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SOCIAL MEDIA, DRESS-PATTERNS AND THE SELECTION OF PARTNERS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE FEMALE STUDENTS: THE CASE OF UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN

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ABSTRACT

The study examined social media, dress-patterns and the selection of partners among undergraduate female students, the case of university of Ilorin. The study adopted descriptive survey research and phenomenological research design, and the population of 16 411 female undergraduate students (2022/2023) was obtained from the school record. A sample size of 320 female undergraduate students was randomly selected for the study using multi-stage and simple random sampling, but only 285 participants filled out and returned their questionnaires. Three hypotheses were tested using Chi-square statistical analysis at a 0.5 significance level. An in-depth interview (IDI) was conducted, and eight interviewees were purposefully selected among research participants and (IDI) was analyzed using thematic and content analyses. The findings from the hypotheses revealed a significant relationship between social media and indecent dressing, a significant relationship between dress patterns and selection of partners, and a significant relationship between social media and fashion trends among the participants in the study area. Based on the study's findings, it recommended that the management of higher institutions in Nigeria should ensure that the dress code is enforced adequately in their various citadel of learning and that students who are found wanting are appropriately sanctioned, based on institution's code of dress regulations.

Keywords: *Dress pattern, Fashion trend, Female undergraduates, Selection of partners*

1. Introduction

Social media influence has adversely affected the dressing pattern of significant number of youth in the 21st century, especially among young ladies on various

campuses of higher institutions in Nigeria (Okafor, & Uwalaka, 2021). The quest to dress in vogue has made most young ladies and guys expose considerable parts of their bodies, which are considered important in African culture (Akpan, 2018). According to Abdulbaqi, Abisoye, and Udende (2022), social media has infiltrated into the fashion life of most young ladies and guys in contemporary life, and it has eroded the culture of decent dressing, which is embedded in traditional African cultural heritage (Aleke, Omaka-Amari, and Obande-Ogbuinya, 2018). It has been acknowledged as the mixture of various internet tools that allow operators to produce, exchange and adapt content consistently and simultaneously (Olaewaju, 2023). Anierobi, Etodike, Eluemuno, and Nwiko, (2021) opined that mass media played pivotal roles in shaping modern dressing patterns among female students of higher institutions of learning in Nigeria.

In the study conducted by Giwa (2017), it was observed that more than three-quarters (78%) of the students in higher institutions in Nigeria are into indecent dressing. It is majorly evident in the types of social media they were exposed to. Okafor and Uwalaka (2021) asserted that youth of the 21st century are exposed to content in social media which exhibits immoral dressing, and it negatively influences the way and manner they appear/dress in the public domain. According to Ewulo (2016), internet sites have been bombarded with anti-social activities such as fraud, indecent dressing, gambling, and pornography movies. Birhan (2019) believes that clothing, dress patterns, or adornment is an aspect of human physical appearance that has social significance apart from food and shelter. Akpan (2018) and Anierobi, Etodike, and Eluemuno, (2021) noted that dressing is one of the key aspects of people's culture and describes their tribal or ethnic identity. However, the above motives have been defeated as most youths (young ladies and guys) in Nigeria are dressing to expose intimate and sensitive parts of their bodies to gain public recognition and attention (Sadeeq, 2015).

There is a distinct difference between decent dressing and indecent dressing. Nzoiwu, (2023) describe decent dressing as the wearing of cloth which protects significant and considerable parts of the body. While indecent dressing on the other hand is any cloth worn that is improper for a particular or specific occasion, situation or outing. This includes trousers and skirts beneath the waist (sagging), wearing only a singlet in the public domain, and the host of others. Dressing is a cultural outlook covering every sensitive aspect of the human body and pinpoints and demonstrates where the person came from (Anierobi, Etodike, and Eluemuno, 2021)). Thompson, Ellis, Soni, and Paterson, (2018); and Ibrahim (2020) opined that female students' choice of clothing or dressing is one of the social reasons for selecting mates, peers and friends, as people pay much attention to the dress patterns of their prospective friends. Azuah and Algbuboa (2014) revealed three main external components that influenced female choice of clothing in higher institutions of learning, which include

dress like friends to belong to a group, involvement of friends in making clothing choices, and discomfort when their clothes are different from all others.

