

ASHESI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

**"TO PERM OR NOT TO PERM"
- A CASE OF NATURAL HAIR IN ACCRA, GHANA.**

BY

SENA LILY CAN-TAMAKLOE

Dissertation submitted to the Department of Business Administration

Ashesi University College

In partial fulfillment of Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration

APRIL 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank the Lord Almighty for His grace upon my life and the strength He gives me each day to pursue my education. Had it not been for him I would not be able to overcome the hurdles I face in life and to finish this four year course. His guidance, counsel, wisdom and knowledge has enabled me to begin and complete this project.

I also thank Kajser Hallberg-Adu for being interested in this topic right from the beginning, helping me to find information on the subject and making some very interesting suggestions. Her intellectual contribution and creative input has been very valuable in the completion of this paper. I also thank Edward Abrokwah for believing in me and encouraging me to keep moving forward.

My sincere thanks goes to my father Anthony Can-Tamakloe who did not give up on my education even when the going got tough. I am most grateful to my mother, Peace Can-Tamakloe whose unending support, motivation and motherly love has kept me focused in achieving my goals. I also thank my sister Suzzie Klutse for her support and encouragement.

Lastly, I thank all the owners of the salon who granted me an interview and to all the respondents who found interest in the subject and took the time to contribute information to this research.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the reasons behind some Ghanaian women's switch from chemically altered or relaxed hair to wearing their hair "natural". The black hair care industry in the USA is worth an estimated 3 billion dollars yearly and is dominated by products such as hair relaxers and hair extensions. A majority of women in Ghana chemically relax their hair for various reasons. However, a growing number of Ghanaian women are beginning to switch from chemically treated hair to natural hair, a practice that is perhaps a deviation from the norm.

The objective of this study is to reveal the reasons behind some Ghanaian women opting for natural hair instead of relaxed hair and the potential effect these reasons have on the local black hair care industry in the area considered under study. The paper also delves into the history behind black women wanting straighter hair and how hair straightening began in America and Ghana.

This study is useful in understanding the factors that inform hairstyling choices among women, particularly Ghanaian women. It is also a ground breaking research in terms of literature regarding Ghanaian anthropology with respect to women's choice of hairstyles. Finally, this study provides vital information for stakeholders in the black hair care industry in Ghana (i.e. salons, retailers of hair care products) by providing insight into a gradual change in preference by consumers.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
ABSTRACT.....	II
Table of Contents	III
Chapter 1.....	1
1.0 Background Introduction.....	1
1.1 Problem Statement	9
1.2 Objective of Study	11
1.3 Significance of Study	11
1.4 Organization of Study.....	14
Chapter 2.....	15
Literature Review.....	15
Chapter 3.....	26
3.1 Methodology	26
3.2 Sample Size.....	28
3.3 Sampling Technique	28
3.4 Limitations of Study	28
Chapter 4.....	30
4.1 Data Analysis	30
4.2 Age range of respondents	30

4.3	Respondents who had relaxed hair within the last three years.....	31
4.6	Do respondents feel more African with natural hair?	35
4.7	Reasons why respondents maintain their hair natural	35
4.8	Are respondents considering relaxing their hair again?	37
4.9	Would respondents encourage other women to wear natural hair? .	38
5.0	Interview with salon operators and women with natural hair.	38
	Chapter 5	42
5.0	Recommendations and Conclusion	42
5.1	Recommendations	42
5.2	Conclusion	43
	Appendix 1	49
	Appendix 2	50
	Appendix 3	51
	Sample of Questionnaire	51
	Appendix 4	54

Chapter 1

1.0 Background Introduction

"A woman's hair is her crowning glory and she shares this glory with her family" (Maya Angelou, 2009). A woman's hair is not only appreciated by her alone but the people around her, it is a source of pride and a thing of beauty. Ghanaian women spend quite some amount of money on hair relaxers and hair pieces in a constant effort to improve the appearance of their hair and to satisfy fashion requirements. It seems a woman's hair is the part of her body that is constantly undergoing change, especially that of a Ghanaian woman. One minute it is short, the next minute it is longer than that of Indian women. Then come the colours from red to blue, green even purple. These days it has become common to see a black woman with for instance blonde hair as a result of changes in hair fashion.

This paper will discuss the historical importance of hair relaxing among African-American women, the introduction of hair straightening to Ghanaian women through colonialism and also seek to investigate reasons for the recent gradual return to "natural hair" by some Ghanaian women.

The desire to have straight hair by African-American women begun during the time of slavery, Lester (2000) explains that when slave women brushed the hairs of their masters' children, the ease with which they could comb the straight silky hair of white children led to internalized feelings of inferiority and an alleged sense of their own hair being unmanageable. When

the slaves compared the texture of their hair to that of their masters and masters' children, it was evident that Caucasian hair was easier to comb because of its silky and straight nature while the African hair was coarse and a bit difficult to comb because the hair strands are tightly coiled. Lucinda Roy (1988) in her poem *If You Know Black Hair* describes black hair as the toughest of hair that struggles against the comb during the process of combing. The difficulty in combing their hair as against that of their masters' led to slave women not appreciating their hair and thus seeing it as bad hair which is inferior to white hair. These feelings of inferiority often led to black slave women wearing scarves in order to shield their displeasing hair from their white masters. The yearning for straight hair became a cultural element in African American society pervading even their literature. The poem below, an excerpt from Lester (2000) describes the intensity to which straight hair was sought after by African Americans after the process of hair straightening with lye emerged.

Oh give me a perm
Where the waves all roam firm—
And the style and the body will stay.
While seldom is heard—
A bad, blasphemous word
As my scalp becomes toxic sauté

The author in this poem admits that the process of straightening her hair involves the use of toxic and harsh chemicals but she still craves a perm because she feels that in relaxing her hair, she will end up with hair that is

more manageable in the sense that it has more style and will stay in one place other than the original kinky (tightly coiled) hair which sprouts in different directions and has less form. In effect, the author believes that she will be more appreciated with the relaxed hair and therefore does not mind the harshness of the perming treatment.

The black hair care industry in America is estimated to be worth 3 billion dollars (Good Hair, 2009). The current key drivers for growth in the industry are hair pieces made from human hair or synthetic fibers and hair relaxers. Human hair pieces are hair gotten from sometimes Caucasian but mostly Asian women with long straight hair. These hairs are then washed and processed into weaves that can then be worn by attaching it to the hair with hair glue or sewn to tracks on the hair. Hair relaxers are chemical mixtures that contain the main ingredient Sodium Hydroxide, Sodium Hydroxide has the ability to break down protein bonds within African hair, and it is the breakdown of these proteins by hair relaxers that renders African hair straight.

The process of chemically altering black hair is called hair relaxing while the straightened hair is now referred to as relaxed hair. In Ghana, hair relaxing is also known as “perming” and hair relaxers are usually called “perming creams”. These products are in high demand, particularly by black women the world over. This is because most black women do not wear their hair in the natural state and rely on hair pieces, relaxers and other hair care products in order to have hair that is straight and to attain the modern standard of beauty.

So how did hair relaxers come about? The inventor of the hair relaxer is actually Garret Augustus Morgan Snr, he found out that chemicals used to repair sewing machines could relaxed the curls of kinky hair. However, Madam C.J Walker is known to be the first female self made millionaire who rose to fame as a result of her door to door selling of the hair relaxer to black women to use in order to straighten their hair. This was as a result of black women finding their natural kinky hair too tough to manage and also an internalized feeling that their hair was bad hair therefore creating a desire to have hair that is almost like that of their white counterparts. African hair is sometimes referred to as kinky because the hair strands are tightly coiled on the head. Hair bears much significance in the lives of women and even men across all cultures. A woman's hair is fashioned to exhibit beauty, removed to cause humiliation and is sometimes interpreted as a sign of power or powerlessness (Koppelman, 1996) .

The nature or type of hair can sometimes be used to determine age (grey hair is associated with old age), economic or intellectual status, ethnicity and religious affiliation depending on each society. In Ghana for instance, an informal interview with a member of the Deeper Life Church revealed that church laws required female members of the Deeper Life Church to wear their hair natural as a sign of rejecting worldliness. Culturally, Queen mothers of the Ashanti tribe are supposed to wear their hair natural with the sides of the head shaved in a circular format; this style is called the *densinkran* and is the official hairstyle of Queen mothers of Ashanti. In the event that a Queen mother has relaxed hair, she must cover it with a scarf/

hair net before appearing in public in her royal regalia. In an interview with a native of Ashanti, tradition does not permit a Queen mother from the tribe to appear in public in full regalia with relaxed hair.

Hair in African arts and culture is not only viewed as an element of beauty but is a medium of communication. It could indicate the emotional state of a woman, for example among the Frafra, an ethnic group found in the Northern part of Ghana, part of the widowhood rites performed on women include the shaving of the widows hair to signify the shedding off of all bad luck to render the widow free and clean (Atinga, 2006). In the Volta region of Ghana, *trokosis* (*girls chosen to serve gods as a means of averting an ancestral curse*) have their hair shaved as a sign of servitude (Ghanaweb, 2006). On the other hand, among the Asante tribe located in the south of Ghana, the hair of a fetish Priest was left to grow into long matted locks, this hairstyle was called *mpesempese* which literally means "I don't like it". Also, during the nineteenth century, young Akan girls wore coiffures decorated with gold ornaments to announce their eligibility for marriage (Sieber and Herreman 2000).

