

African Journal of Human Kinetics, Recreation and  
Health Studies (AJHKRHS)  
ISSN 2976-7776 (Print) ISSN 2976-7784 (Online)  
Indexed by SABINET

Volume 2, Number 2, December 2024

Pp 83 - 104

## Marginality and the Exclusion Matrix: An Analysis of the Perceptions of the Physically Challenged Community Regarding Their Clothing Needs

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31920/2976-7784/2023/v2n2a5>

**Ruramai Musorowegomo**

*Ministry of Education Zimbabwe,  
Textiles Technology and Design Teacher,  
Tennyson School.  
musorowegomor@gmail.com  
+263771350520*



**\*Nyasha Cefas Zimuto**

*Ministry of Education Rwanda,  
Languages and Culture Researcher,  
Gacuba 2 Teacher Training Collage.  
nyasha.zimuto.nz@gmail.com,  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6915-7397>.  
+250792 047421*

---

### Abstract

There have been a few studies on the clothing needs of physically challenged individuals, with most of the existing literature focusing on wheelchair users. The current research aims to analyse the efforts of the contemporary community, including the creative work of designers in meeting the clothing needs of physically challenged individuals, as well as the different perspectives of the concerned community on this matter. The study primarily focused on individuals with leg, foot, and hand amputations, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, spina bifida, and spinal cord injuries. It utilised the Bulawayo

Jairos Jiri Centre as a case study to provide comprehensive and accurate information. Marginality theory and a mixed method research methodology were employed to guide the research perspective and collect and analyse data. Consequently, the study brought to the fore that physically challenged people are unhappy with the clothes in the local market since they limit them when it comes to wearing trendy and comfortable designs. The findings led to the recommendation that the skewed notion of exclusion which characterises the clothing industry when it comes to addressing people with disabilities' clothing needs must be looked into and upturned to give visibility to this marginalised group.

**Keywords:** *Clothing industry, marginality and exclusion, physically challenged people, clothing needs, designer creativity, Jairos Jiri association*

## **Introduction**

This study is an analysis of the contemporary community and designer creativity endeavours in addressing people living with leg, feet and hand amputations, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, spina bifida and spinal cord injuries here after being referred to as physically challenged people's clothing needs and the impact it has on the marginal group. Clothing is rehabilitating in nature; thus, it is also one of the tools that can be used to rehabilitate the physically challenged as it assists and helps in independent dressing and unclothing and can boost one's self-esteem. (Chukwuka et al, 2018; Wright, 2022). Thus, properly including the people in question in the design and clothing needs discourse is paramount. The problems related to the clothing aspects of the physically challenged are highly individualised because they are closely related to one's physical makeup. In most cases, clothing-related complications are regarded as the domain of caregivers, which is not easy for them to solve because most of the physically challenged people need clothing that fits their bodies which in most cases will not be of regular shape or size. In some cases, they need clothes with pockets that can be reached with much ease, with easy-to-use clasps that can be closed and opened through little arm movements while others would need support at specific areas (Feng and Hui, 2021; Chukwuka et al, 2018). Be that as it may, all these are ignored by most designers who mainly focus on able-bodied people's clothing needs only excluding the physically challenged in the process. In most cases when designers are making clothes, they do not consider physically challenged people's needs and clothing demands. The exclusion does not mean that the physically challenged and fewer of

those who assist the physically challenged do not take the problems of clothing seriously (Newton, 2017; Al John, 2021). Physically challenged people do have the desire to wear trendy clothing but many designers do not design clothes specifically for them (Gates, 2015). Like any other people who have figure irregularities, physically challenged people need clothes that accommodate some irregularities on their bodies (Mpofu, 2013). Physically challenged individuals also want dresses designed to suit their body challenges, however, these types of clothing are not readily available in the Global South clothing market (Gamawa, 2015 and Mpofu, 2013).

It is vital to note that adapted dress is defined as clothing, outfits and footwear specifically created for individuals who are physically challenged, who in most cases have difficulties in wearing clothes by themselves because of their inability to control closures such as zippers and buttons, or because of lack of a range of movement required for one to dress self (World, 2015). For this study, clothing will be used to refer to dress as well as footwear, clothing accessories and underwear. Even if the term adapted clothing has always been there and in use, many designers do not consider adaptive clothing as they design clothes in the conventional fashion industry. Tommy Hilfiger is the earliest conventional trademark on adapted clothing for kids in 2016 and then for grownups in 2018 (Morill, 2018; Madrideo, 2023). However, studies in the area of dress for individuals with physical challenges are very uncommon and scant to provide strong references to fashion designers. This squarely means that the physically challenged are excluded from the mainstream designer world and are relegated to the marginal strata of the clothing industry.

