

APPAREL ACQUISITION AND UTILIZATION AMONG FAMILIES IN ENUGU STATE.

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Abstract

This study investigated the acquisition and utilization of apparel among families in Enugu State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Two research questions guided the study. A sample of 400 women was drawn from the population. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The findings indicated four ways of acquiring apparel by Enugu State families and fifteen ways of utilizing these apparels. Based on the findings three recommendations were made.

Background of the Study

Family is the basic social institution from which other institutions have emerged. It is the basic unit of every society. Anyakoha, (2007) stated that family is a group of persons living together and are united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption. Family exists in different forms like monogamous or nuclear family. This is made up of father, mother, and their children. Polygamous family is another form of family that consists of father, his wife or wives and their children. The last form of family is extended family comprising of the husband, his wife or wives, their children and other relations.

The family makes provision for members. Wikijissa, Eule, Datol, Padung, Amagon, Ntubun, Langkuk and Ahupa, (2001) pointed out that certain family provisions are investable to meet the desired human needs. These provisions made by the families among other things, cover their basic needs which include clothing. An aspect of the clothing provided in the families include, the apparel.

Apparel as body covering specifically refers to actual garments constructed from fabrics (Kaiser, 1997). These fabrics are of fibre origin. According to Anyakoha, (2007), fabric is a cloth constructed with yarn or directly from fibre by various construction methods. Such methods are weaving, crocheting, fluting and others. These fabrics are further converted to apparel in the form of gowns, skirts, blouse, shirt, trousers. This form of apparel can be acquired and used by the family members. Certain factors however motivate many families into apparel acquisition and usage. Such factors include task, occupation, level of family income and expenditure, prices and mode of payment, time and place of purchase, quality and durability of the apparel, fashion trend and other personal factors.

Apparel acquisition can simply be referred to as how apparel are gotten or procured. In other words, apparel acquisition implies the methods or ways through which an individual or families get their apparel. These apparels can be acquired through different ways which include buying ready to wear apparel, swapping or exchanging apparel between individuals, buying fairly used or second hand apparel, inheritances from older siblings or friends or other relations, recycling, donations and other means.

Liddles, (1981) wrote that apparel can be owned through swapping at parties, where friends exchange their wearable apparel with another one or for some other things else. List,

(2007), Birthwistle and Moore, (2007) also supported that swapping is a means of apparel acquisition. In many families, apparel can be acquired through inheritance from parents, older siblings or other family relations. In view of this, Birthwistle and Moore, (2007) stated that apparel can leave ones possession by handing them over to other members of the family or the homeless. Apparel can also be acquired by buying fairly used or second hand ones from second hand shops. This method of acquisition according to Solomon, (1992) and Crispell, (1995) is referred to as "Lateral Cycling". There are less privileged families who cannot acquire their apparel through buying ready to wear or fairly used ones. Such families may acquire their apparel through charity donations. Though Soyen, (1995) noted that this method of apparel acquisition known as charity donation to non-profit organization does not only help the needy but also saves landfill spaces. Families also acquire their apparel through home recycling. This type of recycling is done by changing already existing style, colour or design. Liddle, (1981), pointed out that apparel is acquired by recycling the old or existing one such as changing jeans trousers to denim skirt, dying plain skirt and blouse, adding decorative trims or appliques, changing the apparel to tunic tops, changing gown to skirt or blouse. Apparel acquisition is very important in every family because of the roles apparel plays in human life.

Apparel can play different roles or can be of different uses to different consumers. Anyakoha, (2007) stated that apparel could be used for self beautification as to improve ones appearance, look attractive, cover nakedness and appear modestly decent. It could also be used to show roles or duties as in nurse and police uniforms, show mood such as in black or white outfit for mourning, show status or positions like the Emirs, Obis, Obas and also exhibit culture affiliation. Uses of apparel can also be explained using four clothing theories. Marshall, Jackson, Stanly, Kefgen and Tochiespecht, (2000) stated

the theories as Modesty, Immodesty, Protection and adornment theories. Apparel can also be used to show personality. In line with this Clayton, (1997) noted that a person's apparel can tell others a little about that individual's personality. Likewise Brandenburg, (2000) goes further to discuss that apparel depicts ones thinking of who he is and what he wants to convey to people about himself. Apparel uses or function cannot be complete without considering the comfort of the wearer, supporting this Benson, (2002) stated that people do not just pick anything to wear, but what will give them utmost comfort, Jackson, (2002) in his own clarification wrote that one must be well packaged to make or create the right image.