A survey conducted in 2007 with 15 African-American teenagers revealed that for black women in America, hair relaxing has become a norm and individuals who stray are considered too ethnic. More importantly, black women regard the wearing of natural hair as unprofessional and so for those who wish to go higher up the career ladder, they relax their hair in order to look professional. This stems from the fact that most employers tend to be

white and view a black person with natural hair as unserious, unkempt and aggressive. African – American comedian George Mooney puts it this way, “if your hair is relaxed, white people are relaxed. If your hair is nappy, they are unhappy” (Good Hair, 2009). Nappy hair in this context is natural African hair. What the comedian is simply trying to say is that white people are more comfortable around black people with relaxed hair but feel somewhat uncomfortable around a black person with natural hair. This stems from the perception that a black person with natural hair is more likely to be aggressive or not very accommodating.

In the black community in America, some black women who wear their hair in the natural state see hair relaxing as a sign of conformity in which women of color try to attain a certain standard of beauty that is just impossible. These women regard hair relaxing as a rejection of their African-American identity and the putting on of a personality that does not fit them. The perception that black women were bowing to a “white” standard of beauty by way of relaxing their hair provoked condemnation from many African American leaders during the 1900’s when the practice had gained popularity. Prominent black leaders such as Booker T. Washington condemned the act and criticized those who sold hair straightening products and those who engaged in the practice. When Booker T. Washington founded the National Negro Business League in 1900, he refused to admit black businesses that engaged in hair straightening as members of the league.

Other vocal opponents to the practice of hair straightening were W.E.B DuBois and Marcus Garvey, with Garvey proclaiming "Don't remove the kinks from your hair! Remove them from your brains." Malcolm X also expressed his belief that the straightening of hair by African Americans caused them to feel ashamed of their own unique beauty. This then brings us to the self hatred theory which surfaced during the Black Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's in America. Proponents of the self hatred theory viewed hair straightening as hatred of black physical traits and the admiration of white physical traits. During the time of the movement, the Afro was viewed as a symbol of black pride and liberation in the African American community while chemically altered hair symbolized shame and embarrassment of one's black racial origin.

Drawing away from the politics of black hair, we focus on the current hair accessories used by most black women. Now unlike natural hair, relaxed hair becomes weaker as a result of the repetitive chemical treatments, with less weight and body. In a bid to add more form to relaxed hair, women have implored the use of hair extensions which are made of either synthetic fibers or human hair itself. The demand for human hair extensions by more black women with Ghanaian women being no exception, has given rise to a multi-million dollar industry. Surprisingly, this industry is based in India, a place where women do not need hair. The religious Hindu practice of *Tonsure* sees thousands of Indian men and women shaving off their hair as an offering to God in return for a favour or as a sign of thanksgiving for an answered

prayer. The shaved hair is then gathered by the temple overseers and sold to local entrepreneurs who process the hair and then export it to countries where the human hair demand is high, a typical example being the United States and of course Africa; the continent with the highest population of black women.

According to BBC Have Your Say (2009), black women tend to spend three times more on their hair than their white counterparts. The increase in spending is attributable to the high prices of hair pieces particularly human hair. Also women with relaxed hair need to do a "touch up" every four to six weeks as a result of new growth of the natural hair beneath. A "touch up" or "re-touch" as it is commonly referred to in Ghana is the process of applying hair relaxer to the new growth of hair beneath the already relaxed hair. This is because although the hair on top of the head may be chemically altered, the new growth shooting out from the scalp comes out in its natural "kinky" state therefore a touch up is needed in order to straighten the new growth to ensure the whole hair being straight. It is the repetitive process of hair relaxing that makes the practice perhaps more financially demanding. Burns and loss of hair among black women has also been associated with the use of harsh hair relaxers and tightly fixed hair weaves.

A short survey of five salons produced varying prices with respect to maintaining relaxed hair and natural hair around the three areas of Osu, Labone and Danquah. Results from the survey showed that it costs an average of GH¢15 and GH¢26 to have one's hair chemically relaxed and to

fix a weave respectively. On the other hand, it costs an average of GH¢16 to have a natural hairdo. These costs can be weekly or monthly; depending on how often one requires the service. From this information, one may gather that the cost associated with natural hair is lesser than that of relaxed hair.

The expense associated with relaxed hair and its related issues of identity but more importantly the scarring of scalps by harsh relaxer creams has given rise to more black women in America embracing their natural hair and women in Ghana particularly in the capital city are not left out.

Over the years an increasing number of women in the public eye have “gone natural” e.g. Ursula Owusu, Vice President of FIDA, Comfort Ocran of Legacy and Legacy and organizer of economic empowerment seminars, Minister for Youth and Sports Akua Sena Dansowaa, and Gifty Afenyi Dazie, former head of Ghana Institute of Journalism and some female lecturers at university. The reason for the change of hair of these women and their counterparts across the city could be similar to those of African American women or vary greatly. The current research is aimed at investigating to find out the driving force behind Ghanaian women’s growing preference for natural hair instead of the usual relaxed hair.

1.1 Problem Statement

Choosing to wear one’s hair natural or relaxed is not just an aesthetic decision but cuts across professionalism, identity, psychology and culture. Factors including colonialism and modernity contributed to the

widespread of hair relaxing in the Ghanaian society so much so that it has become the norm. Now some women are beginning to stray from the norm by cutting off their relaxed hair to embrace their natural hair. The question therefore is; why have some Ghanaian women switched from having relaxed hair to natural hair?

Natural hair in the context of this study is hair that is free of any chemical treatment; in this regard natural African hair is one that is “kinky” in nature, meaning hair that is coarse and tightly curled. Dreadlock is considered natural hair in this study. Relaxed hair however is hair that has undergone chemical treatment with hair relaxers and therefore is straighter and longer compared to natural hair. Black consciousness in this regard is the state of mind of the individual which makes him aware of being an African and therefore projecting it in his or her appearance and views his or her natural hair as the typical look of an African.

This study intends to investigate the gradual return of natural hair in the city of Accra with Osu, Labone and Danquah as the catchment area. This will examine if the growing preference for natural hair is 1) a growing sense of black consciousness, 2) a fashion trend that will soon fade, 3) that it is more economical for women in Accra to wear natural hair than to have it relaxed and 4) a bad experience with relaxers that resulted in burns, hair loss etc. Specifically, the following theories will be tested.

- 1) Women with a high black consciousness will wear their hair natural

- 2) There will be a positive relationship between the cost of natural hairdos and the preference for it.
- 3) Women who have suffered injury with relaxers are more likely to prefer natural hair.
- 4) There will be a positive relationship between current hair fashion and the wearing of natural hair by women in the city.

1.2 Objective of Study

The objectives of the study are as follows

- a) To examine the factors that informs women's decision to wear a particular hairstyle.
- b) To determine if the wearing of natural hair by some Ghanaian women is an affirmation of the African identity or not.
- c) To examine the potential effect that women's preference for natural hair could have on the black hair care industry.

1.3 Significance of Study

This study is important in that there is not enough existing literature on the subject of African women and their hair compared to literature on African – American women. It is worth investigating the relationship between Ghanaian women and their natural hair in order to gain insight into how present day women in the country see themselves as African women. This can help to establish if there is or is not a link between natural hair and black consciousness or identity and can further be helpful in determining if the

wearing of natural hair by black women determines the degree of their black consciousness.

Black women in general spend up to three times more on their hair than their white counterparts. Once again, very little is known about how hair influences the economic decisions of women in the capital city considering most purchases of artificial hair pieces is by women in urban areas. This study will bring to the fore the reasons why women opt for one hairstyle or another and the impact these choices have on their finances.

Very few materials exist with respect to Ghanaian anthropology and especially very little regarding Ghanaian women and their grooming practices. The emergence of currently few salons that cater to only natural hair is perhaps a divergence from the norm but their continuing existence and thriving in the market indicate they have a fair number of customers if not more. Investigating this trend will provide insight into the changing lifestyle choices of women in Ghana and serve as documented evidence of our socio-cultural practices. This study also adds a new dimension to existing information on Ghana's anthropology regarding women and will serve as a reference point for subsequent studies on the same or related subjects.

The topic of hair is of great importance and debate across all cultures but particularly within the African community, hair is not just an element of beauty but a form of communication of one's self, status and an overall symbol of identity. Women in Ghana, choose to wear their hair a certain way due to many reasons which range from finances, fashion, black

consciousness through to just having hair that makes you comfortable with yourself. However, all these reasons have one underlying commonality, and that is that women seek to attain a certain standard of beauty through their style of hair whether it is natural or chemically treated. It is these standards of beauty that has given rise to multi-million dollar industries such as the hair relaxer and human hair industry. Now with some women going natural, there could be a chance that another industry could be born (possibly the natural hair industry) and there will be the need to create hairstyles, formulate products and other accessories as the industry will dictate. This study presents information on the changing preferences of women and will thus help stakeholders in the black hair care industry to position themselves for potential changes in the demand for their products.

