

Design and Development of Chair Back /Armrest Covers: Implication for Home Economics Graduates in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract: - The study sought to Design and Develop Standard Chair Back and Armrest Covers for Home Users in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria. The Study employed Survey Research Method to collate the data needed for Analysis. The population of the study comprised of 200 Married Women and 200 Single Ladies. A sample of 100 Married Women and 100 Single Ladies was proportionally selected from the population. The findings of the study revealed that most chair covers were cut without considering the shapes and sizes of the chairs and hence did not fit comfortably around the chairs, but were found lying on the floor or squeezed into the chair. The study also identified poor quality of embroidery or designs on the chairs covers as a major factor which resulted to the short life span of the items. The study concluded that if chair covers were cut to standard sizes in proportion to the sizes and shapes of the chairs, the chair covers would be prevented from slipping off position or been squeezed into the chair. Additionally, the findings showed that in the production of chair covers, cotton fabrics were preferable to chiffon and satin fabrics.

Key words: Armrest, chair back.

I. INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria today, the increasing rate of unemployment, social problems, poverty and hunger have become worrisome to the Government and well-meaning citizens. The “Unemployment and Report Under from 1st to Employment 3rd Quarter 2017” released by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), indicated that: the unemployment rate increased from 14.2% in the 4th quarter of 2016 to 16.2% in the 2nd quarter of 2017 and 18.8% in the 3rd quarter of 2017. The number of people in the labour force who were in unemployment or underemployment increased from 13.6 million and 17.7 million respectively in the 2nd quarter 2017, to 15.9 million and 18.0 million in the 3rd quarter 2017 (NBS report, 2017).

Though pathetic as the number of graduates streaming out of Universities and other institutions of higher learning across the country searching for employment opportunities increases day by day; government employment, however, is dwindling steadily. There are more graduates yearly than the available jobs. As a panacea to these problems, entrepreneurship has been identified as a means of providing employment. Anyakoha (2006), entrepreneur is one who chooses or assumes risks, identifies business opportunity,

gathers resources, initiates action and establishes an organization or enterprise to meet such demand or market opportunity”. Entrepreneurs indulging in clothing and textile business concentrate on buying and selling of clothing and textile goods and services. Few indulge in the production of fashion products such as garments and fashion accessories such as beads, jewelries, purses and bags, hats and caps and chair/armrest covers.

Although there are numerous chair and armrest covers in the market, several problems were associated with them such as tacky chair covers that do not fit comfortably around the chair. The size and shapes of such chair backs were cut without considering the size and shape of the chairs. Secondly, there was disharmony in colour of the chair/armrest covers with the rest of the upholstery. Patterns were created on the chair back/arm rest covers without due regards for colour positions in the colour wheel. These resulted in colour disharmony in the patterns created. Thirdly, poor quality embroidery or designs of the motifs on the chair backs and arm rest covers gave rise to short life span of the items. In some cases of patterns of low quality, the threads rip-off early from the chair back and armrest covers, leaving the items shattered. Fourthly, uses of inappropriate fabrics for production of chair/armrest covers accentuate tearing and slipping off position. In some homes, the chair back and arm rest cover items may be found lying on the floor or squeezed inside the chairs after each use.

This study therefore, seeks to tackle the stated problems by designing and developing appropriate prototypes of chair and armrest covers as guidelines for Home Economics Graduates seeking entrepreneurship.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to design and develop appropriate prototypes of chair back and armrest covers as guidelines for Home Economics Graduates. Specifically the study sought to:

- i. ascertain the factors that influence the selection of chair back/armrest covers.
- ii. develop standard appropriate chair back/armrest covers for households.

Research Questions

- i. What are the differences between the responses of Single Ladies and Married Women on the factors that influence the selection of chair back and armrest covers.
- ii. What are the differences between the responses of Single Ladies and Married Women on the challenges faced in using chair back and armrest covers.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the responses of Single Ladies and Married Women on the factors that influence the selection of chair back and armrest covers.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the responses of Single Ladies and Married Women on the challenges faced in using chair back and armrest. Covers.