The above discussion made the researchers note that many physically challenged people at Jairosi Jiri Centre in Bulawayo face a voluminous number of related challenges when it comes to their clothing needs. Although there are such challenges there are no studies that were conducted at Jairosi Jiri Centre, and on physically challenged people in Zimbabwe in general to ascertain their clothing challenges and needs. It is against this background that it is vital that, research be carried out to identify the fashion trials met by physically challenged individuals and come up with strategies that could be adopted in designing clothing for physically challenged people. Speculative discussions hint that most clothing designers did not cater for the needs of the physically challenged in designing clothing. Accordingly, physically challenged people felt saddened by the clothing designers whom they felt side-lined them and

did not acknowledge their existence in the mainstream fashion industry. Accordingly, research needed to be carried out to identify and address challenges met by physically challenged people, and come up with strategies that could be adopted in designing clothing for physically challenged people. The study thus assesses the clothing challenges met by the physically challenged people at Jairos Jiri Bulawayo Centre in particular and the Global South in general. The study identifies the clothing challenges faced by physically challenged people at Jairos Jiri Centre in Bulawayo, as well as reveals the clothing needs of people with physical challenges in general. It also recommends strategies that can be adapted to meet the clothing needs of people with physical challenges. The research stands guided by the following questions; what are the clothing challenges faced by physically challenged people which push them to the periphery? What are the clothing preferences of people with physical challenges? Which inclusion strategies can be adapted to meet the clothing needs of people with physical challenges?

It has been noted that people who are physically challenged face challenges in finding apt clothing that affords them a decent fit as well as style. There were various reasons behind the issue. Primarily, the garments were created for individuals in the standing situation. Thoren (1996) and Suri (2016) noted that the majority of people with disabilities do not fall in the current size category, which means that their body dimensions contrast the current body dimensions in the size system. Because physically challenged people sit in wheelchairs for long periods, their spines sometimes bend or move forward (Sau-Fun, 2011) resulting in decreased trunk length (Suri 2016). Thus, the traditional proportions of the body that form the fundamentals of clothing design do not apply to these individuals. This explains why current ready-to-wear garments do not fit individuals with disabilities. Designs that are readily obtainable in the Zimbabwean markets do not afford suitable ease and/or flexibility for people who are physically challenged. Properly fitted and stylish clothing could help improve self-image and social presentation (Chang, 2009; Monks, 2012; Yin et al, 2022). However, at present, these individuals often have few choices in clothing options thus, must wear clothes that do not fit well and are not customized to their body type (Murchu and Freeman, 2023; Madrideo, 2023). The invisibility and group discrimination in the clothing industry consequently become the mainstay of this research.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Marginality is used as the lances through which this study scrutinises the data gathered from people with disabilities and the conclusions made thereof. There are a plethora of ideas and tenets on marginality, however for the current study the argument by Jagtap (2021) which avers that; marginality is an involuntary position and condition of an individual or group at the margins of social, political, and economic, ecological or biophysical systems, preventing them from access to resources, assets, services, restraining freedom of choice, preventing the development of capabilities, and eventually causing (extreme) poverty is used as the launch pad from which the marginally and excluded group's clothing needs and situation are assessed. People with disabilities are thus viewed as marginalised due to their systematic exclusion and prevention by able-bodied people from accessing designer clothes which are comfortable and stylistic in conformity to their body figures. The physically handicap for many reasons, have been excluded, exploited, and pushed to the periphery by groups considered to be better and larger by the contemporary community in the Global South. This study as a result uses marginality to give visibility to a group which has been marginal for many years. Thus visibility can only be ushered by authentic research and proper documentation which is the mainstay of this research.

## ***Research Methodology***

The section outlines the research design, the study population, the sample and sampling procedure, the data collecting instruments, the pilot study, the data collection procedure and the data analysis and summary of the section.

## ***Research Design***

The research used the mixed method. Quantitative approaches were used on issues that required numbers while qualitative tools and methods were used on aspects that could not be quantified. A qualitative approach was more appropriate for this research as the study aimed to reveal the views and experiences of the participants on the clothing problems faced by vulnerable people at the Jairos Jiri Centre. The major advantage of the use of qualitative approach was the use of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions that were able to probe the participants and

obtain detailed views, opinions and experiences that helped to expose the challenges that are being faced by physically challenged people (Douglas, 2017). The major disadvantage of qualitative research was that it was time-consuming to conduct semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, where participants were allowed to narrate their views, opinions and experiences without being interrupted (Madrideo, 2023). However, the freedom of expression resulted in authentic data since there was limited researcher intervention in the processes.