Thus, indecent dress is revolving around pertinent issues which range from disrespect for Africa traditions and cultures, vulnerability to sexual harassments, negative impact on the person morality and risk to public safety (Olawaju, 2023). Equally, Anku, Danso, and Kuwornu-Adjaottor (2018) maintain that the person who dress indecently can be victim of sexual harassment which can have adverse impact on the person's self-esteem. In the same vein, the indecent dressing of female undergraduate students in higher institutions of learning is equally attributed to celebrities who appear on social media platforms (Facebook et al., etc.), not realising that the choice of clothing or dressing patterns of these celebrities are always in tandem with the type of roles they were required to perform in the particular or specific movie (Ji, 2019; Zhao et al., 2021). Ajiboye and Chukwu (2015) revealed that significant number of female undergraduate students dress in order to appear more civilised, attractive, and beautiful. While others dress to seduce and attract the opposite sex and to seek attention from the guys and vice versa. Empirical evidence has shown that no studies have focused on the combination of the investigated variables (Akpan, 2018; Bello and Ogunjinmi 2020; Okafor, & Uwalaka, 2021; Nzoiwu, 2023). However, the available evidence in Nigeria shows that previous discourse (Ji, 2019; Ibrahim, 2020, Abdulbaqi, Abisoye, & Udende; 2022) either focused on adopting dress code on campus or indecent dress on campus without thoroughly considering the combination of the investigated variables. It is on this premise that this study intends to examine social media, dress-patterns and the selection of partners among undergraduate female students: The case of university of Ilorin. The following research questions guided this study:

- i What is the significant relationship between social media and indecent dressing among female undergraduate students in University of Ilorin?
- ii Is there any significant relationship between dress patterns and selection of partners among female undergraduate students in University of Ilorin?
- iii Is there any significant relationship between social media and fashion trend of female undergraduate students in University of Ilorin?

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant in the study:

- Ho 1: There is no significant relationship between social media and indecent dress among female undergraduate students in University of Ilorin
- Ho 2: There is no significant relationship between dress patterns and selection of partners among female undergraduate students in University of Ilorin
- Ho 3: There is no significant relationship between social media and fashion trend of female undergraduate students in University of Ilorin

2. Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research and phenomenological research design to examine social media, dress-patterns and the selection of partners among undergraduate female students: The case of university of Ilorin. A descriptive research design was adopted to survey the respondents' opinions, interests and preferences on the investigated variables. The survey method allows researchers to elicit information from the selected respondents in one short survey. The population of female undergraduate students in the area of study was about 16,411 (2022/2023 Academic Session). To ensure equal representation of research participants, a multi stage sampling technique was first applied in dividing the institution into faculties, departments, and levels. A Simple random sampling without replacement was used through the processes of definition of the population, sampling frame, random selection, sample size, contacting the sample and data collection to select the participants from each faculty that made up the institution to elicit data for the study.

Respondents selected for this study were only female undergraduate students and a total of three hundred and twenty respondents (female undergraduate students) were randomly selected from all faculty, making this study's sample size three hundred and twenty (320). Twenty respondents were selected randomly from each of the sixteen faculty that made up the institution. This implies that twenty participants were chosen from each faculty of the institution. The data collection procedure was that researchers, with the help of two research assistants, approached each research participant in the class area of their respective faculty, and questionnaires were administered to them. This was possible because each faculty had designated class areas where lectures were usually take place. However, out of 320 questionnaires randomly distributed to selected respondents in the field, twenty-three questionnaires were not retrieved, while twelve questionnaires needed to be correctly filled out after thoroughly checking for omissions, mistakes, and other inconsistencies. Therefore, only 285 questionnaires duly completed were used as this study's sample size. The semi-structured research instrument was titled "Influence of Social Media on Dress Pattern and Selection of Partners (ISMDSP). It was divided into four sections (A, B, C, and D).

