

Clothing Maintenance Practices of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Students in Owerri Municipal of Imo State: A Case Study

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Abstract

The study was a case study of students clothing maintenance practices of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State. The specific purposes were to study the Components of clothing maintenance practices, Problems encountered and Solutions to the problems encountered in the process of clothing maintenance by students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri. Three research questions guided the study. The population for the study was 1,346 students from five (5) departments of Vocational and Technical Education, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri. Data were collected from a sample size of 200 respondents using stratified random sampling technique. Instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings include 22 components of clothing maintenance practices, 28 problems associated with clothing maintenance practices and 13 solutions to the problems associated with students clothing maintenance practices. Based on the findings, the recommendation among others is that students should adhere to the identified clothing maintenance practices, to reduce possibilities of contracting contagious diseases as well as having durable and lasting clothing items.

Keywords: Clothing, Maintenance, Tertiary, Institutions, Students, Practices.

Introduction

Clothing is one of the basic necessities of man. It includes a great range of materials that are worn to protect and adorn the body, as well as communicate intent. Reasons for wearing clothing include: protection, enhancement of appearance, modesty, role identity, attraction, social status and traditional identity. Kyung (2013) noted that clothing is constantly consumed by man for enhancement of appearance, protection, modesty, role identity, attraction and social status. Clothing includes various accessories such as dresses, shoes, hand bags, jewellery, hairdo, make up among others. It involves everything one puts on from head down to

the sole of the feet (Uzozie, Ezike and Eze, 2014). Clothing can create varied impression for people on the beholders thus influences the impression people have about the wearer. It can also affect the person's comfort and self confidence. The amount and types of clothing worn depends on physical, social and geographical considerations such as figure type, status and positions held in the society as well as environmental weather conditions. Clothing therefore is made up of more than fibre and textiles. For clothing to perform its functions, it must be properly maintained.

Clothing maintenance is an act of taking care or keeping clothing made up of more

than fibres and textile materials worn on the body in good condition to extend the shelf life (Kingsley & Agbo, 2018). Kunz (2009) highlighted the processes involved in maintenance of clothing, as keeping the materials free from physical damage and retaining or refreshing the appearance in terms of removal of stains and dirt in order to retain the external and visual characteristics. A good knowledge and skills in clothing maintenance practices will help the youth plan their wardrobe well and make effective use of the clothing maintenance practices. Clothing maintenance practices include laundering, drying, storage and mending the clothes when they develop faults. In line with this, Anyakoha (2015) described clothing maintenance practices as the process of applying appropriate repairs on clothing articles to prolong the shelf life of the product. Laundry as a major component of clothing maintenance practices is a process of hand or machine washing and drying apparel items to remove stains/soils and to restore items to their first purchased appearance. It is therefore necessary that adequate knowledge of the fabrics is acquired by students so as to know the correct ways to launder clothing articles (Julia, 2017). Clothing storage is done after laundry to give the garment time to rest and prolong the shelf life of the product. Different forms of storage exist and they include placing clothes on hangers, closets, drawers, shelves among others. According to Anyakoha (2015), clothes should be aired after each wear to remove odour, kept in storage with like items and pockets emptied before storing clothes. Mending involves repairs on some parts of clothes that are torn or worn out and replacement of such things as spoilt zippers, buttons that fell off and restoring loose stitches. Agbo (2018) stated other processes involved in mending as darning, patching, and reinforcement. They are described as forms of repairs for

restoring the garments to good conditions or shape after damage.

Similarly, Umeh (2014) stated the importance of taking good care of the clothing articles worn on the body and keeping them in good condition. Every individual including students of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education is expected to imbibe good clothing maintenance practices for durability, improving personal appearance, facilitating consumers' satisfaction and prolonging the life span of fabrics. As humans are meant to be very conscious or aware of the importance of clothing maintenance; few pieces of clothing articles given proper maintenance and used to the greatest advantage are infinitely durable, stand a taste of time more than the ones that are badly maintained. Providing positive role models for youths in relation to clothing care and maintenance skills are needed to lengthen wear life of clothing and reduce waste among the students. Further, it will benefit students, parents, laundry workers in adopting proper clothing maintenance practices.

