

Physiological, psychological and socio-economic factors influencing clothing selection and buying practices among Kenyans: a study of Kenyatta University community

Otieno, Giannaenerica Kwena

This was a survey research with a two-fold purpose. One purpose was to investigate how physiological, psychological and socio-economic factors influence clothing selection and buying practices among Kenyans. The other purpose was to identify factors that underlie satisfaction and dissatisfaction with clothing selection and buying by individuals in Kenya's clothing market. The major objectives of this study were to (1) identify the clothing information sources used by Kenyans, (2) identify the physiological, psychological and socio-economic factors influencing clothing selection and buying practices among Kenyans, (3) determine if there are significant differences between male and female consumers with respect to physiological, psychological and socio-economic factors as they affect their clothing selection and buying practices, and (4) identify factors that underlie respondents' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with clothing selection and buying. The data used in the study were collected using a questionnaire, which was administered by the researcher to a sample of 150 members of staff at the Kenyatta University starting October, 1989 to January 1990. The data were analysed by the use of frequencies, percentages, mean scores, T-tests and Pearson Product-Moment correlation. Results showed that most sources of clothing information especially the impersonal communication channels such as Television advertisements, newspaper articles and fashion magazines were underutilized or unpopular with consumers for being costly, not readily available or unreliable. Among the used sources, clothing displays and personal communication channels were the most utilized by consumers. The study showed that the physiological factors that most influenced consumers' clothing selection and buying practices were good construction and finishing qualities in clothing, colour and design of fabrics, fitting characteristics of clothing and purpose for which clothing items were bought. The psychological factors that most influenced consumers' clothing selection and buying included item in which one looked beautiful, one's own beliefs and values, cost of the item and acceptable styles by society. The socio-economic factors that had most influence on consumers' clothing selection and buying practices were amount of money available, number of dependants in one's household, one's age and status one held in society. Very few physiological, psychological and socio-economic factors showed significant difference between male and female respondents in their clothing selection buying practices. Fabric construction as a physiological factor showed significant difference between males and females, with a higher influence on the female than the male consumers. There were significant differences between males and females in three psychological factors among which prestige of item's brand name influenced the males more, while, latest style or fashion and own beliefs and

values influenced female consumers more. The socio-economic factors that showed significant difference between males and females were religious norms and/or beliefs and status held in society. These had more influence on the female consumers than on the male. Satisfaction with clothing selection and buying showed significant positive relationship with the male, married consumers, older age, low educational level, low household income, high number of dependants, own beliefs and values, and religious norms or beliefs. There was however a negative relationship with purpose for which item was bought, label information, care for garment, fabric construction, prestige of item's brand name, was bought, label information, care for garment, fabric construction, prestige of item's brand name, social activities engaged in and uniqueness of outfit. It was evident that consumers were dissatisfied with various aspects within Kenya's clothing market. These were the clothing information available, quality standards of most clothing items, the consumers' protection service, consumer's knowledge about textile fabrics' quality, availability of imported second-hand clothing, assistance given by sales personnel and hawking of imported clothing.