

IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS DRESS CODE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

The paper looked at the present mode of dressing in many Nigerian universities which has become a big concern to education stakeholders. They feared that there was too much distraction and disruption for effective teaching and learning in Nigerian universities due to the manner many students dress. The researcher looked at how acceptable dress code can be implemented and sustained. The population of the study was 27 federal Nigerian universities. A random sample of 4 federal Nigerian universities (14.81%) was used for the study. From each university, a stratified random sampling method was used to select 100 male and 100 female students and 20 male and 20 female senior academic and non-academic staff to participate in the study. A total of 800 (400 male and 400 female) students and 160 (80 male and 80 female senior academic and senior non-academic) staff participated in the study. The instrument used in gathering the data was the questionnaire designed by the researcher titled Students' Dress Code Inventory (SDCI). The questionnaire was made up of two parts: Part A was based on respondents' personal data while Part B contained ten questions on appropriate dress code for students and how it can be managed and sustained. The validity of the instrument was done by both experts in educational administration and educational psychology. Test-retest method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. A Z-Test and common percent were the statistics used to analyze the data. The major findings were that there was high rate of indecent dressing in Nigerian universities although 76% of students indicated willingness to abide by the dress code if implemented; only 68% of staff was ready to implement it. Based on the findings, it was recommended that university management should create public awareness on the importance of dress code and also have a dress code which should be properly managed for the success of the universities.

Keywords: implementation, management, dress, code, Nigerian, universities

1.Introduction

Education is concerned with the development of total personality of students and positive changes in their behavioral 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 spotting, 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 DRESSED”.

Researchers like Adams, Mcpherson etc have shown that a student’s conduct and performance are related to his or her clothing; therefore the university is concerned with the student’s clothing. A student’s clothing should not be a distraction or disruption to learning environment. Appearance should not distract classmates from important task of learning.

The problem of dress code is not new in Nigerian universities. Some faculties like Law and Medicines etc have dress codes in many universities. However, many faculties do not have any dress code. There is a need to create public awareness and to remind all students that they are expected to dress in an acceptable way in the university.

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.

Decent dressing deals with clean, neat and presentable clothing. This includes dresses, shirts and blouses with sleeves, clean pants including plain black or blue jeans with clean T-shirt that covers below the waist, skirt suits, dress or shirt with blazer, clean Nigerian attires, French suits, etc. The clothing should cover body parts including stomach, belly button, back shoulders, chest, and the legs below knees. Small earrings and light make up, low heeled noiseless shoes, clean hair are all parts of decent dressing.

Indecent dressing is the mode of dressing or appearance that is disruptive and distractive. This mode of dressing or appearance includes: -

- Trousers and skirts worn below the waist (sagging)
- Singlet, spaghetti blouses, low neck blouses exposing the breasts
- Skirts with slit above the knees
- Transparent dresses, shirts and blouses
- Attire printed with offensive or obscene wordings
- Revealing attires mini-skirts etc
- Bathroom slippers or bare foot
- Clothing including T-shirts which displays sex, violence, drugs, tobacco, alcohol, death, gang or hate slogans or picture.
- Tight trousers, shirts, dresses or skirts.
- Boggy trousers
- Non-natural colored hair
- Hats, caps, sunglasses
- Body piercing jewelry except the ears for women
- Chains, hand bands
- Tattoo with provocative writing or picture
- Noisy shoe heels etc

The list is actually in exhaustive. A student's dressing directly affects the way he or she thinks, feels and acts. Every student should always aim to be addressed as a professional and should dare to keep it up! With sheer determination and moral will, students should observe the university dress code when implemented.

The Committee of Nigerian Vice-Chancellors in government universities should meet and come up with appropriate dress code and penalties for breaking it in government universities. This should be the blue print for its implementation in various universities. However, it is expected that there will certainly be opposition to implementing dress code. Some students may see it as interfering with their human right. This can be defended because indecent dressing works against the university aims and objectives in the training of human minds. The distraction and disruption usually caused by indecent dressing has a negative effect on others in the society. The university aims at training and awarding certificates at the end of the training to

those who have been found worthy in character and knowledge. This is to say that legally, people who dress indecently and which by nature, often affects their behavior, should not be graduated at the end of their training.

The implementation of the dress code is the duty of everyone in authority. As the student enters the university, the written dress code should be given to the new students during orientation which is usually a week after resumption. The students should be monitored by both the academic and administrative staff of the university.

