METHODS

Functional attributes of clothing preferences of students in universities in Nigeria: Implications for clothing and textiles education

Juliana Ego Azonuche[*]

Department of Vocational Education, Home Economics Unit, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

[*]**Correspondence:**
Juliana Ego Azonuche,
azonuchejulianaego@gmail.com

This study looked at the practical aspects of students' choices of attire in Nigerian universities. The study determined the drivers of students' clothing preferences in Nigerian universities, as well as objectively identified the clothes that they favored and evaluated their practical features. This study was led by one hypothesis and three research questions. Southern Nigeria was the study's focus. The study design was *ex post* facto, and both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were applied. There were 28,650 students enrolled. Multistage sampling was used to first select three state universities by random sampling technique, a sample size of 585 undergraduates were purposively selected who were between 18 and 30 years of age and among the 200–400-level courses in the universities. To collect the data, an observation checklist and functional attributes of clothing preference questionnaire (FACPQ) were used, reliability coefficient with Kuder–Richardson-20 coefficient was obtained for an overall competent level (OCL) of 0.86. Cronbach's α coefficient obtained for clothing preference determinants is 0.820 and functional attributes is = 0.85. Percentage, mean, standard deviation (SD), and *t*-test at 0.05 significance level were used to analyze data. The results showed that the fashion preferences of students included, among other things, leggings, spaghetti tops, slim faded, and torn jeans, hipster (low waist/sagging pants), bum shorts, and miniskirts. The following factors are determined by clothing: Brand, influence from peer groups, current fashion, self-satisfaction, ease of wear, attractive appearance, availability of clothing, and not durability, figure type, wearer's mood, fit, money available, or comfort. When it comes to comfort, mobility, ease of task performance and activities, protection, and safety, student attire has low functional qualities. The wardrobe choices of undergraduate males and females did not significantly differ from one another. The upshot is that teaching pupils about clothes and textiles will encourage appropriate clothing choices and wearing habits while also aiding in the prevention of indecent attire. As teenagers and young adults, their main concern is keeping up with the times and dressing stylishly to satisfy peer pressure and standards. It was suggested that colleges set a clothing code to help students control their wardrobe, provide workshops and seminars on good fashion once new students are admitted, and punish those who do not follow the rules.

Keywords: functional, attributes, clothing preferences, students, clothing and textiles

1. Introduction

A wide range of significant objects or materials applied to the body for covering, weather protection, and aesthetic purposes are covered by clothing. Clothing is an integral aspect of a person's physical appearance, encompassing various types of clothing, accessories, decorations, haircuts, and makeup (1). People's opinions of a person are shaped by their clothing, which says a lot about the wearer. Other studies discuss about the wearer's individuality, personality, and culture while also providing comfort and self-confidence (2, 3). Originally, people wear clothing for

the following four purposes: Ornament, protection, modesty, and immodesty (4). Decency and not dressing outrageously are the characteristics of modest attire, especially when it comes to young people.

In Nigeria, universities represent the pinnacle of higher education establishments, enrolling both young adults and female and male adolescents. To stand out from the crowd, these kids utilize their clothes as a means of expressing their celebrity, peer identity, and sense of connection and belonging (5). They dress in a variety of ways that go against the basic aesthetic and utilitarian requirements of daily life. For clothing to fulfill man's demands for comfort, safety, protection, ease of use, and ornamentation, among others, it must be functional. Clothes that offer protection, comfort, fit, and facilitate movement or mobility during activities are considered functional garment elements (6, 7). They target esthetic components of clothes that exude appeal and beauty. In the world of fashion, utility is important, yet sacrificing aesthetics may make an item look unappealing (8).

University courses in clothes and textiles education cover topics such as fibers, fabrics, textile design, garment manufacture, upkeep, and care. For appropriate dress sense, a pleasant image, and comfort, clothing preferences, selections, and care require some understanding of fabrics and apparel. Clothing and textile educators face a dilemma in the 21st century: ensuring that the next generation of students has the knowledge and technological abilities that are necessary to keep up with the rapid advancements in technology and fulfill the global demand (9).

