SELECTION OF INTERFACINGS AND QUALITY OF INTERFACED GARMENT PRODUCED BY SMALL SCALE GARMENT PRODUCERS IN LAPAZ-ACCRA

Volume 1, June 2019 Pages: 109 - 120
ISSN: 2665-0983 (ONLINE) DOI: 10.35738/ftr.v1.2019.08

AUTHORS
Edith Abla Kludzi
Department of Home Economics Education, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

Phyllis Forster
Department of Home Economics Education, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

Sussie Aku Damalie
Department of Fashion Design and Textile Technology, Takoradi Technical University, Takoradi, Ghana
Corresponding author's email: seyram1985@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to examine the factors considered by small scale garment producers in the selection of interfacing fabrics and to evaluate the quality of interfaced garments produced by small scale garment producers in Lapaz- Accra. The study was conducted using twenty-five (25) tailors and twenty-five (25) seamstresses in Lapaz- Accra. Interview schedule and observation guide (assessment form) were used to collect data from the small-scale garment producers. The result of the study revealed that the weight of the fashion fabric, area of the garment to be interfaced, application method, and suitability of colour of the interfacing fabric were the factors which mostly determined the selection of interfacing fabrics among the respondents. However, the type of fabrication method used for the fashion fabric and care requirements of the fashion fabric had no significant influence on the selection and use of interfacing fabrics among the respondents. It is recommended that the findings be made available to the respondents and COTVET so that the small-scale garment producers would be educated.

Keywords: interfacings; garments; garment construction; supporting fabrics; COTVET; Lapaz-Accra

1. INTRODUCTION

Selection of interfacing fabrics is vital in clothing construction. The selection is determined by availability, the fabric care, amount and direction of stretch, quality, weight, hand and colour, the fibre content, the design of the garment, the area to be interfaced, garment quality and finished appearance (Komives, 1992).In the view of Marjorie and Baker (2006), the appropriate interfacing to use in a specific garment should complement and reinforce, not overwhelm the fabric. The best choice depends on garment fabric, fabric care, fabric construction and desired effects. Marjorie & Baker added that interfacings have variety of weights from sheer to heavyweight. Lightweight interfacing might be used for a draped collar, while a tailored collar would require heavier interfacing. It may be necessary to use more than one type and weight of interfacing in a garment, depending on its purpose (Shaeffer, 2008).

Creative Publishing International (2009) stated that craft interfacings for a home décor project such as a fabric bowl, or an accessory like a brimmed hat are stiffer than garment interfacings. The organisation further noted that heavy, dense, non-woven interfacings labelled “craft interfacing” is suitable for home décor and accessories. Craft interfacings are available in sew-in or fusible with adhesive on one or both sides depending on the brand. On the other hand, non-stick press cloths are used on double-sided fusible craft interfacings and are fused to the fabric only one side at a time during the construction process.

Selecting interfacing compatible with the fashion fabric ensures a finished garment with the desired standards of care, shrinkage and washability and poorly selected interfacing can damage the fashion fabric (Hackler, 1998). Hackler further observed that 100% nylon interfacing distorts spandex or stretch denim fabrics, and a nylon/polyester blend interfacing works with 100% rayon, 100% cotton, and 100% challis.

Tondl and Tolman (1993) pointed out the following factors to consider when selecting interfacing fabrics:

Care- The fashion fabric and interfacing must have similar care requirements. "dry clean only" interfacing should be used with a garment that is intended to be dry cleaned not in a garment that is intended to be laundered.

Colour- the colour of interfacing must be compatible with fashion fabric since colours do show through some fabrics. Beige coordinates with neutral shades and warm pastel tones. Blue coordinates with cool tones, silver with neutral shades and cool pastels tones, red with warm, white with all tones and charcoal, and black with dark tones.

June 2019 - Fashion And Textiles Review, ISSN: 2665-0983

Fabrication- interfacings are available in woven, non-woven or knit fabric fabrications.

