

PREFERENCE OF READY-MADE GARMENTS TO LOCALLY-MADE APPARELS AMONG FEMALE STAFF OF AKURE METROPOLIS

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Abstract

This paper examined the preference of ready-made garments to locally made garments amongst female staff in Akure metropolis of Ondo State. Four research questions guided the study. The study employed the use of descriptive survey research design. The Convenience technique was used to select female staff that constituted the sample size of one hundred and sixty-four (164) respondents from the total population of two hundred and seventy-seven (277) for the study. A 24-item questionnaire which was designed on a 4 point scale and titled "Preference of Ready –Made Garments to Locally Made Garments Questionnaire"(PRMGLMGQ), as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts both in Clothing and Textiles and Home Economics from the Department of Home Economics. Data were analyzed descriptively using mean score at 2.50 rating and standard deviation. The result of the findings revealed that the only garment feature considered acceptable by respondents is design and aesthetic value ($X=2.66$) and the most preferred garments by female staff in Akure Metropolis are the ones with labels ($X=2.54$). The paper concluded that ready-made garments are thought of as possessing all the physical characteristics required for quality such as label, hence, female consumer are not often satisfied with locally-made garments. Consequently, from the findings, it was recommended that the government should enforce quality control programs on services rendered by local seamstresses, monitor apprenticeship programs and award of professional certificates to fashion designers and finally textile industry should be revitalized to produce high quality fabrics in order to encourage garment products to use high quality fabrics in the construction of garments.

Keywords: Preference, Ready-made garments, Locally-made Apparels, Female Staff, Akure Metropolis.

Introduction

Clothing as a collective term for items worn on the body is one of the basic needs of human being which importance cannot be over-emphasized in determining the impression a person makes on others as you are addressed the way you dressed. Hurd & Griffin (2007) said that

clothing can satisfy the psychological need to belong to a profession, social group, an association or a group or a country of heritage. Clothes are worn for comfort and protection; others are for psychological social reasons. Adam and Galinsky (2012). Fairt and Hollines (2001) said the amount and type of clothing worn depends on functional considerations such as a need for warmth, or protection as the primary purposes of clothing hinge on protection from elements, enhancement of safety among others. From ancient times, people have used fabrics of various types for covering, warmth, personal adornment and even to display personal wealth.

Garment is a single item /piece of clothing in the form of coats, gowns, skirts, blouses, shirts and trousers which reflect standard of modesty, religion, occupation, gender and social status. Ozougwu (2008) explained garments as forms of clothing in the forms of clothes, gowns, skirts, blouses, shirts or tops specially constructed from fabrics or other materials such as furs or grasses, to serve different functions for the wearer and cover nakedness. Garment making as one of the occupation in the clothing industry is act of designing, cutting, arranging and sewing different components of a garment. Garment making is a technical accomplishment that requires knowledge of fabrics, principles of clothing construction and skills involved in it (Tortora, 2005). The function of the garment manufacture is to style the garment, to produce efficiently, up- to -date machinery and with modern manufacturing techniques.

Ready-made garments are garments that are readily sewn in advance with the use of standard specifications of different body figures suitable for use without modification by the consumer. Abul (2009) defined Ready- made garments as mass-produced finished textile products of the clothing industry. Ready-made are not custom tailored according to measurements, but rather generalized according to anthropometric studies (Wikipedia, 2019). Locally-made apparels are made from fabrics and by individual that are readily available in the environment. Ready -made garments would be attractive if it fits well and proper attention is paid to its finer details. Choosing garments and garment styles depends on the occasion for which the garments are meant for. For example, the choice of garments for church may not be the same with that for office wear or other social occasions. Garments for churches are made in such a way as to maintain decency and modesty while that for office is mainly such that will uphold work standards, promote decorum and discipline in work place atmosphere, enforce morality and promote free movement.