Section A contains questions related to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Section B contains questions on the influence of social media on indecent dress. Section C contains questions on the influence of dress patterns on the selection of partners. Section D contains questions related to social media's influence on female undergraduate students' fashion trends. Experts in related fields validated the questionnaire for internal consistency and reliability. The second research instrument was an in-depth interview (IDI) used to elicit data from eight purposively selected research participants based on their specific characteristics to corroborate quantitative data. Simple descriptive statistical

analysis was used for frequency data and Chi-square statistical analysis at 0.5 significance for inferential data. The test of independence type of Chi-square was used to establish a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Similarly, after transcription of in-depth interview, the thematic content analysis with the following themes emerged; (i) impact of social media on indecent dress (ii) nexus between dress patterns and selection of partners (iii) impression of students about western and traditional mode of dress.

The emerging themes were analyzed through transcription, reading and re-reading of data, coding of data, and identification of initial themes, refining the themes, defining and naming the themes and detailed analysis of the qualitative data. The University Ethical Committee granted ethics approval before the commencement of the study with the condition that any information provided by the participants must be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. The formula for Chi - square (X^2) is thus: $X^2 = \sum (f_o - f_e)^2$

Where:

X^2 = Co-efficient of Chi - square, $\sum$ = Summation, f_o = Frequency observed & f_e = Frequency expected

Model Specification

Model One:

$$IDFi = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SOM_i + \mu_i \dots (1),$$

Where, $IDFi$ = Indecent Dress of Female Undergraduate Students at a point in time... SOM_i = Social Media Influence at a point in time, μ_i = error term at a point in time

Model Two:

$$SEPi = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DPA_i + \mu_i \dots (1)$$

Where, $SEPi$ = Selection of Partners of Female Undergraduate Students at a point in time,

DPA_i = Dress Pattern at a point in time μ_i = error term at a point in time

Model Three:

$FASH_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SOM_i + \mu_i \dots (1)$, Where, $FASH_i$ = Fashion Trend of Female Undergraduate Students at a point in time. SOM_i = Social Media Influence at a point in time, μ_i = error term at a point in time

3. Results

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequencies	Percentage (%)	Variables	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
			Gender	285	100
Age	196	68.8			
18-23	78	27.4			
24-28	11	3.8			
29 years and above					
Total	285	100	Total	285	100
Marital Status			Level		
Single	266	93.3	100	65	22.8
Married	19	6.7	200	102	35.8
			300	48	16.8
			400	36	12.6
			500	34	12
Total	285	100	Total	285	100

Source: field survey, 2023

Table 1 showed that most respondents were between 18 and 23. This is evident that the majority of the research participants are still young and they are still going through different phases of human development. Thus, the implication of having young degenerating minds in higher institutions of learning is that they may be easily susceptible to social vices. All the participants (285) were females based on the objectives of the study. The distribution of respondents by marital status indicated that 93.3% (266) of the respondents were single, while 6.7% (19) were married. This indicated that most of the respondents in this study were distributed by marital status. The table indicates that 102 (35.8%) of the respondents were in 200 level, while 65 (22.8%) of the research participants were in 100 level, 48 (16.8%) of the respondents were in 300 level, 36 (12.6%) of the respondents were in 400 level while 34 (12%) of the respondents were in 500 level. This proved that most of the students were given a sense of equal representation based on specific characteristics possessed by the respondents. The figure above revealed that the participants were adequately distributed across levels.

Analysis of hypotheses

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant relationship between indecent dress and social media among female undergraduate students.

