

The Influence Of Feminine Hairstyles And Job Acquisition In Ghana

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Abstract: Fashionable hairstyles have played important roles in the lives of humans especially women for decades. The expressions of these varied hairstyles mostly showcased by women have become a symbolic and iconic association. The electronic and the print media normally portray hairstyles of diverse popular cultures both locally and worldwide for human consumption. These wide coverage's on different hairstyles on our television sets and newspapers have created huge impacts on the youths of today and even work settings. The study aims to look at the influence of female hairstyles to job seeking in Ghana, also to explore on the selection of hairstyles when women are seeking for jobs and finally, analyze the perception and impact these hairstyles have on job seeking. This study made use of descriptive design which fall under qualitative methodology. The population involved all feminine genders who have completed university and are seeking for employment in the Ewutu Efutu Municipality. A sample size of 8 ladies and 2 managers' were considered and convenient random sampling technique employed on the selection of the sample. The outcome from the study said that first impressions count when it comes to job acquisitions in terms of appearance and the way one position herself to the kind of employment one is seeking for in the society. It was, therefore, suggested that women should pay critical attention to their appearance because it talks louder about them when seeking for a job.

Keywords: hairstyles, job seeking, feminine.

I. INTRODUCTION

The diverse lifestyles that we have in our society have made most women to adopt different hairstyles as a form of group identities during social gatherings which have equally been adopted by most men especially the youth. The cross-section of the hair shaft may be divided roughly into three zones such as the cuticle, cortex and medulla (Fogelman, 1997) which is located in the dermis and maintains stem cells, which not only re-grow the hair after it falls out, but also are recruited to regrow skin after wounds are created and that is the part beneath the skin, called the hair follicle (Krause and Foitzik 2006). Agreeing to the above assertions Robbins (2012) posits that the human hair as a biosynthesized material that has a complex internal structure of around 20-180 μ m in width, and grows to a length of approximately 90cm which it consist of many layers. He added that, the cuticles are the

outermost layer formed by flat overlapping cells in a scale-like formation. Also, the outmost layer of the cuticle, the epicuticle, is a lipoprotein membrane that is estimated to be 10-14nm thick. (Swift & Smith, 2001). This is well known as it is been revealed by x-ray's detailed diffractions of the molecular structure of the human hair (Doucet & Briki, 2004).

Hairs and its ways of styling has been an important and confusing aspect in the lives of women. According to Patton (2006) over centuries hair and hairstyling among the African women have been very creative from the 15th century, since then, there has been various evidence of meaning and symbols attached to Africa hairstyling and also perceived hair styling as being more than just aesthetics, which formed part of people's sense of identity and still has its roots deepened from the past till today as most women are seen gathered to do each other's hair. Sieber and Herreman, (2000) state that, hairstyling in Africa could be kept in so many ways, be it short

or long, braided or modelled, lengthwise or crosswise, oiled or dyed and rubbed with different pigments which serves as an aesthetic function of adding beauty to the human body.

The women in Effutu municipal, transformed their hairs in many different styles such as sewn-in weaves, braids, relaxed, hot combed, permed and locked to augment their facial looks and apparels of their outfits. This is supported by (Mercer 1989; Erasmus, 1997) who expressed a similar view that hair is an organic matter and part of the human body which has been subjected to manipulation and styling throughout history and plays a vital role in the lives of Africa people, which has always carried social meanings, symbol of status or as a fashion statement. The interest in hairstyling continues throughout their lives and is associated with individual and social issues of identity and beauty (white, 2010).

The evolution of these hairstyle trends in our present-day has contributed a lot to the perception of female hairstyle modesty. Lim, Rin and Kim, (2007) add that most women use hairstyle as a symbol of social status and wealth with royal women playing a leading role in showing malignant ostentation by large and high hairstyles which displayed to emphasize sexual appeal and showed the symbol of sensuality which conflicted with the morality. Today, women's hairstyling's has received a lot of negative perception from many employers. Though styling the hair has been a definite factor in the lives of women in terms of their personality but it is unknown as to what kinds of hairstyles are best to wear when seeking for a job. This has created a vacuum making hairstyle and employment seeking a major deal even though the perception of modesty in hairstyles for job acquisitions is ill-defined.

