Factors Influencing Fashion and Clothing Choice of Undergraduates in Tertiary Institutions in Imo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated factors that influence fashion and clothing choice of undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. Survey research design was used. The population comprised 10580 final year undergraduate students in the institutions. A random sample of 385 final year students were involved. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics and t-test were used for data analysis. Results show that desire to enhance beauty, family orientation and to appear seductive were some of the factors that influence the fashion and clothing choice. Clothing style preferences of female undergraduates include, tight clothing, skimpy dresses and fixing eye lashes, while those of male undergraduates include body hugging dresses, and low waist trousers among others. The study recommends that parents and religious leaders should educate the youths on appropriate dressing patterns and clothing choice at early child hood-stages.

Keywords: Fashion, Clothing, Choice, Factors, Undergraduates.

Introduction

Fashion is a popular style of clothes, hair, manners and habit or practice, especially with regards to clothing, accessories and make-up. Schall and Appiah (2016) defined fashion as prevailing style of clothes that is currently appropriate at any given time. Fashion can also be described by such words as clothing style that is currently appropriate (Daniels in Vieria, 2009, Vigneron & Rekesh, 2010). The basic element of fashion is popularity acceptance. In other hand, fashion can be referred to as generally accepted clothing choice that is widely chosen and accepted by a large number of people.

Fashion often reflects society (Suna, 2013); society values (Engel, Backwell & Miniard, 2005; O'cass & Frost, 2002); status (Vigneron & Rekesh, 2010; Khare & Rekesh, 2010); due to its competitive and innovative nature (Daniellson, 2008). It projects individual's behavioral pattern (Subhani, Hasan, & Osman, 2011), used to express individual's identity (Kjeldaard, 2009; Keldgaard & Wilska, 2002). It is also used for manifestation of societal culture (O'cass & Mcewen, Banerjee, 2008; 2005; Moori, 2002); as a strong communication tool and means of transferring social and interpersonal messages (Ozlu, 2008; Omair, 2009; Keldgaard & Wilska, 2002). Fashion is also used for social identification (Ku, 2003) and for status expression (Kinra, 2006) It reflects individual's clothing choice.

Clothing is anything placed on the body to motivate action, beautify, attract, and to provide clue to ones' behavior, expectation or intention. It includes garment, ornaments, hairdo and accessories worn by people. Individuals' behavior and life style can be projected by ones' clothing choice (Mathew, 2016). Clothing choice is used to describe the act of selecting clothing among alternatives. Clothing choice can as well be referred to as individual's clothing preferences. It involves making decision on the type of clothing articles an individual desired as appropriate and ideal for use. Ones clothing choice can affect the mood, behavior, health, overall confidence and the reason for wearing clothes (Jill 2016), it can also expose one to sexual harassment and assault (Gray 2016; Bernard, Loughnan, Marchal, Godart & Klein 2015; Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez, & Puvia Costa 2013; Loureiro, & Panchapakesan, (2017)).

There have always been various reasons why clothes are worn. The reasons include warmth, protection, beauty and modesty. In the recent times individual's point of emphasis has shifted to drawing attention to sexuality. In an attempt to achieve this, they dress indecently. This can be seen in the clothing choice of undergraduate students in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The way and these students manner dress specifically the female students clearly portrays much emphasis on drawing attention negatively. The dressing style often time distract students from academic activities.

Presently, the male undergraduate students in tertiary institutions are becoming more anxiously concerned with their appearance just like the female undergraduate students than in the past decades (Le-Ferla, 2006). Supporting Omede (2011)this, reported that like the female students, most men are now expressing their masculinity through fashion. This has a serious impact on the way they dress and act (Olori, 2003). They see modesty as old fashioned and out-ofdate (Schlueter, 2007). Tertiary institutions are places of learning. They are academic as well as social institution. Tertiary institutions are seen as a cure for ills of the society. Part of their responsibility is to handle students' social, economic and political problems (Esiowu & Igbo, 2008). They are expected to help in moderating harnessing and the students' fashion and clothing preferences.

However, the fashion style discourages modesty and work

against the African or Nigerian culture (Olori, 2003; Keldgaard & Askegaard, The 2006). clothing preferences portray moral and cultural decadence in the society (Subhani, Hasan & Osman, 2011). Often times the students half naked. appear Olugbenga and Odeleye (2008)reported that most students in tertiary institutions dress provocatively and seductively especially the female students. The undergraduate students dressing pattern portrays indecency without minding that they should look responsible. The current fashion style of students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria expresses near or total abandonment of modesty as power. Schlueter (2003); Ranjan; (2016) and Omede (2011) reported that instead, undergraduate students believe that their sexuality is their power. The undergraduates in recent time have concerned themselves so much with prevailing fashion that they do not have enough time for their study and other things.

