

Innovations

Clothing Problems of the Physically Challenged Persons in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State in this Millennium

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Abstract

This paper examines the clothing problems of physically challenged persons in Ughelli— North Local Government Area of Delta State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. This research work adopted the descriptive survey method of ex-post-facto design to describe the variables identified in the study. The population comprises of (30) thirty, physically challenged persons in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. Thirty physically challenged persons were used for the study, thus there was no sampling because of the manageable size of the population. A structure questionnaire was employed by the studies and oral interview method was used for respondents who were not educated. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by two lecturers in Home Economics Department, Delta State University, Abraka. Split half reliability technique was used, and a Spearman Brown Coefficient of 0.78 was obtained signifying that the instrument is reliable and adequate for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. and hypotheses were tested with t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed four major clothing problems faced by physically challenged persons in Ughelli-North Local Government Area of Delta State, and four solutions to the problems. The paper therefore recommended that clothing selection, use and care information, should be incorporated into rehabilitation and counselling programmes for the physically challenged persons in the society, fabric selection be given priority in order to improve fit and care, thereby increasing their independence, among others.

Keywords: 1.Clothing; 2.Problems; 3.Physically Challenged; 4.Ughelli-North.

Introduction

A physically challenged person as described by (Chang, 2009) is somebody who has ‘some degree of limitation in interacting with his environment. This could be a minor case, for instance somebody on clutches, who can, to some extent, help himself or a major case of somebody who has no legs and arms and will find it very difficult to help himself. In another sense (Americans Disability Acts) defines disability as a condition of being unable to perform a task or function because of a physical or mental impairment; something that is disable. Handicap, lack of necessary intelligence, strength among others. This group of people includes those with physical, mental or emotional disabilities; examples of such person includes people on wheel chair,walker, one arm, no arms no legs arthritis, broken limbs, a blind person, a mentally retarded person among others. This group of persons, based on their disabilities; finds it difficult to put on clothes worn by normal human beings. Since their body features are either abnormal or incomplete (Chang. 2009)

The physically challenged persons in Nigeria are of two categories. Firstly, are those who are almost being marginalized and segregated from, because of their unbalanced out look as a result of their body features which are either incomplete or malfunction; which affect their clothing choice and selection. This makes them appear inferior hence develop a low self-esteem and withdrawn from the normal society (Chukwuka et al., 201

8). Some of them who cannot afford to buy good clothes that suit their physical deformity, appear very dirty and may seem to appear like mentally retarded persons. Some of them because of their disability are unemployed, without any monthly income for livelihood, thus cannot afford to buy clothes for themselves, hence turn out to be beggars on the streets. This further make them appear like commoners and also stigmatized and find it difficult to mix-up with persons of their age-group (Wingate, Kaiser and Freeman, 2005).

The second category of physically challenged persons became disabled as a result of ill health such as Arthritis, Paralysis, and Accident among others. This category of persons may have the money to buy good clothing's for themselves but may not have choice to select that which will conform to their disability as a result of scarcity hence they may end up dressing poorly as a result of their deformity. The physically challenged persons just like any ordinary person are also interested in fashionable dresses (Brown, 1977). Unfortunately, there are no fashion homes that can design clothes for them in Nigeria. However, Chulow (2007) from his research work revealed that a physically challenged persons clothes should be close to acceptable societal styles. This view is supported by (Arubayi, 2010) who opined that "clothing needs of disabled people should satisfy deep psychological needs; by providing satisfying experiences". She further explained that clothing for the physically challenged persons should not set them apart from the society instead effort should be made to help them individually to conform to society in all ramifications. This study therefore seeks to identify the clothing problem of the physically challenged person and tries to find solution to their problem.

It is on this basis that this paper examines the clothing problem of physically challenged persons in Nigeria. This study tries to identify the clothing problem faced by physically challenged persons in Nigeria and proffer solutions to them with a view to ameliorate their plight in the society. The physically challenged persons in Nigeria are stigmatized, marginalized and segregated from. due to their deformity, which prevents them from dressing according to acceptable societal norms. Thereby making them faced with the challenges of putting on clothes that are ill fitted, lack of comfort, ease and choice, since their body structure does not conform to the clothes sewn for normal bodied persons. Therefore, the statement of problem is in two folds; firstly to identify problems faced by physically challenged persons and secondly to find solutions to the problems. So as to alleviate some of the challenges.

