

EXPLORING PLAIN GEORGE FABRICS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF FASHIONABLE APPAREL FOR UNDERGRADUATES IN IGNATIUS AJURU UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

The study explored plain George fabrics for construction of fashionable apparel for undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Specifically, five objectives and five research questions guided the study. Mixed approach design (survey and Research and Development) was used for the study. The population of the study was 30,765 undergraduates from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of three hundred and eighty-five respondents. The result shows that undergraduates have knowledge of plain George fabrics and that they can identify George fabrics in the midst of other fabrics with a grand mean of 3.56 ± 0.72 . Finding also revealed that undergraduates have positive perception of plain George fabrics with a grand mean of 3.25 ± 0.79 . The finding also revealed reasons for non-usage of plain George fabrics with a grand mean of 3.13 ± 0.82 . These reasons include plain George fabric is not popular with fashion wears; no already made apparels with plain George fabrics; plain George fabrics are not cut in yards during purchase. Insufficient adverts on plain George fabrics; plain George are mostly used as wrapper among others. Two skirts (a straight skirt and a skirt with pleats at the knee), a combat trouser and two tops prototypes were produced using plain George fabric. The finding also revealed the measures that will enhance the use of plain George fabric in apparel production amongst undergraduates with a grand mean of 3.56 ± 0.71 . These measures include: producing fashionable apparels with plain George fabrics, making contemporary readymade wear with George fabric, making trendy styles by combining plain George fabrics with other fabrics, advertising plain George fabrics and apparels among others. The study concludes that undergraduate student will purchase and wear apparels made

from plain George fabrics if it is designed in a contemporary and fashionable styles. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that fashion designers should come up with appealing designs of apparels using plain George fabrics to capture the apparel market

Keywords: Apparel, Design, Fashion, Undergraduates, Plain George fabric.

Introduction

Undergraduates are students who are actively engaged in education in tertiary institution of learning. These students typically are pursuing a higher education qualification such as a bachelor's degree, even though they have not yet completed their bachelor's degree. Most undergraduates are young girls and boys who fall within the range of early adolescence and late adolescence (Oladele and Ogundipe, 2016). These undergraduates are more involved in wearing fashion clothing as they want to look good like their peers. They love fashion and choose trendy apparels that express their particular distinct identity. This makes them select other fabrics over plain George when selecting fabrics for making their apparels. Most people limit plain George fabrics as fabrics for tying as wrapper during cultural days, dance troupe, burial and other social functions rather than for fashionable day to day wear (Adeoti and Kalilu, 2024). Moreover, the choice of fashion apparel by undergraduates is highly stimulated by fit and high fashion style. In order to enhance the potentials of plain George fabrics among undergraduates for day-to- day school wear, there exist the need for creativity and innovations in exploring the use of plain George fabrics for construction of fashionable apparels.

Apparel means personal attire or clothing of a particular kind. It is what an individual wear for the purpose of body coverage, beautification or comfort. It is an outer wear clothing made from fabrics. Fabrics has been the basic material used in the construction of apparel. One of the most popular fabrics in Nigeria is George fabric. History had it that European traders

brought it to Nigeria during the colonial era, and it quickly became an essential part of traditional Nigeria wrapper for both men and women because the creativity of the fabric makes it admirable (Marcel, 2022). Presently, in the market today, different designs of George fabric exist. This includes fancy George, Georges with embroidered squares, an embroidered George with floral motifs using sequins and mirrors, plaid or check George, a plain George with gold coloured thread woven into it, as well as plain George (Rahadkrishna, 2017).

Plain George fabric also known as madras fabric is one of the most popular fabrics in the Southern region of Nigeria. This George has cultural meaning and a classic look in fashion and it is mostly tied as wrapper and used for many local traditions amongst the Rivers State people. It is one of the popular traditional fabrics among the Rivers State people that are usually worn on occasion such as burial, cultural activities, traditional activities and identities (Agbagba, 2022). Though plain George fabric is usually only worn on special occasions, it can also be used to produce fashionable apparels for undergraduates.

Fashion in terms of apparel means wearing popular apparel that is suitable to the wearer and at the same time impresses others as to the good taste of the wearer (Sarina, 2022). Fashionable apparels are trendy clothes that people will want to wear any day. These clothes are worn daily by undergraduate students because they are stylistic. Plain George fabrics can be designed in a stylistic and fashionable way that will be comfortable for undergraduates' day to day wear. Moreover, plain George fabrics are light and airy, it lets air flow therefore comfortable to wear. Plain George fabric also has a smooth, even texture that drapes beautifully and brings out the body's natural shapes which makes it suitable for construction of stylistic and fashionable apparel. It is usually woven in a

plain or simple pattern with various bright color range. It is a strong and durable fabric which can easily be maintained when it is properly cared for. These qualities of plain George fabrics make it suitable for fashionable apparel construction.