This is contrary to their academic training and upbringing. This is morally unacceptable and has become the greatest causes of social, immoral, and economic problems encountered by students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The findings of the study will educate the students on the impact of their clothing choice and preferences and help them appreciate the need to dress decently. Therefore, the study sought to investigate factors that influence fashion and clothing choice of undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to ascertain the fashion and clothing choice of undergraduate students in tertiary institutions, in Imo State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study:

- 1. identified factors that influence fashion and clothing choice of undergraduate students in the tertiary institutions.
- 2. determined clothing style preferences of female undergraduate students in the tertiary institutions.
- 3. determined clothing style preferences of male undergraduate students in the tertiary institutions.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions;

- 1. What are the factors that influence fashion and clothing choice of undergraduate students in the tertiary institutions?
- 2. What are the clothing style preferences of female undergraduate students in tertiary institutions?
- 3. What are the clothing style preferences of male undergraduate students in tertiary institutions?

Hypotheses (H0)

One hypothesis was stated to guide the study.

H0₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female

undergraduate students on factors that influence fashion and clothing choice.

Methodology

Area of the Study: The study was in three tertiary carried out institutions in Imo State, Nigeria. The Imo include State institutions University, Federal University of Technology, Owerri and Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri. *Study Design*: Descriptive survey research design was used. It was considered suitable for the study since it generalizes population using a representative sample. Population of the Study: The population comprised all final year undergraduate students in three tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria namely Imo State University (3544), Federal University of Technology Owerri (3536) and Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri (3500). Records from the Departments Registry of the institutions indicated that there were a total of 10,580 (4,243 males and 6,337 females) final year students in these institutions as at the time of the study. The final year students were used as the population because they have spent more than three years in the institutions and they are more fashion conscious than newly admitted students.

Sample and Sampling Technique: The sample size of 385 (comprising 129, 128 and 128) were selected based on the population from three tertiary institutions in Imo State namely- Imo

State University, Federal University of Technology and Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri respectively. Multistage and random sampling techniques were used to select the sample size from the population.

Instrument for Data Collection: Ouestionnaire based on the research questions for was used data collection. The questionnaire was structured on a 4- point scale. The instrument was validated by three experts in Clothing and Textiles. Their suggestions were used to improve the instrument. After validation, the instrument were later administered on 20 respondents who were not part of the population for the study, in order to determine the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach Alpha procedure. А reliability coefficient of .950, .963 and .966 were obtained for the three sections of the instrument, representing the research questions respectively. reliability The coefficients obtained indicated a high reliability of the instrument.

Method of Data Collection: A total of 385 questionnaires were distributed, by hand and all were returned fully completed after one month. This represented a return rate of 100 percent.

Data Analysis: Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions, while t-test statistics was used for the hypotheses to establish significant differences in the mean responses of the respondents at 0.05 significant level.

Results

Table 1: Mean Responses and t-tes	st Results of Respondents on Factors that
Influence Fashion and Clothin	g Choice

S/N	Factors that influence fashion trends	$\overline{X_1}$	SD_1	$\overline{X_2}$	SD_2	t-	p-
						value	value
1.	Self esteem	3.07	1.19	2.93	1.07	0.70	.49
2.	Desire to enhance beauty	3.18	1.02	3.07	1.13	0.61	.54
3.	Television advertisement	3.18	1.07	3.04	0.98	0.78	.44
4.	Internet posts	2.96	1.07	2.99	1.05	-0.16	.87
5.	Fashion consciousness	3.07	1.00	3.10	1.17	-0.17	.87
6.	Value consciousness	2.84	1.02	3.17	1.12	-1.83	.07
7.	Peer group influence	3.22	1.11	3.04	1.10	0.95	.37
8.	Need for uniqueness	2.80	1.00	2.86	1.01	-0.35	.73
9.	Social acceptance	2.98	1.15	3.16	1.05	-0.93	.35
10.	Group influence	3.04	0.93	2.93	1.03	0.67	.50
11.	Desire to look like celebrities	3.02	1.05	2.87	1.10	0.82	.41
12.	To give an impression of maturity	2.76	0.98	2.93	1.03	-01.0	.32
13.	Fashion show	2.62	1.02	2.89	1.00	-1.55	.12
14.	Eye catching fashion advertisement	2.84	1.11	2.67	0.99	0.91	.36
15.	Religion	2.80	1.13	2.67	0.96	0.70	.49
16.	Education	2.80	1.15	3.03	0.97	-1.21	.23
17.	Money at hand	3.18	1.26	2.75	0.97	2.09**	.04
18.	Economy of the nation	2.93	0.91	2.79	0.89	0.90	.37
19.	Information and Communication						
	Technology	2.67	0.93	2.74	0.92	-0.44	.66
20.	Social media	2.76	1.00	3.00	1.03	-1.38	.17
21.	Influence from other nations	2.64	0.98	2.81	0.99	-1.01	.31
22.	Lecturers' clothing or fashion styles	2.56	1.02	2.68	0.92	-0.70	.49
23.	To appear seductive	2.87	1.07	2.70	1.03	0.93	.35
24.	Culture	2.82	0.91	2.78	0.96	0.25	.80
25.	Family orientation	2.73	0.96	3.00	0.99	-1.62	.12
26.	Fashion magazine articles	2.69	0.91	2.85	0.99	-1.00	.32

