# Investigation Into The Clothing Choices Of Married People In Makurdi Metropolis

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***Abstract:*** *This study was conducted to investigate factors that influence the clothing choices of married people in Makurdi metropolis. Specifically the study determined (i) Types of clothing preferred by married people in Makurdi metropolis. (ii) Problems encountered by married people in making clothing selection/choice. (iii) Solutions to the problems encountered by married people in making clothing selection/choice in Makurdi metropolis. The study was conducted in Makurdi metropolis. The population for the study comprised of one thousand, one hundred and sixty six (1166) secondary school teachers (male and female) registered with Teaching Service Board. The sample size was made up of two hundred and ninety one (291) teachers proportionately selected. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Mean was used to analyse the data generated from the research questions and t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that individual/personal likes greatly affect clothing choice of married people with a mean of 3.33 whereas comments from in-laws does not affect clothing choice of married people with mean of 2.48. Based on the findings of this research it was recommended that married couple should respect each other's choice of clothing as failure to do so may bring problem in their marriage.*
***Keywords:*** *clothing, clothing choice, married people.*

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## I. Introduction

Clothing is anything one puts on the body in order to protect, beautify or adorn it (Nnubia, 2010). Clothing includes dresses, hair-do, make-ups, accessories such as handbags, shoes etc. Clothing according to Kaka & Agwa (2008) is very important in the personal appearance of an individual. Clothing communicates culture and personality of an individual. Ozougwu & Anyakoha (2005) opined that clothing communicates characteristics of individuals such as individual's personality, attitude, temperament and trustworthiness. Clothing worn by an individual gives various forms of impression about the individual's personality traits, lifestyles, values, interests, emotional stability, social, economic, mental and educational status (Ozougwu & Anyakoha, 2005). According to Esiowu & Igbo (2008), there are various styles of clothes and numerous accessories that go with the clothes. Clothes include skirts, blouses, gowns, shirts and all trousers. Hence, clothing is used for adornment, identification of traditional, social and occupational status.

Kaka & Agwa (2008) also stated that clothing play role of communication by expressing the individual unique personalities for modesty, attraction, social status, and identification of roles in the society. Kelvin (2003) opined that clothing talk about the wearer and gives other people clues about values and how individuals should be treated. Physically, clothing serves many purposes: it can serve as protection from weather and can enhance safety during hazardous activities such as hiking and cooking. It protects the wearer from rough surfaces, rash-causing plants, insect bites, splinters, thorns and prickles by providing a barrier between the skin and the environment. Clothes can insulate against cold or hot conditions. Furthermore, clothes can provide a hygienic barrier, keeping infectious and toxic materials away from the body. Clothing also provides protection from harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation (Kaka & Agwa, 2008).

Clothing choice is the process of choosing clothes for individuals and family members. It involves careful planning and selection (Nnubia, 2010). Clothing choice can also be described as the utilization of available resources in the family in order to meet the family's needs for clothing without jeopardizing other related needs in the home (Uzoka, 2001). Selection of clothing presents a greater challenge today than in the past. Since the kind and variety of clothes available today seem almost limitless as a result of new technology and its accompanying mass production of garments, which has resulted not only in a vast number of garments but also a wide range of prices and quality from which selection has to be made by the individual. The invention of man-made fibres has also been one of the most important stimulants in the recent revolution in clothing, as

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these fibres have increased greatly the variety and types of clothing available to families. New finishes give these fabrics new properties which make them easy to care for and more appealing to the wearer. The rising incomes of families and individuals over the years have made many families to exercise their choices in clothing. All these factors have increased the range and emphasized the importance of decisions to be made by families in providing clothing for their members (Mohammed, 2010). Kanellakis (2007) stated that making sure one's clothing fits properly should be the first step in dressing. Manwa, Ndamba & Lokadhia (2010) opined that one's choice of clothing should ensure appropriate size, shape, style and colour.

