

Influence of Gender and Age on the Clothing Practices among Undergraduates of Universities in Kwara State

Muinat A. Obalowu, Adeshola A. Babayeju, Christiana T. Gbadebo

Department of Home Economics and Food Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Influence of gender and age on the clothing practices among undergraduates was investigated. Two research questions and hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Survey research design was adopted with a sample size of 1,066. Data was collected and analyzed with Mean scores, t-test, and ANOVA. The findings revealed that undergraduates by gender did not differ in their clothing practices while there was a significant difference in their ages. It was concluded that gender has no influence on the clothing practices while age has. It was recommended that undergraduates should be educated on good and acceptable clothing practices. (*J ARAHE 25(2):50-55, 2018*)

KEY WORDS: Gender, age, clothing practices, undergraduates, universities

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Clothing is any covering for the human body and a form of artistic expression that reflects the moral and social aspects of human life. It has been recognized as one of the primary needs of man together with food and shelter. Clothing comprises outer garments or outer wear, under garments or inner wear, inner wear or inner garments, accessories and cosmetics (Forster, 2014). Clothes can manifest the wearer's social status, self-image and other personality characteristics resulting from complex social influences. Thus, it is believed that the needs that are met through apparel products and apparel consumption practices of undergraduates could provide appropriate indicators to reflect the social, economic and consumption experience patterns that could affect undergraduates' psychological satisfaction. In this present dynamic age, values and life-styles are reflected in the clothes that people

choose to wear and this is an important sphere of human activity. Clothing is any covering for the human body and a form of artistic expression that reflects the moral and social aspects of human life. Clothing practice therefore is a process whereby individuals engage in acquisition and appreciation of clothing for functional, communicative or reflective purposes. Clothing practice involves the way individuals dress, decisions they make in their choice of clothing, shopping for clothing, selection of clothing and clothing maintenance

The problem of youth's clothing choice has been of major discussion in recent times. While some people think that a person's dressing should not bother anyone else, others believe that such appearance should be acceptable by the society. A student's dress code should suit the school environment.

Observing the hallways of many higher institutions today reveals that students have pushed dress code to the limit, (Fayokun, Adedeji, & Oyeade 2009). Students wear halter-tops and bare midriff clothes, tight underwear peeking above ultra-low-cut blouses, and bright-coloured bras shining through transparent shirts. Girls wear skirts that are just "an inch" longer than their pants. When female students wear such clothes, they struggle to sit down, climb stairs, and motor cycles which is a common means of

Address for correspondence: Obalowu Muinat A., Department of Home Economics and Food Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ilorin, P.M.B 1515. Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria
Tel: +234 8063739639 · E-mail: obalowu.ma@unilorin.edu.ng

transportation in Nigeria. They also find it difficult to cross gutters or pick up things from the ground.

In this present dynamic age, values and life-styles are reflected in the clothes that people choose to wear and this is an important sphere of human activity. Clothing is any covering for the human body and a form of artistic expression that reflects the moral and social aspects of human life. Man's use of clothing dates back to the time of creation when Adam and Eve became naked after falling victim to temptation and they plucked and used fig leaves to cover their nudity. Clothing can be used to mark age differences, represent royalty, peer influence, socio-economic and academic class as well as religious conviction. It is part of peoples' culture and defines their tribal or ethnic identity, which is expected to be seen in every ethnic group, and even among undergraduates. Most undergraduates are young people in the Universities who are studying for their first degree.

The African culture and most especially the Nigerian culture support modesty in appearance. Christianity, Islam and other religion which most of these undergraduates practice encourage decency and modesty in dressing. To ensure that students are properly dressed, those offering such academic courses as law, medicine and nursing, among others wear specific uniforms which form their dress code.

Choosing and wearing of clothing are influenced by both external and internal factors. Some of these internal factors comprise perception, motivation, learning, attitudes, personalities, self-concept, lifestyle and demographics. Some external factors include variables, such as cultural background or ethnicity, subculture, family influence and social factors. Other factors that influence clothing practices could be role models whom an individual is in expression, and serves as a basis for self-appraisal or as a source of personal standard (Lancaster & Reynolds, 1998).

