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Clothing Care, Selection and Maintenance Practices Among Academic Staff of the College of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Lafia Nasarawa State

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Abstract

The study investigates the Clothing Care Selection and Management Practices of the Academic Staff of COAST Lafia. Three specific objectives guided the study. The study adopted a survey research design. The study population consisted of two hundred and eighteen staff of the college. A sample-sized team of 125 staff participated in the study and Krejcie and Morgan procedure was used in sample selection. Clothing selection and management practices (CSMP) were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by three experts from the department. The internal consistency of the instruments was determined using Cronbach alpha statistical analysis and the reliability coefficient of 0.89. Data obtained were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions while Pearson correlation was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05% level of significance. Results from the study indicate staff has high knowledge on laundry ($\overline{X}$ 3.27), ironing (3.19), airing (3.72), storage practices (3.34) but low knowledge on care label instructions. Also, washing of cloth after every wear (3.27), ironing after every wash (3.36), usage of detergent to wash (3.39) were the extent of care on clothing among the staff. The study recommends that in order to achieve an improvement in the clothing care, selection and management practices of staff of COAST, Lafia. The college authorities in collaboration with the department of fashion design and clothing technology should organize seminars on clothing care and management practices for Staff of COAST Lafia in order to improve their knowledge on clothing care label.

Keywords: Clothing Repair, Darning, Clothing Selection, Clothing Maintenance, Care Labels

Introduction

Clothing is any item worn on the body, clothing is any article or item placed on the body to protect, beautify or adorn it. Clothing is made of fabrics or textiles, but over time it has included garments made from animal skin and other thin sheets of materials and natural products found in the environment, put together. The wearing of clothing is mostly restricted to human beings and is a feature of all human societies. The amount and type of clothing worn depends on gender, body type, social factors, and geographic considerations. According to Azuah (2016) most people desire to look nice in their cloth but do not know what is appropriate for their body proportions and figure types. It is noted that clothing communicates nonverbally and hence makes a statement about the person wearing it (Larsson, 2014, Anyakoha & Eluwa 2015)). Humans are very conscious of the importance of good clothes; few pieces of clothes given proper maintenance and used to the greatest advantage are infinitely durable and preferable than many of the best clothing badly maintained. Clothing care is a process of giving special attention to clothes (Klepp & Laitala,2023). Some of the reasons

why we care for clothes is for appearance, health and the fabric. Dirty clothes are unpleasant to handle, unhygienic and dangerous to health, since it harbors germs. Clothing maintenance is an act of taking care or keeping the fiber and textile material worn on the body in good condition, checking and repairing it regularly to extend its durability (Wiley, 2017). The maintenance can be achieved through proper laundry, storage, repairing, reconstruction, retaining, and mending (Agbo & Kingsley, 2017). Fabrics' care entails dirt prevention, dirt removal and ensuring safety from environmental hazards such as rodents, insects' sunlight, dampness, wetness and any other factors that adversely affect the fabric and makes it undesirable (Agbo, 2004).

Clothing selection requires knowledge and skill to get maximum value for money. Clothing selection of any given individual includes all the procedures involve in planning, shopping and wearing of clothes. Each of these procedures include various steps of taking a decision. If clothing is to perform its varied functions, it must be appropriately selected for specified functions irrespective of the age of an individual, (Nchekwube &Chigbu 2014). According to Mohammed and Umar (2010), clothing choice and selection presents a never-ending array of decisions as individuals must select garments that are correct in weight for the climate, suitable for the occasion, meet their emotional needs, have the necessary degree of comfort, freedom and suitable condition to wear. Naturally, people want to select clothes that will be as attractive as possible, hence well-chosen clothes can bring out the best personality traits and physical features and make the person feel the very best. Making clothing choices and selection is an essential part of functioning independently as an adult in society (Abiamuwe, Seriki-Mosadolorun & Lemon, 2015. Agbo and Kingsley (2018) also revealed that clothing selection are a very personal and emotional issue to an individual and a very important means to define, refine, or enhance one's self-esteem.