The information gathered from this study will help inform the marketing strategies of salon owners and hair care product manufacturers because they will know how consumers choose their hair care options. It will especially establish if indeed there is a market for natural hair and the growth potential of that market. This will help stakeholders to make informed decisions about their services in terms of pricing, product formulations and branding.

1.4 Organization of Study

This paper is organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Background of study – the background of study gives an introduction to the study. It presents a general overview of the topic and relevant issues related to it.

Chapter 2: Literature Review – this contains literature already done by other scholars concerning the topic of natural hair.

Chapter 3: Methodology – the methodology gives an account of the instruments which will be used to gather data for the study. It also provides information on how the data will be analyzed and the tools that will be used for the analysis

Chapter 4: Data Analysis – This chapter contains a detailed analysis of findings from the study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendation – conclusion and recommendation will be obtained at the end of the study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter commences by analyzing previous works with regards to the perception of natural hair among African – American women and the concept of “good hair” in the black community in America. The issue of relaxers in Ghana and the pursuit of “good hair” by Ghanaian women from colonial times are also highlighted. More importantly academic literatures on the subject are analyzed to provide insight into the current study.

Hair is used for many purposes and has different significance across cultures. Women mainly use their hair to beautify themselves and to seek power (Weitz 2001) be it economic, political or social. In the 1960’s during the civil rights movement, black women like Angela Davies wore the afro as a symbol of black self esteem and as a statement that black people should be respected as who they are and deserved equal rights just like white Americans. During this time, black people wore dresses of African design as a sign of being connected to their African roots but the signature affirmation of their blackness was the wearing of an Afro hair in support of the black civil rights movement. Working women tend to avoid elaborate and fancy hairstyles in order to appear professional and be taken seriously in their jobs.

Hair plays the role of a determining factor along the lines of ethnicity, race and gender. In William Blake’s 1796 painting of *Europe supported by Africa and America*, he portrays the different continents in the form of three women with Europe being fair skinned with long blonde hair that falls all the

way down to cover her genitals thereby setting her apart as being pure and more civilized. On the left hand side of Europe is the African who is not only the darkest in complexion but with hair unlike Europe and America; short, curly and “frizzy” looking. The African hair was regarded by most Europeans as “demonic, licentious and pubic” while the European hair was appreciated as a symbol of purity and enlightenment (Rosenthal 2004).

The nomadic tribes in parts of Africa called the Fulani are usually identified by the light, curly and silky feel of their hair. Women are generally differentiated from men by the nature of their hair which is usually longer and lighter. Along racial lines, Caucasians and Asians are known to have straighter hair while Africans are identified as having tightly coiled locks of hair.

Before the arrival of the Europeans in the then Gold Coast now called Ghana, women wore their hairstyles in various designs but a common feature was that the hair was plaited with black thread or braided and depending on the occasion, the hairstyle would range from simple plaits to that with elaborate designs. Historic pictures and stories indicate that women in those days wore their hair in the natural state. In *Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe he narrates how one of the wives of the main character goes to plait her hair but spends too much time doing it and subsequently aroused the anger of her husband; a clear indication that women in those days invested a lot of time and effort in their hair just like their modern counterparts to attain a standard of beauty. Hair also served as a mode of communication. In

Nigeria, Yoruba women in polygamous marriages would braid the *kohin-sorogun* hairstyle, meaning turn your back to a jealous rival to upset their rivals. The hairstyle was best admired from behind therefore the wearer would turn her back to jealous rivals in order to upset them (Ogunwale 1972). Hair plaiting was a social activity among friends and family in which women would plait each others hair. When the Europeans first arrived in West Africa in the late 15th century, they observed the various hairstyles worn by the Africans (White and White 1995). The hairstyles included braids, plaits and shaved hair in different patterns which were often decorated with shells, beads or strips of cloth woven in. The Dutch explorer Pieter de Marees published a plate showing sixteen different hairstyles which depicted the various classes as well as genders in Benin alone.

Subsequently colonialism influenced the socio-cultural practices in the country including hairstyles and hair treatment. Women now straightened their hair instead of plaiting it; a trend that was influenced by the nature of the Caucasian hair being soft and silky as opposed to the African hair which was kinky and quite coarse in nature. Hair straightening back then was considered a modern practice. My mother was born in the 1950's and recalls how in a bid to have hair that looked like that of European women, Ghanaian women would implore the use of the straightening comb and Shea butter to undertake the activity of hair straitening. "We would heat the comb till it was red hot," she says, "smear a section of the hair with Shea butter down to the scalp and rigorously comb the hair with the hot comb." The gritty sound of

burning kinky hair gave way to a much straighter, longer and silky looking hair. The activity did not come without its hazards, scalps were often burnt by the hot comb, an over heated comb will completely burn the hair instead of straightening it.

The 1970's brought with it the hair relaxers and this provided an easier way to achieve straight hair and by the 1990's as a child, almost every woman I knew or came across had chemically straightened her hair. Straight hair was the norm and as a teenager who had completed high school in 2004, I was constantly pressured to relax my hair in order to look matured and well groomed. Nyamnjoh, Durham, and Fokwang (2002) remarked that modern hair in contemporary Africa was heavily influenced by Western culture and products manufactured in the West such as shampoos, imported wigs and artificial hair.

In doing research for this paper, I came across articles on how over the years straight hair became the most desirable hair preferred by black women. During the days of slavery, slave masters and mistresses taught slave children to refer to their hair as wool thus encouraging them not to like their hair. House slaves especially were required to look "decent" because they tended to spend a lot of time in the presence of their masters and their guests. House slaves were not to appear offensive to any person of white breeding therefore they were given time for personal grooming and the women were encouraged to iron their hair straight (Byrd and Tharps 2001) thus beginning the practice of hair straightening among slave women and

consequently creating the notion that "good hair" is one that was straight and silky just like white hair. Thus began the culture of most African – American people imploring every use in the form of hot press combs and hair relaxers in order to get rid of their natural hair that made them feel inferior in order to attain hair that was deemed better than theirs.

Research conducted by Whitney Bellinger in 2007 on the topic *Why African American women try to obtain "Good Hair"* interviewed fifteen African – American women aged sixteen to eighteen. They were asked open ended questions on why they would choose to relax their hair or keep it natural. A majority of the respondents said they had their hair relaxed in order to attain "good hair". Good hair was interpreted as hair that was straight, long, silky, and seemed Caucasian. However, three of the respondents did not agree to "good hair" being Caucasian hair. Many of the girls said they relaxed their hair because it made it easier to manage in terms of combing and styling and also because their mothers had chemically relaxed hair.

The research concluded that the reason many African – American women chemically alter their hair is because their mothers did it. Again, they do it in order to get better employment opportunities because relaxed hair created an impression of neatness and professionalism as opposed to natural afro hair. Relaxed hair also showed one's social and economic status, women belonging to the working class tend to spend more on their hair. For teenagers, it was a matter of manageability and convenience.

In the documentary *Good Hair*, African American comedian Chris Rock explores the concept of “good hair” in the African American community and the many reasons why African-American women relax their hair instead of keeping it natural. Actress Nia Long admitted that somehow having relaxed hair made you feel more beautiful than the other brown skinned girl who had natural hair. Four high school seniors were interviewed on their perception of natural hair and two of them responded that they if they were hiring, they would not take seriously an individual who had natural hair because it made one look less professional. However, many black women interviewed gave responses that indicated that natural hair was unmanageable because of its coarse nature and less attractive. Hair pieces gave them the opportunity to achieve that Eurocentric standard of beauty that natural hair could not. In effect relaxed hair made them feel more beautiful and attractive than natural hair.

The conclusion therefore from the documentary was that most African – American women considered their natural hair unmanageable and inferior to white hair. Black women in the working class considered relaxed hair as professional while natural hair was viewed as a sign of rebellion against the Eurocentric standard of beauty.

A feature in the East African magazine titled, *African Hair: The personal grows political* by Charles Onyango-Obbo (2010) maintained that hair in general was more of a political issue than a personal one. African radicals view women with straight or relaxed hair as women suffering from

an inferiority complex or mimicking white women. The article argued that in a setting where for political, social, religious or cultural reasons women are not allowed to vote or run for political offices, they are also not allowed to show their hair and thus have to cover their hair. The author tried to establish a link between women's rights and their hair saying that, in countries that prohibit women from exposing their hair, it is also found that women in those countries tend not to have the right to determine the number of children they want to have and when to have them, and often have to conform to a dress code. According to the author, for women in these settings to be able to wear certain dresses that otherwise would not be allowed such as tight fitting trousers, they must first gain the right to do as they please with their hair.

Describing African hair as a subject that is often misunderstood, the author points out that African hair is form of African art and comes in many varieties. It has social attributes in the sense that women gather to do each other's hair and the hairstyle reflects the individual's personality. In sampling the views of some Kenyan women regarding natural hair, photographer and filmmaker Phillipa Ndisa-Herrmann compiled a photo essay with pictures of respondents and their comments. An excerpt of nine women was featured in the article. One respondent admitted she does not relax her hair not because of black consciousness but because she has a sensitive scalp. Another respondent, a mother of a child with natural hair said that if the school her

daughter attends objected to her daughter's hairstyle, she would raise an issue over it. Others said they simply liked the natural hairstyles.

