



IMPACT OF DRESS CODE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, MAKURDI, BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract:

The study determined the impact of dress code on the academic performance of Undergraduate students in Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. Two research questions and one hypothesis respectively guided the study. The study adopts survey research design and was conducted in Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. The population of this study was 7,261 respondents made up of 5,661 undergraduate students, 430 academic and 1170 non-academic staff of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. A sample of 379 respondents made up of 295 undergraduate students and 84 staff of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi was determined using Taro Yamane formular for a finite population and used in the study. Multistage sampling technique of proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques was employed for sample selection. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Impact of Dress Code on Academic Performance Questionnaire (IDCAPQ) developed by the researchers from literature reviewed. The IDCAPQ was subjected to face and content validity by three experts and trial tested on 30 respondents from federal university Lafia, Nasarawa State. Cronbach Alpha method of reliability was used to determine the internal consistency of the IDCAPQ which yielded a reliability coefficient of .71. The instrument (IDCAPQ) was used for data collection and data collected for the study was analyzed using mean to answer research questions and chi-square statistics to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there are eight causes of indecent dressing amongst undergraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, there are six ways in which indecent dressing affects the academic performance of undergraduate students in Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi and that indecent dressing exerts significant impact

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on the academic performance of undergraduate students in University of Agriculture, Makurdi. Based on the findings, it was recommended amongst others that the Guidance and Counseling Unit of the school should educate students on the dangers of indecent dressing and its possible effects on their students.

Keywords: dress code, academic performance, undergraduate and students

1. Introduction

Education is considered to be a veritable tool and the bed-rock of development of any nation; hence the call by governments for “education for all”. However, certain developments over the past years seem to be militating against this vision. Notable among them is the craze for the so-called *fashion* which has resulted in nudity among the teeming youth on Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi campus (Nwagwu as cited in Olori, 2003). It is increasingly becoming obvious that indecent dressing has gradually taken over the dress pattern of students in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria, and Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi is no exception. It has become like an epidemic spreading so fast and the earlier something is done about it, the better for the future of our desperate and vulnerable youth. What then is indecent dressing? To answer this question, it will be imperative to understand the meaning of decent dressing. According to Yahaya (2013), a decent dressing, of course, is part of human life, because it elicits respect and protects the person’s dignity. Decent dressing by students attracts respect from lecturers, guardians, classmates and most significantly protects them from being the target of rape and failure.

Indecent dressing on the other hand is the improper and provocative way of dressing relative to the society or culture of the students. According to Oyeleye (2012), indecent dressing simply means the deliberate exposure of one’s body to the public. This practice is contrary to the acceptable norms and values of the society. Moral decadence on the other is a reduction in the level of morality in the society. Adeboye (2012) defined indecent dressing as the wearing of clothes that are not appropriate for a particular occasion or situation. She further explains that, it is not indecent to go naked in the bathroom, in labour room or in the bedroom with your partner. Adebayo (2013), describes indecent dressing as a way of dressing that is likely to shock or offend people. Egwim (2010), referred to indecent dressing in a more specific term as the attitude of someone, male or female that dresses to showoff parts of the body such as the breasts, buttocks or even the underwear particularly those of the ladies that need to be covered. In addition, there are those who believe that indecent dressing bothers so much on morality hence they ascribe some religious meanings to it. They say “*indecent dressing is any type of dressing that the Almighty Father (the creator of the universe) abhors.*”

According to Olori (2003), this form of dressing is provocative, improper and morally unacceptable. These dress patterns are morally offensive and reveal the high rate of moral decadence in the society of our time. Not a day passes without some complaint

by lecturers, students, visitors, non-teaching staff about the provocative dressing of undergraduate students, most especially the girls. They wear skimpy skirts, only about one inch longer than their pants to lectures and other social gatherings in and outside campus. Quite apart from the skimpy and tight fitting nature of these dresses, their transparent nature also helps in exposing their thighs and other vital parts of their body for public view. This makes them find difficulty in climbing machines, crossing a gutter and even bending down to pick up objects. As if this is not enough, the girls again wear very tight trousers called 'shinnies', thereby showing the contours of their body ostensibly to entice the opposite sex. They also wear very short and transparent tops called 'show your stomach' which exposes their abdomen and breasts.

