

 Research Article

Indecent Dressing among Female Undergraduate Students: Impact on Emotional Adjustment and Cognitive Engagement of Their Male Counterparts in Anambra State

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Abstract

This study sought to x-ray indecent dressing among female undergraduates in a university community and its impact on the emotional adjustment and cognitive engagement of their male counterparts in Anambra State. The descriptive design was adopted for this study and guided by three research questions. The sample size for the study was 542 undergraduate male students in a government-owned university in Anambra State drawn through a multi-stage sampling procedure. Researcher designed questionnaire validated by experts in the field of Education was used in eliciting responses from the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's alpha to estimate the internal consistency of the instrument. The analysis gave an alpha coefficient of 0.71, 0.73, 0.70 and 0.72 for clusters 1 to 4 respectively and 0.71 for the whole cluster. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings of the study revealed prevalence of indecent dressing among female undergraduate students in Anambra State. It also showed that indecent dressing among female students are sustained by many factors such as imitation of western dressing style, peer/social group pressure, fashion in vogue and poor parenting. The result further revealed that curbing indecent dressing in tertiary institutions in Anambra State is possible through creating of awareness on proper dress codes for students using bill boards. Finally, the findings of the study showed that indecent dressing among female undergraduate students has a negative impact on both the emotional adjustment and cognitive engagement of their male counterparts in Anambra State. It was recommended among others that there should be enforcement of policies against indecent dressing on campuses.

Keywords: Cognitive Engagement, Emotional Adjustment, Indecent Dressing, Undergraduate Students

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Received

July 30, 2024

Accepted

December 20, 2024

Published

February 3, 2025

Citation: Anierobi, E. I., Nnonyelu, O. G., & Nwaru, P. E. (2025). Indecent dressing among female undergraduate students: Impact on emotional adjustment and cognitive engagement of their male counterparts in Anambra State. *Journal of Research in Education and Pedagogy*, 2(1), 61–72.

DOI: [10.70232/jrep.v2i1.18](https://doi.org/10.70232/jrep.v2i1.18)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, habits, and personal development. It offers people the opportunity to transmit what is worthwhile to their generation. Irrespective of gender, colour or culture, every child needs and is entitled to quality education (Nwikpo, Anierobi, Okeke & Etodike, 2021). Education is, therefore, an intentional activity with specific goals in mind, such as spreading knowledge or developing the abilities and character qualities necessary for future success. There is no doubt that everyone involved in education especially parents and schools want their wards and students respectively to perform well academically. Students' major goal in enrolling in school is to gain knowledge and their academic performance primarily indicates the breadth of their knowledge. Therefore, for students to engage in academic activities, acquire knowledge and achieve good grades, they must be emotionally adjusted and cognitively engaged. For this to happen; there must be a serene and friendly learning environment.

Learning environment should be safe, inclusive, free from threat, and with opportunities for self-advancement (Anierobi, Okeke & Daniel, 2022). It should also offer intellectually stimulating and engaging content, with opportunities for active participation, autonomy, and social interaction. There should be a focus on positive reinforcement, constructive feedback, and personal relevance. Nevertheless, these factors that promote emotional adjustment and cognitive engagement of students could be punctured or disrupted by the inappropriate and wrongful dressings worn by female students of higher institutions which could negatively influence the emotional and cognitive engagement of male students.

Cognitive engagement is conceptualized as the efforts made by students in engaging their brain and memory towards processing, internalizing and understanding academic contents needed for acquiring knowledge. Agah and Unachukwu cited in Anierobi et al (2023) construe that it is the efforts by students to understanding concepts and academic contents presented to them. Irrespective of pedagogical strategies, research shows that meaningful learning is predicted by quality cognitive engagement (Guthrie et al in Barlow et al, 2020). Students display cognitive engagement by asking questions for clarification of ideas, persistence in difficult activities, flexibility in problem-solving, relating new information to existing information and use of self-regulation to support learning (Finn & Zimmer in Anierobi & Unachukwu, 2020). Cognitive engagement has been linked with academic performance of students (Wara, Aloka & Odongo, 2018). This implies that students with good cognitive engagement have better understanding of subject matter and usually perform better than those who learn by rote. Similarly, Khan, Gul and Zeb (2023) found that cognitive and emotional engagement is strongly connected to academic success and productivity. Deductively, cognitive and emotional engagement are critical for students to achieve success and be productive in their pursuit of academic goals. It follows to assert that students can be cognitively engaged when they have stable and well-adjusted emotions.