"After 1994 in South Africa, the people began to be proud of themselves because before that, we were made to believe in the European style of beauty" – Jabu Stone (Sherry Day). The opening comment from Jabu Stone, a natural hair stylist interviewed by the author indicates a sense of rediscovery by ethnic South Africans in terms of hairstyles after the end of apartheid. In this report, the writer set off to interview stakeholders in the black hair care industry in South Africa. Among the respondents are hair salon owners, street braiders and consumers who patronize these services. Jabu Stone maintains that the preference for natural hairstyles by an increasing number of South African women is a phenomenon that has come to stay. According to him natural hairstyles best showcase African beauty. Around the city of Johannesburg, many beauticians also agree that for many ethnic South Africans the end of apartheid was the end of being ashamed of black culture. Being free politically has led many black South Africans to express their pride outwardly and through their hair. This new found sense of pride has also led to the creation of employment for many people giving rise to many street braiders in the city.

While one consumer saw the increase in demand for natural hair as just a trend that will pass, another said she saw natural hair as a healthier alternative to hair relaxing. Due to the demand for natural hairstyles, salons which previously did not offer services catering to natural hair have now

diversified their services in order to satisfy their customers who demand such services. However many consumers prefer to go to street braiders for their hairstyles because they charge cheaper than the salons. Interestingly, salon owners, street braiders and consumers seem to agree that the days of black South Africans absorbing the notion of a European standard of beauty had long passed.

Drawing away from other African countries, we focus our attention on Ghana and our beauty perceptions about hair and review available literature on the subject with respect to Ghana. Interestingly, there does not seem to be much literature or work done about natural hair in Ghana. Searches through journals, news articles and magazines both online and physical revealed little or no information about previous researches done on the topic. However, a search through Google videos revealed a video documentary titled *Me Broni Ba*, a short video about salons in Ghana. *Me Broni Ba* (2008) is a short documentary produced by filmmaker Akosua Adoma Owusu. It centers on hairstyling as an important aspect of Ghanaian culture and creativity. It also assesses how European influences have affected the perception of beauty in the Ghanaian society.

Me Broni Ba, which literally means my white baby, is an endearment term. Musicians sing about women they love and consider beautiful by referring to them as *Me bronni* (my white woman) while mothers also call their children *Me bronni ba* to endear them. According to the filmmaker, this practice clearly suggests that Ghanaian associate what is good and beautiful

with whiteness and this has found its way into the hair culture in the country. In the documentary, salons were visited and particular attention was placed on the sign boards that advertised these salons. All of them had images of black women with relaxed hair wearing different Eurocentric hairstyles. None of them had images with natural hairstyles such as plaits.

What the filmmaker did not understand was why apprentices at salons, practiced hair braiding styles such as "rasta", a three piece braid on the hairs of white dolls. Most apprentices in Ghana learn how to braid hair using the hair of white dolls and manikins; they are common features in many salons. Also learning how to fix a weave is done using dolls, although some dolls are dark in colour, their hair is still long and straight just like white dolls. The film however did not ask the salons why they used white dolls but a possible reason could be that many manikins do not have afro hair so these salons are making use of what is available to them.

This documentary is very different from the topic under research but it helps to give an understanding of how beauty in terms of hair is advertised and projected in the Ghanaian society with strong influence from the white standard of beauty. This study however, looks at factors influencing women in Osu to wear their hair natural and the possible effects it has on the businesses of salon owners and the hair care industry in Osu.

Most research regarding the desire of black women to have hair other than their own is mostly centered round African – American women. Although these researches have proven useful in understanding the moving

away of black women from natural hair to relaxed hair, they fail to examine the same phenomenon among African women and even very little research has been done concerning the growing preference for natural hair by African – American women and women in Africa. This has limited the ability to generalize findings to cover all black women since a larger proportion of black women are found in Africa than in America where black people in total make up only 12% of the entire population. However, the studies about African American women prove helpful as they give insight into the subject, considering there are very few studies about African women with respect to hair.

As mentioned above, there is very little literature available concerning women in Africa. The few works that have been mentioned earlier fail to give in-depth information on the reasons behind African womens' preference for natural hair. This paper is different from previous works done on the subject because apart from finding out the reasons why some women in Osu wear their hair natural, it will also analyze the possible effects that the preference for natural hair by these women has on the local hair care industry in the area under study.

Chapter 3

3.1 Methodology

The study interviewed a cross section of women with natural hair with ages beginning from eighteen and above. This was done by visiting salons in Osu, a suburb of Accra. These salons included those that cater to only natural hair and those who offer a variety of services. This is because not all women with natural hair go to exclusively natural hair salons because of proximity and also affordability. Open ended questions regarding their preference for natural hair was asked in the questionnaires distributed. Open ended questions because the subject of hair ties into various aspects of life and open ended questions could unearth different perspectives on the subject that has not been considered yet. Each questionnaire contained a total of seventeen questions.

A questionnaire with specific questions regarding why women choose to go natural was distributed to respondents for them to answer. This was so as to get a source of quantitative evidence to support or prove otherwise the stated hypotheses. Respondents of the questionnaires were drawn from women in the salon and also random women on the streets of Osu and Danquah who may not afford to do their hair in salons. Students from a tertiary institution were also included in the sample.

Osu and Danquah was chosen as an area of study because they are busy places in Accra with a lot of commercial activity. They have many salons, shops, banks, restaurants and hotels located there as well. People from various backgrounds do business there and so sampling from these areas is not likely to be biased towards a particular group of individuals but will capture a wide range.

Adult women with ages beginning from eighteen were considered for the interview. This was to allow the study to capture a cross section of women in the study area and also to widen the scope of the study because different age groups have different economic status, different taste in fashion and perceptions of black consciousness. In effect the wide age group is to give the study a wider scope.

Also interviews were held with owners of salons to ask for their outlook on the industry in which they operate. These interviews were aimed at ascertaining whether operators of these salons see a future for natural hair and a possible establishment of a vibrant natural hair care industry in the country.

Data gathered from open ended questions asked during the interview have been written down while data from the questionnaire was analyzed using the Microsoft Excel office tool. Field data was processed according to the number of responses per question. The number of responses for each multiple answer question was tabulated and summed up. The processed data

was then represented in the form of bar charts which were then compared and analyzed.

3.2 Sample Size: The total number of respondents in the study is 53.

3.3 Sampling Technique: The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling. Only women with natural hair were approached to fill out questionnaires. The information gathered for this study is therefore primary data since it came straight from the sample of women who answered the questionnaires.

In previous work done by Whitney Bellinger in 2007, the researcher interviewed 15 women and wrote down their answers since it was a purely qualitative research. This study however, is both qualitative and quantitative. In this study, 53 women answered questions in a questionnaire with both closed and open ended questions. Therefore the use of the Microsoft Excel Tool was implored in order to tabulate answers from the closed end questions. Also the Excel tool was used because the data gathered did not require complex calculations in order to interpret and represent. Representing the information through bar charts allows for readers to easily understand, especially for salon owners.

3.4 Limitations of Study

This research did not cover a wide geographical location in terms of scope. Therefore location is identified as a potential limitation to this study in that it only captures women in the catchment area of Osu, Labone and

Danquah Circle. The study covered only a cross section of women in Osu who used to have relaxed hair but have made a switch to natural hair. Hence, women with relaxed hair were not considered in this study.

The researcher had to find other salon operators who were willing to be interviewed without being paid. This was because some salon operators wanted to be paid before they will allow to be interviewed. As a result, the study was not able to interview many salon operators for their views on the topic.

Chapter 4

This chapter begins with the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the field through questionnaires that were administered. The final part of this chapter is an interview report on salon owners in Osu regarding their opinions on the wearing of natural hair by their clients.

4.1 Data Analysis

The number of questionnaires received at the end of the data gathering was 53 out of a total of 60. Seven of the questionnaires were not filled according to specifications and thus they were not included in the final submission. This is because the respondents chose to answer specific questions in the questionnaire and declined to answer the rest of the questions claiming it was for personal reasons. However, the rest of the respondents were willing and interested in answering all the required questions and did not have any reasons for not answering a particular question or the whole questionnaire. The findings have been represented in the form of bar charts to aid in the understanding of the data.

4.2 Age range of respondents

As shown below in the chart, most of the respondents or thirty respondents were in the 18 – 28 age range.