Source: Field survey, 2016

Note: ** = Significant @ 5%, N₁=96 (number of male undergraduate students), N₂ =289 (number of female undergraduate student), X_1 = mean of undergraduate male students; X_2 = mean of female undergraduate students

Table 1 indicates that all the items had mean scores above 2.50. This shows that all the 26 items are factors that influence undergraduates clothing

choice; hence all the items were accepted. The results on table 1 also showed that in all the items, there were no significant differences except on money at hand (item 17). Therefore were accepted except on item 17. the null hypotheses on all the items

Table 2: Mean Responses of female undergraduate students' clothing style preferences (N= 289).

S/N	Fashion style preferences of female	Ā	Std	Decision
	undergraduate students			
1	Skimpy dresses	2.60	0.99	Preferred
2	Short skirts	2.46	1.09	Not Preferred
3	Sleeveless dresses	2.68	0.93	Preferred
4	Very tight dresses	2.67	1.01	Preferred
5	Transparent dresses	2.18	1.09	Not Preferred
6	Artificial nails	2.99	1.08	Preferred
7	Eye lashes	2.98	1.06	Preferred
8	Excessive make-up	2.68	0.99	Preferred
9	Dangling earrings	2.70	0.94	Preferred
10	Dresses without shoulder	2.40	0.95	Not Preferred
11	Dresses with spaghetti straps	2.41	0.90	Not Preferred
12	Mini length dresses	2.47	0.93	Not Preferred
13	Dresses that exposes sensitive body parts	2.25	1.11	Not Preferred
14	Very high heel shoes	2.51	0.97	Preferred
15	Bum shorts	2.31	1.11	Not Preferred

Source: Field survey, 2016.

Table 2 above indicates that items1, 3, 4, 6-9, and 14 had mean scores above 2.5 which showed that the items are clothing style preferences of female undergraduate's students; hence the items were preferred. However, items 2, 5, 10-13 and 15 were not preferred as clothing style preferences of female undergraduate students in tertiary institution in Imo State, Nigeria because they had mean scores less than 2.5.

Table 3: Mean Responses of male undergraduate students on clothing style preferences (N= 96).

S/N	Clothing style preferences of male	X	Std	Decision
	undergraduates youths			
1	Different forms of messages by inscriptions on	2.61	0.98	Preferred
	their garments			
2	T- shirts with inscriptions of immoral messages	2.37	0.98	Not Preferred
3	Formal shirts without formal trousers	2.60	0.99	Preferred
4	Body hug dresses	2.68	0.97	Preferred
5	Caftan without trousers	2.37	0.99	Not Preferred
6	Low waist trousers (sagging trousers)	2.60	0.99	Preferred
7	Permed hair	2.71	1.02	Preferred
8	Jerry curly hair	2.71	1.02	Preferred
9	Plaited hair	2.36	0.99	Not Preferred

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10	Braided hair	2.42	0.96	Not Preferred
11	Earrings	2.34	1.02	Not Preferred
12	Dresses that expose the body (armpit, chest	2.30	1.05	Not Preferred
	among others)			
13	T- shirts without jeans	2.23	1.07	Not Preferred
0	E: 11 0017			

Source: Field survey, 2016.