Apparel acquisition and usage go simultaneously because before one acquire apparel he would first consider the uses, functions or role the apparel will play, to know the type of apparel, style, colour, design and other features to look out for. Therefore, this study would find out ways families in Enugu State acquire and utilize their apparel.

Research Objectives

The main purpose of this study was to determine the acquisition and utilization of apparel among families in Enugu State. Specifically, the study determined.

1. Ways families in Enugu state acquire their apparel.
2. Ways families utilize apparel in Enugu State.

Research Objectives

The study proffered solution to the following questions.

1. In what ways do families in Enugu state acquire their apparel?
2. In what ways do families in Enugu state utilize their apparel?

Methodology

The study was conducted in Enugu state using descriptive survey research design. The population of study consists of 1, 633,096 women according to the Federal Office Statistics, (2006). Women were used as the respondents because they are the home makers that are responsible for family clothing. Yaro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size of 400 because population was known and homogeneous. The instrument for data collection which was questionnaire of 40 items was face validated by the three experts in Home Economics, Crobach's Alpha Reliability index was used to determine the internal consistency of instrument at .76. The questionnaire was personally administered on the respondents and collected personally with the help of two research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. The value 3.0 was fixed as cut off point which was the average of five point scale. Any item with a mean equal to 3, 0 and above was accepted as agreed, while mean below 3.0 was regarded for the five point scale.

Results

Data were collected and analyzed base on research purpose and questions posed.

Research Question 1: In what ways do families in Enugu state acquire their apparel?

Data related to the above question were presented and analyzed on table 1.

Table 1: Mean Scores of Responses on Ways Families in Enugu State Acquire their Apparel

S/N	Item Statement	X	S.D	Remark
1	Handing down to other siblings, friends and relations.	3.66	1.26	Agree
2	Swapping of unwanted apparel with friend.	1.81	.39	Disagree
3	Buying ready to wear.	3.19	1.05	Agree
4	Recycling wrapper to short gown or skirt.	1.93	.85	Disagree
5	Buying fairly used i.e. second hand.	3.44	1.44	Agree

6	Donations from charity shops.	1.91	.96	Disagree
7	Home sewing i.e. sewn in the house.	1.89	.92	Disagree
8	Remodeling old apparel with laces and fabrics.	1.68	.77	Disagree
9	Redesigning old apparel with appliqué.	1.57	.49	Disagree
10	Changing old style to style in vogue.	1.44	.49	Disagree
11	Custom sewing i.e. designing and sewing a particular style for a particular person only.	1.45	.49	Disagree
12	Buying tailored apparel.	3.43	1.49	Agree
13	Apparel alteration i.e. changing already sewn apparel into another style.	1.34	.62	Disagree
14	Others please specify.	1.39	.48	Disagree

Key: \bar{x} = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, A = Agreed, D = Disagreed.

Table 1 shows that four out of fourteen item considered were possible ways families in Enugu State acquire their apparel, with mean scores ranging from 3.1925 to 3.6625, that shows that items 1, 2, 3, and 12 had their mean greater than 3.0 which shows agreement while items 2, 4 6, 7, 8, 9, 1, 11, 12 and 14 have their mean ranging from 1.3425 – 1.935 which is less that 3.0. They are therefore disagreed to be apparel acquisition method of families in Enugu State.

Research Question 2

In what ways do families in Enugu State utilize their apparel?