Some of the boys are also guilty of indecent dressing. However, their dress pattern is different from that of the girls. Their dressing makes them look dirty and very unattractive with unkept hairs and dirty jeans having pockets of holes deliberately created around the knees and lower parts of the trousers. The waist of their trousers is lowered at the middle of their two bottom lobes, revealing their pant which is called "Low waist" or "Otto waist" (named after Otto Fistta, an expatriate coach of the Ghana Black Stars who was noted for this type of dressing). This type of dressing makes them walk by dragging their feet on the ground which is very embarrassing for any gentleman. Research reveals that these wrongful and improper dressings of undergraduate students has a high tendency of impacting negatively on their academic performance as the output of male lecturers most especially can reduce when they concentrate on watching such provocative dressings during lectures (Amoo & Adeyemi, 2007). Female students on the other hand spend so much money in buying such useless dresses instead of spending them on their academic work. Their indecent dressing also makes them patronize discotheques, night clubs, brothels and hotels where they can have fun at the expense of their studies. There is also the possibility of some male lecturers or even female lecturers falling prey to such seductive dressings which may result in sexual favours between the lecturers on one hand and students on the other hand. This clearly will be a hindrance to quality education; as such students will not be able to perform up to the expectation of their prospective employers and consequently lead to loss of revenue to the state. Quite apart from that, poor performance of students as a result of indecent dressing can be linked to unemployment. This is so because students who dress indecently have divided attention for their studies and are therefore unable to receive adequate practical training which is a prerequisite for employment by most companies. And because such companies are not ready to spend extra money training such partially groomed graduates, the latter find themselves joining the Unemployed Graduate Association of Nigeria (Amoo et al., 2007).

Education is concerned with the development of total personality of students and positive changes in their behavioural patterns. The attainment of the lofty aims and objectives of education cannot be realized unless we have in our university an environment that is conducive for effective teaching and learning. Discipline is absolutely essential ingredient of such an enabling operational climate. The attitudes and values of

students constitute the critical factor in the level of discipline in the university. There is need for students to be aided in clarifying their values and modifying their attitudes so as to be able to make rational decisions in socially, relevant acceptable way (Nwagwu, 2000).

A dress code is a set of rules governing what garment may be worn in a specific setting. For example, there are garments appropriate for going to church, some for sporting, some for going to parties, some for staying at home, some for going to lectures etc. It deals with a modest and good dressing in conformity with the environmental acceptable values. There is a saying that you are addressed by the way you dress.

A student coming into the university should realize that he or she is in an academic environment which is characterized with decency, peace, harmony and hard work. The student should realize that there is a set of rules although may be silent governing what garment must be worn. According to Rykrsmith (2012), what you wear affects others perception of you. The clothes we wear put us on a different mindset. It is therefore necessary to dress in the image one wants to portray oneself. Freeburg, Workman, and Lentz-Hee (2010), suggested that through dress code, the universities establish rules governing students' appearance. Adebayo (2013), advised that the African society is founded on a moral heritage that must be preserved and so the dress code should be observed with sheer determination and moral will. Dress Code has so many advantages some of them are: instilling discipline in the students; helping to preserve moral standard by lowering sexual abuse and harassment; creating less distraction to both the students and the lecturers; the much expected classroom order is made possible by helping the student to concentrate in his or her academic work; it shows sense of responsibility on the part of the students; decency, reputation and character formation are other benefits of dress code; it is all about acceptable image and prepares the student for labor market by instilling in them the habit of good dressing. Students are taught what sort of dress will serve them best professionally and socially.

The university attaches importance to modest and good dressing. Many stakeholders have complained that many students both male and female are guilty of indecent dressing in the university. Dressing is not just a matter of taste, comfort and convenience. When a student dresses up, he or she should ask himself or herself if the dressing meets the following criteria: decency, socially acceptable, not too expensive, not distractive or disruptive etc. Many students copy the ghetto mode of dressing. They pull down their pants and skirts below the waist showing their inner boxers or pants. This is what they call sagging. Some males plait their hair, some wear earring on one ear. These students do not know that no professional will dress in that manner and it is very unprofessional. Students in the universities are being prepared to be great future professionals. If the student's indecent dressing is not checked, by the time he or she leaves the university and goes into the labor market to look for a job with one eared earring if you are a man or sagged trouser or bushy hair and unshaved mustache, the student will find it difficult to get a job. The employers will see him as irresponsible. The same treatment will be meted to a lady who dresses as if she is going to a party with very

big earring, transparent blouse or dress, very loud make up, skirt or dress above the knees etc. This study therefore sought to investigate the impacts dressing code has on the academic performance of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi students in Nigeria and proffer solutions.

