

TEACHERS' SHOE SELECTION FACTORS FOR SCHOOL

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Abstract

The selection of shoes among school teachers can significantly impact their musculoskeletal health when they are required to stand for prolonged periods in the classroom. Properly selected and supportive footwear can reduce the risk of developing or worsening Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs), ensuring that teachers can perform their duties comfortably and effectively. This study dives into the interesting realm of school teacher shoe choosing, investigating the variables driving their decisions and putting insight into the broad range of shoe selections present in the classroom, from comfort to professionalism to personal expression. This cross-sectional study comprised 212 school teachers from selected elementary schools in Terengganu. Teachers were recruited through purposive sampling from the sampling frame consisting of a list of all teachers obtained from the respective elementary schools' administrative offices. These teachers completed all the surveys at their workplace, which was their respective schools. Results were analyzed using descriptive analysis, which showed that regarding shoe type selection, the preference for heels (50.5%) edged out the desire for flats (49.5%) among teachers. In terms of shoe size, the majority of teachers (38.2%) wore size five shoes, followed by size 8 (21.2%), size 6 (20.8%), and size 7 (19.8%).

Furthermore, nearly half of the teachers (49%) owned only one pair of shoes during school hours, and the majority (58.0%) indicated an average shoe spending range of RM50 to RM100. Co-workers had the most significant influence on shoe selection when purchasing, accounting for 36.8% of the total. With 32.1%, advertising was the second most influential element. With 14.6%, 11.8%, and 14.7%, respectively, salespeople, friends, and relatives influenced their shoe choices for school hours. This study has shed light on the numerous elements influencing shoe choice among school teachers. Understanding these elements is critical for researchers and the footwear industry to promote proper shoes worn during school hours.

Keywords: Shoe selection, elementary school teacher, footwear survey, influence factors

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Abstrak

Pemilihan kasut dalam kalangan guru sekolah boleh memberi kesan ketara kepada kesihatan muskuloskeletal mereka apabila mereka dikehendaki berdiri dalam tempoh yang lama di dalam bilik darjah. Kasut yang dipilih dengan betul boleh mengurangkan risiko gangguan muskuloskeletal dan memastikan guru dapat melaksanakan tugas mereka dengan selesa dan berkesan. Kajian ini menyelami keadaan yang menarik dalam pemilihan kasut guru sekolah, menyiasat pembolehubah yang mendorong keputusan mereka dan meletakkan pandangan tentang pelbagai pilihan kasut yang terdapat di dalam bilik darjah, daripada keselesaan kepada profesionalisme dan kepada ekspresi peribadi. Kajian ini melibatkan 212 orang guru perempuan dari sekolah rendah terpilih telah dijalankan di Terengganu. Persampelan guru diambil menggunakan teknik persampelan terpilih yang terdiri daripada senarai nama semua guru yang diperolehi dari pejabat pentadbiran sekolah rendah masing-masing. Guru-guru ini menyelesaikan semua tinjauan di tempat kerja mereka, iaitu di sekolah masing-masing. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa dari segi pemilihan jenis kasut, keutamaan terhadap kasut tumit (50.5%) mengatasi keinginan untuk kasut tapak rata (49.5%) dalam kalangan guru. Dari segi saiz kasut, majoriti guru (38.2%) memakai kasut saiz 5, diikuti saiz 8 (21.2%), saiz 6 (20.8%), dan saiz 7 (19.8%). Tambahan pula, hampir separuh daripada guru (49%) hanya memiliki sepasang kasut yang mereka pakai semasa waktu persekolahan, dan majoriti (58.0%) menunjukkan purata perbelanjaan kasut antara RM50 hingga RM100. Rakan sekerja mempunyai pengaruh terbesar pada pemilihan kasut apabila membuat pembelian, menyumbang kepada 36.8% daripada jumlah keseluruhan. Pengiklanan dengan peratusan 32.1 merupakan elemen kedua paling berpengaruh dan dengan peratusan masing-masing 14.6%, 11.8% dan 14.7%, jurujual, rakan dan saudara mara mempengaruhi pilihan kasut mereka untuk waktu sekolah. Kajian ini telah menjelaskan pelbagai elemen yang mempengaruhi pemilihan kasut dalam kalangan guru sekolah. Memahami elemen ini adalah penting bagi penyelidik serta industri kasut untuk mempromosikan kasut yang sesuai dipakai semasa waktu persekolahan.

