Preference and Selection of Used Clothing among Civil Servants in Benue State

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Abstract

The study assessed the selection of used clothing for the survival of civil servants in the changing society of Benue State. The study had three objectives: To identify ways of clothing selection, types of fabric supplied and types of clothing preferred. The Population consisted of 4000 Benue State civil servants. The sample size was 200. The data collection instrument was a self-reported structured questionnaire validated by experts and with a Cronbach alpha of 0.72. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings identified 11 ways of selecting used clothing. These include visiting the used cloth market (M= 3.04). The finding further revealed that twelve types of fabric w e r e supplied through bail which includes cotton (M = 3.56) and acetate(M= 2.5). The findings also revealed six types of preferred used clothes which are gowns (M= 3.40), skirts/trousers (M= 3.00), shirts with a skirt (M= 3.02) and blouses with a skirt (M= 2.84). The study concluded that civil servants in Benue state preferred to use clothing such as gowns, skirts, blouses, trousers and shirts as work clothing because they are more affordable and accessible The study recommended that bale of fabric supplied by traders should contain the six types preferredby the civil servants.

Keywords: Selection; Preference; Used clothing; Civil servants, Benue State.

Introduction

Civil service is more of sedentary office work, which does not require much vigorous physical activity. Civil service is one of the major occupations of the residents of Benue state in addition to trading and farming. These groups of workers include teachers and staff of various ministries and parastatal. In the time past, the civil service commission paid workers many allowances including a dressing allowance. These

allowances enabled workers to afford various needs such as brand-new clothing. With the current economic changes in the country, many workers do not receive such allowances anymore and even salaries have become grossly inadequate and irregular. As a result, many government employees are not able to afford some commodities including brand-new clothes. Therefore, in other to meet their need for work clothing, civil servants resort to the selection and purchasing of used clothing.

Clothing selection according to Ida et al. (2021) involves deciding on what to wear, how to purchase or obtain what to wear and when to wear clothes for various occasions. In their view, clothing selection does not end until the clothing article is worn on the body. Clothing selection practices of any given person include all the procedures involved in planning, shopping and wearing clothing. Individuals could decide to select brand-new clothing which is usually packaged, or they could go for used clothing.

Used clothing include wears previously used by other people, which usually comes in bale, for sale or reuse (Alex, 2022). Most of the used clothing sold in Nigeria is imported from Europe and America where they have been fairly worn without much wear and tear. A good number of them still retain their colour, shape, texture and viability, and therefore have value for reuse. According to Collins (2022) used clothing is affordable and can save money. Their styles are also usually more authentic and unique compared to new clothing. They are therefore suitable for work clothes. Madison (2022) highlighted the benefits of selecting used clothing as it reduces environmental impact, promotes exploitative work conditions, saves money and has a unique vintage style which looks more authentic. According to Jade (2020) used clothing helps to reduce fast fashion demand, is easier to shop, lasts longer, saves resources and is unique.

Despite these advantages, poor selection of used clothing articles could also lead to poor dressing and the shabby appearance of individuals. Civil servants interact with people from various walks of life in the course of their daily duties, therefore, they need to appear smart and confident in their work clothes without being unnecessarily expensive. These values are usually obtainable with used clothing. However, when workers make a poor selection of used garments and accessories, they might end up not getting good dressing value from the purchase. It is therefore imperative to assess the preference and selection of used clothing among civil servants in Benue State to provide empirical information that will enable the sellers and buyers of used clothing to enhance their choices of used clothing.

Objective of the study

The main purpose of this work was to assess the preference and selection of used clothing among civil servants in Benue state.

Specifically, the study;

1. identified ways of selecting used clothing by civil servants in Benue state;
2. determined the textiles fabric that comes in used clothing bales for selection and
3. determined the preferences of different types of used clothing that

come in bales for civil servants in Benue State.

Methodology

Study design: Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study.

Population for the study: The population of the study was 4000 Benue State civil servants (State civil service commission worker's register, 2021).

Sample for the study: The sample size for the study was 180 civil servants. A two- staged sample technique was used to select the sample. The first stage involved a purposive selection of the state capital and one local government area from each of the three geopolitical zones in the State. The second stage involved a random sampling of 50 civil servants from each zone and the state capital bringing the sample size to 200 civil servants. However, 180 completed questionnaires were returned which became the actual sample for the study. These civil servants were teachers and workers in the state parastatal.

Instrument for data collection: The instrument used for data collection was a self-reported structured questionnaire, titled Preferences and the Selection of Used Clothing Questionnaire (PSUCQ). The instrument had four points rating scale of Strongly Agreed 4 Agreed 3, Disagreed 2 and Strongly Disagreed with their nominal values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The instrument contained two parts. Part A collected information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. While part B collected data on ways of selecting used clothing among civil servants, information on the Textile fabrics that come in bale, and information about the preferences of used clothing by the civil servants in Benue State.

