

ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING CLOTHING MAINTENANCE SKILLS OF BOARDING STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGER STATE

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Abstract

This study examines the strategies for improving clothing maintenance skills of boarding students in Niger State. A structured questionnaire using five points Likert scale was designed and used for the study. The questionnaire was face validated by three home economics experts. A reliability co-efficient value of 0.74 was obtained which made the items suitable and valid. The data collected from the administration of questionnaire were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics. Results from the study indicated that (i) the daily and weekly clothing maintenance practice among boarding students needed appraisal and improvement. (ii) Male and female teachers do not differ significantly on daily, weekly and seasonal clothing maintenance skills required by boarding students in Niger State. Recommendations were made based on the findings among which is that teachers should provide avenues for students to be highly engaged in clothing practical activities that involve washing, ironing, patchwork, polishing and dyeing.

Introduction

Secondary school is a learning environment for youths who have completed elementary education (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004). These youths are called students. The secondary education is made up of six years duration of learning i.e. the first three years (junior or basic) while the last three years are senior secondary. Abdullahi (2006) stated that students at this level of education comprises male and female from different socio-economic background and experience. In secondary school, students are either in the boarding house or are day students. The age range of these students is between 12-19 years and this age brackets is often referred to as adolescent (early and late). The growth rate of students at this level is rapid, as the body prepares for adulthood and the implication for clothing is quite enormous. Clothing is anything worn or placed on the body in order to cover, protect or adorn it from external interference (Anyakoha & Eluwa, 1999). It acts as buffer between man and the society where he/she lives. The primary function of clothing is therefore to protect against the rigors of climate, bacterial invasion and other environmental hazards.

Boarding house is specifically designed to provide certain privileges for students staying in schools outside their homes. These privileges according to Onyeneje (2003) include accommodation, feeding, healthcare, sport and other recreational activities. Every secondary school student is expected to put on uniform clothing for identification. A uniform is distinctive clothing identifying a wearer as a member of an organization, group or profession. Appropriate clothing enhances one's appearance and provides aesthetic satisfaction. Fashola (2007) identified the following reasons why clothing is essential.

- to differentiate man from other living is creatures
- provide uniqueness and protection to body organs
- reduce weather effect on man and
- for identification purposes.

The need to maintain clothing especially by boarding students cannot be over-emphasized. Clothing maintenance has to do with care and management of clothes we wear at home, work places and in schools. Clothing maintenance could be regular, preventive and emergency as they enhance durability of fabrics, promote good health and save money. Technology has greatly improved the quality and quantity of clothing which demand for improved maintenance. The varieties of clothing students' use are not adequately maintained probably due to ignorance or carelessness.

In the boarding house where parents and older siblings are not around, students are faced with task of maintaining their clothes and other accessories. The problem is peculiar to all boarding houses in Nigeria and Niger State in particular. This study seeks to examine clothing maintenance skills among boarding students in Niger state secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Boarding students in Niger state schools use clothing and accessories which are specified by the school authority for different activities. Such activities include sports, hostel wear, outing and classes. These clothing and their accessories are expensive and meant to be appropriately maintained to enhance durability and connote neatness and respect. Most students in boarding houses lack essential knowledge and skills required to effectively maintain these clothing (Ayodeji, 2004). This ugly situation often reduces the life span of the clothing items and expose the wearer to some hazards. For these reasons, it becomes necessary to identify appropriate strategies for improving clothing maintenance skills of boarding students in secondary schools with the view of helping to inculcate good maintenance culture.

Research Objectives

This paper is conceived on the following objectives:

- (i) To identify suitable daily and weekly clothing maintenance skills needed by secondary school students in boarding houses in Niger state.
- (ii) To examine seasonal and storage skills needed by students in boarding houses in Niger state.

Hypotheses

Two null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance. They include:

H₀₁: Male and female teachers do not differ in their mean responses on daily and weekly clothing maintenance skills required by boarding students in Niger State.

H₀₂: Male and female students in Niger state boarding schools do not differ in their mean responses on seasonal and storage skills required for improved clothing maintenance skills.

Methodology

The sample for the study was drawn from all the boarding schools in the three educational zones of Niger state i.e Zone A- Bida area, Zone B – Minna area and Zone C – Kontagora area. The target population for this study was all the 59 boarding schools in Niger state. However, a total of one thousand two hundred respondents were randomly selected and used as sample for the study. Two boys and two girls boarding schools were selected from each zone. A total of 12 boarding secondary schools were used for the study.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire subdivided into sections. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and personally administered on the respondents

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who were mainly teachers, students and form-masters and mistresses. The questionnaire sought information on the daily, weekly, seasonal and storage maintenance skills required by students in boarding houses. In all, the instrument was made up of forty items. Each questionnaire item had a 5-point Likert scale with values assigned as SA-5, A-4, U-3, D-2 and SD -1.