### ***Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure***

The population of the study were people living with leg and hand amputations, Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Epilepsy, Spina Bifida and Spinal Cord Injuries at Jairos Jiri Centre in Bulawayo. A population is defined as all members who can take part in a study because they share common characteristics, such as being matrons or physically challenged people, as in the current study (Ofsted, 2006). The population in the study was 387 physically challenged people (Jairosi Jiri Centre, Bulawayo, 2022). Sampling is defined as a way of selecting or identifying the area of focus or the participants to take part in the study (Castro-Arce and Vanclay, 2020). Thus this study made use of purposive sampling to choose participants. Jairosi Jiri Centre was chosen purposively, for being the place that houses physically challenged people, and one which can be easily accessible to the researcher who resided in Bulawayo. Purposive sampling was also done on the participants due to their relevance to the study. The sample constituted the Jairosi Jiri Bulawayo Director (D), Matron (M), Social Welfare Officer (SWO) and fifteen physically challenged persons (PCP). These provided authentic data since they are faced daily with the surmountable clothing challenges of the physically challenged.

### ***Data Collection Instruments***

The study, being skewed to qualitative methods, used semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The two instruments made it possible to gather in-depth views from the participants on the clothing challenges faced by the physically challenged people at Jairos Jiri Centre and the possible solutions to the challenges. Semi-structured interviews were used in the research on the Director and Matron from Jairos Jiri Centre. The interview questions were taken from the interview guide. As such, an interview guide was used to ensure that the purpose of the study

was under constant control and that all research questions for this study were addressed. The strength of a semi-structured interview is that the researchers quickly and deeply explored the given situation by asking detailed questions about the respondents' situation and not just sticking to the interview guide (Kajornboon, 2015). The main problem with semi-structured interviews was that the interviews were time-consuming. Focus group discussions were also conducted on the fifteen physically challenged persons. Focus groups are a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher (Syed and Akhter, 2018). The purpose of the focus group discussion on physically challenged people was to gather their views, their challenges, and what they suggest on their challenges. This was helpful since the researchers created a conducive environment that made the participants feel comfortable to share their views.

### ***Data Analysis***

Qualitative data was analysed by arranging it in a logical and chronological order using themes according to the research questions of the study. Categories were identified and clustered into meaningful groups (Watson and Rayner, 2017). Interviews and focus group data were examined for specific meanings. The data analyzed was presented in the form of verbatim bar graphs, histograms and pie charts. To conform with research ethics, the researchers explained to the participants the reasons and purpose of the study. Their confidentiality was made a major priority.

### ***Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion***

The last section presented how the research was conducted. The current section presents, analyses and discusses data collected through interviews and focus group discussions on eighteen participants at one institution for people living with physical disabilities in Zimbabwe.

## Demographic data

### Participant Sex

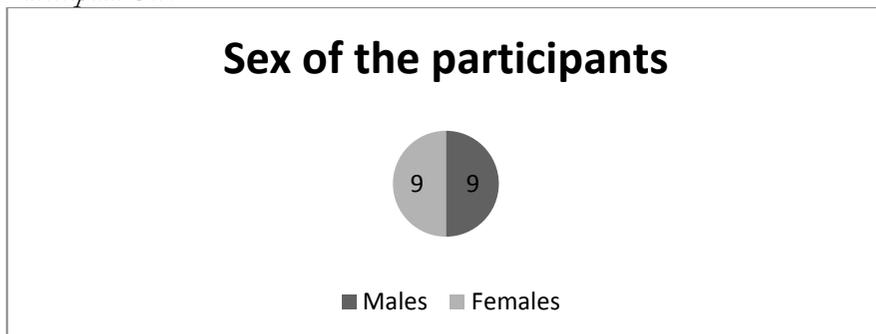


Figure 1- Sex of the participants

The results presented in Figure 1 showed that the number of males and females was similar. This, therefore, showed that the views in the study were virtually gender-balanced, and hence the views on the clothing needs of the physically challenged people were nearly balanced. Figure 2 below shows the ages of the participants.

### Age ranges

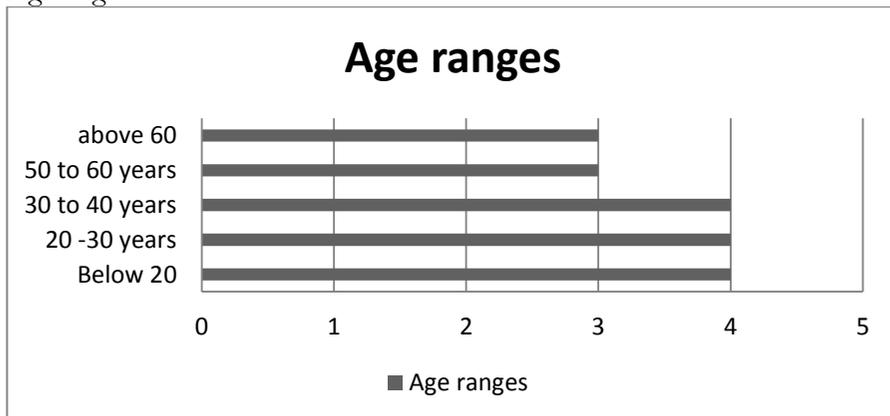


Figure 2- Showing the age ranges

The results shown in Figure 2 indicate that an almost equal representation of all ages from the young to the old was achieved. Accordingly, the clothing needs of all age groups of people living with physical challenges were catered for. Figure 3 below shows the academic qualifications of the participants.

