

Article

Students' Understanding and Use of Information on Care Labels on Clothes

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Abstract: The main purpose of this study is to investigate students' awareness, understanding and use of the information on care labels. Quantitatively, the study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The population of the study comprised all the Family and Consumer Science students at the University for Development Studies, Nyankpala campus, Tamale. Morgan and Krejcie chart, was used to select 159 out of 270 students. Data collected were analysed using IBM SPSS with descriptive statistics which included mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages. Findings of this study proved that students do not always use the information on care labels when purchasing and caring for clothes and cannot identify the symbols on care labels that do not directly link with their meaning. This study has practical implications for students by using the information on care labels when purchasing and caring for clothes. Students should likewise find ways of identifying the symbols even without their meanings. The Social Implication implications of this study also postulates that local clothes manufacturers should be encouraged to create their labelling schemes for care labels that will be peculiar to how Ghanaians care for their clothes as they exist in other countries. Organizations and bodies that formulate the symbols should make sure the shape of the symbols has a direct link with their meaning to aid in their understanding and usage.

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1. Introduction

Ready-to-wear clothes usually come with a label that spells out how the clothes need to be cared for. However, the findings of a study show that the majority of clothes made and worn locally by dressmakers and tailors in several parts of Ghana do not have any kind of label [2]. Clothes must be taken care of to lengthen their lifespan so that buyers get the greatest value for their money. Washing, drying, ironing, and dry cleaning are all aspects of caring for clothes, as are the right methods for storing and laundering. Knowing the precise fibre(s) from which a garment is manufactured is also required in order to properly care for it. If producers want their customers to be able to maintain their clothes, they must include thorough care instructions. These instructions must be written in a style and form that is easy for customers to read and comprehend in order to be effective. A researcher observed, some consumers completely remove the labels from the clothes because they find them to be bothersome and irritating, especially if they are sewn or affixed to the back neckline [3]. However, care instructions are now routinely written within knit clothes, near the neckline, thanks to current technology. For "itch-free" care labelling, this offers a durable solution [4]. The disadvantage of this labelling method is that regular washing can wash away the lettering and symbols. However, to be successful, a care label must remain legible for the whole life of the garment [5]. To help consumers

properly care for their clothes, manufacturers add fibre content to the care label information. Instead of following the symbols or care instructions, several customers claimed to use their understanding of how to care for different types of fibres in clothes [6]. This means that producers must provide a brief description of the relevant fibre, specifically indicating how to care for it, in order for consumers to use the specific fibre in the care of their clothes. Also as observed by others, pieces of information on care labels, especially the symbols can be confusing at first glance, which makes some consumers ignore this information when caring for clothes [7].

Additionally, based on anecdotal data and first-hand experience, some people ruin the appearance and shape of clothes by using the wrong laundry method or procedure. These occasionally lead to damages like fading, clothes losing their shape, the surface of some woollen garments becoming shiny from the direct application of hot iron or from using the incorrect heat setting, and the bleeding of colours or dyes from one clothe to another, among other things. A study revealed that, if consumers go contrary to the instructions on care labels as a result of ignorance and negligence, the beauty and lifespan of the clothes can be affected [8]. This means that consumers need to understand the information and instruction on care labels to maintain their clothes. As a result of the aforementioned, it is very necessary to investigate whether consumers are aware of care labels and their importance as well as their knowledge and understanding level of the information on care labels, especially the symbols. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate Family and Consumer Sciences students' awareness, understanding and use of the information on care labels.

The findings of this study are meant to assist local clothes manufacturers in creating their labelling scheme, especially with the symbols that will be peculiar to how Ghanaians care for their clothes as some countries have mandatory standards for care label instruction. Local clothes manufacturers will also use the findings to see the need to attach care labels to their products. They will likewise be helpful to Home Economics and Family and Consumer Science departments in various schools to intensify the teaching of the information on care labels. Last but not least, organizations and bodies responsible for the formulation of these symbols can use the findings to assess the effectiveness of the symbols.

1.1. Literature Review

Care labels are written instructions on pieces of fabric that are usually stitched to the inside of clothes or other items. Labelling, in the opinion of a researcher is also regarded as a form of communication between the producer or maker and the consumer [9]. They might be sewn to the back neckline, side seams, or waist seam of the garment [10]. These labels are seen as a simple and approachable way to notify customers about clothes, including the size, fibre content, and care recommendations [11]. Additionally, the care label code is simply expressed by visual symbols for washing, bleaching, tumble drying, ironing, and dry cleaning [12].