According to Mohammed (2010) clothing choice presents a never-ending array of decisions as individuals must select garments that are correct in weight for the climate, suitable for the occasion, meet their emotional needs, have necessary degree of comfort or freedom and suitable condition to wear. Naturally, people want to select clothes that will be as attractive as possible, hence well chosen clothes can bring out the best personality traits and physical features and make the person feel the very best. Marriage, also called matrimony or wedlock, is a socially recognized union or legal contract between spouses that establishes rights and obligations between them, the children, and the in-laws (Haviland, Prins, McBride & Walrath, 2011). According to Vongdip (2000), marriage is an alliance between two kin groups in which the couple is merely the conspicuous link. Marriage provides a forum by which the families of the couples finally become socially related. The term marriage according to Odebunmi (2007) refers to the union between opposite sexes and does not include same sex marriage as being practiced in some developed countries. The definition of marriage varies according to different cultures, but it is principally an institution in which interpersonal relationships, usually sexual, are acknowledged. In some cultures, marriage is recommended or considered to be compulsory before pursuing any sexual activity.

Married people especially female face several problems in their clothing selection practices. Decision for instance, involving one or more judgments on what to add or discard from their wardrobe is a yearly occurrence. Agbo & Unom (2011) stated that clothing decision has to be made on the basis of appropriateness for the culture, climate and suitability to the occasion, comfort emotional and psychological needs. These problems are compounded by the very increasing styles and designs of clothing available in several colours, texture and fabrics in the market. An individual is well dressed when the person knows what truly gives the individual fittings and goes for it also one is well dressed when one does not follow fashion blindly but always make a point of duty to create personal style out of what is fashionable. Making informed clothing choice is an essential part of functioning independently as an adult in the society (Abiamuwe, Seriki-Mosadolorun & Lemon, 2015). Married people's clothing choice should serve as role models to their unmarried counterparts in the society. Their mode of dressing should communicate such favourable intents as self respect/high self esteem, sense of responsibility and sound moral values.

**Statement of the problem**

Recently it has been observed that both married and unmarried people dress in similar ways, some culminate in indecency. Wang (2012) had noted that dressing is said to be indecent when it deviates from acceptable code in a particular culture. It involves dressing in a manner that could be immoral, disgusting, provocative or sending lewd suggestion and negative signals. This abnormal dressing cuts across sexes for example indecent dressing among the women is manifested in putting on transparent dresses, miniskirts, tight trousers and other dresses that reveal parts of the body. It could be the bust, belly, upper arms or buttocks. For the men, it manifests in the form of sagging trousers, wearing shirts that reveal the armpit, rough jeans, T-shirt with different kinds of messages. Best (2002), noted that this negative trend in dressing is a possible indication of low level of cultural and religious values and practices. In almost all societies, there are usually acceptable modes or ways of dressing that is both culturally and socially acceptable. Such guarded cultures are fast fading away due to copying of other cultures and carelessness in selecting clothing by individuals. Many families could be wrecked as a result of the married women being carelessly and indecently dressed. It exposes such married ladies to sexual harassment and molestation by other men. Dissatisfaction by husband and his family members about the appearance of some women may result in family quarrels and family instability.

Indiscriminate use of clothing by married people may introduce their children to wear same and poor clothing habit or indecent dressing can exist among family members. In a society that places high regards on good morals, any misconduct in general behaviour and particularly dress habit of an individual member of the family, may mislead other members of the family (Agbo and Unom, 2011). Lack of regard for what is worn by married people could also pose health hazards such as cold, catarrh and pneumonia thereby exposing the family to financial drain, emotional and social challenges.

Two different people united by marriage may have different priorities on clothing choice before marriage and if not properly reconciled may cause challenges for their marriage. Some couples in an attempt to meet up with fashion trend spend much on clothing to the detriment of other basic needs such as food, shelter, education etc in the family. If this is not curtailed, it can bring about family instability.

