

**Indecent Dressing in Nigerian Tertiary Education Institutions:  
Implications for Education Administrators**

**By**

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***Abstract***

*In this paper, the issue of indecent dressing in Nigerian tertiary education institutions was highlighted. The concept causes and implications of indecent dressing in these institutions were discussed in relation to quality education. The paper showed that if this maladaptive behaviour is not controlled, the character aspect of the training given to the students would not be fulfilled because without good character disposition, learning will not take place. The paper therefore, called for urgent stamping out of this ugly situation as this will go a long way to sanitize the teaching and learning environment and in turn restore quality in tertiary education.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The issue of indecent dressing in our tertiary education institutions is perhaps most neglected in the education policy and system in Nigeria. The consequences of this trend is that indecent dressing practiced by our tertiary institution students in the campuses is steadily eating deep into the institution's culture thereby making nonsense of tertiary education. The university as the apex of tertiary institutions is where the indecent dressing is mostly practiced. According to Anadi and Egboka (2007), students wear outrageous and unimaginable styles that have very high seductive tendencies capable of desanitizing the teaching and learning environment, thereby disrupting the desired effectiveness in teaching and learning. Emphasizing the extent to which indecent dressing has gone into the university environment, they succinctly stated that, it is obviously clear that the phenomenon of indecent dressing is no longer making just an incursion into the university environment, but is now becoming institutionalized.

Following this however, the research studies done so far on this issue revealed that indecent dressing has contributed a lot to the dwindling quality of tertiary education. Some recurring factors identified by Igbinovia (2003), Salami and Uko- Aviomoh (2001) and Anadi and Egboka (2007) as being responsible for this state of affair in the tertiary institutions are home upbringing, peer group influence, attraction of the opposite sex, fashion consciousness, influence of western lifestyle and laissez- faire attitude on the part of lecturers. Others include to gain cheap popularity in the campus, poor regard for personal integrity, desire to belong to the class of big girls, general decline in moral standard in the society, quest for money and other material things, influence of corruptive experiences from internet, phonographic pictures, movies, etc. The observations and recommendations of these studies rarely find their ways to

education policy makers for consideration and implementation. Thus there is call to identify reasonable measures to be taken now and urgently to explore ways and means to stamp out this unhealthy situation in our tertiary institutions for the interest of education in Nigeria.

It is against this background that the present study was undertaken to examine the causes, and educational consequences of indecent dressing in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

### **INDECENT DRESSING IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS**

Tertiary education sometimes called higher education in Nigeria, is education given after secondary education in Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Monotechnics, including those institutions offering correspondence courses (Anyakoha, 2007). For him, tertiary education makes critical contributions to economic and social development of any country.

The major function of tertiary education is to help the students to acquire advanced knowledge, positive attitudes and technical skills that will enable them function well in their respective communities. To acquire these, one must have attended and successfully completed a number of stipulated courses in the tertiary institutions.

Tertiary institutions therefore, include such traditional multi- purpose universities for graduate and post- graduate studies and research. The specialized institutions of science and technology, professional institutions in various areas of human needs and endeavor (Nwuzor and Ocho, 2003). Others are all purpose institutions of polytechnics which prepare intermediate manpower, institutions of college's technology and other intermediate professional preparation institutions (Aghauche, 2007). Notably, tertiary institutions are established for some goals and objectives in mind. These according to Ozioko (2005) include conducting research, teaching and learning, extending the frontiers of knowledge and offering community service. To realize these the classroom (as a concretization point) environment in particular and tertiary institution environment in general must be very conducive for teaching and learning as where this is not possible the dreams of achieving quality education in Nigeria becomes a myth. In view of this therefore, it is very imperative for the tertiary institutions authorities to work hard towards this direction. In fact there is abundant evidence that every tertiary institution is working towards achieving its set goals and objectives. But most unfortunately, it is pertinent to note that while the institution is working to achieve this, the indecent dressing by unscrupulous students works contrary to that and make nonsense of every effort made.