The care label's main function is to provide comprehensive instructions for handling the item. These include knowing how much it will cost to maintain the goods, particularly if they have to be sent to a dry cleaner, how to clean the clothes items (certain cleaning techniques to use), and how to avoid damage [13]. The fibre composition, suggested washing methods, brand name, and country of origin are only a few of the details listed on care labels [14]. Some of these instructions or informational presentations employ symbols. Due to people's increased awareness of the products they use and wear, as well as the abundance of information available to consumers on how to meet their clothing needs, care labels should not only become more practical but also easier for customers to understand [15, 16].

Below are examples of care labels: (Source: [13])



(1)

(2)

Plate 1 displays a care label with symbols that have no meaning attached to them. The care label in Plate 2 includes care symbols and their meanings. Care labels with symbols and their meanings are advised for effectiveness and for consumers' better understanding [12]. For instance, the first instruction on Plate 2 is "machine wash cold," which would be difficult for the average person to understand if it weren't written down.

Additionally, for symbols such as    , which means hand wash, any bleach (when needed), tumble dry (normal, low heat) and iron (low) respectively, a consumer without a Clothes and Textile background will find it difficult to use such information. Symbols that are employed in conjunction with words have a deeper meaning [17]. Care labels belong to the category of symbols known as cognitive/perceptual symbols [18]. A study categorises perceptual symbols as modal because there may be no connection between their structure and perceptual state or meaning [19]. As a result, not all of the symbols used correspond to their intended meaning, such as the symbol for "tumble dry" which is a square with a circle inside it.

Customers should carefully read and analyse the instructions on care labels before making a purchase. The majority of Canadian consumers read the care label before purchasing and caring for clothes, according to research [20]. However, shopping wisely will lead to the acquisition of clothes of superior quality. This entails taking into account both the intended usage of the item and the level of maintenance it will require, which may be established by reading the care label [21]. Another finding found that women use care label information more frequently while purchasing clothes [20]. This is probably due to the fact that women or female household members are often in charge of laundry and clothes maintenance at home.

According to other studies, consumers may not understand and use the information on care labels at a high enough rate [22, 23]. A study involving housewives found that respondents were able to identify the washing and ironing symbols but were not able to identify the bleaching and drying symbols [12]. If customers are unable to interpret those symbols, they will find it difficult to understand and use the information which could affect the longevity of the clothes. Furthermore, researchers contend that customers would experience less worry while purchasing a product if they were well informed about it and confident in their abilities to take care of it [24].

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research design

The study was quantitative in nature and gathered data through a cross-sectional survey design to achieve the aim of the study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the primary data.

2.2. Sample and sampling procedure

The target population consisted of all Family and Consumer Sciences students at the University for Development Studies, Nyankpala campus. This was made up of 270 students. Strengthening individual and family well-being across the lifespan is one of the objectives of Family and Consumer Sciences education. Since its inception, this discipline has been focused on applying knowledge to raise individual and family standards of living [25, 26]. Students studying Family and Consumer Sciences take courses in Clothes and Textiles that cover fibres with a variety of characteristics and methods of care. As a result, they are expected to comprehend the meanings of the symbols found on care labels and apply them to the maintenance of their clothes. Using Morgan and Krejcie's chart, the sample size adopted for the study was 159 [27].

2.3. Instrument for collecting primary data

The instrument adopted for the study was a seven-item questionnaire. This included a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree and strongly disagree as well as a descriptive table where respondents were asked to give or write the meaning of the symbols on care labels. The instrument was used to seek information on the awareness level of the students on care labels, their understanding level of the information on care labels (especially with the symbols) and whether as consumers, they use the care label information in caring for their clothes. This was divided into four sections. Section 'A' asked for the demographic information of respondents such as gender, age, marital status and qualification. Section B assessed students' awareness as well as their usage of the information on care labels. Section C examined students' perception of care labels and lastly, Section D assessed students understanding level of the information particularly the symbols on care labels. Students were provided with the symbols and their meanings and were made to write the meaning of those symbols beside them. The content and face validity of the questionnaire were established with the assistance of colleagues in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, the Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Sciences, University for Development Studies. Their comments and suggestions were incorporated to make the instrument valid before pretesting it. The questionnaires were administered in person to respondents because this gives the researcher an opportunity to establish rapport and explain terms that are not clear to respondents [12].

