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**INDECENT DRESSING AMONG STUDENTS OF TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study investigated the effects of indecent dressing in Adamawa State educational tertiary institutions. The study adopted a survey research design. 300 students were selected from the three tertiary institutions through stratified random sampling technique using sex, age and class level as strata. The instrument was validated by two experts in Counselling Psychology and Test and Measurement, while test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument, and the reliability coefficient was 0.87. Results showed that the factors influencing indecent dressing included imitation of western style of dressing, peer/ social group pressure, wrong and inadequate family orientation on the correct dressing manners, among others. The results also revealed the effects of indecent dressing to include poor academic performance, lack of concentration in class, seduction of lecturers, victimization of students by members of staff, dropping out of school, and leakage of examination of questions by such lecturers. In conclusion, the mode of dressing by undergraduates in tertiary institutions is worrisome and unacceptable. The study recommended that the school management in tertiary institutions should organize seminars, conferences, workshops and public enlightenment programmes regularly to sensitize and enlighten undergraduates on the need to dress decently in the society.

**KEYWORDS:** Indecent dressing, fashion, sexual harassment, poor parenting and social ills

**INTRODUCTION**

Dressing is an act of putting on clothes. Importance of wearing a clothe on the body is in order to protect, beautify or adorn it. Clothes are one of the basic necessities of man. In its widest sense, it includes a great range of material that man wears or applies to the body. Clothing includes dresses, shoes, jewellery, hairdo and make- up. Clothing is also used to show people's status and the roles they play in society (Anyakoha & Eluwa, 2008). They further explained that the clothe someone decides to wear influences the impression people have about such an individual. It also tells about the family such a person comes from. It can also affect the person's comfort and self-confidence. The dressing pattern of an individual is a kind of "sign language" that communicates a complete set of information and is usually the basis on which immediate impressions are formed (Kiran, 2002).

A dress is therefore said to be indecent when it has provocative or stimulating influence on almost all those that happen to view it on the user.(Egwim (2010). Although, there are no universally acceptable ways of dressing, dresses are meant to serve some definable purposes, notwithstanding

one's country or region. They are part of people's culture and they define their tribal or ethnic identity. Apart from dresses being a means for cultural identity, they are for ornamental or aesthetic purposes, for protection of the body against harsh weather conditions as well as for covering the intimate part of the body (Omede, 2011). These purposes are important especially as they form major aspects of a person's personality. Indecent appearance has come to characterize the dress pattern of many students on the campuses of higher learning in Nigeria. There is hardly any higher institution of learning in this country that is not faced with this nauseating problem. Taking a close study of some of the Nigerian Daily Newspapers, one would see series of pictures that testify to the fact that dressing among young people is sexy and indecent.

Uba (2006) states that in the past years, when men were men and women were submissive, the basic essence of covering the female anatomy was of grave importance. Women were proud to cover up themselves, but today all that seem to have been swept off the dust of history. Wherever you turn, on the street, in the bus, in the campus, in the market places, there all shapes and types of breast rudely and embarrassingly stare at everyone in sight. The way students on these campuses of learning particularly, the female ones, dress seductively leaves much to be desired. What the girls call skirts that they wear is just "one inch" longer than their pants. When they put on such dresses, they struggle to sit down, find difficulty in climbing machines, cross gutters as well as pick anything from the ground. Apart from the skimpy and tight fitting nature of these dresses, they are again transparent; revealing certain parts of the bodies that under normal dressing patterns ought to be hidden away from the glare of people (Omede, 2011).

Obilo and Okugo (2013) observed that public Nigerian universities are battling with the wave of indecency, notably among female students. The authors explained the situation as the reign of skimpy dresses on campus which has turned many campuses to fashion runways. Beside that wearing short skirts some female undergraduates throw caution to the wind by displaying their boobs as a cheap means of getting attention. Dress to kill is now a popular slogan in lecture halls with the intention of looking sexy or classy, forgetting that they ought to look responsible. The dressing patterns of students have been viewed as anti-African and are invented. This un-African dressing pattern among undergraduates of this generation has generated lots of concern and worry among the citizens.