2. Statement of the Problem

The rate of indecent dressing among Nigerian university students is a matter of concern to education stakeholders. There has been increase in dropout rate, carryover rate and outright failure rate among the students. Many factors have been alleged as the reasons for these. This allegation needs to be justified by carrying out a study like this to see the actual perception of students and staff on this issue. Many unethical things have been attributed to dress code. Some of these are: cultism, student not focused, poor academic performance, constant breaking of rules and regulations, poor self-image among others. Therefore, this study sought to investigate if dress code would exert significant impact on the academic performance of undergraduate students in Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi students in Nigeria.

2.1 Purpose of the Study

This main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of dress code on the academic performance of undergraduate students in Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. Specifically, the study sought to investigate:

- 1) The causes of indecent dressing amongst the undergraduate students in Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi
- 2) The impact of indecent dressing on academic performance of undergraduate students in Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi

2.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered by the study;

- 1) What are the causes of indecent dressing amongst undergraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi?
- 2) How does indecent dressing impact the academic performance of undergraduate students in Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi?

2.3 Research Hypothesis

This null hypothesis is formulated and tested by the study at 0.05 level of significance

H₀: Indecent dressing has no significant impact on academic performance of undergraduate students in Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi.

3. Methodology

This section presents the method and procedure that was followed in conducting the study. The procedure includes: Research design, area of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instrument for data collection, validation of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

Survey design was adopted for this study. The researcher used survey design as an appropriate design because information was obtained on the impact of dress code on the academic performance of undergraduate students from a few groups of undergraduate students and staff of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi who are representative of the entire population using a structured questionnaire.

3.2 Area of the Study

The study was conducted at Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi which was established in 1988 following the recommendation of a 1987 Federal Government white paper on higher education curriculum and development in Nigeria. This is a reputable higher education institution focused exclusively on agriculture but have however deviated from the focus due to factors such as in descent dressing of students on campus hence this allegation needs to be justified by carrying out a study like this to see the actual perception of students and staff on this issue.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of this study was 7,261 respondents made up of 5,661 undergraduate students, 430 academic and 1170 non-academic staff of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. (Registry: FUAM, 2016).

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for this study was 379 respondents made up of 295 undergraduate students and 84 staff of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. This was determined using Taro Yamane formular for a finite population. Multistage sampling technique was employed for sample selection. At the first stage, proportionate stratified random sampling method was used to select 295 undergraduate students and 84 staff to participate in the study.

Secondly simple random sampling technique (balloting) was used to select respondents. This ensures everyone has equal chance of being selected to respond to the instrument and reduces sampling bias. This is because of the large population of respondents involved in the study.

3.5 Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Impact of Dress Code on Academic Performance Questionnaire (IDCAPQ) developed by the researcher from literature reviewed. The instrument is divided into part A and B. Part A is concerned with personal information about the respondents. Part B solicits responses on all the research questions. Each IDCAPQ item was anchored on a four rating scale of: Strongly Agree (SA), Agreed (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with a corresponding nominal value of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

3.6 Validation of Instrument

The instrument for data collection was subjected to face and content validation by three experts. One expert in guidance and counselling and two experts in Educational Test and Measurement from the Department of Educational Foundations and General Studies Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. The comments were taken into consideration in the final modification of the research instrument that was used for data collection.

3.7 Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot study was carried out on the instrument to further determine its reliability. The pilot study was carried out involving 30 respondents from Federal University, Lafia which is not the same with the area of study, but the respondents has similar characteristics with those of the area of study. The responses obtained was subjected to reliability analysis using Cronbach Alpha Reliability method which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.71 indicating that IDCAPQ is reliable for use in the present study.

3.8 Method of Data Collection

The instrument was administered by the researcher and two research assistants who are familiar with the study area. The researcher and research assistants visited the respondents in their offices to administer the questionnaire on face to face bases. This was to ensure that the actual individuals for whom the questionnaire is meant, is indeed the one who completes it. Also, it ensures that the researcher/ research assistants are available to explain any point that the respondents may not understand very well. The questionnaire was either filled on the spot and given back to the researcher/research assistants or the researcher/research assistants comes back after an interval of three hours to collect them. 379 copies of questionnaires were administered and were all retrieved and used for data analysis.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was used to answer research questions while Chi-square statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The choice of mean to answer research questions is because data collected was on interval scale. The use of chi-square on the other hand was because the study also

sought to determine whether dress code exert significant impact on academic performance of undergraduate students in FUAM.