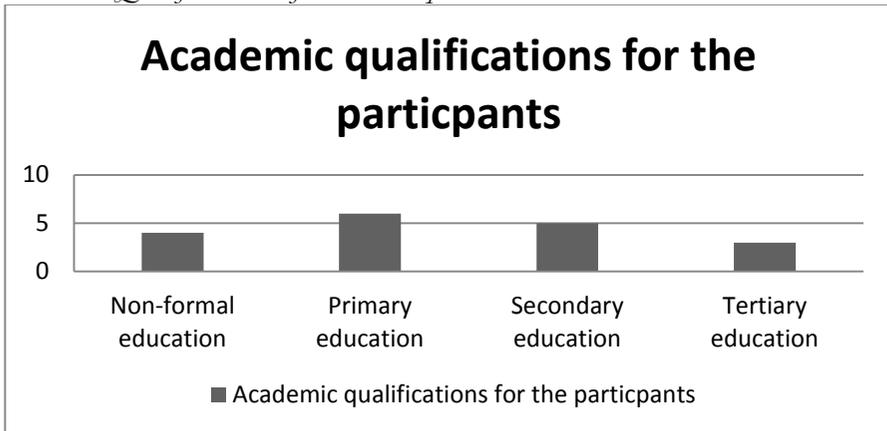
*Academic Qualifications Of The Participants*

Figure 3- Academic qualification of the participants

The results presented in Figure 3 show that the academic qualifications of the participants ranged from non-formal education to tertiary education. The results show a fair distribution at all levels of education. As such, the views expressed on the clothing needs of the people living with physical challenges were taken from participants, of a mixed bag of academic qualifications and represented all tastes and needs of people living with disabilities.

***An Analysis of Designer Creativity in Addressing Physically Challenged People's Clothing Needs.***

The objectives were to identify the clothing challenges faced by physically challenged people at Jairos Jiri Centre in Bulawayo, the clothing needs of the people with physical challenges at Jairos Jiri Centre in Bulawayo and strategies to meet the clothing needs of people with physical challenges at Jairos Jiri Centre in Bulawayo.

***Clothing Challenges Faced by Physically Challenged People at Jairos Jiri Centre in Bulawayo***

Most of the participants expressed that the clothing situation was pathetic, as most of the people were not happy with what was being worn by most individuals at the centre. This includes the challenges faced when it comes to footwear at the centre. The following were some of the responses from the participants. D stated:

The clothing of most of the persons living with disabilities is not pleasing at all. There is no one whom we can describe as happy with their clothing. M added: Most persons at the centre are wearing loose-fitting clothes, oversized and old.

Thus there is a challenge of clothes that are loose-fitting and oversized at the centre. People just wore clothes to cover their bodies and not to be smart looking which brings about confidence in individuals. The challenge results in physically challenged people not being outgoing because they will be ashamed of the clothes that negatively depict them due to them being oversized. PCP 4 concurred:

We don't have a choice when it comes to clothing. We just wear anything to cover over bodies. In most cases, we have to wear old and oversized clothing because that is what can be worn without many challenges.

Thus the group is marginalised when it comes to clothing needs. They are regarded as the 'others' who do not warrant specific considerations in the clothing industry. PCP 14 added:

We have no choice when it comes to clothing. It is just wearing what is available. In most cases, it is just this old and sized clothing. PCP 15 concurred, that even the shoes that we are given here do not consider those with amputated feet and those with paralysis.

The challenge emanates mainly from the idea that most of their clothes are donations since they are in most cases not trained and or involved in the designing and production of their clothes. Thus, the majority of the participants revealed that they acquire clothing through donations. The following were some of the responses provided by the participants. M stated that:

Most of the persons living with disabilities acquire clothing through donations from well-wishers.

PCP 2 added:

We are just called by the matron and she gives us clothes to wear, and we just collect and wear

PCP 4 added:

The centre receives clothing from donors, and we are given anything that the matron and the assistants think will fit us due to our different disabilities.

PCP 7 elaborated:

Since I got here at the centre 20 years ago, we have never bought or made any clothing for ourselves. Most of my clothes are donated by well-wishers. The matron then calls us and gives us a bundle of clothes that they think will fit us, according to our disabilities.

