

# An Appraisal of Teachers' Perception on Repairing of Clothes

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the study was to examine teachers' perception on repairing of clothes in Agona Kwanyako in the central region of Ghana. Quantitative research approach and Descriptive survey design were adopted for this study. The population of this study comprised teachers in the seven public Basic Schools, one Senior High School, two private Basic Schools and one Vocational and Technical School in Agona Kwanyako. Krejcie and Morgan chart was used to sample hundred and fifty-five (155) out of two hundred and sixty (260) teachers in Agona Kwanyako schools. The main instrument for data collection and analysis was questionnaire. All the questionnaires retrieved were prepared by sorting and coding. They were then entered into IBM SPSS Statistics 2017 version 25.0 for data to be analysed. The SPSS software was used to generate mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentages on the data because it is fast, energy saving and gives a consistent and accurate statistical representation of raw data. Findings were then discussed in relation to the research question for the study. Data were presented using tables and charts. The study indicated that the perception one holds about the repair of clothes affects how they view the act and their subsequent adaptation of the exercise. The perception teachers hold about clothes repair was that, clothes protect the environment, create employment and alleviate one from poverty, helps clothes stay trendy and can give one a sense of satisfaction. It can also be concluded that clothes that are normally used such as dresses, shirts and trousers are the types of clothes mostly repaired. Teachers have positive perception about clothes repair. Based on this it is recommended that Home Economics teachers should team up with other teachers to inculcate proper clothes care in their students. Also, clothes should be made in such a way that repairing is easier and possible based on the findings on the types of clothes that are mostly repaired.

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## 1. Introduction

Repair is defined as the correction of specified faults in a product before it is put back into service [1]. Repairing of clothes became important for a number of reasons. Rationing of clothes in the UK was announced during the World War II on 1st June, 1941. This was because the clothing factories were taken over for the war effort which required uniforms and silk used for producing parachutes, maps and gun powder bags. This was also due to the shortage of raw materials required for the production of clothing [2]. The rationing resulted in unavailability of ready-made garments on the market and people having fewer clothes, so it was very important to repair what they had whenever there was a damage. Soldiers during the world war therefore usually carried a sewing kit called "housewife" which contained basic sewing supplies, such as needle, thread, buttons and scissors, which was used to mend their clothing [3]. This according to them, was due to the fact that new clothes were not accessible hence it was very necessary to maintain what they had. A researcher revealed that the rationing led to the "Make Do and Mend" campaign by the government to promote clothes mending [3]. The Studentsewing indicated further

that the campaign was not very well received, probably because women did not have time to spend on sewing or they were already practicing the technique hence the message was nothing new [4]. The practice of repairing clothing has largely disappeared; damaged clothing is typically discarded rather than repaired [5]. This is probably because of lack of time, a stigma about wearing repaired clothes, low cost of clothes among others [2]. Additionally, 'fast fashion has led to a change in the relationship with clothes and thus people are less likely to take time to undertake simple repairs or address issues of maintenance [6].

Even though other researchers such as Gwilt have found out that in some countries the practice of repairing clothes has largely disappeared, it has been observed that some people in Ghana still repair their clothes [5]. This is because some students come to school with patched uniforms, loose buttons refixed, replaced button which sometimes look different from the rest and lengthen uniforms. People have different perception on repairing of clothes. Some people see wearing or using a repaired article especially a patched dress as a sign of poverty and that people wearing repaired clothes are usually stigmatized [5]. Others also believe that repairing is a waste of time since, clothes are now cheap and easily accessible [2]. On the contrary, others view repairing of clothes as pleasurable, prolonging the life of clothes among others. Some individuals known as itinerant menders who go around with their sewing machine, sometimes from house to house to make it easy for people who do not have time or lack the skills and the equipment needed to repair their damaged clothes. These individuals sometimes offer repair services such as fixing zips, re-stitching split seam, among others. This shows that mending can be a lucrative job and a source of income to individuals.