Kata kunci: *Pemilihan kasut, guru sekolah rendah, tinjauan kasut, faktor pengaruh*

Introduction

Globalization has impacted many elements of our existence. Previously, buyers prioritized the price of a product. However, buyers know and actively compare different footwear companies in today's market. Consumers' attention to quality has resulted in a tendency to choose more expensive brands known for their outstanding quality. The current study intends to investigate the elements influencing customers' purchasing decisions regarding footwear. Women value appealing, trendy footwear that is also comfortable since it allows them to make a good impression on others. Because the footwear industry is large and successful, there is considerable

competition, which motivates brands to offer lower pricing in order to entice people away. The footwear market is large and profitable, resulting in fierce competition that motivates brands to provide lower pricing to entice consumers away from competitors (Nasar et al., 2012).

Women nowadays choose a range of footwear to protect and soothe their feet and to transmit a positive impression through attractive and fashionable selections (Wang, 2014). The footwear industry significantly impacts the personal character and identity of individuals, which they willingly embrace (Guzel, 2013). When it comes to purchasing footwear, various essential elements come into play, including shoe styles, material selections, pricing, interactions with salespeople, and store appeal (Mofizuddin & Rana, 2017). Understanding consumer behaviour in terms of purchasing ideas and behaviours depends on aspects such as marketing trends, strategies, rules and regulations, the influence of social and autonomous media, and informed peer groups. Consumers' desires, preferences, needs, and purchasing criteria significantly influence their choices when selecting specific footwear and other items that fit their preferences and satisfaction levels (Shahrukh et al., 2017).

In the context of school teachers, a teacher is regarded to be engaged in prolonged standing if they spend more than half of their classroom hours standing. As a result, teachers may have muscle tiredness by the end of the workday, especially if they wear improper footwear. Surprisingly, teacher preferences and attitudes about footwear selection have not been adequately considered. This neglect is most likely caused by the assumption that the lower extremities, particularly the feet, can fully support the body's weight while standing for lengthy periods (Alias et al., 2019). Hence, this research was undertaken to uncover the shoe selection of female school teachers in Terengganu's selected elementary schools.

Literature Review

Footwear was initially created to protect human feet from numerous biological hazards. While its original purpose was to protect feet, it has since grown into an accessory and a fashion statement. In today's society, the fundamental goal of shoe design is to protect and comfort the human foot during diverse activities (Mofizuddin & Rana, 2017). Inadequate footwear can cause various foot-related health difficulties, including orthopaedic issues such as joint, skin, circulatory, and postural abnormalities. Poorly made shoes can dramatically increase the risk of leg discomfort and injuries. This is especially true for women's footwear, as improperly manufactured high-heeled shoes can cause leg abnormalities in addition to the abovementioned concerns. According to the International Foot Surgery Society, 80% of the global population suffers from particular foot or posture problems caused by inappropriate shoe structures and designs (Broega et al., 2017).

According to Alias et al. (2020), among female school teachers in elementary schools in Terengganu, comfort is the most critical factor influencing their choice of footwear, outweighing factors such as price, quality, durability, and style. According to Goonetilleke (2001), the concept of comfort is multidimensional, embracing different factors. Height, form, adaptability, style, weight, inside shoe conditions (such as temperature and humidity), and fabric all impact footwear comfort. It is well-accepted that obtaining shoe compatibility is critical for a person to feel comfortable and satisfied when using their shoes. However, not all aspects of human-footwear interaction are understood equally well (Karwowski, 2000).

Research by Anderson et al. (2017) on footwear comfort supports these findings, as respondents prioritize comfort while choosing shoes. They stated a need for immediate and long-lasting comfort when wearing a shoe. Furthermore, respondents defined 'comfort' as the absence of pain or discomfort, implying that comfortable shoes allow individuals to wear them for long periods without experiencing foot pain. Long-term comfort is vital for school teachers who experience ergonomic obstacles such as prolonged standing, walking, and awkward posture during the school day. The value of comfort is related to diverse occupational duties and activities and depends on the employees' qualities (Salles & Gyi, 2013).

The research on shoe selection among school teachers is significant, owing to the high frequency of MSDs. The prevalence of MSDs among school teachers appears to be significantly higher, ranging from 40% to 95% (Chong & Chan, 2010; Korkmaz et al., 2011). MSDs are a serious and prevalent problem in occupational health. MSDs are classified into several types based on the site of the pain or discomfort. One category includes upper limb issues, which include any discomfort or pain from the fingertips to the neck. Lower limb ailments, which include discomfort and problems with the hips, thighs, and feet, are another category. MSDs can affect the body's muscles, joints, tendons, ligaments, and nerves. Most MSDs emerge gradually, frequently due to the nature of the job or the work environment in which individuals work (Cardoso et al., 2009). Teachers are particularly vulnerable to these problems among diverse professional categories.

Methodology

Participant selection

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants from the teaching profession in Terengganu's selected elementary schools. The participants were all female teachers with at least one year of teaching experience. Pregnancy and a history of operations or prior treatments on any body region were exclusion factors for participant selection. We successfully recruited 212 participants, all completing the survey questionnaires at their elementary school work setting by adhering to the inclusive and exclusive

criteria. It is worth noting that the participation percentage among teachers was 100%.