There is therefore the need for this study, to find out how students of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri maintain their clothing articles, the problem they encounter and ways of proffering solutions to the problems. This will in turn enhance the clothing maintenance practices of students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, Imo State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to find out the clothing maintenance practices of students of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri municipal of Imo State. Specifically, the study determined:

1. Components of clothing maintenance practices of students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri

2. Problems encountered by students in their clothing maintenance practices in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri.
3. Solutions to the problems encountered by Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri students in their clothing maintenance practices.

Research Questions

1. What are the major components of clothing maintenance practices of students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State?
2. What are the problems encountered by students of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri in their clothing maintenance practices?
3. What are the solutions to the problems encountered by Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri students in their clothing maintenance practices?

Methodology

Design of the Study: Descriptive survey design was preferred for this study because information were gathered from students regarding their views on the clothing maintenance practices by students of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State.

Area of the Study: The area of the study was Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri municipal council of Imo State which is situated along Owerri-Orlu road. The school is full of academic activities involving students in NCE, Degree and PGD programmes. The students live in the hostel, dress to school which subject them to clothing maintenance.

Population for the Study: The population comprised 1346 final year degree students of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri. There are five (5) departments in

the Schools of Vocational and Technical Education. These include: Department of Agric Science, Department of Business Education, Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Department of Home Economics and Department of Technical Education. (Source: Registry Department, AIFCE, Owerri)

Sample and Sampling Technique: The sample is two hundred (200) students which were randomly selected from the five (5) Departments of the School of Vocational and Technical Education, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri. Stratified random sampling was used to select 200 respondents from the five departments. 40 students were selected from each of these five Departments.

Instrument for Data Collection: The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire titled Clothing maintenance practices of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education students in Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State. The questionnaire was divided into two sections (A and B). Section A is on the personal data of the respondents while section B is based on a 4-point rating scale with 24 items grouped into three (3) clusters to answer the three research questions.

Method of Data Collection: The researchers gave the questionnaire to the students by direct contact. The students returned the completed answered questionnaire to the researchers. A total of 200 copies of the instrument were distributed by hand. The entire 200 copies were retrieved.

Method of Data Analysis: The data obtained was analysed using mean and standard deviation. The cut off point for decision acceptability of the items was 2.5 while anything below 2.5 was termed as not accepted.

Results

Table 1: Showing responses on components of clothing maintenance practices of students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education in Owerri Municipal Council of Imo state

S/N	Clothing Maintenance Practices	Ex	N	X	SD	Decision Rule
1.	Sorting of clothing according to colour/ clothing type prior to laundry	680	196	3.4	0.8	Practices
2.	Mending of torn parts of the clothing as they occur/before laundry.	668	196	3.4	0.6	Practices
3.	Removing of stains according to the type of stain before laundry.	640	196	3.2	0.9	Practices
4.	Steeping or soaking of white cotton separately to avoid stains	670	196	3.4	0.6	Practices
5.	Washing of clothes according to fabric type for duration	668	196	3.4	0.6	Practices
6.	Rinsing until soap is completely removed from the articles until water is clean	654	196	3.3	0.5	Practices
7.	Applying blue/starch as necessary.	602	196	3.0	0.8	Practices
8.	Extracting water by wringing, mangling, squeezing or rolling the clothing on a clean towel according to fabric type	608	196	3.1	0.7	Practices
9.	Drying according to the type of clothing	614	196	3.1	0.8	Practices
10.	Ironing of pressing according to fabric type (finishing).	666	196	3.3	0.5	Practices
11.	Airing of the ironed clothing articles	602	196	3.0	0.7	Practices
12.	Storing in the wardrobe, hangers, drawers or box.	674	196	3.4	0.5	Practices
13.	Replace zip/slack elastic and lost buttons	638	196	3.3	0.6	Practices
14.	.Imbibing .good maintenance practices to improve personal appearance	672	196	3.4	0.4	Practices
15.	Using back stitches in mending torn cloths	638	196	3.2	0.6	Practices
16.	Patching torn clothes with similar fabrics and matching thread decoratively.	644	196	3.2	0.6	Practices
17.	Using darning for L-tear woven fabrics	614	196	3.1	0.4	Practices
18.	Renovate faded clothes by dyeing	636	196	3.2	0.6	Practices
19.	Always check tags on the neck or down the side seams for laundry instruction.	648	196	3.3	0.6	Practices
20.	Practice good hygiene by wearing deodorant to keep cloth in better condition	700	196	3.5	0.8	Practices
21.	Avoid storing clothes in a humid closet to remove odours	678	196	3.4	0.6	Practices
22.	Restoring clothing items to their first purchase appearance.	668	196	3.4	0.4	Practices
Grand mean				3.2		

