



**ASHESI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

**TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT FOR SMALL-SCALE GHANAIAN  
DRESSMAKERS: A CASE STUDY OF 3 COMPANIES IN ACCRA**

**UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**

B. Sc. Business Administration

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Thesis submitted to the Department of Business Administration, Ashesi University College in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science degree in  
Business Administration

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**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this Thesis is the result of my own research work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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**ABSTRACT**

Ghana's government places a lot of emphasis on promoting goods produced in the country as a method of moving its country towards the goal of being an industrialized economy. Efforts made to promote the use and purchase of goods produced in Ghana include the launch of the made-in-Ghana campaign and logo in 2014 by the country's Trade Ministry.

Even though the government has made several attempts to promote the use and purchase of made-in-Ghana goods, research shows that most of the goods used in Ghana are imported from other countries. In the apparel industry, most of the products are imported from countries outside the African continent. There is evidence that the reason for this phenomenon is that imported clothes come at a higher quality than clothes made in Ghana.

The aim of this research was to find out the level of knowledge about Total Quality Management among local dressmakers and to find out what accounts for the difference between the quality of clothes made in Ghana and those from other continents in order to understand fully why imported clothes are purchased in larger volumes than locally made clothes.

The findings of this research showed that local dressmakers have knowledge about some TQM concepts and some international fashion standards but had problems abiding by these standards because of lack of access to capital.

**Keywords:** Total Quality Management, Small-Scale Ghanaian Dressmakers, Quality, International Fashion Standards

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**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

TQM: Total Quality Management

ISO: International Organization for Standardization

JIT: Just-in-Time

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## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

### **Background and Introduction**

Shortly after African countries gained independence, they started to pursue import substitution industrialization as a method of gaining industrial development. Import substitution is a development model that promotes local production of goods as a way of reducing dependency on foreign goods (Neumann, 2013). Most African countries at the time were running on agrarian economies and their governments had hopes that the import substitution method would create modern, stable and industrialized economies across the continent (Quartey, 2006).

Ghana, in pursuance of this goal, set up light manufacturing industries to produce goods such as soap, aluminium, textiles, woodworks and many others. These industries blossomed until the 1980s when the nation experienced an acute shortage of foreign exchange for exporting raw materials. Most of these blooming industries died down and this led the country down the path of importing commodities essential for daily living. A new pattern had been formed. Ghana had become a nation that imported almost everything it needed for survival. In spite of this, the Ghanaian government tries its best to promote the use and purchase of goods that are made in Ghana (Quartey, 2006).

One of the ways that Ghana's government tried to carry out its import substitution agenda is through the made-in-Ghana campaign. It was launched in 2015 by the nation's Trade Ministry. The launch came along with a logo for made-in-Ghana products that made it easy to identify the goods (see Appendix for logo). The campaign was implemented by a 17-member committee made of experts and professionals who worked tirelessly with the country's Trade Ministry. The Minister of Trade at the time, Mr. Ekow Spio-Gabrah stated that the promotion of made-in-Ghana goods was being done with aim of reducing Ghana's trade imbalance (Jafaru, 2015).

Staff members of the Trade Ministry were also encouraged to wear African print clothes to work every day, instead of wearing them only on Fridays, as is the custom of some Ghanaians (Billa, 2016). Ghana's Presidents have been great supporters of the vision of import substitution and they have constantly reiterated the fact that it is extremely important that Ghanaians purchase and use made-in-Ghana goods. The current President, HE Nana Akuffo Addo, in a speech at the launch of the Kumasi Mall reassured Ghanaians that his government was going to work tirelessly to ensure that an enabling environment was created for the growth of Ghana's economy. He also stated that he hoped that the Kumasi Mall will have about 20% of its goods to be of Ghanaian origin (myjoyonline, 2017).

Research conducted by PanAvest International and Partners, a Supply Chain Professional Development Partnership showed that between the years 2014 and 2015, about 90% of the clothes worn in Africa were imported from countries like India, Bangladesh and China (Obour, 2014).

Among the reasons given for the low patronage of locally made goods is the low level of quality of goods produced on local markets. Apart from having goods that are of inferior quality, the entire customer experience does not have the touch of quality at different stages. The clothes that are imported are second hand clothes, and are generally cheaper than locally produced ones. Ghana receives a lot of these clothes. As at 2015, it was among the top 5 receivers of second-hand clothes. It is however, very ironic to note that these second-hand clothes are of superior quality to clothes manufactured locally. The 2 main causative factors for this phenomenon are cost and quality, but this study is focused mainly on quality (Brooks, 2015).

The aim of this study is to find out what causes the difference in the quality of clothes produced in Ghana and those that are imported from other countries and also to find out if local

dressmakers know about international quality standards that apply to their area of work. This research is a case study that will focus on 3 small scale dressmakers located in Accra. Total Quality Management is a way of ensuring that the entire customer experience has a touch of quality at every stage and this study will also attempt to find out if dressmakers know about it and whether or not they make use of it in their operations.

In order to find out what characterizes the small-scale dressmaking industry and to understand the experiences unique to this industry, the PESTLE and Porter's Five Forces analyses were conducted. The PESTLE analysis gave attention to external circumstances that have effects on the output of the small-scale dressmaking industry. The Porter's Five Forces Analysis places more focus on the industry and situations exclusive to it.

Table 1: *PESTLE Analysis*

#### **PESTLE Analysis**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Political</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fairly stable democratic country (The country has had successive successful elections since 2000)</li> <li>Unfortunately, corruption levels are high. For 2017, the country scored 40 out of 100 for corruption perception (Transparency International, 2018).</li> </ul>
<i>Economic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GDP growth for 2016 was 3.72%. Inflation for that year was 17.46% (IMF, 2018).</li> <li>The country imports more than it exports and had Balance of Payment as -6.69% of GDP for the year 2016 (IMF, 2018).</li> </ul>
<i>Socio-Cultural</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to the Human Development Report for 2016, about 54% of Ghana's population live in urban areas.</li> <li>Out of the country's population of 27.4 million, people between the ages of 15 and 64 are 15.9 million in number. This suggests that the</li> </ul>

	country's population is youthful (HDRO, 2018).
<i>Technological</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Global Information Technology Report for 2016, showed that Ghana had a fairly good access to the latest technology needed to run businesses in the country. The country scored 3.9 out of 7 points for this indicator (World Economic Forum, 2016).</li> <li>• The country also had a fairly good score for the use of ICT in business transactions; 4.3 out of 7 (World Economic Forum, 2016).</li> </ul>
<i>Legal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Rule of Law rankings, Ghana performed well both on the regional and global level. For the factors of open government, absence of corruption, order and security, regulatory enforcement and civil justice, Ghana ranked between 1 and 3 out of 18 for the regional rank. On the global level, Ghana had an average rank of 46 (World Justice Project, 2018).</li> </ul>
<i>Ecological/Environmental</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Environmental Performance Index report for 2014 stated that Ghana had an overall score of 32.07 out of 100. The country ranked 151 out 178 (Yale University, 2018).</li> </ul>