As a result, all participants reiterated that the major challenge emanates from the fact that the clothes that were donated did not take care of the physical disabilities, taste, size, style and fashion trends. These clothes thus were derogatory when put on due to the physical make-up of the people who receive the donations.

There is also a superfluity of other challenges that were highlighted by the participants regarding their clothing systems and the resultant exclusion in the mainstream fashion and design sphere. D stated:

The major challenge faced in clothing by people living with physical challenges is that their needs are not taken into account when donors make donations of clothing. Donors just bring in what they have, and that's what we give to our patrons. So, at the end of the day, people living with physical challenges have no choice. It is a matter of getting what is available.

M added:

We have many types of people living with physical disabilities. All of them have different clothing needs, but the clothes we get do not cater for these needs. In the end, we just give people oversized clothing to cater for all needs.

PCP 1 stated:

The clothing that we get does not hide our disability as we would wish for, but instead makes our disability more pronounced.

PCP 3 added:

We would wish for clothing that reduces our dependency on other people to wear. But with these clothes we have, we have to ask others to come and help us as we wear them. Some are too tight, and some lose that without assistance we get entangled in them and sometimes fall.

PCP 7 concurred:

Without the ability to use our hands, we require clothing that requires less time to wear, takes care of our safety into consideration, and also makes us look presentable. However, most of the clothes that we get do not cater for these needs. As such, we have lots of challenges when attempting to wear donated clothing.

Thus the wearing process is a dilemma for most physically challenged people. The donated clothes make them dependants and a burden to other people thereby enhancing the chances of them being ill-treated. The dependence syndrome created by the clothes makes it almost impossible for this marginalised group to live independently which generates self-reliance in individuals.

The participants also stated that the major catalyst of all their challenges was that they were not consulted in choosing and designing the clothing that came to them mainly due to financial constraints. The following were some of the views expressed by the participants. D stated:

As much as we would like to take into consideration the needs of the people living with physical challenges, the root problem is that as a centre, we do not have the financial resources to buy clothing as per the specifications of the people that we have. We work with donations, and that is what we can provide.

M added:

The centre has no resources to cater for individual needs. We could ask them about their needs, but we do not have the resources to go and buy clothing that suits them best. Neither do we have control over what is donated. We cannot specify the needs of our patrons to the donors. That is the root cause of our problems.

PCP 11 summarized:

We have no power over what we are made to wear. Without money, we have no power to have our needs taken into consideration. We just have to do with what is available, just to cover our skins, despite our needs.

This clearly shows that physically challenged people are excluded from the economics of the country. If they were economically empowered they could be able to buy themselves proper fitting clothes. Thus the exclusion along body feature lines has resulted in physically challenged people being poor and receivers at the mercy of the able-bodied. The findings unravelled by the participants showed that most of the people with physical challenges are not happy and comfortable with the clothing at their disposal. The findings revealed that the major challenges were that the clothes that are donated do not take care of the physical disabilities, taste, size, style and fashion trends. The findings further exposed that the root cause of all the challenges was that the people living with physical challenges did not have the financial resources to purchase clothing according to their physical disability needs. The idea is that the dress needs of physically challenged individuals are garments that can cover their physical challenges, reduce reliance on their caregiver, need less time to put on, serviceable and resilient, not costly, sustainable, aptness, protection and nice-looking. Taking into consideration the above needs gives them a sense of community belonging. Designers are to take into consideration the requirements of physically challenged people before designing and making garments for them. Thus caretakers ought to always have physically challenged people's needs in mind whenever they are dressing people with physical challenges (Chukwuka et al., 2018; Mataraarachchi et al, 2018; Wright, 2022). Taking care of the different needs according to body features will result in a community with physically challenged people who are active in the day-to-day activities of their communities.

### ***Clothing Needs of the People with Physical Challenges at Jairos Jiri Centre in Bulawayo***

The participants expressed that they needed clothing that was easy to wear, required less assistance, hid their disabilities and was fashionable.

The following were some of the responses provided by the participants. D stated:

The primary goal for clothing is to cover the body. As long as our patrons are clothed, we feel their basic need is covered.

The view that clothes must just cover the body was however refuted by the physically challenged participants. M added:

We feel that our patrons need to have clothing that protects them from the weather, is easy to wear and does not require too much effort to put on. Therefore, we consider safety, coverage of body, and easiness of wear as the primary needs of our patrons.

PCP 6 stated:

We are like everyone else, so our clothing needs are the same. Just because I do not have hands does not mean that I also do not need to be smart and fashionable. We also need nicely designed clothes.