Oxford (2000) refers to indecent dressing as showing parts of the body that one usually covered. Those parts of body that are meant to cover include the breast, the buttocks the navel and the public areas. Indecent dressing by implication, "portrays the individual as indisciplined, unscrupulous and of low self- worth" (Nwankwo, 2007). For him, it conveys negative self- projection determinable by the excessive amounts of indiscipline, sex appeal and mate search /hunger exuded. To this effect Iheanacho (2005) presented the following dressing patterns as constitute the indecent/sexy dressing:

- exposing the breast of the female
- exposing the complexion of the thighs of the female
- the dress revealing /showing the exact size and shape of the buttocks of the female
- tight blouse / body hug or midriffs -baring shirt worn by the female significantly arouse the males who also bare their chest in return.
- Wearing tight trousers and exposing the tummy by both male and female exert inter-sex arousal with the male being more easily aroused than the female.

Previously, the practice of indecent dressing in the tertiary institutions existed at low ebb with involvement of few lazy and recalcitrant female students. But today, it is becoming more pervasive with involvement of many students other than female students. Thus it is being practiced by male students and youths who happened to visit the institutions. Obviously, the involvement of many people in this maladaptive behaviour makes it a complex predicament with its increasing wave of perpetrators and sophisticated ways it is practiced. By and large, this situation results to the distortion of teaching and learning environment and in turn leads to the decline in the desired effectiveness in teaching and learning. Thus the situation becomes illusory and self-destructive as these students in question no longer read their books. They rather parade the campus with their indecent, skimpy and seductive dresses to show obsessive opposite sex hunger. Consequently, the result is a fall in the quality of education and its concomitant gross moral decadence in the society. This is obvious as the indecent dressing exerts tremendous influence on the neighborhood by being easily copied by the youths.

Therefore, following the increasing hue and cry of the tertiary students' indecent dressing, this paper deems it necessary to alert attention of all education stakeholders on the dangers of indecent dressing on our tertiary institutions because if nothing urgent is done about it, the dream of achieving the goals and objectives of tertiary education will not be achieved in Nigeria.

#### **EDUCATION IMPLICATIONS OF INDECENT DRESSING**

Despite the fact that indecent dressing has many effects on the perpetrators on one hand and on the education on the other, yet majority of our tertiary education students wear them. Following this therefore, this paper tries to highlight some of the educational implications of indecent dressing so that the perpetrators will see the need to stop it.

Indecent and sexy dresses worn by tertiary students have very high seductive tendencies capable of destabilizing the teaching and learning environment and in turn make nonsense of tertiary education. Similarly, Bolarim (2007) revealed more secret on this and has this to say:

When the girls are in the class and they are half naked, the male lecturer will have no choice than to Look or commit what we call 'lookery'.

You cannot tell him to close his eyes and anything can follow that. Such things that can follow according to Iheanacho (2003) are sexual "turn-ons' and 'come-ons". For him such situation cannot be conducive to learning. The point here is that the average attention span of the students is affected to the extent that their ability to code information into memory has become very low or very close to absent.

Obviously the level of sexual consciousness arising from sexy dresses corrupts and distorts the teaching and learning environment. Thus, "the darting and prying eyes as well as absent mindedness associated with sexual day dreaming" (Nwobi, 2000) are common spectacles in lecture halls in tertiary institutions (Nwankwo, 2007). This negates the realization of the objectives of tertiary education.

The indecent dressing going on in the tertiary institutions leads to the increase in the examination malpractice. In his own contribution to this, Mediera (1975) revealed that the perpetrators of indecent dressing expose themselves not only to be lacking interest in serious academic work but have come to distract others. Furthermore, they negatively project themselves as having low self-worth, being unscrupulously showy, always attracting attention to the self and so cannot be disciplined enough for any meaningful academic exercise (Nwankwo, 2007). In the lecture hall for him "they seem to show obsessive mate hunger and have some secret agenda. Their hope for success is examination malpractice.

