

Factors Influencing the Clothing Selection and Wearing Practices of Youths in Tertiary Institutions of Abia State

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Abstract

The study determined the factors that influence the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths in tertiary institutions of Abia State. The study adopted a survey research design. Mean and t-test were used to analyze the data collected. Taro Yamen formular was used to select 396 respondents for the study. Questionnaire and the focus group discussion were used for data collection. It was revealed the various factors affected the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths in higher institutions. It was recommended that Universities should have dressing code for students. National Orientation Agency should organize seminars and workshops for the youths.

Key Words: Factors, Clothing, Selection, Wearing, Practices, Indecent, Dressing.

Introduction

Clothing, according to Anyakoha (2011), is any article placed on the body to protect, beautify or adorn it. Clothing includes dresses, shoes, jewelries, hair-do and make-up. It is used for satisfaction of human needs and desires. It is worn among all people for six common reasons; protection, appearance, modesty, role identity, attraction, social status and traditional identity. According to Ozogwu and Anyakoha (2005), the clothing worn by an individual gives various forms of impression, about the individual's personality traits, lifestyles, values, interests, emotional

stability, social, economical, mental and educational status.

Clothing, is also an important factor in the interpretation of body image which in turn affects the responses of the beholder. Onoyima (2005) stated that what is worn may give an impression of inner self, identity and thereby constitutes a form of identity. Esiowu and Igbo (2008), stated that clothing power should not be underestimated and that it is something people use to realize and validate themselves as they communicates their thoughts, values, attitudes or feelings to others and receive responses from others both

verbally and non-verbally. The clothing one chooses to wear also tells others whether the wearer is conservative or not, out-going or reserved, casual or organized, confident or unsure. The most important consideration of dressing mode should be what makes one comfortable and gives the wearer confidence. A good fit allows the joyous senses of motion and freedom, giving both comfort and grace (Salami and Uko-Aviomoh, 2004). Thus a well fitted garment can give a feeling of self-confidence.

Clothing is also a means of communicating with others about oneself because each time a person puts on an article of clothing, the person does more than simply get dressed. The wearer is telling something about; who he/she is, where he/she belongs, values, family background, cultural heritage, moral standard, personality among others. Consequently clothing also makes some impressions on people around; that is, the beholders. It can even cause them to react to the wearer in certain ways that could be offensive. Clothing that exposes such parts of the body as breasts, give poor impression of the wearer. Also wearing certain styles and colours of clothes that are associated with a cult group, could lead to wrong impression or identity of a wearer (Anyakoha, 2011). Furthermore, the controlling principle of the mode of dressing is pride and vanity with major determinant factors being the spirit of the age, the urge to satisfy personal ego, the pride of life

and the lust of the eyes and lust of the flesh (Isibor, 2001).

Four major theories have been used to explain the reason behind individuals clothing choices and decisions. According to Marshall, Jackson, Stanley Kefgan and Tochie-Specht (2000), such theories include modesty, immodesty, protection and adornment theories. Modesty theory is opposed to wearing of too gorgeous clothes. Immodesty theory states that clothing is not used to cover nakedness but to attract attention, while protection theory views physical protection and psychological protection as major reasons for wearing clothes. Adornment theory stresses that clothing is worn for beauty. These theories recognize the importance of clothing as a symbol that communicates information in human interaction. It also helps in the establishment of self identity and in the identification of others. The clothes worn by youths often send the wrong messages or impressions about them.

Presently, clothing selection and wearing among students in tertiary institutions in Abia State are determined largely by peer and mass media, including home videos.

