

COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF CONSTRUCTION QUALITY OF IMPORTED READY-TO-WEAR AND NIGERIAN MADE EMBROIDERED GARMENTS (KAFTANI) NASARAWA STATE AS A CASE STUDY.



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Abstract

The research compared the quality of embroidered kaftani made in Lafia, Nasarawa state, Nigeria and those imported from outside Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 20 Nigerian- made and 4 imported ready-to-wear kaftani. Two instruments, observation guide and construction quality criteria charts were developed and used to guide the study. Five judges, experts in quality control assessed the construction quality attributes of sampled kaftani using international standard quality standards. The judges found that Nigerian-made embroidered kaftani had lower construction quality than the imported ready-to-wear counterparts. Of all the construction defects in Nigerian-made Kaftani sampled, 50% had ratings of quality attributes within and above average. Nigerian manufacturers were competent in finishing, interfacing, pocket attachment and hem but were deficient in colour combinations and closures. Specific defects common with Nigerian-made embroidered kaftani include variable stitches per inch, uneven seam allowance, weight of interfacing not in alliance with the weight of fabrics, colours of thread not complimenting with the colour of fabrics and insufficient under-pressing.

INTRODUCTION

Embroidered garments are very common among the people of Nasarawa state. Embroidering of garments is the decorative stitches sewn on garments in bead to design it. Embroidering of garments has, in the course of time, undergone various stages of development. Originally decorative garments were done manually. Manual method consumes time and energy but the invention of embroidery machines has brought a very big relief to tailoring as it designs very fast, consumes less energy and yet produces more uniform and better design. Today, computer has greatly increased the accuracy and speed of product development in embroidery designs. According to Ampong and Garvor (2006), an appreciable degree of technology has been applied in the garment manufacturing industry by large firms for their production although these advanced technologies are yet not available for use in most small scale

manufacturing firms, especially in developing countries.

In Nigeria, and particularly in Nasarawa state, garment producing industries are noted to be one of the largest industries existing mainly in small scale capacity. According to Dickerson, (1991) and Wolfe (1989), garment production is seen as the largest industry in the world due to its economic benefits. In Nasarawa state, the garment manufacturing sector is predominantly in small scale. The aspect of embroidery designs are mostly done by the tailors who are predominantly males (Dangkwak and Belikisu 2001). This is very common among garment manufacturing companies in Northern Nigeria. Business on embroidered garments is very lucrative as the materials is acceptable to many people is very high, which extends to even their neighboring countries especially those at their boarder. For this reason, the garment producers in

Nigeria are not limited to domestic markets but are also trying to export their products outside Nigeria. To target foreign markets, there is need for these local products to meet the international quality standards so that the doubt on the credibility of made in Nigerian products will be erased. Most consumers rate products from developing countries inferior in quality to those manufactured in developed countries (King1993). Most prominent Nigerians still scramble to lavish money in buying embroidered garment made in other developed countries not minding their cost. Efforts should however be made to improve the quality of locally manufactured embroidered garments to meet international standards. This will reduce the preference of our people for imported ready-to-wear garments, thereby helping our economy to grow, as we can export to earn foreign currency.

Quality is a multidimensional construct and has a very great influence on the final product of the garment (Betzina, (2009), Ampong and Garvor (2006) and Frings (1992), Barhup 2006). It is the belief of most garment producing industries that their customers can differentiate between low and high quality embroidery by subjective evaluation of the texture of the garment attributes (Betzina, 2009, Fowler and Clodfelter, 2001). It becomes a paramount importance that every producer of embroidery garments should strive to meet at least the basic standard. This study was therefore set to assess construction qualities of embroidered garments produced locally and those produced abroad to establish disparities for improvement to better standard in the local embroideries.

Problem of the study

It has been revealed that embroidered garments are highly acceptable by people in Nigeria. In Nasarawa State, consumption of embroidered garments are alarming. Tailors engaged in the production of these embroidered garments have increased to meet up with the demand. Neighbouring countries to Nigeria too have high demands for these embroidered garments. To meet up with locally and international market, the Nigerian tailors who are engaged in the production of these embroidered garments need to be well informed so as to satisfy their consumers. Therefore, this study is determined to create awareness to tailors on the importance of a standard production.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to compare the construction quality of locally produced and imported ready-to-wear embroidery garments ("Kaftani") in Nasarawa state, Nigeria to ascertain construction defects of locally made kaftani for improvement to standard.