The term emotional adjustment refers to the capacity of an individual to identify, understand, and be in charge of their emotions to cope with the pressures, challenges, difficulties and demands of daily life routines and events. It entails the ability of an individual to manifest or express the appropriate form of emotion in a suitable situation (Miglani, 2023). Studies have indicated that depression and anxiety affects the psychological wellbeing of individuals (Lee, 2020). Others linked emotional adjustment to cheerfulness, resilience, high academic achievement, a positive self-concept (Shuur et al, 2020) and as a booster for self-initiated growth and all-round development (Richard, 2015). Invariably, emotional maladjustment has various consequences that impact different aspects of an individual's life which include impaired social relationships, poor academic or occupational performance, physical health problems, and mental disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). One of the factors that could affect the emotional adjustment of students is indecent dressing which apparently could be one of the causes of most distractions across the strata of university.

Dressing is an act of putting on clothes for the main purpose of covering one's nakedness. Aside from covering the nakedness of man to distinguish him from other animals dressing serves other purposes such as beautifying and adorning the body and making one look responsible. A dress is therefore said to be indecent when it has a provocative or stimulating influence on almost all those who happen to view it on the user (Obinyirioha, Ako & James, 2024). Although there are no universally acceptable ways of dressing, dresses are meant to serve some definable purposes, notwithstanding one's country or region. They are part of people's culture, and they define their tribal or ethnic identity. Apart from dresses being a means for cultural identity, they are for ornamental or aesthetic purposes, for protection of the body against harsh weather conditions as well as for covering the intimate part of the body (Tachia-Bai & Dajo, 2024). It is sad then that despite knowing the importance of dressing decently and the consequences of dressing indecently, many particularly university students still involve themselves in indecent dressing.

Indecent dressing is the improper and provocative way of dressing relative to the society or culture of the students (Kwanuba, Subaba & Filgona, 2020). Nzoiwu (2023) described indecent dressing as any form of dressing that exposes any part of the body considered private. Oluwadare, Otunaiya, and Opeoluwa in Nzoiwu (2023) added that indecent dressing means any type of dressing that does not conform or align with the mode of dressing which is socially acceptable in the community where the person resides. It is becoming a serious challenge and a trend in higher institutions in Nigeria (Fadipe, Dauda & Okesina, 2024). Indecent dressing takes the form of wearing skimpy clothes, also known as fitted, strapless and short blouses and sagging trousers with low waist or ass down, by boys and even girls, cleavages and sleeveless shirts, also known as spaghetti or off-shoulder. Ajayi in Nwikpo et al (2022) equally pointed out that more

female students are trapped in the web of indecent dressing. Previous studies highlighted some of the indecent dresses the female students wear in and around the university to include skimpy, tight-fitting, and transparent outfits (Gbadegbe & Quashie, 2013).

Indecent dressing has some impacts on both staff and student counterpart of the person that adorns oneself in it. Nwiko, Anierobi, Eluemuno, Ezennaka, Ezeonwumelu (2022) showed that indecent dressing of female undergraduates in southeastern, Nigeria, negatively impact the study engagement of male undergraduates. In their study, Selase and Mawuli (2013) showed that provocative dressing destructs the attention of both students and lecturers during lectures. Indecent dressing was associated with exposure to sexual harassment, rape and poor image on female students who dress indecently (Ibrahim, 2020). Oyekola and Badmus (2023) reported that students who dress indecently perform poorly because they lack time to squarely focus on and concentrate on their studies. Fadipe et al (2024) equally reported that low self-esteem, sexual harassment and poor academic achievement were among the consequences of indecent dressing.