In 1864, German sociologist Max Weber developed the modernization thesis upon which this study was based. The idea describes how cultures modernize, that is, how they gradually move from traditional to contemporary societies. It pinpointed a few social factors that influenced the growth and change of society as a whole. It examined how society is changing and how people are responding to it, as well as how new technologies are requiring citizens to pay more for a better quality of life. Globalization forces old values to give way to contemporary ones in many facets of life. This study supports the hypothesis that students' preferences for clothes are based on contemporary culture, fashion, and staying current with trends, which they learn about from a variety of sources including the media, the internet, peer pressure, and fashion trends, and because of this, people's perceptions of how clothing affects them mentally, socially, emotionally, and expressively vary depending on the characteristics or situation (5, 10).

Age, gender, modesty, and size are physiological factors that influence clothing selection. Psychological factors include mood, values, appearance, and disposition. Social factors include image, level of living, media, and fashion. The environmental factors include culture, religion, weather, and availability (4). In contrast to the primary purpose of clothing, university students often compare and contrast products based on various factors when choosing their wardrobe, including price, styles, fashion, brand, advertisement, peer influence, self-perception, age, appearance, self-esteem, identity, lifestyle, media, location, and availability.

The majority of universities in Nigeria deal with issues related to undergraduates' inappropriate and impure attire on campus. As a result, some schools have implemented dress codes for students to combat this immodest behavior and prevent the institution from becoming a status symbol that could undermine morality and societal values (11). These students' favorite types of clothes were loose-fitting garments, hairstyles with varied colors, artificial jewelry and accessories, sagging pants, and apparel that was too tight, among other things. As a consequence, it enables individuals to attract attention, entice the other sex, keep up with current trends in fashion, and interact with their peers. It has been shown that pupils' functional capacities in terms of their fashion choices are overlooked.

Prior research revealed a relationship between a person's taste for clothes and their weather, mood, self-expression, self-esteem, and personality traits (12–14). According to (15), university students' fashion choices are determined by how best to hide physical flaws while yet being stylish and having a distinct identity. Additionally, women's acculturation to clothing is influenced by social, religious, cultural, and environmental influences as well as individual characteristics (14). According to (16), there are a number of elements that affect undergraduate college students' choice of clothes, including comfort in clothing, the weather, their mood, their own fashion sense, their religious beliefs, media, and their family orientation. Additional research looked at various product aspects and levels of features that help users and consumers (5, 17–22). The necessity to take into account the practical qualities of these chosen or preferred articles of clothing has not yet been studied, despite the fact that several research works have looked at clothing choices and selection and the effects of preference. As a result, it is important to evaluate the practical aspects of students' preferred attire at Nigerian universities.

1.1. Purpose of the study

Specifically, this study

- identified preferred clothing of students in universities,
- ascertained determinants of students' clothing preferences in universities in Nigeria, and
- Assessed functional attributes of preferred clothing items of students.

1.2. Research questions

1. What are the preferred clothing of students in universities?

2. What are the determinants of students' clothing preferences in universities in Nigeria?

3. What are the functional attributes of preferred clothing items of students?

1.3. Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean rating on functional attributes of clothing preference between male and female students in universities in Nigeria.

2. Methodology

This study used an expo-facto design using research methods that were both qualitative and quantitative (focus groups and descriptive surveys, respectively). All male and female undergraduate students in Southern Nigerian state universities between the ages of 18 and 30 made up the study's population. There are around 28,650 undergraduate students enrolled overall (Student Affairs Office, 2021–2022). The sample for the study was chosen using a multistage sampling process. First, three state universities—Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State; Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State; and Anambra State University, Akanibiam, Anambra State—were chosen at random from among the states in the South. A total of 585 undergraduate students made up the sample size; they were purposefully chosen from among the faculties at the universities; Delta State University, Abraka = 195 Students. There are 195 students at Ambrose Alli University in Ekpoma, Edo State, and 195 students at Anambra State University in Akanibiam, Anambra State. A total of 385 females and 200 males who were students of the 200–400-level courses and had to have attended the institution for at least a year made up the sample.