The instrument was however subjected to face validation by three experts from the School of Vocational and Technical Education, College of Education Minna. The validators were required to identify item(s) that are relevant and to suggest other relevant ones omitted. The reliability of the instrument was established using product moment correlation coefficient and a value of 0.74 was obtained meaning that the items on the questionnaire are suitable and valid. The instrument was administered to the respondents in their various locations through four trained research assistants. The assistants were properly briefed on the objective of the study so that they might clarify issues/items on the questionnaire. This method was adopted to ensure high return rate. A total of one thousand one hundred copies of the questionnaire were filled and returned and the responses were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics. Any item with a mean score of 3.50 and above was regarded as accepted. Similarly any item scoring a mean below 3.50 was regarded as rejected. The t-test was used to test the null hypotheses stated at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed and presented in tables as below:

Table 1

Responses of teachers on daily and weekly, clothing maintenance required by boarding students

S/No	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Washing clothes	4.23	0.991	Agree
2.	Airing of garment	4.18	0.882	Agree
3.	Putting perfume on the body not on clothes	3.98	1.026	Agree
4.	Proper taking off of clothes and other accessories	4.15	0.924	Agree
5.	Allow deodorants to dry before wearing	4.25	0.926	Agree
6.	Set aside clothes that needed washing or dry cleaning	4.02	1.004	Agree
7.	Put on socks properly	3.90	0.887	Agree
8.	Take clothes over the head rather than feet	4.50	0.625	S/Agree
9.	Wash underwear daily	4.62	0.216	S/Agree
10.	Mending of clothes	4.58	0.604	S/Agree
11.	Soaking clothes	2.40	2.473	Disagree
12.	Starching	3.75	0.923	Agree
13.	Blueing/Dyeing	3.82	0.601	Agree
14.	Use saddle soap to clean shoes, hand bags and belts	3.60	1.213	Agree
15.	Polishing of shoes	4.15	0.526	Agree
16.	Use detergent to wipe out patent leather	4.00	0.869	Agree
17.	Keep all leathers away from dampness, heat and dust	3.95	0.728	Agree

18.	Pretreat stains	4.22	0.789	Agree
19.	Use fine sand paper to clean Swede materials	3.70	0.978	Agree
20.	Sorting out	3.80	0.996	Agree

Table 1 (Item 1-20) revealed the responses of the respondents on daily and weekly maintenance skills required by boarding students in Niger state. Of all the items, only item 11 i.e. soaking clothes falls below cut off mark of 2.5 (disagree) majority of the respondents disagree on soaking and boiling clothes to remove stains as part of daily and weekly clothing maintenance skills. Similarly, item 8 and 9 strongly agree on taking clothes over head rather than feet and wash underwear daily. Table 2 is in support of the above finding.

Table 2: T-test analysis of male and female teachers on daily and weekly clothing maintenance skills of boarding students

Variable	N	Mean (X)	t _{cal}	t _{cr}	Rem
Female teachers	200	3.98	0.421	1.146	*NS
Male teachers	200	4.01			

Table 2 shows the mean rating and collated t-test analysis of male and female teachers in boarding schools on daily and weekly clothing maintenance skills needed by students. While the male teachers had mean of 4.01, their female counterpart has 3.98. Beside, the ^{Calculated} value of 0.421 is less than ^{critical} values of 1.146. These values indicated no significant difference in the opinion of both sex on daily and weekly clothing maintenance skills. Hence the hypothesis is accepted. Male and female teachers do not differ in their mean responses on daily and weekly clothing maintenance skills of boarding students. This finding is in agreement with Tally (2007) on the need for effective clothing management. He suggested regular washing, ironing and mending of clothes.