Table 2: Porter's Five Force Analysis

**Porter's Five Force Analysis**

<b>Force</b>	<b>Intensity</b>
<i>Buyer Bargaining Power</i>	<b>High</b> [Switching cost for consumers in this industry is low. Consumers can easily find another dressmaker to buy clothes from and this reduces the power of small scale dressmakers to increase prices and increases the power of the consumer to determine how much value to place on the industry's output.] (Porter, 2008)
<i>Supplier Bargaining Power</i>	<b>Low</b> [Switching costs for dressmakers is high because the machines used in garment construction cannot be converted for use in any other industry. Dressmakers also find themselves at the end of the supply chain. This means that it is not possible for them to forward integrate. As a result, suppliers in this industry have very little bargaining power.] (Porter, 2008)
<i>Rivalry Among Firms</i>	<b>High</b> [Competitors in this industry are numerous and have similar amounts of power. Products are also identical and this makes it easy for customers to switch between producers. This puts pressure on price and reduces

	profitability. Rivalry is increased because producers are competing intensely for customers.] (Porter, 2008)
<i>Threat of New Entrants</i>	<b>High</b> [Barriers to entering this industry can easily be overcome. As a result, it is easy for new forms to be set up from time to time. Start-up capital is relatively easy to come by, making it easy for new players to enter the market.] (Porter, 2008)
<i>Threat of Substitutes</i>	<b>High</b> [Clothes made by small scale dressmakers could easily be replaced by imported second-hand clothes, imported new clothes and/or clothes made by high end local designers.] (Porter, 2008)

### **Problem Statement**

Cost and quality have been identified as the main causative factors for the preference of imported clothes over locally manufactured ones. Local dressmakers are losing a part of the market for clothes because their clothes are of a lower quality standard than those that are imported. In order to capture a larger market share, it is highly necessary to have an improvement in quality of locally produced clothes. However, improvement can only be sought after if there is sufficient knowledge about the current state of affairs. Once dressmakers are able to identify where they stand in terms of quality standards as opposed to their foreign competitors, the process of improvement can start. If dressmakers also know the reasons for their current state, it becomes easier to find solutions. Based on this, the research objectives and questions for this project were crafted.

### **Research Objectives**

The aim of this research is to find out what accounts for the difference of quality of clothes produced by small scale dressmakers in Ghana and those that are imported from other countries outside Africa. The research is also aimed at finding out the level of knowledge about international fashion quality standards and Total Quality Management among small scale dressmakers in Ghana.

### **Research Questions**

1. Do small scale dressmakers know about and/or make use of any Total Quality Management principles in their operations?

2. Are local small scale dressmakers aware of any international quality standards that apply to their industry?
3. What accounts for the difference in quality of clothes made in Ghana and those from other continents?

### **Description of Study**

This study is a qualitative one. It will rely on both primary and secondary data in order to make conclusions. Primary data will be gathered through semi-structured interviews with local dressmakers and through observation of work processes in small scale dressmaking companies. Secondary data will be sought from books, articles and other forms of literature. The study is also an exploratory one and data collected will be analysed thematically.

### **Significance of Study**

The knowledge that this study will uncover will be useful for small scale Ghanaian dressmakers, as it will reveal the current state of knowledge about quality in the industry, and possibly show some of the reasons for this state of affairs. It will also be useful for people who want to enter the dressmaking industry since they will know the state of the industry before they take the step of entering the industry. Possible new entrants will have a fair idea of what to expect if they decide to join the industry.

### **Scope and Limitations of Study**

This study is limited only to small scale dressmakers because they form the majority of dressmakers in Ghana and are more or less, the backbone of the dressmaking industry in Ghana. This research is qualitative in nature and is also a case study covering 3 companies in Ghana, implying that the results obtained cannot be generalized for a larger population. Results are heavily skewed towards the situations and experiences of these 3 enterprises. Other factors that contribute to or affect consumer behaviour in this industry such as price, celebrity

endorsements and others will not be considered in this study. The focus of this study is quality management.

**Conclusion**

This chapter gave an introduction to the project. It showed the background to the study, identified a major problem in Ghana's dressmaking industry and showed how the researcher is attempting to add to the solution generation process by finding out the root cause for one of the issues in this industry.

The next chapter will aid in meeting the research objectives for this project by using different literature sources to answer the research questions posed by the study.

## CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview

This part of the paper seeks to use literature to answer the research questions raised in the previous chapter. In that regard, it starts by attempting to define quality. It then gives a brief history of Total Quality Management (TQM) and gives a summary of the definitions that experts in the field have given and show the relevance of TQM to companies today. The importance of TQM to small companies is shown in the paper as well as evidence of the practice of TQM in Ghana. The chapter concludes by showing that small scale dressmakers in Ghana could benefit from making use of TQM.

### Definition of Quality

Quality means different things to different people. Depending on which role a person plays in the supply chain, quality will have a different meaning or relevance. In most cases, consumers are not able to fully define what quality means to them but they can identify a product which meets their quality specifications or standards. Even though it cannot be explicitly defined, there are 5 approaches that could be used to gain a fair understanding about what quality is. These approaches are: *1. Transcendent approach 2. Product-based approach 3. User based approach 4. Manufacturing-based approach 5. Value-based approach* (Garvin, 1988).

These different areas are elaborated on below.

### *Transcendent Approach*

According to followers of this philosophy, quality is synonymous to things like beauty which cannot be explicitly defined because they are logically primitive. Concepts like this can only be understood after they have been experienced and have had their characteristics displayed (Garvin, 1984).

Quality according to the proponents of this theory also state that it is absolute and universally recognizable even though it cannot be precisely defined. The summary of

this approach is that even though we cannot define quality we have the innate ability to identify its presence or absence (Stabile, 1992).

### ***Product-Based Approach***

Corollaries of the product based approach are that higher quality can only be obtained at a higher cost and that quality is an inherent characteristic of a product, not something that can be ascribed to the product. These 2 outcomes of the theory are present because the theory states that quality is precise and can be measured. The differences in quality are shown by the quantity of a certain ingredient or element present in a product. For example, a carpet or rug should have a large number of knots per square inch in order to meet quality standards. A carpet with a small number of knots per square inch has less strength and can wear off easily. In this scenario, the carpet's quality in terms of strength was measured using the quantity (number of knots per square inch) of one of the ingredients of the carpet (Garvin, 1984; 1988).

This has resulted in vertical dimension of quality and has made it simple for goods, especially durable goods to be ranked (Garvin, 1984).

### ***User-Based Approach***

The user-based approach is based on the fact that quality "lies in the eyes of the beholder." It takes a more personal approach. The theory suggests that consumers have varying needs and the product that best satisfies their needs is the product they will see as quality. The user-based approach is defined by economists and by operation managers. Even though both definitions are related, they differ in many ways. For economists, the differences in the way that consumers perceive quality is captured in the demand curves of these products. Individual quality preferences of consumers are summated and the product contains as many quality preferences as possible in order to capture a large portion of the market. Under operations management, user-based approach to quality simply means "fitness for use" (Stabile, 1992).

***Manufacturing-Based Approach***

Quality under this approach means conformance to requirements. It shifts focus from the consumer side to the producer's side. It is concerned with getting things right on the first try. Even though the consumer may know what he or she wants in a product, the manufacturer is the best person to ask when it comes to quality because he/she knows exactly what goes into making the product. For this approach, techniques are put in place to make sure that products are reliable and perform well (Garvin, 1984; Stabile, 1992).

