

Wardrobe Management Practices of Pregnant Teachers in Makurdi

Agbo, D.A.

Department of Home Science Management
College of Food Technology,
University of Agriculture, Makurdi.

Abstract

This study examined the wardrobe management practices of pregnant secondary school teachers in Makurdi metropolis. The research design was survey. Population for the study comprised 1909 female teachers in secondary schools in Makurdi, Benue state. A sample of 109 respondent adult female teachers who are pregnant or had been pregnant in previous years was randomly selected. The findings include that pregnant teachers were aware of the various clothing items required during pregnancy; that the predominant garments acceptable to pregnant teachers are free flowing garments. Unpredictable change of weather affects choice of clothing by pregnant teachers.

Keywords: Wardrobe, Pregnancy, Teachers, Dress sense, Students

Introduction

A pregnant woman is one who is carrying a developing foetus in her womb for about 36 weeks (Merenstein and Gardner, 2002). During this period, the woman could be identified through many characteristics; her physical shape, look, gait, sitting, standing and her walking position. Other physical characteristics common to the pregnant woman are breasts become fuller, firmer and the nipple areas become darker due to increase in hormone. Early morning sickness, referred to as nausea may occur. This results in vomiting and generally feeling unwell. Frequent urinating may occur, this is as a result of the bladder filling more frequently. Tiredness and dizziness sometimes occur in pregnancy. Pregnancy is also

characterised by hand and feet swelling. Although not experienced by all pregnant women, increase of the foot is reasonable due to the increase of blood pressure in the mother. This is caused by changes in blood volume that will be automatically doubled to meet the needs of foetus. Enlargement of the feet may occur especially after a long day at work. Skin changes may also occur during pregnancy. Often fleck as melisma in black face, fold in the body such as the axilla (armpit) and neck, even the middle-relief and often the surface of the skin of the belly may appear and eventually protruding belly accompany pregnancy. All the stated conditions place some demands on the pregnant woman and her clothing. Discomfort may arise as a result of the

aforementioned conditions; therefore pregnant women need specific dresses or clothes for considerable comfort.

A teacher according to Adeyemo (1995) is trained both in theory and practical. Through his influence, character, experience, and way of dressing, many students are moulded or otherwise. Her correct use of different components of clothing span from her knowledge of clothing and dress essence. Knowledge as a basic tool for survival equips the teacher with dignity in the presence of her students, saves her from waste of finances and affords her good health to attend to her work schedule. Her example is very important to the students.

Clothing is any covering for the human body that is worn for various reasons including: comfort, protection, adornment and self esteem. Cloths comprise of what is worn on the body other than the skin. Wearable clothes include constructed body coverings such as garments/dresses, foot wares, hats and caps. Clothing performs a range of physical, social and cultural functions by protecting, distinguishing individual occupation, social status and gender differentiation. Clothes can tell who the wearer is emotionally, physically. Expressions of responsibility, joy, sadness, dirty habits, wellness etc can be assessed by what a person wears. Clothing choice of individuals is determined by factors such as activities, individual taste, shape or figure type, knowledge about clothing, and available finances. Others are fabric, materials for construction and accessories with which a dress item is worn. The clothing needs

of a woman during pregnancy require careful management in order to stock suitable and relevant clothes in the wardrobe.

Management components include planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating. Management as explained by Clayton (1994) is using what you have to get what you want. People who manage well accomplish more with greater ease (Clayton 1994). The amount and types of clothing worn depend on function considerations (such as covering of a person's genital). While in some cultures much more clothing is expected, other cultures permit scanty clothing (Craig, 1984)

Wardrobe planning is the correct assemblage of different clothing requirement, coordinating clothes properly to meet the need of the hour by an individual (Agbo, 2008). Wardrobe planning is achievable with careful planning and correct placement of priorities as well as reliable resources (Anyakoha & Eluwa, 1991; Dead, 2012). A wardrobe full of clothing does not answer the common and usual question of what does one wear now. A well planned harmonious wardrobe builds self respect, confidence and tells who the individual is. An unplanned, inadequate wardrobe creates confusion, frustration and makes one timid (Craig, 1973; Webb-Lupo and Lester, 1987 and Clayton, 1994). The pregnant woman requires some ideal clothes in her wardrobe.