Table 2: Chi-Square Analysis of Relationship between indecent dress and social media

Indecent Dress	Social Media				Total
	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	
Strongly Agree	45	26	0	0	71
Agreed	35	88	9	1	133
Disagreed	9	8	12	31	60
Strongly Disagreed	0	0	13	8	21
Total	89	122	34	40	285

Source: field survey, 2023

X^2 calculated = 135.610 X^2 tabulated = 9.48 N = 285 DF = 9 Sig. = 0.05

Table 2 above showed Chi-Square analysis of indecent dress and social media. The X^2 calculated = 135.610 value is greater than the X^2 tabulated = 9.48 value, therefore, it can be deduced that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between indecency dress and social media of female undergraduate students is rejected.

In addition to the above data, some were gathered from in-depth interviews with the respondents to establish a significant relationship between indecent dress and social media. In the interview, some purposively selected participants emphasized how exposure to social media has dramatically influenced their dress patterns. One of the interviewees reported:

My dress pattern changed when I observed that people on campus always accorded much regard to people who appear in dresses that are in vogue, like those of celebrities on social media. Therefore, my clothes are always determined by the types of styles worn by celebrities on social media because people regard them as models/ids, and I want to be like them.

Another interviewee stated:

I like to appear more civilized. Consequently, I dress this way because some people perceive students with traditional attire as uncivilized. Therefore, I chose to appear like this so that I will be regarded as a classy lady, and most of my outfits are derived

from the various styles of celebrities on social media.

Hypothesis Two:

There is no significant relationship between dress patterns and the selection of

Table 3: Chi-Square Analysis of Relationship between selection of partners and dressing patterns

Selection of Partners	Dressing Pattern				Total
	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	
Strongly Agree	81	33	0	0	114
Agreed	31	71	0	0	102
Disagreed	0	14	45	0	59
Strongly Disagreed	0	0	8	2	10
Total	112	118	53	2	285

Source: Field survey, 2023

 X^2 calculated = 204.667 X^2 tabulated = 9.48 N = 285 DF = 9 Sig. = 0.05

Table 3 showed Chi-Square analysis of selection of partners and dressing patterns. The X^2 calculated = 204.667 value is greater than the X^2 tabulated = 9.48 value, therefore, the null hypothesis two which states, there is no significant relationship between selection of partners and dressing patterns of female undergraduate students is rejected.

In the interview, some participants reiterated the influence of dress patterns in selecting partners. A participant reported:

I see dressing as one of the critical aspects of being associated with friends or partners in our society, particularly in various campuses of higher institutions. Of course, my friends largely influenced my dress pattern because we mimicked each other in outfits.

Another interviewee reported:

"I dress in this manner because people in our contemporary society, especially students on campuses of higher learning, do not usually appreciate ladies with traditional attire. As such, most ladies have abandoned traditional African dress patterns and opted for foreign dresses that are in vogue".

Another interviewee comments:

"Most of my friends appreciated fitted dresses as we compete among ourselves in terms of whom guys appreciate and patronize regarding male friendship. For the guest to appear more gorgeous to the male counterpart in our vicinity".

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between social media and fashion trend among female undergraduate students.

Table 4: Chi-Square Analysis of Relationship between social media and fashion trend

Social Media	Fashion Trend				Total
	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	
Strongly Agree	82	28	0	0	110
Agreed	60	46	0	0	106
Disagreed	8	6	30	4	48
Strongly Disagreed	6	0	11	4	21
Total	156	80	41	8	285

Source: field survey, 2023

X^2 calculated = 153.503 X^2 tabulated = 9.48 N = 285 DF = 9 Sig. = 0.05

Table 4 above showed Chi-Square analysis of social media and fashion trend. The X^2 calculated = 153.503 value is greater than the X^2 tabulated = 9.48 value, therefore, the null hypothesis three which states, there is no significant relationship between social media and fashion trend of female undergraduate students is rejected.