Hypothesis:

There is no significant difference in construction qualities of locally manufactured kaftani and the foreign embroidered one.

Methodology.

The Cross-sectional survey design of descriptive sample survey that involves the collection of information from a sample population was most appropriate. This was due to the small sample size used in the study.

Area of Study.

Lafia metropolis was used for the study. It is the capital of Nasarawa state, with a population of about 205, 000 people (National Population Agency, Lafia branch 2009) Manufacturers in Lafia were targeted because it is believed that their products have characteristics that compare favourably with that of manufactures in other parts of Northern Nigeria.

Population of the Study Population of Manufacturers:

The study used two groups of people- the National association of tailors and dressmakers of Nigeria (NATDON) Lafia branch with a total population of 192 persons and traders in Saudi line in Lafia main market with a total population of 18 traders making a total of 210 for the study.

Population of Embroidered Garments:

The major population of embroidered garments compared was men's long gowns (Kaftani), made up of 43 with long sleeve wide open at wrist and 39 long sleeve with cuffs and placket at wrist and with standing collars. This population was targeted Comparative evaluation of construction quality of imported ready-to-wear and nigerian made embroidered garments (kaftani) nasarawa state as a case study.

because over 80% of all the processes used in embroidered garments are found in it (Stamper, Sharp and Donnel 1988).

These construction processes includeshaping devices like stitches and seams, pockets applied or slashed neckline treatment in form of collar, interfacings application; sleeve treatments in form of long sleeves with cuffs or long sleeves with wide open at wrist; and closures in form of buttoned closures in the front of "Kaftani" and its sleeves. Others include the quality of designing yard used – whether it fasts or not, ability to combine colours in designing, measuring of cut designs and overall finishing of garments in the form of pressing.

Assessments were limited to construction processes because it is the major determinant of quality of garments (Barhup, 2006, Kelly, 2003, King, 1993)

Sampling:

A purposive sampling technique was used to sample 10 manufacturers because not all the members in the NATDON association do produce embroidery garments and 4 traders in Saudi line that have the imported ready-to-wear kaftani.

Sampling of (kaftani) Embroidered Garment.

A sample of 24 'Kaftani were selected for the study. These 24 Kaftani were made up of 10 locally made kaftani with long sleeve wide open at the wrist and 10 locally made kaftani with long sleeve with plackets and cuffs and standing collar; and 4 imported kaftani, 2 samples of each of the two categories described above. Purposive sampling was used to pick sample with the specifications outlined and simple random sampling was used to pick one long sleeve kaftani wide open at the wrist and one long sleeve kaftani with plackets and cuffs at wrist and with a standing collar from the local manufacturers while 4 imported kaftani were chosen using simple random sampling among the importers.

A five-man judge was constituted to assess the construction quality of the sampled kaftani.

Instrumentation:

Two instruments were developed to guide the study. The instruments included observation guides and construction quality criteria charts. The observation guide outlined the items assess out for in assessing embroiderv construction processes as outlined by Stamper et al (1988) and Validated by Wright, (2006). The construction quality criteria chart was based on the export standard quality. A rating scale ranging from 1-7 was used, with 1 as the lowest and 7 as the highest standard. The instruments were pilot tested and found reliable.

Findings– Rating of Construction Processes in Kaftani

Table 1 has the ratings of the specific construction processes present in the sampled kaftani in relation to international quality standard. All the five Judges who performed the assessment of the construction quality of the sampled kaftani, found out that there are some slight differences in some variables although major differences existed in a good number of the fabrics that made Nigerian embroidered garments sub-standard to their counter-parts from developed countries. The mean rating of assessment of the of embroidered construction quality garments showed that indigenous manufacturers were more competent in finishing processes and pocket attachment but were extremely poor in constructions of embroidering designs at the sleeves and hems. However, the results show clearly that most of the construction qualities assessed were rated fairly good and just few were rated extremely poor.