Table 2: Mean Score of Responses on Ways Families in Enugu State Utilize their Apparel

S/N	Item Statement	X	S.D	Remark
15	For protection against environmental hazard	3.37	1.45	Agree
16	To cover nakedness	3.33	1.53	Agree
17	For adornment or beatification	3.54	1.47	Agree
18	To attract attention	1.96	37	Disagree
19	For social identification	1.48	50	Disagree
20	To show their culture	3.88	1.32	Agree
21	As an action of	1.47	50	Disagree

22	immodesty For household activities/ work	4.24	77	Agree
23	As sleeping or night wear	3.20	1.06	Agree
24	For sports	3.45	1.40	Agree
25	For church activities	3.35	87	Agree
26	For social gatherings like wedding, parties, traditional marriage	3.48	1.36	Agree
27	For school	3.11	64	Agree
28	To cover themselves against cold	3.11	64	Agree
29	To show personality e.g. Ozo, Obis, Igwes, Chiefs etc	3.52	1.19	Agree
30	As sign of role play e.g. Nurses, Priests, Police etc	4.10	88	Agree
31	For advertisement	1.70	59	Disagree
32	To show fashion in vogue	1.87	1.04	Disagree
33	To promote art work	1.77	67	Disagree
34	As stiffens for pillows	1.61	48	Disagree
35	As wipe for cars, chairs, shoes, tables, etc	1.61	66	Disagree
37	As line over floor when pounding	3.50	1.39	Disagree
38	To cover valuable items	3.75	1.26	Agree
39	To show the individuals figure type	1.88	87	Disagree
40	To show fitting of apparel on the body	1.67	59	Disagree

Key: \bar{x} = Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, A=Agreed, D-Disagreed.

Table 2 shows the mean response on ways families in Enugu State utilize their apparel with fifteen out of twenty-six items recorded above 3.0, items 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 37 and 38 with mean score ranging between 3.11 to 4.24 agreed while items 18, 19, 21, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, and 40 with mean score between 1.47 to 1.96 disagreed.

Discussion of Findings

Research question one was to find out ways' families in Enugu State acquire their apparel. The result revealed that they acquire their apparel through four different ways. Handing down apparel to other siblings, friends and relations. This is in line with the opinion of

Winakor, (1995) that apparels are acquired through inheritance from senior siblings, friends and other relations. The second and the third findings stated that Enugu State families acquired their apparel through buying ready to wear apparel and through buying fairly used or second hand apparel. In agreement with Solomon, (1992) and Crispell, (1995) that apparel can be acquired by buying from second hand apparel shops and they referred to this method as "lateral cycling". The last finding stated that apparel can be acquire through tailored apparel confirming what Liddle, (1981) stated that, people are willing to pay high price for tailored apparel for the reason of having well fitting on them or to help cover figure fault that ready to wear apparel cannot cover.

The study also revealed fifteen ways in which families in Enugu State utilize their apparel, for protection against environmental hazards or cold, to cover nakedness, for beautification or adornment, show culture, as sign of role play and to show personality. Anyakoha, (2007) stated that apparel could be used for self beautification as to improve ones appearance, look attractive, cover nakedness and appear modestly decent. It could be used to: show role or duties, show status or positions and also to exhibit cultural affiliation. Apparel can also be used for household activities as sleeping or night wear, for church activities, social gathering like wedding, parties, traditional marriage, and for school. This is connected with what (Anyakoha and Eluwa, (2007). Anyakoha, (2007) noted about apparel that, there are different apparel for different occasions and activities like school, sports and picnics, work, household work, night gowns or sleeping apparel, apparel for social gathering or party.

Conclusion

This study has investigated acquisition and utilization of apparel among families in

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Enugu State. It determines the objectives i.e. ways families in Enugu State acquire their apparel. It also determined ways families utilize apparel in Enugu State. The result reveals that Enugu State families acquire their apparel through recycling, handing down, buying ready to wear or fairly used apparel while they also utilize it in some other ways like protection, adornment and role play.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that government or non-governmental organization should provide apparel recycling centre, Home Economics extension workers should organize seminar to educate families on apparel acquisition patterns, functions of apparel and ways of proper utilization of apparel. Charity shops should also be opened for donation by the privileged and acquisition for less privileged.

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