



Strategies for encouraging labelling of locally designed garments: A case study of Abia State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study focused on the strategies for encouraging labelling of locally designed garment in Nigeria: A case study of Abia State. Survey research design was adopted for this study. Four research questions guided the study. The population for the study was 1949 subjects, comprising 1724 local garment consumers, 73 local garment producers and 52 local garment marketers. A total sample size of 370 was selected and studied. Data was collected with a validated structured questionnaire while mean was used for data analysis. The findings of the study revealed that local garments in Abia State do not carry labels. It also showed the influence labelling of garments has on the sale of garments. Identified by the study also are factors hindering labelling of local garments and the strategies for encouraging labelling of local garments in the state. In conclusion, labelling of locally designed garments should be enforced in the country so that the consumers will have knowledge of the contents of the fibre used in making the garment they are buying and obtain equal worth of the money they spent in buying the garments. This will preserve the scarce resources, give room for proper care and maintenance of the garment and promote health. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended among others that both federal and state governments in Nigeria should enforce labelling of all locally designed garments in the country while the garment consumers and producers should be given consumer education/orientation on how to read and interpret garment labels of the garments they are producing/buying.

KEYWORDS: LABEL, GARMENT, LOCALLY, DESIGNED GARMENTS

Introduction

A label is small piece of paper, fabric or similar material attached to an object which gives information about something to which it is attached to. It can also be referred to a piece of fabric, paper or plastic that is attached to a product. It has information about that product it is attached to. For instance, clothes companies' attach labels to garments. The labels have information about the garments' materials, size, and the company that made them. Labels are key features of most products as they help to market the products, allow customers or consumers to recognize their choices and give important messages like

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manufacturer's/designer's name, ingredient(s), instructions and uses. Labels are essentials when making the decision to purchase items, especially garment. Therefore, one can say that labelling is a significant means of product identification.

A label can be a piece of paper, printed statement, embroidered textile, embossed leather which is either a part or parcel of a product, name of product and the address of producers or such useful information to be beneficial to the users (Kundan and Koirala, 2014). An informed consumer cannot readily purchase any product without a label. In like manner, a garment that does not have any label cannot be easily purchased by an informed consumer. This shows that labels affect the sales of the garment by attracting or grabbing the consumer's attention towards the garment. The marketers might arouse the interest in the mind of the consumer towards the garment through an attractively designed garment, but on closer approach to such garment without a label will discourage the consumer from buying such garment.

The primary function of labels is to provide information about products that are not immediately recognisable or verifiable by the consumer when observing the product, this enables consumers to make decisions based on the visual properties of the product or from previous buying experiences (Howard and Allen, 2006). Information on garment labels are fibre content, size, price, care and country of origin is conveyed by clothing labels (Solomon and Robolt, 2009).

The characteristics of clothing labels and types of information presents various sources of information and are used to convey clothing-related information to consumers. Information on clothing labels is mostly presented in written format while some information is often presented in symbol format (Brown and Rice, 2001). The first impression formed and association made by consumers about a clothing product, is often through objective information in the form of product labels (Taghian and Lamb, 2006). Labelling garment and other textile articles plays a vital role in the buying decision of a consumers. For some, the convenience might be a reason to pick up a garment (Fibre2fashion, 2018). However, label, being a very important factor in the recognition and marketability of a garment, should contain information relating to whether the product has harmful chemical and also contain information relating to environmental aspect of the garment, such as the chemicals that have been used during dyeing. Information on the handling of garments is also found on labels. Labelling is a very important element affecting the sales and distribution process of a product as the labels provide clear information about the quality (components), price, brand name, and other features to the customer. It further protects the customer from the malpractices of the middlemen and the integrity of the manufacturer or designer.

Labels carries the integrity and standard of a manufacturer or a designer. Labelling of a garment helps garment dealers to encourage potential buyers to make purchase. When established, labels remain the attraction of the consumer who are already acquainted with the brand. Labelling protects consumers from mischievous retailers. It also helps marketers to sell out their stock of garment. Labelling gives necessary information to the consumers about the products. The consumers can get knowledge about the quality and features of a product without tasting the product. From the label attached on the product they can recognise standard and grades of product (Thapa, Neupane and Dilli, 2014).