Gender and age may influence clothing practices of undergraduates and in determining undergraduates' clothing choice and ways of dressing. The University represents a very large youth population and therefore the justification to find out if age and gender as independent variables have any influence on the clothing practices of undergraduates which is the dependent variable.

Statement of the problem

Serious concern has been shown by lecturers, Universi-

ty authorities, education stakeholders, parents and the general public in Kwara State over the clothing practices of undergraduates especially the female ones. It has been observed that some female undergraduates in Kwara State wear among other things, tattered jeans with holes on the knees, very short, tight fitting and transparent clothes which barely cover their bodies. This becomes worrisome because such clothing practices send out wrong signals to observers and could encourage female students being raped or killed for rituals. Some male undergraduates of Kwara State Universities go about with unkempt hair and funny hairstyles. They wear among other things dirty tattered jeans with holes deliberately made in them. They also wear sagging trousers below the hips and this exposes their boxers or even parts of their bare buttocks thereby making the academic environment very disturbing for lecturers and other undergraduates. Wearing of earrings and piercing of the nose are today part of male undergraduates' clothing practices. The roughly dressed boys and girls cause disturbance in lecture halls as they walk in.

There are clothing items appropriate for going to church, some for sporting activities, for going to parties, for staying at home and some for going to lectures. All these deal with modest and good clothing practices in conformity with the environmental acceptable clothing practices.

A student's conduct and performance may be 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 researcher has observed that not many studies have been done on undergraduates' age and gender on their clothing practices. This study was to empirically investigate if age and gender have influence on the clothing practices among undergraduates in the universities? To find answer to this question this study becomes relevant.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of gender and age on the clothing practices among undergraduates in Universities in Kwara State. Specifically, the study sought to

1. Determine the difference in the clothing practices by gender among undergraduates of Universities in Kwara State;

2. Investigate the difference in clothing practices among undergraduates of different age groups in the Universities in Kwara State.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the difference in the clothing practices among male and female undergraduates in the Universities in Kwara.

2. Is there any difference in the clothing practices of undergraduates of different age groups in the Universities in Kwara State?

Hypotheses

The research questions were answered, formulated into null hypotheses and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the clothing practices of male and female undergraduates the Universities in Kwara State.

2. There is no significant difference in clothing practices of undergraduates of different age groups in the Universities in Kwara State.

Scope of the study

The study focused on the influence of gender and age on the clothing practices among undergraduates in Kwara State. The study was delimited to the influence of gender and age on the clothing practices of undergraduates in four Universities in Kwara State, namely University of Ilorin, Kwara State University, Malete, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, and Landmark University, Omu-Aran.

METHODOLOGY

Survey descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The research design used information collected from a sample for generalization of a larger population (Ekeh, 2003).

This was suitable for this study because the researcher described the data that were collected and analyzed them based on the existence of the clothing practices of selected undergraduates for generalization among undergraduates in Kwara State.

Table 1. Population of Undergraduate Students in Universities in Kwara State (2014/2015)

S/N	University	Number of students
1.	Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin	3,326
2.	Kwara State University, Malete	4,450
3.	Landmark University, Omu-Aran	2,205
4.	University of Ilorin, Ilorin	22,163
	Total	32,144

Sources: Academic Planning Unit of each University

Population of the Study: The total population of 32,144 undergraduates was used for this study.

Sample and sampling technique

The sample comprised 1,057 undergraduates from all the Universities in Ilorin were recruited using multistage sampling technique.

Stage 1

Simple random sampling technique was used to select three (3) faculties from each University which constituted twenty five percent (25%) of the total number of existing faculties in the Universities. This was done by giving each faculty a number that was written on pieces of paper, these pieces of papers were put in a bag from where one piece was picked at a time. The piece picked was recorded and then returned to the bag. This process was repeated until the three faculties were obtained. If the same piece of paper was picked again, it was returned to the bag without recording the number. This was to ensure that each faculty under the study had an equal chance of being selected and the probability of a faculty being selected was unaffected by the selection of other faculties.

Stage 2

One department was randomly selected from each of the faculties chosen in stage One by the use of ballot.