Anecdotal evidence and personal observation indicate that the perception of individuals on clothes repair affect the type of clothes they repair as well as their level of engagement in the act. There is much literature on the need for clothes repair, benefits, types of clothes damages and methods for repairing them, how to protect clothes to avoid damages, tools and materials required for their repair [7, 8-12], but how teachers view repairing of clothes and the types of clothes mostly repaired have not been explored as observed the researcher. Also, ultimately, mending is demonstrated to be an under-researched subject [13]. Additionally, research focusing on clothing repair as part of sustainable clothing consumption practices has been conducted in some developed European countries such as UK and the Netherlands as well as US. However, little or no research has examined consumers' clothes repairing or mending behaviour in the Ghana context. Considering the fact that teachers are models in their communities, this study seeks to investigate teachers' perception about clothes repair and the type of clothes that are mostly repaired by teachers. If teachers have positive perception about clothes care, they will practice and maintain their clothes well and ensure that students maintain their clothes as well by advising them to maintain their clothes to save money spent on clothes for other important things in the family. The purpose of the study was to examine teachers' perception on repairing of clothes in Agona Kwanyako in the central region of Ghana. The study sought to answer the research questions - What is the perception of teachers in Agona Kwanyako about repairing clothes and what are the types of clothes mostly repaired by these teachers?

### ***1.1. Perception of Individuals about Clothes Repair***

Life cycle studies have shown that 58 percent of the total environmental impact of clothes occurs after acquisition [14]. Therefore, an intervention in the maintenance and care stage of the consumer process could form a good solution towards more sustainable consumer behaviour. The aspects of consumption behaviour may be classified as the stages of pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase [15]. Sustainable consumption not only refers to sustainability in purchasing, but it also refers to sustainable activities in the post-purchase period, which involves using, reusing (repair), recycling and discarding

[16]. By repairing clothes if there is a fault the lifetime of a garment is extended instead of it being thrown away and replaced by something new [17].

Research has revealed that there is limited awareness of the impact of sustainable clothing which means that there is the need to encourage more sustainable consumer clothing behaviour [18]. It has been shown that, £30 billion worth of UK consumers' clothes are unworn and a third of clothes goes to landfill in the UK [19]. A study further noted that approximately 350,000 tonnes of used clothes are sent to UK landfills each year but added that this could be reduced significantly if wearers were actively and routinely involved in repairing damaged clothes [5]. Yet consumers committed to sustainable clothing lack awareness of the sustainability issues in clothing care, with their interpretation of sustainable clothing limited to purchasing [20]. The practices of mending clothes and thus extending their lifecycles vary enormously through time, from place to place, and among demographic groups [21]. Perceptions vary between individuals and are dependent on context, that is, an activity which one person regards as an enjoyable leisure activity may be seen as a dreaded chore by another. Mending was once classified as a household chore, that is a task that must be undertaken in order to keep clothing in use, because items were costly to replace. However, as the price of clothing has decline or fallen, repair has become much less common place and an option rather than a necessity [22]. It is a common assumption that nobody mends clothing anymore in Western societies. However, it is clear that repairing is more common than people think, especially when compared to the common assumption of "nobody" repairing clothing anymore. This is because many of the respondents in a study admitted mending their clothing at least occasionally, especially the simpler tasks, such as sewing on a button and fixing an unraveled seam [23]. Mending is generally limited to minor tasks such as sewing buttons and fixing hems, and that even these tasks are not commonly undertaken [5].

Repairing damaged and worn out clothes is one way to reduce the amount of waste and extending the life of clothes. Mass-production, 'fast fashion clothes are now cheap and easy to acquire and that has resulted in consumers viewing clothes as 'throwaway' and as such are unlikely to undertake simple repairs to address issues of maintenance [6]. Basically, people have changed the cultural and economic value attributed to clothing which has resulted in discarding damaged clothes rather than repairing them. Fast fashion has also led to overconsumption and disposability [5]. This mind set in turn has led to a more transitory relationship with clothing, with perfectly good clothes disposed of before they are worn out, because clothes can be more easily and conveniently replaced than repaired or modified. The skills for repairing clothes are also disappearing, and even when consumers have these skills, there was a sense that they do not have to do that anymore [18]. Fashion is now more accessible and affordable in comparism with garment production and consumption patterns in previous decades [24]. This is partly due to the increase in the availability of low quality and inexpensive products which are typically constructed from inferior fabrics and materials and manufactured in factories where employees have poor working conditions and low salaries [24]. However, designers in their quest to make more profit intentionally develop garment to persuade the consumer to get rid of one garment in pursuit of another. While this continual development of new garments may profit the fashion producers, it is ultimately destructive to society and the environment [5].