2.1. Instrument for data collection

The students were surveyed using focus group discussions (FGDs) to learn more about their chosen clothes, their factors, and their practical qualities. The feedback and ideas received were utilized to create a 27-item observation checklist that was created through observation, focus group discussions, and a review of the literature on students' preferred clothes. Answers to this were either "Yes" (1) or "No" (0). The information obtained from the FGD, the study's objectives, and a thorough literature analysis on clothing preferences were gathered using the FACPQ. The student demographics were contained in Part I. There were two sections in Part II: Section A featured 20 items on factors influencing preferred attire, with options for Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD)

on ratings of four, three, two, and one provided, respectively. Section B utilized a 5-point grading system with 14 items on the functional features of preferred clothing: Excellent (E) = 5 points, Good (G) = 4 points, Satisfactory (S) = 3 points, Poor (P) = 2 points, and Extremely Poor (EP) = 1 point. A lecturer in clothing and textiles from the University of Benin in Edo State validated the questionnaire in person, and a final version was created based on the changes and observations made.

Determinants of preferred clothing and functional attributes of preferred clothing were used to determine the internal consistency of the instruments of the obtained data. The reliability was assessed using Kuder–Richardson-20 for the OCL of preferred clothing items and Cronbach's α reliability coefficient indices for Sections A and B. For OCL, the Kuder–Richardson-20 coefficient was found to be 0.86. Determinants of preferred clothing = 0.820 and functional aspects of preferred clothing = 0.85 were the Cronbach's α coefficients obtained for Sections A and B.

With the assistance of four research assistants, 586 undergraduate students were handed the instrument, which they promptly filled out and returned. For the purpose of answering the study questions, the acquired data were analyzed using percentages for OCL, mean, and standard deviation (SD). An item's mean of 2.50 or more is considered highly agreed upon, while 2.49 or less is considered strongly disagreed against. A t-test was used for the hypothesis at the significance level of 0.05.

3. Results

3.1. Research question 1

What are the preferred clothing of students in Universities.

Table 1 presents the proportion of replies from students regarding their chosen clothing items. The results indicate that 74.2 to 99.7% of the clothing items are liked by university students, while the remaining percentage ranges from 10.40 to 32.8%. This suggests that while nude heels, suits, and belts are disliked, students choose outfits such as leggings, bum shorts, faded or torn jeans, spaghetti tops, breast, tube shirts, bare back tops, hipsters (low waist/sagging pants), small dresses, sneakers, and colorful hairstyles.

3.2. Research question 2

What are the determinants of students clothing preferences in Universities in Nigeria?

Table 2 results showed that, among other things, respondents agreed that factors such as brand of clothing, peer group influence, current fashion, imitation of other students, being unique in one's attire, self-satisfaction, ease of wear, and impressing others were determinants

TABLE 1 | Percentage of responses of respondents on identified preferred clothing items of students in university.

S. No.	Preferred clothing items	Number	Percent (%)	Remarks
1.	Leggings	582	99.7	Yes
2.	Bum short	576	98.6	Yes
3.	Jeans skirt	446	79.1	Yes
4.	Skinny jeans/trousers (faded and tattered)	576	98.6	Yes
5.	Dress	552	95.2	Yes
6.	T-shirts	520	91.9	Yes
7.	Blouses (breast tubes)	514	89.2	Yes
8.	Blazer dress	438	75.5	Yes
9.	Mini skirt	508	87.6	Yes
10.	Mini dress	514	88.6	Yes
11.	Shirt	438	75.5	Yes
12.	Suiting	138	25.5	No
13.	Belt	190	32.8	No
14.	Hipster pants and waist (low waist hip sagging)	564	97.2	Yes
15.	Bag/purse	576	98.6	Yes
16.	Sneakers	522	91.3	Yes
17.	Wedges	420	74.2	Yes
18.	Slippers	446	79.1	Yes
19.	Nude heels	146	26.2	No
20.	Sandals	420	74.2	Yes
21.	Ballet flats	470	81.0	Yes
22.	Necklace	420	74.2	Yes
23.	Bogus earrings	474	81.7	Yes
24.	Accessories (bangles, bracelet, and eyeglasses)	420	74.2	Yes
25.	Colored hairdo	470	81.0	Yes
26.	Long braid	470	81.0	Yes
27.	Dreadlocks/uncombed/unkempt hair	564	97.2	Yes

of university students' clothing preferences. However, respondents disagreed with the statements that comfort, fit on the wearer, money available, durability, and parental provision were factors influencing university students' clothing preferences. Items 3, 4, 11, 13, 15, 18, and 20 had mean values ranging from 1.10 to 2.41, indicating that respondents disagreed. Thus, the evidence suggests that the main factors influencing students' preferences for clothing are not durability, figure types, the mood of the wearer, fit, money available, comfort, or parental provision, but rather the brand of clothing, peer group influence, current fashion, imitation of other students, being unique in one's attire, and impressing other students. The SD, which indicates how closely their answers to the factors influencing university students' choices for clothes range from 0.58 to 0.70.