Garment is a single item of clothing used to cover the body. It can be used as an outer cover or outward appearance like dresses, suits, pants and so on. Garments can be produced at home as locally designed or in the industry. The wearing of a garment is mostly restricted to human beings and is a feature of nearly all human society. The amount and type of garment worn depends on the individual's choice, belief, customs/tradition, place of residence, type of

occasion and age (Stoneking, 2003). Some garments can be gender specific, while others are not gender specific and are locally referred to as unisex (Balter, 2009).

Physically, garments serve many purposes. The basic function of garment is to cover nudity and present a human being decently. It also serves as a protection for enhancement of safety during hazardous activities such as hiking and cooking, laboratory activities, sports, military assignments and explorations into dangerous environment (Ralf, Kayser and Stoneking, 2003). Garment protects the wearer from rough surfaces, rash-causing plants, insect bite, splinters, thorns and prickles by providing a barrier between the skin and the environment hazards (Stoneking, 2003). Garments can as well insulate against cold conditions, they can provide a hygienic barrier keeping infectious and toxic materials away from the body (Gilligan, 2010).

Garments can also serve many other purposes such as; adornment, beautifying the body, identification and modesty as well. It also documented that garments also provide protection from ultraviolet radiation. Wearing garment is also a social norm, and being deprived of wearing garment may be embarrassing to an individual and also not wearing garments in public to the extent that genitals, breast or buttocks are visible could be seen as indecent exposure. Megan, (2013) asserts that garments are things that cover the body, protecting it from the element, impropriety and scrutiny.

Garments performs a range of social and cultural functions, such as individual, occupational and gender differentiation, and social status. In many societies, norms about clothing reflects the standard of modesty, religion, gender and social status. Garment may also function as a form of adornment and an expression of personal taste or style. Garments protects against many things that might injure the uncovered human body, (Ralf Kayser and Stoneking, 2003). Garments protects people from the element, including, rain, snow, wind and other weather, conditions as well as from the sun. Garments reduce risk during work or sports. Conversely, garments may protect the environment from the garment wearer, as with doctors wearing medical scrubs. Wearing garment also have social implications, they cover part of the body parts that social norms require to be covered, act as a form of adornment, and serve other social purposes, (Balter, 2009).

Garment is one of the basic necessities of any human beings which is used for protection, decoration, beautification, adornment, self-expression, status symbols and to express one's personality (Weber, 1990). Garment can be made at home or produced by roadside tailors or in the industries. Garments can be defined by its role in revealing or resisting ethnic, professional, class-based, or political identities, or in screening off or establishing a sense of individuality (Bergstrom, 2011).

The word *locally* simply means done in, made in, or connected with a particular area. Local is affecting, or confined to a limited area or part. It can also be said to be of or relating to a city, town, or district rather than a large area. According to USDA (2012) locally designed based on the distance from farm to store. To be considered locally by their standard, a product must be sold within 400 miles of its origin or within the state. Therefore, one may say that a "locally designed garment" is a garment or fabric designed for protection which is manufactured or created and sold within 400 miles of its origin or within the state of production. When a garment is said to be locally designed, it simply means that the garment is done in, or made in or manufacture at a particular area. Generally, garment without labels do not attract the attention of the competence consumers who make purchase based on what they know about the product [garment].

Statement of Problem

Locally designed garments are those garment that are produced within an area (Local Government Area, State or Country). It has been observed that most locally designed garments come without labels on them. This act leaves the consumers with no information or knowledge of the designer's name, quality, care, fibre content and features of what they want to buy. It also affects the rate of sales and purchase by an informed garment consumer as well. This generally affects the patronage of such garments, especially in Abia State, Nigeria.