***Value-Based Approach***

This approach suggests that a quality products performs certain functions at a price that is acceptable. This approach seems to be more prevalent. This approach is important because it blends two important factors; quality and price. It shows what consumers are willing to pay for what they consider as quality. The hybrid that this approach creates is called "affordable excellence" (Garvin, 1984; Stabile, 1992).

The absence of a definite explanation of what quality is poses a problem for manufacturers. It is dangerous for manufacturers to focus on only one of the approaches to quality. Focusing on just one approach, leaves out one of the groups of people in the supply chain. A Japanese company that focused only on meeting Industrial Standards for newspaper rolls found out that customers were very unsatisfied with their products. Another company that focused only on satisfying customers found that its production costs were very high in addition to the big problem of not being able to meet industry quality standards.

Total Quality Management becomes important here because it is a holistic approach to quality. It runs through every department of a company and involves all the members of the supply chain.

**History of TQM**

The exact date and time when the term TQM was formed is not clear, however, experts know what triggered the total quality management movement (Dale et al., 1998). Active talks on quality are reported to have begun in Japan after the second Sino-Japanese war which ended in 1945. The union of scientists and engineers formed a committee that came up with ways to improve productivity in the country and enhance quality of life.

In the 1980s, the concept of quality management also gained recognition in the USA and it has gradually spread to other parts of the world. Experts who developed TQM theories include Philip Crosby, Edwards Deming and Joseph Duran. These experts have somewhat conflicting views about the meanings of quality, however, almost all TQM systems have been drawn based on the views of these three experts and other lesser known experts (Dale et al., 1998).

**Definitions of Quality According to 3 Quality Experts**

There are 3 main experts in the area of quality; Philip Crosby, Edwards Deming and Joseph Juran. Their definitions of quality have shaped a lot of quality management systems. For Crosby, quality needs to be defined by measurable terms which will make it easier for companies to meet tangible targets. Quality, in his opinion means conformance to requirements. For Deming, however, quality is not a rigid phenomenon. To him, quality is a relative term which has varying definitions since its definition changes from consumer to consumer depending on the specific needs of that consumer. Juran's definition of quality is "fitness for use." For Juran, a good or service is of high quality when it is suitable for use by the consumer. His focus is on making sure that a consumer can appropriately use the good or service that he or she has purchased.

**Similarities and Differences between 3 Quality Theories**

There are similarities between the definitions of these experts. All 3 approaches to quality suggest that there are no shortcuts to quality. They also suggest that the involvement of

management is critical in the achievement of quality standards since most of the problems associated with quality can be attributed to management policy and action.

Other similarities include the fact that education should be continuous and employees need to know exactly what is required of them so that they can effectively deliver. Employees will only know what is expected of them if there is a proper communication system in place. A good communication system will also enable employees discuss the issues they have with the management of the firm. If management of companies expect good results, they must provide the necessary tools and equipment for employees (Suarez, 1992).

Notable among the similarities is the fact that quality management implementation can be done in all types of organizations, including small scale enterprises.

Crosby, Deming and Juran disagree at certain points on what quality should be. The differences under each theory of quality stem from four main areas; measurement of costs of quality, goal setting, supplier relationship and leadership activities.

Under measurement, Crosby and Juran agree that cost should be measured in monetary terms. For Deming, on the other hand, intangible costs are considered as part of quality costs. Intangible costs include the impact of the loss of a customer. According to Deming, the intangible costs carry more importance than costs that be quantified.

Under the Goals section, all three experts disagree. For Crosby, the ultimate goal under quality is to have no defects in goods or services. Deming's opinion, however, is that a system with no defects in goods and services is the starting point. A defect-free system implies conforming to specifications and standards which is equivalent to living by the status-quo. Meeting industry standards and specifications should be the starting point for every company. Juran believes that companies should have company-wide quality related goals which will trickle down to the various departments and employees of the company. Each department

should have strategic goals and aims and people within the departments also need to have specific goals. The achievement of these goals at the unit level will feed into companywide achievement of quality standards.

For supplier relationships, Crosby and Juran believe that it is best to have more than one supplier to serve as a form of protection in cases of strikes accidents and other problems that suppliers may encounter. Deming's belief on the contrary side is that only supplier should be used in order to ensure that product quality is always consistent (Suarez, 1992).

Based on the views of Crosby, Deming and Juran, various TQM models have been developed. Other experts in the field whose writings have impacted various TQM paths and models include Mitchell Feigenbaum and Karou Ishikawa.

## **7 Concepts of TQM**

- ***Continuous Improvement***: This term is also known as 'kaizen' in the Japanese language. It is a long term approach to improving quality and efficiency by making changes to production processes from time to time. These changes are done in small bits at different points in time whenever it is discovered that gaps in the production process can be filled (Natarajan, 2000). It is concerned with finding and eliminating waste in machinery, labour and/or production methods. According to Juran (DeFoe & Juran, 2010), companies that do not practice continuous improvement fall behind and become irrelevant.
- ***Six Sigma***: The Six-Sigma program was developed by Motorola to reduce defects, lower costs and improve customer satisfaction. It is concerned with process improvement and it uses the DMAIC model to ensure progress (Antony et al, 2011). The DMAIC model starts of by *defining* the critical outputs and identifying areas that need improvement. The work that needs to be done is *measured*, data is collected and

then *analysed*. The process is *improved* upon and *controlled* in order to ensure that the progress which has been made is maintained (DeFoe & Juran, 2010).

- ***Employee Empowerment***: In some modern TQM oriented companies, employees are now being viewed as internal customers (Natarajan, 2000). This raises the value that the company places on its employees. It also pushes companies to provide all the tools that employees will need in order to ensure customer satisfaction and continuous improvement of work processes. It is in the company's best interest that employees are empowered because, according to Juran (DeFoe & Juran, 2010), a well empowered employee will be great at delivering expected results. Employees can be empowered through effective communication networks, supportive supervisors, building a high morale organization and through the creation of formal team structures (Kumar & Suresh, 2009).
- ***Benchmarking***: Benchmarking has to do with selecting the best practices and using these practices as the standard. It is a systematic and continuous process that allows companies to compare their performance with practices that are the best and seen as industry standards (DeFoe & Juran, 2010). Benchmarking is a good strategic planning method and helps greatly when it comes to optimizing creative potential. It also enhances the process of continuous improvement (Zairi, 2011).
- ***Just-in-Time (JIT)***: JIT is a concept that reduces cost of operations and increases the quality of production processes as well as quality of products (Madanhire, 2014). The need for JIT has risen in recent times because of culture changes that require instant delivery of goods (DeFoe & Juran, 2010).
- ***Taguchi Concepts***: Taguchi concepts were developed by Dr Genichi Taguchi. These concepts; quality robustness, quality loss function and target-oriented quality are used in different businesses to improve both process and product design (DeFoe & Juran,

2010). Taguchi concepts work in a way that allows variances in production to be eliminated even before they occur and as a result these concepts are considered important in the manufacturing industry (Natarajan, 2000).