3.3. Research question 3

What are the functional attributes of preferred clothing items of students?

The results in **Table 3** demonstrated that all of the items had means between 2.00 and 2.89, indicating inadequate

functional qualities of university students' favorite apparel. The majority of students chose clothes that are cozy, safe, and pleasant to wear rather than ones that are cool to the touch. The majority reported inadequate mobility, weather protection, and ease of wear. The majority of favored apparel makes it difficult to do duties and is difficult to put on and take off. This suggests that the clothes chosen by college students are not very useful in terms of comfort, mobility, protection, and safety. The SD ranges from 0.41 to 0.87 showing closeness in the responses of the students.

3.4. Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of functional attributes of clothing preferences between male and female students in the university.

Table 4 results indicated that there was no discernible difference between male and female students' mean replies to any of the items. Given that their probability values fall between 0.110 and 0.875, they are significant at the $p > 0.05$ level of analysis. Consequently, at the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis—that there is no significant

TABLE 2 | Mean responses and SD on the determinants of students' clothing preferences in the university.

S. No.	Determinants	Mean	SD	Ranking
1.	Peer group influence	3.81	0.70	2nd
2.	Fashion in vogue	3.80	0.63	3rd
3.	Comfort	1.61	0.72	17th
4.	Fit on the wearer	2.00	0.68	15th
5.	Mood of the wear	2.11	0.58	14th
6.	Imitation of other students	3.78	0.64	4th
7.	Being unique in clothing oneself	3.69	0.66	5th
8.	To impress other people	3.80	0.71	3rd
9.	Age of the wearer	2.87	0.69	11th
10.	Gender	2.90	0.60	10th
11.	Money in hand	1.92	0.63	16th
12.	Satisfaction of self-desire	3.48	0.72	6th
13.	Figure types	2.40	0.70	13th
14.	Weather condition	2.00	0.68	15th
15.	Brand of clothes	3.90	0.73	1st
16.	Available clothing	3.01	0.69	9th
17.	Makes one look beautiful	3.12	0.66	8th
18.	Durability	2.41	0.70	12th
19.	Easy to wear	3.44	0.75	7th
20.	Parents provision	1.10	0.67	18th

TABLE 3 | Mean responses and SD on the rating of students on the functional attributes of preferred clothing based on comfort, movement, protection, and safety.

S. No.	Functional attributes of preferred clothing	Mean	SD	Remark	Ranking
1.	Comfort ability in wear	2.80	0.61	Poor	3rd
2.	Ease in the garment use	2.79	0.58	Poor	4th
3.	Nonirritating to the wearer	2.10	0.67	Poor	11th
4.	Breathability	2.06	0.50	Poor	12th
5.	Allow body heat to escape	2.00	0.41	Poor	14th
6.	Feel on the body	2.01	0.52	Poor	13th
7.	Fabrics are soft to the skin in wear	2.42	0.55	Poor	10th
8.	Cool to the body in wear	2.89	0.68	Poor	1st
9.	Allow freedom in movement	2.52	0.87	Poor	5th
10.	Easy to wear	2.46	0.50	Poor	9th
11.	Easy to doff wear	2.47	0.49	Poor	8th
12.	Safe on wear	2.81	0.76	Poor	2th
13.	Protect the body from weather conditions	2.61	0.80	Poor	6th
14.	Allow task performance	2.50	0.57	Poor	7th

difference—was maintained. It suggests that there was little difference in the replies from the male and female pupils.