Benchmark of 2.50 was established to accept any item with a mean rating of 2.50 or above as agreed while any item with a mean rating less than 2.50 was regarded as disagreed for research questions

The decision rule used for the mean (\bar{x}) is calculated as follows:

- Strongly agreed (SA) = 4,
- Agreed (A) = 3,
- Disagreed (D) = 2,
- Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1.

Hence $(4 + 3 + 2 + 1) / 4 = 10/4 = 2.50$

The decision rule for rejection or otherwise of the hypothesis was based on the chi-square calculated value (χ^2_{α}) and the critical value (χ^2). A hypothesis of no significant impact was rejected for any cluster of items whose chi-square calculated value is greater than the critical value at 0.05 and with the specified degree of freedom while it was not rejected for any cluster of items whose chi-square calculated value is less than the critical value at 0.05 and with the specified degree of freedom.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The results of the study were presented according to research questions answered and hypothesis tested as follows:

Research Question 1: What are the causes of indecent dressing amongst undergraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Causes of Indecent Dressing amongst Undergraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi (N=379)

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Most parents have no time to check their children's wardrobe hence children wear anything they like	2.96	.79	Agree
2	My parents buy any kind of dresses for me to wear	3.07	.86	Agree
3	I always dress the way I see people dress in my community	2.70	.89	Agree
4	Students seems to dress like Nollywood actors/actresses that they watch via the satellites and TV channels	2.81	1.02	Agree
5	Peer pressure is one of the causes of indecent dressing	3.42	.97	Agree
6	Poor parenting and foreign influence on our culture causes leads to indecent dressing	3.33	.71	Agree
7	Beauty contest in school environment has great impact on indecent dressing among students	3.11	.97	Agree
8	For one to be noticed in the society, he/she needs to dress indecently among students	2.99	.86	Agree

N = number of respondents, \bar{X} = mean of respondents, SD = Standard deviation of respondents.

To answer the above question, data on causes of indecent dressing amongst undergraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi was collected and subjected to analysis using mean and standard deviation as presented in Table 1. Data presented in Table 1 shows all the 8 items had their mean scores ranging from 2.70 to 3.42 indicating that their mean values were above the cut-off point of mean 2.50. This showed that all the items were agreed by respondents as the causes of indecent dressing amongst undergraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. The Table further showed that the standard deviation of the items ranged from .71 to .1.02, indicating that there was less variability in the opinion of the respondents on the causes of indecent dressing amongst undergraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi.

Research Question 2: How indecent dressing does affect the academic performance of undergraduate students in Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi?

To answer the above question, data on how indecent dressing affects the academic performance of undergraduate students in Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi was collected and subjected to analysis using mean and standard deviation as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on How Indecent Dressing Affects the Academic Performance of Undergraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi (N=379)

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
9	Indecent dressing helps to seduce some lustful lecturers for extra marks in Continuous Assessment (CA)	2.89	.79	Agree
10	Indecent dressing makes one lose concentration during lectures	2.95	.59	Agree
11	Students who dresses to kill gets themselves raped by hoodlums	3.01	1.03	Agree
12	Indecent dressing has no impact on academic performance on students	2.95	.92	Agree
13	Students who dress indecently engage in commercial sex which sometimes leads to unwanted pregnancy that makes them drop out	3.07	.76	Agree
14	Most students who dress indecently tend to have little or no serious time for their academic work	3.41	.64	Agree

N = number of respondents, \bar{X} = mean of respondents, SD = Standard deviation of respondents.

Data presented in Table 2 shows all the 6 items had their mean scores ranging from 2.89 to 3.341 indicating that their mean values were above the cut-off point of mean 2.50. This showed that all the items were agreed by respondents as the ways in which indecent dressing affects the academic performance of undergraduate students in Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. The table further showed that the standard deviation of the items ranged from .59 to .1.03, indicating that there was less variability in the

opinion of the respondents on how indecent dressing affects the academic performance of undergraduate students of Federal University in Agriculture, Makurdi.