Similarly, in garment making/construction, the main factors influencing the utilization of fibres for clothing are their ability to be spun, the desirability of their properties for apparel use and the cost or economy of production. A *fabric* is *cloth* or other *material* produced by weaving together cotton, nylon, wool, silk, or other threads. In the last century, highly fashion conscious generation gave preference to ready to wear dresses than self-made or 'Locally made' dresses. This is due to many factors such as ready availability, versatility, fine workmanship and fabric of high quality. Ready-made garments were practical for the fast moving life. In those days, it is impossible to identify the gender of children because parents are highly fashion conscious and dress the children in unisex dresses. Today an average consumer demands various properties for garments which they wear. The properties are fitness, appearance, comfort, durability, ease of care, ease of wear, maintenance of shape and luster suitability to the occasion and versatility for many occasions which lead to greatest satisfaction (Agbo, 2017).

The recent turn in fashion and the dawn of sophisticated fashion designers and machines has improved the patronage of locally-made apparels sewn from different fabrics and materials such as *Ankara*, lace, *adire*, batik, chiffon, silk and tulle. The term locally-made apparel is used to denote a garment that has been customized from raw fabric rather than one that has been purchased from a third-party supplier and then screen printed or altered. Locally-made apparels are widespread in the urban fashion industry. They are generally of higher quality and price than a standard mass-produced item due to customization and specification. The new dawn in fashion industry is observed mostly among a particular portion of the clothing market. Working class middle aged women now have high taste for what they wear and how they carry themselves. This recent trend has encouraged 'cut and sew' fashion designers.

Many people have different opinions when it comes to ready-made apparels and locally-made garments. Some perceive that ready-made garments are well sewn, neatly trimmed and whipped. Most times, they are sewn by expert fashion designers with the use of exceptionally good sewing machines.

Generally, women are more conscious of what they wear and how they wear it than men. In selection they consider a mix of extrinsic and intrinsic factors such as colour, lines, audience, season, price, brand, comfort among others. Studies have been carried out to examine the preference of locally-made materials and textiles over foreign ones and most of the studies found out that foreign textiles were mostly preferred over locally available ones for reasons such as quality, fashion, price and functional features (Shittu, 2017). Studies on preference of ready-made and locally-made apparels are not much. The few available only considered self-concept and self-esteem in garment preference, size and fit of ready-made dress and importance of branding in ready-made garments. The dearth of studies on ready-made and locally-made apparels necessitated the study.

Statement of the Problem

Ready-made garments are expensive, of superior quality to locally made ones in terms of seams, durability, quality and texture of materials and are mostly imported. This is a great challenge to the development of the clothing and textile industry in the country. This is an activity that will not only make fashion designers self-reliant but also boost the economy of the nation. Selection and purchase decision of garments are made based on certain features of a garment. Although ready-made garments might be expensive, they are sometimes preferred. Apart from these, personal experience has shown that some quack stylist and fashion designers are of the habit of spoiling clothes given to them in terms of seams and finish. This has in no little way discouraged the use of locally-made garments. While some fashion designers have made attempts to improve their professionalism, it is observed that women still prefer the ready-made garments to the locally-made ones. If the goal of utilizing locally made products is to be achieved in the country, it is expedient to identify ways of diverting the attention of women (as primary consumers of fashion) from ready-made garments to the locally-made ones. It is in the light of this that the study examined the preference of ready-made garment to locally-made garments among female staff of Akure Metropolis.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the preference of ready-made garments to locally-made apparels among female staff of Akure Metropolis. Specifically, the study:

- i. highlighted the features of garment considered acceptable by female staff of Akure Metropolis before clothing selection
- ii. established the preferred type of garment among female staff in Akure Metropolis
- iii. highlighted the factors responsible for preference of a ready-made garments over the locally-made garment
- iv. suggested possible strategies to encourage the utilization of locally-made apparels among female staff of Akure Metropolis

Research Questions

The following questions guided the findings of the study

1. What are the features of garment considered acceptable by female staff of Akure Metropolis before selection?
2. What is the preferred type of garment among female staff in Akure Metropolis?
3. What are the factors that are responsible for preference of a ready-made garments over the locally-made garment?
4. How can the utilization of locally-made apparels among female staff of Akure Metropolis be encouraged?

Methodology

Design of the Study: The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey design.