II. METHODOLOGY

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. It is located on latitude 7.73°N and longitude 8.52°E, and it is situated at an elevation of 104 meters above sea level. The Local Government shares boundaries with Guma to the North-East, Gwer to the South, Gwer-West to the West and Doma Local Government Area of Nassarawa State to the North-West. The Local Government is divided into two major blocks by River Benue, hence the North and South Banks. It has a population of 300 337 (2006 Cencsus) with a land mass of 16km radius. Makurdi town, the headquarters of the State also serves as the State Capital. Its location makes it the “Gateway” State to both of the North the and the South.

All forms of transportation such as road, rail, air and water are obtainable in Makurdi. The populace is predominantly agrarian.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of 200 married women and 200 single ladies from University of Agriculture, Makurdi Air Force Secondary School, Makurdi and other Home Makers in Makurdi Metropolis.

Sample of the Study

The sample of the Study was drawn from all the three categories of Home Makers. The sample size of each group was obtained using proportionate sampling technique from the population – 100 Married Women and 100 Single Ladies.

Instrument of Data Collection

Home Maker’s Opinion (HMOQ) was Questionnaire employed for the collection of data.

Reliability of Instrument

Spearman Brown reliability coefficient was used. A reliability coefficient of r = 0.67 was realized.

III. RESULTS

Research Question 1

What are the differences between the responses of Single Ladies and Married Women on the factors that influence the selection of chair back and armrest covers.

Factors that Influence Selection of Chair back and Armrest Covers

S/N	VARIABLE	SA	A	SLA	D	SD	REMARK	
1	If your salary increase above the present wage, will you go for chair/arm rest covers of higher quality?	42	24	3	6	0	4.36	Agree
2	My spouse influences my choice of quality of decorative items in the home.	18	45	6	3	3	3.96	Agree
3	My children decide what colours and quality of armrest and chair back covers.	21	46	12	6	0	4.49	Agree
4	The age of my children influence my choice of chair back and armrest cover.	33	30	9	0	3	4.20	Agree
5	The shape, colour and size of my cushion chairs in the living room influence my purchase.	21	27	12	9	6	3.64	Agree
6	The colour of the armrest and chair back covers influence my purchase.	15	36	12	6	6	3.64	Agree
7	The functionality of the chair back covers and armrest determine my choice.	21	39	3	3	9	3.80	Agree
8	The age of my set of cushions determine my purchase of chair back and armrest covers.	18	33	12	9	3	3.72	Agree
9	I purchase armrest and chair back covers to protect the chairs from spoilage.	15	24	24	9	3	3.52	Agree
10	I purchase armrest and chair back covers to preserve and beautify the chairs.	24	30	9	9	3	3.84	Agree

Table 1: Responses of Married Women

Source: Field Data 2018.

Married Women submitted that an increase in salary will definitely move them to pick higher quality chair back and armrest covers, this was confirmed by 88% of Married Women with a corresponding mean of = 4.36. Similarly, 84% of the married women with a mean of = 3.96, asserted that their spouses influenced their choice of decorative items in the home. The ages of the children, another 84% with a corresponding mean of = 4.20, confirmed influenced their choice of chair back and armrest covers. The shape, colour, and size of their chairs in the living room also determined

their choice of chair back and armrest covers, 64% submitted with a corresponding mean of = 3.64. In the same vein, the functionality of the chair back and armrest covers influenced significantly the selection of chair back and armrest covers, as was highlighted by 80% of the Married women with a corresponding mean of = 3.8.

Factors that Influence Selection of Chair back and Armrest Covers

S/N	VARIABLE	SA	A	SLA	D	SD	REMARK
1	If your salary increase above the present wage, will you go for chair/arm rest covers of higher quality?	45	18	6	3	3	4.32 Agree
2	My siblings influence my choice of quality of decorative items in the home.	15	42	18	0	0	3.96 Agree
3	My siblings decide what colours and quality of armrest and chair back covers.	27	33	6	9	0	4.04 Agree
4	The age of my siblings influence my choice of chair back and armrest cover.	33	30	3	6	3	4.12 Agree
5	The shape, colour and size of my cushion chairs in the sitting room influence my purchase.	27	39	6	0	3	4.16 Agree
6	The colour of the armrest and chair back covers influence my purchase.	21	33	12	3	6	3.8 Agree
7	The functionality of the chair back covers and armrest determine my choice.	21	27	15	0	12	3.6 Agree
8	The age of my set of cushions determine my purchase of chair back and armrest covers.	15	36	12	6	6	3.64 Agree
9	I purchase armrest and chair back covers to protect the chairs from spoilage.	21	24	15	9	6	3.6 Agree
10	I purchase armrest and chair back covers to preserve and beautify the chairs.	21	33	12	3	6	3.8 Agree

Table 2: Responses of Single Ladies

Source: Field Data 2018.