- ***Knowledge of TQM Tools***: There are 7 tools under TQM and they are grouped under 3 areas based on the various functions they play. The tools for idea generation are *check sheets*, *scatter diagrams* and *cause-and-effect diagrams*. *Pareto charts* and *flow charts* are used in the process of organizing data while the *histogram* and the *statistical process control chart* are used to identify problems.

### **Why TQM is Important**

Studies have shown that Total Quality Management has positive effects which are evident in various sectors and departments in a company. Areas that are typically positively influenced by TQM include operational performance, supply chain performance, customer satisfaction, and competitive advantage among others.

Quality became a competitive weapon for most global industries in the 1980s following the surge on giving attention to quality in Japan. Customers in this day and age are very aware of the rising quality standards. They also have a wide range of product choices, thus, a company that does not pay attention to quality will lose its competitive edge. Quality management can no longer be considered as a mere addition for companies that want to be successful, it should be viewed as a necessity for sustaining competitive advantage.

Operational performance refers to the performance of an organization in terms of service delivery, process productivity, minimizing costs and errors, among others (Al-Qahtani., et al, 2015). The inputs of quality management, namely, continuous improvement, supplier management, employee involvement and others have a direct output in customer satisfaction, service quality, productivity and quality and enhanced business. The attitude of continuous improvement, for example helps in minimizing an organization's errors. As errors are reduced,

cost also reduces. As errors and costs reduce, customers gain a higher satisfaction level with the quality of products consumed. Customer satisfaction usually leads to customer loyalty (Gharakhani et al., 2013).

One of the concepts under quality management is supplier relationships. Studies done in the past could not confirm whether supply chain performance and total quality management had any key relationship. However, a study done in 2001 on the textile and apparel industry showed that it was important for companies in this industry to have a well-coordinated supply chain so that they could meet the quality expectations of consumers. Both supply chain and quality management principles have the aim of achieving customer satisfaction, therefore if a firm is able to coordinate the principles under each concept, it will ultimately achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty (Vanichchinchai & Igel, 2011).

### **TQM in Small Scale Enterprises**

Most of the research done on TQM has shown that it is beneficial to large companies. For small companies, however, not many studies have been conducted. The few studies that have been done show proof that TQM is beneficial for small companies also and as such small enterprises have been advised to make use quality management principles. A small company is a company that has less than 500 employees (Haksever, 1993). Such companies stand to gain the same benefits of a sustained competitive advantage, operational excellence and better financial performance as large companies if they also implement TQM.

Cengiz Haksever started his paper by defining clearly what a small company is. Apart from number of employees, there are other parameters used in determining whether or not a company is considered small or large. For a company to be considered small, it should meet one or more of the following requirements:

1. Management is usually the same as the owner.

2. Capital is supplied and ownership is held by an individual or a small group of people.
3. The area of operations are mainly local.
4. The business is small when compared to the biggest units in the field.

He also gives a brief description of the nature of small businesses in relation to its operations, resources, objectives and customers (Haksever, 1993).

Small businesses are usually run by entrepreneurs who are skilled craftsmen, but are unlearned when it comes to running a successful business. Small firms also usually suffer from shortages of capital/resources because there is typically one source of capital; the owner(s) of the business. A lot of small businesses are set up with the aim of being an income provider for the owner. Therefore, as long as the business is able to provide a substantial amount of income for the owner, there is little incentive to expand. Lastly, small companies usually have their operations limited to a local sphere, meaning that most of the customers come from the local environment. Suppliers, distributors and employees are normally located in the local sphere. These characteristics of small firms account for some of the reasons why it is difficult for them to make use of TQM (Haksever, 1996).

In their 2013 paper, Stringer and Nwabueze argue that in order for small businesses to survive, they would need to make use of quality management principles. According to them, the rules of competition keep changing and nowadays, the change takes place on a daily basis. If small companies do not work hard enough, they will be wiped out by the new dimensions of competition.

They outline reasons for the inability of small companies to use quality management principles, including the inability of small business owners to understand TQM. They also state that TQM is difficult to implement because it requires a large amount of resources and is quite extravagant to plan for and implement. An example of such a resource is the fee that companies

need to pay to the International Organization for Standardization. Before the fee is paid, a company needs to show that it can meet international standards for quality. Small companies may not be able to afford such fees, making it difficult for them to apply quality management principles.

They end their paper by suggesting that small companies implement TQM effectively and they also draw a possible framework that small enterprises can make use of. The key actions for small businesses to undertake are centred on the areas of ‘operational excellence, employee intimacy and customer relationship (Stinger & Nwabueze, 2013).

Carol Moore also speaks about the challenges that small companies face when they attempt to follow through with quality management principles. She agrees with Philip Crosby on the fact that quality is free. In her paper, she states that managers have attested to the fact that “quality pays for itself a 100 times over.” She however, argues that cash flows between the implementation of quality and the reaping of benefits from quality implementation are usually small or negative, making it problematic for a firm to follow through with quality standards (Moore, 1993).

Moore (1993) also points out that companies which implement quality standards as a result of company pressure, are not really successful at doing it. This is because, they operate from a compliance point of view and do not develop the right attitudes needed to sustain a culture of quality.

In concluding her paper, Moore gives suggestions that small companies could make use of in trying to successfully implement quality management principles. There are 3 main areas that should be worked on. First of all, small companies must put in place proper measurement systems so that they are able to manage their systems more easily.

Moore also states that the concept of continuous improvement should be applied because TQM is not just a program. Her last recommendation is that there should be teamwork and trust among all members of the firm (Moore, 1993).

### **TQM in Ghana**

In 2012, a study was conducted to find out the extent of the implementation of quality management in Ghana. The study was done for both multinational firms and small local firms. Results showed that most of the multinational companies in Ghana had a high level of knowledge in quality management. According to the study, the reason for this phenomenon was the presence of expatriates in these companies. The study claimed that because the expatriates brought in knowledge from other parts of the world, they were more familiar with quality management principles as opposed to fully Ghanaian owned firm whose main knowledge base was the Ghanaian economy. (Copuroglu et al., 2012).

The concept of quality management is not entirely absent in fully Ghanaian owned companies, however there is very little knowledge about the concept. Since the knowledge of the concept is very minimal, the benefits that it gives are also not known by Ghanaian firms. The incentive for practising quality management is the competitive advantage that it gives a company. Since locally owned firms do not know about these benefits, they do not have the incentive to act on quality management principles (Copuroglu et al., 2012).

### **TQM in the Dressmaking Industry**

TQM standards are implemented worldwide by the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) in various industries in different countries, including the dressmaking or apparel industry. For the dressmaking industry, ISO standards range from standard forms of measurement, clothing sizing to methods of fastening accessories onto clothes and quality of materials and equipment used in the production process (ISO, 2016). Other measures of quality relating to the dressmaking industry include fabric type, construction details, styling, fit and

general construction and seam strength. These measures of quality are not exactly easy for customers to quantify before a garment is used. The customer usually only becomes aware of these dimensions of quality after the garment has been used (Burns et al, 2011). Quality in the garment industry is one of the main sources of customer dissatisfaction. Often, the source of dissatisfaction is the use of low quality materials and lack of quality workmanship. In order for dressmakers to ensure that customers enjoy superior product quality, dressmakers need to adhere to quality standards.