There are multiple possibilities for repairing or mending and in each instance the repairer makes a choice, that is, whether to return the commodity to its original identity or to rework it in a way that gives it a different meaning [13]. People dispose their clothes and do not repair because of changes in fashion or style of garment, because it has become outdated, bored with the garment, lack sentimental value, have several or similar garments, does not fit with other clothes, changes in life situation among others [23]. This is also in accordance with the symbolic interaction theory which talks about the meaning given to an activity or action. A habit of repairing and altering clothes, particularly those

to which they sensed an emotional attachment [25]. Research conducted to examine U.K. and Scandinavian consumers' barriers to mending their clothes has identified practical social, socioeconomic, systemic, and psychological reasons that hinder a consumer's likelihood to engage in even the most basic clothing repairs [26]. Among the most commonly cited reasons for not repairing clothes includes the high costs associated with repair, repairing considered a time-consuming activity and requiring a high level of skills [5, 23]. Repairing clothes requires knowledge, access to proper equipment and materials, and to some extent also that the clothes are actually repairable [23]. This goes to show that resources such as time, knowledge, tools and equipment as well as other materials are needed for one to engage in repair activities efficiently.

Using stitched-based technique to mend damages such as wear and tear require limited, low cost equipment, basic skills levels and limited time even though most common reasons people give for not engaging in repair activities are the financial cost involved, lack of time and skills [6]. Researchers explored a series of facilitated public engagement events in 2014 across Scotland to explore practice-based approaches that engage the public and encourage community participation in clothing repair [6]. They found that extremely skilled quilters and embroiders in craft groups did not perceive that they could use these skills to repair clothes [26]. Not all consumers who have the skills choose to repair their clothing which means that skill is not a factor for all consumers [23]. Repairing of clothes also have negative connotations, considering clothing repair as "women's work", a domestic and unnecessary chore, and a sign of poverty. This is because most people associate mending to times of economic hardship. Academic research into clothing use behaviour has revealed that people avoid using clothes with visible repairs in order to protect themselves and their families from stigma [25]. Furthermore, participants in McLaren and MacLauchlan's study associated clothes mending and repair with poverty. This is consistent with the traditional perceptions of repair and poverty [6]. This is because according to the symbolic interaction theory, people interact with others using symbols which means that people who use clothes with visible repair or damages are considered to be poor. To avoid this stigma, fast fashion has made it low quality garments with cheap prices, thus making clothes more available and can be replaced anytime such that they are considered 'throwaway'. Because of it being easily accessible Chapman (2005) argues that this has led to a sense of detachment from our clothes, a reason why they are not considered worthy of repair. A study by McLaren and MacLauchlan in which they organised an event called love your clothes (LYC) to help people overcome barriers to repair revealed that garments that are mostly repaired are often favourites which confirms that an emotional connection can overcome the psychological barriers to repair [6]. Some people do not consider minor repairs as real clothes repair. This is evident in a number of respondents in a study who answered that they never repair clothing but also reported to have done some repairs, such as sewing on a button or fixing an unraveled seam [23]. This shows how perception of clothes repair or repair in general varies from one individual to another.

Repair work are mostly done when it is necessary, however, a wide range of clothes was designed from the outset to accommodate later alterations and/or repairs. For example, in some varieties of seventeenth-century dress, garments sleeves or cuffs were created as detachable pieces so that the items could be efficiently washed, repaired and/or replaced with ease [27]. Also WRAP in 2015, report showed that repair is most likely to be considered by consumers in certain clothing categories including children's clothing, occasional wear, and denim [19]. Historically repair was made to mask damage. Mending practices traditionally focused on hiding damage, particularly if the garment was considered precious or valuable. The extent of the techniques used to accomplish repair work was varied and dependent on the wearers access to skills and materials, and the social and cultural norms of the time. A study explored the attitude of seven women to four dress-related activities: shopping for new garments; sorting clothes within the

