Clothing Decision Making Practices of Female Students in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike: A Case Study

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Abstract

This study focused on clothing decision making practices of female students in Michael Okpara University' of Agriculture (MOUA) Umudike as a case study. It adopted survey research design. The population of the study was made up of 8000 students. Sample for the study was 550 selected through systematic random sampling technique. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings include eight factors influencing clothing decision, 15 procedures adopted by female students in making required clothing decision and eight problems that militate against clothing decision. Based on the findings, four recommendations were made including among others, that impulse decision making should be avoided, self confidence in implementing decision making should be encouraged.

Keywords: Clothing, Decision, Making, Practice, Females, Undergraduates.

Introduction

Clothing is any material placed on the body to adorn, protect and beautify it. It includes components of clothing like dresses, hats, shoes, jewellery, belts, scarves/ties, handbags, briefcase, wallets (Marshal, *et al.*, 2000). The type and quality of clothing worn is often dependent on gender, as well as socio-economic and climate condition (Arubayi and Obunadike, 2011, Grilligan, 2010 and Stoneking, 2014). Various attempts have been made to explain the motivations and reasons underlying people's clothing decisions and choices. In fact, life is made up of all kinds of decisions. Decisions making according to Anyakoha (2015) is the action taken in choosing or selecting from alternative courses of action. The concept of decision making involves defining the finding, comparing and choosing a course action. It is the process of selecting one course of action from a number of possible alternatives in solving a problem

(Coli, 2003). Similarly, decision making is a choice made about the thing that affects one's life. That is why Jonnes, 2003 stated that cloths are worn for six major reasons which protection, modesty, occupational identity, attraction, social status and traditional identity. Learning why people wear cloths and what influence their clothing decisions will help one to choose the cloths that are best for her. Clothing decision should be a conclusion arrived at, after consideration on the article of clothing to be purchased (Nnadozie, 2007).

As one moves through the decision process a number of different kinds of decisions must be made. Decision on what to buy, where to buy how to make the purchase, and in this case, the choice may be among the types or places to buy. It is the duty of the buyer to decide if the purchase will be made in store or door-to-door sales person. He equally decides about paying cash or using credit card.

Female students in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike should be conscious of their clothing practices. Each decision requires an effort to solve a problem and makes a decision by searching for and evaluating information (Anozie, 2010). According to Onuoha (2009), clothing decision making involves identifying types of clothing to be purchased. Many female students do not know the kinds of decision they need to make when purchasing articles and where to purchase. When she identifies the need to purchase articles of clothing her decision will include price product model and manufactured label. As stated by Grilligan (2010), new materials are available in the market and new finishes are given different fabrics. These and many similar factors make identifying material and determining quality difficult.

There are major and minor decisions to made. As Eze (2012) stated that these decisions could be joint decision, decision by hierarchical order, decision dominated by the buyer and decision made by husband and wife. Major decision concerning buying of clothes for different occasions should be delegated to the one purchasing according to her skills and knowledge about fabrics (Anozie, 2010). The kind and quality of clothes purchased should influence one's social status, culturally reference groups, personality of family members and employment status (Stoneking, 2014).

Initially, the dressing of an individual is rated by the way one dresses. They dress modestly, uniquely and full of maturity. Personal clothing should flatter one's figures and styles (Grilligan, 2010). The style of the garment should fit the figure without unduly tight or loose. John (2010) stated that it is essential that one should go with comfortable and fitting-styles

especially those that are in vogue to promote his or her natural adornment. Some female youths are individualistic in the clothing decision. Moreover, Prebia (2008) said that there may be someone who likes revealing the body contours. For such a person, crisp and transparent fabrics may be ideal especially when no backing or lining is used.

Nowadays it has thwarted the opinion people have about clothing. It is worrisome to note that female students these days wear indecent, sexually seductive and scandalous clothing that attracts public assault. Mazrui (2012) observed that this dressing mood may be considered as indecent. Orakwe (2002) worried that indecent dressing is scandalous and sinful. It implies that female youth who dresses scandalously to seduce male counterpart faces wrath of God (Mazzui, 2012).