Garment designing in Abia State is on a steady increase, since there has been campaign on the need for people to acquire entrepreneurship skills due to teeming unemployment of youths in the country. Even, some university graduates these days register with a good garment designer to acquire more skills in garment designing. A successful entrepreneur needs, as a matter of urgency, to package their products to compete favourably internationally. However, the wonderful and beautiful garment produced by these fast-growing local garment designers cannot optimally actualize this purpose because their products do not have labels like the products of their counter parts in some other parts of the world. These local garment producers are supposed to attach labels to their products, to meet the garment needs of the consumers and compete favourably internationally. Information concerning instructions, warnings, and care usage of the garment are carried by the label from the designer to the consumer to ensure durability and preserve resources. Also, information on the quality, care, maintenance and features of a garment needs to be known by consumers through attachment of care label. However, in Abia State such vital information provided by care label on locally designed garments are lacking. This therefore, calls for the need to identify strategies for encouraging labelling of locally designed garments in Abia State, hence the need for this study.

Objective of the study

The main purpose of this study is to identify the strategies for encouraging labelling of locally designed garments in Nigeria, using Abia State as a case study. Specifically, the study identified:

1. The state of labelling of locally designed garment in Abia State that is whether locally designed garments are labelled or not.
2. The influence of labelling on the sales of locally designed garments.
3. The factors hindering labelling of locally designed garment in Abia State.
4. Strategies for encouraging labelling of locally designed garment in Abia State.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study.

1. What are the state of labelling locally designed garment in Abia State?
2. What are the influence of labels on the sales of locally designed garment in Abia State?
3. What are the factors hindering the labelling of locally designed garment in Abia State?
4. What are the strategies for encouraging labelling of locally designed garments in Abia State?

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to Abia State, Nigeria, where majority of the locally designed garment are produced in Nigeria. Responses to the instrument was restricted to the producers/designer of local garments in Abia State, marketers of locally designed garments and consumers of locally designed garment in Abia State.

Methodology

Study Design

The study used survey research design. A survey research design is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analysing data from a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group.

Area of the Study

The area of this study was Abia State, Nigeria. Abia State is in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. The capital is Umuahia and one of the major commercial cities in Nigeria. The commercial hub, aba was formerly a British colonial government outpost in the region. Abia State was created in 27th August 1991 from part of Imo state. Abia State is located on the coordinates 5°25'N 7°30'E. The study covered Abia State, mainly Aba, Umuahia and Ohafia (the three educational zones in the state) respectively.

Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised three main groups of respondents namely consumers, marketers and designers of local garments in Abia State, Nigeria. The breakdown of the population are as follows:

Local garment consumers	
Civil servants from	
Umuahia	905
Aba	454
Ohafia	365
Subtotal	1724
Registered Local garment designers	73
Registered Local garments marketers	52
Subtotal	125
Total	1849

Source: Abia State Civil Service Commission & Ministry of Commerce and Tourism.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A critical look at the above population distribution of the number of local garment consumers, designers and marketers respectively will discover that the population is not evenly distributed. Therefore, the researcher decided to use 20% of the population of each group of the respondents as follows: 20% of 1724 local garment consumers = 345, 20% of 73 local garment designers = 15 and 20% of 52 local garment marketers = 10. These made up a total sample size of 370 respondents. A Simple random sampling technique was used to select consumers, designers and marketers which were involved in the study.

Instrument for data collection

A structured questionnaire titled: State, Influence, Factors and Strategies Questionnaire (SIFS) was used for the data collection. The instrument was in five sections: A, B, C, D and E respectively. Section A elicited information on the demographic data of the respondents. Section B was used to elicit information on the state of labelling locally designed garment in Abia State. Section C was used to generate data on the influence of labelling on the sales of locally designed garment in Abia State, section D elicited information on the factors hindering the labelling of locally designed garment in Abia State, while section E elicited information on the strategies for encouraging labelling of locally designed garment. A four-point rating scale of Strongly agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used for rating the responses, with values 4, 3, 2, and 1 assigned respectively.

Validation of the instrument

The instrument was validated by three experts (two lecturers from Home Economics Department and one lecturer from Measurement and Evaluation Department, both in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The contributions of the validates reflected in the final draft of the instrument before it was administered.

Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

370 copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents by the researcher and two research assistants by hands. 362 copies of the questionnaires representing 98% were correctly filled and returned while eight copies representing 2% were not returned. The analysis was based on the returned questionnaires. The statistical tools used for data analysis were frequency, simple percentages (%), mean and standard deviation. Frequency was used to organize the data collected. Percentage was used to analysis the demographic data of the respondents while mean was used to analyse the responses to research questions. The mean was calculated by assigning nominal values to the response categories. Based on a four-point rating scale of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively, a mean rating of 2.50 was regarded as a minimum acceptable mean score while any mean below the acceptable mean of 2.50 was rejected.

Findings

The presentation of the data is organized in accordance with the research questions and is presented in tables below.

Research Question 1

What is the state of labelling locally designed garment in Abia State?

In table 1 below, all the respondents agreed that locally designed garments in Abia State do not carry labels except two. This is shown vividly on their grand mean scores.

Table 1: The Mean Responses of the respondents on the state of labelling locally designed garments.

S/N	The following are the state of labelling in Abia State.	\bar{X}_1	SD	\bar{X}_2	SD	\bar{X}_3	SD	\bar{X}_G	SD	Remarks
1	There is no law that local garments produced in Abia State should be labelled.	3.00	1.04	3.17	1.04	2.94	1.11	.01	1.06	Agreed
2	Almost all locally designed garments in Abia State do not carry labels.	2.66	0.99	2.91	0.88	2.43	1.11	2.66	0.99	Agreed
3	I do not buy locally designed garment in Abia State because they do not carry labels.	2.96	1.13	3.20	1.05	2.90	1.09	3.02	1.09	Agreed
4	For some years now I have been buying locally designed garment in Abia State with labels.	2.23	1.04	2.00	1.10	2.14	1.01	2.12	1.05	Disagree
5	For some years now I have been buying locally designed garment without labels.	2.97	1.02	2.95	1.02	3.01	0.96	2.97	1.00	Agree
6	All the local garments in Abia State have labels attached to them.	2.39	1.03	2.40	1.09	2.60	0.92	2.46	1.01	Disagree
7	Most of my friends do not like buying local garments in Abia State because they do not carry labels.	3.09	1.03	2.88	1.03	2.83	1.07	2.93	1.04	Agreed

Key: \bar{X}_1 = Mean Responses of local garment consumers; \bar{X}_2 = Mean Responses of local garment producers/designers; \bar{X}_3 = Mean Responses of local garment marketers, \bar{X}_G = Grand mean response of all the subjects, SD= Standard Deviation.

Research Question 2

What are the Influences of labelling on the Sales of locally Designed garments?

Table 2 below shows that labelling has influence on the sale of locally designed garments. This is shown on their grand mean scores which were all up to 2.50, the acceptable mean score and some were even above the acceptable mean score.

Table 2: The Mean Responses of the Respondents on Influences of labelling on Sales of locally designed garment.

S/N	The followings are the influences of labelling on the sale of garments in Abia State	\bar{X}_1	SD	\bar{X}_2	SD	\bar{X}_3	SD	\bar{X}_G	SD	Remarks
1	Some of the locally designed garments in Abia State are not purchase because labels are not attached on it.	2.87	1.04	3.14	0.97	3.03	1.01	3.01	1.00	Agree
2	People prefer buying ready to wear garment to local designed garment because of labels on it.	2.57	1.00	2.70	0.93	2.53	1.12	2.60	1.01	Agree
3	Customer prefer buying garments with labels because it enables them know the fibre content of the garment.	2.99	0.94	3.27	0.86	2.89	0.97	3.05	0.92	Agree
4	Customers purchase garments with labels because it tells them how to care for it.	2.96	0.96	3.11	0.90	2.72	1.16	2.93	1.00	Agree
5	Locally designed garment with labels attracts higher sales than those without labels.	3.10	1.01	3.26	0.79	2.93	1.01	3.06	0.94	Agree
6	Consumers prefer buying garments with Labels because it helps to identify the trade mark owner of the garment.	2.94	0.98	3.08	0.92	2.77	1.08	2.89	0.99	Agree
7	Garment consumers buy garment with Labels because it provides the consumer with information about the garment.	3.03	0.90	3.27	0.76	2.87	1.15	3.01	0.94	Agree
8	Consumers buy garment with Labels because it helps them identify fake garments easily.	3.04	0.99	3.07	1.05	2.78	1.07	2.94	1.04	Agree
9	Customers prefer buying garments with label to those without labels.	2.98	1.09	3.11	0.93	2.87	1.04	2.96	1.02	Agree