wardrobe; making (specifically knitting) clothes for themselves; and mending damaged clothes showed that individuals may be more likely to engage in mending if it is framed as leisure rather than domestic chores [28]. However, fixing holes within fabrics of a garment especially larger ones seemed to present more of a challenge. They all felt that mending was a chore as well as a pleasure and that was because they all had the skills required for mending according to the researcher. And to consider whether to repair or not, the participants described weighing up whether the garment was sufficiently valuable in either emotional or economic terms to be worth the effort to consider whether they will be able to repair, looking at the nature of the problem and their skill levels in relation to the problem. Also, people repair clothes in order to extend the life of items they themselves as well as people close to them made because of the effort needed to make them. Additionally, clothes that were expensive or valued in other ways were more likely to be repaired [23]. It is then clear that even though mending extends the active lifetimes of garments in the wardrobe, it tends to be seen as a relatively uninteresting task for some, which is carried out only as long as the item is considered to be worth the effort and the process does not appear to be overly time-consuming or complex. This means that efforts to promote mending may be hampered by apparently widespread concerns about wasting time. The researcher commented that it can be hard for those with busy lives or schedule to find enough time to mend alongside paid and unpaid work and this was seen in the comments made by the participants. In addition to skills and time needed to repair consumers also made mention of access to a repair kit and a sewing machine [23].

With respect to the group of people who repair often, a Swedish study looked into differences between consumer groups and their repair activities. Focus group interviews indicated that the group of retired respondents did more clothes mending often than the other two interviewed groups, and the common activities included sewing on buttons and repairing broken seams. Repairs that were more complex, such as broken zippers were taken to a tailor. Another focus group, fashion-interested youth, sometimes also repaired clothing, mainly jeans, whereas a group of parents of small children had less time to repair, and did not prioritize the task as much [29]. All of them repaired some of their clothes, but they also got help from their mothers, mothers-in-law, and professionals [23]. The elderly is more active in undertaking repair activities, such as sewing on buttons, fixing unraveled seams, and darning clothing, whereas the young are more likely to remodel their old clothing. This shows why studies on clothing lifespans have shown that older people's clothes have higher average lifespans than the clothes that young people own [30]. This proves that for mending, age is the second most important demographic variable [23]. The result also proved that even some of the high-income families do repair which disprove the perception that it is only the poor who repair their clothes. Education only had a minor effect, as respondents with a higher level of education were more likely to conduct minor repairs (sewing on buttons and darning clothing). Non-working respondents were more likely to fix unravelled seams and darn clothing than students and working respondents were. This affirms the fact that time is a factor in repairing clothes and because it has economic incentives. Having children below the age of 15 decreased the likelihood of some mending activities, but the difference was not significant for darning clothing or making something new from old clothes [23]. This tendency confirms the Swedish study, where this group (families with small children) said that they did not have as much time to repair [31]. To encourage mending, people need to be taught sewing skills because the lack of this knowledge and skills hampers the ability of consumers to maintain and care for their clothing in a more sustainable manner [32].

The WRAP in 2017 consumer clothing survey findings indicate that almost 30% of U.K. consumers surveyed had garments that they had not worn because they needed some kind of repair (e.g., broken zip, lost button, elastic replacement, or some other repair). Nearly one-third of the respondents reported that they were more likely to repair clothes if they had the necessary skills and around 20% of participants indicated that they



could have used half of their unworn clothes if they were repaired [33]. Research confirms that clothing repair skills have been lost in recent years and people often lack confidence in their ability to mend or alter clothes. Most can sew buttons on, but fewer are able to alter a hem or darn a hole. Younger people in particular are less likely to have these skills. As a result, many people simply store or discard items in disrepair or in need of alteration [34]. Competence makes work easier, quicker, and more enjoyable and provides a better and more even result [23]. This means that if clothes consumers acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, they find clothes repairing more enjoyable. In this matter, education is of importance. Aside the knowledge and skills, knowing how to operate a sewing machine is an advantage because the use of the sewing machine makes repairing of clothes faster.