The youths are predisposed to various forms of clothing norms and practices. Some youths according to Ozougwu and Anyakoha (2005) ignorantly copy and wear such indecent, reckless, seductive, scandalous and sexually provocative clothing meant for commercial sex workers. Andrew (2003) stated that

the pattern of clothing of youths is different, it makes them to look so dirty and very unattractive with unkempt backs and dirty jeans that have patches 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. Eziechi (2006) observed that trousers are lowered and fastened tightly at the middle of the two bottom lobes. These are not only revealing, they cause youths to walk awkwardly. Clothing practices of youths give rise to various social problems, including rape, prostitution, male lecturers being enticed, use of females for ritual purposes, and other ancillary social and moral problems like cultism, among others (Olaoye, 2005). It is therefore necessary that some research attention be given to clothing practices of the youths.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the factors that influence the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths in tertiary institutions in Abia State. Specifically, the study determined ways:

- 1) home video and internet influence the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths in federal tertiary institution in Abia state
- 2) peer group influence the clothing selection and wearing practices of youth in federal tertiary institution
- 3) school environment influence the clothing selection and wearing

practices of youths in federal tertiary institution in Abia State

- 4) families influence the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths in federal tertiary institution in Abia state institutions in Abia State.

Research Question

- 1) What are the ways home videos and internet influence the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths in Tertiary Institutions of Abia State?
- 2) What ways do peer group influence the youths clothing selection and wearing practices in Tertiary Institution of Abia State?
- 3) What ways do school environment influence the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths in tertiary Institutions of Abia State?
- 4) What ways do families influence the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths in tertiary institutions of Abia State?

Hypothesis (HQ₁): There is no significant difference between the mean opinions of female and male youths on the factors that affect the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths in tertiary institutions of Abia State.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey researched design. The area of the study was Abia State. The study focused on the tertiary institutions of Abia State. There are four tertiary institutions in the area comprising of

one Federal University and three state institutions.

Population of the Study: The population of the study was made up of all the youths in the Tertiary Institutions of Abia State. The population of the youths in these institutions were Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. 15700, Abia State University Uturu, 25000, Abia State Polytechnic 3300 and College of Education Technical Arochukwu 2000. According to Academic Records available from these Institutions students affairs unit, (2014).

Sample for the Study: Systematic sampling technique was used to select Michael Okpara university of Agriculture because it is a federal university Tare, Yamen formular for finite population was used to selected 396 final year students of college of applied food science and tourism for the student.

Instrument for Data Collection: The instrument for data collection was a focus group discussion (FGD) and questionnaire developed from an extensive literature review. The instrument was face validated by three experts in the Department of Home Economics/Hotel Management and Tourism, Michael Okpara University of agriculture, Umudike, Internal consistency of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded the reliability co-efficient of 0.87. Mean and T-test were used to analyze the research questions, normally values were assigned to

different scaling items of the questionnaire and corresponding mean scores were interpreted using real limits of number based on the grand mean. Any item that had a mean score 3.00 and above were interpreted as agreed while any score below 3.00 was regarded as disagreed.

Techniques for Data Collection and Analysis: Data were collected in two phases, focused group discussion session (FGD) was conducted with 30 youths to get the preliminary information on the factors that affect clothing selection and wearing practices. Secondly, 366 copies of the instruments were administered by hand to the youths with the help of trained research assistants. All the copies of the questionnaire were properly completed and returned, giving a 100 percent return. Mean and t-test were used for data analysis while hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings

The following findings were made.

- Nine ways home videos and internet influence youths clothing selection and wearing
- 10 ways peer group influence youths clothing selection and wearing practices.
- 11 ways school environment influence youths clothing selection and wearing practices.
- Nine ways families influence youths clothing selection and wearing practices.

Table 1: What are the ways home videos and internet influence clothing selection and wearing practices of youths?