There is therefore the need for this study to be carried out to unravel personal clothing decision making practices of female youths and to come up with ways of enhancing the dressing. However, there are doubts as to how far female youths are contributing to the propagation of self worth through their use of clothing. Most often, they do not care about their dressing provided the style is in vogue. The dressing styles adopted by female students in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture continually called for attention. They display all forms of nudity in the public places. Conservative manner of dressing is no longer there. There is need for this study to investigate clothing decision making practices of female students, hence the study.

Purpose of the study
The major purpose of the study was to investigate clothing decision making practices of female in Michael Okpara university of Agriculture, Umudike. Specifically, the study determined:
1. factors influencing clothing decision making practices of female students in MOUAU.
2. procedures adopted by female students in making clothing decisions.
3. problems that militate against clothing decision making practices of female students in Umudike.

Research Questions
Three research questions guided the study.
1. what are the factors influencing clothing decision making practices of females.
2. what are the procedures adopted by individual for decision making practices.
3. what are the problems that militate against clothing decision making practices of females.

Methodology
Design of the study: The study was a survey research conducted in

Umudike, Umuahia. This design was adopted because it provided the researchers the opportunity of sampling large representative sample of population. It geared towards a thorough understanding of clothing practices of female students.

Area of the study: The area of the study was Michael Okpara University, Umudike. They are students and civil servants. The researcher observed different dresses worn by the students and students. Some dress to kill while some wear anything claiming they are fashion crazy. The area of the study was chosen because majority of the students came from this area and surrounding areas.

Population of the study: The population of the study comprised of female students in MOUAU. The target population was 6435. The population of year two and year three students were used totalling 3657 and 2778 respectively based on available record of the university (Source: statistics department, 2014).

Samples for the study: Simple random sampling techniques were used to select the sample for the study. This was done by selecting 10% of students from the entire population (6435), which gave total of (129). This is made up of the sample for the study. This sample is irrespective of the department.

Instrument for data collection: A 4-point scale questionnaire was used for data collection. It had two parts. Part one sought information of selected personal data of respondents, part two focused on the research questions.

The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts in clothing education. This was given to three experts in college of Education in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, who critically examined the items included with the specific purpose of the study and made useful suggestions and improved the quality of the instruments. Their recommendations, advice, suggestions and observations were used to review the questionnaire items.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis: One hundred and twenty nine questionnaire were administered by hand to the respondents by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. One hundred and twenty nine were returned completely. This showed 100% returned rate. However, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected. Any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as agreed. Similarly, any item scored below 2.50 was regarded as disagreed.

Findings of the study
Findings are summarized in tables 1-3

Table 1: Mean responses and standard deviation of female students on factors influencing decision making.

S/N	Factors influencing decision making of female students	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Cultural influences	3.34	0.80	Agree
2.	Peer group	2.85	0.90	Agree
3.	Social class	3.32	0.78	Agree
4.	Personality of individual	3.26	0.82	Agree
5.	Recourses available to the family	3.38	0.75	Agree
6.	Money available to the students	3.06	0.96	Agree
7.	Students decision making skills	2.28	0.73	Agree
8.	Students knowledge of clothing	3.31	0.78	Agree

Table 1 shows that respondent strongly agreed with all the items on factors influencing decision making practices of female students.

Table 2: Mean responses and standard deviation of female students on procedures adopted by female students in making required clothing decision.

S/N	Procedures adopted in making required clothing decisions by female students.	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Determine the required clothing needs	3.26	0.72	Agree
2.	Determine clothes that you need which are in good shape	3.41	0.76	Agree
3.	Determine clothes that you no longer wear either because you no longer like them or no longer fit you.	3.34	0.80	Agree
4.	Determine clothes that need to be mended	3.38	0.75	Agree
5.	Consider your figure type	3.17	0.86	Agree
6.	Choose befitting fabrics and styles of garments.	3.32	0.78	Agree
7.	Consider the texture, colour and design of fabrics.	3.06	0.96	Agree
8.	Identify alternatives (clothes)	3.32	0.77	Agree
9.	Gather information's on the alternatives	3.06	0.95	Agree
10.	Consider the alternatives	3.41	0.93	Agree
11.	Compare prices	3.38	0.75	Agree
12.	Choose the best of the alternative clothing	3.06	0.93	Agree
13.	Check clothing before paying for it	3.36	0.79	Agree
14.	Take responsibility for the decision (purchase of cloths)	3.34	0.81	Agree
15.	Evaluate your decision (clothing)	3.32	0.78	Agree

The data presented in Table 2 above shows that the respondents have agreed with all the items.