Single Ladies submitted that an increase in salary will definitely move them to pick higher quality chair back and armrest covers, this was confirmed by 84% of Single Ladies with a corresponding mean of = 4.32. The ages of their younger siblings/cousins, another 84% with a corresponding mean of = 4.12 confirmed influenced their choice of chair back and armrest covers. The shape, colour and size of their chairs in the living room also determined their choice of chair back and armrest covers, 88% submitted with a corresponding mean of = 4.16. In the same vein, the functionality of the chair back and armrest covers influenced significantly the selection

of chair back and armrest covers, as was highlighted by 64% of the Married women with a corresponding mean of = 3.6.

Research Question 2

What are the differences between the responses of Single Ladies and Married Women on the challenges faced in using chair back and armrest covers.

Problems Associated with the Use of Chair Back and Armrest Covers sold in the Market.

S/N	VARIABLE	SA	A	SLA	D	SD	REMARK
13	The fabric types are not durable	36	30	6	3	0	4.32 Agree
14	The colour combinations do not appeal to my taste.	15	48	9	3	0	4.00 Agree
15	The sizes and shapes do not serve the purpose of coverage (most of them are too small)	15	51	6	0	3	4.00 Agree
16	The motifs/designs on chair back covers are not pleasant enough.	30	30	12	3	0	4.16 Agree
17	The motifs/designs are not indigenous so are unacceptable to me.	27	18	18	9	3	3.76 Agree
18	The armrest covers/chair back covers do not stay well on the chairs.	33	24	6	6	6	3.96 Agree
19	Since they do not stay well on the chairs they are found rumpled/squeezed inside the chair.	30	30	3	3	9	3.92 Agree
20	The colours show dirt and stain too quickly especially if white.	21	27	21	6	0	3.84 Agree
21	Some of the chair back and armrest covers slip off easily since they are made from satin.	12	42	18	0	3	3.8 Agree
22	Some of the designs have too many cuts/openings which tear off easily if used by large family members.	24	30	18	3	0	4.00 Agree

Table 3: Responses of Married Women

Source: Field Data 2018.

The Married Women complained that the fabrics used in making some of the chair back and armrest covers in the market were not durable. This was captured by 88% of the respondents with a corresponding mean of = 4.32. They also complained that the sizes of some of the chair backs and armrest covers on the market are too small and hence do not serve the purpose of coverage, 88% made this complaint with a corresponding mean of = 4.0. In a similar vein, 80% with a corresponding mean of = 3.96, expressed dissatisfaction with

the frequency in which the small chair back and armrest covers fell off the chairs or were found rumpled or squeezed in the chair. Another 80% with a corresponding mean of = 4.0, also expressed dissatisfaction that some of the motifs/designs commonly found on chair back / armrest covers were unpleasant to be used as a decorative.

Problems Associated with the Use of Chair Back and Armrest Covers sold in the Market.

S/N	VARIABLE	SA	A	SLA	D	SD	REMARK
13	The fabric types are not durable	33	30	9	3	0	4.24 Agree
14	The colour combinations do not appeal to my taste.	15	48	9	3	0	4 Agree
15	The sizes and shapes do not serve the purpose of coverage (most of them are too small)	24	39	6	3	3	4.04 Agree
16	The motifs/designs on chair back covers are not pleasant enough.	24	30	9	6	6	3.8 Agree
17	The motifs/designs are not indigenous so are unacceptable to me.	15	33	15	3	9	3.56 Agree
18	The armrest covers/chair back covers do not stay well on the chairs.	18	42	9	3	3	3.92 Agree
19	Since they do not stay well on the chairs they are found rumpled/squeezed inside the chair.	36	30	0	6	3	4.2 Agree
20	The colours show dirt and stain too quickly especially if white.	24	39	9	0	3	4.08 Agree
21	Some of the chair back and armrest covers slip off easily since they are made from satin.	6	33	21	6	9	3.28 Agree
22	Some of the designs have too many cuts/openings which tear off easily if used by large family members.	15	27	3	18	12	3.2 Agree

Table 4: Responses of Single Ladies

Source: Field Data 2018.

