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Client Deadline Approach in the Clothing and Textiles Industries in Ghana: A Study of Kumasi Metropolis

Thomas Obeng Asare

Senior Lecturer, Kumasi Technical University, Ghana

Ezekiel Narh-Korley

Lecturer, Kumasi Technical University, Ghana

Robert Ahiabor

Lecturer, Department of Fashion Design and Modelling, Wa Polytechnic, Wa

Abstract:

The client's satisfaction has been on the forefront when managers of companies are assessing customer satisfaction in any organization. Failure to listen and act appropriately to the complaint of the customer often causes anger and frustration with eventual withdrawal of the customers. Provision of excellent customer service is the best strategy for companies to sustain the confidence of the customer. The purpose of this study was to investigate how clients' deadline could be met in the clothing and textile industry with case study of Kumasi Metropolis. The researchers purposively obtained a sample size of 100 clothing and textiles workers from various fashion firms in the Metropolis. Questionnaires and structured interviews were employed to gather data for the study. The study showed that fashion firms mostly met the deadlines of clients with few firms having difficulties dealing with client deadlines. Clients' loyalty was also high with firms enjoying higher returns since they satisfied clients' needs and expectations. Various causes of delays in meeting clients' deadlines were revealed with poor designs and specifications ranking the most predominant. The researchers recommend that the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations should organise regular training workshop on efficient clothing production for clothing workers to satisfy deadlines of clients. In addition, the Government and Stakeholders should assist the clothing and textiles firms to expand their business to enable them employ more workers that could help them meet client deadlines.

Keywords: Client, deadline approach, Ghana, clothing and textiles, Kumasi metropolis

1. Introduction

The fashion industry is one of the most important sectors of the global economy that creates jobs and clothes for people all over the world (Morris and Einhorn, 2008). About 60 million to 75 million people are employed in the textile, clothing and footwear sector worldwide in over 100 countries (Morris and Einhorn, 2008; Stotz and Kane, 2015). The reality of this industry is that many individual producers in the developing countries work long hours under strenuous conditions for pennies on the money charged, far less than a living wage (Jana, 2008). A major concern among garment workers are long working hours and forced overtime. Employees normally have to work between 10 to 12 hours, sometimes 16 to 18 hours a day (Enslin-Payne, 2011). Ghanaian fashion workers frequently work a seven-day per week in peak seasons and sometimes they sit working non-stop for 13 to 14 hours a day (Adjei, 2004). When a factory faces order deadlines, working hours get longer. They sew until their arms feel sore and stiff. Unlike Africa, in developed countries such as China, garment employees sometimes have to work a day shift and a night shift. Overtime is usually obligatory and if workers cannot work the additional hours, they face penalties, verbal abuse and or dismissals (Pyun, 2006).

These conditions adversely affect the employees' health and safety coupled with the stress in trying to meet deadlines of clients (Gibbon, 2004). Eye strain, exhaustion and debilitating overuse injuries occur because of poor ergonomics, long hours and constant pressure to meet production workload (Gibbon, 2004). Getting the job done remains high on the books of employers in every sector of work particularly the clothing and textiles industry (Dugger, 2010). Yin (2004) notes that over 100,000 pieces of cloth were sewed on the Chinese New Year of 2004 with subsequent rise in revenue generated by fashion firms. However, most of these cloths were not delivered on time because of stress on the employees. In developing countries including Ghana, fashion jobs are held in high esteem mostly during festivities such as Christmas, Eid ul- Adha, Easter and others. Employees are mostly called upon during these peak periods to deliver as early as they could (Adjei, 2004). Failure to deliver leads to loss of revenue, and consequently leaving bad image on the part of the clothing and textile firm.

Chen (2011) however opined that dealing with efficient delivery of goods especially in the fashion industry coupled with meeting client deadlines has become such an important issue over the last decade with particular emphasis on developing countries, Ghana not exception. Chen (2011) underlined issues such as non-payment of services rendered, inadequate cloth size, change of designs or styles and employee inefficient attitude and stress which are very common in Ghanaian settings. The client's satisfaction has always been on the forefront when managers of companies are measuring or assessing customer satisfaction in any organization (Crotty, 2012). Richard Whiteley (1991) emphasized in his study "The Customer Driven Company," on the theme "saturation with the voice of the customer" as the key to ensuring excellent customer service and consequently a successful and profitable business. Failure to listen and respond to the voice of the customer often causes stress, anger and frustration for millions of customers and the ultimate failure of those businesses that are not intimately connected with their customers. Today, providing excellent customer service is the best strategy for any company. In the current economic environment, hundreds of businesses are collapsing, downsizing, or restructuring every day. Granted, businesses fail for a variety of reasons, but those companies that do not provide excellent customer service are among the first to go (Richard, 1991).

