, it operates within a broader network of influencing factors.

**7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study concludes that media has a significant and positive influence on clothing choices among students in tertiary institutions in Kericho County. The moderate to strong correlation ( $r = 0.627, p < 0.01$ ) indicates that increased exposure to both traditional and digital media is associated with greater adoption of fashion trends. While television and print media still play a role, digital platforms appear to be more influential due to their interactivity and accessibility. However, the findings also suggest that media influence is not absolute, as it is moderated by personal preferences and economic background. Overall, media remains a key driver of fashion awareness and behavioral change among students.

The study recommends that stakeholders in the fashion and education sectors leverage media platforms to promote positive and responsible fashion consumption among students. Institutions can collaborate with media outlets to create awareness about sustainable fashion and encourage critical evaluation of trends. Additionally, students should be sensitized to become more conscious consumers by evaluating media content

rather than adopting trends blindly. Policymakers and educators should also integrate media literacy programs into curricula to help students understand the influence of media on their decisions. This will ensure that media serves as a constructive rather than purely persuasive force in shaping clothing choices.

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