4. Discussion

The results indicated that university students prefer to wear things such as colorful hairstyles, sneakers, slippers, leggings, small dresses, ragged jeans, spaghetti tops, breast tube tops, bare back tops, hipsters (low waist/sagging pants), and colored hairstyles over naked heels, suits, and belts. This is consistent with the findings of (23), who noted that skimpy dresses, short skirts, breast-displaying dresses, seductive and sophisticated ensembles used for attention-grabbing purposes, and other indecent attire, were among the wave of indecent clothes among students (3, 24). Since most of them look to be careless and half naked, the majority of these outfits frequently portray insane fashion. Wearers

TABLE 4 | t-test analysis of responses of male and female students on functional attributes of clothing preferences.

S. No.	Functional attributes of preferred clothing	Male (200)		Female (386)		t-value	Significant	Decision
		X_1	SD_1	X_2	SD_2			
1.	Comfort ability in wear	2.79	0.63	2.70	0.70	1.036	0.300	NS
2.	Ease in the garment use	2.38	0.70	2.50	0.72	0.249	0.804	NS
3.	Nonirritating to the wearer	2.41	0.73	2.60	0.70	0.725	0.439	NS
4.	Breathability	2.53	0.83	2.55	0.85	1.583	0.875	NS
5.	Allow body heat to escape	2.84	0.92	2.69	0.81	1.010	0.312	NS
6.	Feel on the body	2.57	0.89	2.39	0.64	0.542	0.567	NS
7.	Fabrics is soft to the skin in wear	2.72	0.76	2.70	0.82	0.152	0.860	NS
8.	Cool to the body	2.78	0.68	2.71	0.80	0.678	0.492	NS
9.	Allow freedom in movement	2.64	0.80	2.65	0.89	1.070	0.281	NS
10.	Easy donning	2.54	0.76	2.34	0.76	1.672	0.085	NS
11.	Easy doffing	2.61	0.61	2.70	0.67	1.651	0.110	NS
12.	Safe on wear	2.49	0.80	2.68	0.66	0.542	0.586	NS
13.	Protect the body from weather condition	2.58	0.72	2.40	0.72	0.410	0.657	NS
14.	Allow task performance	2.66	0.68	2.67	0.69	0.397	0.700	NS

X_1, mean for male; X_2, mean for female; n_1, number of male; n_2, number of female; SD, standard deviation; t-value, calculated level of significance; df, degree of freedom = 583; NS, not significant, level of significance = 0.05.

of clothing appear modest and not immodest or obscene, which has far-reaching ramifications. Clothes are also used to embellish and protect. Apuke discovered that young people copy other people's makeup, hairstyles, and hip–hop attire in addition to other fashionable and trendy looks (25). The majority of their outfits are messy, and unsightly, with untidy hair, ripped, holes in the jeans, and low-waist pants or trousers that expose their underwear (26). These provide a poor impression of university students since they do not look well in these attires.

Further research revealed that the majority of students' preferences for clothing were determined by their brand of choice, peer pressure, current fashion, copying other students, feeling unique in one's attire, self-satisfaction, ease of wear, attractive appearance, availability of clothing, and least important factors, figure type, wearer's mood, fit, comfort, and availability of money. This is consistent with the findings of Obeta and Owah (5), who revealed that consumers (students) are more receptive to brand names than to quality. Peer groups have a significant impact on fashion choices. Researchers (Obeta A and Uwah B; Esiowu AP and Igbo CA) noted that friends who wear a certain type of clothing feel it is appropriate, and as a result, all of their friends and social groups are forced to follow suit (3, 27). These pals want to seem stylish and feel good about themselves, so they dress differently from other people. Clothing manufacturers and retailers effectively strategize to meet the demands of university undergraduate students, who are influenced by various factors such as advertisement, style in fashion, desire to enhance beauty and self-esteem. These findings were reported by Ohaka R et al. (28) in collaboration with Nwabah N and Yohanna K (9, 26). Since

students do not have paid employment and are completely dependent on their parents for maintenance, it would have been predicted that factors such as durability, body types, clothing fit, comfort, and parental provision would have been key drivers of students' clothing preferences. Accordingly, preferences for suitable apparel would have included fit, comfort, durability, and figure types that were not in opposition. According to (29), students utilize their time and money for school to attend fashion shows and nightclubs, which has a detrimental impact on their well-being and their ability to pay attention in class (30–32).