Hypotheses One: Indecent dressing has no significant impact on the academic performance of undergraduate students in University of Agriculture, Makurdi.

To test the above hypothesis, the mean ratings of the respondents were analyzed using chi-square statistical tool and presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Chi-Square Test of Impact of Man Indecent Dressing on Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students

	Df	χ^2	χ^2_{α}	Sig.	Alpha Level	Remark
Pearson Chi-square	18	26.00	132.629	.013	.05	S, R
Number of Valid Cases		379				

Df = degree of freedom, χ^2 = critical value, χ^2_{α} = chi-square calculated, Sig. = P-value; P < .05, S = Significant, R = rejected.

Table 3 shows a chi-square calculated value of 132.629 which is greater than the critical value of 26.00 at .05 level of significance and with 18 degree of freedom (i.e. $\chi^2_{\alpha} = 132.629 > 26.00$) This indicates that indecent dressing significantly impact academic performance of undergraduate students in University of Agriculture, Makurdi. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that Indecent dressing has no significant impact on the academic performance of undergraduate students in University of Agriculture, Makurdi was rejected.

4.2 Discussion of Results

The findings of the study are discussed as follows:

The result of the study on research question one revealed that there are eight causes of indecent dressing amongst undergraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. The causes were: most parents have no time to check their children's wardrobe hence children wear anything they like, My parents buy any kind of dresses for me to wear, I always dress the way I see people dress in my community, Students seems to dress like Nollywood actors/actresses that they watch via the satellites and TV channels, Peer pressure is one of the causes of indecent dressing, Poor parenting and foreign influence on our culture causes leads to indecent dressing, Beauty contest in school environment has great impact on indecent dressing among students, and for one to be noticed in the society, he/she needs to dress indecently among students. From the causes of indecent dressing, peer pressure and poor parenting are the major causes of indecent dressing in the universities. This is in line with Omede and Odiba (2011) and Gushee (2004) when the relate children's behaviour to what obtains in their homes. The influence of hoe environment on the development of children has a long way to go with them.

The findings on research question two in Table 2 shows that there are six ways in which indecent dressing affects the academic performance of undergraduate students in

Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. The ways were: Indecent dressing helps to seduce some lustful lecturers for extra marks in Continuous Assessment (CA), indecent dressing makes one lose concentration during lectures, Students who dresses to kill gets themselves raped by hoodlums, Indecent dressing has no impact on academic performance on students, Students who dress indecently engage in commercial sex which sometimes leads to unwanted pregnancy that makes them drop out and most students who dress indecently tend to have little or no serious time for their academic work. This was further supported by the results of hypothesis tested in Table 3 which revealed that indecent dressing has a significant impact on the academic performance undergraduate students in University of Agriculture, Makurdi. It must be noted that the dressing styles and learning accounts for their academic performance in the university. This view is in line with that expressed by Holland (as cited by Agbulu & Ekele, 2004) in his theory that the academic performance of students depends on his learning styles. The finding of this study is in line with Gbadegbe and Quashie (2013) who conducted similar research on impact of indecent dressing on academic performance on tertiary institutions. The study revealed that indecent dressing destructs the attention of both students and lecturers during lectures. The authors cited above added credence and validity to the findings of this study.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The rate at which indecent dressing has infiltrated into academic environment in University of Agriculture students is alarming. Most female students are now preoccupied with what to put on to seduce the opposite sex than what to read to become someone responsible in future. Some of the male students also spend their time wearing tattered dresses all in the name of fashion, with little consideration for moral uprightness. In order to be a beneficiary of quality education or holistic education, one requires to be dedicated, hardworking and serious with their books. Having divided-attention or loosing concentration during lectures as a result of provocative dressing is an affront to the vision of quality education. It is therefore necessary that all stakeholders of education in Nigeria be proactive in coming out with measures to stop indecent dressing on tertiary campuses, especially on university, hence this study aimed at investigating the impact of dress code on the academic performance of students of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) The school authority should take very practical initiatives to embark on reorientation about the potential dangers associated with indecent dressing so as to prevent decline in academic performance of students.

- 2) It would be prudent that University of Agriculture students are taught lessons on morality and strict adherence to our cultural norms.
- 3) There should be a dress code for all university students which should be included in the Students' Handbook for consumption by students.
- 4) The Guidance and Counseling Unit of the school should educate students on the dangers of indecent dressing and its possible effects on their students.

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