Another interviewee affirmed:

My wardrobe changed drastically as my favourite celebrities unveiled new dress fashions on social media. The latest fashion trends on social media always determine my fashion choice.

Another interviewee asserted:

Social media has always been a source of my fashion trends because I can quickly get my favourite dress pattern from social media platforms. It is well known that different fashion trends are showcased on different social media platforms.

4. Discussion of Findings

The study showed that indecency in dress is significantly related to social media among female undergraduate students of the University of Ilorin. The relationship is, however, in a negative direction. The findings indicated that the dressing patterns of the significant number of the students are informed and influenced by various foreign styles that are characterized by social media platforms. This study corroborates the findings of Giwa (2017), who pointed out that most of the students (78%) in higher institutions in Nigeria are into indecent dressing, which is majorly evident in the types of social media they were exposed to. This study is also in tandem with Apuke, (2017), who opined that exposure to various social media platforms has

changed the mode of dress pattern of our youth to that of foreign culture, which is inimical to our traditional culture. Akpan (2018) revealed that mass media has been a contributing factor to indecent dressing among university students. Akpan, further opined that mass media has been a significant source of immodest dressing where young people (students inclusive) learn how to dress flamboyantly without considering some considerable or sacred parts of their body that our society considers important.

The study also revealed a significant relationship between the selection of partners and the dressing patterns of female undergraduate students. This study is consistent with Oli, (2017), who asserted that peer imitation largely influenced dress style as the peers saw no harm in dressing like their partners/friends or course mates they tried to mimic. They tend to believe that their dress is always unique and appropriate and then tend to imitate them to have a sense of belonging in terms of their friendship. The study supported the stance of Sylvanus (2020), who found that some students in higher institutions appreciate partners with African modes of dressing such as Kente, Ankara, and Batic based on the African geographical locations. While others usually associate with friends with the Western mode of dressing. The study also aligns with Sadeeq (2015), who noted that dressing gives others, especially guys, opportunities and advantages to form impressions and perceptions about the person who wears it. The impression and perception could be positive or negative depending on how the person appears to them in the public domain.

This study also revealed a significant relationship between social media and fashion trends among female undergraduate students. This conforms with Ibrahim (2020), who reported that more than a quarter (81.7%) of the research participants on the study of social media and dress pattern among female students in citadel of learning strongly agreed and agreed that social media greatly influences their wardrobe. However, Ibrahim found that some students could not change their wardrobe owing to financial constraint. The cause of immodest dress is equally traceable to numerous factors such as fashion trends among celebrities on social media, value systems, and imitation of Western culture, globalization, peer pressure, and poor parental upbringing (Bloch, 2018).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study examined social media, dress-patterns and the selection of partners among undergraduate female students: The case of university of Ilorin. The study discovered how exposure to social media adversely influenced the indecency of female undergraduate students' dress, its impact on the selection of partners/friends, and the determinants of fashion trends that characterised social media by celebrities.

Thus, social media can create a perception among youth that indecent dressing is fashionable by promoting celebrities who dress indecently to promote their customer's product which may have an inimical effect on the mode of dressing of the youth who appreciate these celebrities.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the above findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i The management of higher institutions in Nigeria ensures that the dress code is enforced adequately in their various citadel of learning and that students who are found wanting are appropriately sanctioned, disciplined or penalised based on institution's code of dress regulations.
- ii Regular seminars and workshops should be organised by school administration and Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) on the benefits of decent dressing which range from respect, promotion of professionalism, safety, and positive influence.
- iii Parents should teach their youngsters good morals relating to dressing as embedded in African society and culture and how it is entrenched in their respective scripture.
- iv In collaboration with other relevant bodies, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) should constantly scrutinize celebrities' dressing mode before it is displayed on social media to avoid unnecessary imitation by their fans..
- v Sponsors and managers of higher institutions or learn should formulate policies that will enforce for strict adherence of dress code etc.

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