S/No	Item	\bar{x}_1	\bar{x}_2	t-test	Remarks
1	Youth mostly depend on home video and internet for information and entertainment.	4.06	3.90	0.84	Agreed
2	Youths get their fashion from home video and internet.	4.15	4.00	1.21	Agreed
3	Youths emulate celebrities seen in home videos for their dressing	4.45	4.42	0.6	Agreed
4	Youths use the celebrities as models for their clothing selection and wearing.	4.00	3.99	0.56	Agreed
5	Youths get styles in vogue from home video and internet.	3.80	3.85	1.28	Agreed
6	Youths buy cloths seen in home video and internet without considering meaning of inscription	4.20	3.50	0.72	Agreed
7	Youths wear provocative appearance clothe because of what they see in home video and internet.	4.15	3.53	1.18	Agreed
8	Youths look scandalous while wearing celebrities fashion.	4.00	3.44	1.46	Agreed
9	Youths priorities are shaped by what they see in home video and internet	4.45	3.57	1.15	Agreed

\bar{x}_1 = female youths, \bar{x}_2 male youths, t-test, Remarks = Agreed

Table 1 shows that all the items had mean scores above the cut off mean of 3.00 which indicates that they were all accepted as ways home videos and internet influence clothing selection and wearing practices of youths. The items that had highest mean ranking are the items youths emulate celebrities seen in home video and internet for their dressing and youths priorities are shaped by what they see in home videos and internet.

Table 2: What ways do peer group influence youth clothing selection and wearing practice?

S/No	Item	\bar{x}_1	\bar{x}_2	t-test	Remarks
1	Peers group influence the type of cloths youths buy	4.20	3.85	0.81	Agreed
2	Peer group affects their wearing practices	4.00	4.30	1.15	Agreed
3	Peer group exert authority over their members	3.50	3.40	1.46	Agreed
4	They dress like their members	3.40	4.05	1.18	Agreed

5	The often have no sense of their dressing mode	3.40	3.65	0.72	Agreed
6	They dress to impress their group members	3.44	3.85	1.28	Agreed
7	Youths dress to attract the opposite sex	3.55	4.00	1.46	Agreed
8	Youths spend a lot of money in clothing selection	4.25	4.00	0.85	Agreed
9	Youths dressing does not suit occasion and activities because of what they see in home video	3.50	4.50	1.15	Agreed
10	Youths dressing makes them to look irresponsible	4.05	4.50	1.15	Agreed

\bar{x}_1 = female youths, \bar{x}_2 male youths, t-test, Remarks = Agreed

Table 2 shows that all the items had mean scores above the cut off mean point of 3.00 which means that the respondents accepted the items as ways that peer group influence clothing selection and wearing practices of youths in tertiary institutions of Abia State.

Table 3: What ways do School environment influence the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths, influence of school environment on the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths

S/No	Item	\bar{x}_1	\bar{x}_2	t-test	Remarks
1	Youths selection what they see in school among their schoolmates	4.64	4.42	1.18	Agreed
2	They wear things they cannot wear at home	4.07	3.76	1.35	Agreed
3	They keep the clothes at school and wear good ones at home	3.67	3.33	4.10	Agreed
4	They imitate their lecturers	3.10	3.00	2.00	Agreed
5	They imitate their actors and actresses	4.54	4.31	0.59	Agreed
6	Youths feel that they will be rejected if they don't dress like their schoolmate	4.53	4.15	2.11	Agreed
7	They wear the clothes to attract lectures attention	4.04	4.00	1.30	Agreed
8	They wear clothes to impress their cliques	3.55	3.74	1.40	Agreed
9	School make youths to select provocative clothes	3.66	3.83	1.36	Agreed
10	They select clothes that expose their bodies	4.21	4.16	1.24	Agreed
11	Their mates admire and hail them when they wear those clothes that expose their bodies	4.63	4.16	1.20	Agreed

\bar{x}_1 = female youths, \bar{x}_2 male youths, t-test, Remarks = Agreed

Table 3 shows the mean rating of respondents on how school environment influence youths clothing selection and wearing practices in Tertiary Institution of Abia State. It had mean scores above the cut-off

point of 3.00 which means the respondents accepted that school environment has an influence over the youths clothing selection and wearing practices.