Most consumers of clothing and clothing products often base their purchase decisions on attractive physical properties such as texture, color, style and sometimes cost. Other important properties are quickly overlooked by not paying attention to the cleaning instructions provided on the clothing labels, particularly at the pre-purchase and post-purchase periods, this results in consumers obtaining less value and dissatisfaction with clothing products (Diyaolu, Soyebo & Abaniwu,2024). After purchasing and selecting the clothes, the next thing to consider is how to maintain these clothes to increase their serviceability. The selection of clothing and clothing articles is guided by factors that must fulfill the following characteristics: aesthetics, functionality, and accessibility (Agbo & Kingsley 2015). Among these factors are age, personality, physique, occasion.

Clothing maintenance practices include knowledge about laundering, ironing, storage, labeling and mending the clothes. Laundering is the cleaning of clothes by hand or machine-washing in a detergent solution (Tullia, 2017). It is important to know the kind of fabrics and the correct ways to wash the articles. Another maintenance practice is clothing storage after laundering and drying. According to Anyakoha and Eluwa (2015), clothes should be aired after each wear to remove odor stored by either hanging in a wardrobe or folding and putting away in a box or a drawer. Proper storage protects clothes from rumpling, pests or rats.

Care label means a permanent label or tag, containing regular care information and instructions, that is attached or affixed in such a manner that it will not become separated from the product and will remain eligible during the useful life of the product,(Raha, 2020), label as a care procedure tells the washing method, safe water temperature, if chlorine bleach should be used or not, and safe temperature for drying and ironing. This special instruction gives assurance that the particular apparel will remain in its best form after repeated washing treatments (Raha, 2020). Clothing repairs are services carried out on clothing

that have been damaged to put it in order. Clothes can be repaired through mending as it involves repairs on some parts of the clothes that are torn or worn out and replacement of such as spoilt zippers and buttons darning, patching, and re-enforcement. Gwilt (2014) stated that clothing repair is to restore to good condition or shape after damage or wear.

Statement of the Problem

Poor knowledge of clothing care, selection, and clothing maintenance is detrimental and results to an unappreciable appearance and a waste of financial resources. People face several problems in their clothing care, selection, and clothing maintenance practices such as difficulty in following care label instructions. Again, clothes are quite expensive, it therefore follows that these clothes, when provided, should be taken good care for durability. Lack of knowledge and sheer maintenance negligence could hamper clothing usage; many of the changes in garments are associated with laundry-related problems such as stains, odor, shrinkage and color changes. This shows that the care phase is important for continued use of clothes. Care of clothes is probably taken for granted but it requires time and effort to prolong clothes lifespan. Sometimes to care for clothes, one may cause harm to some clothing items due to poor care and laundering practices leading to failure of a particular clothes functions. Many consumers are unaware of material properties and care labels, and therefore do not care for their clothes as effectively as it should, (WRAP, 2012). It has therefore become very expedient to carry out this research on clothing care, selection and management practices among the academic staff of COAST Lafia.

Objective of the study

The major objective of the study is to investigate the clothing care, selection and management practices among the Academic Staff of College of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Lafia Nasarawa State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. determine clothing selection and management practices among academic staff of COAST, Lafia
2. determine the extent of care on clothing among the academic staff of COAST, Lafia
3. determine the extent of knowledge about clothing maintenance practices among the academic staff of COAST, Lafia

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis states that: There is no significant difference between clothing care and knowledge about clothing maintenance

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a survey research design in which opinion of group of people were sought by collecting and analyzing data considered to be representative of the entire group. (Nworgu, 2015). The study was conducted in the Lafia Municipal Council of Nasarawa State. The council has a total population of 478,809 people, (National Population Commission, 2006).

Population for the Study: The population of the study comprised Academic staff totaling 218 of the College of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Lafia Nasarawa State Information was obtained from the registry department in February 2024.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: Random sampling was used to solicit information from the Academic staff that were at work on that day. The sample for the study was 125 academic staff. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table -1 for sample size determination.