The results also demonstrated that the clothes chosen by university students had low practical qualities in terms of comfort, mobility, protection, and safety. Among other things, clothing is uncomfortable to wear, does not breathe well, is difficult to put on and take off, hinders mobility and weather protection, and hinders work performance. The results contradict with those of the results of the study by Azonuche JE and Anyakoha EU; and Ozougwu et al.(7, 33) who found that the main functional characteristics of well-fitting clothes in use are comfort, protection, safety, freedom of movement, and task performance. Since clothing must enable the wearer to perform tasks and provide other necessary utility, it has been determined that functional capabilities are the most important aspect of clothing (34). However, these students disregard the functional aspects of their clothing because they are wearing it for other reasons, such as to attract attention from the opposite sex, to be fashionable, to copy others, or to appease their peer groups. They portray their lifestyle and fashion choices by dressing in tiny, tight fitting, transparent clothing that sags and exposes their hips, thighs, and other important body parts

(26, 35, 36). The majority of their clothing is altered to better showcase their body type, curves, and silhouette after purchasing. They struggle to walk and sit, and they frequently find it uncomfortable to bend down to pick things up or cross gutters. According to Ewulo MO (37), these students' appearance is terrible due to their messy haircuts, damaged jeans at the knee and thigh, and extremely uncomfortable foot-dragging when they walk. These students fail to see that the university is a bastion of morality, character, and knowledge. Although they should serve as role models for the greater community, their usage of fashion and mannerisms convey an impure outlook on life.

The results indicated that there is no significant difference between the replies of male and female university students about the functional features of their favorite clothes. This is in line with reports by Yohanna(26) and Ojobane et al. (38) on indecent attire among young people, both male and female, attending higher education institutions. Given that male youngsters compete with female counterparts in the fashion department, this may not come as a surprise. In Nigeria, some men even wear jewelry and style or plait their hair—things that were previously thought to be reserved for women. However, fashion acculturation is quickly changing attitudes within the community.

4.1. Implications for clothing and textiles education

The majority of students have a bad attitude about wearing appropriate clothing in an effort to keep up with current trends. Some students despise and mistreat professors who warn them, skip class, and commit test fraud, all of which have an adverse effect on their academic achievement. The knowledge, abilities, and behaviors that can be gained through a variety of learning opportunities in fabric identification, selection, and wearing practices for various occasions—as well as in individual styles and designs based on clothing theories—are increased by clothing and textile education. Since students' clothing preferences are influenced by peers, fashion, brand of clothes, impression, and imitation, among others, it is important that knowledge and behavioral practices of dress sense by clothing and textiles students, knowing what, when, and how to wear act as models for other students to imbibe and emulate to curb indecent dressing. The ideal clothing preferences of students should enhance physical appearance; give comfort, be acceptable, and show modesty in use, knowing that, the most expensive clothing is not the most fitting. As a result, proper attire for students should be practical rather than merely the newest style, which might indicate irresponsibility and obscenity among university students. Students' awareness and capacity to express themselves through their attire contribute to a feeling of community, freedom of speech, and an ideal learning environment.

5. Conclusion

The need to seem well, make an impression, and get attention has severely impacted Nigerian university students' sensitivity to style preference and choice. The study's conclusions revealed the clothing preferences of university students, who frequently do not look appropriately dressed for their academic status. These preferences include leggings, bum shorts, skinny faded and tattered jeans, mini-skirts, spaghetti tops, breast tube tops, bare back tops, and hipster (low waist/sagging trousers). Comfort, fit, protection, safety, and utility are not the foundation of these desired apparel functional qualities. The students exchange these useful characteristics for clothing brands, peer pressure, fashion, copying others, and the need to stand out from the crowd and feel good about themselves through attractive appearances.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following are hereby recommended:

1. To limit students' clothing choices, university administration should establish a dress code for students.

2. To reduce and discourage inappropriate attire and to encourage students on campus and off to wear respectable clothes, orientations, seminars, and workshops on dress sense should be held for new students upon admission and at the start of each semester.

3. Students who are discovered to be dressing indecently should face disciplinary action from the university administration.

4. General studies (GST) classes offered by all faculties must incorporate dress sense.

5. Through group and individual counseling, teachers and counselors should ensure that students are adhering to the school clothing code.

6. Parents should be urged to provide a good example for their kids and wards, keep an eye on what they wear, and be in constant communication with them.

Author contributions

JA confirms sole responsibility for the following: Study conception and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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