

## **Clothing Recycling and Renovation Practices of Rural Women Living in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State**

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### **Abstract**

This study was designed to investigate the clothing recycling and renovation practices of rural women living in Rumuolumeni in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study adopted a survey research design. A sample of 400 women who were involved in the study was selected through the random sampling technique. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using mean. Findings of this study revealed only seven recycling and renovating tools, three guidelines for recycling and renovating specific clothing articles were used by the women and four recycling and renovating methods were adopted by the women. Based on the findings, four recommendations for recycling and renovating the clothing for the rural women were made.

**Keywords:** Clothing, Recycling, Renovation, Reconstruction, Articles.

### **Introduction**

According to Johnson and Foster (1990), clothing is anything placed on the body to adorn, protect or communicate intent. It constitutes visual communication, which gives varied impressions about the wearer (Nwadi and Anyakoha, 2011). Clothing includes, accessories, hair dos, make ups, shoes and others (Anyakoha and Eluwa, 2005).

Clothes, according to Jones (1990) are dresses, gowns, shorts, blouses and related articles used for protection,

adornment, modesty, social status, occupational and traditional identity. Horns and Gurell (1993) opined that clothes play many functional and aesthetic roles which include protection from the environment, enhancement of personality as well as role identification. According to Olugbamigbe (2010), renovation can be defined as a process of enhancing the appearance of old articles, refurbishing old items or recycling out of used materials or items in order to make them useful and also

enhance their face values. Renovation is therefore, the process of refurbishing an old item or article in order to prolong its useful life. Many favourite garments could be altered, improved and made fashionable with little initiative. Each worn garment presents its problems, and this calls for one to see to these problems (Olugbamigbe, 2010). Recycling on the other hand is a way of mending a used material through a special process so that it can become useful again. It is also a change of feature on an article where the new product is seen to serve the consumer better than the former. For example, when a long sleeve blouse is burnt, it can be reconstructed into a short sleeve. Also, an old Buba and wrapper can be turned into a skirt and a blouse. Summer blouses can be turned also into pencil skirt and bolero. Skirts, slacks and sleeves can be shortened or lengthened. Make a dress longer by adding midriff or band of contrasting fabric at the hem. Turn old clothes into blouses (Awosika, 2003).

Several years after clothes are selected to meet the individual's psychological, sociological, cultural and physical needs, they get too tight or small in size and can no longer fit the individual; sometimes the styles are out of fashion for that season or the individual gets tired of the style. Clothing articles are expensive. They therefore, need to be recycled, repaired or renovated for them to be useful again. Clothing recycling and renovation activities include: reconstruction, remodelling and renovation (CESAC, 1995). Proper

recycling of clothes helps to keep them in good condition so that appearance of the wearer is enhanced. Proper recycling involves decision making. According to Anyakoha and Eluwa (2005), decision making is the action taken in selecting from alternatives courses of action. Clothing recycling decisions include, among others, tools used in recycling, guidelines for recycling clothing articles, and various recycling methods adopted by families.

Recycling and renovation of clothes prevents wasting of clothing articles and also promotes economic activities within the household. Through this, the economy of the individuals and families can be enhanced as women of this country are equipped with the necessary skills that can help them to contribute their own quota to family development (Marshal, Suzanley, Stannley, Kafgan and Spetch, 2000). Adequate recycling and renovation facilities and processes for clothing, however, are management consideration (Wood, 2006). Recycling and renovation done to an old garment that is too tight and faded respectively will extend the useful life of such a garment. Out of fashion garment can be and renovated or recycled neatly and when well done, the garment can appear almost as good as new (Kattlean, 2005). Proper recycling and renovation of clothes in addition to making them look new, also make them better, useful and last longer. In Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, women have multiple responsibilities in the homes and outside the homes, including the management of family clothing. Recycling and renovation of

clothes are important aspects of this management. Most women often lack proper knowledge and skills on proper recycling and renovation of clothing. Furthermore, majority of rural dwellers particularly those in Rumuolumeni lack adequate supply of most infrastructural facilities like electricity supply, good roads and other facilities that could help them in their clothing management practices (Nathan, 2009).