### **Conclusion**

TQM has been proven to be beneficial to small scale companies if it is properly implemented. Even though the process of implementing quality management principles is costly, companies that practice it gain a lot of benefits which eventually outweigh the costs. It will be beneficial for small scale dressmakers in Ghana to make use of quality management principles. The main advantage they stand to gain is a sustainable competitive advantage which will be useful in competing against foreign made clothes. There are quality standards for the fashion industry, a little description of these standards have been stated.

The implementation of TQM is mostly enforced by the ISO and the process of gaining ISO certification is costly for most companies. The cost of certification serves as a barrier for some companies in their bid to adhere to meeting quality standards. It is possible, however, for companies to meet quality standards without getting ISO certifications. Since quality standards are generic, it is possible for companies that do not have certification to implement these standards.

The next chapter of this study shows how the researcher will go about the collection of primary data for the study. The techniques in the next chapter will be used as tools to find out from some dressmakers in Ghana what they know about quality management in general and international quality standards in their area of work.

## **CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY**

### **Overview**

The aim of this research was to find out what accounts for the difference of quality of clothes produced by small scale dressmakers in Ghana and those that are imported from other countries outside Africa. The research was also aimed at finding out the level of knowledge about international fashion quality standards and Total Quality Management among small scale dressmakers in Ghana. This section of the paper will help in answering the research questions for this study by showing the methods that were used in the process of gathering the primary data needed.

The research questions are:

1. Do small scale dressmakers know about and/or make use of any Total Quality Management principles in their operations?
2. Are local small scale dressmakers aware of any international quality standards that apply to their industry?
3. What accounts for the difference in quality of clothes made in Ghana and those from other continents?

The various methods and techniques used in this study will attempt to answer these questions.

### **Research Design**

This study was a qualitative one. The qualitative technique was used for this research because it gives the opportunity to understand social realities in an in-depth and thorough manner. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study is limited to a small section of people; small scale Ghanaian fashion designers. In order to find out the information and experiences that are unique to this group of people, it was best to conduct a qualitative study (Johnston, D & Vanderstoep, S., 2009). This study was exploratory in nature because the area

of TQM for small scale dressmakers in Ghana had not been explored yet. This was also a case study research as it zoomed in on the experiences of 3 local dressmaking companies.

Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. Primary data was gathered from semi-structured interviews and observation while secondary data was obtained from articles, books and other academic writings on the area of enquiry for this study.

### **Research Scope (Study Population and Study Area)**

This study's population was made up of small scale dressmakers located in Accra. The sample for the study was made up of 3 dressmaking companies that have a total of 15 employees who were interviewed and observed in order to gain knowledge about the current state of Total Quality Management in Ghana's dressmaking industry.

### **Sampling Strategy (Sampling Techniques and Sample Size)**

The sampling techniques used in this study were convenience and purposive sampling. Convenience sampling is a non-random sampling method that involves selecting research participants based on their availability to partake in the study. Purposive sampling is a non-random sampling technique where research participants are selected based on the characteristics they possess which will be necessary for use when answering the research questions in a study (Johnston, D & Vanderstoep, S., 2009).

Convenience sampling was used in this research also because of the short time period within which this research needed to be completed. Even though it was ideal to test the entire population, it was not possible. As a result of this, it was necessary to use a sample. In this case, convenience sampling was used because it is inexpensive and fast (Johnston, D & Vanderstoep, S., 2009). The research participants that contributed to the study were also readily available, making convenience sampling a good option for this research.

**Data Collection (Data Collection Instrument and Data Collection Procedure)*****Data Collection Instrument***

In this research project, the main mode of primary data collection was interviews. Guided/semi-structured interviews follow an outline of questions, however, interviewers can occasionally ask questions that are not on the outline if they will add extra information that will be relevant to the study.

The interviews helped the researcher find out the current state of TQM knowledge among dressmakers. The interviews also helped the researcher understand the reasons behind the current level of knowledge and application of TQM principles among small scale dressmakers.

The researcher's approach to the observation process was artificial immersion which gives the advantage objective separation. In a bid to overcome the problem where the insights of the researcher are simply that of an outsider, semi-structured interviews were used to understand stories from the perspective of dressmakers themselves (Johnston, D & Vanderstoep, S., 2009).

***Data Collection Procedure***

The researcher visited the workshop of the 3 companies used in the study and the interviews were conducted with the owners of the companies.

Participants were informed about the study and its purpose before the interviews took place. Participants were not forced to engage in the study. The researcher ensured that participants are at ease during interviews by assuring them that their identities would be kept confidential. This helped participants freely contribute their wealth of knowledge to the study.

**Data Analysis**

A thematic analysis was used in this study to analyze the data collected. A thematic analysis is a tool researchers use to identify, analyse and interpret patterns of meaning within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2016). A thematic analysis is useful because it can be applied in different research situations due to its flexible nature (Braun & Clarke, 2016). A thematic analysis involves identifying the data that is collected in research and categorizing the data under various themes. A thematic analysis gives procedures for data collected to be grouped under codes and eventually into themes. Classifying data under themes enables the researcher to perform more complex analyses.

**Reliability and Validity**

Reliability refers to the extent to which the results of a study are consistent over time and accurately represent the population being studied (Golafshani, 2003). A study is also considered to be reliable if similar or same results are obtained after the study is conducted again under similar conditions. Validity refers to whether or not a study measures the variables that it initially set out to answer. In order to ensure the reliability of this study, all decisions made at each point in the study will be documented so that it is possible for further research to be done. This will make it easy for other researchers to read and understand what this study is about and make it possible for further studies to be done in this area (Golafshani, 2003).

In order to ensure the validity of the study, the findings that will be made will be shown to research participants to get feedback and check for alignment. This will ensure that all results presented are the actual ideas of research participants that have not been diluted with the preconceived notions of the researcher (Grossoehme, 2014).

**Ethical Considerations**

In order to ensure that the rights of participants are not infringed on, the issue of ethics was taken into consideration. Participants only took part in the study if they agreed. In view of that, they signed consent forms which served as proof that they are willing to participate in the study. Confidential information of research participants such as their names, addresses and dates of birth were not disclosed. Participants were also free to drop out of the study at any point in time.

**Conclusion**

This chapter gave a description of the tools and processes the researcher used in gathering primary data for this research. The next chapter will show the results that were obtained as a result of using the tools outlined in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS**

### **Overview**

This chapter contains both the presentation of the results and a discussion of the results of the study.

The objective of this research study is to find out the extent of knowledge about Total Quality Management among small scale dressmakers in Ghana. The study was also aimed at finding out if the clothes produced in Ghana are of a lower quality standard than those produced in countries outside the African continent. The last aim of the study is to find out how quality is managed and enforced in small scale dressmaking companies in Ghana. In order to understand the phenomenon in a more in-depth manner, this study focused on 3 dressmaking companies located in Accra.

The services of these companies include but are not limited to dressmaking. The first company where interviews and observations took place (henceforth identified as Company A), offers dressmaking services, teaching and apprenticeship programs in sewing and the sale of jewellery. Company B offered dressmaking services along with the sale of shoes, jewellery and fabrics. Company C offered dressmaking services and apprenticeship programs.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the owners of these companies. More information was obtained by observing the work practices as well as the dresses produced in these dressmaking enterprises. The answers obtained were analysed thematically and grouped into various sections in order to understand the results better. These sections have been outlined below.