Clothing problems of physically challenged persons is an area of concern in Nigeria, Ughelli North L.G.A) which little or no attention has been given to. However. Wingate et al., (2005) and William 2005 in their different researches. came out with the finding that lack of fit. Comfort. ease and difficult in closures and choice are the major types of clothing problems. which the physically challenged face. This makes it obvious that. no matter how well the clothes are made by the designer, their deficiency makes the clothes not balance on them, thereby making them ill fitted. Comfort is another aspect to be noted, since there are no special clothes for the handicaps, they may be forced to put on clothes for normal persons, which may be uncomfortable for them and may find it difficult to walk, particularly those with disability on the legs. For some the clothes may be too thick on them and may cause them to sweat and smell. More to that lack of ease in dressing may be a severe problem. since the disable may have to struggle for a long period of time. just to put on a shirt. In addition to that. they also have the challenge of choice since there are no special clothes made for people with disability, they are being forced to put on clothes which may not conform to their disability, therefore making them dissatisfied with what they wear. Lastly difficulty with closure is another aspect of challenge, in that the disable may find it difficult to close up certain areas of the clothes, depending on the degree or area of disability. For instance, putting on buttons or closing-up back zippers may pose a severe problem to the disabled, particularly those who do not have limbs or have pain on the waist or chest.

A survey research which gives solution to the clothing problem of the physically challenged persons, was carried out by (Chulow, 2004). From his survey, he claims that many self-help features have been put in place to aid in the dressing process. For men. they wear braces that include zippers, trouser leg linings, half belt, ties with elastic and shoe locks to facilitate fastening of shoes, suit coats made to seat length to improve the appearance of men in wheelchairs, Velcro placed on closures where buttons are normally used. All these have enabled men and women to dress themselves more easily.

In the case of women, self-help feature including Velcro for hard-to-manipulate closes, large buttons, magnetic fasteners, grippers, front zippered closures on dresses, slips blouses, wrap-around skirts in A-line or slightly full styles, stretch bras that hook in front, fuller slacks or kimono style sleeves. Special styles and fabrics have also been developed and designed to help the dependent individual to be more independent. The use of

wool, cotton and other cellulosic fibers has helped to combat the problems of excessive perspiration which has been a characteristics problem for many quadriplegic individuals.

In addition to Chulow solutions to clothing problems for the physically challenged persons (Buck, 2017) also comes up with some solutions. For instance, those physically challenged with limited hand or leg movements, for example those with arthritis and fractures on the limbs and find it difficult to put on fashionable garments the back opening, difficulty to button garment, aligning button holes and putting on tight trousers, it requires the individual to put on clothes, with larger arm or openings/raglan sleeves, front opening, wrap around styles, Velcro closures, zippers with pull rings, zippers for leg opening, longer length zippers, and elastic waistline.

Those with braces on legs and finds it difficult to move the leg. Such a person should put on clothes made from a durable fabric and should put a re-enforcement in the area of the brace so as to prevent the brace from destroying the fabric and those with visual problem who cannot tell the front from the back, should put on clothes with V-neck, which is the best. Applique design, small pieces of rick—rack added to assist in identifying neckline and front from back. Also the fabrics that are to be used in garment making should be easy to care fabric that are not too bulky, fabric that will not wrinkle easily. moderate weight knit should allow comfort and ease to movement.

Persons who are physically challenged are also an important component of the society; unfortunately, they are always being marginalized in terms of clothing construction, in that the clothes designers make special clothing for people whose figure vary from the norms, the tall, the chubby and the large or obese but nothing is done for the physically challenged; talk less of making a choice. This view is supported by (Chang, 2009), who says that specialized clothing for people with disability is scarce in the market, therefore, even if they wish to make a choice to buy, they will not see what to buy. Meinarder (2002), Kidd (2006) and Arubayi (2009), suggests that choice of clothes for the physically challenged depends on different needs and restrictions. This can be classified as aesthetic, functional safety, availability requirement, ease and convenience. Therefore, fashion designers should make clothes for the physically challenged persons, to meet their needs, so that they can have a wide variety of choice based on their restrictions.