Few studies have been done on the issue of client's needs especially deadline and time is found to be irreplaceable resource and when misused goes a long way to affect productivity (Theodore, 2009) believes that most fashion and textiles firms are not mindful of time. The researchers' observations found that most fashion firms in the country fail to deliver on time. Moreover, these firms aside from being under-resourced with basic production equipment hired less qualified personnel in their production causing complains from clients on poor service delivery and inability. Consequently, clients remained stuck to ready-made and second-hand clothing, which compensate for the inadequacies of the clothing and textile firms. The researcher identified this as a major problem especially at a point when there has been a major decline in the performances of the textile industry to the economy of Ghana. The purpose of the study was to assess clients' satisfaction of fashion and textile firms in meeting deadlines and the causes of the delay in work delivery on the part of the fashion and textile firms.

1.1. Research Questions

The central question that will be addressed in this research is "What challenges do fashion and textile firms face in meeting client's deadlines?"

- The study sought to address three specific questions
- To what extent are clients satisfied with fashion firms in meeting deadlines?
- What challenges do fashion and textile firms face in meeting client deadlines?
- What solutions could be offered to curtail fashion firms' inability to meet clients' deadlines?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Customer Satisfaction in the Fashion and Textiles Industry

Overall customer satisfaction should be a more fundamental indicator of the firm's performance due to its links to behavioural and economic consequences beneficial to the firm (Anderson et al. 1994). A variety of studies finds that higher levels of customer satisfaction lead to greater customer loyalty (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Bearden and Teel, 1983). Through increasing loyalty, it is argued, customer satisfaction helps to secure future revenues (Fornell 1992; Rust et al. 1994/1995), reduce costs of future transactions (Reichheld and Sasser 1990), decrease price elasticities (Anderson, 1996), and minimize the likelihood customers will defect if quality falters (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993). Internally, improving quality and customer satisfaction reduces costs associated with defective goods and services, such as warranty costs, field service, reworking/replacing defective goods, and handling/managing complaints (Garvin, 1988, Gilly and Gelb, 1982). Word-of-mouth from satisfied customers lowers the cost of attracting new customers and enhances the firm's overall reputation, while that of dissatisfied customers naturally has the opposite effect (Anderson, 1994; Fornell, 1992). Finally, empirical work suggests that firm providing superior quality enjoy higher economic returns (Aaker and Jacobson, 1994; Anderson et al., 1994).

For virtually all firms, the means of generating consistent profits comes by having customers who not only initially buy, but also consistently re-buy. Repeat customers are fundamental to the end-goal of every business, i.e. to make a positive, sustainable financial return. As a result, the measurement of customer satisfaction and repurchase intention has become critical to managers and researchers (Lusk, McLaughlin, and Jaeger, 2007). Both measures have traditionally been used to understand and predict how a customer will behave in the future. Satisfaction, however, is a retrospective metric (Zeithaml, 2006), whereas repurchase intention focuses on future consumption behaviour.

There is a great deal of research that links customer satisfaction and repurchase intention to outcome variables such as customer retention (Mittal and Kamakura 2001), reduced customer defections (Anderson, 1994), share-of wallet (Cool, Keiningham, Aksoy and Hsu, 2006), receptiveness to cross selling efforts, reduced complaint rates and word-of-mouth. For company executives, however, establishing the subsequent effects of these variables on metrics such as profit, share price, firm value, etc., is the most important demonstration of the positive link between customer satisfactions, repurchase intention and firm financial performance. Customer value is a strategic weapon in attracting and retaining customers and has become one of the most significant factors in the success of both manufacturing businesses and service providers (Zeithaml, 2006; Woodruff,

1997). Past research suggests that brand personality boosts consumer preference (Zhang, 2007) and has a positive relationship with levels of consumer trust and loyalty (Wysong, Munch, & Kleiser, 2004). Furthermore, customer perceived value provides marketers a clue on how to better satisfy the needs of their targeted customers (Yurong, et al 2002). Moreover, perceived performance serve as an important antecedent of value and either directly or indirectly drives repurchase intention (Olorunniwo & Hsu, 2006).