Table 1 shows that all the items in the above table were accepted by the respondents as the components of clothing maintenance practices of students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education in Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State. All the items have

their mean above 2.5 which is the cut-off point for acceptance regarding the importance of various components of clothing maintenance practices of students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri. The Standard Deviation

value for the 22 items in the table ranged from 0.9 - 0.4 which indicates that the responses are close to one another and to the mean.

Table 2: Responses on problems encountered in clothing maintenance by students in tertiary institutions in Owerri Municipal council of Imo State

S/N	Problems Encountered	Ex	N	X	SD	Decision Rule
1.	Limited knowledge/skill on laundry, mending and storage skills.	718	196	3.6	0.6	Problems
2.	Lack of personal value on clothing maintenance	640	196	3.2	0.7	Problems
3.	Inability to interpret laundry signs and instruction on clothing items	722	196	3.6	0.8	Problems
4.	Lack of skill in manipulating washing machine	716	196	3.1	0.6	Problems
5.	Lack of knowledge to store clothes in an air circulated space	632	196	3.2	0.9	Problems
6.	Low standard of personal cleanliness	636	196	3.3	0.6	Problems
7.	Lack of good dress sense	630	196	3.2	0.8	Problems
8.	Ignorance of clothing maintenance practices	660	196	3.3	0.8	Problems
9.	Lousiness in keeping clothes in good order	636	196	3.2	0.5	Problems
10.	Inadequate laundry equipment	660	196	3.3	0.7	Problems
11.	Non-availability of storage facilities	674	196	3.4	0.8	Problems
12.	Lack of time due to tight activities	620	196	3.2	0.8	Problems
13.	Insufficient ventilation in storage space	654	196	3.3	0.6	Problems
14.	Constant power failure	640	196	3.2	0.8	Problems
15.	Limited lines for spreading clothes in the hostel.	650	196	3.3	0.5	Problems
16.	Lack of sewing accessories for mending (needles, pins, scissors, thread, buttons)	636	196	3.2	0.7	Problems
17.	Lack of good wardrobes, drawers among others	646	196	3.2	0.8	Problems
18.	Insufficient hangers and other accessories	644	196	3.2	0.8	Problems
19.	Inability to apply correct procedures to remove stains	652	196	3.3	0.6	Problems
20.	Time constraints to launder due to lecture attendance, project and assignment	732	196	3.2	0.8	Problems
21.	Negative attitude of students towards clothing maintenance	666	196	3.3	0.5	Problems
22.	Lack of money to buy suitable laundry facilities	622	196	3.1	0.6	Problems
23.	Lack of interest in acquiring the right knowledge of proper clothing maintenance practices.	632	196	3.3	0.5	Problems
24.	Lack of techniques to handle stubborn stains	636	196	3.2	0.8	Problems
25.	Inadequate water supply in the hostel	646	196	3.2	1.0	Problems
26.	Inadequate provision of better storage space in the hostel	634	196	3.2	0.6	Problems
27.	Insufficient lines for spreading clothes in student's residence	616	196	3.1	0.7	Problems
28.	Clashes of lecture time and laundry time.	604	196	3.0	1.3	Problems
Grand mean				3.2		

Table 2 reveals that all the 28 items had their mean scores ranged from 3.1 to 3.8 being the cut off point 2.50 of a 4 point rating scale. This indicated that they were all accepted as problems encountered by students in their clothing maintenance practices in Alvan

Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri. The Standard Deviation values for the 28 items ranged between 1.3 to 0.5 indicating that the responses of the respondents are close to one another and not much variation.