He further opined that the physically challenged should choose clothes that will make them appear as normal persons. For instance, a physically challenged person without hands should choose a suit with long sleeve to cover and camouflage the hands to make him look like a normal person (Arubayi, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the clothing problems of the physically challenged persons in Ughelli-North Local Government Area of Delta State. Specific objectives include to:

1. find out the clothing problems faced by physically challenged persons in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State.
2. determine the solution to the clothing problems faced-by physically challenged person in Ughelli-North Local Government Area of Delta State.

Research Question

1. What are the clothing problems faced by physically challenged persons in Ughelli—North Local Government Area of Delta State?
2. What are the solutions to the clothing problems faced by physically challenged person in Ughelli-North Local Government Area of Delta State?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the clothing problems faced by physically challenged persons in Ughelli-North Local Government Area of Delta State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female respondents on the solution to the clothing problems face by physically challenged person in Ughelli-North Local Government Area of Delta State.

Research Method and Procedure

This research work adopted the descriptive survey method of ex post—facto design to describe the variables identified in the study. The population comprises of (30) thirty, physically challenged persons in Ughelli- North Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria.. The physically challenged persons include people with Arthritis, leg and hand amputees partial paralysis and the blind. Thirty physical challenged persons were used for the study, thus there was no sampling because of the manageable size of the population.

A structure questionnaire was employed by the studies and oral interview method was used for respondents who were not educated. 30 questionnaires were administered to respondents and only 25 was returned having a return rate of 83%. The option opened for the respondents are in line with the four point scale of SA(4, A(3), SD(2), D(1). The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by two lecturers in Home Economics Department, Delta State University, Abraka. Split half reliability technique was used and a Spearman Brown Coefficient of 0.78 was obtained, signifying that the instrument is reliable and adequate for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. Items with mean value of 2.50 and above were accepted and those below were rejected. Hypotheses were tested with t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Table 1: Mean (x) Responses on Clothing Problems Faced by Physicalhc Challenged Persons in Ughelli-Local Government Area of Delta S/cite (N=25)

| S/N | Items | (x) | SD | Remark |
|-----|--|------|------|--------|
| 1. | Normal clothes worn by a physical challenged person lack fitness | 3.48 | .510 | Agreed |
| 2 | Normal clothes worn by a physically challenged person is uncomfortable | 3.36 | .490 | Agreed |
| 3 | Normal cloths worn by a physically challenged person lacks ease | 3.40 | .500 | Agreed |
| 4 | Physically challenged person will like to wear fashionable clothes | 3.44 | .507 | Agreed |

Source: Field survey (2019)

Table I presents the mean responses of respondents on clothing problems of the physically challenged persons in Ughelli-North Local Government Area of Delta State. The results show that all the items had mean scores greater than 2.50, which is the acceptable benchmark for a 4-point scale. This indicates that respondents agreed that the items are problems which the physically challenged persons faced in Ughelli-North Local Government of Delta State.

Table 2: Mean (x) Responses on the solution to the clothing problems faced by Physically Challenged Persons in Ughelli-NorthLocal Government Area of Delta State(N=25)

| S/N | Items | (x) | SD | Remark |
|-----|---|------|------|--------|
| 1. | Physically challenged person should have a choice in clothes selecction | 3.44 | .507 | Agreed |
| 2 | Special clothes designed for the physically challenged persons should be available in the market for sale. | 3.96 | .200 | Agreed |
| 3 | Clothes worn by physically challenged person should camouflage their defect so as to look like normal able person | 3.24 | .436 | Agreed |
| 4 | The physical features/restrictions/needs of a physically challenged persons should be considered in making clothes for them | 3.44 | .507 | Agreed |

Source: Field survey (2019)

Table 2 presents the mean responses of respondents on the solution to the clothing problems faced by the physically challenged persons in Ughelli-North Local Government Area of Delta State. The results show that all the item has mean scores greater than 2.50, implying that the respondents agreed that the items are the solution to the clothing problems faced by the physically challenged persons.

Table 3: Summary of t-test on the Mean Rating of Male and Female Respondents on the Clothing Problems Faced by Physically Challenged Persons in Ughelli-North

| Sex | N | Mean (x) | SD | Df | t-cal | t-tab | P | Decision |
|--------|----|----------|------|----|-------|-------|------|-------------|
| Male | 11 | 3.55 | .522 | 23 | .561 | .580 | 0.05 | Ho Accepted |
| Female | 14 | 3.43 | .514 | | | | | |

Key: N = Number of respondents; SD = Standard Deviation; df = degree of freedom. t-cal = calculated; t-tab = table value of t; P = level of significance

Source: Field Work (2019)

The result from the t-test analysis in Table 3 showed that the calculated value of (.561) is less than the table value (.580) at degree of freedom 23, and at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the clothing problems faced by physically challenged persons in Ughelli-North Local Government Area of Delta State.

