

A survey on knowledge about care label on garments by Residents in Egypt

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to examine the knowledge of consumers on the care labels found on garments products. Considering that the comprehension of care labels is highly dependent on their symbols, the process of symbol comprehension becomes very important. This study is conducted to shed light on the performance of Egyptian women in knowing that care labels exist on garments, besides following instructions of care label when laundering garments. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 156 participants. Data was collected through the interview and questionnaire. Analyses were done to show the effects of age on awareness of the existing of care labels on garments and following care labels when laundering garment products. It was also established that most of women are not aware, do not understand or know care labels on garments, also did not follow information on the care labels due to they don't care and the lack of knowledge on their meanings and application. The study recommends community based teaching programs on care labels.

[Heba Assem El-Dessouki. **A survey on knowledge about care label on garments by Residents in Egypt.** *Life Sci J* 2015;12(3s):49-53]. (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 9

Keywords: Care label, care information, Textile Wearing Apparel.

1. Introduction and Literature Review:

Studies conducted on care instructions on textile products first started at the end of the twentieth century, when the companies started being more concerned with consumer satisfaction and reducing the production cost at the same time. Even though these labels had first appeared as a volunteer service, over time, they became dependent on some regulations.

Care labels on textile products act as a guide in the care of textiles [5]. The aim is for garment products to retain their quality during usage. Disregard for the care labels can result in deterioration of textile products making them unattractive. Care labeling outlines how a user should care for a particular clothing or textile product. The label provides things to do and not to do when cleaning or caring for the product. [10]

A mandatory consumer product safety standard outlines the minimum information requirements and safe usage markings for a product. Often the term mandatory standard is used instead of the full form. Under the mandatory standard, care labeling for clothing and textiles covers items such as: clothing, household textiles, apparel, furnishings, upholstered furniture, leathers and/or furs.

Some clothes appeared to have lost their color, shape this look made the garments unattractive. Some had a baggy look at the hemline and some had a puckered appearance on the lapels, also some become shiny.

Current care labels are the combinations of various symbols referring to washing, bleaching, drying, ironing, and dry-cleaning processes that

inform the consumers about what to do and what not to do during the cleaning and caring treatments of the purchased products. Apparel-product labels are recognized as a simple and easily accessible source of information usually providing information on size, fiber content and care methods [8]. Countries around the world are trying to standardize the symbols used on textile care labels. However, the understanding and use of care label signs by consumers may be quite low [2]-[7].

A care label as a permanent label or tag containing regular care information and instructions as Joseph defines [5]. The care label should not become separated from the product and should remain legible during the use of the product. McArthur et al said that a good care label should contain fiber content, any special treatments or finish, cleaning instructions and size of garment.

Considering that the aim of these symbols is to elongate the life of the product, make it more sustainable, and prevent the possible mistreatments and damages to other products, the existence of these instructions might encourage the consumers to buy the product. This is also affected by the comprehension of the existence of these symbols as an indicator of quality [11]-[8].

Louw says it is wise for one to follow care labels all the time [6]. This is supported by Cooper [1], when he says the best rule is always to follow care labels because these care instructions are for the best treatment of the garment. It is important for consumers to care for their textile products according to care labels [4]. This ensures that the correct treatment is applied on each garment. Correct

treatment contributes towards preserving the textile product in the best condition during use.

Care labels should be made of material resistant to the care treatment indicated in the label [9]. This ensures that the care label will last the life time of the article. The care label code should be simple enough to be understood by users in all countries irrespective of language and at the same time providing as much information as possible. This is meant to prevent damage which may occur during treatments. Words may be added to the symbols for clarity [3]. Point out that the International Standard has been made sufficiently flexible to accommodate the needs of the users. This was made possible by making available a large selection of care treatments which include washing, bleaching, ironing, dry cleaning and drying. The user has room to choose the most suitable for a particular use.

From the above background the researcher wondered if garments products mistreatment was due to the lack of knowledge on care labels by consumers or lack of adequate information on products. This led to the investigation on the knowledge of care labels by consumers.

Purpose of Study:

The purpose of the study was to establish whether women in Cairo city were aware of meaning of care labels and were able to interpret information and follow it on these labels. Hopefully the study will improve the way the women aware and apply care label information when laundering clothes.