3. Results

3.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Students

The demographic characteristics of the students were investigated. These included gender, age, marital status and level. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	25	15.7
	Female	134	84.3
Age	17-22	114	71.7
	23-28	42	26.4
	29-34	3	1.9
Marital status	Single	136	85.5
	Married	23	14.5
Level	100	43	27.0
	200	32	20.1

	300	44	27.7
	400	40	25.2
Total		159	100.0

Source: Field data, 2023

The findings in [Table 1](#) reveal that more females (84.3%) than males (15.7%) participated in this study with more of the respondents between the age range of 17-22 (71.7%). Also, there was a fair representation of all the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences levels with 27.0% from level 100, 20.1% from level 200, 27.7% from level 300 and 25.2% from level 400.

3.2. Students' usage of care labels

3.2.1. Students' awareness of care labels on clothes

Students were asked to state whether they are aware of care labels on clothes. The results are presented in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Students' awareness of care labels on clothes

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	122	76.7
No	18	11.3
Not sure	19	11.9
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field data, 2023

The results in [Table 2](#) show that most students (76.7%) are aware that clothes have care labels attached to them even though some students (11.9%) were not sure whether clothes have care labels. However, 11.3% of the students do not know there are care labels on clothes.

3.2.2. How often students use the information on care labels when purchasing clothes

The researcher further investigated how often students use the information on care labels when purchasing clothes. The results are presented in [Table 3](#).

Table 3. How often students use the information on care label when purchasing clothes

	Frequency	Percentage
Always	17	10.7
Once in a while	78	49.1
Sometimes	35	22.0
Not sure	16	10.1
Never	13	8.2
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field data, 2023

The findings in [Table 3](#) revealed that quite a number of the students (49.1%) use the information on care labels once in a while when purchasing clothes. 22.0% and 10.7% sometimes and always use the information respectively when making purchases while 8.2% never use the information.

3.2.3. How often students use the information on care labels when caring for clothes (washing, drying, ironing, dry cleaning).

Students were asked to state how often they use the information on care labels when caring for clothes and [Table 4](#) presents the findings.

Table 4. How often students use the information on care label when caring for clothes

	Frequency	Percentage
Always	16	10.1
Once in a while	31	19.5
Sometimes	79	49.7
Not sure	24	15.1
Never	9	5.7
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field data, 2023

[Table 4](#) revealed that almost half of the students (49.7%) sometimes use the information on care labels when caring for clothes with 19.5% using the information once in a while. Some of the students (15.1%) were not sure whether they use the information with 5.7% never using the information when caring for clothes.

3.3. Students' attitudes toward care labels

Students were asked to state what they do to care labels on clothes, whether they cut them off or keep them, the results are presented in [Table 5](#).

Table 5. What students do to the care label on clothes

	Frequency	Percentage
Cut it off	40	25.2
Keep it	119	74.8
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field data, 2023

The findings in [Table 5](#) showed that most students (74.8%) keep the care labels on clothes with quite a few (25.2%) cutting them off.

3.3.1. Students' understanding of the information on care labels

Students were asked whether they understand the information on care labels. The results are presented in [Table 6](#).

Table 6. Students understand level of the information on the care label

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	92	57.9
No	67	42.1
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field data, 2023

[Table 6](#) revealed that more than half of the students (57.9%) admitted that they understand the information on care labels even though 42.1% do not understand them.

3.3.2. Students' perception of care labels on clothes

[Table 7](#) shows the results of the perceptions of students on care labels on clothes.

Table 7. Students' perception of care labels

Perception	Mean	Std. Deviation
Care labels are very important	1.50	.64
They provide all the necessary information needed to care for clothes	1.94	.84
It is easy to understand the information on care labels	2.53	.95
I do not see them as a cause of irritation	2.45	1.01
All the clothes I buy have care labels	3.21	.96
Average	2.33	.88

Scale 1=Strongly agree, 2=Agree, 3=Not sure, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly disagree. The closer the mean to 1, the stronger the agreement.

From [Table 7](#), it can be seen that most students with a mean score of 1.50 and 1.94 agree that care labels are very important and provide all the necessary information needed to care for clothes respectively. However, students with a mean score of 2.53 were not sure it is easy to understand the information on care labels while care labels not being seen as a cause of irritation scored a mean of 2.45 which was also moving towards not sure. Also, most students with a mean score of 3.21 were not sure whether all the clothes they buy have care labels.