This has opened our mind's eye to explore and examine the factors that influence the selection of hairstyles when females are looking for an employment and also analyze both the merits and demerits of employers on what they look out for in terms of acceptable modest hairstyles as criteria for female employees so that it will create an awareness on female job seekers and also serve as a reference guide for future scholars.

II. METHODOLOGY

The ontology which led to the epistemological stance of this work was coined under the constructivist theories of reasoning which falls under the qualitative method where descriptive design was employed. The study population covered all females within Effutu Municipality who have completed their university education and seeking employment and also managers who are directly involved in job employments. Population as explained by some research secrates as a group of people that are of interest to the researcher and also where the intended results from the findings apply (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005; Owusu-Afriyie, 2018). Due to the largesize of the population, purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used to select eight (8) females and two (2) human resource managers out of the total population for easy accessibility and responsive findings.

Purposive because the researcher's focus was on only graduate females seeking for jobs.

The instruments for data collection were observation and interviews where a semi-structured interview guide was used on the interviewees to extract vital information's from the respondents in addition to still live images for pictorial analysis. Further, secondary data was sorted from the libraries and the internets to gain vivid insights of what is under study. This is buttressed by Hox and Boeije, (2005) who say that secondary sources of data are imperative since they help future researchers to understand the topic and how to enhance the prior discoveries. Finally, the data received was put into thematic codes where descriptive analysis was employed.

Distributive table of sample size

Institution	Respondents	Percentages %
University of Education	3	30%
University of Ghana	2	20%
University of Cape Coast	2	20%
Trans African University	1	10%
H.R. Managers	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Source: Fieldwork

Table 1

III. FINDING

In line with the interpretive way of reasoning under the qualitative approach, the researcher used both primary and secondary data to gain insights to the objective set for the study. Data collected from the primary source was codified into themes that reflected the interview questions presented and some secondary sources of information was used to back the data collected. A semi-guided verbal interview and observational tools were used to extract constructive reasoning from the respondents based on the constructivist line of epistemology under qualitative theories. Interview data were transcribed and observational field notes were expanded. Besides, a camcorder was used to take still life photographs on the various hairstyles of the respondents the moment they were contacted to enable the researcher to appreciate the reasoning of expressionism and impressionism of aesthetic theories. The data were analyzed and presented in a descriptive and interpretative approach of emic observational reasoning of qualitative paradigm. Below are finding that came forth from the photographs, descriptive and interpretative analysis.

A. INFLUENCE OF FEMININE HAIRSTYLES FOR JOB SEEKING

A verbal question was asked during an interview forum for all the sampled respondent whether hairstyles have roles to play in job seeking. The data revealed that all the respondents (100%) shared similar views that hairs on their heads play essential roles in their living bodies. In their view's, when it comes to women, hairstyles are used to express their personality, social status or class in the society and also enhances their physical appearance to make them more gorgeous. Based on the views raised above, a follow-up

question was asked whether or not, hairstyle forms part of job-seeking requirements, eight of the interviewee respondents agreed that hairstyle forms part of job-seeking requirements and they explained that in seeking for a job, first impression always counts in terms of appearance and how one presents herself helps to satisfy the nature of the job one is seeking.