2.2. Productivity and Customer Satisfaction

The purpose of measuring firm-level productivity is to evaluate the efficiency with which inputs are transformed into outputs (goods and services). The most common type of productivity measure is the simple, or single factor, ratio of output to a specific type of input, such as sales per employee. There is also a rich literature addressing the issue of how to measure productivity as a ratio of output to all types of inputs- labour, capital, materials-known as total factor productivity (Solow 1957; Griliches and Jorgenson, 1967). As the present study is concerned with the type of performance measures used by managers, we focused on the most common "single factor ratio," labour productivity calculated as the firm's total sales divided by the number of employees.'

Classical economics discusses productivity improvements in terms of capital and labour (Smith, 2006), where increases in productivity are generally considered the major source of economic growth. Common types of investments that increase productivity include substituting capital for labour automation of processes, improvements in existing technology or developing new training programs for employees. Productivity may also depend on numerous factors, such as the quality of resource allocation. Rather than increasing current levels of investment in capital or labour, reallocation of resources can increase productivity via changes in strategy, processes, and/ or organizational structure and values.

Moreover, there is considerable disagreement concerning the nature of the relationship between productivity and customer satisfaction (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990). The firm that achieves superior levels of customer satisfaction needs to devote fewer resources to handling returns, rework, warranties, and complaint management, thus lowering costs and improving productivity (Juran, 1988). In a services context, Reichheld and Sasser (1990) argue that reducing defects leads to greater loyalty and increased loyalty leads, in turn, to greater productivity via lower costs of making future transactions, favourable word-of-mouth, and perhaps a price premium. However, there is equally compelling logic which suggest that the pursuit of customer satisfaction increases costs and thereby reduces productivity. For example, in economics, the relationship between productivity and customer satisfaction is generally viewed as negative. Customer satisfaction-utility-is modelled as a function of product attributes. Increasing the level of utility-improving raw materials, adding features or service personnel requires increasing the level of product attributes and, therefore, costs (Griliches 1997). Moreover, it is common to expect diminishing returns to such efforts.

Finally, empirical analysis based on the PIMS database fails to find support for either a positive or negative relationship between quality-as perceived by the firm's managers and costs (Jacobson and Aaker 1987; Phillips et al., 1983). It may however be argued that the nature of this relationship depends on the type of quality under investigation.

2.3. Causes of Delayed Delivery of Finished Cloths or Garments

Agaba (2009) attributes delays in fashion industry to poor designs and specifications, and problems associated with management and supervision. In their study, El-Razek *et al.* (2008) found that delayed payments, coordination difficulty, and poor communication were important causes of delay in textile firms in Indonesia.

Sambasivan and Soon (2007) established poor planning, inadequate supervisory skills of supervisors, delayed payments, material shortage, and rework or redesign, were the most important causes of delays in the Malaysian Textile industry. Kouskili and Kartan (2004) identified the main factors affecting the textile and garment industries on cost and time overrun as inadequate/inefficient equipment during peak periods; examples festivals and occasion's energy crises and unreliable sources of materials.

Le-Hoai *et al.*, (2008) ranked the three top causes of cost overruns in India as material cost increase due to inflation, inaccurate quantity take - off, and labour cost increase due to restrictions from the client on designing a particular cloth. Bubshait and Al-Juwait (2002) list the following as factors that cause delay in Saudi Arabian fashion industry: number of cloths being sewed at the same time, lack of productivity standards in Saudi Arabia, level of competitors, and client manipulation. It can therefore be concluded that delays in the fashion and textile industry vary from country to country.

However, fashion designers improper planning also leads to delay in the fashion industry. Fashion designers often fail to come out with a practical and workable "work program" at the initial planning stage of sewing cloths especially those that are sewed in bulk for schools, hospitals and other organisations. This failure is interrelated with lack of proper specification from clients and inadequate experience on the part of fashion designers towards sewing of particular cloths (Le-Hoai *et al.*, 2008). Supervisors of fashion and textile firms only check and review the work design submitted by the clients based on experience and intuitive judgment. Improper planning at the initial stages of a fashion project manifests throughout the project process and causes delays at various stages. Only a sewing project that is well planned that can be well executed (Le-Hoai *et al.*, 2008).