Data Collection

Process	Extremely good	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good or poor	Fairy bad	Very bad	Extremely bad	Total kaftani assessed
Stitches/seams	-	-	9	-	9	13	7	24
Centre front		6	6		9	17	15	24
designing patterns	-			-				
		30	8		18			
Pocket attachment	-	_	_	-		-	7	24
Collar	30	9	5	-	6	17	5	24
Sleeve attachment & designing	-	9	4	-	29	30	-	24
Opening/fastening	-	-	8	-	8	13	23	
Tertaula aire a	15	25	20					24
application	45	23	30	-	-	-	-	24
Hem	9	14	17	-	-	_	9	24
Colour combination	-	-		-	21	10	34	
of thread								24
Finishing processes	16	7	5	-	-	-	-	
								24
Total	100	100	100	0	100	100	100	

Table 1: The judges' assessment on construction qualities of locally embroidered Kaftani Analysis of Specific Construction Quality/Processes.

Table 2 shows the judges record on the construction defects of locally constructed kaftani over the imported ones.

Stitch length	2.8	3.76	Rejected
Repairing stitching	2.9	3.22	Rejected
Skipped stitches	0.6	3.21	Rejected
Crooked stitching	1.8	3.01	Rejected
Wavy stitching	1.23	3.44	Rejected
Loose formation	0.6	3.32	Rejected
Unsecured stitch ends	0.4	3.42	Rejected
Use of different shades of thread	0.9	3.06	Rejected
Use of different colors in neatening	1.23	3.82	Rejected
Weak threads usage	0.2	3.62	Rejected
Uneven seam allowance	1.22	4.34	Rejected
Cross seams not intersecting	0.8	3.84	Rejected
Seam edge raveling	0.4	4.22	Rejected
Seam allowance different	1.32	4.42	Rejected
Inferior embroidery threads usage	1.02	3.36	Rejected
Imperfect colour combination	0.4	4.62	Rejected
Inconsistent design patterns.	0.33	3.42	Rejected
Pocket ends not properly secured,	0.05	3.44	Rejected
Uneven top stitching,	0.21	3.32	Rejected
Unequal shape of pocket bottom	0.32	3.42	Rejected
Unequal openings of side pocket	0.01	3.06	Rejected
Collar width very narrow,	1.02	3.82	Rejected
No under stitching of collar facing	0.23	3.62	Rejected
Shouting colours of thread on collars.	0.01	4.34	Rejected
Unequal length of both sleeves,	0.2	3.84	Rejected

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Unequal wrist circumference	0.31	4.22	Rejected
Embroidery designs not uniform	0.01	4.42	Rejected
Incurved armhole	1.20	3.36	Rejected
Uneven top stitching	1.09	3.44	Rejected
Improper secured placket base,	0.01	3.32	Rejected
Buttonhole ends not properly reinforced	0.21	3.42	Rejected
Button not properly secured	0.01	3.06	Rejected
Incorrect heat application of interfacing	0.01	3.82	Rejected
Discolouration of interfaced areas	0.02	3.60	Rejected
Weight of interfacing and fabric.	0.001	4.34	Rejected
Uneven width of hem	0.11	3.82	Rejected
Narrow hem	0.02	4.22	Rejected
Puckered hem	0.01	4.44	Rejected
Colour of thread and fabrics	0.02	3.36	Rejected
Threads that discolour others	0.01	3.44	Rejected
Colour of threads that fades easily.	0.01	3.34	Rejected
Thread ends were left hanging	0.01	3.46	Rejected
Insufficient under-pressing	0.03	3.08	Rejected

Table 2 above showed the defects observed by the judges on the two sets of kaftani. In this study, the chi-Square computed for the defects in the locally constructed kftani is far more than that of imported kaftani. The data was tested at 0.05 level of significance and the degree of freedom was also computed. It was observed that the null hypothesis was rejected. Computed value for the locally constructed kaftani was 4.46 which were greater than that of the imported kaftani which was 1.02. Therefore it is accepted that imported kaftani has more construction standard than the locally constructed kaftani.

Stitches/seams:

The structural elements of garment construction lay basically on the stitches and seams used. Therefore, any pronounced defects will strongly affect the quality of such garment. The defects dictated include- Stitch length, repairing stitching, skipped stitches, crooked stitching, wavy stitching, loose formation, unsecured stitch ends, use of different shades of thread, use of different colors in neatening and the use of weak threads. Seams were formed as a result of the use of stitches. Other peculiar defects include uneven seam allowance, cross seams not intersecting, seam edge raveling, and seam allowance different in size at sides.

Centre front embroidered designs:

some defects observed in the locally constructed embroidery design include use of inferior embroidery threads, inability to combine colours perfectly, and inconsistent design patterns. The embroidery at the centre front of kaftani is always the centre of attraction. It is the portion of the garment where the consumer's eyes goes at the first instance. For this reason, thorough care should be employed during the construction process.