Table 3: Responses of students on seasonal clothing maintenance and storage skills required by boarding students in Niger State

S/No	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Brushing hats and caps	4.53	0.625	S/Agree
2.	Repairing snaps	3.50	1.124	Agree
3.	Storing clothes completely dry	4.20	0.770	Agree
4.	Inspect clothes after washing	3.72	0.641	Agree
5.	Use moth repellent to treat woolen cloth	4.29	0.588	Agree
6.	Store clothes in boxes	4.14	0.621	Agree
7.	Use plastic or cardboard boxes	2.45	0.911	Disagree
8.	Use hand belt and cup hooks	3.56	0.924	Agree
9.	Put clothes on shelve	4.23	0.556	Agree
10.	Use a second rod if closet space is tight	3.78	1.245	Agree
11.	Store clothes in wardrobe	3.69	0.723	Agree
12.	Organize storage space to keep cloth neat	4.56	0.209	Agree
13.	Use a tray to hold items	3.88	0.678	Agree
14.	Use space under bed to keep box	4.25	0.643	Agree
15.	Arrange clothes in box	3.51	0.552	Agree

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16.	Add perfumes or cents to drive insect	4.25	0.214	Agree
17.	Use multiple shirts, skirts	3.65	0.942	Agree
18.	Use shoe bag pocket to hold shoe	3.92	1.125	Agree
19.	Prevent mildew	4.32	0.925	Agree
20.	Iron or press dry clothes	4.10	0.431	Agree

Test 4: T-test analysis of male and female students on seasonal clothing maintenance and storage skills required by boarding students in Niger State.

Variable	N	Mean (X)	t _{cal}	t _{cr}	Rem
Female teachers	350	4.12	0.125	0.721	*NS
Male teachers	350	4.19			

Tables 3 and 4 show the mean, standard deviation and t-test analysis of male and female students on seasonal maintenance skills and storage requirement of clothing materials. An examination of table 3 (items 1-20) revealed data in favour of specified skills except item 7 that disagreed.

Also, Table 4 showed the mean values of 4.12 and 4.19 for female and male students respectively. Since from the table the $t_{critical}$ (0.721) is higher than the $t_{calculated}$ (0.125). Hypothesis 2 is hereby accepted, hence there is no significant difference in the opinion pool of male and female students on seasonal clothing maintenance and storage skills of boarding students in Niger state secondary schools.

Discussion

The study revealed that daily and weekly clothing maintenance practices among secondary school students in boarding houses are very poor and urgent steps should be taken to avoid further damages. A critical examination of figures on Table 1 items 9 ($\bar{X} = 4.62$) and 10 ($\bar{X} = 4.58$) strongly agree that washing underwear daily and mending of clothes are important clothing maintenance skills needed by boarding students in order to ensure good personal hygiene. In trying to identify the likely factors which may influence clothing care practices, it was discovered that many of these students do not possess the basic experience in clothing care. Majority of the respondents agree on all the items 1-20 except item 11 i.e soaking clothes was disagreed upon by majority of the respondents hence a mean value of 2.40. it was suggested that students should change their attitude to clothing maintenance as supported by Friggs (1999) on procedures for managing clothing and other domestic items.

It is also necessary that clothing are seasonally maintained and appropriately stored as a way of complementing the daily and weekly clothing maintenance (Friggs 1999). Table 3 revealed the seasonal skills of boarding students in Niger state. Majority of the respondents agreed that seasonal and storage clothing maintenance skills include all the 20 items except item 7 with a mean value of 2.45 i.e. use plastic or cardboard boxes. Friggs (1999) noted that it is important that clothing is maintained seasonally. The finding revealed that storage is an important but sometimes overlooked part of clothing maintenance. All the respondents agreed that it is appropriate to store only clean clothes using hanger in an organized drawer or box.

The result of the two hypotheses shows that male and female teachers do not differ significantly in their mean responses on daily and weekly clothing maintenance required by boarding students. Male and female students also do not differ in their mean opinion on seasonal and storage

skills required by boarding house students. These are reflected on t-test value of Tables 2 and 4. Hypotheses 1 and 2 was therefore accepted as the t-test value was not significantly different.

Recommendation

In view of the findings of this paper it is therefore recommended that:

- i. Teachers should provide avenues for students to be highly engaged in practical activities that involve sewing, ironing, patching, polishing, washing and dyeing.
- ii. Parents and guardians should encourage their wards to imbibe appropriate dress code and good sitting posture.
- iii. Standard practical demonstration should constitute strategy for assessing learning outcome of boarding students on daily and weekly clothing maintenance.
- iv. Government and other stakeholders should provide appropriate resources and support to teach clothing maintenance and storage.

Conclusion

The study revealed that students in boarding houses require appropriate skills in the maintenance of clothing items as evidenced in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4. Developing effective clothing maintenance skills enhances orderliness, creativity and good health habit. It was observed that teachers, school principals, form masters and mistresses and prefects has a challenging task of ensuring and sustaining good clothing maintenance habit. Once these skills are developed in these students, they tend to be better and healthier leaders of tomorrow.

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