Olori (2003) viewed that the dressing pattern of undergraduate students are determined by factors such as mass media, peer pressure, religious, culture among others. Indecent dressing is the major cause of the various assault and sexual harassment recorded in the society over time. Iheanacho (2005) states that skimpy, transparent and sexy dresses worn by female undergraduates elicit sexual responses in males; such dresses were dresses that expose the legs, dress that expose the breast and dresses that show the exact size and shape of the buttocks. Ibanga (1991) collaborates "exposing sensitive parts of the female body send wrong signals to the males" These forms of dresses suggest

that such ladies need attention and that they are irresponsible and so there are always irresponsible men to dialogue, lure or force them to bed for sex.

The tertiary institutions are described as both an academic and social institution. It is viewed by the public as a panacea for the ills of the society. It is also expected to solve one's social, economic and political problems (Esiowu & Igbo, 2008). In higher institutions of learning, due to influence of peers and other environmental pressure, they have exaggerated need to appear and belong. The more fashionable and well-dressed the undergraduates, the higher status they achieve in the institution. Most Nigerian students have dropped their traditional clothing styles to foreign styles. People of many countries have dropped their cultural clothing styles and adopted western dress styles for everyday wears. These dressing patterns or styles are regarded as sexy fashion which allowed a degree of display of the body for appraisal and approval from the opposite sex. These styles or patterns were not previously experienced in the streets because they were seemed the ultimate in decadent behaviour. The undergraduates have completely shifted to this crazy dressing pattern that makes them appear half naked most of the time.

Indecent appearance has come to characterize the dress pattern of many students on the campuses of higher learning in Nigeria. There is hardly any higher institution of learning in this country that is not faced with this nauseating problem. The way students on these campuses of learning particularly, the female ones, dress seductively leaves much to be desired. What the girls call skirts that they wear is just "one inch" longer than their pants. When they put on such dresses, they struggle to sit down, find difficulty in climbing machines, cross gutters as well as pick anything from the ground. Apart from the skimpy and tight fitting nature of these dresses, they are again transparent; revealing certain parts of the bodies that under normal dressing patterns ought to be hidden away from the glare of people (Omede, 2011).

In the case of boys, their pattern of dress is different. It makes them to look so dirty and very unattractive with unkempt hairs and dirty jeans having pockets of holes deliberately created around the knees and the lower part of the trousers allowed to flow on the ground because they go through their heels into their legs as socks (Omede, 2011). The waist of their trousers are lowered and fastened tightly at the middle of the two bottom lobes to reveal their boxers (pants). And when they are walking, they drag their legs and one of their hands particularly, the left one, cupping their invisible scrotum as if they will fall to the ground if not supported. Many of them because of how they dressed had at one time or the other become victims of rape, lured into prostitution, used for ritual purpose, unable to complete their education or training and also engaged in other ancillary social and moral problems like cultism and lying to mention these few. Although, there are no universally acceptable way or ways of dressing, dresses are meant to serve some definable purposes, country or region notwithstanding. They are part of a peoples' culture and they define their tribal or ethnic identity (Omede, 2011).