The dress code once it is set in motion should be properly managed by continuous creation of public awareness as reminder of what is expected. It is necessary to have an agreement with those who are expected to implement dress code by interaction, suggestions and inspirations.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The rate of indecent dressing among the Nigerian university students in government universities is causing a lot 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. One of them is indecent dressing which many have complained causes distractions and disruptions. 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 etc.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study.

1. Is there indecent dressing among students in Nigerian government universities?
2. Is there any effect of indecent dressing on students in Nigerian universities with regard to effective teaching and learning?
3. Do students in Nigeria government universities need dress code?
4. Is there at present any dress code in Nigeria government universities?
5. Will implementation of dress code bring about effective teaching and learning?
6. Are the government universities ready to implement dress code?
7. Is the university staff willing to help in the implementation of student dress code?
8. What are the unethical effects of indecent dressing?

1.3 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are to guide the study: -

HO1 There will be no significant difference in the responses of staff and students on the existence of indecent dressing in Nigerian university.

HO2 There will be no significant difference in the need for implementation of dress code between the staff and students.

HO3 There will be no significant difference in the responses of academic and non-academic staff in their willingness to implement dress code.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is very beneficial to Nigerian government who will be encouraged at the efforts made in the universities to ensure that the stated goals and objectives of the universities are met. The universities will enjoy non-distractive environment in their pursuit of aims and objectives of the institutions. They will be training students who would be worthy in knowledge and character when graduating. The students would be more focused. The failure rate, drop-out rate and unethical practices would be lessened. There will be hope of improving on their self image and hope for gainful employment when they graduate. The stakeholders would be glad to see well dressed students as good role models for students and pupils in primary and secondary institutions. They will also be glad that African culture is exhibited in the students' mode of dressing.

2. Methodology

The population of the study was 27 federal Nigerian universities. A random sample of 4 federal Nigerian universities(14.81%) was used for the study. From each university, a stratified random sampling method was used to select 100 male and 100 female students and 20 male (10 academic and 10 non-academic) and 20 female (10 academic and 10 non-academic) senior academic and non-academic staff to participate in the study. A total of 800 (400 male and 400 female) students and 160 (80 male and 80 female senior academic and senior non-academic) staff participated in the study.

The instrument used in gathering the data was the questionnaire designed by the researcher titled Student Dress Code Inventory (SDCI). The questionnaire was made up of two parts: Part A was based on respondents' personal data while Part B contained ten questions bothering on students' attitude to dress code, barrier to effective implementation of dress code, management efforts to promote and sustain dress code etc. The validity of the instrument was done by both experts in educational administration and educational psychology. Test-retest method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. A Z-Test and common percentage were the statistics used to analyze the data. The scores were rated in such a way that the score of 0-1 =Low desire for dress code, 1.01-2=Average, 2.01-3=High and 3.01-4=Very High.

3. Results

Table 1 Answer to Research Questions

No.	Questions	YES	NO
1.	Is there indecent dressing among students in Nigerian government universities?	85%	15%
2.	Is there any effect of indecent dressing on students in Nigerian universities with regard to effective teaching and learning?	89%	11%
3.	Do students in Nigeria government universities need dress code?	76%	24%
4.	Is there at present any dress code in Nigerian government universities?	57%	43%
5.	Will implementation of dress code bring about effective teaching and learning?	68%	32%
6.	Are the government universities ready to implement dress code?	66%	34%
7.	Is the university staff willing to help in the implementation of student dress code?	68%	32%
8.	What are the unethical effects of indecent dressing?	sexual harassment, poor Performance, low self image, distraction, disruption, not being focused, irresponsible etc.	

3.1 Testing Hypotheses

HO1 There will be no significant difference in the responses of staff and students on the existence of indecent dressing in Nigerian university. This null hypothesis was analyzed with the data collected from the questionnaire. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Test of Significant Difference in the Responses of Staff and Students on the Existence of Indecent Dressing in Nigerian Universities

Statistics	Staff	Students	Calculated Z-Value	Table Value
Number	160	800		
Mean	3.02	3.06	1.05	1.96
SD	.42	.45		

From Table 2, the calculated Z-Value at 0.05-Confidence Level was 1.05 while the Table value was 1.96. The null hypothesis which states that there will be no significant difference in the responses of staff and students on the existence of indecent dressing in Nigerian university is therefore accepted. Although the Mean-score of the staff was 3.02 while the score for the students was 3.06, they both rated indecent dressing in Nigerian universities as being very high. Eighty-five percent of the respondents agreed that there was indecent dressing in Nigerian universities while only 15% of the respondents disagreed.