Table 8. Students' identification of the care symbols

	Symbol (percentage)																									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
Do not wash	1.3	3.2	1.3	-	-	74.2	1.3	-	3.2	1.3	-	1.3	1.9	3.8	-	-	3.8	-	1.9	-	-	-	-	2.5	-	1.3
Bleaching is allowed	5	-	-	0.6	8.8	0.6	38	3.8	10.8	1.9	5.7	1.9	2.5	-	-	-	3.2	-	1.3	3.1	-	-	-	4.4	-	-
Tumble dry (normal)	1.3	5	-	-	-	0.6	5.1	5.1	3.2	7.6	40.3	2.5	-	4.5	0.6	7.5	3.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	2.5	1.3
Only chlorine bleaching is allowed	1.3	-	0.6	2.5	-	-	5.1	68.2	2.5	-	3.1	1.3	7.5	5.1	-	-	-	1.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.4	-
Only non-chlorine bleaching is allowed	-	-	4.4	-	-	0.6	24.1	5.1	41.1	10.8	-	1.3	1.3	2.5	-	-	0.6	1.3	1.9	-	-	-	1.3	1.9	1.9	1.9
Bleaching is not allowed	-	2.5	-	1.3	-	-	4.4	1.9	4.4	41.8	6.3	1.3	7.5	5.1	4.4	0.6	3.8	-	-	-	-	-	1.9	5.7	5.1	-
Do not dry	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.6	4.4	8.2	5	13.3	42.1	6.4	-	-	3.8	-	-	-	-	3.1	-	4.4	5.7	1.9
Do not tumble dry	1.3	1.9	-	-	1.3	10.7	0.6	-	7	3.8	7.5	30.4	9.4	2.5	1.3	2.5	3.8	0.6	-	-	-	1.3	-	2.5	3.8	2.5
Line dry	3.1	-	3.2	1.3	-	0.6	9.5	1.9	6.3	3.2	1.9	3.2	6.3	25.5	17	10.1	8.9	-	-	-	-	2.5	-	0.6	-	-
Machine wash (hot)	2.5	8.2	22.8	47.5	1.3	-	-	-	1.3	1.3	3.8	-	0.6	1.3	2.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.3	-	-	-	0.6
Hand wash	6.3	-	-	1.3	79.9	2.5	0.6	-	-	-	1.9	-	-	-	-	2.5	-	-	-	-	-	1.3	0.6	1.3	-	-
Drip dry	0.6	-	-	5.7	-	1.3	2.5	5.7	1.3	-	-	1.9	6.9	12.7	44	6.9	2.5	-	1.9	0.6	-	-	3.1	1.9	0.6	1.3

Do not iron	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.6	-	0.6	-	-	-	-	1.3	6.3	-	2.5	1.9	-	-	0.6	5.7	79.2	-	-	-
Dry clean	8.8	3.8	-	1.9	5.7	-	-	-	1.9	1.9	11.9	2.5	-	5.7	1.9	6.9	-	1.3	1.3	0.6	-	-	0.6	41.1	2.5	-
Do not dry clean	1.3	-	2.5	-	-	2.5	-	-	-	3.8	-	2.5	5.7	1.3	-	5	3.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.4	56.3	1.9
Do not wring	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.9	-	24.7	-	-	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	0.6	-	3.8	-	4.4	85.4
Machine wash (cold)	11.9	50.6	12.7	1.9	-	3.8	-	1.3	-	-	0.6	1.3	-	2.5	1.9	2.5	-	3.8	0.6	-	-	-	0.6	1.3	-	-
Iron (low)	-	1.3	1.3	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	3.2	1.3	7	-	-	0.6	-	1.9	13.2	71.7	5.7	-	-	-	2.5	-	-
Dry flat	3.1	-	-	-	-	-	4.4	2.5	-	-	3.1	1.9	3.1	8.3	11.3	44.7	5.7	0.6	-	4.4	-	-	1.9	3.8	1.9	-
Dry in shade	-	1.9	-	4.4	-	-	3.2	-	7.6	3.8	1.9	-	-	6.4	3.1	6.9	41.8	0.6	-	3.1	4.4	1.3	-	2.5	3.8	-
Iron (medium)	1.9	-	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.5	-	-	-	-	1.3	0.6	-	1.9	13.8	69.8	2.5	6.9	-	-	-	-
Machine wash (warm)	6.3	5.1	34.2	27.2	1.9	-	-	-	1.3	1.3	1.9	-	1.9	-	0.6	-	4.4	-	1.9	1.3	1.3	-	-	-	1.3	-
Iron in any temperature (steam or hot)	-	-	3.2	1.9	-	-	-	2.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.6	0.6	3.8	66.7	3.1	6.3	8.8	3.8	3.1	-	-	-
Machine wash (normal)	44	16.5	12.7	-	-	-	0.6	-	-	1.3	3.1	1.9	-	2.5	1.3	1.3	-	1.3	-	-	1.3	0.6	3.1	3.2	0.6	1.3
Iron (high)	-	-	-	1.3	-	0.6	-	1.3	-	-	-	-	1.3	1.3	-	1.3	-	1.3	-	5	78.6	0.6	-	2.5	1.3	0.6
Do not steam	-	-	-	-	1.3	1.9	-	-	3.2	0.6	0.6	-	1.9	1.3	-	-	3.2	3.8	0.6	-	1.9	71.7	0.6	1.3	3.8	-