Application- interfacings can be applied by fusing (fusible) or sewing (sew-in). Selection of the appropriate fabric and the best application method helps achieve the desired results.

Give or stretch- Some interfacings are very stable or stiff; others have varying amounts of stretch or give. Stable or stiff interfacings are used in areas of the garment that are not intended to stretch (buttonholes, waistband); however, stretch interfacings are used in areas that need shaping (necklines, armholes).

Weight- interfacings weights vary from sheer to quite heavy; interfacing weight should be slightly lighter than the fashion fabric to complement the fashion fabric not dominate it. Interfacing heavier than the fashion fabric is desirable only if special shaping or effect is needed, other than that too heavy interfacing may give unprofessional results.

Tondl and Tolman (1993) further explained that fashion fabric is draped over sew-in interfacings to determine if sew-in interfacing is suitable. The combination is shaped and manipulated to check if it gives desired results. However, the appropriateness of fusible interfacing is determined by fusing a small piece of the interfacing to the fashion fabric; in the fusing process, the fashion fabric gains extra body. Patson (2009) indicated that having a supply of interfacings makes it easier to test fusible types of interfacing to see if they provide the desired results; including ease of fusing and quality of adhesion. Shaeffer (2008) also observed that the decision between using fusible and sew-in interfacing is dependent on fashion fabric, degree of firmness and personal choice.

1.1 Indicators of a Well-Interfaced Product

Marjorie and Baker (2006) stated that a suitable, well-applied interfacing should:

- Be appropriate to the fashion fabric in relation to fibre content, care, construction type (knit, woven, Nonwoven) and manner applied (sew-in or fusible). Have the same “grain” or “give” as the fashion fabric with which it is used.
- Coordinate in colour as closely as possible. Use light colour with light coloured fashion fabrics and dark with dark colours.
- Provide the appropriate support or reinforcement needed to improve the shape of the garment or fabric area.
- Be used in the appropriate location in a garment or home decorating item.

- Not alter colour or hand of the fashion fabric. If an appropriate weight cannot be found, it is best to go for lighter than heavier.
- Appear flat and smooth; no bubbles, wrinkles, or folds when applied.
- Suit the pattern design and construction situation. Various types and weights of interfacing could be used depending on the area and function (Baker, 2006).

Collars, cuffs, pocket, flaps and welt, waistbands, belts, jackets, yokes, sleeve caps front or back openings, lapels, hems are some parts of the garment that are interfaced.

Interfacing fabrics are underlying supportive fabrics placed between a facing and the outer fabric of a garment during garment construction. Its purpose is to give stability, shape and reinforcement to details such as collars, cuffs, waistbands, pockets, lapels, buttonholes, hems, necklines, etc., and prevent stretching and sagging of loosely woven fabrics. There were over-reliance and use of vilene as an interfacing fabric by garment producers in Lapaz. Most small-scale garment producers (tailors and seamstresses) in Lapaz used only vilene to interface their products, even though many varieties of interfacing fabrics were available for different fabrics and projects. These observations came to light when the researchers interacted with small scale garment producers in Lapaz-Accra during an interaction in 2006 and 2007.

Interactions with other small-scale garment producers in Winneba, Dzodze and Akatsi by the researchers also revealed the same. A term paper on "Common Sewing Notions on the Ghanaian Market" revealed that there were different types and weights of interfacings for different purposes in the market. Vilene, by its nature, has several characteristics, which limit its usage in garment construction. It is visible on the right side of sheer fabrics, and the fusing adhesive comes through lightweight fabrics, sheers, or open structures such as eyelets.