Instrument for Data Collection: The research instrument for the collection of data was titled 'Clothing Care Selection and Management Practices' (CSMP). The questionnaire was made up of 63 test items comprising three sections. Sections 1 and 3 were made up of items presented on a four-point rating scale of strongly agree (4) agree (3) strongly disagree (2) and disagree (1) while section 2 was presented on a four-

point rating scale of very high knowledge (4), high knowledge (3), low knowledge (2) and very low knowledge (1). The Instrument was face validated by three experts from the Home and Rural Economics Department, College of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Lafia. 125 copies of the questionnaire were distributed by hand to the academic staff at their various offices. Those that were present at school on that day was given the questionnaire to fill. The copies were all retrieved on the same day. Data was collected by the researcher with the collaboration of some research assistants.

Data Analysis and Techniques: The data collected for the study were analyzed using percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Mean ratings of 2.50 and above were used for the objectives. The mean above 2.50 was accepted as agreed while the criterion value below 2.50 was considered disagreeable.

Result

Table 1 shows that respondents agree on clothing selection on boutiques (3.51), native (3.37), mood (3.36), religion (3.37), weather (3.55), income (3.16), spouse (3.75), physique (2.87), fashion trends (2.65), occasion (3.44), personal value/taste (3.48). All the items ranged between (2.65-3.51) and were agreed upon except for items such as friends (2.45), inheritance (2.33) and handed down from relatives (2.32) who ranged below 2.50 and were disagreed upon.

Table 1: **Mean Responses and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Their Clothing Selection Practices**.

Clothing Selection Practices	Mean ($\overline{X}$)	St.d	Remarks
Sources of clothing selection			
i. boutique	3.51	.66740	Agree
ii. second hand	3.07	.79490	Agree
iii. hand down from relatives	2.32	.88697	Disagree
iv. inheritance	2.33	1.06213	Disagree
Category of clothing you wear			
i. casual (jeans/shirt)	3.28	.82125	Agree
ii. corporate	3.14	.75886	Agree
iii. casual-casual (native)	3.37	.64338	Agree
Mood influences the choice of clothing	3.36	.91051	Agree
Religion influences choice of clothing	3.34	.73071	Agree
Weather affects the choice of clothing	3.55	.72352	Agree
Income affects the selection of clothing	3.16	.95661	Agree
Spouse influences clothing selection	2.75	1.03687	Agree
Friends/ colleagues influence clothing selection	2.45	1.08883	Disagree
Physique/ figure clothing selection	2.87	1.12863	Agree
Fashion trends affect clothing selection	2.65	.98459	Agree
Occasions often influence the selection of clothing	3.44	.80778	Agree
Personal value and taste influences clothing selection	3.48	.76832	Agree

Table 2 shows the extent of clothing care among staff of COAST Lafia. The most prevalent method of washing is after every wear ($\overline{X}$ =3.27). ironing of cloth after every wash(3.36), use of detergent to wash (3.39), wardrobe storage (3.05), Sun drying (=3.57), mending of cloth (3.17), bleaching agent (3.08), purchase of cloth yearly(3.18) is the most accepted means of washing clothes weekly (2.45), ironing of cloth after use(2.26), storage in rope(2.25) and basket (2.28) and purchasing cloth weekly (2.29) were disagreed upon by the respondents.

Table 2: Mean Responses and Standard Deviation of Respondents To the Extent of Care About Clothing