Based on [Table 8](#), the percentages of students who were able to give the correct meaning of the symbols are presented in [Table 9](#). These are arranged according to the symbols with the highest percentage.

Table 9. Percentages of students who were able to identify the care symbols.

Symbol	Correct		Wrong	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Z- Do not wring	135	84.9	24	15.1
E- Hand wash	127	79.9	32	20.1
W- Do not iron	126	79.2	33	20.8
U- Iron (high)	125	78.6	34	21.4
F- Do not wash	118	74.2	41	25.8
V- Do not steam	114	71.7	45	28.3
S- Iron (low)	114	71.7	45	28.3
T- Iron (medium)	111	69.8	48	30.2
H- Only chlorine bleaching is allowed	107	67.3	52	32.7
R- Iron in any temperature (steam or dry)	106	66.7	53	33.3
Y- Do not dry clean	89	56.0	70	44.0
B- Machine wash (cold)	80	50.3	79	49.7
D- Machine wash (hot)	75	47.2	84	52.8
P- Dry flat	71	44.7	88	55.3
A-Machine wash (normal)	70	44.0	89	56.0
O- Drip dry	70	44.0	89	56.0
M- Do not dry	67	42.1	92	57.9
J- Bleaching is not allowed	66	41.5	93	58.5
Q- Dry in shade	66	41.5	93	58.5
I-Only non-chlorine bleaching is allowed	65	40.9	94	59.1
X- Dry clean	65	40.9	94	59.1
K- Tumble dry	64	40.3	95	59.7
G- Bleaching is allowed	60	37.7	99	62.3
C-Machine wash (warm)	54	34.0	105	66.0
L- Do not tumble dry	48	30.2	111	69.8
N- Line dry	40	25.2	119	74.8

Source: Field data, 2023

The findings in [Table 9](#) revealed that most students could identify the symbols such as do not wring (84.9%), hand wash (79.9%), do not iron (79.2%), iron (high) (78.6%), do not wash (74.2%), do not steam (71.7%), iron (low) (71.7%), iron (medium) (69.8%), only chlorine bleach is allowed (67.3%), iron in any temperature (steam or dry) (66.3%), do not dry clean (56.0%) and machine wash (cold) (50.3%). However, symbols such as only non-chlorine bleaching is allowed (40.9%), dry clean (40.9%), tumble dry (40.3%), bleaching is allowed (37.7%), machine wash (warm) (34.0%), do not tumble dry (30.2%) and line dry (25.2%) were not identified by most students.

4. Discussion

More females participating in the study affirm that the majority of universities' Family Science courses such as Family and Consumer Sciences and Family Studies are female dominated [28, 29].

Based on the results of this study students are aware that clothes have care labels attached to them which is encouraging and is in line with the result of the third European

barometer for care labelling by GINETEX which showed that 74% of Europeans never or rarely buy a garment without a care label. Awareness of an item is paramount to the usage of that item [30]. Most students being aware that clothes have care labels is good because it can influence their usage.

The results of this study show that even though students are aware that clothes have care labels, most students do not always use the information on care labels when purchasing clothes but rather use them once in a while which is contrary to the findings of other studies [20]. If students do not read or use the information during a purchase, they will not know whether they will be able to give the required treatment or care for the clothes. Also, examining and reading care labels before purchasing clothes will result in purchasing high-quality clothes because the clothes intended usage and the level of maintenance they will require will be known [21].