A lot of factors could be responsible for indecent dressing among female undergraduate students. Some of the factors include poor parenting, the negative influence of the internet, television programme and peers (Abdulkareem, Abdulkareem, Yusuf & Ibrahim, 2022; Ojogbane, Amonjenu & Hussein, 2020). Explicitly, Ukaegbu (2023) showed that mass media and celebrities, fashion, advertisements, and music videos expose youths to indecent dressing. Anierobi, Eluemuno, Etodike and Nwiko (2021) noted that undergraduate students in the universities are aware of the consequences of indecent dressing, and have a negative perception of it, yet they still engage in it with reckless abandon. Ahmed (2015) underscored the desire to look sexy, sensuous, tantalizing, and stimulating as what motivates indecent dressing. According to Ahmed, on many occasions, this seductive mode of dressing had come with grave consequences of turning them into victims of rape and other social vices. Anadi, Egboka, Anierobi (2011) construed that some factors that sustain indecent dressing of female undergraduates include continued importation of indecent wears into the country, show of movies that embodied nudity and indecent dressing in the country. Similarly, Oyekola and Badmus (2023) affirmed that influence of western culture and value orientation from the family.

Scholars reported that indecent dressing can be curbed in many ways. For instance, adequate educational campaigns, and enforcement of school dress codes are effective ways of fighting indecent dressing in tertiary institutions (Okafor, Nwokoro, Anyika, 2023). Okafor and Uwalaka (2021) asserted that indecent dressing can be curbed through adopting dress codes in higher institutions. Abdulkareem, Abdulkareem, Yusuf & Ibrahim (2022) averred that curbing indecent dressing could be achieved if parents serve as a good model to their children, proper use of social media and enforcing dress codes in institution. Apart from instituting dress codes, Mofoluwawo and Oyelade (2012) showed that sanctioning defaulters is an effective strategy in curbing indecent dressing in tertiary institutions.

Despite the cons of indecent dressing, scholars affirmed that Nigerian tertiary institutions are battling with the wave of indecent dressing among male and female students (Okafor & Uwalaka, 2021). The reign of skimpy dresses in the school environment has turned many campuses into fashion runways. However, besides wearing short skirts, some male and female undergraduate students throw caution to the wind by displaying their boobs and earrings as a cheap means of getting attention. 'Dress to kill', is now a popular slogan in lecture halls to look sexy or classy, forgetting that they ought to look responsible (Obilo & Okugo, 2013). Given the importance of emotional adjustment and cognitive engagement to students' overall learning and performance, this study, therefore, deemed it necessary to determine the impact of indecent dressing on the emotional adjustment and cognitive engagement of male undergraduate students in higher institutions in Anambra State. This study is anchored on modernization theory by Max Weber to explain how foreign cultures and dresses changed Africans ideology and mentality, to the extent that the female university students now see them as modern ways of dressing.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Literature have shown that indecent dressing of female undergraduates is prevalent in Nigerian universities. Previous research revealed that indecent dressing among undergraduate female students has debilitating impacts on not only the female students that indulge in it but it also has a way on impacting on their male counterparts and male staff of the institution alike. Would it be possible that indecent dressing

which allow beholders easy access the curves and part of the private parts of female students capable of negatively influencing the cognitive engagement of male students in the learning process? Furthermore, when these male students are pushed into this mind battle from the arousal and harassment which they face even in lecture halls and school environment through exposure to indecent dressing of female students, how emotionally adjusted would they be with their academic activities which determines their performance? These questions prompted this study on indecent dressing among female undergraduate students: impact on emotional adjustment and cognitive engagement of their male counterparts: factors sustaining indecent dressing and possible strategies for curbing it in higher institutions in Anambra State.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of indecent dressing on emotional adjustment and cognitive engagement of male undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Specifically, the objectives of the study seek to determine:

- The factors that sustain indecent dressing among female undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.
- The impact of indecent dressing on the emotional adjustment of male undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.
- The impact of indecent dressing on the cognitive engagement of male undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.
- The possible strategies for curbing indecent dressing among female undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide this study:

- What are the factors that sustain indecent dressing among female undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?
- What impact does indecent dressing of female undergraduate students have on the emotional adjustment of their male counterparts in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?
- What is the impact of indecent dressing of female undergraduate students on the cognitive engagement of their male counterparts in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?
- What are the possible strategies for curbing indecent dressing among female undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