HO2 There will be no significant difference in the need for implementation of dress code between the staff and students. This null hypothesis was tested with the data collected from the questionnaire. The result is on

Table 3.

Table 3 Test of Significant Difference between the Responses of Staff and Students on the Need for Implementation of Dress Code

Statistics	Staff	Students	Calculated z-Value	Table Value
Number	160	800		
Mean	2.95	3.01	1.76	1.96
SD	.38	.43		

From Table 3, the calculated Z-Value at 0.05-Confidence Level was 1.76 while the Table Value was 1.96. The null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in the need for implementation of dress code between the staff and students' response is therefore accepted. The mean score for the staff was 2.95 showing high need for the implementation of dress code while that of the students was 3.01 showing very high need for the implementation of dress code. Also, 76% of the respondents indicated need for implementation of dress code while only 24% had a contrary opinion.

HO3 There will be no significant difference in the responses of academic and non-academic staff in their willingness to implement dress code. The null hypothesis was tested using the data collected from the questionnaire as on Table 4.

Table 4 Test of Significant Difference in the Responses of Academic and Non-Academics on their Willingness to Implement Dress Code

Statistics	Academic Staff	Non-Academic Staff	Calculated Z-Value	Table Value
Number	80	80		
Mean	2.64	2.58	1.86	1.96
SD	.28	.32		

From Table 4, the calculated Z-Value at 0.05-Confidence Level is 1.86 while the Table-Value is 1.96. The null hypothesis which states that there will be no significant difference in the responses of academic and non-academic staff in their willingness to implement dress code is therefore accepted. The mean score for academic staff was 2.64 while that of the non-academics was 2.58. The difference however is insignificant statistically and both showed high willingness to implement dress code. Sixty-eight percent of both academic and non-academic staff showed willingness to implement dress code while 32% indicated negatively.

3.2 Discussion

From the analysis of data, 85% of the respondents agreed that there was indecent dressing in the universities. This means that there is high consensus on the problems of indecent dressing. In fact, 89% of the respondents agreed that indecent dressing was affecting the effective teaching and learning in the universities in Nigeria. Some of the negative effects for indecent dressing were listed as distraction, disruption, poor self image, irresponsibility, not focused etc. The need for dress code was indicated by 76%

of the respondents. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents were of the opinion that there was no dress code in Nigerian government universities. The 43% who were positive on the existence of dress code were sort of generalizing because of dress code in all the various universities' faculties of medicine and Law. Each university has more than twelve faculties. Sixty-six percent of the respondents indicated the much expected willingness of the government universities to have dress code. Both the academic and non-academic staff showed high willingness in implementing dress code when it becomes legal.

4. Conclusion

From the research findings, it is obvious that the absent of dress code has created the high rate of indecent dressing. This had manifested in forms of distraction, lack of academic focus, sexual harassment, cultism, loss of integrity etc. There is a high indication that many stakeholders are worried and would like the way forward. The government universities are ready to legalize and implement dress code and students have shown willingness to observe it when it is legalized. A university is a place for effective teaching and learning. It is highly capital and labor intensive. It s a place for hard work, peace and respect for one another. Therefore, there is need to put in place all that will help the stated goals of the university to be achieved so that the graduands will sincerely be found worthy in character and knowledge.

5. Recommendations

The following suggestions are made in order to improve implementation and management of dress code in government universities in Nigeria: -

- Conferences, seminars and workshops should be organized for both the students and staff in the government universities to create public awareness on the importance of dress code.
- A booklet containing rules and regulations guiding dress code should be made available to all students.
- There should be an orientation of new students. The first week of resumption is suggested. Dress code should be one of the topics among others that should be discussed.
- Penalty for indecent dressing should be spelt out and implemented strictly. This will prevent further flouting of the law.
- Awards should be given to the selected students who conform to the stated appropriate dress code.
- Staff should constantly be reminded and encouraged to help in implementing dress code.
- Committee on dress code should be set up at faculty level and university level with inclusion of students' representatives.
- Studies should be carried out on the effects of dress code in the government universities when implemented.

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