Furthermore, a variety of ways of mending were observed, from seamless invisible mends to garments featuring boldly visible mends. Repair workshops and events such as these provide platforms where menders of all skill levels learn, by working with the materials, various techniques of mending, how to customize, personalize, redesign, learn about material quality, material limitations and add durability to the garment. The menders even reflected on how before joining the workshops they would throw a garment away if it ripped or a button fell off. The reasons why they did so were because they did not know how to mend and/or lack awareness about what could be repaired but changed because of their engagement in the workshops. Public spaces such as mending workshops are indicative of the advances being made in overcoming negative connotations attached to this practice [6]. By giving mending a public status, these groups are working to address and help fight off conceptions of drudgery, gender and poverty associated with mending [6, 28]. People not only learn how to mend but are encouraged to wear their mended garments with pride. Furthermore, people take away knowledge with them that they can share with others in their family. Researchers revealed that users often learn ways to care for garments through their family members [35]. Additionally, many of the first-time participants who came to the workshops did so after being recommended by a friend or a family member. In this way, supporting researchers further indicating that, the strength of social ties in spreading a practice that may not have been considered worthy of being practised. Moreover, the learned knowledge at workshops can also be applied by users to the restoration of other garments sitting idle in their wardrobes. Activating users in this manner allows for unused garments currently piling up in the wardrobes to be brought back into active use [35].

Through their mending practices, users actively learn to fight against fast fashion values of planned obsolescence and extend the life of garments in creative ways. Resources provided by these workshops aid in equipping menders to improve the quality of their existing garments, creating self-reliant individuals and empowered communities. Gwilt suggests the possibility of new business opportunities that can be explored by small and/or medium sized fashion design labels by incorporating mending as a service into their practice. However, if mending is to be encouraged as a regular practice, businesses must not charge for it [37]. For this to happen, Chapman in 2013 policy-driven Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) suggest that programmes can be formulated making free repair services mandatory while offering subsidies or tax-cut incentives to small or medium sized brands that do so [38]. Also, clothes could be designed in a way that they are easy to alter or mend, for example by having extra seam allowance that permits size adjustments [39]. Another example is that a rubber band that is threaded in a casing is easier to replace than an attached elastic band [23]. Gwilt recommended that to make repair work easier and more enjoyable, designers can embed approaches that support or improve the wearers attitudes and practices in clothing repair during the design process. Through the uptake of innovative design-led approaches, designers can change established cultural attitudes to repair and encourage wearers to re-engage with mending practices [36]. To further support this trend for repair there should be the provision of

basic repair kits, including threads or yarn, buttons and instructions, in garment packaging and/or on product labels [34]. It is also important for researchers and policy makers interested in promoting sustainable consumption to understand factors that influence a consumer's decision to repair or replace a product [40]. This way it will be easier to find ways to encourage consumers to repair their clothes based on the factors.

## 2. Materials and Methods

Quantitative research approach and Descriptive survey design were adopted for this study. The population of this study comprised teachers in the seven public Basic Schools, one Senior High School, two private Basic Schools and one Vocational and Technical School in Agona Kwanyako. Krejcie and Morgan chart was used to sample hundred and fifty-five (155) out of two hundred and sixty (260) teachers in Agona Kwanyako schools [40]. This chart gives the relationship between sample size and population and helps to identify and obtain the required sample size for a study. The main instrument for data collection and analysis was questionnaire. The semi-structured items would help to find answers to the research question, *research question: "What is the perception of teachers on repairing clothes?"*, respondents were presented with a five-point scale which described the different perceptions of repairing clothes. They were made to indicate the level to which the respondents agreed or disagreed with those statements and that helped to determine the perception of teachers on repairing of clothes. They were also presented with different types of clothes to determine clothes that are mostly repaired by teachers.