Kouskili and Kartan, (2004), held the view that inadequate fashion designer experience causes delay in most fashion and textile firms in the world. A fashion designer with inadequate experience cannot plan and manage the projects properly

and this can lead to disastrous consequences (Theodore, 2009). Client's finance and payment for completed cloths or designs can cause delays in the fashion industry as well. Fashion designing particularly those done in bulk involve huge amounts of money and most of the fashion and textile industries find it very difficult to bear the heavy daily expenses when the payments are delayed. Work progress can be delayed due to the late payments from the clients because there is inadequate cash flow to support expenses especially for those fashion and textile firms that are not financially sound (Kaliba *et al.*, 2009).

Problems with intermediaries and other experts in the fashion and textile field also can delay in meeting timelines in the fashion industry. Typically, in huge projects, there are many experts working under the main fashion firm to do other things such as neatening and other sophisticated designs. If the expert is capable, the project can be completed on time as planned. Deadlines can be delayed if the fashion expert delays because of inadequate experience or capability (Majid, 2006). Shortages in basic materials like buttons, needles, sewing machines etc. can cause major delays in the fashion industry. However, some lackadaisical attitude on the part of some fashion designers in the country could be the major cause of the problem of meeting client deadlines in the country. Some fashion designers postpone the delivery of completed cloths to clients so it were underline their relevance in the communities in which they operate. Agaba (2002) posited that this in some situations lead to clients paying additional monies to the fee charged by the fashion designer. One problem that has been identified as the major cause of delays in meeting client deadlines is communication. Since there are two parties involved in the execution of a sewing project (client and fashion designer), the communication between the parties is very crucial for the success of the project and subsequently meeting deadlines. Proper communication channels between the various parties must be established during the planning stage. Any problem with communication can lead to severe misunderstanding and therefore, delays in the execution of the project (Agaba 2002).

Moreover, delays in meeting deadlines have in many cases given rises to intense arguments between the client and the fashion designer.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The researchers adopted qualitative and quantitative strategy for this study. Mixed method researches an approach to inquiry that associates both qualitative and quantitative forms. It involves philosophical assumptions, hence the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches in the study. The mixed approach involves more than simply collecting and analysing both kinds of data; it engages the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of the study can be greater than either qualitative or quantitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The researchers' choice of the mixed method stems from the fact that they wanted to explain and interpret concepts covered in the study.

3.2. Sample

The population for this study consisted of employees of various fashion and textile firms in the Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana. The sample size used for this study was 100 workers of various fashion and textile firms in the Kumasi Metropolis as well as 300 consumers of fashion products other than designers. The researchers used the snowball technique to locate 50 fashion and textile firms in the Metropolis. The same snowball technique was used to select 300 people who patronize local fashion products. Each fashion and textile firm had an average of seven (7) employees. By the use of random sampling technique, the researchers selected two (2) workers each from the firms. The random sampling technique ensured that each employee had equal chance of being selected.

3.3. Instruments

In order to obtain the required information, interviews, observations and questionnaires were the instruments used in collecting data from the intended population. A set of close-ended form of questionnaire consisting of 23 items each was administered to the respondents. The questionnaire ranked alternatives based on how one feels about the issue and checked it against the suggested responses. The questionnaire items were divided into five main headings and were administered after seeking permission from the shop owners. A structured interview, which lasted for about 30 minutes, was used to gather information from the master designers. With the permission of the participants, the interviews were audiotaped. A non-participant observation was made on the participants on three (3) occasions to enable the researchers observe the atmosphere at the industry with regard to meeting customer deadline.

3.4. Data Analysis

The field data were collated and sifted so the open-ended questions were coded. After editing and coding, the data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software based on descriptive statistics involving mainly frequency distributions and cross tabulations. Before performing the desired data transformation, the data were cleaned by running consistency checks on every variable. While content analytic technique was used to analyse the qualitative data collected through the structured interviews. Below are the findings of the study.