**Research objectives**
1. Find out the factors that influence choice of clothing by married people in Makurdi metropolis?
2. Identified the types of clothing preferred by married people in Makurdi metropolis?
3. Identified the problems encountered by married people in making clothing selection/choice?
4. Identified the solutions to the problems encountered by married people in making clothing selection/choice in Makurdi metropolis?

**Research Questions**
1. What factors influence choice of clothing by married people in Makurdi metropolis?
2. What are the types of clothing preferred by married people in Makurdi metropolis?
3. What are the problems encountered by married people in making clothing selection/choice?
4. What are the solutions to the problems encountered by married people in making clothing selection/choice in Makurdi metropolis?

**Statement of Hypotheses**
One hypothesis guided the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance.
**$Ho_1$:** There is no significant difference between the male and female responses on the factors that determine clothing choice by married people in Makurdi metropolis.

**Significance of the Study**
This study will be relevant to home makers, parents, Home Economists, clothing retailers, fashion designers and students. The findings of this study would contribute significant research literature for future researchers (Home Economists and students) who may want to carry out research work in similar topics in other states or countries.

**Scope of the Study**
This study was limited to only families of married secondary school teachers living in Makurdi metropolis, Benue State, whose marriages are less than twenty (20) years old. The reason for choosing these families was because they still have young children who they are still providing for. The study considered the apparels and foot wears of family members. Jewelries, clothing accessories, hairstyle, manicure, body painting and tattooing were not considered in this study.

# II. Methodology

**Research Design and Area of Study**
The design of the study was survey research design conducted in Makurdi, Benue State. The study area has a population of 1,359,238 people (National Population Commission, 2006). It covers a land area of 69,740 square kilometers. The ethnic groups in the study area are the Tiv, Idoma, and Igede. Other ethnic groups like the Jukun, Igala, Etulo, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba etc. can also be found in the area. The Tivs are the major ethnic group. Makurdi is both business and educational centre. Makurdi is home to two major universities namely University of Agriculture, Makurdi and Benue State University, colleges, secondary and primary schools (both public and privately owned schools). Makurdi metropolis is a civil service state as well as a business place due to the availability of farm produce.

**Population for the Study**
The population of the study is one thousand, one hundred and sixty six (1166) secondary school teachers in both government and mission owned schools in Makurdi metropolis that are registered with Teaching Service Board (2016).

**Sample and Sampling Procedure**
A total of 291 respondents formed the sample size for this study. The sample size was obtained using the table for determining the minimum sample size required in research activities by Krejele & Morgan (1970) in Emaikwu (2011). Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select two (2) secondary schools each from the five council wards in Makurdi metropolis giving a total of ten (10) secondary schools registered with Teaching Service Board (TSB). In each school, thirty teachers were selected using purposive sampling technique. A total of 160 married men and 131 married women were selected for this study.

**Instrument for Data Collection**
The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed from the literature review and the research questions posed by the study. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A was

about the respondent's personal data, Section B consisted of information on the amount that the respondents earn and how much is spent annually on clothing items and Section C was made up methods that families adopt in expending money on clothing items.

**Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

The researcher distributed the questionnaire personally to the subjects in their schools in the morning hours with the help of two research assistants. The filled copies of the questionnaire were retrieved within two days from their respective schools. The number of questionnaire distributed was two hundred and ninety one (291) copies but two hundred and fifty seven (257) representing 88.3% recovery were retrieved and used for the study. Frequencies, percentages and mean were used to analyze the data collected. Section A was analyzed using frequency and percentage. Section B and C was analyzed using mean.