Stage 3

Undergraduates involved in the study were selected across all the levels of their programme of study.

Stage 4

Proportionate random sampling technique was used to select students from the three selected departments. The proportion that was adopted was fifty percent.

Instrumentation

Questionnaire titled Clothing Practices Questionnaire (CPQ) was used for data collection for the study. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on the objectives, research questions and formulated hypotheses. The questionnaire was divided into five sections (A, B, C, D and E).

Section A : was on socio- demographic information, Section B focused on clothing choice and was assessed with items on Clothing Practices Questionnaire (CPQ). Sections C, D and E focused on Shopping and Clothing Purchase, Dressing Styles and Clothing Management respectively. They consisted of fifty items all related to clothing

Table 2. Descriptive analysis of socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Sex		
Male	504	47.7
Female	553	52.3
Total	1,057	100.0
Age		
Below 20 years	355	33.6
20–24 years	566	53.5
25–29 years	114	10.8
30 and above	22	2.1
Total	1,057	100.0

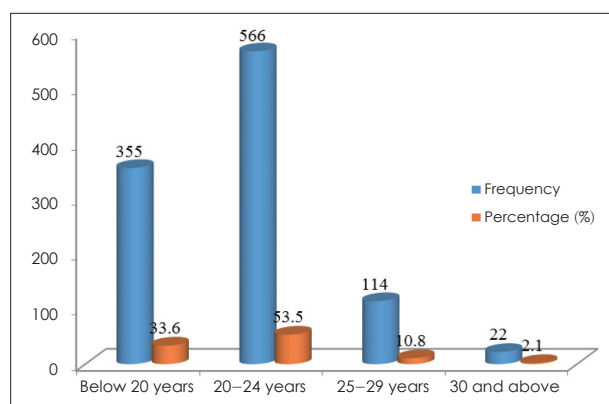


Fig. 1. Distribution of respondents by age.

practices and dealing with undergraduates' clothing choice, clothing purchase, dressing styles and clothing maintenance. Responses of each item was rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 4 which indicated strongly agree to 1 which indicated strongly disagree.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the statistical analysis of the data collected from the study.

Analysis of demographic data

Table 2 shows that 504 (47.7%) male respondents and 553 (52.3%) female respondents participated in the study comprising, 516 (48.8%) respondents from public universities and 541 (51.2%) from private universities representing ownership. Fig. 1 shows that 355 respondents representing 33.6% were below 20 years while 566 (53.5%) were 20–24 years age range, 114 (10.8%) are 25–29 years, while 22 representing (2.1%) were 30 years and above.

Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis one

There is no significance difference in the clothing practices of undergraduates in Kwara State Universities by Gender.

Table 3 shows a calculated t-value of -1.571 and a *p*-value of 0.117, testing at an alpha level of 0.05 since the *p*-value is greater than the alpha level, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between male and female undergraduates in their clothing practices in Universities in Kwara State is retained.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant difference in clothing practices among different age groups of undergraduates of Universities in Kwara State.

Table 3. T-test of independent sample of clothing practices by Gender

Sex	N	Mean $\bar{x}$	Standard deviation	t-cal	Sig. (2tailed)
Male	504	125.45	17.05	-1.571	0.117
Female	553	127.04	15.89		

$\alpha=0.05$

Table 4. ANOVA of clothing practices by age group

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	3383.535	3	1127.845	4.199	0.006
Within groups	282863.133	1053	268.626		
Total	286246.668	1056			

$\alpha=0.05$

Table 5. Post hoc multiple comparisons of clothing practices by age groups

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean difference (I-J)	Sig.
Below 20 years	20–24 years	1.52592	.257
20–24 years	25–29 years	–5.98310	.003*
25–29 years	30 and above	10.16108	.028*
30 and Above	Below 20 years	–5.70390	.190
25–29 years	Below 20 years	4.45718	.190
20–24 years	30 and above	4.17798	.331

*: The mean difference is significant at 0.05 Alpha level

Table 4 shows an F-value of 4.199 and a p -value of 0.006. Since the p -value is less than the alpha level, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the clothing practices of different age groups of undergraduates of Universities in Kwara state is rejected. Consequently, there is a significant difference in the clothing practices among undergraduates of different age groups of Universities in Kwara state.