Construction in clothing refers to how clothes are been produced. It is the creation process of combining ideas into a congruous object of thought like clothing. Clothing construction is the methods used in assembling apparel. Dedhia (2016) noted that Clothing construction refers to the stitching of garments and all the sewing techniques involved in the process. It also entails every choice and detail: pockets, seams, seam finishes, zippers, facings, linings, interfacings, closures and hems, as well as a good understanding of fabric are all intertwined. Construction of a garment is a beautiful art, which requires skill of sewing which is essential to convert the design on paper into garment. Garment construction has both technical and design issues, the designer can choose where to construct lines like pockets, collars, plackets, sleeves and how to finish edges and how to produce volume and structure in order to create a good look and experience for the wearer after construction of the clothes (Braide 2016).

Clothes are constructed based on attributes needed for it to serve its purposive use. According to Dedhia (2016) construction, design, materials and finish are physical aspects in garment. The physical aspect (features) and performance features of the product brings about the quality. Quality is defined as the extent to which a textile product satisfies the consumers expectations which include both physical and performance features. The quality concerns of manufacturers and designers focus mainly on how to meet the consumers need and expectations.

Exploring plain George fabrics in construction of apparel for undergraduates will bring an awareness of the possibility of

blending plain George fabrics with a contemporary design concept. Such an alliance creates a new and innovative appearance that offers numerous benefits. Through the use of plain George fabrics, contemporary fashion apparels can project the philosophy of a locality and yet maintain a harmonious balance between ethnic grace and western elegance. The need to promote the vast and diverse plain George metaphor through fashion has necessitated the need to incorporate plain George fabrics with fashionable styles in a contemporary design fashion to bring aesthetic and philosophical fashion apparel to today's undergraduate (consumer). Hence, the need for the study on exploring plain George fabrics for the construction of fashionable apparels for undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study explored plain George fabric for the construction of fashionable apparels for undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Specifically, the study:

1. ascertain knowledge of George fabrics possessed by undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
2. ascertain perception of undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on George fabrics.
3. ascertain reasons for non-usage of plain George fabrics for the construction of fashionable apparels for undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.
4. Produce fashionable apparels with plain George fabrics for undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.
5. Determined measures that will enhance usage of plain George fabrics for construction of fashionable apparels for undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Research Questions

1. What knowledge of George fabrics do undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education possessed?
2. What are undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education perception of George fabrics?
3. What are the reasons for non-usage of plain George fabrics for the construction of fashionable apparels for undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?
4. What are the fashionable apparels produced with plain George fabrics for undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?
5. What are the measures that will enhance usage of plain George fabrics for construction of fashionable apparels for undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?

Methodology

Research Design: The research design adopted was a mixed approach of survey design and Research and Development (R and D). The survey design was used because the study gathered the opinion of respondents in a given population using questionnaire (Nworgu, 2015) while Research and Development design was used for production of the fashionable apparels. R and D design is an industry-based development research design in which the findings of research are used to design new products and procedures or improve on existing products. R and D was used to follow specific steps to produce fashionable apparels using plain George fabrics. These steps were selection of designs, making of patterns and construction of fashionable apparels.

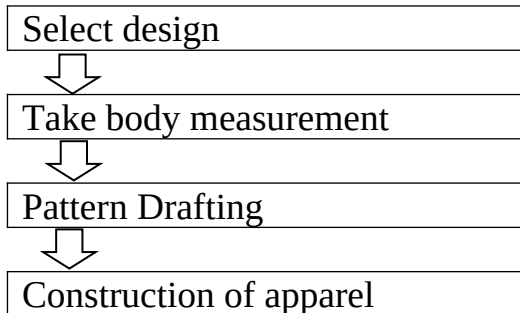
Area of the Study: The study was carried in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Ignatius Ajuru University was chosen because most of the students have flare for fashionable apparels and only utilize plain George fabrics during student week, cultural activities among others.

Population of the Study: The total Population for the study was 30,765 (ICT Unit, 2023/2024 session update) comprising of all the students from the seven Faculties in the University.

Sample and sampling Technique: The sample size employed was three hundred and eighty- five using Krejcie and Morgn table. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select Fifty-five students from each Faculty. This gives a total of 385 students.

Instrument for Data Collection: Structured questionnaire named “Plain George fabric Instrument for construction of Fashionable Apparels”. The instrument was developed by the researcher based on the research questions that guided the study and insight from reviewed literature. The questionnaire comprised of section A for personal data and section B, 20 variables on knowledge, perception of George fabrics as well as reason for non-usage of plain George fabrics and measures that will enhance usage of plain George fabrics for construction of fashionable apparels. A four-point scale of Strongly Agreed (SA) – 4; Agreed (A) – 3; Disagreed (D) – 2 and Strongly Disagreed (SD) -1.