Conceptual Framework

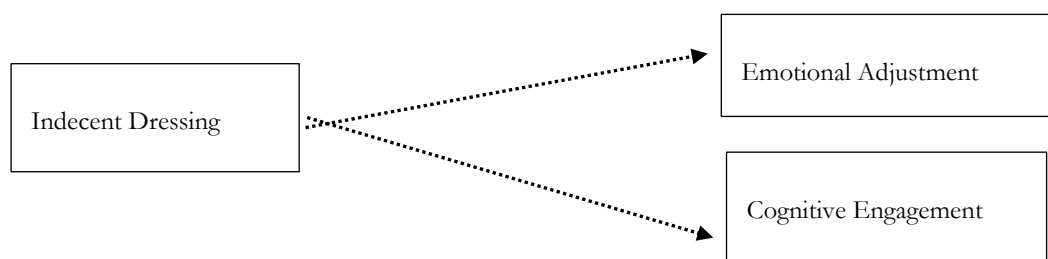


Figure 1. Schematic Representation of the Relationship Between the Independent Variable (Indecent Dressing) and the Dependent Variables (Emotional Adjustment and Cognitive Engagement)

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

The descriptive research design was adopted for this study to fulfil the goals of determining the prevalence, factors, and strategies for intervention for indecent dressing among female undergraduate

students and its impact on the emotional adjustment and cognitive engagement of male counterparts in a government university in Anambra State. We analyzed the data collected from the respondents using Frequency, percentage and Weighted Mean presented in Tables. This analytical approach was considered appropriate for describing the situation at hand without manipulating the variables.

2.2. Research Participants

The sample size for the study was 542 undergraduate male students in a government-owned university in Anambra State. Simple random sampling was used in drawing one out of the two government-owned universities in Anambra State. Afterwards, a convenient sampling technique was adopted for sampling male students for the study. We created a Google form questionnaire and distributed its link online to all the faculties in the university. We specified that the questionnaire was meant for only undergraduate male students. The questionnaire provided a consent column and required that any participant could choose to discontinue at any point in responding to the items on the questionnaire. Five hundred and forty-two (542) undergraduate male students who responded to the Google form questionnaire in different departments in the university formed the study sample for the study.

2.3. Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for this present study was a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. The instrument was titled “Impact of Indecent Dressing of Female Students on the Emotional Adjustment and Cognitive Engagement of Male Undergraduate Students Questionnaire” (IIDFSEACEMSQ). The instrument has 20 items and 4 clusters which sought information relevant to answering the research questions. The instrument is based on a four-point response scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) for cluster all the clusters. All were weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

2.4. Validation of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instrument, we submitted the instrument alongside the title, purpose of the study, scope of the study and research questions to 3 experts in the Department of Educational Foundations at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The experts were requested to examine and scrutinize the items for language clarity, relatedness to the purpose of the study, contents, relevance, suitability, and coverage of the dimensions of the study. There corrections were affected in the final draft of the instrument.

2.5. Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach’s alpha to estimate the internal consistency of the instrument. The analysis gave an alpha coefficient of 0.71, 0.73, 0.70 and 0.72 for clusters 1 to 4 respectively and 0.71 for the whole cluster. This was considered high, implying that the instrument was reliable for use.

2.6. Method of Data Analysis

In analyzing the data collected from the respondents, we used Frequency, Percentage and Weighted Mean. The responses were organized in Tables according to the research questions. We adopted a decision rule of cut-off mean of 2.50, so that if the mean score of any item is greater than or equal to 2.50, then it will imply that the respondents agreed with the issue raised in the particular item, but if the mean score of any item is less than 2.50, it means that the respondents disagreed with the issue raised in the particular item.

2.7. Ethical Considerations

In the present study, male undergraduate students from a government-owned tertiary institution in Anambra State were involved. The authors sought the consent of the students for participation in the study. The participants were assured that their responses were strictly for research purposes and that their identity would be confidential. They were informed that anyone of them had the opportunity to discontinue with responding to the questionnaire items anytime they feel uncomfortable about it. These information were provided in the google form links shared with them for filling the questionnaire. With these information, only the willing male students who understood that their responses were for research purposes and their identity kept confidential took part in the study.