The quality and quantity of cloths and clothing accessories in a person's wardrobe has direct bearing with his or her economic status, educational status

(Agbo, 2008). Knowledge of fashion is generally reflected on the choice of clothing by individual or families. Families that value clothing are likely to spend more money on clothing than families whose living standards have less regards for clothing (Agbo, 2008)

Uncomfortable maternity dress may cause several anxieties to pregnant women. Prolonged or frequent anxiety may contribute to pre-mature birth or abortion. Tight clothing during pregnancy may lead to unhealthy pregnancy. The growing foetus could have poor blood circulation, foetal low oxygen supply and obstructed air movement (Goldman, 2005).poor and inappropriate clothing could bring about physiological discomfort, nausea, excessive salivation among others and low input at the duty post of pregnant women. Physical harm such as cold, heat thrush, heat rashes and fall from inappropriate heels or slippery foot wear could also result from inappropriate clothing usage by pregnant teacher.

Lack of proper clothing, especially garments that should accommodate the changing physical, psychological need to prepare for the expected child can bring about family disorder and disenchantment among the family members. Poor knowledge dissemination to students will affect their dressence in their future life. This research is set to address the problems that may confront the family, students as a result of lack of knowledge of clothing usage in pregnancy.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to determine wardrobe management practices of pregnant teachers in Makurdi Metropolis. Specifically, the study determined:

1. Level of awareness of pregnant teachers about wardrobe planning and management.
2. The contents of the wardrobe of pregnant teachers
3. The problems encountered by pregnant teachers in managing their wardrobe.

Methodology

Area of Study: the study was conducted in Benue State; one of the states in the middle belt of Nigeria. It shares boundaries with the following states: Cross Rivers, Nassarawa, Taraba, Anambra and Kogi. It is a major state linking the southern part of the country to the north. This advantaged position makes it a scholarly state. There are several primary, secondary and tertiary schools in the state. The total number of secondary schools in Benue State is 312. The secondary schools are situated both in the rural urban places of the state. There are 22 secondary schools in Makurdi the State headquarters.

Population for the Study: Population for the study comprised all the adult female teachers in the secondary schools in Makurdi Metropolis numbering 1909 (Teaching Service Board, Makurdi).Female teachers' dressing in recent times have received serious attention by the education administration. Heads of Schools and colleges insist on descent appearance of

teachers and especially female teachers while at work. The Benue State government insists on the use of corporate wears by teachers as against use of wrappers which may hamper their movement while teaching. This demand for appearing smart is even more needful for pregnant teachers who may be encumbered by their state of pregnancy; hence the focus on pregnant teachers.

Sample for the Study: Sample for the study was 190 adult female teachers who were pregnant or had been pregnant in past two years. Sample for the study was obtained using multiple techniques. Ten post primary schools were selected by simple random method from stratified 22 post primary schools in Makurdi metropolis. Stratification was based on location (North and South banks), government and private ownership. This is to ensure good participation of the entire population. In each of the selected schools, nine female teachers (10% of the sample size) who are pregnant or who had been pregnant within the past two years were purposively selected. Consent was sort from respondents using consent forms prior to distribution of the questionnaire.

Instrument for Data Collection: The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instrument was divided into two parts. Part one was structured to obtain personal data. Part two was subdivided into sections A, B, C and D which south information on challenges of clothing in pregnancy, clothing choices and wardrobe management

practices. A 5- point Likert scale was used: 5 (strongly agree), 4 (Agree), 3 (Slightly agree), 2 (Disagree) and 1 (Strongly disagree). Mean of 3.0 was used for deciding level of acceptance. The instrument was face-validated by one clothing lecturer and measurement and evaluation lecturer at the University of Agriculture Makurdi.

Reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Coefficient alpha method since the test items have varying point values. The Coefficient alpha for the items administered to 50 female teachers was 0.82 indicating that the instrument internal consistency and is reliable.

Data Collection and Analysis

Technique: One hundred and ninety copies of the questionnaire were administered by hand to teachers in their classrooms or during break period. Data collection represented 100% recovery of the questionnaire. These were collected at scheduled dates. Data were analysed using percentages and means through SPSS.

Findings of the Study

(1) Demographic presentation showed that 68% were employed y government, 32% were employed by privately owned schools. Out of 190 adult female teachers, 60% were pregnant within the period of the research while 40% had been pregnant within the past two years. Thirty per cent of the teachers were within age range of 41-50years. Age of the respondents showed that 30% were within the age range of 41-50 years, 50%, 50% were within the age range of

31-40 years while 20% were within age range of 20-30 years.