## **Presentation of Interview Results**

### **Company A**

#### ***What Quality Means***

According to this dressmaker, quality means finishing a dress well, both on the inside and the outside. Other things that comprise quality include the cut, stitching and silhouette. The dress must be cut perfectly following all the sewing principles and the stitching must be neatly done. The silhouette, which is the outline of the dress should be done nicely and shaped properly so that it is pleasing to the eye. The silhouette should also conform to the wearer's body so that the dress enhances the wearer's beauty. One of the most important aspects of quality is that the dress must fit the wearer perfectly. A good customer service experience was also mentioned as an important aspect of quality as it usually determines whether or not some customers will come back. This dressmaker mentioned that one of the areas of customer service that matters in her field of work is timely deliveries. She mentioned that she runs a system where clothes are delivered to customers 2 weeks after they are brought in. She stated that this system has worked perfectly for her and it makes her customers happy. Her timely delivery system has set her apart from many other players in her field of work who are known for failing to deliver clothes on time and this has won the business a lot of customers. This timely delivery system ensures that the company has no backlog of orders for more than 2 weeks.

#### ***International Quality Standards & TQM***

Dressmaker A agrees that there are international standards in her field of work. She made reference to ISO standards. She also made mention of certain tools that are available for use by dressmakers in the process of meeting international fashion standards such as curved rulers also known as French fashion curve, notcher and patterns. In the dressmaking process in her company, some of the tools are used. She made mention of the fact that the use and drafting of new patterns is a tedious and time consuming process and as such, it makes the clothes produced by her outfit relatively more expensive than those made by other small scale dressmakers. Even though her clothes have higher prices, she still has consumers rushing in

because they are assured of a good customer experience and a perfect fit of clothes. She attributed the success of her outfit to her knowledge about dressmaking gathered from many international sources. She also mentioned that her experience in the corporate world has contributed to the success of her business and the attainment of high quality standards

### ***Reasons for Difference in Quality***

Dressmaker A agreed that there are vast differences between clothes produced locally and those produced in countries outside Africa. She mentioned that some Ghanaians may not be willing to pay for quality, seeing as Ghanaians fail to pay attention to quality in so many areas of work. She also said that fashion schools which teach about international standards in quality are few in number. People in Ghana usually learn dressmaking by understudying another person and they usually end up producing clothes in the exact manner as the person who taught them. She stated that since most Ghanaian seamstresses do not know about international standards, their apprentices also do not learn about it and the cycle of absence of perfect quality continues.

Another causative factor for the difference in quality of clothes identified by Dressmaker A is the lack of sewing accessories and tools. She recognized the fact that the tools are expensive and many dressmakers run small businesses that do not necessarily make huge profits, therefore they would not be able to afford expensive tools for use in their work.

She did not think that it is possible to change the situation based on the fact that the proliferation of dressmaking enterprises is extremely high. Given that the number of small scale dressmakers is very high, it will be very difficult to exercise control and ensure adherence to standards.

**Company B*****What Quality Means***

In Company B, the focus was on Customer Service. In this company, it is seen as the most important aspect of quality because it ensures that old customers are retained and attracts new customers. As a result of the company's location on a busy road, a lot of new people trickle in every day. This presents a great opportunity to increase the number of customers that the company has. According to Dressmaker B, it is extremely necessary to treat everyone that enters the shop with great enthusiasm and respect even if they look like they cannot afford the services that the shop offers. In some cases, people come in only to make enquiries and walk out without making a purchase. It is important that such people are treated nicely even though they do not make any purchase because the nice experience is enough to bring that customer back either in the near or far future. In some cases, these people make referrals to others who end up becoming loyal customers to the outfit.

Good customer service has contributed greatly to the success of this company and it is therefore considered as one of the most important aspects of quality. The dressmaker also made mention of the fact that the final product should be what the customer asked for. This sums up the quality definition for Company B.

***International Quality Standards & TQM***

Dressmaker B agreed that there are international quality standards for dressmakers. These standards for her fall under areas such as customer service and the fit of the dress. According to her, international standards had to do with making the customer happy and doing exactly what the customer wants.

***Reasons for Difference in Quality***

According to this dressmaker, there are differences in the quality of clothes made in Ghana and those made in countries outside Africa. This is because, in Ghana, dressmakers are not particular about finishing and packaging. This does not just apply to the dressmaking

industry but to many other industries found in Ghana who cannot compete on the international scene because of lack of attention to details about the packaging and finishing of goods. She also mentioned that in Ghana, the focus was on producing goods at a low price instead of making products that will last for a long time and bring satisfaction to customers.

She reckoned that in the industry, dressmakers try to cut cost by using cheap implements that end up reducing the beauty of the dress. Apart from the reduction in beauty, these cheap accessories end up tearing when customers wear the clothes and this pushes them to buy imported clothes which will not fall apart a few days after they are purchased or to make purchases from local high end fashion designers and labels like Christie Brown, Pistis and others.

### **Company C**

#### ***What Quality Means***

In the third dressmaking company, quality covers a wide range of areas. These areas include finishing, fit and a happy customer. Hemming, knitting, embroidery, neatening and general stitching should be done neatly and properly so that the garment fits the customer properly. The above mentioned activities are done at various stages in the dressmaking process and according to this dressmaker, all these processes need to be done with due diligence in order to ensure that the garment produced meets a good quality standard. Apart from going through these processes in a proper manner, it is also important to use accessories that are of good quality. The accessories mentioned here are zips, buttons, pres-studs and others.

She also mentioned that the type of fabric used to make the garment plays an important role in ensuring quality. Not every garment style can be executed with any type of fabric and the work of a good dressmaker is to advice the customer on what style is suitable for the fabric. The presence of Chinese made fabrics on local markets in large quantities was a point on which this dressmaker had a lot of complaints about due to the fact that they are of inferior quality.

Just like the other dressmakers, Dressmaker C said that customer service is an important area of quality. All customers deserve to be treated nicely and if they do not receive what they deserve, they may never return.

### ***International Standards & TQM***

When it came to international standards, Dressmaker C said that even though there are set standards of work for this industry, most local dressmakers did not adhere to them for various reasons. She mentioned that no one knows all there is to know when it comes to sewing because fashion is an ever evolving area of life. As such, determining what is and is not a standard for every dressmaker is difficult. However, areas like fit, finishing and neatening are keen when it comes to meeting international standards.

### ***Reasons for Differences in Quality of Clothes***

Dressmaker C mentioned that some Ghanaians are able to meet the high industry standards for dressmaking but those are just a few. As a result of the use of cheap implements and accessories, most Ghanaian dressmakers cannot produce clothes that are of superior quality. She recounted experiences of some of her customers who had experienced wardrobe malfunctions at certain important events because, the fabrics used in making their garments were cheap wax that had been imported from China. According to her, the reason for the difference in the quality of clothes is the use of cheap materials in the process of dress making and garment construction. In her opinion, the attainment of quality standards depends solely on the designer and the designer's aim or goal of satisfying his or her customers and widening his or her customer base.