Procedure for the Construction of apparel



Validity of the Instrument: The instrument for the study was subjected to face validation by three experts. Two from the Department of Home Economics Hospitality and Tourism and one from the Department of Fine and applied Art, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. They were given the purpose of the study and research questions. The experts reviewed the items in

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the instrument for clarity, relevance and appropriateness of language.

Reliability of the Instrument: The reliability of the instrument was determined using Test Retest. Data obtained was used to measure the test consistency of the instrument. The reliability was established using person Product Moment Correlation Coefficient which yielded 0.92.

Method of Data Collection: The researcher with the help of three research assistants administered the questionnaire and collected it. There was 100% return rate.

Method of Data Analysis: Mean and standard deviation were employed to answer the research questions and ascertain the closeness of the respondents means. The cut off mean for decision level was 2.50 based on the cluster mean relative to the real limit of numbers shown below:

Result: Data for the study were analysed and presented based on the research questions that guided the study. The data are presented in the table below:

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation rating of undergraduate’s knowledge of plain George fabrics

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD
1	I know plain George fabric	3.35	0.84
2	I can identify plain George fabrics in the midst of other fabrics	3.21	0.88
3	Plain George fabric is common and available in the market at all times	3.42	0.61
4	Plain George fabric is light and comfortable	3.39	0.56
5	Plain George fabric is a traditional fabric	3.34	0.81
6	Plain George fabric is tied as wrapper and head tie on the waist and head	3.30	0.87
7	People use it as family attire (aso ebi) during burial and other event	3.26	0.76
8	Plain George fabric is not in vogue	2.01	0.93
9	Plain George fabric is used for special occasion	3.02	1.02
10	Plain George fabric are designed in different colours	3.37	0.64
	Grand mean and standard deviation	3.17	0.72

Data presented in Table 1 show the mean responses and standard deviation rating of undergraduate knowledge of plain George fabrics. The results reveal that all the item statement have their means ranging from 3.02 – 3.42, indicating that the respondents agree to having knowledge of George fabrics. However, response on item 8 indicates that undergraduates do not have the knowledge whether George fabric is not in vogue. The grand mean of 3.17 establish the fact that undergraduate students of Ignatius Ajuru University have knowledge of plain George fabrics. In addition, the standard deviations range from 0.56 – 1.02 with a grand SD of 0.72 which is below 1.50, indicating that the respondents are close to each other in their opinions and that their responses are not far from the mean.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation rating of undergraduate's perception of plain George fabrics

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD
1	Plain George fabric is fashionable	3.39	0.61
2	If made into fashionable styles I can wear it to school	3.36	0.71
3	I will be comfortable when I wear it	3.23	0.88
4	Plain George fabric cannot be out dated	3.24	0.87
5	plain George fabric is valuable in my culture	3.42	0.61
6	Plain George fabric is culturally important and relevant	3.18	0.76
7	Plain George fabric is durable and useful	3.10	0.93
8	Plain George fabric can be designed into fashionable styles	3.15	0.79
9	Plain George fabric can be combined with other fabrics to make apparel	3.24	0.87
10	Plain George fabric can be designed into contemporary and modern styles	3.19	0.89
	Grand mean and standard deviation	3.25	0.79

Data presented in Table 2 show the mean responses and standard deviation rating of undergraduate perception of plain George fabrics. The results revealed that all the item statement have their means ranging from 3.10 – 3.42, indicating that the

respondents have positive perception of plain George fabrics. The grand mean of 3.25 establish the fact that undergraduate students of Ignatius Ajuru University of education perception of plain George fabric is positive. In addition, the standard deviations range from 0.61 – 0.93 with a grand SD of 0.79 which is below 1.50, indicating that the respondents are close to each other in their opinions and that their responses are not far from the mean.

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation rating of undergraduate's reasons for non-usage of plain George fabrics for apparel

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD
1	George fabric is not popular with fashion wears	3.24	0.88
2	No already made apparels with George fabrics	3.46	0.77
3	Influence of foreign culture	2.98	1.02
4	Plain George fabrics are not cut in yards during purchase	3.48	0.57
5	Plain George fabric is not trendy in clothing production	3.09	0.89
6	Plain George fabric is obsolete	2.01	0.93
7	Insufficient advert on plain George fabric in media	3.23	0.87
8	Preference for already made wear	2.50	0.61
9	Plain George fabrics are commonly tied as wrapper and head tie	3.37	0.64
10	Plain George fabric is not colour fast	2.97	1.00
	Grand mean and standard deviation	3.13	0.82

Data presented in Table 3 show the mean responses and standard deviation rating of undergraduate reasons for non-usage of plain George fabrics. The results revealed that all the item statement have their means ranging from 3.13 – 3.46, indicating the respondents' reasons for non-usage of plain George fabrics. However, item 6 (George fabric is obsolete) with a mean of 2.01 was not accepted as reason for non-usage of plain George fabrics.