Apart from dresses being a means for cultural identity, they are for ornamental or aesthetic purposes, for protection of the body against harsh weather conditions as well as for covering the intimate parts of the body (Answer.com, 2011; &Articlesbase.com, 2011). These purposes are important especially as they form major aspects of a person's personality. But as important as these purposes are, they have been defeated by the generation of Nigerian youths (Articlesbase.com 2011). Their dress patterns are most times anti-African, and are invented. They usually dress in manners that do not show that they are responsible (nigerianfilms.com, 2009). The African culture and particularly that of Nigeria encourage modesty in appearance as do the Christian and Islamic religions where the larger population of these youths claim to be worshipping God. This un-African dress pattern among the youths of this generation has generated lots of concern and worry among the citizenry of the country. Religious institutions as well as institutions of learning are not resting on their oars to watch this immoral act being perpetuated, but they speak against it. For instance, Olori (2003) reported that at the University of Abuja rules were made that any dress worn must cover intimate parts of the body, must not expose the breast, stomach, navel and bare chest. In the same vein, it seems that the introduction of a dress code was misinterpreted by the students to mean they should dress indecently. This is because what became obvious with students in this college after the introduction of this dress code was the alarming and arrant ways that they began to dress indecently. One is not however surprised because what is typical of most Nigerian administrators is always a wide gap between policy formulation and execution. Indecent dressing even though is not accepted as the normality, is seen to be gaining ascendancy. One then wonders what becomes of the society tomorrow with the calibre of students that are being trained. If rules are made for people, they supposed to be adequately informed why such rules are made. It is for this very reason that this paper attempts to counsel students about the cause effects of dressing indecently as well as suggests solutions that could remedy the further spread of this immoral act on campuses of learning in Nigeria.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Indecent dressing is the major cause of the various assault and sexual harassments recorded in the society, overtime. In the name of fashion, ladies dress half naked to functions for instance; Nigerian ladies derive pleasure in wearing miniskirts, bumper shorts, armless tops etc. Innocent boys have been subject to arrests along with hooligans because of this ill. Boys nowadays fix hairs, pierce ears making them look like hardened criminals, so one cannot really blame police for arresting them. Many of them because of how they dressed had at one time or the other become victims of rape, lured into prostitution, used for ritual purpose, unable to complete their education or training and also engaged in other ancillary social and moral problems like cultism and lying to mention these few. Nowadays, there are different boy styles like sagging, hot bosom, low west and the likes. Although to say the least, these unfortunate societal ill has now eaten deep into both the young and the old, it is also common amongst artistes especially while they are on stage. It is therefore the aim of this study to assess the indecent dressing among students in some tertiary institutions in Adamawa State.

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the factors influencing the dressing patterns of undergraduates

2. Establish the types of indecent dressing among undergraduates.
3. Investigate the effects of these dressing patterns on undergraduates
4. Suggest possible ways of curbing indecent dressing among students?

## Research Questions

The following research questions guided the Study:

1. What are the factors influencing dressing pattern of undergraduates in tertiary institutions?
2. What are the types of indecent dressing among undergraduates?
3. What are the effects of these dressing patterns on the undergraduates?
4. What are the possible ways of curbing indecent dressing among students?

## Research Hypotheses

**HO1:** Religion has no significant influence on the dressing outfits of students.

**HO2:** Types of parenting has no significant influence on dressing habits of students.

Research Methodology

## Research Design

The study adopted a survey research design and assessed effects of indecent dressing among students in Adamawa State Tertiary Institutions. This design is chosen because Fajonyomi (2003) says that survey is used for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory purpose, and of course this survey is descriptive in nature and therefore is more appropriate for this study.

## Population and Sample

The study employed a survey research design. The target population for the study comprised of students of three tertiary institutions students in Adamawa State. The sample size of 300 was chosen from the three tertiary institutions by stratified sampling technique. Five faculties were chosen by simple random sampling while 20 students were chosen from each of the faculty. Therefore, 100 students were chosen from each institution using age, sex and class as strata.

## Research Instrument

The research instrument titled “Effects of Indecent Dressing among Students of Tertiary Institutions” (IDSTI) was adapted from Selase and Mawuli (2013). The instrument was divided into 5 sections. Section A contained the demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as age, gender, educational level, religion, etc. Section B contained five items on the types of indecent dressing among students of tertiary institutions. Section C contained six items on the factors responsible for indecent dressing among students of tertiary institutions. Section D contained seven items which investigated the effects of indecent dressing patterns on academic performance of students, while Section E contained seven items which investigated the possible ways of curbing indecent dressing among students.