Research Questions:

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1- Do women in Cairo city aware of existing of care labels on garments?
- 2- Do women in Cairo city follow care label instructions when laundering garment?

2. Material and Methods:

A qualitative survey was used to collect data for the study from participants who actually interact 126 out of 156. In the questionnaire, participants in the survey explained if they had an idea about the care label and if they could follow the instructions.

Questionnaire was used to collect data from women to ascertain their awareness, knowledge and following the care labeling instructions when laundering. Women were targeted because they are the ones who normally do the laundry for their families.

In order to analyze the results the questionnaire was divided into three different categories of age; between (18 to 23) university students, (25 to 32, and (over 34) schools and others jobs. The women were interviewed to establish whether they were aware of

the care labels and were able to apply the information in laundering clothes. The interviews took about 10 minutes with each respondent.

Some of the questionnaire sentences and items

The Care Labels that are attached to clothing are intended to help consumers to make buying decisions, and to help consumers properly clean and press their clothes: frequency as following;

- Always
 - Sometimes
 - Once in a while
 - Never Don't Know
1. In general, do you have any idea about care label?
 2. Do you have any idea that the garment has care label on it?
 3. How often do you use the information on care label when you are deciding on what clothes to buy?
 4. How often do you use the information on care label when you are caring for your clothing by washing, dry cleaning, or pressing?
 5. How often do you consider the information on the care label?
 6. Did you follow the instructions on the care label? What was the result?
 7. Which of the following age groups would best describe you? (Please check the appropriate box) 18 to 23 years 25 to 32 years
 Over 34 years
 8. Where are you working?
 9. University
 10. School
 11. Others

3. Results and Discussions:

3.1 Awareness of existing care labels on garments

First research question read: Do women in Cairo city aware of existing of care labels on garments?

Data collected has shown that the women were not very knowledgeable about care labels on garments. The questionnaire and interview showed that most of the participants don't care about searching for care labels or even see what's written inside it, they ignore.

As observed in Table 1, the awareness existing of care labels on garments is considerably low. The first item, which indicates (always) was only 16.66% of all ages; the second (sometimes) was only 43.33%, third one (once in a while) was 46.66%, the fourth (Never) was 86.66% and the last one (don't know) was 86.66%. Thus, only 56% of the participants have the awareness on care labels on garments, and the rest did not have any idea about care labels. It was noted during the study that lack of knowledge on care labels resulted in selection of incorrect laundering procedures. Fig.1 shows the mean values of

awareness of existing of care labels on garments for all ages in percent.

3.2 Following Care Labels Instructions

Second research question read: Do women in Cairo city follow care label instructions when laundering garment?

As seen in Table 2, following care label instructions is considerably low. The first item, which indicates (always) was only 20% of all ages; the second (sometimes) was only 43.33%, third one (once in a while) was 50%, the fourth (Never) was 86.66% and the last one (don't know) was 80%. Thus, only 56% of the participants follow the instructions on care label on garment, and the rest did not. Fig 2 shows the mean values of following care label instructions when laundering garment for all ages in percent.

The questionnaire and interview showed that most of the participants don't follow care label instruction although they knew that it exists. It was observed that some of the women doing laundering were considering care labels. Some of the women did look at labels in sorting clothes. Some classified clothes by use of colors not checking care labels. It is important to first of all identify treatment required for each garment by studying care labels. This will maintain textiles in the best condition. It is important when sorting to check care labels. With regards to washing, it was observed that most women washed all the clothes with cold water. However few of the participants took note of the care labels in sorting garments for laundering purposes.