Based on the results, it can rightly be said that students do not always use the information on care labels when caring for clothes which is contrary to a similar study showed that the majority of Canadian consumers (63.1%) always use the care labels when maintaining clothes [20]. This can affect the treatment that is mostly given to clothes which can likewise affect the lifespan of clothes and their durability.

Based on the results, it can be seen that most students do not cut the care labels off but rather keep them which can help them in caring for their clothes. Basically, some consumers cut the care labels because they find it to be a cause of irritation which is not the case for respondents in this study [3]. Additionally, most European consumers cut off their clothes labels while most British prefer to keep them [30]. This goes to show that consumers have different ways of reacting to care labels on their clothes.

Understanding the information on care labels is very important because for students to be able to use the information, they need to understand the information. However, the percentage of students who admitted that they do not understand the information shows that much education is needed to help such students. Previously other studies showed that the rate at which consumers comprehend the information on care labels may be low [22, 23]. However, respondents in this study proved otherwise. If consumers understand the information on care labels, they would be more at ease to purchase their clothes [24].

Based on the results, it can be said that students have positive perceptions of care labels. They see care labels to be very important like most Europeans [30]. However, some students did not see the information on care labels to be easy to understand since they were not sure with regards to that perception. Nevertheless, for a label to be effective, it needs to be understandable [31]. Students likewise did not see care labels as a cause of irritation, others reported that keeping the care label on their clothes is unclear [16]. Students are not sure whether all the clothes they buy have care labels which also explains why they reported not always using the information on care labels when purchasing clothes, unlike Europeans who never buy clothes without care labels [30].

From the results, it can be seen that the shape and structure of the symbols affect the understanding of consumers. This is because students were able to identify symbols that have a direct bearing on their meaning, for example, the symbol which means do not wring, which has the shape looking like something which is being wrung and crossed, showing that it is a warning sign; the hand wash symbol has a hand in a basin; the iron high symbol which has an iron with three dots which can be differentiated from the ones with one and two dots; do not wash symbol which has the basin crossed which proved that it is a warning sign regarding washing. The results of studies showed that consumers see many of the symbols as not intuitively linked to their meaning which makes them unrecognizable and that they prefer care labels that are written out in words [20, 30]. This goes to show that care labels should not only be in symbol form but be attached to their meanings, because symbols that are used in conjunction with words have a deeper meaning [12, 32]. Consumers should be able to get the meaning of the information on care labels and easy to understand [15]. As a result of consumers' inability to understand the

meaning of all the symbols on care labels, GINETEX has developed a mobile application known as "MY CARE LABEL" to help Europeans to understand the symbols on care labels [30].

5. Conclusion

Care labels are necessary for maintaining the quality of clothes and to get the most out of them, consumers need to have a better understanding of all the information on them including the symbols. The study involved all Family and Consumer Sciences students which included students who have no Home Economics background as such they had no idea about the information on care labels. Also, all the levels have their different schedules which affected the data collection period.

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the students are aware of care labels on clothes but do not always use the information on care labels when purchasing and caring for clothes. This can also mean that they do not care for their clothes using the right method which can affect the life span of their clothes even though they keep the care labels on their clothes.

Additionally, the students agree that care labels are important and provide all the necessary information needed to care for clothes but are not sure whether it is easy to understand the information on care labels, that they are a cause of irritation and whether all the clothes they buy have care labels. This likewise explains why the students do not always use care labels when purchasing clothes because they do not inspect clothes to ascertain whether they have care labels or not.

The students were able to identify the symbols that have a link with their meaning. This means that the students were not able to identify some of the symbols which can affect their usage. If students in the Family and Consumer Sciences department are not able to identify these symbols, then it is likewise going to be difficult for students in other departments to do so. This likewise may be partly a reflection of the general consuming public in Ghana.

Practical and Social Implication: Based on the findings of this study, local clothes manufacturers should be encouraged to formulate mandatory standards or their scheme for labelling for care labels that will be peculiar to how Ghanaians care for their clothes as they exist in other countries. Organizations and bodies that formulate the symbols should make sure the shape of the symbols has a direct link with their meaning to aid in their understanding and usage. Better still, the symbols should always come with their meaning. Teachers at all levels should also be encouraged to use seminars and other means to educate students on the information on care labels, especially the symbols. The Family and Consumer Sciences Department should encourage students to always use the information on care labels when purchasing and caring for clothes. Students should also be encouraged to educate other students about care labels since they have positive perceptions of care labels.

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