(2) Pregnant teachers' awareness about wardrobe content during pregnancy: Data are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Awareness of Pregnant Teachers about Content of the Wardrobe during Pregnancy.

| S/No. | Pregnant Teacher's awareness of clothing required in pregnancy | Mean | Remarks |
|-------|---|------|-----------|
| 1 | Pregnant teachers should go on flat shoes or slippers | 3.5 | Agreed |
| 2 | Try different types of house wear compression | 3.2 | Agreed |
| 3 | Pregnant teachers should go on maternity out fits that are available which look great on them | 3.1 | Agreed |
| 4 | Pregnant women should wear warp dress made of rayon | 3.3 | Agreed |
| 5 | Pregnant teachers should wear maternity pants/trousers for comfort | 2.4 | Disagreed |
| 6 | Pregnant teachers should wear skirts with elastic waist band that are not firm | 3.1 | Agreed |
| 7 | Pregnant teachers should wear beautiful colors of official outfit | 3.1 | Agreed |
| 8 | Pregnant teachers dressing should be matched with simple accessories for comfort and beauty | 3.3 | Agreed |
| 9 | Large but firm brassieres should be worn to accommodate enlarging breasts | 3.9 | Agreed |
| 10 | Pregnant teachers should wear garments with openings and closures | 3.7 | Agreed |
| 11 | Pregnant teachers should use cosmetics that have mild odours/smells | 3.2 | Agreed |
| 12 | Pregnant teachers should use cosmetics that do not cause them sweating | 3.4 | Agreed |

Table 1 shows that pregnant teachers were aware of the various clothing items required during pregnancy since each of the value for the respondents was higher than 3.0 for the items presented to the respondents. The use of maternity trousers was not accepted (mean = 2.4).

(3) Eleven items of wardrobe for pregnant teachers were presented to respondents to express their opinions on their usage or otherwise. Data are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Content of the Wardrobe for Pregnant Teachers in Makurdi Metropolis

| S/No. | Content of Wardrobe | Mean | Remarks |
|-------|--------------------------------------|------|---------|
| 1 | Pregnancy basic maternity brassieres | 3.6 | Agreed |
| 2 | Versatile maternity clothes | 3.7 | Agreed |
| 3 | Maternity shirts, trousers | 3.1 | Agreed |

| | | | |
|----|--|-----|-----------|
| 4 | Separates (blouses and skirts, trousers, tops) | 3.5 | Agreed |
| 5 | Stretch fabrics made into gowns and blouses | 2.3 | Disagreed |
| 6 | Ruched bust garments (frilly trimming garments) | 3.5 | Agreed |
| 7 | High heeled foot wears | 2.8 | Disagreed |
| 8 | Special foot wears that are flat and comfortable | 3.7 | Agreed |
| 9 | Clothing accessories to complement dresses | 3.8 | Agreed |
| 10 | Tight fitting blouses | 2.1 | Disagreed |
| 11 | Wrappers and blouses | 3.9 | Agreed |

Table 2 shows that content of wardrobe for pregnant women consisted of variety of clothing items acceptable to the pregnant teachers. Wrappers and blouses had the highest mean (3.9). Stretchy garments have the least mean (2.3).

(4) Eight problems encountered by pregnant women in wardrobe planning and management practices outlined in the questionnaire. Data are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Problems Encountered in Wardrobe Planning and Management Practices by teachers in Makurdi Metropolis

| S/No | Problems encountered in Wardrobe Planning and Management | Mean | Remark |
|------|--|------|--------|
| 1 | Impulsive buying make pregnant teachers buy what they did not budget for | 3.6 | Agreed |
| 2 | Wrong choice of clothing leading to poor fitting | 3.4 | Agreed |
| 3 | Poor fabric selection | 3.5 | Agreed |
| 4 | Wearing of tight shoes, uncomfortable for pregnant teachers | 3.1 | Agreed |
| 5 | Pregnant women clothes get smaller quickly | 3.1 | Agreed |
| 6 | Maintenance cost for maternity clothes are high | 3.2 | Agreed |
| 7 | Unpredictable change of weather affects choice of what to wear | 3.7 | Agreed |
| 8 | Unavailability of garments, under wears, braziers specifically designed for pregnancy period | 3.4 | Agreed |