## III. Results
### Table 1: Factors Influencing Choice of Clothing by Married People in Makurdi Metropolis

| S/N | Factors | $\bar{X}$ | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Individual/personal likes | 3.33 | Agreed |
| 2. | Available finance at disposal | 3.14 | Agreed |
| 3. | Educational level | 2.95 | Agreed |
| 4. | Profession | 3.07 | Agreed |
| 5. | Religion | 3.05 | Agreed |
| 6. | The activities or occasion for which clothes are used(e.g. wedding/ marriage anniversary) | 2.94 | Agreed |
| 7. | Social status | 2.88 | Agreed |
| 8. | Fashion in catalogues, magazines or newspapers | 2.78 | Agreed |
| 9. | Age of marriage | 2.89 | Agreed |
| 10. | Preference of spouse | 2.79 | Agreed |
| 11. | Age of children | 2.69 | Agreed |
| 12. | Skin colour/complexion | 2.69 | Agreed |
| 13. | Number of children | 2.79 | Agreed |
| 14. | Cultural expectation/limitations | 2.73 | Agreed |
| 15. | Friends clothes and styles | 2.66 | Agreed |
| 16. | Figure type/shape | 2.72 | Agreed |
| 17. | Fashion shows (modeling) | 2.55 | Agreed |
| 18. | TV stars/Newscasters | 2.52 | Agreed |
| 19. | Clothing items in vogue | 2.61 | Agreed |
| 20 | Comments from in-laws | 2.48 | Disagreed |

Table 1 showed that the respondents agreed with nineteen out of the twenty listed factors as factors influencing what is worn by married people in Makurdi metropolis. This is because all the items had mean scores ranging from 3.33 – 2.54 which is above the cutoff point of 2.50 with individual/personal likes having the highest mean score of 3.33.

### Table 2: Types of Garments Preferred by Married People in Makurdi Metropolis

| S/N | Types | $\bar{X}$ | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **For the females** | | |
| 1. | Traditional wears such as buboos, iro and buba, and head ties | 2.87 | Agreed |
| 2. | Gowns | 2.69 | Agreed |
| 3. | Well fitted tailored suit-skirts and blouses | 2.75 | Agreed |
| 4. | Long skirt | 2.73 | Agreed |
| 5. | Trousers | 2.65 | Agreed |
| 6. | Long sleeve shirts | 2.66 | Agreed |
| 7. | Short skirts | 2.65 | Agreed |
| 8. | Short sleeve shirt | 2.58 | Agreed |
| 9. | Shorts/Knickers | 2.42 | Agreed |
| 10. | Body hug/clinging clothes | 2.40 | Agreed |
| 11. | Leggings with spaghetti or sleeveless top | 2.32 | Disagreed |
| | **For the males** | | |
| 12. | Fitted Jean trousers/Plain trousers | 2.96 | Agreed |
| 13. | Traditional/native wears | 2.80 | Agreed |
| 14. | Well fitted tailored suit- trousers and shirt with tie | 2.80 | Agreed |
| 15. | Shorts/Knickers | 2.71 | Agreed |
| 16. | Short sleeve shirt/polo shirt | 2.71 | Agreed |
| 17. | Long sleeve shirt | 2.55 | Agreed |

Result on table 2 showed that respondents prefer the females to wear ten out of the eleven listed clothing items for the females whereas the males can wear all the listed clothing items.

**Table 3: Problems Encountered by Married People while making Clothing Choices in Makurdi Metropolis**

| S/N | Problems | $\bar{X}$ | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Difficulty in deciding on the type/style of clothes to buy | 2.89 | Agreed |
| 2. | Readymade clothing too expensive | 2.90 | Agreed |
| 3. | Crave for foreign made clothing items | 2.90 | Agreed |
| 4. | Difficulty in finding the right size and style in readymade garments | 2.81 | Agreed |
| 5. | Spouse not fashion conscious | 2.92 | Agreed |
| 6. | Difficulty in deciding on what to wear to each occasion such as social and religious gathering | 2.86 | Agreed |
| 7. | Not knowing how to identify and select good quality clothing | 2.75 | Agreed |
| 8. | Availability of too many designs | 2.66 | Agreed |
| 9. | Major changes in size due to physical development | 2.81 | Agreed |
| 10. | Lack of care labels on clothing items | 2.54 | Agreed |

Table 3 evealed that the respondents agreed to all the problems listed as the problems encountered by married people while making clothing choices in Makurdi metropolis.