Pocket attachment:

Pockets are a functional part of kaftani and in most cases form part of the design and for this reason, improper attachment of pockets to kaftani disfigure the beauty of garments. Some of the major defects noticed in the assessed garments include pocket ends not properly secured, uneven top stitching, unequal shape of pocket bottom, unidentical pairs of pocket, inconsistent designing pattern on chest pockets and unequal openings of side pockets.

Collar attachment and designing:

Collar is that part of garment that finishes the neck edge. In kaftani mostly standing collars were preferred. The major defects recorded were collar width very narrow, no under stitching of collar facing when collar has not been topstitched and use of shouting colours of threads in embroidering the standing collars.

Sleeve attachment:

The quality of sleeve attachment in kaftani enhances the total adornment to the kaftani. Improper attachment of sleeves is easily detected and reduces the quality of such garment. However defects in sleeve attachment recorded include unequal length of both sleeves, unequal wrist circumference of the two sleeves; embroidery designs not uniform in sleeves, uncurved armhole and uneven top stitching.

Opening and fastening:

In Kaftani, opening and fastening are mostly found at the centre front, such as from the neck edge to about 5 inches below the breast or longer depending on the style. Openings and fastenings can also be found at the sleeve cuff and placket area of long sleeves. Defects detected in the kaftani evaluated include improper secured placket base, buttonhole ends not properly reinforced, button not properly secured and manual topstitching of the openings.

Interfacing application:

Application of interfacing in Kaftan strengthens and stabilizes areas where it is being applied. In Kaftani, interfacings are mostly found in all areas where embroidery designs were carried on, at the neck and at the placket areas. Indigenous kaftani assessed had bubbling of interfacing areas due to the use of incorrect heat application, discolouration of interfaced areas and weight of interfacing not in alliance with the weight of the fabric.

Hem finish:

The finishing of hem in Kaftani garments contributed a lot to its quality. Some defects detected in the hem finishing of the assessed Kaftani include uneven width of hem, narrow hem and puckered hem.

Colour combination of thread:

Judges found out that the manufacturers in bead to combine threads in embroidery, most often use more than necessary threads at a time. This gave the garments unattractive appearance. Other defects include the use of colour of thread that is not complimentary to the colour of the fabrics, threads that discolour others when laundered and colour of threads that fades easily.

Finishing processes:

Finishing processes are the key to attraction of Kaftani garments and they influence the choice of the consumers. Judges found that, in most cases, thread ends were left hanging and insufficient under-pressing.

Discussion

According to Ampong and Garvor (2006), Barhup (2006), and Marshall et al (2004), construction is the method used to assemble garments together. In this study, each of the construction processes examined contributed to the quality of the finished Kaftani. For this reason there is need to take appropriate care in these construction processes so as to achieve an international standard. Following the rating of the judges closely, it was found out that half of these locally produced Kaftani had average qualities and even above average in rating and so, stand to disapprove the consumers' views that Kaftani produced locally are completely of low quality (King 1993). This can only stand to be so if average rate in quality is not good enough for the consumers. Quality according to Ampong and Garvor (2006) is a degree of excellence. Marshall et al (2004) defined quality as conformance to a certain set of standards. However, Stamper et al (1988) and Barhup (2006) refer to quality in the apparel industry as a very vague term and according to them, there is no mechanical device that can measure precisely the quality of garments. For this reason it becomes difficult to determine at what point of standards a product becomes of high or low quality. However, Betzina (2009) was of the opinion that constant improvements in quality should be every producer's target as elimination of all complaints from consumers cannot be easily attained.

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In Nigeria, consumers of kaftani garments are aware of the quality characteristics of the garments. Though Nigerian producers are trying to meet up, most times, imported kaftani that have slight differences in construction process are bought exorbitantly just for the fact that they are imported

Conclusion

It is evident from this comparative assessment of construction quality of locally made and imported ready –to-wear embroidered kaftani that locally made embroidery are deficient in some quality. This finding is line with the consumers' point of view for preferring imported ready-to-wear embroidery. Quality is the watchword of every product, and the minimum standards below which a product could be referred to as inferior.

Recommendation

For Nigerian- made kaftani to compete with the imported counterparts, and make meaningful strides in clothing industries, basic standards should be developed and made accessible to all clothing manufacturers who produce for sale within and outside Nigeria.

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