The fusing process, which fixes the interfacing to the fashion fabric, also flattens the surfaces of napped or crinkled fabrics and does not give an excellent look to the finished garments. Therefore, the researchers want to find out factors considered by the small scale garment producers in the selection of interfacing fabrics and also evaluate the quality of interfaced garments they are produced by the small scale garment producers. This study is limited to small-scale garment producers at Lapaz-Accra who use interfacings in garment production; hence, the findings cannot be generalised to producers in medium and large garment industries.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was a mixed method which used a descriptive survey design due to its flexibility; this method can use either qualitative or quantitative data or both. Descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test the hypothesis or answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study (Creswell, 2009).

According to Polit & Hungler (1995), a descriptive survey aims predominantly at describing, observing and documenting aspects of a situation as it naturally occurs rather than explaining them. A descriptive survey involves asking the same set of questions to a large number of individuals. It is appropriate when a researcher attempts to describe some aspect of a population by selecting unbiased samples of individuals who are asked to complete questionnaires, interviews or tests (Frankel & Wallen, 1993).

The study looked at the selection of interfacings and the quality of interfaced garments produced by small scale garment producers in Lapaz-Accra. It is against this background that the descriptive survey design was used to achieve the objectives of the study.

2.1 Population

The target population for the study was all small-scale garment producers in Lapaz-Accra. These stakeholders constituted the population because they directly made use of interfacing fabrics in garment production at their workshop.

2.2 Sample and Sampling Technique

In order to arrive at the sample size for the study, convenience and snowball sampling which are non-probability sampling techniques were employed in selecting a total of fifty (50) respondents made up of twenty-five (25) tailors and twenty-five (25) seamstresses in Lapaz-Accra. The basis of selecting fifty respondents as the sample size for the study is in tandem with Cohen et al. (2000) submission that a sample size of thirty is a minimum number if researchers plan to perform statistical computation with the data. Convenience sampling or, as it is sometimes called, accidental or opportunity sampling involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents and continuing that process until the required sample size has been obtained, or those who happen to be available and accessible at the time (Cohen et al., 2000). Researchers simply choose the sample from those to whom they have easy access. As it does not represent any group apart from itself, it does not seek to generalise about the wider population (Cohen et al.). In snowball, sampling researchers identify a small number of individuals who have the characteristics in which they are interested. These people are then used as informants to identify or put

June 2019 - Fashion And Textiles Review, ISSN: 2665-0983

the researchers in touch with, others who qualify for inclusion and these, in turn, identify yet others hence the term snowball sampling (Cohen et al., 2000).

In this study, the researcher, being a fashion designer herself who lives in Lapaz, happens to know three of the respondents who were initially chosen as the primary contact persons in this study. These respondents also introduced other seamstresses and tailors. The introduction continued until the target of 50 respondents was reached.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Factors considered by small scale garment producers in the selection of interfacing fabrics

For an interfaced product to come out well, careful considerations need to be made in the selection of the interfacing fabric. Information on factors considered by the respondents in their interfacing selection is presented in Figure 1 below;

Factors:
F1 - Care requirements of the fashion fabric
F2 - Suitability of colour of the fashion fabric
F3 - Types of fabrication for the fashion fabric
F4 -Suitability of application method for the fashion fabric
F5 - Area of the garment to be interfaced
F6 - Weight of the fashion fabric