Table 1: Items of awareness of existing of care labels on garments

| Items | Age % | | | Total |
|-----------------|----------|----------|---------|-------|
| | 18 to 23 | 25 to 32 | Over 34 | |
| Always | 0 | 30 | 20 | 16.66 |
| Sometimes | 40 | 20 | 70 | 43.33 |
| Once in a while | 20 | 50 | 70 | 46.66 |
| Never | 100 | 70 | 90 | 86.66 |
| Don't Know | 80 | 100 | 80 | 86.66 |
| Total | 46 | 54 | 66 | 56 |

Table 2: Items of following care label instructions when laundering garment

| Items | Age % | | | Total |
|-----------------|----------|----------|---------|-------|
| | 18 to 23 | 25 to 32 | Over 34 | |
| Always | 10 | 20 | 30 | 20 |
| Sometimes | 30 | 40 | 60 | 43.33 |
| Once in a while | 40 | 60 | 50 | 50 |
| Never | 90 | 80 | 90 | 86.66 |
| Don't Know | 90 | 80 | 70 | 80 |
| Total | 52 | 56 | 60 | 56 |

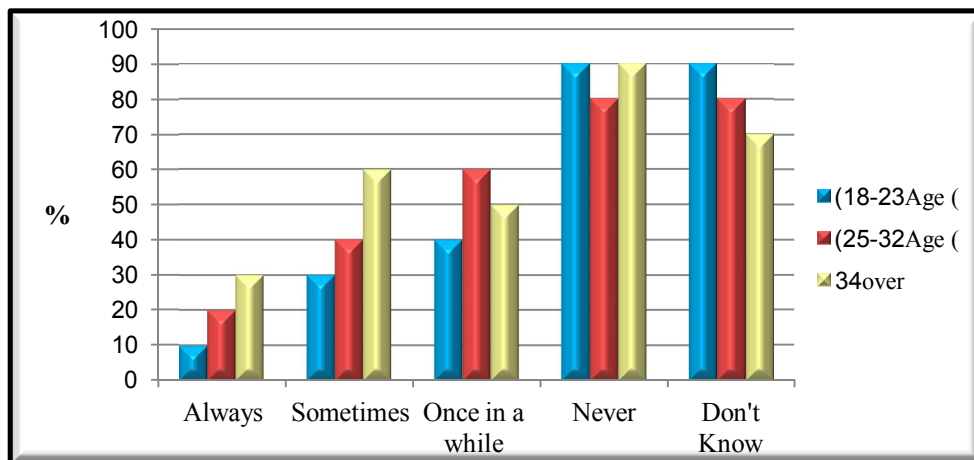


Fig.1: Mean values of awareness of existing of care labels on garments for all ages

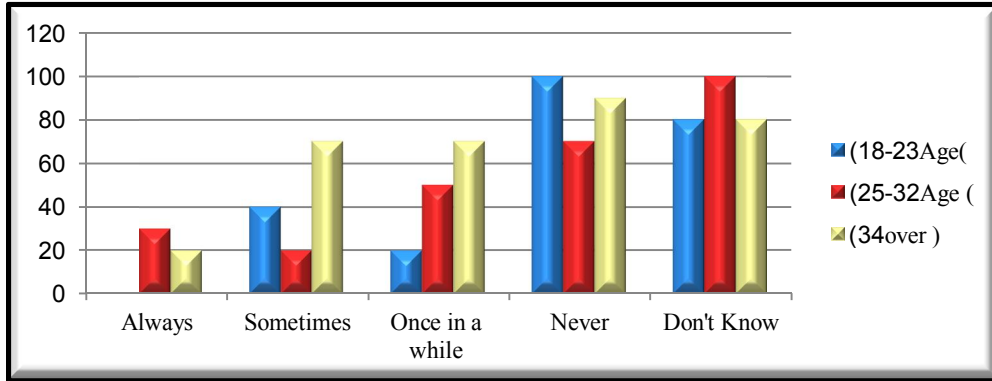


Fig.2: Mean values of following care label instructions when laundering garment for all ages