## **Summary of Interview Findings**

### **What Quality Means To Dressmakers**

According to the dressmakers that were interviewed, quality means a lot of things and covers a wide range of areas. These areas include but are not limited to the type of fabric used, finishings and fasteners, fit and cut/pattern and customer service.

**Type of Fabric:** Some fabrics cannot be used to make certain dress styles. It is up to the dressmaker to figure out which particular fabric will be well suited for the different dress styles available. There is also an influx of low grade Chinese fabrics on the market which are of inferior quality and when these fabrics are used in the production process, clothes do not turn out as beautiful as they would have been if fabrics of superior quality were used. Dressmaker C lamented that the use of Chinese fabrics in the production of dresses greatly lowered quality standards. She mentioned that clothes made from inferior fabrics either faded or got torn after the customer wore them a few times. This made it difficult for dressmakers to put in great effort when making clothes out of low quality fabrics because such clothes would be discarded after a short time. It was also noted that the weight and texture of certain fabrics made them suitable for particular dress styles.

**Finishings and Fasteners:** Edges of clothes should be finished off properly so that they do not fray off as the customer wears them. Both the inner and outer part of clothes should be well finished. Some fastenings used in the dressmaking process include buttons, press studs, velcro, cords, cuff links among others. It is extremely important that these fasteners are fixed properly so that they enhance the fit of the dress. Particular attention needs to be given when the inner part of a dress is being finished. Even though it cannot be seen, an improperly or poorly finished inner part of a dress can affect the fit of a dress. According to Dressmaker A, the inner part of the dress is as important as the outer part and it is necessary that it is finished as perfectly as the outer part of the dress. Dressmakers also made mention of the fact that it is important to

take out all temporary fasteners such as pins before a dress is presented to the customer since their presence in the clothes will cause uncomfortable situations for dress wearer.

***Fit & Cut/Pattern:*** Dressmakers stated that the 'fit' was a very important area under quality in their area of work. This is one of the main areas of concern for most of their customers. In order to achieve perfect fits, dressmakers had to make use of measurements, patterns and various methods of cutting fabrics. Dressmaker A mentioned that for some dress styles, the simple design did not require the process of pattern drafting. For some complex dress designs, however, dress makers had to put to use complex pattern drafting skills and tools so that clothes could fit customers perfectly.

***Customer Service:*** All the dressmakers interviewed stated that customer service was considered by them as an important area of quality. According to them, the first experience a customer has is usually not with the clothes but with the designers since they serve customers directly. Customers that did not feel welcome usually did not stay long enough to have dresses made for them. It is necessary, therefore, that dressmakers create a welcoming ambience for customers. It was mentioned by one dressmaker that in some cases, customers return for more clothes only because they were treated nicely and not necessarily because of the quality of clothes produced. Timely delivery of clothes was recognized as an aspect of customer service.

### **Dressmakers' Knowledge about International Quality Standards**

With regards to fit, dressmakers acknowledged that there are international standards. They spoke about generic body patterns which can be altered and used for people with different body sizes. However, they could not always make use of these patterns since they were designed for people of white descent who have body structures that are different from African body structures. The next alternative available was for dressmakers to draft their own patterns which will suit the body types of their customers. However, the process of pattern drafting is long and complex, implying that prices of clothes would have to increase in order to match the

man hours and skills used in the production of clothes. Due to this, dressmakers resort to using the freehand method of sewing which is simpler and faster even though it does not always provide the perfect fit that customers look for.

The table below shows the varying levels of knowledge present in the companies used in the study.

Table 3: *Table Showing Levels of Knowledge about International Fashion Quality Standards*

Levels of Knowledge: No Knowledge → Low → Fairly High → High → Very High

<b>International Fashion Quality Standard</b>	<b>Company A</b>	<b>Company B</b>	<b>Company C</b>
<i>Type of Fabric</i>	Very High	Very High	Very High
<i>Construction Details</i>	High	Fairly High	Fairly High
<i>Styling</i>	High	High	High
<i>General Fit</i>	Very High	Very High	Very High
<i>Seam Strength</i>	Very High	High	Very High

### **Reasons for Difference in Quality of Clothes Produced In Ghana and Those Produced In Countries on Other Continents**

Dressmakers agreed that there are vast differences in quality of clothes produced in Ghana and those produced in other continents. However, they mentioned China as an exception. According to the dressmakers, the difference in quality is caused by the lack of capital. In the process of dressmaking, each stage can be done perfectly if the appropriate machine is used. For example, a buttonhole will be cut out perfectly if a buttonhole machine is used. The generic electric sewing machine also has the capacity to cut button holes, but it will not be done perfectly. Dressmakers expressed concern as they spoke about the fact that machines needed for small parts of a dress cost huge amounts of money. It made more economic sense to rather purchase generic electric sewing machines than to buy specialized machines that would be used for only a small part of the dress. In the interactions with the

dressmakers, it was realized that even though they wished to produce clothes of high quality, it was not possible because of financial constraints.

### **Analysis of Interview Findings**

**Understanding Quality:** In trying to define quality, dressmakers did not give a specific definition, confirming the fact that quality has no universal definition. Dressmakers unknowingly made reference to the different approaches of defining quality with the exception of the value based approach.

Dressmakers made mention of areas that were key to them when it came to understanding what quality is. The *type of fabric* used can be placed under the product based approach and here the quality of a dress is judged based on the strength of the materials used in the production process. This suggests that in the companies that were visited, there is a belief that quality is precise and it can be measured. The absence or presence of a particular number of strands in a fabric is used to determine the strength of the fabric. It is therefore used to determine whether or not a fabric is of a high quality standard. Fabrics used as implements in the dressmaking process are now judged on a vertical dimension and number of strands present in each yard of fabric are used to determine strength of the fabric and one aspect of the quality of this fabric. Another element/part of the fabric that could be used in judging quality of fabrics include the number of days that it takes for the colour/dye in a fabric to start running.

The aspects of *finishings and fastenings* as well as *fit and cut/pattern*, can be placed under the manufacturing approach since they give preference to the work of the manufacturer and his/her role in ensuring quality. They could also fall under the customer based-approach since they are concerned with how the dress will look on the customer. Customers generally do not know what processes need to be undertaken in order to produce a dress. In order to meet certain specific requests of a customer, dressmakers need to manipulate their sewing tools and implements. For example, if a customer requires that the buttons used in making his shirt do

not show on the outside of the shirt, the dressmaker needs to go through a complex process of either providing an overlap to cover the buttons or find another form of seemingly invisible fastening. The processes that the manufacturer goes through to ensure that the requests of the customer are met are unknown to the consumer. However, the manufacturer realizes that meeting the customer's need is key. As a result, the manufacturer makes sure that in the end, the product made is fit for the customer's use and that it meets all of his or her requirements so that the customer comes back for more clothes.

The reference to customer service fits under the customer-based approach to defining quality. It was identified by research participants as one of the most important areas under quality in their area of work. This suggests that dressmakers leaned more towards the customer-based approach since 3 out the 4 major areas of quality identified were aligned with satisfying the customer.

### **Knowledge about Total Quality Management/ International Quality Standards**

When it came to knowledge about International Quality Standards for the dressmaking industry, dressmakers acknowledged that there were international standards when it came to the process of making clothes. They made mention of the use of generic body patterns that could be altered to fit varying body sizes.