PCP 10 added:

Yes, we need clothes that are easy to wear, with less assistance. But we also need clothing that is fashionable with the new fashion trends. We do not want to be the dumping ground for clothing that has gone out of fashion. That is very cruel to people. Why is it that they do not donate fashionable clothing, not just clothing for the 60s and 70s?

PCP 12 supported:

We need designer clothing too. We have seen other people without hands at the Paralympics wearing designer outfits, and that is also what we need. We need to be consulted on what we want. Genuine donors should come and consult us, measure us, and request our preferred styles and tastes.

PCP 15 concurred:

Our clothing should be easy to wear, and above all be our designs and specifications. We have seen it in the international arenas, it can be done. What is important is to consult us, as what is done to everyone else, take our considerations in our clothing and make clothing according to our tastes.

The above propositions point to the fact that physically challenged people are like anyone else and they have a great taste for quality wear hence there is a need to dress them accordingly. Their involvement in the making and choosing of different clothes is their main wish. The involvement will result in clothes that are individual-specific and proper for the people in question (Al John, 2021).

The participants also expressed that the responsibility for their clothing should be taken by all people who care about them. And it is the responsibility of the government to provide them with the skills and finances to make their clothes. The following were some of the responses provided by the participants. D stated:

Our responsibility is to ensure that our patrons have clothing in general. The issue of designer clothing is not of paramount importance to us since we depend more on the donor community.

M added:

Our responsibility lies with sourcing clothing for our patrons. Looking for clothing based on specifications may go beyond our means. So as much as we may wish for that, our hands are tied. We do not have the resources for that avenue.

However, PCP 1 stated:

It is the responsibility of the donors to provide us with clothing based on our specifications. If they are genuine, they need to come to see us, consult us on what we need, and come back with clothing tailor-made for us. They should not give us what they do not need.

PCP 4 supported:

It is the responsibility of the government and donor community to ensure we get the designer clothing that we require. The donors and government agents should come and consult us. Measure our bodies, and provide clothing according to our specifications.

PCP 6 added:

The centre should make it their responsibility to tailor clothes. The centre needs to have fashion designers, garment makers and clothing specialists who can consult us, measure us, and design according to our

needs. The centre should not run away from its responsibility and depend on donations.

*PCP 11* argued:

Nothing is stopping us as people without hands also to make our clothing. We always want to depend so much on others. Disability does not mean inability and that we have to fold our hands (laughs) and depend on donors. I for one have been following a tailor in India he is handless and has become a very well-known professional tailor.

Consequently, findings from the participants showed that people living with physical challenges need clothing that is easy to wear, requires less assistance, but is also fashionable with the ability to cover or disguise their physical challenges. They are as a result willing to be involved in the designing and making of such. More so, the findings revealed that the responsibility to provide the special needs of the patrons is beyond the capabilities of the centre, but also is the responsibility of the donors, and the persons living with physical challenges too. Thus the call by the physically challenged people for the centre, donors and the government to work together towards making sure that the people are empowered and involved in the decisions and designing of clothes that affect their day-to-day lives. Their exclusion from the clothing industry has resulted in physically challenged people not being interested in the fashion industry. There are a few individuals who take up textile technology and design as a profession. One of the reasons for this lack of interest can be the lack of clothes that match their physical and mental needs on the market. Thus clothing manufacturing industries should design and manufacture dress appropriate for the physically challenged (Mutungwe et al, 2020). People need to wear clothes that are not only compatible with social considerations but are also suitable for the physically challenged user at the same time. (Mutungwe et al, *ibid*). Physically challenged people do not want to have functional clothes that do not fit their bodies or are uncomfortable. They want clothes that are useful in everyday life and that make them look good in society.

***Strategies to Meet the Clothing Needs of People with Physical Challenges at Jairos Jiri Centre in Bulawayo.***

The participants stated that the clothing needs of the patrons need to be communicated to all donors. Professional tailors should also be

encouraged to interact with the patrons and design their clothing accordingly. The participants also echoed the fact that the patrons needed to be empowered to make their garments. The following were some of the views presented by the participants. M stated:

All we can do is to post our patron's clothing needs to the donor community in the hope that they will provide clothing, that specifically targets people living without hands and other physical challenges. That may be our only way to broadcast the clothing needs of people without hands.

M added:

When donors come, we should ask them to go and interact with people living without hands, and hear how they can be of help, in catering for their special needs.

*PCP 1* stated:

Fashion designers need to be invited to come to the centre and talk to us, and we tell them what we want to wear. After that, they can design clothing suitable for us, that they can put on the market, for people who want to assist us.

*PCP 4* supported:

The major challenge we face is that people always say there is no clothing for us on the market, as such they cannot find designer clothes for us. As such, the fashion designers, and the fashion industry need to be aware of us and make clothing suitable for us. Thus, the fashion designers, and experts in the fashion industry, need to come and interact with us, and go design and fill the market with our clothing.