The grand mean of 3.13 establish the fact that undergraduate students of Ignatius Ajuru University of education will use plain George fabrics if it is within their reach. In addition, the standard deviations range from 0.57 – 1.02 with a grand SD of 0.82 which is below 1.50, indicating that the respondents are close to each other in their opinions and that their responses are not far from the mean.

Prototype of apparels produced with George fabric



Fig 1: Straight skirt & top (back view)



Fig 2: Straight skirt & top (front view)



Fig 3: combat trouser & top (front view)



Fig 4: Combat trouser & top (back view)



Fig 5: Combat trouser and top



Fig 6: Skirt with pleats at the knee (variation of skirt)

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation rating of measures that will enhance usage of plain George fabrics for apparel

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD
1	Produce fashionable apparels with George fabrics	3.67	0.49
2	Make contemporary ready-made apparel with George fabrics	3.47	1.06
3	Make trendy styles by combining George fabrics with other fabrics	3.40	0.74
4	Use George fabrics for trendy children clothes	3.47	0.67
5	Making stylistic designs for apparels with George fabrics	3.57	0.75
6	Use George fabrics in contemporary and modernized styles	3.75	0.44
7	Advertise George fabrics and apparels made with George fabrics on media	3.58	0.74
8	Patronize plain George clothing to encourage designers	3.54	0.72
	Grand mean and standard	3.56	0.71

Data presented in Table 4 show the mean responses and standard deviation rating of measures that will enhance usage of plain George fabrics for apparel. The results revealed that all the item statement have their means ranging from 3.40 – 3.75 indicating that the suggested measures that will enhance undergraduates’ interest in usage of plain George fabrics for apparel. The grand mean of 3.56 establish the fact that these measures can enhance usage of plain George fabrics for apparel. In addition, the standard deviations range from 0.44 – 1.06 with a grand SD of 0.71 which is below 1.50, indicating that the respondents are close to each other in their opinions and that their responses are not far from the mean.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from Table 1 revealed that undergraduates of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education possessed knowledge of plain George fabrics with a grand mean of 3.17. The finding

shows that they know plain George fabric and can identify it in the midst of other fabrics; plain George is common and available in the market; plain George comes in different colours among others. This finding supports the statement of Oladele and Ogundipe (2016) that undergraduates are more involved in wearing fashion clothing and are aware of numerous fabrics that exist. In the same vein, Lasisi et al (2022) also noted that African fabrics can easily be known and identified by their designs and arrangement and that having knowledge of fabrics can easily make it to be used and the knowledge can easily be transferred to others and children.

The finding in Table 2 revealed a positive perception of George fabrics by undergraduates of Ignatius Ajuru University of education with a grand mean of 3.25. The finding shows that plain George fabric is fashionable; it cannot be out dated; plain George fabric is culturally important and relevant, plain George can be designed into fashionable styles, plain George can be combined with other fabrics to make apparel among others. This finding also admits the fact that undergraduates of Ignatius Ajuru have a positive perception of George fabrics and will want to wear fashionable apparel made with it. Lasisi et al (2022) noted that most people do appreciate the use of African fabric as they believe that garment made with African fabric can be used on a daily basis.

The findings on Table 3 shows undergraduate reasons for non-usage of plain George fabrics with a grand mean of 3.13. These reasons include George fabric is not popular with fashion wears; No already made apparels with George fabrics; George fabrics are not cut in yards during purchase. Insufficient adverts on George fabrics; plain George most used as wrapper among others. This finding is in line with Adeoti and Kalilu (2024) who stated that George fabric is mostly tied as wrapper and head tie.

The author noted that women often tie it as wrapper with lace blouse on special occasion. Onwuakpa,2023 also noted that the influence of foreign culture is a barrier on non-usage of African fabrics.

The finding on table 4 revealed the measures that will enhance the use of plain George fabric in apparel production with a grand mean of 3.56. These measures include: producing fashionable apparels with plain George fabrics, making contemporary readymade wear with George fabric, making trendy styles by combining George fabrics with other fabrics, advertising George fabrics and apparels among others. This finding is in line with Adeoti and Kalilu (2024) who noted that combining African fabrics with other fabrics such as lace, satin, chiffon will enhance its usage and aesthetics

Conclusion: Based on the findings, the study concluded that undergraduate student will purchase and wear apparels made from plain George fabrics if it is designed in a contemporary and fashionable styles.

Recommendation

1. Fashion designers should come up with appealing designs of apparels using plain George fabrics to capture the apparel market
2. Undergraduates should be encouraged to wear apparel made from plain George fabrics
3. Fashion designers should utilize plain George fabrics in stylistic and fashionable wears.

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