Table 3 shows that items 1, 3, 4 and 6-8 were preferred as clothing style preferences of male undergraduate students. Items 2, 5 and 9-13 were not preferred as clothing style preference of male undergraduate students in Imo State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings on factors influencing undergraduate students fashion and clothing choice showed that all the items are factors influencing students clothing choice and preferences with the following having very high mean scores- self-esteem, desire to enhance beauty, television advertisement, peer group influence, lecturers' dressing styles, family orientation, to appear seductive, among others. The study showed that Information also Communication Technology (ICT), influence from other nations, religion, culture, education, celebrities among others are also factors influencing students' clothing styles. The findings align with the findings of Danielson (2008) who reported that dressing to look like celebrities and their fashion style affect youth's fashion choice. The findings are in agreement with the findings of La-Ferla (2006); Moody, Kinderman, & Shina (2010) Mcleod and (2010) stated that to build an impression of maturity is one of the factors determine that students' fashion choice. The study results also supports the findings of Cassidy and Schijndel (2011); Omede (2011); Elliot, Greitemeyer and Pazda (2013);Banerjee (2008); Loureiro, Costa and (2017) Panchapakesan who emphasized that students' clothing style and choice are influenced by social media, internet, promotional offers, social status and peer group influence. The students have higher degree of fashion consciousness and so, they associate themselves with current fashion styles which in turn influence their life styles and clothing preferences negatively.

The result of t-test on Table 1 (Ho₁) on no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female undergraduate students on factors that influence clothing choice showed that the male and female students have differing opinion on money at hand as a factor that influence clothing choice. However, they did not differ on other factors that influence fashion and clothing choice.

The result of findings on students' clothing preferences of female undergraduate students research question two showed that wearing short skirts, transparent, dresses without shoulder, spaghetti strips, mini length skirts, bum shorts, and wearing dresses that expose the body parts were rejected as students' clothing preferences. While wearing excessive make-up, tight dresses, skimpy dresses, fixing artificial nails and lashes were indicated as clothing style preference of students. The findings align with the findings of Olugbenga and Odeleye (2008) and Source Magazine (2011) who reported that both male and female adolescents prefer wearing skimpy dresses, tight or body hugging dresses. This type of clothing choice attracts undue attention to the body, in some case it gives credence to sexual harassment and offensive comments. Tiggemann and Andrew (2012), Sarron, Alyssa, Jayoung and Kim (2017) reported that tight fitting clothing gives an impression of negative feeling to the body (sexually charged feeling). Also Gray (2016) stated that tight clothing predisposes the wearer to sexual harassment and that wearing dresses that exposes the body parts has a close relationship between sexual activity, sexual orientation and sexiness (Lennon, Johnson, Noh, Zheng, Chae Kim, 2014). Sometimes, & the undergraduate students dresses are usually few inches longer than their under pants. Such dresses hardly cover the legs when sitting, and it is difficult to climb motorcycles, to cross gutter or to pick something from the ground.

The findings also showed that clothing preferences of male undergraduate students include wearing T-shirts without formal trousers; body hug dresses; perming their hairs, low waist trousers and wearing jerry curl hairs. This finding agrees with the findings of Olugbenga and Odeleye, (2008) who stated that undergraduate students of tertiary institutions are commonly associated with putting on body hugging dresses and low waist trousers. Low waist trousers usually portray some of the students as street boys, unorganized and sometimes they look like touts.

The findings of the study have important educational implications for families, students, lecturers and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Most parents have non-challant attitude towards the clothing preference of their children. This may result to failure in moderating and harnessing the clothing preferences of the young undergraduates which can dispose them to destructive life styles and impact negatively on their future well-being.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that fashion and clothing choice have significant impact on students in the tertiary undergraduate institutions. The students are influenced negatively by their clothing choice as they desire to appear seductive. This exposes the female students to negative and destructive life styles e.g. prostitution, for there are many hotels and club houses in the study area that are in dire need for such services. The study also observed that the fashion and clothing choice of female students was not encouraging as it promotes sexual harassment. This can be avoided with proper guidance and advocacy. There is therefore, need to sensitize the undergraduate students and the young people on the need to tread cautiously with regards to clothing choice and fashion related issues.

Recommendations

- Students should ascertain the effects of fashion and clothing choice on their academic as well as social life.
- Religious leaders, parents and lecturers should help in educating the youth on safe and appropriate clothing selection.
- The family should help in training their children to appreciate decent dress code at the early childhood stage.
- Lecturers should dress decently and appropriately for students to emulate.
- Undergraduate students should not wear clothes that focus negative attention towards the body and sexuality; rather the focus should be on appearance, aimed at communicating orderliness, authority and power.

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