

# FASHION STYLES AND FABRIC PREFERENCE OF WORKING CLASS PERSONS WITH BLINDNESS WITHIN KADUNA METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *The paper attempts to find out fashion styles and fabric preference of working class persons with blindness within Kaduna metropolis, Nigeria. the aim were specified as to find out whether working class persons with blindness have any fashion styles and ascertain the disparity in preference of fabric according to gender and age . Based on the specified aims, three research questions were raised. Survey research design was employed to gather information from the vast population of working class persons with blindness within Kaduna metropolis. The samples of the study consist of thirty two (32) persons with blindness from eight (8) working environments within Kaduna metropolis. A two section written questionnaire was developed by the researcher and implemented by interview and observation technique. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages). The findings of the study indicated that working class people with blindness within Kaduna metropolis just like sighted people have flare for fashion and have preference of dresses they wear. They do not only have a fashion styles and preference for the cloth they wear but also have passion for style and color of the dresses they put on most of the times. Also, Preference by touch indicate that natural fiber (cotton) was most preferred (74%) by the respondents on first choice, followed by mixed fiber (cotton and regenerated) and regenerated fiber (polyester) as the last choice. Thus working class persons with blindness defiantly have sense of fashion styles and fabric preference.*

**Keywords:** *Styles, Fashion, Fabric, Working Class, Persons with Blindness, Nigeria*

## INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a multilingual and multicultural nation comprising of the Igbo's in the East, the Hausas in the North, the Yoruba in the South and the Middle belt. All categories have a distinct fashion styles and colors associated with culture and language [1]. While some cultures welcome fitted fashion styles others adhere to loose fashion styles, these are demonstrated by different styles of "asoebi" [2] for different occasions. Nigerians wear all categories of textiles fabrics, like adire textile [3], Ankara [4].

Textiles fabrics are constructed based on the end use suitability, they can be fine or coarse and the texture depends on the origin of the fiber from which they are made. Textured fibers are divided into natural and regenerated. Natural fiber include cotton, wool silk, flax, polyester, acrylic, viscose rayon, cellulose acetate etc., [5].

Fabrics are used by people with visual impairments for occasions, work or leisure. Undoubtedly, while persons with partial sight can view and purchase materials of interest, persons with blindness may depend on the choice of sighted people or touch the fabric for preference due to lack of sight. Research indicate that auditory [6] and tactile [7] are being used in place of sight on different issues relating to technology and science.

In Nigeria, there are growing numbers of persons with blindness in public and private sector employment and appearance, cleanliness as well as styles matter in dealing with subordinates. Fashion styles are irrespective of age and personality [8] and preference and image to individual vary [9].

### Aims of study

The aim of this study is to find out fashion styles and fabric preference of the working class persons with blindness within Kaduna metropolis in particular and Nigeria in general with the following objectives:

- To find out whether working class persons with blindness have any fashion styles.
- To ascertain the disparity in preference of fabric according to gender and age of working class persons with blindness.

### Research questions

1. Do working class persons with blindness in Kaduna metropolis have a sense of fashion styles?
2. Which fabric does working classes persons with blindness prefer based on touch?
3. Does preference for a particular fabric depend on gender or age?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

Survey research design was employed to gather information from the vast population of working class persons with blindness within Kaduna metropolis, Kaduna metropolis is a cosmopolitan community, made up of Tudun-wada, Sabotasha, Kakuri, Ungwar-rimi, Barnawa, Kawo, Rigasa, Malali, etc. Verbal conversation with the president of Kaduna state association of persons with blindness indicates that, working class persons with blindness population within Kaduna metropolis are unknown, however majority of them can be found in rehabilitation centers, schools, ministries, local and state government establishments and working class persons with blindness were identified in each of these areas.

### 3.2 Population of Study

The population of study (32) includes all working class persons with blindness within Kaduna metropolis. Because of the small population sampling technique was not used to select participants. All the identified working class persons with blindness within the metropolis participated in the study. The distributions of persons with blindness working in different places within Kaduna metropolis were displayed in the table below.

**Table 1: Different Places at Kaduna metropolis**

s/n	Place of work	Number of persons with blindness
1	Kaduna state special education school (KASSES)	4
2	Rehabilitation center	4
3	Kaduna polytechnic; Department of Rehab science	3
4	Kaduna North local government (social welfare unit)	10
5	Kaduna South local government (social welfare unit)	5
6	Blind workshop Malunfashi road, Kaduna	8
7	Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN)	1
8	Kaduna State Media Corporation (KSMC)	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

**Instrument of study**

A written Questionnaire (Interview) was developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was made up of two sections. Section A, with eight items on gender, age, color, type, mode and style of dress.

Section B with checklist of liked and disliked was tagged into natural, fabricated or mixed fabric consisting cotton, wool, nylon, polyester, cotton with nylon and cotton with polyester. The participants were expected to touch and select fabric in order of preference and responses was recorded by the interviewer.