Area of the study: The study was carried out in Akure Metropolis. Akure is a city in south-western Nigeria, and is the largest city and capital of Ondo State. There are significant economic, political and cultural activities in the city. Similarly, there are several educational and non-educational institutions in the city

Population of the Study: The population of the study comprised of all female staff in three (3) selected institutions in Akure Metropolis. The total number of female staff in these organizations was two hundred and seventy-seven (277).

Sample and Sampling Techniques: Sample size for the population was one hundred and sixty-four (164). This was determined using "Using Taro Yamane "statistical method of determining sample size. Twenty-six (26) female staff was selected in TESCO, sixty-seven (67) were selected in Aquinas College while seven-one (71) female staff were selected in Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA). Convenience technique was used to select the institutions that constituted the sample for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection: A structured questionnaire titled "preference of ready-made garments to locally-made garments" (PRMGLMGQ) developed by the researcher was used for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A sought for the respondents' demographic data while B was based on the purpose of the study. The items in section B were based on the purpose of the study and were rated on 4-point likert scale

Strongly Agreed(SA)=4, Agreed(A)=3, Disagree(D)=2, Strongly Disagree (SD)=1. The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation to ascertain the appropriateness of the items.

Method of Data Collection: Data was collected by the researcher with the aid of two research assistants. One hundred and sixty-four (164) copies of the questionnaire were produced, administered, duly filled and returned without loss in transit.

Method of Data Analysis: Data were analyzed using mean ($\bar{X}$) and standard deviation. Mean ratings from 2.50 and above were considered as agreed upon and accepted while mean ratings of 2.49 and below were considered as disagreed upon and rejected.

Results and Discussion of Findings

This chapter deals with the analysis and presentation of data. The analysis and presentation were based on the research questions of the study.

Presentation of Findings

Research Question 1: What are the features of garment considered by female staff of Akure Metropolis before selection?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation responses of features of garment considered acceptable by female staff of Akure Metropolis before selection

S/N	Possible features of garment considered acceptable by female staff	N = 164, C = 2.5		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Garments should be the right size, neither too loose nor too tight.	2.38	1.093	R
2.	Patterns of a garment should be fitted to the figure, color and proportion.	2.29	1.073	R
3.	Garments should retain its structure and appearance after wear and care (durability or serviceability).	2.39	1.030	R
4.	Color, seams and lines are of a good quality of garments.	2.42	.997	R
5.	Consumers select garments based on the design or aesthetics of the garment.	2.66*	1.116	A

* mean greater than cut-off point (2.5) accepted as agreed.

Key: N – Number of respondents, C – cut-off point, $\bar{X}$ – Mean response of all respondents, SD – Standard deviation-rejected, A-Accepted

Research Question 2: What is the preferred type of garment among female staff in Akure Metropolis?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation responses of preferred type of garment among female staff in Akure Metropolis

S/N	Preferred type of garment	N = 164, C = 2.5		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Women prefer garments with renowned brand	2.35	1.054	R
2.	Garments that are cheap and easily accessible are most preferred by women.	2.24	.965	R
3.	Body fit is an important aspect of garments that determines women's preference.	2.43	1.069	R
4.	Women prefer ready -made to 'cut-and-sew'.	2.15	.963	R
5.	Women like garments constructed with standard measurement	2.37	1.063	R
6.	Garment with labels are more attractive to women.	2.54*	1.065	A

Research Question 3: What are the factors responsible for preference of ready-made garments over the locally-made garment?

Table 3:Mean and standard deviation responses of factors responsible for preference of a ready-made garments over the other

S/N	Possible factors responsible for preference of a ready-made garments	N = 164, C = 2.5		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Ready-made garments are carefully cut and stitches done properly compared to locally-made ones.	2.47	1.174	R
2.	Most locally made garments have badly fitted undergarments.	2.23	.957	R
3.	Female consumers of garment are more satisfied with ready-made garments because they are perceived to be well-fitted and look nice.	2.51*	.969	A
4.	Ready-made garments have the optimum amount of ease and its seam lines follow the general outline of the body.	2.28	1.006	R
5.	Ready-made garments have appropriate aesthetic attributes.	2.71*	1.067	A
6.	Ready-made garments are unique.	2.41	.952	R