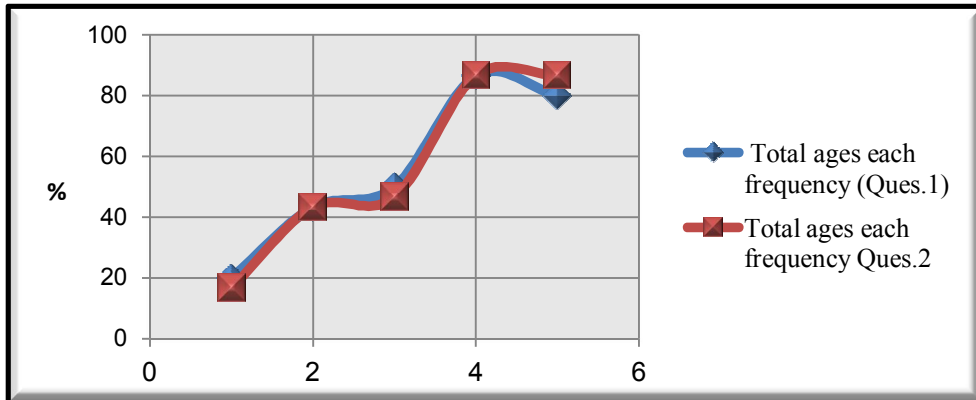


Fig.3: Comparison between (Question 1 and Question 2) for total ages in each frequency

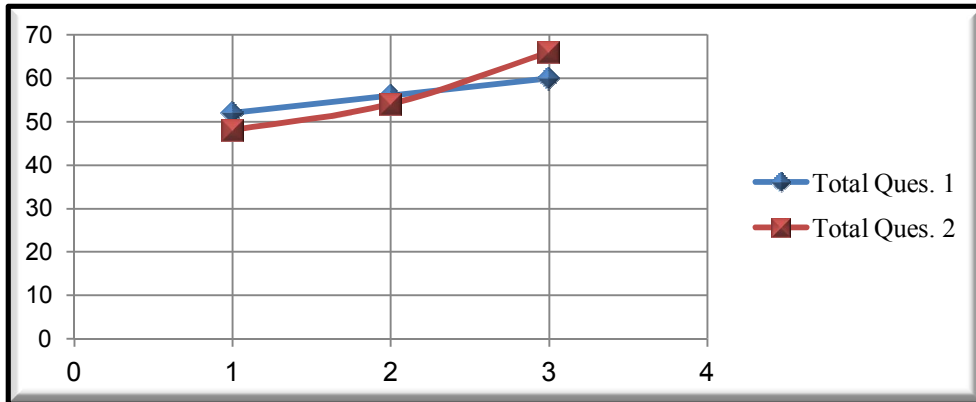


Fig.4: Comparison between total ages for (Question 1 and Question 2)

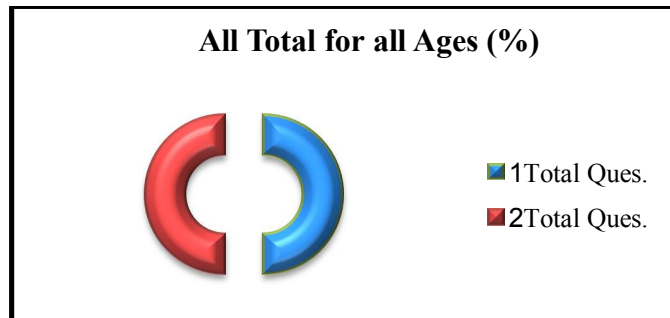


Fig.5: Comparison of all total for all ages

4. Conclusions

The findings revealed that most of Egyptian women are not very knowledgeable about care labels on garments. Some are aware of the general care label categories but are not able to interpret the specific details of each category to provide care treatment required.

Fig.3 shows the comparison between question 1 and question 2 in percent for total ages in each frequency. Fig.4 shows the comparison between total ages for question 1 and question 2, while fig.5 presents the comparison of the total for all ages for the 2 research questions, and its obvious the equality in percent between them. In general the statically tests indicate the seriousness situation percentage of the Egyptian women who have information about garment care label, whether the knowledge of the existence of the care label on garment or following the instructions, they rely mostly on the general appearance of the garment product when laundering.

In conclusion effective care of garment products depend on proper care labeling, the correct meanings of care labels by consumers and the utilization of care label instructions when laundering garments.

5. Recommendations

The study came up with the following recommendations:

1. Community based teaching programs on care labels.
2. Pupils should receive the basic knowledge about care labels and laundry procedures required for specified fibers and garments at primary school levels.
3. Concentration of consumers on the care label interpretation and significance.
4. Manufacturers to be encouraged to provide care labels on garment products to facilitate proper care.
5. Suppliers can provide care instructions on: a removable ticket, a label attached to the goods or a pamphlet accompanying the goods.
6. Further research that is conducted with higher numbers of participants is needed.

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