Table 4: What ways do families influence the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths.

The ways of families influence the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths

S/No	Item	\bar{x}_1	\bar{x}_2	t-test	Remarks
1	They give youths too much money for buying of clothes	3.61	3.76	1.21	Agreed
2	They buy some of the provocative clothes for the youths	4.14	3.77	0.81	Agreed
3	Families do not care about what youths wear	3.85	3.45	1.15	Agreed
4	Youths see family members wearing such clothes	4.00	4.50	0.84	Agreed
5	Parents do not have time to check what youths wear	4.50	3.42	0.72	Agreed
6	Family values are low	3.50	3.60	0.56	Agreed
7	Parents encourage it as a way of exhibiting affluence	3.57	4.01	1.40	Agreed
8	Parents buy home video films that portray these type of dressing	3.89	3.48	0.81	Agreed
9	Parents allow youths to watch any film they like without minding	3.57	4.00	1.46	Agreed

\bar{x}_1 = female youths, \bar{x}_2 male youths, T-test, Remarks = Agreed

Table 4 shows the mean rating of respondents on the ways families influence the clothing selection and wearing practice of youths of Abia State. It had mean scores above the cutoff point of 3.00 which indicates that the respondent accepted the points as ways families influence the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths in Abia State.

Discussion of Findings

This study revealed from the focus group discussion that youths select and wear clothes that are indecent to lectures and some student has been branded because their clothes. The item in table 1 which is ways home videos and internet influence clothing selection and wearing practices of youths is in line with the findings of Shwartz (2004), who stated that the

media can provide information on fashion, beauty and body satisfaction and has the potential to provide positive images for youths in the process of their social development and emerging sense of identity, of which fashion decision are a part. It is also in agreement with Larson (2002), who stated that what people watch on home videos and internet form images in their head and they shape their attitudes, perception and behaviours. It also supports the findings of La Ferla (2006), who stated that people are seeing a high-school-age person looking for specific expensive fashion items, interested in replicating the looks they see of celebrities. The item, youths mostly depend on home video and internet for information and entertainment is also in agreement with Orakwe (2002), that too many students are preoccupied with indecent outlook rather than their studies. Also item 3 youths emulate celebrities seen in home video and internet is in line with Orakwe (2002), who stated that while dressing up that one should not as a matter of importance follow fashion blindly or wear expensive clothes always. She explained that it is not a crime to follow fashion but one should endeavour to create one's own style. The item, youths wear provocative appearance clothes also is in agreement with the findings of Ohanebo (2006) who lamented that the unfortunate thing in this provocative dress sense of youths of higher learning is that some of the parents of these youths are ignorant of what their

wards are wearing in schools because they hide it from them. He also observed that they buy these clothes and wear them while in school and as they go home on holidays to stay with their parents, they pack them in the school. The matter is really serious because the parents of these youths do not even know so as to start checking against such ill dressing of the youths. The study also corroborates with the findings of Adelenia (2002) that an average university student who does not go half-naked is considered uncivilized, unfortunately users of such styles are branded wayward. This is in line with Anyakoha (2011) who stated that the pressures of a peer group can act as an unwritten dress code. She stated further that wearing a style that is popular with the peers can help meet a need for belongingness.

The findings in table 2 revealed that all the items had a mean score above the cutoff point of 3.00 indicating that peer group has a lot of influence on the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths. This is in line with the findings of Eziechi (2006) who observed that trousers are lowered and fastened tightly at the middle of the two bottom lobes to reveal their boxers, also the item, youths dressing makes them to look irresponsible is in agreement with Olaoye (2005), who stated that some female youths has been lured into prostitution, used for ritual purposes and also engaged in other ancillary social and moral problems like cultism among others, it also corroborates with Iheanacho (2005), that it is no

longer uncommon thing to observe majority of our female students in tertiary institutions in dresses that exposes their tummies, parts of their breast, part of their back and greater part of their thighs, the exact size and shape of their buttocks, it is also in line with Wright (2001) who conducted a research on electronic media use by youths discovered that most youths spend more time watching sports programmes which their peer group watch and play.