Content and face validity of the questionnaire were established by requesting colleagues, lecturers and finally the researcher's academic adviser to review, comments and to assist with corrections. Their comments and suggestions were noted and incorporated to make the instrument valid before pretesting it. Construct validity was also ensured by critically developing questions or items within established theoretical framework. Reliability was established using pilot testing. The instrument was pretested on five teachers in Agona Asafo Presby JHS. The result was subjected to Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis using IBM SPSS Statistic (2017) 25.0 to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. Cronbach's Alpha is one of the wide ranges of reliability measures. It is a statistic that measures the internal consistency among a set of survey items that a researcher believes all measure the same construct, are therefore correlated with each other and thus could be formed into some type of scale. It ranges between 0 and 1. The greater the value of alpha, the more the scale is coherent and thus reliable (alpha is actually an approximation to the reliability coefficient). Some authors have proposed a critical value for alpha of 0.70, above which the researcher can be confident that the scale is reliable [41, 42]. The reliability value of the instrument was 0.89 and the test was done for the research objective. All the questionnaires retrieved were prepared by sorting and coding. They were then entered into IBM SPSS Statistics 2017 version 25.0 for data to be analysed. The SPSS software was used to generate mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentages on the data because it is fast, energy saving and gives a consistent and accurate statistical representation of raw data. Findings were then discussed in relation to the research questions for the research. Data were presented using tables and charts.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Perception of Teachers in Agona Kwanyako About Clothes Repair

This section presents results on the research question - *What is the perception of teachers in Agona Kwanyako about repairing clothes?* The study examined the perceptions of the teachers in relation to clothes repair. The perceptions were both positive and negative and include creating employment, difficult, helping one to stay trendy, good for the environment, cost effective, boring, prolong the life of clothes, pleasurable, a worthy return on investment, a waste of time, inner satisfaction/gratifying, a woman's work and

a sign of poverty. A 5- point Likert scale was used to collect the data and the teachers were made to show whether they strongly agree (5), agree (4), not sure (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The decision is that a mean of 5-3.5 is high, 3.4-2.5 is moderate and 2.4-1.0 is low. The findings are presented in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1. Perception of Teachers in Agona Kwanyako about Clothes Repair.**

Perception	Mean	Std. Deviation
Create employment	3.95	0.67
Good for the environment	3.86	0.82
Prolong the life of clothes	3.74	0.87
Cost effective	3.71	0.87
A worthy return on investment	3.67	0.92
Inner satisfaction/gratifying	3.61	0.84
Helps you to stay trendy	3.57	0.76
It is boring	3.52	0.72
It is pleasurable	2.51	1.52
It is difficult	2.40	0.73
A waste of time	2.37	0.75
A woman's work	2.24	0.71
A sign of poverty	2.17	0.46

*N= 140; Source: Fieldwork Data, 2020*

The information in [Table 1](#) discloses that the respondents had various perceptions about the repair of clothes. Particularly, the findings show that the perception that clothes repair creates employment was rated highest ( $M=3.95$ ,  $SD=0.67$ ), followed by the perception that it is good for the environment ( $M=3.86$ ,  $SD=0.82$ ), prolong the life of clothes ( $M=3.74$ ,  $SD=0.87$ ), it is cost effective ( $M=3.71$ ,  $SD=0.87$ ), a worthy return on investment ( $M=3.67$ ,  $SD=0.92$ ), inner satisfaction/gratifying ( $M=3.61$ ,  $SD=0.84$ ) and helps to stay trendy ( $M=3.57$ ,  $SD=0.76$ ). It is boring ( $M=3.52$ ,  $SD=0.72$ ), it is pleasurable ( $M=2.51$ ,  $SD=1.52$ ), it is difficult ( $M=2.40$ ,  $SD=0.73$ ), a waste of time ( $M=2.37$ ,  $SD=0.75$ ), a woman's work ( $M=2.24$ ,  $SD=0.71$ ), and a sign of poverty ( $M=2.17$ ,  $SD=0.46$ ). Therefore, the findings indicated that except the perception that mending clothes is difficult, it is a waste of time, it is a woman's work, and it is a sign of poverty, all the other perceptions were rated higher than the mean score of 3.50 based on the 5-point Likert scale questionnaire used.