Table 3 reveals that fluctuation in weather change (mean= 3.7) and impulsive buying (mean = 3.6) and fabric selection (mean = 3.5) were the greatest problems encountered by pregnant female teachers in Makurdi Metropolis.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study showed that female teachers in Makurdi Metropolis are aware of various wardrobe practices and stock various clothing items in their wardrobe. Several clothing requirements for pregnancy were identified by the female teachers. Such selections agree with earlier assertion by Blunin (2002) that pregnancy state

requires special clothing to accommodate the changes in the body. The study also revealed that female teachers in Makurdi Metropolis have different items that form contents of their wardrobes to suit their lifestyle. This is reflected in the difference between responses on preferred maternity clothing. The use of clothing items like firm and large brassieres was noted by the respondents as necessary clothing. Merenstein and Gardner (2002) asserted that the changing breast size also promotes healthy functioning of the lymphatic and milk producing system of the breast during pregnancy. This makes it extremely important for correct choice of brassieres in pregnancy. Preferences of what to wear in pregnancy, for instance, wrappers and blouses (mean = 3.9) over the use of pants/ trousers (mean = 2.4), varied among female teachers in Makurdi Metropolis. The study showed that use of wrappers and blouses, skirts and blouses are more acceptable than the use of trousers and tops by females. This varies from the use of tight-fitted jean trousers and leggings acceptable for pregnancy in western culture reported by Krieger (2012). A type of clothing that may be acceptable in one culture maybe unacceptable in another. This finding supports the assertion by Agbo (2008) that culture influences clothing choices of people. Use of trousers is seen as a mark of gross irresponsibility within Makurdi Metropolis. Hence at antenatal clinics expectant mothers are encouraged to put on bouffant dresses.

Preference for basic maternity brazzarie, versatile maternity clothes,

use of separates and stretchy fabrics revealed in this study are in consonance with recommended maternity garments by Blunin (2001) and Krieger (2012). Pregnancy grows steadily to a ten- size larger and one will have to get newer clothes to accommodate the size. Large firm brassieres with wider shoulder straps to hold the increased size of breast to avoid breast engorgement are equally helpful (100 babytips-com/pregnancy/maternity-clothes-tips.html). Modern maternity garments are made from lycra or spandex fabrics which give room for expansion of the body size and provide comfort for easy movement (Krieger, 2012). Wrap dresses with v-neckline that showcases the growing bust line, cotton maternity tanks with touch of Lycra, spandex and tannic filled across shoulders and arms are wonderful dresses in pregnancy recommended by Krieger (2012). Spending so much money to frequently buy clothing to fit the expanding size in pregnancy may be curtailed by the use of such stretchy garments. This solves the problem of frequent purchase and unplanned buying of garments to accommodate the increasing size of pregnancy. Family finances wrongly channelled may cause other areas of needs of the family to suffer resulting in rift and conflict in the family.

Difficulty in correctly choosing comfortable clothing for all day usage in spite of change of weather posed problems in the study areas as shown in table 3. A change in weather in the course of the day may mar the comfort of an individual. The factors to consider for wardrobe management during

pregnancy include weather, family standard, type of job, shape/figure type of woman. Weather plays very important roles in the clothing needs of pregnant women. Weather fluctuations make pregnant women very uncomfortable in their clothing. Separates, multiple garments pieces that could be taken off or put on independently could solve such weather changes and its effect on the clothing of the individual. One of the challenges revealed in the study is unavailability of specially designed garments for pregnancy. This confirms the assertion by Chase and Quinn (2003) that specific garment designs for special body shape irregularities are not available. This may include skirts, trousers, overalls and camisoles and tops that take special cognizance of the expanding tummy.

Blunin (2011) noted that maternity clothing should be transformed to accommodate the changing physical, psychological, social need of expectant mothers using the wardrobe management by planning principles. Poor selection of maternity wear and wardrobe management by a pregnant woman may be a precursor to pregnant problems especially for the primigravida or in experienced women against the multigravidas or mothers with previous pregnancies (James, 2002). Uncomfortable maternity dresses that lead to a feeling of isolation and unwholesome attitude of a pregnant woman towards colleagues at the working place may lead to low productivity. Good wardrobe management practices gives confidence to pregnant women as role models in

their society (Marenike, 2002). Preferably, their clothes should hang from the shoulder. They should be washed and ironed regularly. Due to enlargement of the breast as pregnancy progresses, the size of the bra should be checked regularly to avoid pressing the breast. Brassieres with functional components such as openings and closures for the pregnant woman to reach the nipples for cleaning are ideal. Low heeled shoes should be worn to give balance to the prospective mother and to prevent accidents and backache (Mallum and Kembe, 2011).

There is a relationship between pre-natal and post-natal clothing. Pre-natal clothing is the clothes that a pregnant woman wears in the first three months of her pregnancy. Normal clothing may be used taking note of fabric used for construction. In the second to third trimester free clothing to allow free flow of air around the body are used by pregnant women. Allowance for ease of movement and provision for donning and doffing easily are important.