**Validity and Reliability of Instrument**

The face and content validity of the instrument was established by two experts in Guidance and Counselling and Test and Measurement in the Department of Science Education, Adamawa State University, Mubi. The reliability of the instrument was carried out in Federal College of Education, Yola using test-retest reliability method. First test was administered on 30 students, while the second test was administered on the same set of students after two weeks. The reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained.

**Data Collection Analysis**

The researchers administered and collected data on the spot. Thus, retrieved data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

**Results**

Research Question 1: What are the factors influencing dressing pattern of undergraduates in tertiary institutions?

**Table 1: Factors Influencing Dressing Pattern of Undergraduates**

Items	N	Mean	Remarks
Imitation of western dressing style	300	2.54	Accepted
Peer/Social group/pressure	300	2.61	Accepted
Mass media e.g imitating actresses, newscaster	300	2.963	Accepted
Family orientation	300	2.83	Accepted
Poor parenting	300	2.686	Accepted
Fashion in vogue	300	2.67	Accepted
Love of money	300	2.97	Accepted

Accepted ( $\bar{x}$  is 2.5 and above) Rejected ( $\bar{x}$  is less than 2.5)

Table 1 shows the factors influencing dressing pattern of undergraduates in tertiary institutions. The result shows that respondents agreed to imitation of western dressing style ( $\bar{x}$ =2.54), peer/social group/pressure  $\bar{x}$ =(2.61), family orientation ( $\bar{x}$ =2.83), fashion in vogue ( $\bar{x}$ =2.67) and love of money ( $\bar{x}$ =2.97) as factors influencing dress patterns among undergraduates. However, they disagreed to mass media e.g. imitating actress, newscaster ( $\bar{x}$ =1.93) and poor parenting ( $\bar{x}$ =1.76) to be the factors influencing dress patterns among undergraduates. Based on the result, it can be concluded that imitation of western dressing style, peer/social group/pressure, family orientation, fashion in vogue and love of money are the major factors influencing dress patterns among undergraduates.

Research Question 2: What is the type of indecent dressing among undergraduates?

**Table 2: Types of indecent dressing among undergraduates**

Items	N	Mean	Remark
Pulling of trousers to the buttocks	300	3.53	Accepted
Exposing the breast and chest	300	3.22	Accepted
Wearing of short dresses that expose thigh and underwear	300	3.03	Accepted
Exposing armpits and pubic hairs	300	2.90	Accepted
Wearing torn and worn out clothes	300	2.52	Accepted

Accepted ( $\bar{x}$  is 2.5 and above) Rejected ( $\bar{x}$  is less than 2.5)

Table 2 shows the types of indecent dressing among undergraduates. The table revealed that pulling of trousers to the buttocks ( $\bar{x}=3.53$ ), exposing the breast and chest ( $\bar{x}=3.22$ ), wearing of short dresses that expose thigh and underwear ( $\bar{x}=3.02$ ), exposing armpits and pubic hairs ( $\bar{x}=2.9$ ) and wearing torn and worn clothes ( $\bar{x}=2.52$ ) are the types of indecent dresses among undergraduates. Based on the study pulling of trousers to the buttocks by the guys ranked the highest which means it is prevalent followed by exposing of the breast and chest by the ladies.

Research Question 3: What are the effects of indecent dressing among undergraduates?

**Table 3: The Effects of Indecent Dressing among Undergraduates**

Items	N	Mean	Remark
Poor academic performance	300	3.84	Accepted
Lack of concentration in class	300	3.26	Accepted
Seduction of lecturers	300	3.10	Accepted
Victimisation of students	300	3.11	Accepted
School dropouts	300	3.26	Accepted
Awarding of marks for sexual favours	300	3.31	Accepted
Leakages in Examination	300	3.31	Accepted

Accepted ( $\bar{x}$  is 2.5 and above) Rejected ( $\bar{x}$  is less than 2.5)

Table 3 shows the result for effects of indecent dressing among undergraduates. The table identified poor academic performance ( $\bar{x}=3.84$ ), lack of concentration in class ( $\bar{x}=3.26$ ), seduction of lecturers ( $\bar{x}=3.1$ ), victimization of students ( $\bar{x}=3.11$ ), school dropouts ( $\bar{x}=3.26$ ), awarding of marks for sexual favours ( $\bar{x}=3.31$ ) and leakages in examination ( $\bar{x}=3.31$ ) as the effects of indecent dressing

among undergraduates. It can be observed in table 3 that poor academic performance ranked the highest which implies that indecent dressing can be disastrous to both perpetrators and victims.