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the data analysis and discusses the results obtained using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The statistical tool employed for the analysis was descriptive statistics with mean and standard deviation.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	328	41
Female	236	59
Total	400	100
Age Group		
21-30	180	45
31-40	152	38
41 and above	68	17
Total	400	100

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents
Source: Field Data, 2017

From Table 1, 236 respondents representing 59% were females with the remaining 146 respondents representing 41% being males. The researchers noted that most workers in the fashion and textiles firms are female based on the assertion that fashion has been stereotyped to be an occupation for women (Global Fashion Industry Statistic). Moreover, 180 respondents representing 45% were between the ages of 21-30; 152 respondents representing 38% were between the ages of 31-40 with the remaining 68 respondents representing 17% being in the 41 and above age range. Concerning number of years spent in their respective fashion firms, 18% had been in their firms for 1 to 5 years and 63% had spent 6-10 with the remaining 19% spending more than 11 years. This indicates a high level of experience among the employees used for the study.

4.2. Level of Education of Respondents

Figure 1 sought to find out the educational level of respondents. 60.4% of the respondents possessed Second cycle level certificates. Ten percent (10%) had completed tertiary education while the remaining 29.6% had Basic education certificates or no formal education. This implies that majority of the respondents were second cycle graduates who have taken up clothing production as a source of their livelihood.

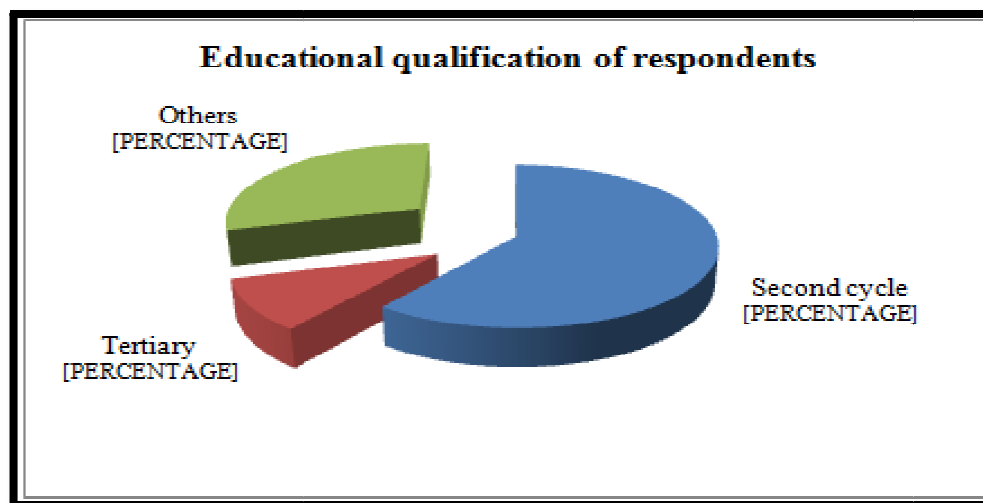


Figure 1: Educational Level of Respondents
Source: Field Data, 2017

4.3. Assessment of Client Satisfaction on Deadlines

Statement	Responses		N (%)
	SA & A (%)	SD & D (%)	
In general, designer are unable to meet clients' deadlines at all seasons	22%	66%	12.0%
I mostly meet the deadlines of my clients.	49%	51%	0
My clients remain satisfied with my delivery times of finished cloths or garments.	56.7%	40.0%	3.3%
My clients' expectations on the quality of garments are mostly met.	62.0%	38.0%	0
I am quite satisfied with the delivery times of fashion designers	60.0%	22.0%	12.0%
My clients remain loyal because I meet their deadlines	54.0%	29.0%	17.0%
I enjoy higher economic status because I meet my clients' needs and expectations.	51%	38%	11.0%
Keeping to client's deadline is a strategic means of increasing revenue.	80.0%	13.0%	7.0%

Table 1: Client Satisfaction on Deadlines

Source: Field Data, 2017

N= (48 Employees) Scale: SA=Strongly Agree, A= Agree, N= Neutral, D= Disagree

SD = Strongly Disagree

Table 2 shows the general assessment of client satisfaction on deadlines as expressed by employees of various fashion and textile firms. The table shows that 66% of the participants disagree or strongly disagree to the notion that fashion designers are unable to meet client's deadline at all seasons, only 22% agree or strongly agree and 12% remained neutral. This suggests that clothing consumers are confident in fashion designers in times of peak seasons such as wedding, and other celebrations.