Some of these women living in Rumuolumeni have their wardrobes full of clothes that are out of fashion, too small or tight in size, faded in colour for them to use and they therefore lose functionality (Wood, 2006). Besides, most Obio/Akpor Local Government Area women have been forced to adapt to the economic hardship facing the general populace in the nation because of the economic meltdown. Men and women, young or old now resort to the use of second hand clothes and over-use what they have. People can no longer dress well to work. Above all, families spend most of their take-home salaries on clothing their family members (Olugbomigbe, 2010). Ohovoriola and Ugeru (2002) stated that the knowledge of proper recycling and renovation of clothing is very important. Acquisition of specialized skills is paramount to all practical oriented skill such as recycling and renovation of clothing (Okoro, 1999). It is therefore, necessary to seek ways of helping the women living in rural areas to improve on their recycling and renovation practices. A meaningful step in this direction is to determine their present knowledge about clothing items in the home that can be recycled

and renovated as a basis for determining ways of helping them.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the clothing recycling and renovation practices of rural women living in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. clothing recycling and renovation tools and aids adopted by women living in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.
2. guidelines which the women adopted for recycling and renovating specific clothing in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.
3. clothing recycling and renovation methods adopted by the women living in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The study answered the following questions:

1. What clothing recycling and renovation tools and aids do women living in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State utilize in recycling of their old clothes?
2. What are the guidelines for recycling and renovating specific clothing articles used by women living in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State?

3. What methods for recycling and renovation of clothing are adopted by women living in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of in Rivers State?

### **Methodology**

**Design of the Study:** The design of the study was survey. The survey design was considered suitable for this study because it will enable information to be gathered from fairly large number of women with an intention of assessing their opinions on the present knowledge of clothing recycling and renovation practices among them.

**Area of the Study:** The area of the study is Rumuolumeni in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State of Nigeria. It is made of four communities in Rivers West Senatorial Zone. The study focused on the women. Majority of these women resident in Rumuolumeni are working in Port Harcourt and came from different local government areas of Rivers State.

**Population for the Study:** The population for the study was made up of all the married women in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. According to the Federal Office of Statistics, the total population of females in Rivers State by 2006 was 1,633,096. The population of females in Port Harcourt West zone by 2006 census is 14,662. The population of married women in the four communities of Rumuolumeni is about 10, 462 (Federal Office of Statistics, 2006).

**Sample for the Study:** There are four communities in Rumuolumeni,

Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. From each selected community, 100 married women (mothers) were purposively selected because each of them has a family made up of husband, wife and children. In general, the total sample of the study was four hundred (400) women living in Rumuolumeni areas from Mgbuoshimeni, Mgbuodahia, Nkpor and Iwofe in Rivers State. The women were met at their various homes in the evening when they have returned from their various places of works.

**Instruments for Data Collection:** A structured questionnaire which was developed based on literature and research objectives was used to collect data for the study.

**Validation of the Instrument:** The instrument was face validated by three Home Economists from the Department of Home Economics, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. These validates were given three copies of the questionnaire and were requested to identify ambiguities and proffer suggestions for improving the study. The experts inputs were used to draft the final copy of the questionnaire for the study.

**Reliability of the Instrument:** To ensure the reliability of the instrument, it was trial-tested on 45 women living in rural areas of Bonny Island in Rivers State who were not part of the respondents that were used in this study. The data from the trial-testing was analyzed. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient index was used to determine the reliability of the instrument, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.87.

This reliability coefficient indicated that the instrument was reliable and was consistent in measuring what it is supposed to measure because a coefficient of 0.87 is high and acceptable.

**Data Collection and Analysis Techniques:** Four hundred questionnaire forms were distributed to randomly selected respondents. Only 360 responses were properly completed and retrieved. Data collected were analyzed using Mean Scores in the data analysis. A cut-off point of 3.5 and above is regarded as Agreed, while any point below 3.5 is regarded as Disagreed.

### Findings

The following findings were made:

**Table 1: Mean Scores of Responses on the Tools Used by women in Recycling and Renovation.**

S/No	Tools used in Recycling	Mean Rating	Remarks
A	Cutting Tools		
1.	Razor blade	3.5	Agreed
2.	Scissors	3.5	Agreed
3.	Ripper	1.4	Disagreed
B	Measuring Tools		
4.	Tape Measure	4.0	Agreed
5.	Yard Stick	3.8	Agreed
C	Sewing Tools.		
6.	Thimble	2.4	Disagreed
7.	Pin Magnet/Pin cushion	3.8	Agreed
8.	Machine Needles	2.3	Disagreed
9.	Hand Sewing Needles	4.9	Agreed
10.	Sewing Machine	1.4	Disagreed
D.	Pressing Tools & Aids		
11.	Charcoal Iron	4.9	Agreed
12.	Electric Iron	1.5	Disagreed
13.	Pressing Cloth	2.2	Disagreed
14.	Ironing Board	3.0	Agreed
15.	Assorted Spools of thread	3.5	Agreed

Table 1 show that seven out of the 13 tools are used by the women. Each of these seven has mean scores more than 3.5.

1. Seven recycling and renovation tools were used by rural women living in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. See table 1.
2. Three guidelines for recycling and renovating specific clothing articles were adopted by rural women living in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. See table 2.
3. Three processes for recycling and renovation of clothing were adopted by rural women living in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. See table 3.