Post-natal clothing refers to type of clothes that the pregnant woman should wear after the delivery of her baby. Free clothing is used within the puerperal 1st 40 days as the reproductive organs have not fully gone back to their normal sizes. Front closure and openings are ideal for breast feeding mothers. Tight clothing such as girdle belt to assist the uterus to involute well 1st 14 days may be used. Tight girdles also provide control for the otherwise enlarged skin of the tummy after delivery. Tight girdles provide emotional and psychological satisfaction for having returned to the original shape

after delivery. Maternity under wears to ensure comfortable pregnancy include: maternity breast feeding bras and crop top, support bands to alleviate backache, shape maintenance to disguise or to improve post natal figure are applicable in pregnancy. The use of knickers provides support and comfort.

Pre-natal and post- natal clothing should be carefully planned to reduce waste of finances. Early purchase of maternity clothes is discouraged; this is because of the risk of fit later in pregnancy. In order to reduce cost, maternity clothes could be borrowed or purchased as second hand (Blunin (2001). The purchase of larger size clothes in fashion which could be used later after pregnancy which could be used later after pregnancy can reduce cost (100babytips-com/pregnancy/maternity-clothes-tips.html). Pregnant women should not buy or wear too tight garments that do not expand. Colours of fabric should be carefully selected. Such colours should be fast, should reveal dirt easily to ensure regular washing by the user. Colours are particularly important for the breast feeding mother since the baby is attracted to brilliant colours rather than dull colours. Garment designs that allow for easy breast feeding is preferable to garment that do not allow for easy breast feeding.

Conclusion

Pregnant teachers' awareness about wardrobe practices, wardrobe and problems encountered while planning and managing their wardrobe were assessed. Although there is evidence of

clothing requirement, culture interferes with the selection. Unavailability of specially designed garments and other clothing articles posed problems to pregnant teachers while planning their wardrobes. Unplanned purchase of clothing items for pregnancy needs by pregnant female teachers in Makurdi Metropolis may affect the finances of their family. The study concludes that the problems revealed may pose challenges to the teachers, affect their output at work and may tamper with their very important position as role models for their students. Adequate knowledge on types of clothing needed in pregnancy and how to use them are necessary to improve their livelihood and equip younger students who are learning from the teachers.

Recommendations

- Pregnant women should select garments that provide maximum comfort for them irrespective of their cultural setting. These should include garments from stretchy expanding fabrics like spandex and lycra.
- Clothing entrepreneurs should provide garments and clothing items specifically designed for pre-natal and post-natal periods for working class women.
- Workshops and seminars should be organized periodically by Home Economics Extension Workers for female teachers on wardrobe management practices. This will provide more knowledge for the female teachers who are role models for the students

References

- Adeyemo, P. O. (1995). *Principles and Practices of Education in Nigeria*. Nigeria; Omolayo Standard Press and Bookshops.
- Agbo, D. A. (2008). Dress culture Awareness. A case study of Idoma cultural fibre. *The Journal of family development*. 2, 167
- Anyakoha, E.U. and Eluwa, M. A. (1991). *Home Management for Schools and College*. Onitsha, Nigeria: African Feb. Pub. Ltd
- Blunin, J. (2001). *People Love it*. Retrieved on august 15th 2003 from (html://www.maternity-clothing-fashion.com)
- Chase, R.W. and Quinn, M. D. (2003). *Designed without limits: designing and sewing for special needs*. (Revised Ed.) New York: Fairchild
- Craig, H. T. (1973). *Clothing: a comprehensive study*: New York: J.B. Lippincott
- Clayton, N. (1974). *Young living*. New York: Glencoe/ McGraw-Hill Companies.
- Dead, F. (2012). *Seminar wardrobe planning*. Retrieved from grayzine.no/deadfleurette/2012/05/s...
- James, C. (2002). Department of Obstetric and Gynaecology and Reproductive Biology. Metro Health Campus of case Western Reserve University, Cleveland OH 44109.
- Krieger, L. (2012). *Maternity Clothes Advice*, Review and Articles/- Flash player installation. www.babycenter.com/pregnancy-style.
- Mallum, J.O. and Kembe, E.M. (2011): *Introduction to home and family health care services*. Jos, Nigeria. Clestinno Press.
- Maenike, J. (2002): Fashion Sunday Vanguard. November, 24th page 26.
- Merenstein, G. B. and Gardner, S. L. (2002). *Handbook of neonatal intensive care*. 5th edt Missouri. Mosby.
- Michelle, A. (2002). *Feeling beautiful during pregnancy*. Retrieved on May 6th 2003 from Willy websolutions.com
- Webb-Lupo, A. and Lester, R.M. (1987). *Clothing decision*. California, Macmillan. 100babytips-com/pregnancy/maternity-clothes-tips.html