Research Question 4: What are the possible ways of curbing indecent dressing among undergraduates?

**Table 4: The Possible Ways of Curbing Indecent Dressing among Undergraduates**

Items	N	Mean	Remark
Lessons on morality should be taught	300	3.16	Accepted
Students who dress indecently to lecturers should be sacked from lecture halls	300	3.1	Accepted
A dress code or a uniform in consultation with the fashion department should be introduced	300	2.59	Accepted
There should be an award for decently dressed student at the end of every academic year	300	2.65	Accepted
The guidance and counselling unit of schools should organise programmes to educate students about indecent dressing	300	2.77	Accepted
Rules and regulations concerning dressing should be formulated and included in the students handbook	300	1.94	Rejected
The stakeholders of tertiary institutions should be involved in instituting measures to harmonise dressing in the institutions	300	1.63	Rejected

Accepted ( $\bar{x}$  is 2.5 and above) Rejected ( $\bar{x}$  is less than 2.5)

Table 4 identified possible ways of curbing indecent dressing among undergraduates. Lessons on morality should be taught ( $\bar{x}=3.16$ ), students who dress indecently to lecturers should be sacked from lecture halls ( $\bar{x}=3.1$ ), a dress code or a uniform in consultation with the fashion department should be introduced ( $\bar{x}=2.59$ ), there should be an award for decently dressed student at the end of every academic year ( $\bar{x}=2.65$ ) and the guidance and counselling unit of schools should organise programmes to educate students about indecent dressing ( $\bar{x}=2.77$ ) were the possible ways of curbing indecent dressing agreed for by the respondents while rules and regulations concerning dressing should be formulated and included in the students handbook ( $\bar{x}=1.94$ ) and the stakeholders of

tertiary institutions should be involved in instituting measures to harmonise dressing in the institutions ( $\bar{x}=1.63$ ) were not accepted by the respondents. To conclude from table 4, it could be observed that undergraduates did not welcome the idea of rules and regulations and also that stakeholders ensure uniformity in dress patterns.

HO1: Religion has no significant influence on the dressing outfits of students

**Table 5: Influence of Religion on Dressing Outfits of Students**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-cal	F-crit	Decision
Between Groups	.396	2	.198	7.961	3.03	Rejected
Within Groups	7.390	297	.025			
Total	7.787	299				

\*Significance:  $P < 0.05$

Table 5 showed the F-value of 7.961 higher than the critical F-value of 3.03 at  $P < 0.05$  level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative “Religion has significant influence on the dressing outfits of students” accepted.

HO2: Type of Parenting has no significant influence on the dressing habit of students.

**Table 6: Influence of Parenting on the Dressing Habits of Students**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-cal	F-crit	Decision
Between Groups	18.099	2	9.050	47.515	3.03	Rejected
Within Groups	56.567	297	.190			
Total	74.667	299				

Significance:  $P < 0.05$

The F-value of 47.515 obtained as shown in table 6 is higher than the critical F-value of 3.03 at  $P > 0.05$  level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative “Type of parenting has significant influence on the dressing habits of students” accepted.

## DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study was to find out the effects of indecent dressing in Adamawa State Educational Institutions. Adeboye (2012) defined indecent dressing as the wearing of clothes that are not appropriate for a particular occasion or situation. She further explained that, it is not indecent to go naked in the bathroom, in labour room or in the bedroom with your partner. Answers .com (2013), describes indecent dressing as a way of dressing that is likely to shock or offend people. The statement further stated that parts of the body (usually sexual organs) that normally should be covered for girls would be their breasts, thighs and buttocks. The study revealed that the major types of indecent dressing among undergraduates namely pulling of trousers to the buttocks, exposing the breast and chest, wearing of short dresses that expose thigh and underwear, exposing armpits and pubic hairs, wearing torn and worn clothes.