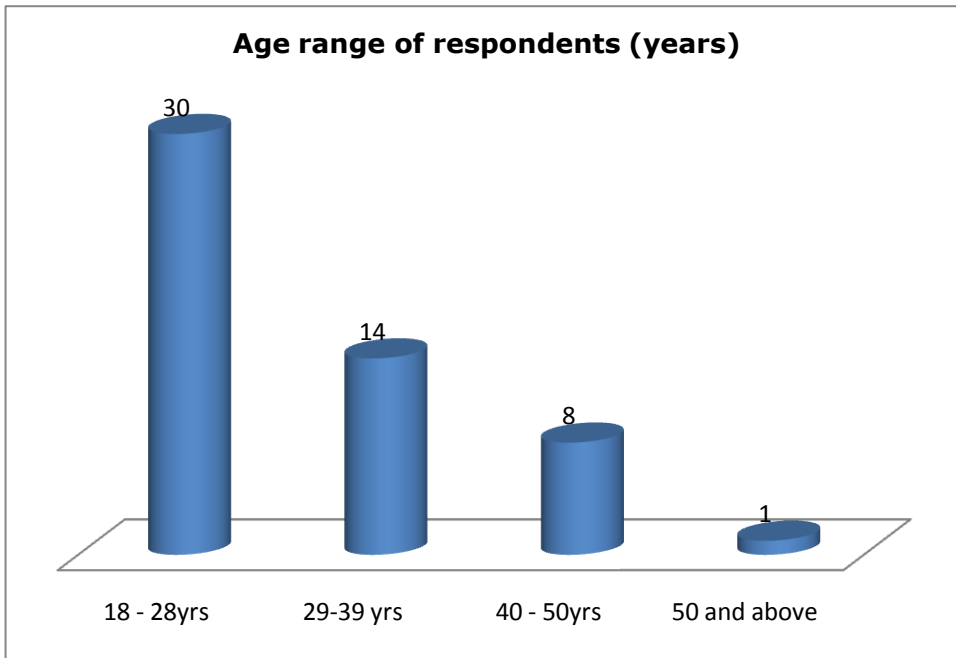


Figure 4.2.1

This age group represents 56% of the sample indicating that young people are embracing natural hair. This result affirms what both salon operators said about more young women turning to natural hair.

4.3 Respondents who had relaxed hair within the last three years.

Almost half of the respondents (51%) had began wearing natural hair before the last three years, indicating that perhaps the trend is not as recent as thought of before. Contrary to what this study proposed earlier, a greater number of the respondents who used to have relaxed hair within the last three years cited other reasons apart from cost, black consciousness, fashion trend and injury from relaxers as the main reasons for "going natural".

4.4 Reasons why respondents switched from relaxed hair to natural hair

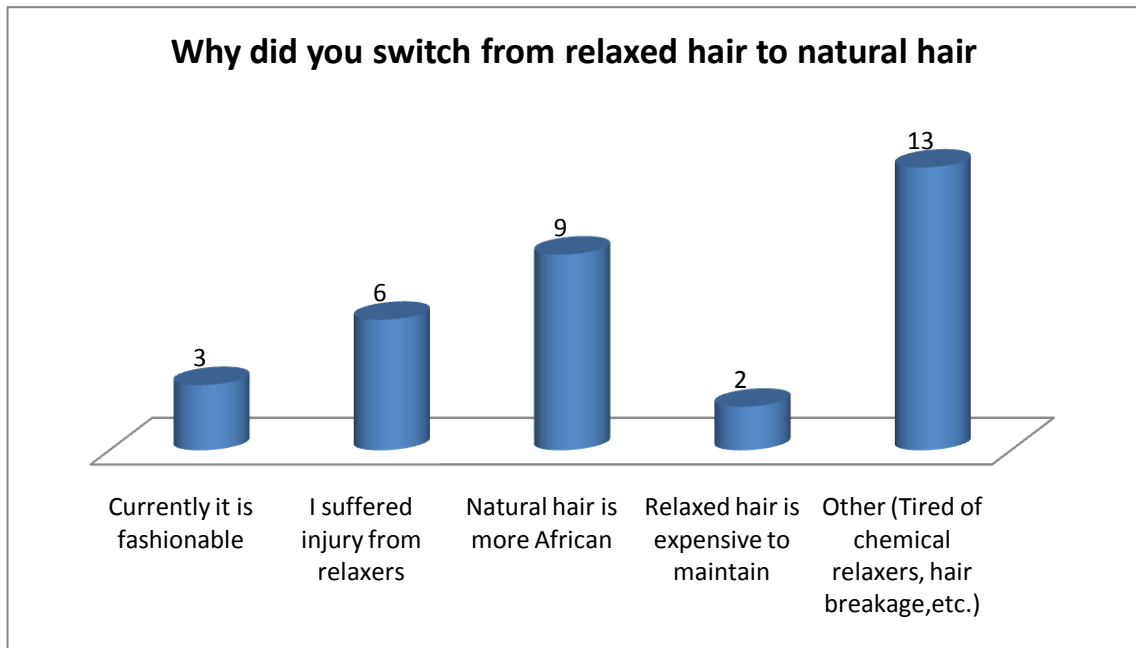


Figure 4.4.1

13 respondents representing 24.5% of the sample cited other reasons such their being fed up with hair relaxers and hair breakage as the main reasons which informed their decision to “go natural”. Aside other reasons than the ones previously stated, nine respondents said that they switched from relaxed to natural hair because natural hair was more African. This goes to show that there is in fact some relationship between black consciousness and the preference for natural hairstyles. Young women are beginning to rediscover themselves as Africans and they are doing this through the wearing of natural hair.

The third major reason why women switched from relaxed hair was because they had suffered injury from relaxers. During a “touch up”, open

cuts on the scalp can occur as a result of the relaxer staying in the hair for too long before being rinsed out or simply because the relaxer is very harsh. Cuts are usually expected with "touch ups", it showed how strong a relaxer was but now it seems that young women are not willing to put up with cuts any more. Manufactureres of hair care products could bear this in mind and perhaps pursue milder relaxers that are less damaging to the scalp.

4.5 Is natural hair cheaper compared to relaxed hair?

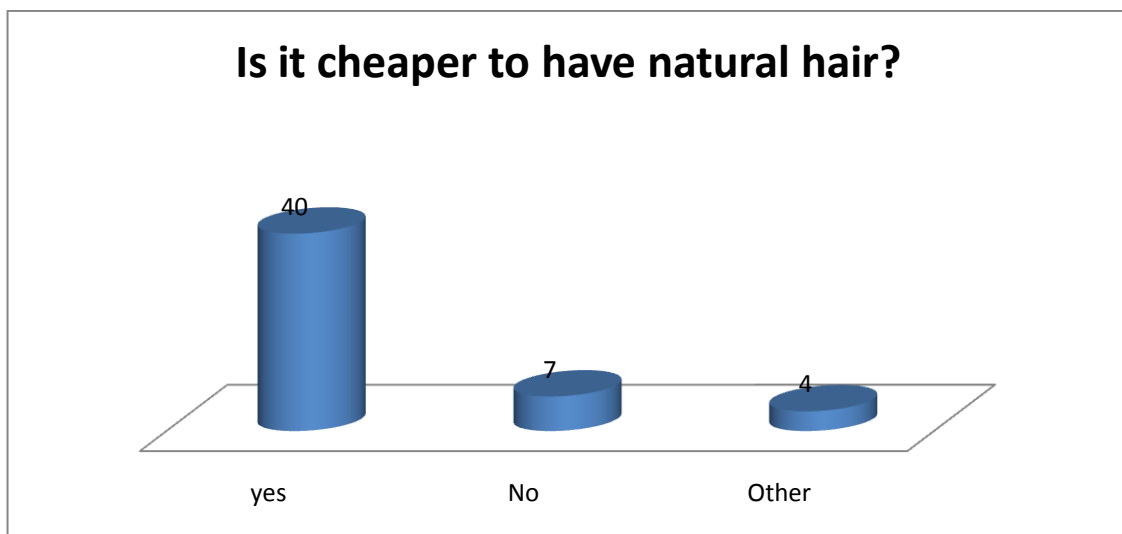


Figure 4.5.1

Interestingly, only two respondents said that relaxed hair was expensive to maintain, this goes to support the conclusion drawn earlier that cost is not necessarily a very strong determining factor in the choice of hairstyles by women in the area under study.

As to whether it was cheaper to have natural hair, most women responded in the affirmative considering other reasons such as it reduces the

number of times they went to the salon while others did not go to salons at all. Some women had their hair twisted by relatives or by themselves. Close analysis revealed that although some respondents seem to pay more than they used to when they had relaxed hair, they felt it was cheaper because they did not have to pay that much on a weekly basis as they did when they had relaxed hair. The fact that they did not have to go to the salon regularly (weekly) was less time consuming for them and thus cost effective.

When women have natural hair, their visit on average to a salon is once a month or when they need to change their hairstyle. When they have relaxed hair, they need to go the salon every week, sometimes twice in a week to wash and style the hair. With every visit they pay an amount for the service. This means that if it costs for instance 10Ghana cedis to wash your hair at the salon every week and you have relaxed hair, then in a month you would have spent 40 Ghana cedis. A woman with natural hair visits the salon at an average of once a month. If she spends 20Ghana cedis on her hair with regards to washing and styling, then her total cost for the month is 20 Ghana cedis.

Drawing a comparison, the woman with relaxed hair goes to the salon four times and spends 40Ghana cedis while the woman with natural hair goes to the salon once a month and spends 20Ghana cedis. For most respondents the reduction in salon visits per month was cost effective for them. Simply put, natural hair saves these women the time and money that they would have spent at the salon every week.