Extent of Care	Mean ($\overline{X}$)	St.d	Remarks
Washing cloth			
after every wear	3.27	.88332	Agree
ii. after two wears	2.97	.91108	Agree
iii. weekly	2.45	1.09621	Disagree
Ironing of cloth			
i. after every wash	3.36	.95377	Agree
ii. when necessary	3.12	.72513	Agree
iii. after use	2.26	.99307	Disagree
Usage of		.	
i. bar soap to wash	3.36	69021	Agree
ii. detergent to wash	3.39	.72841	Agree
Storing clothes in		.	
i. hanger	3.20	89803	Agree
ii. wardrobe	3.50	.61728	Agree
iii. box/bag	3.12	.77226	Agree
iv. basket	2.28	.97219	Disagree
v. rope	2.25	1.12812	Disagree
Drying of cloth through		.	
i. sun	3.57	73247	Agree
ii. shade	3.15	.64827	Agree
iii. machine spin	2.59	.99268	Agree
Repair of cloth through			
i. recycling	2.51	1.04431	Agree
ii. hand down	2.76	.89262	Agree
iii. renovation	2.61	1.00630	Agree
iv. discard	2.64	1.14582	Agree
v. repair/mend	3.17	.96774	Agree
vi. dyeing	2.56	1.07265	Agree
Removal of stains			
i. warm water	3.04	.91051	Agree
ii. bleaching agent	3.08	1.02403	Agree
Purchase of clothes		.	
i. weekly	2.29	97570	Disagree
ii. monthly	2.64	.96934	Agree
iii. quarterly	3.14	.86792	Agree
iv. yearly	3.18	1.00309	Agree

Table 3 shows the extent of knowledge on clothing care which includes hand wash ($\overline{X}$ 3.27), steam (3.16), box/bag (3.08), sun drying (3.72). All the items were rated high knowledge except items on the basket (2.71) and rope (2.55) and knowledge on care label instructions which were low. The correlation ratio was used to determine the level of relationship between clothing selection and knowledge about clothing care among COAST Lafia academic staff.

Table 3: **Mean Responses And Standard Deviation Of Respondents On Extent Of Knowledge On Clothing Care And Maintenance Practices Among Academic Staff.**

Extent of knowledge	Mean ($\overline{X}$)	St.d	Remarks
knowledge about laundry			
i. hand wash	3.27	.55903	High knowledge
ii. machine wash	3.10	.72761	High knowledge
knowledge about ironing using			
i. steam	3.16	.66478	High knowledge
ii. dry heat	3.19	.74807	High knowledge
knowledge about storage of cloth			
i. box/bag	3.08	.58221	High knowledge
ii. wardrobe	3.34	.55509	High knowledge
iii. hanger	3.09	.70051	High knowledge
iv. basket	2.48	.98045	Low knowledge
v. rope	1.85	.93932	Low knowledge
Knowledge about drying of cloth under		.	
i. sun	3.72	44678	High knowledge
ii. shade	3.10	.66991	High knowledge
iii. machine	3.10	.91956	High knowledge
Knowledge about care label	1.92	.86300	L ow knowledge
i. no machine			
ii. dry flat	2.11	.95221	Low knowledge
iii. do not bleach	1.85	.86792	Low knowledge
iv. hand wash only	1.92	.94698	Low knowledge
v. line dry only	2.11	.99366	Low knowledge
vi. wash light colors alike	2.08	1.02862	Low knowledge

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing on Significant Relationship Between Extent of Clothing Care and Knowledge About Clothing Care and Maintenance

Group 1	Pearson correlation	1	.241**
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.007
	N	125	125
Group 2	Pearson correlation	.241**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.007	
	N	125	125

Table 4 shows the correlation coefficient of 0.07 denotes a positive correlation between clothing selection and knowledge about clothing care. That is, high knowledge leads to clothing care and vice versa. from the test of significance, thus the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that there is a significant relationship between clothing selection and knowledge about clothing care.