From the table, 71% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they mostly meet the deadlines of clients with the remaining 29% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing. Moreover, 51% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed to the fact that they had difficulties meeting the deadlines of clients during festive seasons with 49% of respondents strongly agree or agree to this assertion. With respect to client satisfaction on deadlines, 56.7% strongly agreed or agreed that clients were satisfied with delivery times whereas 40% strongly disagreed or disagreed. Only 3.3% of respondents remain neutral. More than half of respondents (62%) strongly agreed or agreed that clients' expectations on the quality of garments were mostly met whilst 38% strongly disagreed or disagreed to this assertion. Sixty per cent (60%) strongly agree or agree that they are quite satisfied with the delivery times of fashion designers, 22% strongly disagree or disagree and 12% remained neutral to the statement. Consequently, 54% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that their clients remained loyal since they met their deadlines; 29% strongly disagreed or disagreed whereas the remaining 17% remained neutral. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the respondents believed they experienced higher economic gains because the met clients' needs and expectations; 38% strongly disagreed or disagreed whilst the remaining 11% remained neutral.

With respect to reviewed literature, Otieno et. al., (2005) stated that the most significant factors that have both negative and positive effects on customer satisfaction in the textile industry are fashion, fit of the garment, and retail environment. The respondents' response revealed that even though fashion firms might strive to add colours, style and advertisement to marketing their products, the basics rely on satisfying the need of the clients, which includes meeting deadlines. This according to Anderson and Sullivan (1993) leads to higher levels of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. As Anderson (1994) and Fornell (1992) put it, word-of-mouth from satisfied customers lowers the cost of attracting new customers and enhances the firm's overall reputation, while that of dissatisfied customers naturally has the opposite effect. The few clients that were interviewed supported the above findings stating that firms usually met their deadlines stating that their choice of firms usually was based on confidentiality and expertise and not necessarily on deadlines.

4.4. Causes of Delays in Client Deadlines

Causes of delays	Responses		
	Mean	SD	Rank
Poor designs and specifications	4.50	.937	1 st
Inadequate garment size	4.30	.922	2 nd
Equipment provision	3.80	.922	3 rd

	Responses		
	Mean	SD	Rank
Payment for sewn garments	3.58	.931	4 th
Poor communication between clients and fashion designer.	3.30	1.081	5 th
Inadequate supervision	2.90	.765	6 th
Inadequate discussions of deadlines with clients	2.85	.786	7 th

Table 2: Causes of Delays

Source: Field Data, 2017

N= (48 Employees) Scale: SA=Strongly Agree, A= Agree, N= Neutral, D= Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

Respondents expressed several causes of delays in meeting clients' deadlines. Table 3 indicates the causes of delays in meeting clients' deadlines. Respondents ranked poor designs and specifications as the major cause of delays in deadlines on a mean score of 4.50 and standard deviation 0.937. Inadequate garment size was ranked 2nd as the next cause of delays with mean score of 4.30 and standard deviation 0.922. On the other hand, lack of equipment provision was ranked 3rd on the list of causes with mean score of 3.80 and standard deviation 0.922. Respondents outlined the fact that clients' failure to pay for garments was a major contributor to delays in meeting clients' deadlines ranking it 4th on a mean score of 3.58 and standard deviation 0.931. Poor communication between clients and the fashion designer was ranked the 5th cause of client delays on a mean score of 3.30 and standard deviation 1.081. Inadequate supervision and inadequate discussions of deadlines with clients was ranked 6th and 7th respectively. The mean scores were 2.90 and 2.85 with standard deviations, 0.765 and 0.786.

The predominant factor 'poor designs and specifications' which are causes of delays in meeting clients' deadlines is in consonance with Agaba (2002) who in his study attributed delays in fashion industry to poor designs and specifications as well as problems associated with management and supervision. El-Razek *et al.* (2008) outlined factors such as delayed payments, coordination difficulty, and poor communication as important factors when it comes to meeting the deadlines of clients. El-Razek *et al.* (2008) view is supported by Sambasivan and Soon (2007) who established poor planning, inadequate supervisory skills of supervisors, delayed payments, material shortage, and rework or redesign, as the most important causes of delays in the textile industry. Several authors including Kouskili and Kartan (2004) and again Agaba (2002) buttress this view stating factors such as cost and time overrun as well as clients paying additional monies on fees charged as the causes of delays in meeting deadlines. Subsequently, few interviews conducted by the researchers revealed that clients singled out the issue of funds as the reason why their cloths are kept for a pretty while by fashion firms.