Table 5 shows significant differences of 20–24 years and 25–29 years with a p -value of .003. it also shows significant difference in 25–29 years and 30 years and above, 25–29 years and below 20 years with p -value of .003, .028 and .037 respectively, but no significant difference of 30 and above and below 20 years and 20–24 years and 30 years and above and below 20 years and 20-24 years with p -values of .190, .331 and .257 respectively.

Discussion of findings

Findings of null hypothesis one revealed that there was no significance difference between male and female undergraduates in their clothing practices in Universities in Kwara State.

This could be attributed to the fact that some of the Universities used for the study have a standard dressing code which they followed in their schools. Both male and female are not allowed to wear certain provocative dresses.

This result corroborates with the findings of Omede (2011) who reported that female students are not allowed to wear sleeveless tops, body hugs, shorts, transparent clothes, head gears, canopy head ties, bogus fashion jewelries, dresses and skirts with slit above the knees, and that male students are not to wear shirts or any clothes, revealing the armpits, shorts above the knees when not required, head ties and earrings among others. The result agreed with Hanzaae and Aghasibeig (2008) who in their findings of the 10-factor decision-making styles solutions confirmed for males and 11-factor decision-making styles solution for females, nine factors were found to be common to both genders. The authors regarded this similarity as a result of the changing gender roles.

The findings were not in agreement with Twigg (2007) who reiterated that women in contemporary culture are more engaged than men with fashion at every level. They opined that women spend more money on clothes, spend more time shopping, and read more about the topic, and that men tend to be less involved than women in questions of fashion. The result also contradicted the view of Tamboli (2008), who opined that females are extremely engaged in the process of fashion consumption when compared with male and older consumers. The findings contradict the view that clothing can be used to indicate social status and convey individual, occupational, and sexual differentiation.

The result of null hypothesis three revealed that there was a significant difference among different age groups of undergraduates in clothing practices in Universities in Kwara State. This agreed with the findings of Danielson (2008) who observed in his study that there are clearly observable differences in dressing by adult age and affirmed that adolescents like to look more mature with their clothing choices, and that young people are very careful in their appearance management, as during these years they notice and are noticed by their counterparts and exhibit characteristic clothing behaviour. The finding is in consonance with the findings of Hansen (2004) who discov-

ered that students' attitude to wearing traditional outfits revolves around beliefs and age. This implies that looking best in "traditional clothing" evoke a level of maturity which some young students consider to be old fashioned, meaning that something that is associated with what their mothers and grandmothers wear is considered old fashion. The result shows significant differences between 20–24 years and 25–29 years, the findings also shows significant difference in 25–29 years and 30 years and above, 25–29 years and below 20 years respectively, but no significant difference between 30 and above and below 20 years and 20–24 years and 30 years and above and below 20 years and 20–24 years.

Findings

The following were the findings:

- i. Null hypothesis one revealed that there was no significance difference in the clothing practices between male and female undergraduates of Universities in Kwara State. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was retained which implied that male and female do not differ in their clothing practices.
- ii. The result of null hypothesis two revealed that there was a significant difference in the clothing practices of different age groups of undergraduates of Universities in Kwara State.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it was concluded that gender has no influence on the clothing practices of undergraduates of Universities in Kwara State. However different age groups, have influence on undergraduates' clothing practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Undergraduates should be encouraged to take a course in clothing and textiles to help them understand this important aspect of human activity.

2. Dress code should be established in all Nigerian Universities to reduce the influence of peer group on undergraduate students' clothing practices.

3. Home Economists who are experts in clothing and textiles should provide undergraduates with adequate information on clothing, through seminars conferences and workshops to provide education on clothing needs of different age groups.

4. The University administrations should incorporate element of good clothing practices into the orientation programmes of the first year undergraduates to reduce bad influence of peer group on their clothing selection practices.

5. University authorities should promote cultural heritage and the development of individuality by encouraging traditional attire at least once a week.

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