The Single Ladies also complained that the fabrics used in making some of the chair back and armrest covers in the market were not durable, this was captured by 84% of the respondents with a corresponding mean of = 4.24. They also complained that the sizes of some of the chair backs and armrest covers on the market are too small and hence do not serve the purpose of coverage,

84% made this complaint with a corresponding mean of = 4.04. In a similar vein, 88% with a corresponding mean of = 4.2, expressed dissatisfaction with the frequency in which the small chair back and armrest covers fell of the chairs or were

found rumped or squeezed in the chair.

Another 72% with a corresponding mean of = 3.8, also expressed dissatisfaction that some of the motifs/designs commonly found on chair back / armrest covers were unpleasant to be used as a decorative.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: *There is no significant difference between the responses of Single Ladies and Married Women on the factors that influence the selection of chair back and armrest covers.*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<i>Married Women</i>	<i>Single Ladies</i>
Mean	3.9312	3.9184
Variance	0.101353946	0.059089297
Observations	75	75
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	138	
t Stat	0.276745065	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.39119497	
t Critical one-tail	1.655970383	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.782389941	
t Critical two-tail	1.977303512	

t Stat = 0.28 < t Critical = 1.98, therefore, we accept the null hypothesis. This means that both the Single Ladies and Married Women concur on the factors that influence the selection of chair back and armrest covers.

H₀₂: *There is no significant difference between the responses of Single Ladies and Married Women on the challenges faced in using chair back and armrest.*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<i>Married Women</i>	<i>Single Ladies</i>
Mean	3.832	3.749333333
Variance	0.213016216	0.376317117
Observations	75	75
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	137	
t Stat	0.932568098	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.176341806	
t Critical one-tail	1.656052081	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.352683613	
t Critical two-tail	1.977431183	

t Stat = 0.93 < t Critical = 1.98, therefore, we accept the null hypothesis. This means that both the Single Ladies and Married Women concur on the challenges faced in using chair back and armrest.

Standard Armrest Cover Measurement

Armrest Size	Measurement
Mini Armrest Cover	Length 35.5cm (14") X Width 20cm (8")
Medium Armrest Cover	Length 45cm (18") X Width 22cm (9")
Standard Armrest Cover	Length 57cm (22.5") X Width 42.5cm (17")

Standard Chair Back Cover Measurement

Armrest Size	Measurement
Mini Chair Back Cover	Length 42cm (16.5") X Width 33cm (13")
Medium Chair Back Cover	Length 51cm (20") X Width 37cm (15")
Standard Chair Back Cover	Length 61cm (24") X Width 43cm (17.5")

Sample of Standard Armrest Cover



Sample of Standard Chair Back Cover



IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study found out that though there were numerous chair covers in the market, several problems were associated with them such as tacky chair covers that do not fit comfortably around the chair and the size and shape of chair covers that were cut without considering the size and shape of the chairs. The finding supports Ward (1999) who opined that chair covers should align with prominent features of the sofas and collectively form a visually balanced composition. The study also found out that there was disharmony in colour of the chair covers with the rest of the upholstery. The finding supports Lyons (2008) who affirmed that a well designed room is a unit in which to ensure a sense of order, there must be consistency of size, shape, a harmony of colours and pattern. The poor quality embroidery or designs of motifs on the chair covers was identified as a factor that gave rise to the short life span of the items.

Furthermore, the study gathered that, in some cases, the threads on chair covers made of low quality fabrics other than cotton tend to rip-off too early, leaving the items shattered. This finding supports Lytle (2018) who affirmed that cotton fabric is not fragile but durable and easy to care for. Also, the use of inappropriate fabrics for the production of chair covers accentuated tearing and slipping off position, which led to the items being found lying on the floor or squeezed inside the

chair after each use.

V. CONCLUSION

The research work submitted that, if chair covers are cut to standard sizes in proportion to the sizes and shapes of the chairs, it would prevent the chair covers from slipping off or being squeezed into the chair after each use. The study also submitted that in the production of chair covers Cotton fabrics are preferable to Chiffon and satin fabrics.

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