Table 3: Responses on Solutions to the problems encountered by students of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education in clothing maintenance practices in Owerri Municipal

S/N	Problems Encountered	Ex	N	X	SD	Decision Rule
1.	Regular water supply to hostel areas to aid easy laundering of fabrics	638	196	3.2	0.6	Solution
2.	Supply of enough water in the hostel by the school authority	716	196	3.2	0.2	Solution
3.	Provision of wardrobe for adequate storing of fabrics	654	196	3.2	0.7	Solution
4.	Provision of more lines for spreading of clothing in the hostels/student residents	668	196	3.4	0.5	Solution
5.	Provision of better storage space in the Hostel.	756	196	3.3	0.5	Solution
6.	Awareness creation on components of clothing maintenance practices	642	196	3.2	0.7	Solution
7.	Motivating students to develop interest in clothing maintenance practices	642	196	3.2	0.8	Solution
8.	Provision of money for suitable laundry facilities.	672	196	3.4	0.6	Solution
9.	Adjustment in the school time table to create adequate time for laundry	634	196	3.2	0.9	Solution
10.	Provision of sewing accessories for maintaining clothes	656	196	3.3	0.6	Solution
11.	Adequate supply of electricity in the hostel.	674	196	3.4	0.5	Solution
12.	Cultivate the spirit of reading tags/labels for clothing maintenance	646	196	3.2	0.9	Solution
13.	Adequate provision of ventilation to avoid moisture deposition on garment.	640	196	3.2	0.8	Solution
Grand mean				3.3		

Table 3 shows that all the items had mean scores above the cut off mean point of 2.5 which means that the respondents accepted the items on awareness creation on components of clothing maintenance as solutions to problems encountered by Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education students in Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State. The Standard Deviation values for all the 13 items in the table ranged from 0.9 - 0.2 indicating that the responses of the

respondents are close to one another and to the mean.

Discussions of Findings

Findings in Table 1 revealed that all the important components involved in clothing maintenance practices were all accepted by respondent with responses above the cut off score of 2.5. The components of clothing maintenance practices include: sorting of clothing according to the type of fabric and

use, mending torn parts of clothing, stain removal, washing of clothing according to fabric type, steeping and soaking of white cotton separately to avoid stains among others. It further revealed that all the clothing maintenance practices could be put into practice for individual physiological comfort of clothing, enhancement of the clothing appearance and durability of the clothes. This is in line with Umeh (2014) who stated that mending of torn parts of the clothing through darning and patching enhances the appearance and durability of clothes. Replacing broken zips and slacks elastics also help to extend the life span of many clothing items. This finding supports the assertion by Agbo (2013) on appropriate steps in clothing maintenance practices which include: repair or mending of clothing at earliest signs of tear, provision of adequate water, soap and storage facilities to make the clothes look attractive, durable and comfortable. This finding agrees with the findings of Kathlean (2005) who reported that regular washing, ironing and mending of clothes call for careful application of skills in the maintenance of clothing items, Nwadi and Anyakoha (2012) further opined that the removal of stains in clothing items, require professional knowledge and skills on how to handle them. Clothing maintenance skills such as reading labels/tags, provision of sewing accessories, adequate provision of ventilation, ironing and storage skills are needed by Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education students as this will help to save cost as well as providing appropriate clothing items for themselves and the entire family.

Results of the study in Table 2 also identified the problems of clothing maintenance practices of students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education in Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State. From the findings presented, it was discovered that the respondents identified