Dressmakers made mention of the fact that they did not use the generic patterns because the process of drafting patterns was long and laborious, and customers were not willing to pay high prices for the clothes manufactured. This is in sync with the value-based approach for defining quality, giving more evidence to the fact that quality does not have a specific definition and it covers a wide range of areas. However, when it came to knowledge about what Total Quality Management is, dressmakers had no idea. Knowledge about what TQM is, its history and its pioneers was absent. Knowledge about how to implement it was also non-existent. However, they demonstrated knowledge of the standards in their industry.

### **Results from Observation**

#### **How Quality Is Managed and Ensured In Small Scale Dressmaking Companies**

Dressmakers have designed their own quality management systems. They have come up with ways of measuring the quality of their work by looking at factors like customers' responses and the work of their competitors.

Dressmakers could not mention the names of the various TQM concepts, but in conversations with them and through the observation of their daily work processes, it was discovered that dressmakers actually make use of some TQM concepts.

There is evidence of continuous improvement among dressmakers. This is as a result of the ever-evolving nature of the fashion industry. Fashion trends come and go, and in some cases trends die and return after some years. Because of this, dressmakers see the need to be abreast of the events of the fashion industry, both on the local and international scene. They keep up with new happenings in the industry with the help of various social media sites such as Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram.

Another TQM concept that was present in the 3 companies used in this study is employee empowerment. The apprenticeship system gives employees a form of power which is useful to the company if it is not abused. The delegation of training duties to older employees ensures that the teaching and learning cycle continues in an unbroken manner. It also places value on older employees and encourages them to work harder.

Evidence of the Just-in-Time concept was seen in 2 of the companies that were studied. The timely delivery systems being used in these companies ensures that the production process is efficient.

Dressmakers realize that international fashion standards are the benchmarks they need to meet if they want to make a mark in the world of fashion.

Knowledge of TQM tools, Six sigma and Taguchi concepts was not evident in the dressmaking companies studied at the time the research was being conducted.

The table below shows the levels of knowledge about TQM concepts observed in Companies A, B and C.

Table 4: *Table Showing Levels of Knowledge about TQM Concepts*

### Key

Levels of Knowledge: No Knowledge → Low → Fairly High → High → Very High

<b>TQM CONCEPT</b>	<b>COMPANY A</b>	<b>COMPANY B</b>	<b>COMPANY C</b>
1. <i>Continuous Improvement</i>	High	High	High
2. <i>Six Sigma</i>	No knowledge	No knowledge	No knowledge
3. <i>Employee Empowerment</i>	High	High	High
4. <i>Benchmarking</i>	Fairly High	Low	Low
5. <i>Just-in-Time</i>	High	High	Fair
6. <i>Taguchi Concepts</i>	No knowledge	No knowledge	No knowledge
7. <i>Knowledge of TQM Tools</i>	No knowledge	No knowledge	No knowledge

### Conclusion

This chapter gave a summary and analysis of the primary data that the researcher gathered in the bid to answer the questions posed by this study. In the subsequent chapter the researcher would show exactly how these results answer the questions posed in the beginning.

## CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION

### Overview

This chapter will show how the research questions set out by the study have been answered with both the data that was obtained in the course of conducting the study. This chapter will also give recommendations that may be useful for industry players.

The objective of the study was to find out what accounts for the difference of quality of clothes produced by small scale dressmakers in Ghana and those that are imported from other countries outside Africa. The research is also aimed at finding out the level of knowledge about international fashion quality standards and Total Quality Management among small scale dressmakers in Ghana. The next part of this chapter will show the answers for the study's research questions

### Answers to Research Questions

*Do small scale dressmakers know about and/or make use of any Total Quality Management concepts in their operations?*

Even though dressmakers could not expressly define TQM, they unknowingly employed some of its principles in the day to day running of their businesses. Out of the 7 concepts of TQM, dressmakers generally demonstrated knowledge about continuous improvement and employee empowerment

The table below shows the varying levels of knowledge about TQM concepts observed in the dressmaking companies that were used in the study.

Table 5: *Table Showing Levels of Knowledge about TQM Concepts*

Levels of Knowledge: No Knowledge ➡ Low ➡ Fairly High ➡ High ➡ Very High

<b>TQM CONCEPT</b>	<b>COMPANY A</b>	<b>COMPANY B</b>	<b>COMPANY C</b>
1. <i>Continuous Improvement</i>	High	High	High
2. <i>Six Sigma</i>	No knowledge	No knowledge	No knowledge
3. <i>Employee Empowerment</i>	High	High	High
4. <i>Benchmarking</i>	Fairly High	Low	Low
5. <i>Just-in-Time</i>	High	High	Fair
6. <i>Taguchi Concepts</i>	No knowledge	No knowledge	No knowledge
7. <i>Knowledge of TQM Tools</i>	No knowledge	No knowledge	No knowledge

*Are local small scale dressmakers aware of any international quality standards that apply to their industry?*

Dressmakers are aware of international quality standards that apply to their industry. Even though they are aware, they are not able to implement some of them because of low access to capital.

*What accounts for the difference in quality of clothes made in Ghana and those from other continents?*

Clothes made in Ghana and those produced in other countries are different because of varying levels of access to capital. Ghanaians have less access to capital and this causes Ghanaian clothes to have sub-standard quality.

### **Recommendations**

Information gathered throughout the research showed that dressmakers have a desire to produce clothes that can be showcased on international catwalk shows because of their beauty and quality. The major barrier for them is lack of access to capital. Capital in this case is in the form of machines and other tools and accessories used in the garment construction process.

Information collected also showed that there was a lot of focus on cost reduction in situations where a little addition of cost will ensure that a garment moves on to a higher level of quality. In order to overcome these obstructions to attaining quality, the following recommendations are being made for the various stakeholders in the industry.

- The Ghana Dressmakers' Association and National Vocational Training Institute; the nationally recognized organizations for training dressmakers should incorporate quality management in its training programs.
- In order to ensure that high quality standards are being implemented, The Ghana Dressmakers' Association could issue quality management licences to deserving sewing outfits. These licences would be granted to dressmaking companies that follow the standard procedures in garment construction. In the bid to meet the goal of continuous improvement, these licences could be renewed after a specified number of years. In order to merit a renewed licence, dressmakers would have to undergo a short course that will provide updates on the evolution of quality.

### **Limitations**

Due to the small sample size and the purposive sampling method used for this study, the findings obtained are unique to the companies studied. It is therefore, not possible to generalize the findings to all members of the study's population.

### **Areas for Further Research**

The study revealed that one of the barriers that dressmakers faced in their quest for meeting international quality standards in fashion is huge capital requirements. Studies could be conducted to find cost effective ways of implementing international standards.

### **Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to find out if small-scale Ghanaian dressmakers knew about TQM and international quality standards for the fashion industry. The study also hoped to find

out the causes of differences in quality of clothes produces in Ghana and those produced in countries outside Africa.

The findings from the study showed that dressmakers were aware of some TQM concepts and applied them in their work. They also knew about international fashion quality standards but could not implement them because of lack of access to capital. Various reasons were given for the difference in quality of clothes produced in Ghana and those produced outside Africa.

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Appendix



Fig 1: Made-in-Ghana Logo