### **3.2. Types of clothes repaired by teacher in Agona Kwanyako**

The researcher analyzed the types of clothes that were mended. The types of clothes outlined in the study included shirts, trousers, skirts, brassieres, panties/boxer shorts, suits, dresses, T-shirts, coat/jackets, and "kaba and slit". Teachers were made to indicate the type of clothes that were often repaired. This means that often is (4), sometimes (3), seldom (2) and never (1). A mean of 2.5 and above was rated high, 1.6-2.49 moderate and 1.0-1.5 low. The findings are presented in [Table 2](#).



**Table 2.** Types of Clothes Repaired Teachers in Agona Kwanyako.

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Dresses		3.65	0.78
Shirts		3.64	0.77
Trousers		3.47	0.88
Kaba and slit		3.45	0.84
T-Shirts		3.15	0.94
Coat/jacket		3.10	1.16
Skirts		3.04	1.18
Brassieres		2.89	1.19
Panties/boxer shorts		2.40	0.95
Suits		2.35	0.96

Source: Fieldwork Data, 2020

It is observed in Table 2 that different types of clothes were repaired by the teachers in the study area. However, the information showed that dresses were mostly repaired ( $M=3.65$ ,  $SD=0.78$ ), followed by shirts ( $M=3.64$ ,  $SD=0.77$ ), trousers ( $M=3.47$ ,  $SD=0.88$ ), “kaba and slit” ( $M=3.45$ ,  $SD=0.84$ ), T-shirt ( $M=3.15$ ,  $SD=0.94$ ), coat/jacket ( $M=3.10$ ,  $SD=1.16$ ), skirt ( $M=3.04$ ,  $SD=1.18$ ), brassieres ( $M=2.89$ ,  $SD=1.19$ ), and panties/boxer shorts ( $M=2.40$ ,  $SD=0.95$ ) while suits were the least of clothes repaired ( $M=2.35$ ,  $SD=0.96$ ). Based on the 4-point Likert scale used in the questionnaire where average score was 2.5, it was concluded that all the kinds outlined in the study received high attention in repairing them.

#### 4. Discussion of Results

The results show that respondents agree that repairing of damaged clothes has a lot of benefits. This is because most teachers agreed that repairing of clothes is cost effective and this agrees with the writer of Thread theory that it is cost effective to repair clothes than buying a new one [8]. A similar study also argued that repairing clothes by oneself keeps one from having either to pay others to do it or to spend money to buy new garments [43]. Clothes have to stay trendy and not outdated, and to achieve that part of garments that have been damaged can be replaced with new elements to suit current fashion. This will also ensure that garments will last until the next time they come into fashion, since fashion is cyclical [8]. This also leads to one of the widely held perceptions that clothes repair helps to prolong the life of clothes thereby saving money for other necessities which had a mean score of 3.74. This finding agrees earlier study that knowing how to repair clothes by oneself keeps one from having either to pay others to do it for or to spend money on new clothes [43]. Additionally, respondents agreed to the perception of repairing of clothes enabling one to gain a worthy return on investment with a mean score of 3.67. This is because as the writer of Thread theory puts it, the purchase of clothes is seen as an investment in time, fashion and appearance [8].

The protection of the environment has been heightened in recent times because climate change and worn out clothes can be a damaging pollutant. Other researchers admitted that when the life of clothes is extended by a third while reducing the need for new clothing, the carbon, waste and water footprints from the production stage would be reduced by more than 20%. Repairing of clothes would mean that a fewer number of clothes would be thrown into the environment to be pollutants [7, 44]. Many teachers with a mean score of 3.86, admitted that repairing clothes is good for the environment and this affirms the findings of previous study that repairing clothes has several environmental advantages [45]. However, other researchers found out that some people do not associate mending with environmental benefits [6, 37].

Most people agreed to the perception that repairing of clothes create employment for people because it had the highest mean score of 3.95. This shows that a lot of the teachers believe that mending of clothes create employment for people and this agrees with another researcher that repairing of clothes create employment for thousands of people [7]. It is also noteworthy that most teachers do not see repairing of damaged clothes as women's work, a sign of poverty and a waste of time. Review of literature shows that people associate mending with economic hardship and that those who repair their damaged clothes are poor [6]. As a result, a similar study commented that people avoid using clothes with visible repairs in order to protect themselves and their families from stigma [25]. To add to that, the findings of the study was supported by other researchers that some high-income families do repair their damaged clothes which disprove the perception that it is only the poor who repair their damaged clothes [23].