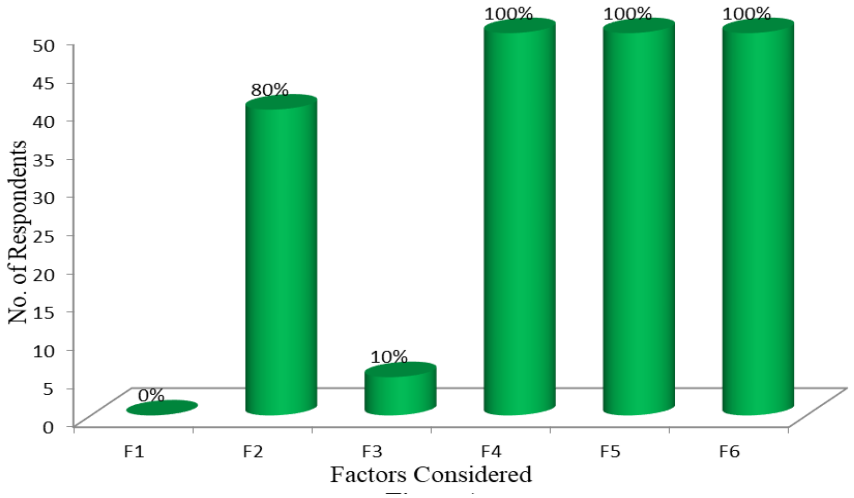


Figure 1. Factors Considered by the Respondents in Selecting Interfacing Fabrics

The data in Figure 1 show that the weight of the fashion fabric (100%), area of the garment to be interfaced (100%), and suitability of application method used in applying the interfacing to the fashion fabric (100%) were the most influential factors

which determined the selection and use of interfacing fabrics among the respondents.

These were followed by the colour of the fashion fabric (80%). The factor that was least considered was the fabrication method used in constructing the fashion fabric, which Forster (2014) indicated, is very important. Care requirements of the fashion fabric as a factor had no significant influence on the choice and use of interfacing fabrics by the respondents.

Komives (1992) specified that selecting and using interfacing is determined by availability, the fabric care, amount and direction of stretch, quality, weight, hand and colour, the fibre content, the design of the garment, the area to be interfaced, garment quality and finished appearance. The beauty, fit and function of a sewn product are likely to be compromised if the quantities mentioned by Komives are not considered in the selection and use of interfacings.

The findings of this study indicated that weight of the fashion fabric, area of the garment to be interfaced, application method, and colour of the interfacing fabric were the factors which mostly determined the selection of interfacing fabrics for use among the respondents. However, the type of fabrication method used for the fashion fabric and care requirements of the fashion fabric had no significant influence on the selection and use of interfacing fabrics among the respondents. This finding is in tandem with the views of Tondl and Tolman (1993), and Klupp (2006) who also identified weight, colour and application method as factors to consider when selecting interfacing fabrics.

The finding that type of fabrication used for the fashion fabric and care requirements had no significant influence on the choice of interfacing fabrics for their sewing projects contradicts the views of Tondl and Tolman (1993) who pointed out that care and fabrication methods are some of the factors that influence the selection of interfacing fabrics among garment producers. Similarly, Hackler (1998) observed that selecting interfacing compatible with the fashion fabric ensures a finished garment with the desired standards of care, shrinkage and washability and poorly selected interfacing can damage the fashion fabric. Interfaced areas of the garments produced by the respondents would not improve the appearance and preserve the shape, and the stability needed in the areas of strain may therefore not be achieved. According to Patson (2009), the primary purpose of interfacing is to give stability, shape and reinforcement to the fashion fabric. Patson further explained that all interfacings must be compatible with the weight and characteristics of the fashion fabric; otherwise, the objective of using them would not be achieved.

3.2 The quality of interfaced garments made by the small scale garment producers

The data for this research question were obtained from responses to Likert scale items on the observation guide (Assessment form). Marjorie and Baker's 2006 indicators of well-interfaced garments and Association of Sewing and Design Professionals (2008) Standards of Quality of interfacings were adapted to collect data for this research question. The data from the observation were further collapsed into three categories as high (3), average (2) and low (1) with three being the highest and 1, being the lowest. This was done in order to find out the quality level of interfaced garments made by the respondents. The data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Evaluation of Interfaced Garments Produced by the Respondents