all the 28 items as the problems encountered by students in the process of clothing maintenance practices in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State. These problems include; limited knowledge/skills on laundry, mending/storage skills, inadequate laundry equipment, low standard personal cleanliness from family where they emerge from, lack of interest in acquiring the right skill/knowledge of proper clothing maintenance practices, insufficient water supplies in the hostel and limited space for spreading clothes, inadequate provision of better storage facilities in the hostel, lack of good dress sense among others. This is in agreement with the findings by Dhurup (2014) that students of tertiary institutions have limited resources and knowledge on how to maintain different types of clothes and this has affected their clothing maintenance habits as well as their academic performance in school. Supporting this, Agbo (2013) noted that the above problems may lead to a feeling of isolation and unwholesome attitude of students towards their lecturers and this may also result to low productivity. In line with this Andrew and Pentecost (2009) stated that limited knowledge on how to maintain different types of fabric can lead to mishandling of clothes during washing, ironing and storage of clothes. This may cause expenses on students thereby endangering their health condition. Boyo and Dada (2013) shared the same view with the result of the study when they emphasized that lack of effective knowledge in maintenance of clothing poses problems such as skin infection to tertiary institution students. This may be contagious thereby putting the lives of students in danger as well as further expense on them. Bell (2003) stated that lack of proper ventilation can cause damage to clothing items for instance greying and yellowing of fabrics. Supporting this Boyo and Dada (2013)

suggested that good ventilation removes dampness due to perspiration and odour in garments. In line with this, Anyakoha and Nwadi (2011) explained that provision of good wardrobe or hangers for storage of clothing can enhance and prolong the life span of the clothes. Anyakoha and Nwadi (2011) further revealed that storage is an important part of clothing maintenance and that it is important to store only clean clothes using hanger in an organized drawer or wardrobes. When we fail to store the clothing articles properly, they could get dirty, look old, infected by moths or become damaged. This is in line with the view of Kingsley & Agbo (2018) that clothes need special care as moths often damage articles that are not stored properly. Mending is the process of repairing and fixing a worn, torn, damage article that are not stored properly. It could be inferred that the surveyed tertiary institution students recognised that no matter how well clothes are, no person is ever well dressed unless the clothing are given appropriate maintenance. These findings corroborated with the earlier studies by Pitts and Hunt (2006) that stated that it is expected that torn clothe should be repaired immediately it occurs at early stage to prevent further damage of cloth, Mending of clothes therefore save money. In trying to identify time constraints as a result of tight lecture schedule assignment and studying influencing clothing maintenance practices, it was discovered that many students do not possess basic experience in clothing care and effective time management interpreting labels/tags on labels for laundry. It was suggested that students should change their attitudes to clothing maintenance as supported by Friggs (1999) on procedure for managing clothing articles and other domestic items.

Finally, the result of findings on solutions to the problem of clothing maintenance practices among tertiary institution students in Table 3 revealed that

all the items are solutions to improve on the life span of the clothing. This is in line with Anyakoha and Nwadi (2011) who pointed out that provision of good wardrobe and storage space in the hostel for adequate storage of fabrics can enhance the appearance and the life span of the clothes. Also, Fabusuyi (2010) highlighted ways of helping tertiary institution students to improve on their clothing maintenance practices. These include regular water supply to hostel areas by the school authority, provision of storage space and lines for spreading of clothing in the hostel, awareness creation on imbibing major components of clothing maintenance practices effectively, adequate electricity supply among others. These can affect their academic performance in the school if not properly addressed. Appropriate resources should therefore be made available to enable students acquire good maintenance clothing practices for sustainability and self confidence.

Conclusion

The economic hardship in the country has drastically reduced the resources available for clothing acquisition for most families including Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education students in Owerri Municipal Council in Imo State. To prolong the life span of the clothing, there is need to sensitize the students on the need for proper maintenance of clothing articles. The study revealed that all the respondents apply right skills in the maintenance of their clothing but there are some problems like inability to interpret the labels and tags on clothing for laundry, inadequate supply of clothing maintenance resources which need to be provided by schools that have student hostels or other residence providers. Practice of good clothing maintenance by Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education students will enhance prolonging shelf life of clothing articles, cleanliness, good hygiene and good

health. This will reduce possibilities of diseases that could be contracted through poor hygiene thereby passing such practices to their generations. Students should therefore adhere to the identified clothing maintenance practices while in school even thereafter.

Recommendations

With the findings from this study, the following recommendation were made:

1. Students of tertiary institutions should adopt this practice of clothing maintenance to have durable and lasting clothing items.
2. Any institution, organization or individual that will build residence for students should provide facilities for clothing maintenance because this will invariably affect their health status.
3. The research study should be carried out among tertiary institutions in other Local Government Area for more knowledge of the clothing maintenance practices.

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