Key: \bar{X}_1 = Mean Responses of local garment consumers; \bar{X}_2 = Mean Responses of local garment producers/designers; \bar{X}_3 = Mean Responses of local garment marketers, \bar{X}_G = Grand mean response of all the subjects, SD = Standard Deviation.

Research Question 3

What are the factors hindering the labelling of locally designed garment in Abia State?

Table 3 revealed that all the enlisted items were the factors hindering labelling of locally designed garments. This was shown on their grand mean score which were all up to 2.50 the acceptable mean score and some were even above the acceptable mean score.

Table 3: The Mean Responses of the Subjects on the Factors Hindering labelling of locally designed garment.

S/N	The following factors hinder labelling of local garments in Abia State.	\bar{X}_1	SD	\bar{X}_2	SD	\bar{X}_3	SD	\bar{X}_G	SD	Remarks
1	Ignorant of the importance of labelling garment by the consumer.	2.96	1.12	3.15	0.95	2.99	0.97	3.03	1.01	Agree
2	Marketers' Ignorance of the influence of labelling on sales of garment.	2.72	1.08	2.80	0.95	2.57	1.00	2.69	1.01	Agree
3	Garment designers Ignorance on the importance of labelling garments.	2.86	1.08	3.03	0.89	2.96	0.99	2.95	0.99	Agree
4	Designers Ignorance of the Information needed on garment labels.	2.90	0.95	3.12	0.99	2.80	1.10	2.94	1.01	Agree
5	Ignorant on how to interpret the symbols on the label.	2.86	1.00	3.39	0.74	2.97	0.94	3.07	0.89	Agree

Key: \bar{X}_1 = Mean Responses of local garment consumers; \bar{X}_2 = Mean Responses of local garment producers/designers; \bar{X}_3 = Mean Responses of local garment marketers, \bar{X}_G = Grand mean response of all the subjects, SD = Standard Deviation.

Research Question 4

What are the strategies for encouraging labelling of locally designed garment?

Table 4 shows that all the strategies enumerated below encourage labelling of locally designed garments. This was revealed by their grand mean scores which were all up to 2.50 the acceptable mean score and some were even above the acceptable mean score.

Table 4: The Mean Responses of the Subjects on Strategies for Encouraging labelling on locally designed garment.

S/N	The following encourage labelling of garments in Abia State.	\bar{X}_1	SD	\bar{X}_2	SD	\bar{X}_3	SD	\bar{X}_G	SD	Remarks
1	Training of designers on the importance of labelling on every product including locally designed garment.	2.84	1.00	3.24	0.93	3.09	0.90	3.05	0.94	Agree
2	Giving consumers education on the importance of labelling locally designed garment.	2.64	1.14	3.01	0.84	2.89	1.04	2.84	1.00	Agree
3	Encouraging families and household members to always insist on purchasing locally designed garment with labels	2.90	0.95	3.05	1.04	2.94	0.87	2.96	0.95	Agree
4	Placing Adverts on mass media which encourage labelling of locally designed garment	2.93	1.08	3.39	0.81	2.74	1.11	3.02	1.00	Agree
5	Attending both local and International conferences where local garments can be exhibited will encourage the labelling of locally .designed garments.	2.88	0.88	3.35	0.73	3.03	0.93	3.08	0.84	Agree
6	Creating website for locally designed garments will encourage labelling of locally designed garment.	3.12	0.96	3.19	0.74	2.99	1.04	3.10	0.91	Agree
7	Advertising labelling of Local designed garment in medias e.g., magazines, newspapers, Facebook and other social medias will encourage labelling of locally designed garments.	3.26	0.88	3.17	0.76	3.09	0.92	3.17	0.85	Agree