Teachers disagreed to the perception that repairing of clothes is a woman's work. Nevertheless, this study shows that more females than males reported that they repair their damaged clothes themselves. Review of literature shows that repair activities in the home were done by mothers and housewives. However, because more women are now employed outside home and now do not have enough time things have changed [46]. Additionally, many of the teachers disagreed to the perception that repairing of clothes is a waste of time. In a study by a team of researchers, respondents mentioned some reasons why they do not repair their damaged clothes and it being a waste of time was one of them [23, 36]. The finding of this study is also in contrast to what others believe that repairing is a waste of time since clothes are now cheap and that they see no sense in repairing damaged clothes when they can get another one so easily [2]. Furthermore, with regards to mending of clothes being difficult, the mean score was below 2.50 which indicates that most respondents disagreed to that perception. Many of the respondents agreed to some extent to the perception that repairing of clothes is boring. This is similar to the findings of another study that mending of clothes is seen as a relatively uninteresting task for some and that people only repair as long as the item is considered to be worth the effort and the process does not appear to be overly time-consuming or complex [23].

Teachers repair their damaged clothes because of the positive perception they have about repairing clothes. This agrees with the symbolic interaction theory which explains that people attach meanings to activities, that is teachers repair their damaged clothes because they view repairing clothes as a way of prolonging the life of their clothes, helping them to stay trendy and also to gain a worthy return on investment.

With regards to the type of clothes that are often repaired, the result showed that all the types of clothes mentioned or presented were mostly repaired by respondent with the exception of panties/boxer shorts and suits. Brassiere which is an under garment had a mean score which is above 2.5 and this is understandable since it is mostly women who do the mending work. This also goes to show that with boxer shorts/panties, most respondents do not repair them when they are damaged but rather replace them. This might be due to the fact that undergarments are very personal and that if they cannot repair them by themselves, they will not give it to anybody to do it for them. Most people buy panties/boxer shorts than make them themselves; mass produced undergarment is so inexpensive to the extent that is more affordable to buy than to make this type of clothing [10]. This might explain why they do not repair them when they get damaged and clothes that are more likely to be repaired are those that are expensive and valued in other ways [23]. A study by McLaren and McLauchan also revealed that most people often repair their favourite garment which means that the types of clothes that teachers admitted repairing are often their favourite [6].

Basically, Suit was also not repaired by most respondents and this can be due to the nature and way in which they were sewn. Producers of suits use the edge-edge way of lining application which takes more time in case one wants to repair unlike clothes such

as dresses and shirts. However, some clothes were designed from the outset to accommodate later alterations/or repairs [47]. An example of such clothes mentioned were some varieties of seventeenth-century dress that were created with detachable sleeves or cuffs pieces that could be efficiently washed, repaired and/or replaced with ease. Teachers having these positive perceptions about clothes repair is going to impact on their students and the community positively since teachers are considered role models. Students and people in the community are also going to see the need to repair their damaged clothes if their role models are doing it. Teachers can even teach others how to mend their clothes.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

It is apparent from the study that the perception one holds about the repair of clothes affects how they view the act and their subsequent adaptation of the exercise. Based on the findings on the perception of teachers about clothes repair, it can be said that all teachers in Agona Kwanyako repair clothes, either by themselves or others. It is noteworthy that repair of clothes protects the environment, create employment and alleviate one from poverty, helps clothes stay trendy and can give one a sense of satisfaction. It can also be concluded that clothes that are normally used such as dresses, shirts and trousers are the types of clothes mostly repaired by teachers in Agona Kwanyako.

Teachers have positive perception about clothes repair. Based on this it is recommended that Home Economics teachers should team up with other teachers to inculcate proper clothes care in their students. Based on the findings on the types of clothes that are usually repaired, local clothes manufacturers are encouraged to make the seams of such clothes stronger to avoid damages. Also, clothes that are not easy for teachers to repair should be made in such a way that repairing will be possible and easier.

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