Instrumentation (Questionnaire)

The survey had two sections and took about 15 minutes to complete. Section A included questions about the participants' socio-demographic backgrounds, intending to capture generic information such as age, Body Mass Index (BMI), family income, teaching experience (years) and teaching hours (daily). In Section B, participants were asked to respond to questions about the selected shoe criteria. This included information such as shoe type, size, number of shoes owned, average price paid for shoes and influencer who influenced the decision to buy footwear.

Statistical analysis

The data was analyzed using SPSS 19.0 software, and descriptive statistics such as percentages, means and standard deviations were used to highlight the respondents' sociological characteristics.

Ethical approval

This study was approved by the Ethical Committee members of Universiti Putra Malaysia (JKEUPM) and the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE). All teachers were given a thorough description of the research aims before participating as respondents, and they were required to submit written consent to participate in the study.

Results and Discussion

Background population

This cross-sectional study comprised 212 school teachers from selected elementary schools in Terengganu. Teachers were recruited through purposive sampling from the sampling frame consisting of a list of all teachers obtained from the respective elementary schools' administrative offices. Based on Table 1, the majority of teachers were 41.8 years old on average (with a standard deviation of 6.82) with 39.2% of them had a normal BMI, followed by the overweight, obese, and underweight groups, which had percentages of 34.9%, 23.6%, and 2.4%, respectively. Most teachers (81.1%) reported a monthly household income of more than RM 4,000. Furthermore, 52.8% of teachers in this study had 1 to 10 years of teaching experience in a school setting with 1 to 4 teaching hours (79.7%). Several significant factors were discovered as contributors to MSDs in a study conducted by Alias et al. (2020). Age, BMI, the number of standing hours, and the footwear used during school hours were among

the factors considered. The study found that teachers between the ages of 30 and 39 and those between the ages of 40 and 49 were more likely than other age groups to suffer from MSDs in their knees (Alias et al., 2020).

Furthermore, among school teachers in India, a significant connection (p 0.01) was discovered between weight and MSDs in the shoulder, knee, and back. This shows that being overweight may cause more discomfort in female school teachers. Furthermore, researchers found that teachers regularly suffered knee and thigh pain during the school day due to prolonged standing and frequent stair climbing (Vaghela & Parekh, 2017). Thus, it is critical to understand the population’s background information to connect it to their shoe preferences, which is critical for foreseeing the prevalence of musculoskeletal issues among school teachers.

Table 1: Background Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Total (%) (N=212)	Mean	SD
Age			
20-29	8 (3.8)	41.8	6.82
30-39	69 (32.5)		
40-49	105 (49.5)		
50-59	30 (14.2)		
BMI			
<18.5 underweight	5 (2.4)		
18.5-22.9 normal	83 (39.2)		
23.0-24.9 overweight	74 (34.9)		
>25.0 obesity	50 (23.6)		
Family income			
<RM 2,000	1 (0.5)		
RM 2,000- RM 4,000	39 (18.4)		
>RM 4,000	172 (81.1)		
Teaching experiences			
1-10 years	112 (52.8)		
11-20 years	100 (47.2)		
Teaching hours (daily)			
1-4 hours	169 (79.7)		
5-8 hours	43 (20.3)		

In addition to the results of this study, Table 2 concluded that regarding shoe type selection, the preference for heels (50.5%) edged out the desire for flats (49.5%) among teachers. In terms of shoe size, the majority of teachers (38.2%) wore size 5 shoes, followed by size 8 (21.2%), size 6 (20.8%), and size 7 (19.8%). Furthermore, nearly half of the teachers (49%) owned only one pair of shoes that they wore during school hours, and the majority (58.0%) indicated an average shoe spending range of RM50 to RM100. Moreover, co-workers had the most significant influence on shoe

selection when purchasing, accounting for 36.8% of the total. With 32.1%, advertising was the second most influential element. With 14.6%, 11.8%, and 14.7%, respectively, salespeople, friends, and relatives influenced their shoe choices for school hours.