Discussion

Findings on Table 1 shows clothing selection requires knowledge about the right clothing to wear. Clothing selections is the decision one makes about his or her clothing this agrees with research conducted by Agbo and Unom (2011) who stated that clothing decision must be made based on appropriateness for the culture, climate and

suitability to the occasion, comfort, emotional and psychological needs. Naturally, people want to select clothes that will be as attractive as possible, hence well-chosen clothes can bring out the best personality traits and physical features and make the person feel the very best and clothing shopping outlet such as boutique, open air market, secondhand clothing stores among others may be the appropriate place for selection. physique can also influence clothing selection. Surana (2020) opines that clothing should be chosen as per one's body figure. Few people have perfect proportions that allow them to wear nearly anything. Generally selection of clothing depends upon the occasion namely formal wear and casual wear, similarly, some persons prefer native wear to the office, and everyone has a different choice of wear this is also in line with the opinion of Kiron (2017). Mood, religion, and weather are also a means of communication, the mood can dictate your choice of clothing likewise. Rowland (2012) in his work asserts that clothing in any culture is a means of communication. This assertion points to the fact that clothing conveys messages when members of a society who share a given culture have learned to associate types of clothing with customary meaning. Through this customary association, certain types of clothes become symbols of mood, social role, socio-economic status, or political class. However, respondents disagreed with the point that friends/colleagues are one of the factors that guide their clothing selection.

The findings in Table 2 revealed that washing cloth, ironing, soap usage, cloth storage, drying of cloth, clothing repairs, stain removal, and cloth purchase are the extent of clothing care and maintenance. Caring for clothing items extends the shelf life and improves the appearance of clothes washing fabrics makes them clean, lasts long, and targets tough stains according to the research carried out by Fazio, (2023); and Gaurav et al., (2023) ironing of clothes gives a smooth wrinkle-free appearance but when laundry dryer is used it can be harsh on fabrics, especially delicate ones such as silk and wool. The high heat and tumbling action can cause shrinkage, fading, and damage to the fibers (Sahani, Shekh, Singh, Nishad, Singh, &Yadav, 2020). Findings also indicate that box and bag storage rated mean ($\overline{X}$=3.34) and were preferred to rope storage (1.85), cloth storage protects from dust, dirt, insects, fungus, and dye transfer (Marshal, Suzanley, Stannely, Kafgan & Spetch, 2000). Neatly folding clothes in the box prevents the clothes from getting creased or rumpled so to retain their original shape (Anyakoha & Eluwa, 2015; Agbo & Kingsley, 2018). Agbo (2005) opines that Sun-drying wax-printed fabrics locally known as *abada* are discouraged. Repair of cloth (3.17) is to maintain a good appearance of clothing; it is expected that when cloth has a tear, it should be repaired immediately at the early stage. This will prevent further damage to the cloth (Agbo & Kingsley, 2018). It enables consumers to reduce making new purchases, (Laitala & Klepp,2018); Durrani 2018). Many fabric materials require special treatment to get rid of accidental stains, normal washing process may not be able to remove stubborn stains except it requires special treatment, most of the respondents opined that a bleaching agent with a mean (x= 3.08) is a means of removing stains, this agrees with Kutuk et al., (2018).

Findings in Table 3 indicate that respondents have high knowledge about practices on laundry, ironing, storage, drying. This result could be because washing of clothes with the use of hand and machine as well as ironing clothes before use is a normal phenomenon among the academic staff. This agrees with Diyaolu et al, (2024) and Barbour, Hustvedt, Burton and Eike (2020). Findings also revealed low knowledge on care label instructions, some clothing consumers find the hashtag or instructions useful, but some do not understand it, (Klepp & Laitala, 2023).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The most important consideration for clothing use and selection should be what makes one comfortable and gives the wearer confidence. Clothing selection requires knowledge and skill to get maximum value for comfort. Some factors influence the

selection of clothes, and are highlighted as selection of clothes from boutique, native wear as category of cloth worn to office, mood, personal taste, religion, weather, occasion and figure type. Most of the clothing care adopted by academic staff was considered appropriate and maintained. Academic staff have high knowledge of laundry, ironing, airing, and storage practices but low knowledge of care label instructions.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made.

1. The Department of Fashion Design and Clothing Technology should organize seminars on clothing care and management practices for the academic Staff of COAST Lafia to improve their knowledge of clothing care labels.
2. Instructional manuals on clothing care and management practices should be designed by professionals in the form of a manual. This manual will provide an adequate and appropriate explanation of care labels in simple language.

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