	Quality of interfaced Garments	H (3) Freq.	A (2) Freq.	L (1) Freq.
1.	Appropriateness of interfaced location in garment	50 (150)	0 (0)	0 (0)
2.	Compatible in weight to fashion fabric	49 (147)	1 (2)	0 (0)
3.	Shape of garment	48 (144)	2 (4)	0 (0)
4.	Bubbles and fold lines on right side of products	46 (138)	2 (4)	2 (2)
5.	Matching of grain lines of interfacing and fashion fabrics	42 (126)	8 (16)	0 (0)
6.	Compatibility of interfacing and fashion fabric textures	37 (111)	13 (26)	0 (0)
7.	Suitability of application method	33 (99)	13 (26)	4 (4)
8.	Compatibility in colour	31 (93)	19 (38)	0 (0)
9.	Interfacing complements and reinforces without overpowering product	26 (78)	24 (48)	0 (0)
10.	Similarity of fabrication methods for interfacing and fashion fabric	0 (0)	33 (66)	17 (17)
11.	Compatible care methods for interfacing and fashion fabric	0 (0)	36 (72)	14 (14)
	Grand mean			

Key: High (H) =3; Average (AV) =2; Low (L) = 1

Grand mean for quality level of interfaced products is 2.59 (which is quite high)

Table 1 presents data on the evaluation of interfaced products of the respondents of this study. All the respondents (100%) used interfacings fabrics in appropriate locations in their garments; hence, their positioning was rated high (3) which resulted in a mean of 3.00 (SD=.00) which is interpreted as high. Majority of the respondents (98%) weight of interfacing and fashion fabrics compatibility was high (3). Only 2%

respondent scored average (2). The mean score for this variable was 2.98 (SD= .14), which is quite high. Again, the majority of the respondents (96%) interfacings provided appropriate support to shape the garment and were rated high (3). Only 4% of respondents were graded average (2) for the same item. The mean score was 2.96 (SD= .19), which is also high.

It was also observed that majority (92%) of the respondents' interfacing fabrics did not show bubbles and fold lines on the right side of the products and so were rated high (3) on that item. Only 4% of them were rated average (2) for the same reason, while 4% of them had their interfaced products showing bubbles and fold lines on the right side of the garment and scored low (1). The mean was 2.92 (SD=.27), which is quite high. However, 84% of the respondents matched grain lines of interfacing and fashion fabric and were valued as high, while 16% scored average on the same item. This trend resulted in a mean of 2.84 (SD= .37), which is quite high.

Majority of the respondents' (74%) were rated high (3) because their interfacing fabrics were compatible with the textures of fashion fabrics. Few respondents' (26%) products were scored average (2) for the same reason, which resulted in a mean of 2.74 (SD= .44), which is quite high. It was also detected that 66% of the respondents' interfacing application methods suited that of the fashion fabrics and were rated high (3). However, 26% were rated average, while 8% were scored low for the same item, with a mean score of 2.58 (SD=.64) which is interpreted as quite high. Though for this group of respondents, interfacing showed through the slit of the buttonhole on the right side, there were bubbles and wrinkles on the interfaced area; the interfacings were also visible on the right side of see-through fabrics which made their garments unattractive. It was observed that 62% of the respondents' interfacing and fashion fabrics' colours' compatibility were rated high (3), but 38% of them were rated average (2) for the same purpose with a mean score of 2.62 (SD= .49) which is quite high.

About half (52%) of the respondents' interfacing fabrics were rated high (3); however, 24 (48%) were rated average (2) for the fashion fabrics they were used for because they complemented and reinforced the fabric without overpowering products. This resulted in a mean score of 2.52 (SD= .67), which was interpreted as quite high.

However, 66% of the respondents were rated average for similarity of fabrication methods in the fashion and interfacing fabrics; nevertheless, 34% of them were rated low. The mean score, in this case, was 1.66 (SD=.47), which is interpreted as average. Finally, more than half of the respondents' that is 36 (72%) interfaced products were rated average for compatibility of care methods required for interfacing and fashion fabric, but 28% of them were rated low for the same function. The mean score for all

the respondents was 1.72 (SD=.45), which is interpreted as average. The mean of means score for the quality of interfaced products made by respondents of this study was 2.59 (SD=.30), which is quite high.