4.6 Do respondents feel more African with natural hair?

This question was asked in order to examine if there is a relationship between natural hair and black consciousness. Forty women representing 75.5% of the respondents said that they felt more African with natural hair. Seven women representing 13.2% of respondents said they did not feel African with natural hair while four respondents representing 7.5% of respondents said it did not really matter and felt indifferent.

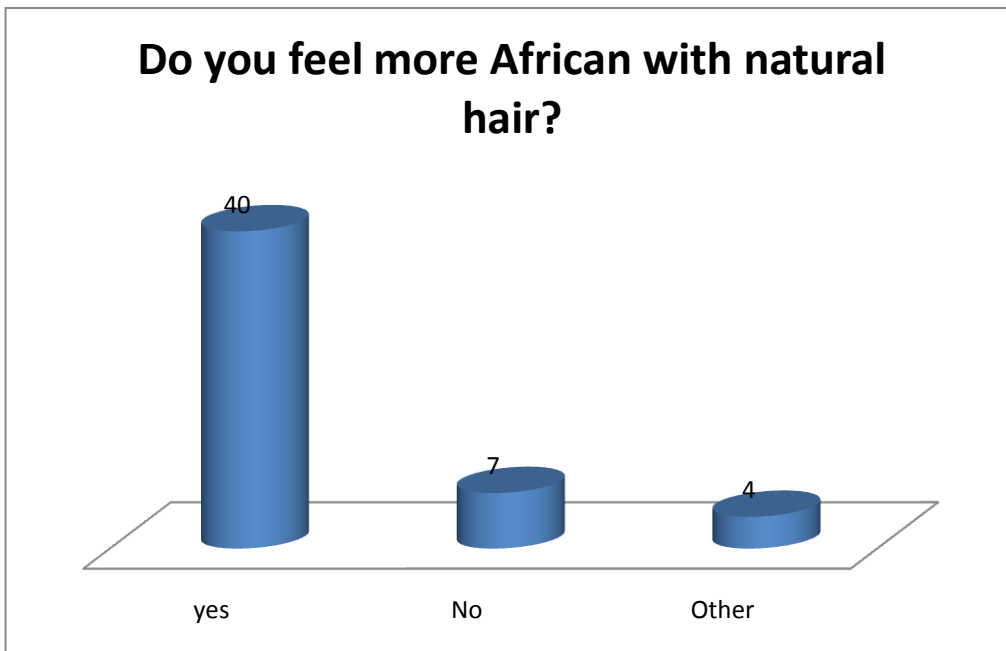


Figure 4.6.1

4.7 Reasons why respondents maintain their hair natural

This question provided multiple answers and respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer that applies to them. The result showed, the reason for women in the study keeping their hair natural was because they felt more African and that natural hair is fashionable now. Aside this, they did not

have to worry about the burns that come with hair relaxing. The fourth reason for maintaining natural hair was that it cost less. Inferring from the chart, another reason why women are keeping their hair natural is because they do not have to worry about burns from relaxers and it was cheaper to keep natural hair.

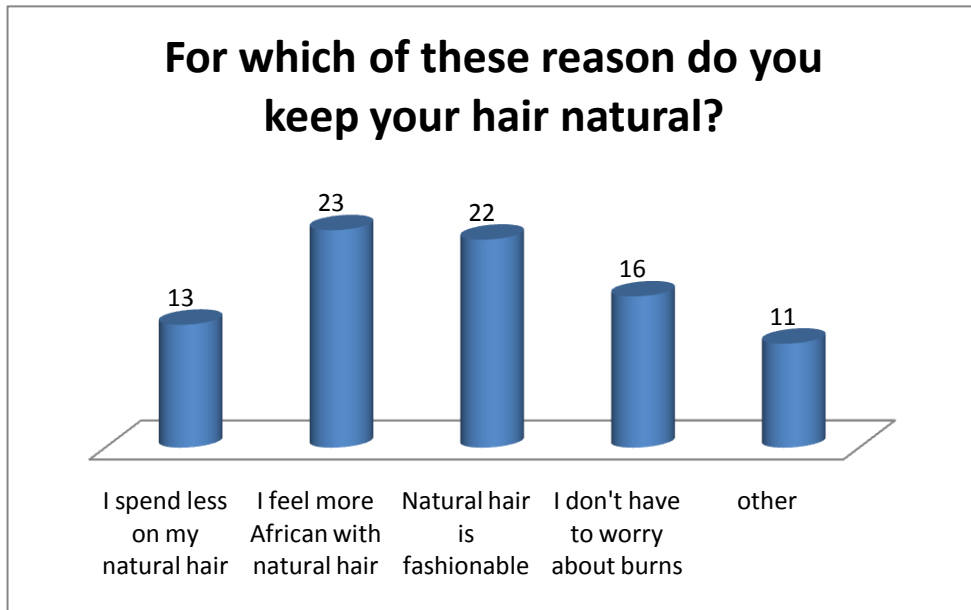


Figure 4.7.1

4.8 Are respondents considering relaxing their hair again?

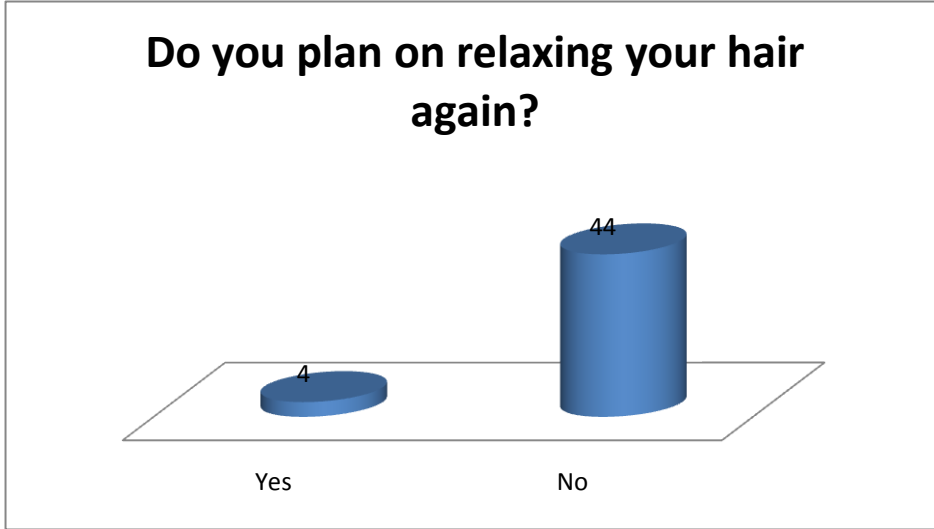


Figure 4.8.1

The question on whether women with natural hair planned to go back to relaxed hair was asked in order to assess whether the wearing of natural hair was just a fashion trend that will soon fade or a practice that has the potential to stay. Forty-four respondents representing 83% of the sample said that they do not plan on relaxing their hair again while another four respondents representing 7.5% said that they plan to relax their hair again. The remaining five respondents representing 9.5% were not sure if they would or would not relax their hair again.

We can infer from this data that natural hair is not about to fade out in a short time, more women have more or less imbibed it as a lifestyle and this interestingly presents a stable market for salons and natural hair care product manufactureres to take advantage of.

4.9 Would respondents encourage other women to wear natural hair?

70% of the respondents admitted they would encourage women in the country to “go natural” with the most recurring reason being that natural hair is cheaper and low maintenance. Others also supported their answers with statements such as “it’s not as difficult to keep as people say it is”, “we don’t need all these chemicals, this is the way we were made originally”, and “we need to celebrate our God given hair and our men love it.”

In a culture like ours where word of mouth is usually the most effective and fast mode of transmitting information, it will not be far fetched to say that more women will embrace natural hair because they have seen their friends do it and thus the culture of natural hair has perhaps come to stay. It might not be adopted by every woman, but it has created so far a niche market and has the potential to create a new segment in the black hair care industry in Osu at least.

5.0 Interview with salon operators and women with natural hair.

According to the owner of Body Kitchen, a salon which caters to both relaxed and natural hair, the percentage of women switching to natural hair has increased. There seems to be some sort of awakening. People have realized that too much chemicals in the hair is not healthy. Now we have learnt how to work with natural hair in addition to the hair relaxing. The industry is changing; if you do not adjust then you will go out of business.

There are working women with natural hair who come to do their hair. They do not complain about their employers' insisting on relaxed hair. Most of the clientele are young, more young women are going natural these days. Asked if she thinks natural hair is just another trend that will soon fade out, she says "more people are going natural and I think within the next five years, natural hair will still be around." According to her, "natural hair needs to be maintained, you need to wash it, condition it with coconut oil or Shea butter. In a way, the white influence has taught us that our hair is "hard" and therefore harder to maintain but in the olden days our forefathers didn't know whether the hair was hard or not but they still treated their hair with Shea butter and Shea butter is really good for natural hair. I think relaxed hair is harder to maintain because you have to wash it regularly but with the natural hair you can keep it for almost three months before you change it."

Asked whether she would encourage other women to go natural, her response was, "Yes. I think it's easier to maintain compared to relaxed hair. All you need is to treat it with Shea butter. You can use a natural hair spray to give it some shine."