Table 3: Mean responses and standard deviation of female students on problems that militate against clothing decision.

S/	Problems that militate against clothing making by female students decision	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Lack of decision making skills	3.31	0.72	Agree
2.	Lack of knowledge of clothing	3.02	0.73	Agree
3.	Peer group influences	3.36	0.80	Agree
4.	Lack of shopping skills	3.33	0.88	Agree
5.	Lack of maintenance skills	3.14	0.76	Agree
6.	Lack of storage space available in the house	3.30	0.78	Agree
7.	Individual differences	3.25	0.86	Agree

The data presented in Table 3 shows that the respondents agreed with all the items.

Discussion of findings

The result as presented in table 1 revealed the factors influencing clothing decision making practices of female students in MOUAU in various ways. Knowledge, background and experience are also considered as factors influencing clothing decision making practices. It helps individual to collect as much information as possible about the clothing items she wants to buy. This means findings from the study shows that female students make decisions on required clothing needs, clothes that one needs which are in good shape, clothes that one no longer wear or no longer fit, clothes that need to be mended, figure type and choose befitting fabric and styles, paying attention to the colour, texture and design of fabric among others. In line with the above respectively,

Anyakoha (2015) stated that clothing decision making involves thinking about the entire wardrobe, not just about individual outfits. There are some of the knowledge and skills which one needs for wardrobe planning. This is agreeable with Iheanacho (2014) who said that one should look for harmonizing colours and fabrics. It may be wise to select a basic colour such as blue, brown or red and build around it. Students shun indiscriminate buying of clothes because it wastes time and money. It helps the students to be focused in their studies.

The result as presented in Table 2 revealed the procedures adopted by female students in making clothing decision have a lot of things involved. It is important to note that one has to select or choose the best out of the alternatives, check clothing before paying for it, among others. This can

be seen from the table, where all the sixteen items were above 2.50 which is the cut-off point. This shows that procedures adopted by female students in making clothing decisions were much and varied. This is also in line with the work of stoneking (2014) who agreed that one should consider alternative clothing and decides where to make the purchase better. This means that decision making practices by female students creates favourable first impression, poise, power and self confidence. Good clothing decision will instill in the students discipline, reputation and character formation. This is in line with Chernicott (2011) who opined that clothing needs of the students when met portrays the character and behaviour of the students.

The result in table 3 revealed problems that militate against clothing decision by female students. The table also showed that the female students lack the decision making skills in their clothing choice. Most times, peer group influences lack of knowledge of clothing, individual differences present some problems.

The problems militating against the clothing decision making practices were agreeable by the respondents. In line with this, John (2010) said that decision making practices can be troublesome if not handled appropriately because decision concerning clothing is not easy to make because of social status, maturity, age gap ignorance, cultural background, discrimination and lack of cooperation.

Conclusion

Life is made up of all kinds of decisions. The concept of decision making involves defining the problem, finding, comparing and choosing a course of action. Decision making in other wards involves a choice among alternative. This is why it is the action taken in choosing or selecting from alternative by female students. Learning why people choose clothes and what influences their clothing decision will help one to choose the clothes that are best for them. Before one takes a decision about clothing there are certain hindrances which may hamper her from making a good choice. Some hindrances which may include lack of good decision making skills, peer group influences, lack of knowledge of clothing, among others. That is why the respondents agree on the items on the table.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it is hereby recommended that:

1. clothing education should be given to students to enable them take necessary decisions concerning choice.
2. Every student must possess a good clothing skills.
3. Self confidence in implementing decision making should be encouraged.
4. Decision should be made based on family priority and resources.

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