The findings in table 3 shows that all the items had mean scores above the cutoff point of 3.00 which means school environment has an influence on their clothing selection and wearing practices. This is in an agreement with Bolarin and Oluwatobi (2008) who pointed out that some students clothing styles are seriously influenced by other students dressing style. She stated further that some of them dress to look more attractive than other female students in the campus and to conform to the groups, others dress to be admired and hailed by their mates. This is in line with Afamara (2012) who observed that youths in higher institutions wear clothing which distract both students and lecturers during lecture. It also agrees with Olori (2013), who maintained that female youths in high institutions wear transparent fishnet clothing which, exposes their thighs and other vital parts of the body for lecturers and students view. The findings also agrees with Gbadegbe and Quashie (2013) , who said that students wear

skimpy skirts only about one inch longer than their pants to lectures. Furthermore, it agrees with Omede (2011), who opined that students wear short knickers, and Rastafarian hairstyles to lectures, Also Ononyima (2013) stated that most student who dress indecently often battle with carryover courses. He also stated that the students tend to have little or no serious time for their studies which makes them to stay longer in the university more than expected and also going out with a poor grade. The finding also agrees with Ohanebo (2006) who observed that they buy these clothes while in school and as they go home on holidays to stay with their parents, they pack them in the school. The findings generally reveal that school environment has an influence on the clothing selection of youths. So inappropriate clothing selection, style and wearing practices present an unhealthy situation in the school environment, Idowu (2001) revealed that good or criminal behavior is learnt from a good or criminal environment He said that youths can be expected to learn from whoever they observe; parents, peers and mass media characters among others.

Findings on the ways families influence the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths in tertiary institutions had means above the cut off mean of 3,000 which indicate that the respondents accepted that families influence clothing selection and wearing practices of youths. This is in line with the findings of Omede (2011)

that students lie to their parents to keep a float and be up to date with clothing styles in vogue, it is also in line with the findings of Laurd, Pettit, Bates and Dodge (2003) who observed that family structure and family processes are believed to impact on youths need to attach to delinquent companions. They said that it is possible that youths who perceive their parents as providing very little warmth and nurturing, might seek that warmth and nurturing as well as a sense of self and identify with delinquent companions. This is also in line with Belch and Willis (2005) who stated that internet is changing the nature of the family decision making process, with its ability to provide easily accessible information and purchase options, the internet has potentially altered the decision-making roles of family members based on their interest in and expertise with the internet.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that there are many factors that influence the clothing selection and wearing practice of youths in institutions, it can be concluded that the clothing selection and wearing practices of youths may be based on varying factors, objectives and conditions based on their life experience, environment and trend. The consequences of the clothing selection and wearing practices are that youths wear what they want and like either good or bad and these has caused a lot of social vices in the institutions

because the clothes speak volumes of the persons personality and inner mind. It is obvious from the study that youthful exuberance played a major role in determining clothes youths select and wear. The respondents agreed that they do not dress according to parental advice and values of the society. Rather, according to focus group discussion result (qualitative) and quantitative data collected, all accepted that in appropriate clothing selection and wearing present an unhealthy situation in the institutions and larger society. Peer pressure, school environment, what is seen in internet and home videos were among the factors found to influence clothing selection and wearing. The youths should be encouraged to dress properly as improper dressing has lured some into dangers, they cannot easily explain.

Recommendations

- 1) The State and Federal Universities should have a dressing code for their campus
- 2) National Orientation Agency should organize seminars and workshop for youths in various institutions of learning.
- 3) Faculties should have monitoring teams that will monitor the dressing code/pattern of the students in their faculty
- 4) Parents should not be tired in teaching the youths the values of the society and checking what youths select and wear.

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