Validity and reliability of the instrument: The Instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Home Economics department, in the faculty of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka, one also from the Department of Vocational and Technical Education Faculty of Education Benue State University Makurdi. The experts assessed the instrument for proper wording, consistency, and representation. Suggestions and corrections made by them were utilized to improve the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined with a pilot test using 20 civil servants in Nasarawa State; the data generated from the pilot study were analyzed using SPSS vision 23. Cronbach alpha yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.72 indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study

Informed consent: The respondents gave their consent using a consent form. The purpose of the research was properly explained to them after which they signed the form.

Data and statistical analysis: Mean and standard deviation were determined using SPPS version 23. A means score of 2.50 was used as a point for the decision rule. Any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted as a factor. However, any item with a mean score of less than 2.50 was rejected.

Results

The result in Table 1 below showed the mean responses of the respondents on the ways civil servants select used clothing in Benue State. All the results were above the cut- off mark of 2.50, this indicates that the civil servants in Benue

State agreed with all the items stated as how they can select used clothing as shown below.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of responses on ways of selecting used clothingN = 180

Ways of Selecting used clothing	Mean	Std Dev	Remark
Check on the internet for an online post for used clothing	2.5 8	0.29	Agree
Find the prices of the posted used clothing	2.52	0.28	Agree
Negotiating with the sellers on the price	2.50	0.28	Agree
Check the worth of the price compared with the worth of the used clothing	3.00	0.33	Agree
Look for speciality clothes such used for office wear	3.02	0.34	Agree
Visit the used clothing market to sample them for purchase	3.04	0.34	Agree
Put a request for the dealers to bring them for you to make yourchoice at your comfort place	2.50	0.28	Agree
Look at the fabric name, brand and shape then make your decision	2.56	0.28	Agree

The result in Table 2 revealed the mean responses of the respondents on the type of fabrics that are available in the bale. The fabrics include cotton (3.56), polyester (3.06), linen (3.04), jeans (3.04), a combination of cotton and polyesters (3.02), wool (3.00) and spencer (3.00).

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of the responses on the textiles fabrics available inbale for purchase N- 180

Textiles fabric that comes in bare	Mean	Standard deviation	Remark
Cotton	3.56	0.27	Agree
Linen	3.04	0.23	Agree
Nylon	2.82	0.21	Agree
Wool	3.00	0.23	Agree
Polyesters	3.06	0.24	Agree
Acetate	2.54	0.19	Agree
Jute	1.40	0.11	Agree
Silk	3.00	0.23	Agree
Combination of cotton and polyesters	3.02	0.23	Agree
Spencer	3.00	0.23	Agree
Jeans	3.04	0.23	Agree
Nino fabric	2.82	0.21	Agree

The result in Table 3 below shows the responses of the respondents on the preference for different types of used clothing. From the table, the preferred types were gowns (3.40), shirts with trousers (3.02), trousers with a t-shirt (3.00), and blouses with a skirt (2.84). The wrapper was not accepted as a preferred cloth (2.03).

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of the responses on the preferences of the different types of used clothing N=180

Different types of used clothing	Mean	Standard deviation	Remarks
Gowns	3.40	0.48	Agreed
Skirt with shirt	3.00	0.42	Agreed
Blouse with skirt	2.84	0.40	Agreed
Shirt with Trouser	3.02	0.43	Agreed
Trouser and T-shirt	3.00	0.42	Agreed
Wrapper	2.03	0.29	Disagreed

Discussion of findings

The study identified eleven ways in which civil servants in Benue state select used clothing. They include checking on the internet for the online post for used clothing, finding out the prices of the posted used clothing, and negotiating with the sellers on the price. The respondents also compared prices with the worth of the used clothing before they purchased it. They made their choices based on the fabric name, brand, information label and shape of the clothing. Theylooked for speciality clothes suitable for office wear. Many of them purchased their clothing by visiting the used clothing market to sample them for buying, or by requesting the dealers to bring them to their homes or workplace. These findings agreed with the findings of Herjanto et al. (2019) on the increasing phenomenon of second-hand clothes purchase. The authors stated the ways consumers select used clothing includes online advertisement, buying online and visiting the markets. In line with the suggestion by the label on the clothing articles to get the information of the clothes.The finding also showed ten textile fabrics that come in bale for selection by civil servants. The commonest fabrics were cotton, polyester and polyesters, acetate, and silk, a combination of cotton and polyester and spencer. This is in line with Davis V. F (2021) and Venkatraman (2015) who outline fabrics for clothing to include; cotton, wool, chiffon, lace, polyester, and silk linen. Others include nylon and wool.

The findings also revealed five different styles of used clothing that are preferred by the respondents. These included gowns, a skirt and blouse, a shirt and trousers. In line with Anyakoha (2015), suitable clothing for work includes gowns, skirts and blouses, and trousers and shirts. In his study, wrappers were not preferred as work clothes. This is probably because wrappers are not usually part of the dress code for work. Moreover, wrappers are usually not sold as used bale clothes

Conclusion

Used clothing is popularly patronized among civil servants in Benue state as work clothing. They usually select these clothing both online and by physical contact with the dealers. The commonest fabrics s e l e c t e d were cotton, polyester and polyester mostly as gowns, skirts and blouses, shirts and trousers. These styles are often suitable and convenient for sedentary work such as civil service.

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