The salon operator commented that women abroad have also bought into the natural hair phenomenon. She cited her niece outside the country who had also gone natural and solely uses Shea butter to moisturize her hair and to grow it. She says, she often purchases Shea butter coming from the north of the country and sends it to her niece abroad. She also uses Shea butter for

her hair and at her salon for the treatment of natural hair. She maintains that Shea butter is the best for natural hair.

Twists and Locks is a salon that caters to only natural hair. Salon Manager Mary says that the future is bright for natural hair because more women are opting for natural hair. According to her, most of the women who turn to natural hair do so because they are fed up with the chemicals from hair relaxers. Asked why they have only one shop currently, she says that plans are underway to open another branch probably in Tema because most of their clientele come from that area. She says contrary to what many people think, natural hair can be worn in a variety of styles and can be grown to a longer length just like relaxed hair. Also unlike relaxed hair, one does not need to visit the salon weekly or for the purpose of washing and styling because a natural hair style such as twists can be worn for a month or two without washing. Mary says she would encourage women to “go natural” because it is a healthier alternative and with natural hair you do not have to worry about hair breakage and other hair problems associated with relaxed hair.

Brief interviews with women with natural hair such as twists and dreadlocks revealed varying reasons for the switch from hair relaxing. Those I interacted with expressed the need to feel different and that natural hair actually did not require much monetary investment as relaxed hair that needed to be washed and styled every week. Being a convert to natural hair, one woman expressed the reason for her switch stemmed from the often

painful process of hair relaxing due to the harsh nature of relaxer crèmes, her increasing spending on hair pieces but most importantly a subtle but strong feeling of black consciousness.

Chapter 5

5.0 Recommendations and Conclusion

This chapter provides an outline of the findings of the study and draws conclusions with respect to the data presented. Furthermore, the researcher spells out some important recommendations which will help salon operators and hair care product manufacturers to take advantage of consumers' preference for natural hair.

5.1 Recommendations

Women in Accra are opting for natural because they are dissatisfied with chemical hair relaxers. With more women wearing their hair natural, the demand for natural hair care products is sure to increase, what this means for manufacturers of hair care products is that they need to formulate products to cater for women with natural hair. Therefore instead of concentrating on producing chemical hair relaxers alone, manufacturers should diversify their products to include natural hair products. This is because their consumers' preference has changed towards natural hair. Failure to diversify their products to suit the change in preference in the market will most likely result in manufacturers losing consumers altogether.

For salons that cater to only natural hair, this survey has proven that there is a market for them which represent a demand for their services. Knowing that their target market is young women, they can take advantage of the situation to focus their marketing strategies on attracting young women with natural hair to purchase their services.

As women switch from relaxed hair to natural hair, it does not mean that they will no longer need the services of salons. Therefore salons who originally cater to only relaxed hair can still maintain their clients when they switch to natural hair. Such salons need to diversify their services to include natural hairstyles. The recommendation for salon operators is that, if they want to stay in business, now they need to offer natural hair care services because natural hair is the fashion craze now. As the owner of Body Kitchen at Danquah bluntly put it, "the industry is changing; if you do not adjust then you will go out of business".

5.2 Conclusion

Before gathering data from the field, a short survey was conducted in which prices of natural hairstyles and relaxed hairstyles were compared from five salons in Osu. The result indicated that the cost associated with natural hair was less than that of relaxed hair. Comparing this to data gathered from the field, a conclusion was therefore drawn that the cost of a hairstyle is not the sole reason behind women's preference for natural hair. Among the other reasons stated by respondents was that they were no longer interested in chemical relaxers. One statement simply read "tired of the chemicals". Also some women experienced hair breakages with the use of chemical relaxers and so they sought natural hair as an alternative.

It was also found that some women are becoming more conscious of their African identity and they are expressing it through wearing their hair

natural. Also many of the respondents agreed that natural hair was fashionable and cost less.

From the findings it is clear that young women are opting for natural hair due to reasons such as it being fashionable, their need to feel more African and their dissatisfaction with hair relaxers. What does this mean for the hair industry in Osu, Accra and Africa? It means that Eurocentric hairstyles are no longer appealing to some African women especially young women. Again, it means that younger women now find natural hair appealing therefore salons need to learn how to care for and work with natural hair to come out with creative natural hairstyles for these women so that they are able to attract them to come to the salons.

This paper set out to find if some women in Accra were opting for natural hair because of cost, fashion, black consciousness or suffered injury from relaxers. Contrary to the reasons stated, women were opting for natural hair simply because they were no longer interested in chemical hair relaxers and found natural hair to be a better alternative. However, the findings also showed that respondents considered natural hair more African, fashionable and cost effective.

The literature review at the beginning of this paper suggested that African women relaxed their hair in pursuit of a Eurocentric standard of beauty. This paper found that women in Accra have begun to redefine their standard of beauty to project their African identity by wearing their hair natural.

Information gathered from the study went on to confirm the theories put forward at the beginning of this paper. It was found out that the women in the study felt more African with natural hair confirming the first theory that women with a high black consciousness will wear their hair natural. Also, it was gathered that natural hair was cheaper to have than relaxed hair, this supports the second theory stated earlier that there will be a positive relationship between the cost of natural hair and the preference for it. Again, it was found that some women switched to natural hair because they had suffered injury from hair relaxers. Last but not the least, responses from the study showed that women considered natural hair currently fashionable.

The objective of this paper was to examine the factors that influenced women's decision to wear a particular hairstyle in this case, natural hair. The research show that cost, black consciousness, fashion, injury from relaxers and most importantly dissatisfaction with hair relaxers account for the reasons why women in Osu, Labone, and Danquah wear their hair natural. From the data analysis, it was made known that these women saw the wearing of their hair natural as an affirmation of their African identity.

Finally, the research has established that the preference for natural hair by women has caused a change in the hair care industry in Osu because salon operators have had to adjust their services to cater for natural hairstyles.

As said in the opening sentence of this paper, a woman's hair is her crowning glory. It is on this crowning glory, particularly that of African

women that a billion dollar industry is built and sustained, providing employment for the operators of salons and hair product manufacturers. Over the years women in Ghana have relied on hair relaxers to turn their natural hair to relaxed hair, imploring weaves to add more volume and style, now some are beginning to go back to the natural hair.

So from natural hair to relaxed hair then back to natural hair, what are Ghanaian women and African women saying to themselves and to the world? That their hair is worth wearing in the same state as it grows out of their scalp, unaltered by chemicals and worth appreciating because it is an extension of their identity as African women. Then again perhaps the statements of these women from the study say it better, "we were born with kinky hair, why try to fix something you were born with?", "we don't need all these chemicals, this is the way we were made originally", and finally "it gives you a sense of identity and removes the need to hide behind artificial products to look beautiful. "

References

- Achebe, Chinua. (2000). *Things Fall Apart*. Oxford:Heinemann
- Angelou, Maya. (2001). *Good Hair*.
- Atinga Ayinbora Samuel. (2006). Death and Dying, A Study of the Mortuary Rites of the Frafra of Northern Ghana in the Light of the Christian Funeral Liturgy, An Attempt at Inculturation. Catholic University, Leuven. Faculty of Theology. Retrieved from [https://repository.libis.kuleuven.be/dspace/bitstream/1979/340/2/Death and Dying - Samuel Ayinbora Atinga.pdf](https://repository.libis.kuleuven.be/dspace/bitstream/1979/340/2/Death_and_Dying_-_Samuel_Ayinbora_Atinga.pdf)
- Bellinger, Whitney. (2007). *Why African American Women try to obtain "Good Hair"*. University of Pittsburgh at Bradford. Retrieved from: <http://www.pasocsociety.org/bellinger.pdf>.
- Byrd, Ayana D. and Lori I, Tharps. (2001). *Hair Story: Untangling the Roots of Black Hair in America*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Douglas, Jennifer. (2007). African American Women and Hair: A Theological Reflection. Retrieved from: http://people.bu.edu/wwildman/WeirdWildWeb/courses/thth/projects/thth_projects_2007_jennifer_douglas.pdf
- Emelumadu , Chikodili. (2009). BBC Africa Have Your Say. Retrieved from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/8330482.stm>
- Koppelman, Connie. (1996). The Politics of Hair. *A Journal of Women Studies, Vol. 17, No. 2 (1996), pp. 87-88*
Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3346594>.
- Lester, Neal A. (2000) .Nappy Edges and Goldilocks: African American Daughters and the Politics of Hair. *Project Muse, The Lion and the Unicorn, Volume 24, pp 201-224*. Retrieved from: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/lion_and_the_unicorn/v024/24.2lester.html
- Nyamnjoh Francis B, Durham Deborah, Fokwang Jude D. (2002).The Domestication of Hair and Modernized Consciousness in Cameroon: A Critique in the Context of Globalization. *Identity, Culture and Politics Volume 3, Number 2, Pp 22*. Retrieved from: http://www.nyamnjoh.com/files/nyamnjoh_etal.pdf.
- Ogunwale A, Titus. (1972).Traditional Hairdressing in Nigeria. *African Arts, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 44-45*. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3334568>.
- Owusu, Adoma Akosua. (2008). Me Broni Ba. Obibini Pictures.