**Table 2: Mean Scores of Responses on the Guidelines for Recycling and Renovation of Clothing Articles, African Prints or English Fabrics.**

S/No	Guidelines for Recycling and Renovation of Clothing Articles, African Prints.	Mean Rating	Remarks
1.	The garment to be recycled should not be too old.	4.0	Agreed
2.	The fabric to be recycled should be sufficient to make the new garment.	3.9	Agreed
3.	The grain of the old garment fabric should be studied to make laying out of pattern pieces for the new garment easy.	3.0	Disagreed
4.	The new garment can be made attractive by the use of sewing accessories.	4.5	Agreed
5.	The garment should be suitable for the purpose for which it is intended.	4.9	Agreed

Table 2 shows that 4 out of 5 guidelines for recycling and renovation of clothing are used by the women. These have mean scores more than 3.5.

**Table 3: Mean Scores of Responses on the Methods of Recycling and renovation of Clothing Articles.**

S/No	Methods of Recycling and Renovation of Clothing Articles	Mean Rating	Remarks
1.	Making new garments out of old ones.	3.8	Agreed
2.	Changing the colour of the old garment completely.	3.8	Agreed
3.	By remodelling out of fashion garment into a garment of current style (fashion).	4.0	Agreed
4.	By making new things out of old garments. E.g., making a girl's garment out of mother's old clothes; a boy's pair of trousers out of Dad's pair of trousers; skirt and blouse from buba and wrapper.	3.9	Agreed
5.	Redye a faded shirt to restore or change colour.	3.9	Agreed
6.	Patch work	1.4	Disagreed

Table 3 shows that all the 5 methods of recycling and renovation of clothing are used by the women. Each of these 5 methods has mean scores ranging from 3.8 to 4.0.

### Discussion

These findings are discussed based on the research questions that guided this study. The study was conducted to determine the recycling and renovation of clothing practices among the rural women living in Rumuolumeni,

Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The findings in table one revealed the recycling and renovation tools adopted in the area of study. The data also showed that some of the recycling and renovation tools include: the use of cutting tools in recycling and renovation e.g., scissors, razor blade, etc, measuring tools are tape, yard stick, sewing tools. These findings are in line with the opinions of some authors cited in review of literature. Marshal et al (2000) opined that most clothing recycling and renovation need a complete recycling and renovation kits like, sewing machine, ironing board iron etc.

The data presented in table two revealed that most of the guidelines for recycling and renovation of clothing articles are adopted in the study area. These findings were therefore in agreement with CESAC (1995) who enlisted the guidelines for recycling and renovation of clothing articles as follows: the garment to be recycled should not be too old, the fabric should be sufficient for the new ones (styles), etc. Chuta (1999) also supported this by saying that recycling and renovation can enhance the appearance of clothes. Marshal et al (2000) also suggested some guidelines for recycling and renovation of clothes in the same view with CESAC (1995). Koester (1995) finally agreed that clothing recycling and renovation activities are making new things out of old garments, remodelling out of fashion garment into a garment of current fashion or style, and dying of faded garments. The views expressed helped to validate the findings from the

study - the recycling and renovation practices adopted by the rural women in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The findings in table three showed that the respondents agreed on the six methods of recycling and renovation practices. This is in line with CESAC (1995) who pointed out that the methods of recycling and renovation of clothing include making new garment out of the old ones, changing the colour of the old garment completely, etc. This was in the same view with Mba (2000) who reported that recycling and renovation process is the changing of old garments to more attractive ones. This was supported by Johnson and Foster (1999) who opined that different ways of recycling and renovation of clothing should be learnt. The findings were also in line with Wood (2006) who summarized ways of recycling and renovation of clothing as reconstruction, or remodelling and renovation.

### **Conclusion**

This study has investigated the present status of clothing recycling and renovation practices of women living in Rumuolumeni rural area of Rivers State. It determined the methods adopted by women in recycling and renovation of their clothes. The recycling and renovation tools adopted by women, the guidelines for recycling and renovation of clothing articles. Based on the findings, the recycling and renovation activities are not practiced effectively by the rural women living in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State even

though they have the knowledge. In addition, there are several problems such as power supply, appropriate technique, negative attitude in the women living Rumuolumeni area encounter which hinder effective clothing recycling and renovation practices in the rural areas. Therefore, there is the need to enhance clothing recycling and renovation practices to empower families for sustainable lifestyle among women living in the rural areas of Rivers State.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers made the following recommendations for proper clothing recycling and renovation practices for women living in the rural areas of Rivers State.

- Workshops and seminars should be organized to educate women on skills involving clothing recycling and renovation practices.
- There is the need for the women living in the rural areas to adopt correct and best methods, using appropriate techniques and strategies for effective clothing recycling and renovation practices.
- There is the need for government or non-governmental organization to create awareness on the economic importance of clothing recycling and renovation practices among the women living in rural areas.
- Women living in rural areas should be encouraged to attend all the enlightenment programmes on clothing recycling and renovation information.

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