**Table 4: Ways of Solving the Problems encountered by Married People while making Clothing Choices in Makurdi Metropolis**

| S/N | Solutions | $\bar{X}$ | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Clothes should be free enough to allow for free movement and circulation of blood. | 2.94 | Agreed |
| 2. | Patronizing locally/ Nigerian made clothes | 2.88 | Agreed |
| 3. | Choosing clothes that suit the occasion one intend to attend | 2.78 | Agreed |
| 4. | Choosing clothes that one is comfortable in | 2.89 | Agreed |
| 5. | Choosing clothes that suits the physical, mental and emotional characteristics of the wearer | 2.79 | Agreed |
| 6. | Reduction in the crave for foreign made clothing items | 2.69 | Agreed |

Table 4 showed that the respondents agreed to all the solutions listed.

**Table 5: Hypothesis 1: Results of t-test Showing Mean Responses of Male and Female on the Factors that Determine Clothing Choices of Married People in Makurdi Metropolis**

| Factors | Gender | $\bar{X}$ | P-value | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Individual/personal likes | Male | 3.33 | | |
| | Female | 3.33 | 0.99 | NS |
| Available finance at disposal | Male | 3.09 | | |
| | Female | 3.18 | 0.42 | NS |
| Age of children | Male | 2.68 | | |
| | Female | 2.69 | 0.91 | NS |
| Comments from in-laws | Male | 2.38 | | |
| | Female | 2.58 | 0.12 | NS |
| Cultural expectation/limitations | Male | 2.64 | | |
| | Female | 2.82 | 0.12 | NS |
| Social status | Male | 2.87 | | |
| | Female | 2.89 | 0.87 | NS |
| Profession | Male | 3.02 | | |
| | Female | 3.12 | 0.37 | NS |
| Educational level | Male | 3.03 | | |
| | Female | 2.86 | 0.14 | NS |
| Preference of spouse | Male | 2.71 | | |
| | Female | 2.86 | 0.23 | NS |
| Skin colour/complexion | Male | 2.68 | | |
| | Female | 2.70 | 0.85 | NS |
| Friends clothes and styles | Male | 2.60 | | |
| | Female | 2.72 | 0.32 | NS |
| The activities or occasion for which clothes are | Male | 2.88 | | |

| used(e.g. wedding/marriage) | Female | 3.00 | 0.35 | NS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fashion in catalogues, magazines or newspapers | Male | 2.87 | | |
| | Female | 2.68 | 0.12 | NS |
| Fashion shows (modeling) | Male | 2.56 | | |
| | Female | 2.54 | 0.87 | NS |
| TV stars/Newscasters | Male | 2.54 | | |
| | Female | 2.49 | 0.70 | NS |
| Age of marriage | Male | 2.73 | | |
| | Female | 3.05 | 0.01 | S |
| Number of children | Male | 2.64 | | |
| | Female | 2.93 | 0.01 | S |
| Religion | Male | 2.93 | | |
| | Female | 3.16 | 0.03 | S |
| Figure type/shape | Male | 2.57 | | |
| | Female | 2.87 | 0.01 | S |
| Clothing items in vogue | Male | 2.47 | | |
| | Female | 2.75 | 0.01 | S |

*NS= Not significant, S= Significant*
Table 5 showed that there was no significant difference in the mean response of males and females on fifteen out of twenty items on the factors that determine clothing choices of married people in Makurdi metropolis.

## IV.    Discussion

Based on the findings of the study, it was discovered that all the factors listed affect choice of clothing by married people in Makurdi except comments from in-laws. This is in agreement with the findings of Olaoye (2013) that a number of factors influence one's dress and they include: time of the day, season, social event, religious tradition, economic and political consideration, technology of the period, modernity, colour preferences, societal norms, psychological disposition, level of education, profession, trade, occupation, age, festivals, ritual ceremonies, institutional norms, fashion in vogue and physical environment. Similarly, Esiowu & Igbo (2008) stated that environment, circumstances (mood), occasion, culture, personality, value, what one plans to do and even weather conditions determine to a large extent what a one should wear. Although comments from in-laws was rejected by the respondents as one of the factors that affect clothing choice, efforts should be made by couples especially males in their choice of clothes so as not to infuriate the in-laws.