Production of poor quality graduates is common in every tertiary institution today. It is very important to observe that despite all modifications in both the structure, inputs, process and contexts of tertiary education yet poor graduates are being produced. The contributions of some studies have lent credence to this premise (Maduabum, 1992; World Bank 2000; NUC, 2004; Anadi and Egboka 2007). Maduabum, World Bank, and NOC expressed the concern that poor graduates are being produced in our tertiary institutions while Anadi and Egboka (2007) stated categorically that the more the quality education appreciates, the depreciates.

The indecent and outrageous fashion patterns worn by unscrupulous tertiary students discourage good study habit in 'students which in turn stunts their intellectual capacity and skill acquisition. In such students "there is abundant evidence of poor time management and application of the self" (Nwankwo, 2007). For him, it is common for such indecently dressed students to come late to the class because of the undue length of time spent preening themselves and then come to the class only when they can get noticed

## **MANAGEMENT OF INDECENT DRESSING**

The prevalence of indecent dressing in Nigeria tertiary institutions in this recent time has posed a great challenge to the authorities of the institution especially where the quality of education is at stake. It is in this consideration that this paper suggests inter-alia as possible scenario.

There is need for enactment of dressing code by tertiary institutions. This should not recommend to the students what to wear but how to wear it. In this case students are free to wear dresses and styles of their choice provided they abide by the rules of the code. To make this successful, institutions are free to have standing committee on indecent dressing. Lecturers will be authorized not to allow indecently dressed students into classes and write bold inscription as "indecent dressing not allowed in this institution" on a bill board and keep at a conspicuous position. Some universities today are using this method; examples are Universities of Lagos, Calabar and Imo State (Anadi and Egboka 2007).

Students union governments at all levels to mount campaigns against indecent dressing with a view to continuously alerting the students on its effects. For better result on this idea, Anadi and Egboka (2007) are of the view that students may be cautioned better by their fellow students given the strength and powers of peer influence. Similarly they maintained that students governments should then talk and warn against indecent dressing during their induction sessions and at other get - together.

Federal government should urgently intervene in the matter by:

- mounting public enlightenment programmes on the effects of indecent dressing. For better result, public newspapers, magazines, bulletins, etc articles should be of good help since according to Nwankwo (2007) learned journals and books are very restricted in circulation and most times highly technical and unreadable by the general public;

- banning importation of indecent wears in the country;

- approving general prayer sessions and

- introducing moral instruction as a general studies course at the tertiary institutions

There should be establishment of a functional Parents-Teachers Association (P.T.A) in every tertiary institution with a view to creating a' forum to tackle the issue of indecent dressing

Religious organizations should come in by preaching, cajoling and moral suasion thereby making students to see with Vanpelt (2002) that a woman does not have to wear revealing clothing to play the teasing games as she can be fully clothed and still send out signals.

Counseling unit of every tertiary institution should be strengthened with a view to enable it face the challenges of indecent dressing with vigour. To this effect, counseling clinics and outreach centres should be established and adequately equipped for effective service delivery. Similarly Nwankwo (2007) suggested that the appropriate counseling procedures and techniques should be put in place to

accommodate the diverse needs of the varieties of the counselees. For him such counseling procedures should incorporate "script analysis" (Emenogu, 1988) relevant behaviour modification techniques (Essuman, 1988) appropriate feed-back and follow-up mechanisms.

Parents should become very critical in monitoring the type of friend their children and wards keep at school especially in connection with dressing. They should also train their children well.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper has discussed the issue of indecent dressing in Nigerian Tertiary Education Institutions in view of its implications to teaching and learning environment and the education at large. It also highlighted various dimensions of indecent dressing with a view to finding out its relationship with the falling standard of tertiary education in the country. Emerging from this is the fact that if this maladaptive behavior in our tertiary institutions is not urgently controlled, the character aspect of the training given to students would become useless. Finally, attempt was made to suggest possible measures to tackle this state of affair and restore quality in tertiary institutions.

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