*PCP 11* added:

People who are physically challenged can also be empowered to produce their designer clothing. Instead of depending on others, the government, and donor community, can train us in garment design and making. Others have done it, and there is nothing that can stop us too.

The above findings point to the fact that the challenges of the physically challenged can only be solved when they are put at the centre of any

endeavour aimed at uplifting their social standing in the community. The findings of the study exposed the fact that the challenges faced in providing for the clothing needs of people living with a disability could be minimized by communicating the needs of the people to all clothing donors. This, as a result, will help the donors in making informed decisions when selecting clothes to donate to the people. Inviting professional tailors to come and interact with the people without hands and design accordingly was another point that was raised by the participants. This is in tandem with the marginality theory which abhors the exclusion and making decisions on behalf of the poor and underprivileged. The participants also argued for the promotion in the fashion industry of the need to put clothing for people with physical challenges on the market. The market demands can only be met when the people in question are involved in the processes to emancipate them. Accordingly, empowering the persons living with disabilities to make their garments was regarded as of paramount importance by the participants. More so, in the study, it was revealed that people with physical challenges can be empowered to become fashion designers who can make quality clothing for their lot. If physically challenged people show interest in clothing like able-bodied people do, it will result in fashion retailers introducing special clothes for physically challenged customers' demands in a bid to try and create a balance between fashion and function by offering products that suit the wearer (Pendergast, 2009; Al John, 2021; Madrideo, 2023). Thus, the above clothing solutions have been proposed to reduce clothing-related problems faced by people with disabilities. The section presented, analysed, and discussed information gathered through focus groups and interviews with eighteen participants at a facility for individuals with physical challenges. Thus the difficulties encountered in meeting the clothing needs of people living with disabilities could be reduced by communicating these needs to all clothing donors, inviting experienced tailors to visit and interact with the people and design accordingly, and promoting self-sufficiency to the people which results in the provision of relevant clothing to the fashion industry.

## **Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

### ***Summary***

The study was undertaken after the researcher had noted that many physically challenged people at Jairosi Jiri Centre faced clothing

challenges. Speculative discussions hinted that most clothing designers did cater for the needs of the physically challenged in designing clothing. The objectives of the study were thus to identify the clothing challenges faced by physically challenged people at Jairos Jiri Centre in Bulawayo, expose the clothing needs of the people with physical challenges at Jairos Jiri Centre in Bulawayo and reveal strategies that can be adapted to meet the clothing needs of people with physical challenges. Literature was reviewed based on the three research questions of the study. The study adopted the qualitative methodology and a case study design. The sample constituted Jairosi Jiri Bulawayo Director, Matron, Social Welfare Office and fifteen physically challenged persons. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data. Content analysis was used to analyse the data. The results of the study were presented, analyzed, and explored. It was presented that clothing received by people living with physical handicaps did not accommodate persons with physical impairments. It was also presented that difficulties encountered in meeting the clothing needs of people living without hands could be reduced by communicating these needs to all clothing donors as well as involving the people in question in the making of their clothes.

### ***Conclusions***

According to the study's findings, the biggest problems were that donated clothing did not accommodate physical impairments, taste, size, style, or fashion trends. Additionally, it was concluded that this was caused by a lack of funds to buy clothing that would meet the demands of those with physical challenges and the exclusion of the people involved in the making of major fashion decisions that affect them. Thus the study concludes that, individuals with physical challenges demand clothing that is simple to put on, requires little assistance, is stylish, and can conceal or cover their physical limitations.

### ***Recommendations***

The study recommended that;

1. The fashion industry should identify the clothing challenges of people living with physical disabilities to address their needs correctly.
2. The Textile technology and design professionals should consider not only the easiness of wear when designing and making clothing

- for people with physical challenges but also design trending fashionable clothing to cover and disguise physical disabilities.
3. The fashion industry should identify the gap that exists within the clothing domain for people living with physical challenges, and therefore provide appropriate clothing for people living with physical challenges.
  4. The study recommends that prototype product samples be designed for three age groups for people living with physical challenges that are newborn, infant and adult groups.