Result on table 2 showed that respondents prefer the females to wear ten out of the eleven listed clothing items for the females whereas the males can wear all the listed clothing items. This could be because the rejected garments were perceived to be indecent, immoral, provocative, disgusting and not ideal for married women. This is in agreement with the findings of Ozougwu and Anyakoha (2005) that indecent dressings could communicate messages such as indecency, sexual attraction, attention seeking, lack of discipline, lack of respect for the dignity of womanhood, lack of self respect and sense of responsibility. These clothing messages could expose women to problems.

The problems listed were all agreed by the respondents as problems affecting married people's choice of clothing. This finding was in line with the opinion of Agbo & Unom (2011) which stated that clothing decision has to be made on the basis of appropriateness for the culture, climate and suitability to the occasion, comfort emotional and psychological needs. Ejila (2014) maintained that, the need, desire and demand of the married females clothing are influenced by the problems encountered which are mainly circumstantial. These problems are compounded by the very increasing styles and designs available in several colours, texture and fabrics in the market. Ejila (2014) equally noted that cost of items, crave for foreign made clothing items, major changes in size due to physical development, deciding what to wear on each occasion constitute a problem in choice of clothing by individuals. Johnson & Foster (1990) were of the opinion that the habits and attitudes that cause people to select certain kind of clothes could be problematic, these habits and attitudes have been shaped by the physical and socio- psychological need.

All the solutions listed were equally agreed by the respondents as solutions to the problems affecting the clothing choice of married people in Makurdi metropolis. This is because according to Ejila (2014), clothes cover as much as 90 percent of the body, clothing acts as packaging and provides most of the materials with which people judge someone. For married people to present good visual image, they must conform to the clothing norms and code acceptable by the society. People are still judged on the appropriateness of the clothing they wear for work or activities they do as well as the type of people they meet (Johnson & Foster, 1990). Dressing appropriately can help people to be successful and confident. Ejila (2014) stated that to be well-dressed, an individual needs to know a lot about him/herself and how to let his/her clothes speak for him/her. He/she has to consider all those qualities that influence clothing choices such as personality, physical shape, lifestyles and even the world around as well as the clothing items that are available. Proper analysis of these will help in decisions about the best clothes to choose for any occasion or activity. In enhancing clothing practices of

the married people, the choice of clothing made should suit the occasion or activities which it is used (Anyakoha & Eluwa, 2001).

The items that have no significant difference showed that the male and female respondents are of the same opinion their responses whereas the items that are significant shows that the male and female respondents are of varying opinion in the responses. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Ejila (2014) that categorized factors that influence clothing choices into internal and external influences: internal factors are those that are inside of an individual. These are the sociological and psychological influences that influence individuals' clothing choice/decisions. They include individual's values, age, body shape/image, personalities, lifestyle, aesthetics and interest. These aspects of the individual are always changing as the individual grows and matures. As a result the style of dressing changes over the year. External factors are those influences that are outside the individual that affects the clothing decision and choices. These factors can be controlled by an individual and they include culture and cultural contacts, geographical location, economic position, group membership/ peer group influence, mass media, and fashion in vogue.

## V.    Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn, married people should respect individual/personal likes or regard for individual likes should be respected in marriage. When individual likes of the couples are at loggerheads, there may be problems in the marriage. Age of marriage, number of children, religion, figure type/shape, and clothing items in vogue greatly affect choice of clothing of married people. Some of the problems encountered by married people in adjusting to each other's clothing choice as found by the study include spouse not fashion conscious, readymade clothing too expensive, crave for foreign made clothing items, not knowing how to identify and select good quality clothing, major changes in the body due to physical development as well as difficulty in deciding what to wear on each occasion. Married people should also support each other in making the right clothing choice as this will enable each spouse know to dress in a way that will be acceptable by the spouse.

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