The remaining two thought otherwise and posited that in their views not all female hairstyles are acceptable for job seeking. An interviewee elaborated that though she is an all-time fan of braids, but when it comes to her going for an employment interactions, she preferred wearing bob cut hairstyle since to her, it makes her look neat, simple and presentable. Besides, one respondent said she believes that getting a job does not solely depend on how knowledgeable one is, but how you package yourself especially, your hairstyle could place you higher or lower depending on the job specification you are seeking for, and that not all hairstyles fit for some jobs since first appearance to her counts a lot. In rebuttal to the assertions made above, a respondent lamented that she is not going to use her hairstyle to perform her duties but rather she is going to use her qualification, knowledge and skills she had acquired to perform her duties at work, so in her view, hairstyles does not matter when it comes job-seeking requirements.

a. WHAT DETERMINES THE SELECTION OF FEMININE HAIRSTYLES FOR JOB EMPLOYMENTS

This interview question was asked to find out from the respondents as to what influence the selection of their hairstyle when looking for jobs. An interviewee suggested that there are many hairstyles that women look out for depending on what is in vogue, desire and what fits them best. She added that there are diverse stylized hair make-ups that comes in different forms and looks which are used to define and enhance women; these hairstyles includes bob cut, bangs or fringe, asymmetric cut, cornrow, afro, braids, dreadlocks, finger waves, perming, low haircut style, weave on, 'poni,' shaved side hairstyles and so on.

The interview data revealed that eighty per cent of the sampled respondents admitted that they are influenced by the kind of hairstyle that would make them look presentable when going to seek for jobs. Further, five of the respondents corroborated that 'poni', weave on, bob cut and braids best fits their looks and makes them feel presentable, elegant and smart because of the individual unique styles that come with it. However, two of the respondents indicated that what influence their choice of a hairstyle when going to seek for a job is the cost of the hairstyle. They pointed out that some of the female hairstyles are very expensive and time-wasting to put on, and that, it does not take expensive hairstyles to secure employment.

The thoughts emerged out of the interview findings revealed to the researcher that women staying at Effutu Municipality have diverse views concerning feminine hairstyles with job acquisition. From the findings, it became clear that the majority of the women perceive both merit and demerit in the hairstyles that they wear. Again, the finding revealed that not all stylized hair make-ups are acceptable in

the society. Since in the society, certain hairstyles are seen to erupt from the ghettos and are considered very bad which raises a lot of talk and tarnishes the image of the ones who wore them and they are tagged as uncivilized or uncultured. Whereas, other hairstyles raised above are perceived to define women lifestyles, personalities and class are considered as presentable for casual and formal occasions.

B. OBSERVATIONAL FINDINGS OF HAIRSTYLES

A careful look at the various hairstyles worn by the sampled population revealed that hairstyles have been associated with beauty as a feeling of attraction and emotional wellbeing and also in harmony with nature (Gary, 2007). It was deduced from the findings that hairstyles are an integral component in the lives of women which showcase a reflection of personalities in public. This assertion is supported by Seiber and Herreman (2000) who posited that African hairstyling could be kept in so many ways such as being short or long, braided or modelled, lengthwise or crosswise, oiled or dyed with different pigments to perform aesthetic function on their bodies.

a. TYPES OF FEMININE HAIRSTYLES OBSERVED

Cornrow: An observation of this type of hairstyle looks like raised rows of ridges which has been braided with the hands very close to the skull.



Figure 1: Braids Source: (Fieldwork 2020)

Afro: This hairstyle looks natural and has been growing for some time without an application of any chemical or pigment as well as without straightener or iron but regularly combed with an afro comb and left bushy of the head.

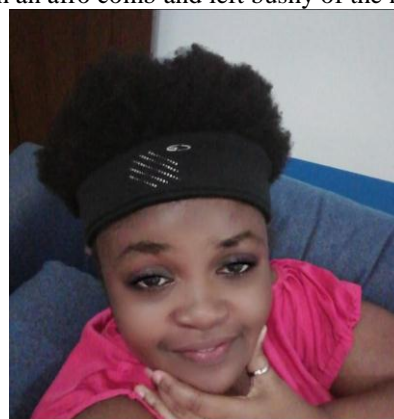


Figure 2: Afro Source: (Fieldwork 2020)

Bob cut: This is a kind of hairstyle which is short in length usually cut above the neck level with no typical layers where chemicals or twists are applied to make it wavy.