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis on the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Respondents on the Solution to the Clothing' Problems Faced by Physically Challenge Li Person in Ughelli-North

| Sex | N | Mean (x) | SD | Df | t-cal | t-tab | P | Decision |
|--------|----|----------|------|----|-------|-------|------|-------------|
| Male | 11 | 3.27 | .467 | 23 | .327 | .747 | 0.05 | Ho Accepted |
| Female | 14 | 3.21 | .426 | | | | | |

Key: N = Number of respondents; SD Standard Deviation; df degree of freedom. t-cal = calculated: t-tab = table value of t; P level of significance

Source: Field Work (2019)

The result from the t-test analysis in Table 4 showed that the calculated value, of t (.327) is less than the table value .747) at degree of freedom 23, and at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the solution to the clothing problems faced by physically challenged person in Ughelli-North Local Government Area of Delta State.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 presents the mean responses of respondents on clothing problems faced by physically challenged persons in Ughelli—North Local Government Area of Delta State. The results of the four items responded to by respondents indicates that lack of fitness, comfort, ease, difficulty in closures and likeness of fashionable clothes are the major problems faced by physically challenged persons in Ughelli—North Local Government Area of Delta State. This view is supported by Wingate, et al. (2005) and William (2005), who in their different researches came out with the findings that lack of fit, comfort, ease and difficulty in closures are the major types of clothing problems faced by physically challenged persons.

Table 2 presents the mean responses of respondents on the solution to the clothing problems faced by the physically challenged persons in Ughelli-North Local Government Area of Delta State. The result from item 1, 3, and 4 shows that physically challenged persons in Ughelli-North have a choice in their clothes selection, their clothes should camouflage their defect so as to look like normal able persons, and their physical features/restrictions/needs of a physically challenged person should be considered in making clothes for them.

This view is supported by Meinanden (2002) and Kidd (2006) who suggested that the choice of clothes for the physically challenged depends on their features, different needs and restrictions. This can be classified as aesthetic, functional, safety, availability requirements; so their clothes choice should be based on their features and restrictions. They further opined that the physically challenged persons without hands should choose clothes that will make them appear as normal person with long sleeves to cover and camouflage the hands to make him look like a normal person.

Item 2 reveals that special clothes designed for the physically challenged persons should be available in the market for sale. But Chang (2009) complained that specialized clothing for people with disability is scarce in the market: therefore, even if they wish to make a choice to buy, they will not see what to buy.

Conclusion

So far not much research has been carried out as far as the clothing problems of physically challenged persons are concerned, in Nigeria. However, the physically challenged persons are not being encouraged, as far as clothing and dressing needs are concerned, as seen in the studies. Most of the times they put on inferior, ill fitted clothes and look dirty and almost like mad persons. How, this study tries to identify their clothing problems and also educate them on the need to put on good and appropriate clothing depending on their disability thereby trying to solve their problems.

This paper concludes by strongly recommending Government and Religious bodies to provide proper clothing aids to disabled persons, who cannot afford to buy good clothing for themselves and also encourage cloth designers to produce special clothes necessary for the various disabilities, so that those who can afford to buy can make their choice.

Recommendations

The self-limiting nature of the physically challenged persons emphasizes the need to further explore their clothing needs, especially the clothing pattern and attitude of the physically handicapped. The following recommendations are made at improving clothing selection for the physically challenged persons in the society in order to create a purposeful life for them.

1. Clothing selection, use and care information, should be incorporated into rehabilitation and counselling programmes for the physically challenged persons in the society.
2. Fabric selection be given priority in order to improve fit and care, thereby increasing their independence.
3. Clothing research be carried out to identify handicaps with special clothing needs.
4. Accessibility to retail clothing for disabled persons be widened to make purchasing by the disabled individual a less frustrating task.
5. Making of clothes for the physically challenged persons, should be included in the Home Economics School Curriculum.

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