INFLUENCE OF GENDER AND RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION ON DRESSING PATTERN AMONG NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES

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Abstract

In recent times Nigerian University undergraduates dressing culture has become indecent and highly provocative and these negates our culture and societal values. A total of 480 (four hundred and eighty) participants used for this study were drawn from Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu and University of Nigeria, Nsukka, using available sampling technique. Instrument used in data collection for this study was questionnaire. The design for this study was a cross-sectional survey design, while a two-way analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the data gathered. The result showed that gender significantly influenced dressing patterns among university undergraduates F (1,472) = 3.66, P<.05. This means that females engage in indecent dressings more than their male counterparts. Another result also showed that religious orientation significantly influenced dressing patterns among university undergraduates F(1,472)=5.87, P<.05. This means that non-Catholics were found to engage in indecent dressing more than the Catholics. In the light of these findings, various organizations and religious leaders should intensify their efforts in preaching against indecent and provocative dressings, for this will help to restore our cultural patterns of dressing already lost to western patterns of dressing.

KEY WORDS: Gender, religious orientation, dressing pattern, and university undergraduates.

Introduction

Dressing is an essential part of human culture. The culture of a society refers to the ways of life of its members, the collection of ideas and habits which they learn and transmit from generation to generation (Haralambos & Healed, 1985). To a great extent, culture determines how the members of a society think and behave; it also structures one’s way of life and determines why one adopts a particular pattern of beliefs, values, art, language and even dressing.

Dressing is a social act which refers to any act exhibited by the actor’s interest, feeling and sentiments, as well as his expectation (Nwabueze, 2007). It is also an act that emanates from common social values, social tastes and beliefs. Any act that is not mindful of others’ feelings is anti-social even though it is extremely satisfying to the individual. According to Nwabueze (2007), as a social action, what a person wears must respect the feelings of others, that is the collective conscience. In a society, people dress for variety of reasons. They dress to cover their nakedness, to look decent, to show status or class distinction and as mark of self expression.

Gender in this simply means both biological and cultural dimensions of being male or female. Sears (2006) explained gender as the pattern of grouping or categorizing people and animals as males or females. Strock (2006) defined gender as the social and cultural construction of masculinity and feminity. The question which many social psychologists have continued to ask is, does being a male or female restrict or enlarge the type and quality of dressing pattern among the Nigerian University undergraduates?

Religion has to do with a people’s thought, feelings and actions in relation to the supernatural. Religion refers to the aspect of a person’s experiences which includes his thought, feeling and actions where he endeavours to live in relationship with what he deems to be divine (Emenike, 2001). He further noted that
religion is with us at every moment of our life. The positive role religious organization played in regenerating university and curbing indecent dressing is partly performed through teaching and sermons of religious gathering. In the pastoral letter from Paul to Timothy chapter 2:9,10 “I also want women to dress moderately, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God”. The teachings of the church has constituted the patterns of Christian dressing and finally a divine call to repentance and restoration of lost moral and spiritual values. Indecent dressing is a dangerous plague bedeviling humanity. It is an instrument of destruction sent from the kingdom of darkness to the world so that many be defiled and disqualified from getting into the heaven. Undergraduate Students of State/Federal universities of Science and Technology are losing credibility and focus due to this time bomb leading to carnal lust. The devil seems to be fighting the last minutes battle and the only way to conquer men is getting them hooked to what they see and watch thereby getting them entangle with habitual lust of the flesh. Most religion like Christianity and Islam, regard indecent dressing as sin. In Christian religion, we know from the Bible that the origin of clothing is from Genesis 3:21, “Unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make a cost of skins, and clothed them”. We were made to understand that God gave them these clothes just to cover their nakedness. Also Genesis 3:10, and he said “I heard thy voice in the garden and I was afraid because I was unclad, and I hid myself. From this, we can infer that Adam hid himself because he knew unclotheness was a sin. But today, our youth especially university students crave to show their unclad state to the public without fear; while males dress like females and females go almost naked forgetting the punishment attached in (1 Corinthians 6:9) “Do you know that the unrighteous and wrongdoers will not inherit or share the kingdom of God?

In the past, people dressed in accordance with their cultural demands. People dressed modestly to respect their family, self, and culture. But today, it is increasingly becoming obvious that indecent dressing has gradually taken over the dress pattern of students of high institutions of learning in Nigeria, and Enugu State University of Science and Technology and University of Nigeria, Nsukka are no exceptions.

Over the years, authorities in the institutions of higher learning as well as concerned stakeholders in the aggrieved enterprise have been expressing concern about scanty and nude dress especially worn by females in our university campuses. It is believed that those dresses are unbefitting of those who would sooner or later assume leadership role in our society.