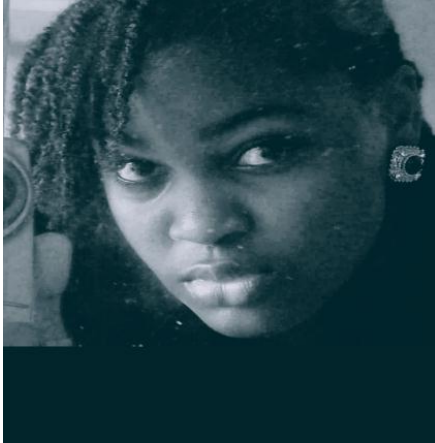


Figure 3: Bob cut Source: (Fieldwork 2020)

Braids: observation of this type of hairstyle is plaited into long strands of joined hairs which stands individually from the base of the skull hanging down close to the bottom usually woven with the hands to create 'V' like weaves.



Figure 4: Braids Source: (Fieldwork 2020)

Dreadlocks: with this kind of hairstyle, the hair is locked into sections either by braiding or hand-rolling the individual section of hairs into root-like forms. This kind of hairstyling is usually associated with Jamaicans.



Figure 5: Dreadlocks Source: (Fieldwork2020)

Perm: observational findings revealed that this type of hair is chemically treated to obtain curls which lies straight and conform to the contours of the head.



Figure 6: Permed hair Source: (Fieldwork 2020)

Natural hair: this hairstyle has not been altered by hot combs, flat irons or chemicals. Each strand of hair is grown into tiny spirals of varied lengths, textures, waviness and kinkiness all around the head.



Figure 7: Natural hair Source: (Fieldwork 2020)

High lights: this hairstyle is similar to permed hair but it involves either high lightening or dyeing the entire hairs with dyes or colouring some sections of the hair. This comes in either short or long forms.



Figure 7: Highlights Source: (Fieldworks 2020)

Weave-on: assessment of this hairstyle is an extension of hairs that have been treated and turned into permanent curly spirals, sewn onto a surface in thick and long forms and worn like a cap on the head.



Figure 8: Weave-on Source: (Fieldwork)

Low cut: this type of hairstyle is cut low to the head and shaped into the style that the customer desires. With this type, the respondent shaped it into a 'ponk' form and dyed the top part.



Figure 9: Low cut 'Coloured' Source (Fieldwork 2020)

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The changing traits of fashion trends have impacted positively on hairstyles when it comes to job seeking. From the researcher's view, hairstyling's and colouring may not be subjectively the best indicator for feminine personalities but the stereotype minds of people often influence how various hairstyles are perceived.

The findings concluded that most women would choose braids, perm, poni and con row styles since it makes them look presentable and modest when seeking for jobs. Inductive reasoning that emerged from the findings indicated that the appearance of women during job recruitment interviews tell a lot about them. This is buttressed by Weitz (2004) who stated

that the perception of people is based on their choices of hairstyles done. Indicating that in the corporate job settings, first impressions are everything and not only in job seeking which can easily work for or against one's success in that setting through policies that makes hairstyles acceptable in the workplaces since it signifies some level of professionalism.

Grazia (2012) agrees that women who turn up for a corporate job interview with long super-styled hairs are perceived as a high-maintenance and women who labours over hairstyles and appearance are seeing as people who might spend too much time on themselves and not give enough time for their work. Besides, women with a straight hair are often perceived as being more serious than those with curls; whereas women with curly hair are seeing as risk-takers people that are prepared to go out on a limb for a company (Grazia, 2012).

It is, therefore, recommended that females should pay critical attention to their appearance because appearance is everything. Other researchers should look into reasons why some hairstyles such as highlights, low cuts with colours on top or shaved side hairs are perceived as not acceptable for job placements. Again, the government, NGO's and other institutional managers should educate the general public on what individual companies and institutions would look out for before employing someone for posterity sake.

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