The study found out that the reasons for indecent dressing among undergraduates include imitation of western style of dressing, peer/social group pressure, imitation of on-air-personalities bane dress sense, wrong and inadequate family orientation on the correct dressing manners, negligent parenting, yearning to follow the fashion trend whether it seems decent or indecent, coupled with urge to feel among and identified with the rich. The findings revealed that majority of the students imitate western style in their dressing pattern. This finding is in line with Kiran (2002) who stated that people of many countries have dropped their cultural dressing styles and adopted western dress styles for everyday wear. Another factor that had a very high mean score was peer/social pressure groups which have an average mean value of 3.90 and therefore was considered as an accepted factor. The finding agrees with Esiowu and Igbo (2008) who stated that when people with whom they associate with wear particular styles of clothing, they tend to assume that their styles are always correct; and then tend to adopt them as their own. Hence the bible injunction that evil corrupts good manner.

This study also found out that effects of indecent dressing include poor academic performance of its subscribers, lack of concentration in class, seduction of lecturers, victimization of students that members of staff feel were insulted by their dress sense, dropping out of school as they spend most of their time hatching new indecent dressing codes without focusing on their studies which leads to eventual withdrawal, awarding of marks for sexual favours by lecturers that have fallen to this destructive appeal, as well as leakage of examination questions by such lecturers.

This study found out that religion has significant influence on the dressing outfits of students, as it defines the moral conduct of its followers, hence has effects on the dressing outfit and dress sense of

its adherents, as well as the type of parenting with which a student was raised has significant influence on the dressing habits of students. This is inconsonance with Omede (2011)

This study revealed the means curbing indecent dressing to include lessons on morality should be taught, not allowing improperly dressed students access to lecturers and lecture halls, issuing the best dressed student award at the end of every academic year, organization of orientation and reorientation programs on the need for decent dressing at regular intervals by the guidance and counselling units of the institution, as well as formulation of rules and regulations etched in the heart of school bylaws and student handbooks after due and proper and consultation with all stakeholders in tertiary institutions. The findings are in agreement with .Unegbu (2006) who pointed out that an individual is well dressed when the person knows what truly gives the individual fittings and goes for it, one is well dressed when one does not follow the fashion blindly but always make effort to create personal style out of what is fashionable.

## CONCLUSION

The mode of dressing by undergraduates in tertiary institutions is worrisome and unacceptable. The rate at which indecent dressing has infiltrated into the moral fibre and academic progression of university students is alarming. Most students are more preoccupied with what to put on to seduce the opposite sex than to read to pass their examinations. This ugly trend in dress or clothing pattern generally should be addressed by different agents of socialization such as the family, school, mass media and religious institutions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made for possible implementation.

1. The mass media is a very strong agent of socialization. Televisions, radio, magazines and newspapers should be used as channels of communication to control the rate of indecent dressing among females. The display of some indecently dressed young girls for adverts should be discouraged.
2. The school management in tertiary institutions should organize seminars, conferences, workshops and public enlightenment programmes regularly to sensitize and enlighten undergraduates on the need to dress decently in the society.
3. As role models, parents should dress decently. The behaviour of parents impacts on their children more greatly than what they tell them to do or not to do. Parents should monitor the films their children watch. Proper parental upbringing is very important to prevent children from succumbing quickly to pressure from peers.
4. University management staff, lecturers and security personnel should ensure that rules on dress code are enforced in higher institutions. Some universities in Nigeria have introduced dress codes for their students; the problem is not making the rules but enforcement. The university should set up disciplinary committee to handle cases of indecent dressing among female students.

5. Religious institutions should also help to check the rising trend of indecent dressing among youth by preaching and counselling them on the implications and consequences of this dress pattern.

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