These findings are in consonance with the indicators identified by Baker (2006) who stated that a suitable, well-applied interfacing should provide the appropriate support or reinforcement needed to improve the shape of the garment or fabric area; be used in the appropriate location in a garment; not alter colour or hand of the fashion fabric. If an appropriate weight cannot be found, it is best to go lighter than heavier as they are recommended by Baker. Other studies by Brown and Rice (2001) explained that suitable interfacing should help maintain the garment's shape and lend it other qualities such as durability and warmth. This result further justifies the views of Patson (2009), who stated that the primary purpose of interfacing is to give stability, shape, and reinforcement to the fashion fabric.

It was observed that none of the respondents' was ranked high for the similarity of fabrication methods for interfacing and fashion fabrics; and compatibility of care methods. This is very serious because the two different fabrics are treated as one in construction, use and care treatment and a single method may be favourable to one of the fabrics and unfavourable for the other. For instance, the same seam is used for the fashion fabric, and interfacing and both the thread and stitch density are the same. Again the same laundry treatment is given to the garment so both fabrics should be able to endure the kind of laundry treatment given by the user of the garment to prevent damage.

In garment production, perfection is the ultimate, and anything below that faces the threat of rejection by consumers. For the individual garment producers to remain in business and perform well in a competitive garment market, they need to build up their skills in the areas where their scores were not high. As it is, the mean of means which indicate their general level of competency in interfacing, as well as the quality of their interfaced products, is quite high (2.59).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it is concluded that respondents considered the weight of the fashion fabric, area of the garment to be interfaced, application method, and colour of the interfacing fabric when selecting interfacings. Also, the mean of the score for quality of interfaced garment produced by the respondents was 2.59, which is quite high.

June 2019 - Fashion And Textiles Review, ISSN: 2665-0983

5. RECOMMENDATION

In the light of the findings of this study, it is suggested that the findings be made available to the respondents and Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET) so that the small scale garment producers would be educated on The appropriate information on selecting interfacing fabrics, likewise COTVET and the respondents should develop standards for interfaced garments made in Ghana to meet international standards of well applied interfaced garments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the small scale garment producers in Lapaz-Accra who participated in this study for their cooperation during data collection.

REFERENCES

Association of Sewing and Design Professionals (2008). *Standards of Quality:* Association of Sewing and Design Professionals Inc.

Brown, P., & Rice, J. (2001). *Ready-to-wear apparel analysis.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Creative Publishing International (2009). *Complete photo guide to sewing: 1200 full-colour how-to photos*. Beverly, MA, USA: Creative Publishing International.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed approaches.* California: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Frankel, J., & Wallen, N. (2000). *How to design and evaluate research in education.* Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Hackler, N. (1998). *Interfacing*. Gainesville, Florida: Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences, University of Florida.

Klupp, C. (2006). *Selecting and applying interfacings*. Arkansa: Cooperative Extension Service.

Komives, M. (1992). *Interfacing and specialty fabrics for sewing and crafts*. NJ: Moonachie Handler Textile Corporation.

Komives, M. (1992) *Interfacing: The foundation of fashion and craft Aids*. New York: Pellon Division.

Komives, M. (1992). *The ins & outs of interfacing: A complete guide to their selection and use*. Mequon: North Lake Shore Drive.

Marjorie, M., & Baker, M. M. (2006). *Interfacings*. Kentucky: Cooperative Extension Office.

Patson, N. K. (2009). *Interfacings*. Washington: Washington State University Press.

Polit, D. F., & Hungler, B. P. (1995). *Nursing research: Principles and methods* (5th ed.). Philadelphia: J.B Lippincott Company.

Shaeffer, C. B. (2008). *Fabric sewing guide* (2nd ed.). Cincinnati: Krause Publications Craft.

Tondl, R. M., & Tolman, K. (1993). *Interfacings*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

June 2019 - Fashion And Textiles Review, ISSN: 2665-0983