In the year 2002, a lot of complaints from members of the public and parents were received about the obscene and indecent exposure of the vital parts of the body particularly by the students of tertiary institutions. The “Guardian Newspaper” February 2008 reported the presentation of a bill on indecent dressing by Senator Eme Ekaette of Akwa Ibom State. In her view, indecent dressing promotes vices in the society such as rape, sexual harassment, victimization, intimidation as well as humiliation of persons, and she mentioned that the bill will help in preserving cultural norms and values.

The ladies expose their bodies in various ways, they wear skimpy skirts, only about one inch longer than their pants to lectures and other social gatherings in and outside campuses. This makes them to find it difficult climbing motor-cycles or crossing gutters. As if it is not enough, they wear trousers generally known as “low waist” which make them to expose their buttocks, while the “show belle” exposes all their stomachs and pubic hairs.

The boys are also not free from the blames of indecent dressing. The waist of their trousers is lowered at the middle of their two bottom lobes exposing their pants and it is called “sagging”. This type of dressing makes them walk by dragging their feet on the ground which is very embarrassing for any gentleman.

Research reports reveal that provocative and improper dressing of students highly impacts negatively on their academic performance, and generally, indecent and provocative dressing arouse sexual drives especially in men.

Therefore, this study in line with the ongoing efforts to restore sanity in the dressing pattern among our university undergraduates, strived to fill the yearning gaps created by dearth of empirical evidence in our environment by finding answers to these problems.

1. Will gender difference influence dressing pattern among university undergraduates?
2. Will difference in religious orientation influence the dressing pattern among university undergraduates?
3. Will differences in gender and religious orientation jointly or independently influence dressing pattern among university undergraduates?

This study would help to understand the apparent persistence of indecent dressing inspite of parents’ religiosity in our campuses. The vices which indecent dressing promote can negatively make the learning environment to be unsafe for both students and staff.

This study aimed at exploring the influence of gender and religious orientation on dressing pattern among Nigerian university undergraduates. The main objective of this study was to investigate whether differences in gender and religious orientation will influence the Nigerian university undergraduates’ dressing pattern. Therefore, these specific objectives were investigated to know whether:

1) Gender will significantly influence dressing pattern among Nigerian University undergraduates.
2) Religious orientation will significantly influence dressing pattern among Nigerian University undergraduates.
3) Gender and religious orientation will jointly and significant influence dressing pattern among Nigerian University undergraduates.

The term “indecent dressing” means the deliberate exposure of one’s body to the public. Egwin (2010) referred to indecent dressing in a more specific term, as the attitude of someone, male or female that dresses to showoff part of the body such as breast, buttocks or even the underwear particularly those of the ladies that need to be covered. According to Olori (2012), this form of dressing is provocative, improper and morally unacceptable.

The incident of indecent dressing is of a hydraheaded origin. It is not just a behaviour that developed over night, but an accumulated behavioural pattern that could be attributed to the home neglect or poor parenting styles of the effect of globalization arising from exported wrong values, foreign influences, a reflection of imported high rate of moral decadence from advanced societies, corruption and high rate of indiscipline among the leaders and the led, peer pressure and the desire to belong as well as fading values, and demonization or demonic influences. Every child in a community whether good or bad has a home as well as parent(s). The influence of home environment on the development of children is not in any way doubtful (Omede & Odiba, 2000). The home is every child’s first window to the outside world. What the parents do with the child at this level in terms of training and orientation goes a long way to determine what the child becomes later in life. Children live or die, thrive or wither, due to the decision of their parents (Gunshee, 2004).

It is from a parent that a child learns about beliefs, values, and other behavioural patterns acceptable to the community. Children are kept incommunicado as a result of the perpetual and prolonged absence of their both parents from home for business or other engagements (Omede & Omede, 2004). Most parents do not check their children’s ward-rope, and the implication is that they wear anything in form of dress. Many parents also buy dresses for their children and see no need for modesty in dressing pattern, but when the children grow up, they find it difficult departing from the behaviour. Apart from this, indecent dressing can also be traced to wrong use of the internet information and communication technology. Most youths that are exposed to the contents of these culture and language, notwithstanding the good earlier orientation acquired, quickly fall vulnerable.

Furthermore, some theories were used in this study to explain some concepts or variables of study.