Table 2: Factors Influencing Shoe Selection of Respondents

Variables	Total (%) (N=212)
Type of shoe	
Flat	105 (49.5)
With heel	107 (50.5)
Size of shoe	
5	81 (38.2)
6	44 (20.8)
7	42 (19.8)
8	45 (21.2)
Shoe quantity	
1 pair	104 (49.0)
2 pairs	72 (34.0)
3 pairs	34 (16.0)
>3 pairs	2 (0.9)
Shoe price	
<RM 50	8 (3.8)
RM 50 - RM 100	123 (58.0)
RM 100 - RM 200	61 (28.8)
>RM200	20 (9.4)
Influencer	
Co-workers	78 (36.8)
Friends	25 (11.8)
Relatives	10 (4.7)
Advertisement	68 (32.1)
Salesperson	31 (14.6)

Thermo-physiological comfort in footwear refers to the materials' properties and their capacity to promote moisture and heat transmission. Similarly, sensory comfort is linked to these materials' physical and mechanical qualities and how they are experienced by the feet through direct contact (Broega et al., 2017). The degree to which a shoe fits the foot's shape determines its ergonomic comfort. Seale (1995) emphasized that every stage of the footwear design and production process must be led by forms that respect the feet' anatomy, physiology, and biomechanics.

However, the design of high-heeled shoes is frequently prioritized over comfort and foot health. Despite medical cautions, high-heeled shoes retain a particular attractiveness for many women, and this allure may be linked to the symbolism

connected with this accessory. The link between high-heeled shoes and sensuality stems from the fact that they cause changes in the female body. The increased heel height alters hip movements, increases the appearance of their body, and gives the illusion of longer legs. Using this accessory instils psychological ease in the buyer regarding her enticing power. As a result, psycho-social comfort is connected with psychological well-being and personal happiness, which are directly related to societal and individual well-being (Steele, 2005). Indeed, this study found that female teachers tended to wear high-heeled shoes despite knowing they would be standing and sitting for an extended time during school hours, particularly in the classroom.

The researchers hypothesize that there is a link between pricing and buying intentions. According to Coelho et al. (2008), the price of a product has a favourable influence on the intention to buy. This idea is reinforced by Yin et al. (2009), who discovered that price considerably impacts a product's purchase intention (Yin et al., 2010). Quester (2009) states that price influences consumers' perceptions of quality. There is an opinion that high costs produce the perception of high-quality items, whereas low-priced products are frequently seen as inferior. Based on Fejes and Wilson (2012), while evaluating products, customers frequently rely on existing cues to create judgements about them. These clues are divided into two categories: intrinsic cues and external cues. According to Reimer and Kuehn (2005), intrinsic cues include the physical characteristics of a product, such as its size and design, whereas extrinsic cues include characteristics such as price and brand. Price is simply the amount of money people are willing to pay for a product or service. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2008), customers determine pricing at various levels based on their opinion of the value they gain from using these items and services. On the other hand, Oh (2014) defines price as the consideration given in exchange for getting a thing (Zeithamal, 1998). As a result, in this study, the selection of shoe prices among school teachers was distributed according to each range of price.

According to this study, co-workers played the most significant role in selecting shoes for school among school teachers, followed by advertisements, salespersons, friends and relatives. Social classes are defined as generally homogeneous groupings that are classified according to a social hierarchy. Even within these large groups, people of the same social class usually share values, lifestyles, hobbies, and behaviours. Almost every civilization has some form of social class, which is essential for marketers because the purchasing behaviour of people within the same social class tends to be similar. This knowledge enables marketers to tailor their marketing methods to different social classes.

Furthermore, research has found that a brand's or retailer's social image influences consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions. Reference groups, aspirational groups, member groups, family dynamics, roles, and status are all examples of social

factors. These aspects explain how external influences, whether direct or indirect, influence our purchasing decisions. Social considerations influence consumer behaviour significantly (Rani, 2014). Among the groups in this study, co-workers are the closest to the school teachers to influence the selection and purchasing of footwear during school hours.

According to Fejes and Wilson (2012), it is common for customers to rely on current cues linked with the product to generate judgements about its evaluation during the product evaluation process. According to Reimer and Kuehn (2005), these cues within a product can be classified into two types: internal cues and extrinsic cues. Intrinsic cues are physical characteristics of the object, such as size and design, whereas extrinsic cues include characteristics like price and brand. Furthermore, Ruswanti (2015) has emphasized the importance of central attentional cues and how they influence attitudes towards commercials and the brand, influencing purchase intentions. The technique of capturing consumers through visual components and music in advertising is known as central attentional cues. In contrast, peripheral attentional cues entail engaging individuals through the message delivered in commercial material.

Conclusion

In this study, the researcher identified the shoe selection factors among elementary school teachers in their daily school setting. This study has shed light on the numerous elements influencing shoe choice among school teachers. Understanding these elements is critical for school teachers and the footwear industry. School teachers must prioritize their comfort and health because it affects their job performance and overall quality of life. Conversely, the footwear industry can use this knowledge to manufacture and promote goods that cater to school teachers' specific demands and preferences. Moving forward, it is critical to continue researching and resolving the issues that school teachers encounter and promote footwear options that prioritize comfort, health, and overall job satisfaction for these dedicated teachers who play a critical role in shaping our future generations.

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