4.5. Meeting Client Deadlines

Statement	Responses		
	SA & A (%)	SD & D (%)	N (%)
Prioritizing on first come first serve	89%	11%	0
Dividing tasks among employees	92%	7%	1%
Adequate supervision	68%	9%	13%
Clients making materials/garments readily available	87%	13%	0
Discussing designs and specifications with clients	79%	15%	6%
Making provision for equipment	100%	0	0
Fixing prices for completed garments	100%	0	0

Table 4: Solutions to Production Delays

Source: Field Data, 2017

N= (48 Employees) Scale: SA=Strongly Agree, A= Agree, N= Neutral, D= Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

Table 4 points out that all respondents (100%) agreed or strongly agreed that fixing prices for completed garments and making provision for equipment as the main solutions to the delays in meeting clients' deadlines. Moreover, 89% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that prioritizing the first come first serve principle would help reduce delays in meeting deadlines with 11% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing to this assertion. With respect to sharing of tasks among employees, 92% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that dividing tasks among employees reduces delays in meeting clients' deadlines whereas 7% strongly disagreed or disagreed. Only 1% remained neutral. Eight-seven percent (87%) of respondents believed client making adequate provision for materials would go a long way to reduce delays; 13% strongly disagreed or disagreed. The issue of supervision was also analysed with 68% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that adequate supervision reduces delays. Nineteen percent (19%) of respondents strongly agreed or disagreed whilst the remaining 13% remained neutral on this assertion. About 2/3rd (79%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed to the fact

that discussing designs and specifications with clients would help curb delays with 15% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing. The remaining 6% remained neutral on their stance. The responses from respondents are buttressed by Assaf (2006) who stated that issues such as duration of contract, mechanism to solve disputes, mechanisms to assess the causes of delay risk management plans and monitoring are major issues that should be considered too when dealing with the issue of delays in the fashion industry. On the issue of payment, Kenley and Wilson (1989) proposed a fashion project net cash flow model to provide a measure of a project's net cash flow trend over time in order to ensure efficient cash delivery. The study however found out that aside from the above mentioned measures, division of labour, adequate garments supply and discussion of designs and specifications with clients are some of the ways to curtail delays in the fashion industry.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to investigate how clients' deadline could be met in the clothing and textile industry with Kumasi Metropolis as the case study. The study showed that fashion firms mostly met the deadlines of clients with few firms having difficulties dealing with client deadlines. Clients' loyalty was also high with firms enjoying higher returns since they satisfied clients' needs and expectations.

Various causes of delays in meeting clients' deadlines were identified: poor designs and specifications, inadequate garment size, lack of equipment provision, payments or funding, poor communication between clients and fashion designers and inadequate supervision. The study however revealed that making provision for equipment and fixing prices for completed garments were the known means of ensuring that firms met the deadlines of clients. Results also showed prioritizing on first come first serve, dividing tasks among employees and making adequate provision of garments or materials as other ways of curtailing delays in meeting clients' deadlines.

The researchers hold the view that fashion firms must prioritize meeting deadlines of clients since firm's sustenance rests solely on clients' patronage. Clients must be made to specify their own designs and must consistently revisit the firm to affirm the execution of the designs on their clothing. Moreover, prices must be fixed and must be communicated to clients during the process of production to avoid conflicts.

Relative to the findings, the following are recommended for consideration: (1) The Government through The Ministry of Trade and Industry should give tax reliefs to fashion firms to enable them purchase required machinery for large scale production within stipulated time. (2) Adequate measures should be put in place by the Ministry of Trade and Industry to advertise and market goods produced by fashion firms. (3) The Government and Stakeholders should assist the clothing and textiles firms in expansion to enable them employ more employees that could help them meet client deadlines especially in festive seasons like Christmas. (4) Fashion firms should assist clients in specifying designs and specifications to curb the issue of uncertainty in specifications in the process of production. (5) Fashion firms should make available their price tag of production to clients to enable them prepare adequately for transactions.

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