Key: \bar{X}_1 = Mean Responses of local garment consumers; \bar{X}_2 = Mean Responses of local garment producers/designers; \bar{X}_3 = Mean Responses of local garment marketers, \bar{X}_G = Grand mean response of all the subjects, SD = Standard Deviation.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study on table 1 showed that locally designed garments in Abia State do not carry labels. The highest mean score on that table is 3.01, that is item no. 1 which bothers on the fact that there are no laws that locally designed garment in Abia State should be labelled. This is a clear indication that locally designed garments in Abia State do not carry labels. Owolabo (2013) stated that most Nigerians do not like showing their identity. They felt that attaching label in home produced garments will attract low patronage. However, most Nigerians living abroad buy large quantity of locally designed garments whenever they visit home because such garments when seen overseas are quite expensive.

In table 2, findings of the study shows that labels have great influence on the sale of garments. This is in agreement with Merchandiser, (2015) who pointed out that without any label on a garment that the probability of buying such garment by an informed garment consumer is very low. Howard and Allen (2006), stated that the primary function of labels is to provide useful information about products that are being introduced new in the market. The labels attached in such product enables the consumer to make decisions based on the visual properties of the product and not from the previous buying experiences.

The finding in table 3 identified five factors hindering labelling of locally designed garments in Abia State. This is in line with Okechukwu and Onyema (1999) who reported that Nigerians have negative attitudes towards home made goods because of the perception that locally made goods are inferior in quality to imported products. This is one of the major reasons why garment made in Nigeria is not labelled because when it is labelled, the consumer will find it unattractive to buy because they already possess a negative attitude which is that any garment designed in Abia especially in Aba, hence the derogatory word "Aba made" for such locally produced garments. These results to a waste of scarce resources.

Identified also by the study are seven strategies for encouraging labelling of locally designed garment in Abia State. These include training of designers on the importance of labelling on every product including locally designed garment, giving consumer education to the populace on the importance of labelling locally designed garment, encouraging families and household members to always insist on purchasing locally designed garment with labels. Advertising labelling of Local designed garment in mass/social medias for example magazines, newspapers, Facebook, WhatsApp's and other social medias will encourage labelling of locally designed garments. This is in line with Emelue, (2015) who reported that technology-related strategies will improve production of labels for garments.

Conclusion

The study has determined the state of labelling locally designed garments in Abia State and found out that most local garments do not carry labels. It was also discovered that labelled garments attract higher patronage from consumers especially the informed garment consumers, and conclude that labelled garment has influences on the sales of local garments. Certain factors hinder labelling of locally designed garments and the strategies for encouraging labelling of locally designed garments were also identified. Conclusively, the application of the findings of the study will certainly encourage labelling of local garments in Abia State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The identified technology, skill and operational knowledge for the production of locally designed garments should be integrated in the curriculum of Home Economics (Clothing and Textile) at all levels in Nigeria education system.
2. The Federal and state governments should help package the identified strategies in production of locally designed garments into programmes for training youth and retraining fashion designers in Nigerian clothing enterprise for improved quality of locally designed garments in Nigerian market.

3. Government of South-Eastern states of Nigeria which is the location of the state in questions should direct their skill acquisition centres to absorb and integrate the identified strategies into their programmes for meeting skill needs of unemployed youth in south eastern Nigeria who are into garment making enterprises.
4. The federal government should improve in electricity supply for empowering the machineries needed for making/producing locally designed and labelled garments faster.
5. The government should boost the textile and clothing industry by scaling up the fight against smuggling and encourage our local textile and clothing industries.
6. Government should encourage investors to bring clothing industries that are based on production of locally designed garments in Nigeria to remove or reduce smuggling foreign clothing items into the country.
7. Nigerians should develop attitudinal change toward encouraging locally designed garments and learn to be patriotic for the love of their own country's products. All these efforts if put into action should encourage and sustain production of quality local garments with labels.

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