**Bandura’s Theory of Observational Learning**

Bandura’s theory of observational learning focuses particularly on social learning. Bandura pointed out that a good proportion of learning takes place by modeling. Modeling as used in the study is defined as the method by which an individual acquires a new behaviour by observing an event or object without any direct external reinforcement. Bandura (1986) opined that reinforcement of models often enhance the probability for the observer to initiate them. The reaction of students in higher institution of learning in dressing that exposes their tummies, part of their breast, part of their boxers, part of the thighs, etc can therefore be explained to be as a result of observational and social learning. Most of these students come from different background and there is a tendency that some of them never used to dress indecently, but on contact with such colleagues in the same classroom, there is every tendency of being influenced by what they see, observe and learn.
Nwabueze (2007) pointed out that most teenagers have idols and role models among western and African music and film stars whose dress code they are quick to copy. Therefore, it becomes clear to see the kind of influence that what these students observe and learn from their role models and their environments in general, has on their dressing behaviour or pattern. The researcher supports this theory because, most of our behaviours are learned from people around us, we call our models.

**Theory of Modernization**
Modernization theory propounded by Armer and Kastillis (2000), is a descriptive and explanation of processes of transformation from traditional value system to modern value system. In other words, modernization is the process to change towards these types of social, economic and political system that has developed in Western Europe and North America and have then spread to other European countries. This theory focuses on way in which past and present pre-modern societies become modernized in all factors to live through process of economic growth and change in social, political and cultural structure usually termed to as globalization. The propounder of this theory failed to understand that modernization or globalization is a general and not specific phenomenon. If modernization/globalization is the cause of indecent/provocative dressing, it should not be peculiar to university undergraduates only, rater, it would have spread to every class of human beings.

**Functionalist Theory**
This theory as enunciated by Marx Weber in 1978 emphasizes that the society is a system which is self regulating tending towards equilibrium. He sees the society as social organism that has parts, each part performing specific function and this function is towards the maintenance of balanced harmonious system. Functionalism is a psychological paradigm that originally attempted to explain social institution as collective means to fill individual biological needs.

Functionalist Theory is the theoretical framework of this study. This is because this theory is most appropriate in explaining the dress pattern and religious orientation. It examines religion as it affects human reaction to events around him. In other words, it brings a link between religious orientation and dressing pattern or behaviour of people.

**Social Role Theory of Gender**
According to Eagly’s (1999) Social Role Theory of Gender, people are expected to behave in a manner that is consistent with societal gender roles, which are derived from shared expectations that apply to individuals solely on the basis of their gender. It is argued that such expectations arise from the different social roles typically occupied by men and women in positions of authority, status, in certain occupations. This theory failed to consider those societies where people in them are faced with role confusion, which is a situation where both men and women were socialized with wrong cultures and “anything goes” becomes watchword.

**Impact of Globalization and Modernization on Dressing Pattern**
Dressing has been considered from the aspect of “globalization” and aspect of “culture”. Psychologically, a particular way of dressing reveals the ethnic background of an individual. The pattern of putting different dresses today has been traced to modernity and globalization (Hansen, 2004). Kimani (2004) stressed that the type of clothe or dress one wears speaks volume about the person. As a result, dress serves as talking guide as well as decoder which communicates message about a person, place or thing. The discourse of modernity and civilization as propelled by civilization throughout the acceleration of information communication technologies has spread different mode of dressing across the globe and this has emanated modality in the society.

Kimani (2004) observed that the polities of miniskirt nudity as played out in the Zambian capital of Lusaka traditional setting, has been perceived as an example of Western immorality which has attracted harsh criticisms and violated moral behaviour in Lusaka and that such behaviour has been severally and widely criticized and seen as an active contribution to the proponent of globalization.
Impact of Indecent Dressing on Students' Academic Performance

Bua and Aghaji (2014) research revealed that these wrongful and improper dressing among university undergraduates has a high tendency of impacting negatively on their academic performance as the output of male lecturers especially, can reduce when they concentrate on watching such provocative dressing during lectures. Female students on the other hand, spend so much money in buying useless dresses instead of spending them on their academic materials. Their indecent dressing also seems to make them to patronize night clubs, hotels, etc where they can have fun at the expense of their studies. Indecent dressing students are victims of academic failure or poor academic work because they have little or no time for their studies. Most of such students seem to be concerned with how to look good, attractive, and appear in the latest provocative dress. Such students battle with carryover courses with the consequences of staying longer in school than is normal to graduate, graduate with weak grade, and may not even graduate at all having outlived their studentship in the institution. Some of them become confrontational and frustrated and may become thugs, armed robbers, prostitutes, kidnappers, drug traffickers, home breakers or even assassins.

Religious Orientation and Dressing Pattern

Olurode (1994) study noted that religious orientation especially the Pentecostals, exerted tremendous influence on the dressing habits of male and female adherents. Similarly, some Christian sect can easily be distinguished by their appearance even in the crowd through their mode of dressing. Religion is a part of cultural system which is a source of belief that pattern and norms direct and control human actions (Nwabueze, 2007). Following this development, religious belief provides guideline for human behaviour and therefore serves as a means that prescribes and determines appropriate dress for the adherents.

