

Factors influencing consumer's selection of imported over local clothing among working women in Nairobi, Kenya

Nyang'or, Eunice Akoth

This was a survey research into the factors influencing consumers' selection of imported over local clothing. The major objectives of this study were to: (1) identify the socio-economic profile of working women, (2) identify imported clothing categories purchased by working women, (3) identify the socio-demographic, economic and clothing characteristics influencing selection of imported over local clothing by working women, (4) determine factors influencing selection of specific imported clothing items e.g. dresses, shoes and brassieres (5) assess the attitude of working women towards the use of imported versus local clothing. (6) Determine the relationship between selection of imported over local clothing and socio demographic, economic and clothing characteristics. The data for this study were collected using an interview schedule, which was administered by the research to a sample of 90 working women in Nairobi from July, 1992 to December 1992. The analyzed data are presented in frequency distribution, percentages, mean scores and the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. Results on socio-economic profile of the working women showed that the most represented age bracket was (21-30) years. Most of the women were also married. The most represented income group was between Kshs. 2,001-3,000/=, while 'O' level plus some college training was the educational level most represented. A majority of the working women were subordinate workers. It was also found that most of the working women prefer imported to local clothing and that outer garments were most popular followed by accessories and lastly inner garments. On socio-demographic and economic factors influencing selection of imported over local clothing, factors that most influenced the working women were price, beliefs and/or values, attitude, fashion or latest style, uniqueness of items, appearance in an item, social activities one is engaged in, income per month purpose of buying an item, and occupation. The clothing characteristics that mostly influenced working women's selection of imported over clothing included good construction, fitting qualities, design, fabric finished and fabric construction/texture. On dresses, factors that mostly influenced working women were size, performance, cost, fitting qualities, construction, design and figure type, while for shoes the factors included size, style, color, workmanship, fitting qualities and care instructions and for brassiers, only size had most influence on their selection. The study showed that consumers (working women) had a positive attitude towards imported clothing and a negative one towards local ones. Selection of imported over local clothing showed significant positive relationship with care instructions, meaning that the respondents preferred selecting imported to local clothing because they had care instructing written on their labels. It also correlated positively with our beliefs and or values. The study generated a number of recommendations: (1) clothing producers and other related bodies need to address themselves to

the socio-Demographic, Economic and Clothing characteristics selection of Imported Clothing over Local by consumers (working women), the implications of these factors to local clothing production and marketing, (2) factors that influence choice of imported dresses, shoes and brassieres need to be addressed and adopted by local producers and manufactures to improve on similar local items, (3) adoption of working women's suggestions on ways of improving local clothing items for example improving on the quality standards, training sales personnel and launching a vigilant consumer protection service, (4) The Ministry of Culture and Social Services, and Ministry of Industry and school authorities need to launch a vigilant campaign on the need for Kenyan consumers to appreciate and protect their culture by purchasing local clothing more than imported items.