**Methods of data collection**

A visit was made by the researchers to the venue of the Kaduna state association of persons with blindness, in order to gather list of names of working individual among them, as well as seek for consent and written permission from participants to carry out the study. A research assistant was employed as supplementary to the researchers to facilitate collection of data that lasted for two weeks. Participants were visited at their respective working environments and interviewed.

Section A questions and responses were read to participants and options of responses selected by participants were recorded on the questionnaire by the interviewer. This was particularly necessary because majority of persons with blindness cannot read the questionnaire in print and the interviewer cannot read Braille

Also, on section B the researcher presented three fabric to the participants to feel/ touch and they were asked to select in order of preference (natural fabric: cotton, regenerated fabrics: polyester and mixed fabric: Cotton and polyester) which fabric they liked first, second and last.

**Methods of data Analysis**

Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistic (frequency count and percentages).

**Presentation of data****Table 2: Fashion styles**

variable		%	female	%	Total
Gender	Male (27)	84.4	Female (5)	15.6	32
Age	Young (25)	78.0	Older (17)	22.0	32
monochrome	Yes (30)	93.0	No (2)	16.2	32
Choosing cloth each day	Yes (29)	90.6	No (3)	19.4	32
Comfortable dress	Traditional dress (22)	68.8	English dress (10)	31.2	32
Dress styles	Loose and short dress (0)	Loose and long dress (5) 15.6%	fitted and short dress (0)	fitted and long dress (27) 84.4%	32
Preferred colors	Primary colors (18) 56.3%	Secondary colors (12) 37.5%	Any color (2) 6.3%		32
Choice of patterns	Large patterns(7) 21.9	Small patterns (3) 9.4%	None (22) 68.8%		32

Table 2 on fashion styles, section A, from Table 4.1 gender of respondents shows that there are five (5) females and twenty seven (27) males, consisting of twenty five (25) young people and seventeen (17) above forty. None of the respondents chose loose or fitted short dress(s). Five (5) respondents chose loose and long while twenty seven (27) respondents chose fitted and long dresses. In terms of Colors, eighteen (18) respondents liked primary, twelve (12) respondents liked secondary, and two (2) respondents prefer any color. Thirty (30) respondents said they like to match dress color with accessories and 2 respondents don't mind. Twenty nine (29) respondents said make their choice of cloth to work every day of the week, while three (3) respondents said they asking perception from their family before choice of cloth to work. Twenty two (22) respondents have no idea about pattern they liked. Seven (7) respondents liked large prints, while three (3) respondents liked small print. Twenty two and ten (22 & 10) respondents are comfortable with traditional and English dresses respectively.

**Table 3: Fabric preference**

Variables	types	First choice	Second choice	Third choice	Total
Natural fiber	cotton	23	9	-	32
Regenerated fiber	Polyester	9	-	23	32
Mixed fiber	Cotton and polyester	-	23	9	32
		32	32	32	

Table 3 on fabric preference, section B: Natural fiber, cotton, was chosen to be the most preferred fabric followed by polyester as first choice as shown in Table 4.2. Regenerated fiber polyester; third and first (23 & 9) and mixed fiber cotton and polyester, second, first and third choice (11)

#### FINDINGS

The outcome of the research has indicated that working class persons with blindness within Kaduna metropolis just like sighted people have flare for fashion (85%) and have preference of dresses they wear (91%). They do not only have a fashion styles and preference for the cloth the wear but also have passion for style (93%) and color of the dresses they put on most of the times. The outcome of this research can be assumed to be the general feeling and opinions of individuals with blindness, not only in Kaduna metropolis but in Nigeria as whole. For the fashion aspect, they are more comfortable in traditional long dresses (69%) as opposed to fitted and/or loose styles. The choice of long traditional dresses according to them gives them more respect. In the case of preference, just like people with normal vision, they use the sense of touch and feel to choose the fabric made of the natural fiber, cotton as their most preferred fabric. They say, they feel more comfortable in Cotton fabrics than polyester, nylon, cotton/polyester or cotton/nylon fabric blends and these choices does not depend on age or gender.

#### DISCUSSION

Our thinking of fashion styles and fabric preference of persons with blindness were out of bound, as we discovered that working class persons with blindness are concerned about how they dress and they personally visit market to choose what fabric to purchase. We were astonished to find out that persons with blindness have the concept of colors and actually have their favorite among different colors and majority (65.6%) know the colors of their cloth and actually select good combinations of what to wear every morning to work (91%). Majority preferred traditional wears that are long instead of fitted or loose. They spoke about how short dresses either fitted or loss does not command respect to wearer, especially in the northern part of the county, this bias could probably be based on religion.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion working class persons with blindness in Kaduna metropolis have fashion styles as expressed by color preference, choice of dress and patterns. Majority preferred cotton and mixed fiber based on touch and these preferences does not depend on gender or age.

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