## References

- Al John, P. (2021). Viability of Village Dressmaking as an Industry Amidst an Era of Ready-To-Wear Garments. *International Journal of Advanced Engineering, Management and Science (ISSN: 2454-1311)*,7(6), 062-066. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijaems.76.7>
- Chang, K. (2009). ICT Integration in Home Economics Classrooms: A Study Using an Online Community of Practice. Thesis Submitted to the University of Sheffield for the Degree of Doctor of Education, School of Education.
- Chukwuka, F; Obiageli, E; Omeneogor, J and Godwin, H. E. (2018). Clothing Needs for Physically Challenged Individuals in Asaba, Delta State Department of Home Economics, Federal College of Education (Tech), Asaba, Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative* 6(7), 35-39.
- Castro-Arce, K and Vanclay, F. (2020). Transformative Social Innovation for Sustainable Rural Development: An Analytical Framework to Assist Community-Based Initiatives. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 74, 45–54. doi: 10.1016/j.jrurstud.2019.11.010.
- Douglas, J.D. 2017. *Existential Sociology*. New York: CP Press
- Feng, Q.L and Hui, C.-L. (2021) Clothing Needs for Wheelchair Users: A Systematic Literature Review. *Advances in Aging Research*. **10**, 1-30.
- Gamawa, A. I. (2015). The Role of Home Economics Education in Alleviating Poverty for Sustainable Development and Human Capacity Building in Nigeria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*. 6(7), 325-330.
- Gates, K. (2015). Felt, False, and Miserable Smiles. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 6, 238–252
- Jagtap, S. (2021). Co-Design with Marginalised People: Designers' Perceptions of Barriers and Enablers. *CoDesign* (doi: 10.1080/15710882.2021.1883065),

- Jairosi Jiri Centre, Bulawayo, (2022) Report on the Status of the Institution
- Kajornboon, J. (2015). Home Economics as Professional Practice. *International Journal of Home Economics*, 8(2), 19-3
- Madrideo, J. (2023). Dressmaking Module as Supplementary Instructional Material for K to 12 Technology and Livelihood Education: An Assessment. *International Journal of Scientific and Management Research*. 6. 259-279. 10.37502/IJSMR.2023.6513
- Mataaraarachchi, I. R; Seram, N; Maduwage, S and Galgamuwage, T. I. (2018). An Investigation of Clothing-Related Barriers Faced by Women with Disabilities. Proceedings of the 3rd World Disability and Rehabilitation Conference, **3**. 1-8
- Mpofu, T (2013) Challenges Faced by The Clothing Sector in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Business and Management*.13.23-84.10.9790/487x/-1358384.
- Monks, B. (2012). Chilled Education Investing in the Future. In D&T Practice 1: 2012, Wellesbourne: England: Fashion Design and Technology Association
- Morrill, T.J. (2018) Nigerian Primary Schools Compliance with Nigeria National Policy on Education: An Evaluation of Continuous Assessment Practices. *Educational Review*, 12(6), 625-636.
- Murchu, D. and Freeman, E. (2023). Best Practice in Designing Interactive On-Line Materials in Home Economics for Second Level Students in Ireland. Available at: <http://www.editlib.org/index.cfm?fuscaction=Reader.ViewAbstract&paperid=18089>.
- Mutungwe, E; Sithole, L; Chirimuta, C and Muzenda, V. (2020). Limitations in the Design and Development of the Apparel Needs of the Physically Challenged: A Case Study of Wheel Chair Users from Selected Institutions in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*. 5(4), 25-30
- Newton, (2017). Roles, Representations and Perceptions of Women. *The Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER)*, University of Ghana
- Ofsted, G (2006). Textiles and Design technology in secondary schools. Document reference number HMI 2633. London.
- Pendergast, D. (2009). Generational Theory and Home Economics: Future-Proofing The Profession. *Family Consumption Sciences Research Journal*, 37, 504–522.
- Sau-Fun, J.P. (2011). Designing in Clothing– A Curriculum Intervention Strategy In A One-Year Design and Technology Postgraduate

- Teacher Training Course. In Inspire and Educate DATA International Research Conference, 153- 160, Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University
- Syed, S. Z and Akhter, M. (2018). Assessing Home Economics College Students' Behaviour Towards Sustainable Development. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 40(2), 105-111
- Suri, P (2016). Clothing Needs Assessment for Wheelchair Users. A Thesis Submitted to The College of the Arts of Kent State University in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for The Degree of Master of Arts-Fashion
- Thoren, P. O. (1996) Innovations and Curriculum Development in Home Economics Education for Colleges of Education in Nigeria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*. 6(7),11-16
- Watson, J. B. and Rayner, R. (2017). Conditioned Emotional Responses. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 3, 1-14
- Wright, N. E. (2022). "Functional Fashions for the Physically Handicapped": Disability and Dress in Postwar America. *Dress*, 48(2), 143–162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03612112.2022.2090724>
- World, R. (2015) The Creative Mind: Cognition, Society, and Culture. *Palgrave Communications*, 3(1), 19. Doi 10.1057/s41599-017-0024-1
- Yin, X; Coles, R and Chen, J. (2022). "Let's Bring Innovation into the Bottom of the Pyramid Together": Introducing the Anti-Poverty Innovation Approach (pp. 13–36). doi: 10.1142/9789811248870\_0002