Research Question 4: How can the utilization of locally-made apparels among female staff of Akure Metropolis be encouraged?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation responses of strategies to encourage the utilization of locally-made apparels among female staff of Akure Metropolis

S/N	Possible strategies to encourage the utilization of locally-made apparels	N = 164, C = 2.5		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Banning importation of ready-made garments.	2.29	.983	R
2.	Company registration and branding of products	2.44	.954	R
3.	Government should encourage the use of industrial machine in clothing production through empowerment programs.	2.51*	1.077	A
4.	Quality control programs on services rendered by local seamstresses.	2.24	1.056	R
5.	Monitoring of apprenticeship programs and award of professional certificates to new tailors and fashion designers.	2.41	.939	R
6.	Production and display of garments with standard measurements.	2.59*	1.050	A
7.	Use of high quality fabrics in the construction of garments.	2.43	1.092	R

Discussion of Findings

Interring from Table 1, It is evident from the study that female staff in Akure Metropolis paid less attention to the size of garment, patterns for figure, color or proportion, durability or serviceability since the only feature of garment considered acceptable was design or aesthetics of the garment.. These however, are the functional features of garments that have been established by authors (Tarafdar, Karmakar & Mondal, 2007; Dedhia, 2015) to be indicators of the qualities of a good garment. Findings from Table 2 indicated that the women preferred garments with labels since it looked more attractive to them. Irrespective of the brand, price, accessibility or body fit, brand was the most important factor for preference of a garment. Earlier studies on clothing preference have not really considered reason for garment preference by female staff, some of the available ones have are against the findings of the study. For instance, Olugbamigbe (2015) identified price as the chief factor in clothing purchase decision of consumers in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State. Other factors identified by Olugbamigbe (2015) were beliefs, attitudes and life styles, perception about a particular product, family and household, age and sex, culture, brand, social class, personality and consumer knowledge. Similarly, Karjaluoto (2005) stated that price, brand, interface, and properties tends to have the most influential factors affecting the actual choice different brands of product

Based on the findings of the study, female consumers of garment are more satisfied with ready-made garments because they are perceived to be well-fitted, look nice and have appropriate aesthetic attributes. Female staff in Akure Metropolis agreed that ready-made garments are carefully cut and stitches done properly compared to locally-made ones, most locally made garments have badly fitted undergarments, ready-made garments have the optimum amount of ease and its seam lines follow the general outline of the body and that ready-made garments are unique. However, they agreed that female consumers of garment are more satisfied with ready-made garments because they are perceived to be well-fitted and look nice and that ready-made garments have appropriate aesthetic attributes. In line with this finding, Dedhia (2015) noted that garment performance aspects determine the standards it meets and how the

consumer benefits through it, performance aspects include the garment aesthetic and functional performance

Summary

Findings of the study have shown that the only garment feature considered by female staff in Akure metropolis is design and aesthetic value, they paid less attention to size, patterns for figure, color or proportion, durability or serviceability as well as color, seams and line. The most preferred garments by the respondents are the ones with garment labels, well-fitted with nice looks and those with appropriate aesthetic.

Conclusion

Garments among female consumers are not just purchased randomly without consideration of the design and aesthetic value on the garment, but other factors such as size, patterns for figure, colour or proportion, durability or serviceability as well as colour, seams and line should also be considered before purchase decision. Ready-made garments are thought of as possessing all the physical characteristics required for quality such as label, hence, female consumer are not often satisfied with locally-made garments. The aesthetic attributes possessed by ready-made garments can also be found in locally-made garments if clothing production at the local level are supervised by the government the process of awarding certificate to local seamstress are thoroughly monitored for quality.

Recommendations

Based on the findings made and the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should place a ban on the importation of ready-made garments in order to encourage the use of locally-made goods and should enforce quality control programs on services rendered by local seamstresses, monitor apprenticeship programs and award of professional certificates to new tailors and fashion designers;
2. Textile industry should be revitalized to produce high quality fabrics in order to encourage garment products to use high quality fabrics in the construction of garments
3. government should encourage the use of industrial machine in clothing production through empowerment programs and garments should be produced and displayed standard measurements

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