Nwabueze (2007) study indicated a significant main effect of gender on dressing pattern. He reported that females were found to be involved in indecent and provocative dressing more than their male counterparts.

Hypotheses

1) There will be no significant influence of gender on dressing pattern among university undergraduates.
2) There will be no significant influence of religious orientation on dressing pattern among university undergraduates.

Method

Participants

A total of 480 participants comprising 260 ESUT students of 150 females and 110 males, and 220 UNN students of 120 females and 100 males used for this study were drawn from Enugu State University of Science and Technology, (ESUT) Enugu and University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), using available sampling technique. 320 participants were Catholics, while 160 were non Catholics. The students were drawn from the Faculties of Arts, Education and Social Sciences of each of the universities studied. They were 200, 300 and 400 levels classes undergraduates students and were between the age range of 18 and 25 years with the mean age of 25.

Instrument

Indecent and Provocative Dressing (IPD) questionnaire designed and validated in Nigeria by Obeleze (2010) was used to generate data. The pilot study carried out by Obeleze in validating the instrument yielded a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of .73 which shows a high reliability index for the instrument.

Procedure

Five hundred copies of the questionnaire were administered to the students present in their various departments/faculties at the time of the study. Out of these copies administered, 485 copies were recovered. Then, out of the 485 copies, only 480 copies were correctly filled and used for this study, while the wrongly filled ones were discarded.
Design/Statistics
The design for this study was a cross-sectional survey design, while a two-way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data generated.

Result
TABLE I: Table of Mean and Standard Deviation for Gender and religious Orientation on dressing Pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64.18</td>
<td>11.89</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65.28</td>
<td>11.29</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>64.22</td>
<td>11.51</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Catholics</td>
<td>65.50</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 above shows that female participants had a slightly higher mean score on dressing pattern (X=65.28, SD=11.29) than male participants (x=64.18,SD=11.89). The result also indicated that non-Catholics had a higher mean score on dressing pattern (x=65.50, SD=11.50) than their Catholics counterparts (x=64.22, SD=11.51).

TABLE II: ANOVA Summary table for gender and religious orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III of square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender:</td>
<td>83.737</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>83.737</td>
<td>3.663</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Orientation</td>
<td>741.024</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>741.024</td>
<td>5.871</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender X Religious Orientation</td>
<td>55.624</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55.624</td>
<td>.441</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>59578.684</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>126.226</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2079490.000</td>
<td>480</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>63950.800</td>
<td>479</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Keys: *=p<.05 ns=not significant

Result as indicated in table II above showed a significant main effect of religious orientation F (1, 472) = 5.87, p<.05. This means that non-Catholics were found to engage in indecent dressing more than their Catholic counterparts. The hypothesis which stated that religious orientation will not significantly influence dressing pattern among university undergraduates was rejected. Also, there was a significant gender main effect F (1,472) = 3.66, p<.05. This means that females engage in indecent dressing more than their male counterparts. As a result, the hypothesis which stated that gender will not significantly influence dressing pattern among university undergraduates was rejected. Finally, there was no interaction effect between gender and religious orientation on dressing pattern.

Discussion
This study investigated the influence of gender and religious orientation on dressing pattern among university undergraduates. The result of the first hypothesis tested showed a significant gender main effect on dressing pattern of university undergraduates. This shows that females engage in indecent and provocative dressing more than their male counterparts, and as a result, the first hypothesis was rejected. This result is in agreement with that of Nwabueze (2007) study, which reported that females engage in indecent and provocative dressing more than the males.

Also, the result of the second hypothesis showed a significant main effect of religious orientation on dressing pattern among university undergraduates. This means that non-Catholics were found to engage in indecent dressing more than their Catholics counterparts. This is in line with Olurode (1994) study, which reported that religious orientation especially the Pentecostals, exerted tremendous influence on the dressing habits of male and female adherents.

In summary, both gender and religious orientation were found to have significant main influence or effect on dressing pattern among university undergraduates.
In conclusion, gender and religious orientation have been found to have significant influence on dressing pattern among university undergraduates. That is, females were found to engage in indecent and provocative dressing more than the males, while non-Catholics were found to engage in indecent and provocative dressing more than their catholic counterparts. Various organizations, religious leaders, teachers and other relevant bodies, should intensify efforts in condemning and maintaining zero tolerance to any form of indecent/provocative dressing.

In the light of the above results, therefore, the researcher recommends that various organizations and religious leaders should intensify their efforts in preaching against indecent and provocative dressings, for this will help to restore our cultural patterns of dressing already lost to western patterns of dressing.

Furthermore, school authorities should put in place a dressing code for students. Parents should ensure that they do not fail in their responsibilities to instill moral and religious values in their children, and should also monitor the kind of things their children do that can affect the child’s moral behaviour negatively.
References


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