- Patton, Tracy. (2006). Hey Girl, Am I More than My Hair? : African American Women and Their Struggles with Beauty, Body Image, and Hair. *NWSA Journal*. Retrieved from: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/nwsa_journal/v018/18.2patton.html.
- Richard, A. Cicely. The History of Hair Relaxers. eHOW. Retrieved from http://www.ehow.com/about_5098213_history-hair-relaxers.html
- Rosenthal, Angela. (2004). Raising Hair. *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 1-16. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30053625>.
- Rosette Shelby Ashleigh, Tracy L. Dumas. (2007). The Hair Dilemma: Conform To Mainstream Expectations Or Emphasize Racial Identity. *Duke Journal Of Gender Law and Policy*. Vol, 14:407, Pp 10. Retrieved from: <http://www.law.duke.edu/shell/cite.pl?14+Duke+J.+Gender+L.+&+Pol%27y+407>.
- Roy, Lucinder. (1988). If You Know Black Hair. *Callaloo*, No. 36, p. 553. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2931536>.
- Sherrow, Victoria. Encyclopaedia of Hair: a cultural history. (2006). Pp 186. Retrieved from [:http://books.google.com.gh/books?id=9Z6vCGbf66YC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Sherrow,+Victoria.+Encyclopaedia+of+Hair:+a+cultural+history&source=bl&ots=YJ78AZn7s7&sig=3fw-7KqFiLampLjl49r3br5c-ZA&hl=en&ei=UEULTcq4LMGLswb_1cDyDA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CEMQ6AEwBw#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com.gh/books?id=9Z6vCGbf66YC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Sherrow,+Victoria.+Encyclopaedia+of+Hair:+a+cultural+history&source=bl&ots=YJ78AZn7s7&sig=3fw-7KqFiLampLjl49r3br5c-ZA&hl=en&ei=UEULTcq4LMGLswb_1cDyDA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CEMQ6AEwBw#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- Sieber, Roy and Herreman, Frank. (2000). Hair in African Art and Culture. *African Arts*, Vol. 33, No. 3 pp 54-69+96. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3337689>
- Stilson Jeff, Dir. (2009). Good Hair. Chris Rock, HBO Films.
- Wetz, Rose. (2001). Women and Their Hair: Seeking Power through Resistance and Accommodation. *Gender and Society*, Vol. 15, No. 5 pp. 667-686. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3081969>.
- White Shane, White Graham. (1995). Slave Hair and African American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol 61, pp. 45-76. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2211360>.

Appendix 1



Europe supported by Africa and America (1796) – William Blake

Appendix 2

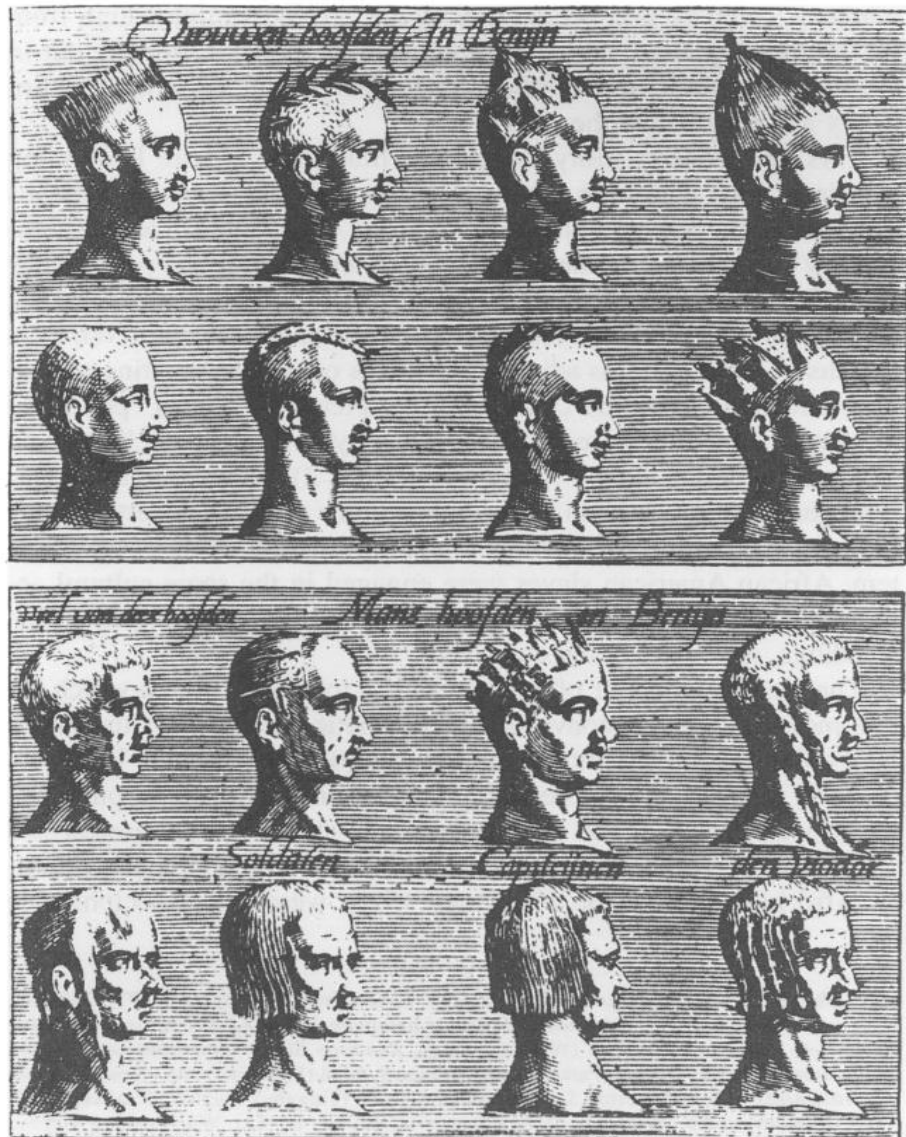


Illustration 2. *Women's heads in Benyn and Men's heads in Benyn*

Women's heads in Benyn and Men's heads in Benyn (Soldiers; Captains; the Viador). Plate taken from *Description and Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea* by Pieter de Marees. (Oxford, Eng. and other cities, 1987 [originally published, 1602]). Reproduced courtesy of the British Library (shelfmark: Yc 1988.B. 7796).

Appendix 3

Sample of Questionnaire

Dear respondent, my name is Sena Can-Tamakloe, a fourth year student and this questionnaire forms part of my final thesis submission which is a requirement for graduation from Ashesi University. Data collected is solely for academic purposes. You can contact me by e-mail at slctamakloe@ashesi.edu.gh if you want to receive feedback regarding the finished project. Please answer all questions by circling or ticking the corresponding response. Thank you.

1. Please indicate your age.
a) 18 – 28yrs b) 29 – 39yrs c) 40 – 50yrs d) 50 and above

2. What is your occupation?
.....

3. Within the last three years, did you ever have relaxed hair?
a) Yes b) No

[If no, please go to Question 8]

4. Why did you relax your hair then? **[You can circle more than one reason]**

- a) Relaxed hair was easier to comb b) Natural hair was not fashionable
c) Hair relaxing was the norm d) It seemed cheaper

Other (please specify)
.....

5. How often did you have to visit the salon when you had relaxed hair?
a) Weekly b) Monthly c) Every other week d) Every other month

Other (please specify).....

6. In a month, how much did you spend to maintain your relaxed hair with regards to washing and "touch up"?

GH¢.....

7. Why did you switch from relaxed hair to natural hair ?
- a) Currently it is fashionable b) I suffered injury from relaxers
c) Natural hair is more African d) relaxed hair is expensive to maintain
Other(specify).....
8. How often do you visit the salon now that you have natural hair?
- a) Weekly b) Monthly c) Every other week d) Every other month
Other(please specify).....
9. Now, in a month how much do you spend now on your natural hair with regards to washing and styling?
- GH¢.....
10. In your opinion, is it cheaper to have natural hair?
- a) Yes b) No
Other.....
11. Do you feel more African now that you wear your hair natural?
- a) Yes b) No
Other.....
12. Compared to relaxed hair do you feel equally beautiful /attractive with natural hair?
- a) Yes b) No
Other.....
- 13.** For which of these reasons do you keep your hair natural? **[You may circle more than one].**
- a) I spend less on my natural hair b) I feel more African with natural hair
c) Natural hair is fashionable d) I don't have to worry about burns
Other.....
.....

Appendix 4

Average cost of relaxed hair care procedures within the areas of Osu, Labone and Danquah upon one salon visit.

Salon	Touch – Up	Washing	Weave
1	¢13, ¢15 , ¢25	¢8 , ¢10	¢20 , ¢30
2	¢10	¢8 , ¢10	¢18 , ¢20
3	¢10	¢10	¢20
4	¢15, ¢25	¢7	¢25 , ¢35
5	¢15	¢10	¢25 , ¢45
Average	GH ¢14.6	GH¢ 9	GH¢ 25.8

Average cost of natural hairdo within the Osu, Labone and Danquah areas.

Salon	Cost of Natural hairdo
1	GH¢ 10
2	GH¢ 15 , GH¢ 20
3	GH¢ 20
Average	15.83