3. RESULTS

Research Question One: What are the factors that sustain indecent dressing among female undergraduate students in Anambra State?

Table 1. Mean Rating of Respondents on the Factors that Sustain Indecent Dressing among Female Undergraduate Students in Anambra State (N=542)

S/N	Factors that sustain indecent dressing among female students include:	SA	A	D	SD	Total	X	Remark
1	Imitation of western dressing style	219 40.41%	253 46.68%	38 7.01%	33 6.09%	542 100%	3.47	Agreed
2	Peer/social group pressure	160 29.52%	197 36.35%	150 27.68%	35 6.46%	542 100%	3.37	Agreed
3	Poor parenting	130 23.99%	255 47.05%	104 19.19%	53 9.78%	542 100%	2.55	Agreed
4	Fashion in vogue	200 36.90%	309 57.01%	30 0.55%	3 0.92%	542 100%	2.87	Agreed
5	Television shows on entertainment programmes	240 44.28%	270 49.82%	28 5.17%	4 0.74%	542 100%	2.53	Agreed
	Grand Mean						3.00	Agreed

Data in Table1 shows that all the items have mean score of 2.53 and above with a grand mean of 3.0 showing agreement. The findings also show the percentage of the respondents that agreed that imitation of western dressing style (46.68%), peer /social group pressure (36.35%), fashion in vogue (57.01%) and television shows on entertainment programmes (49.83%) and poor parenting (47.05%) are factors that sustain indecent dressing among female undergraduate students in Anambra State.

Research Question Two: What is the perceived influence of indecent dressing on emotional adjustment of their male counterparts in Anambra State?

Table 2. Mean Rating of Respondents on the Perceived Influence of Indecent Dressing on Emotional Adjustment of their Male Counterparts in Tertiary Institutions in Anambra State (N=542)

S/N	As a male student:	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	X	Remark
6	I feel anxious when I see female students dressed in revealing clothing	120 22.14%	235 43.36%	106 19.56%	81 14.94%	542 100%	2.77	Agreed
7	The way female students dress in school makes me angry	145 26.75%	271 50%	79 14.58%	47 8.67%	542 100%	3.13	Agreed
8	I feel the way female students dress in school make me bored in class	139 25.65%	148 27.31%	143 26.38%	112 20.66%	542 100%	2.50	Agreed

S/N	As a male student:	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	X	Remark
9	I feel uncomfortable around female students who dress in revealing clothing	116 21.40%	230 42.44%	100 18.45%	96 17.71%	542 100%	2.97	Agreed
10	I feel the way female students dress in school makes me feel worried	191 35.24%	203 37.45%	89 16.42%	59 10.89%	542 100%	2.86	Agreed
	Grand Mean						2.85	Agreed

Data in Table 2 shows that all the items have mean scores of 2.67 and above with a grand mean of 2.85 showing agreement. Explicitly, The findings also show the percentage of the respondents that agreed that exposure to indecent dressing among female students makes them feel anxious (43.36%), angry (50%), feel bored in class (27.3%), feel uncomfortable around indecently dressed female students (42.44%) and makes them feel worried (37.4%). This shows that all the respondents agreed to the fact that indecent dressing of female undergraduates negatively influence the emotional adjustment of their male counterparts in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Research Question Three: What is the perceived influence of indecent dressing of female undergraduates on cognitive engagement of their male counterparts in Anambra State?

Table 3. Mean Rating of Respondents on the Perceived Influence of Indecent Dressing on Cognitive Engagement of Their Male Counterparts in Tertiary Institutions in Anambra State (N-542)

S/N	As a male student:	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	X	Remark
11	Indecent dressing by female students makes me lack concentration in my studies	185 34.13%	206 38.01%	99 18.27%	52 9.59%	542 100%	2.96	Agreed
12	The mental image of indecent dressing by female students distracts me from reflective thoughts over my studies	200 36.90%	233 42.99%	74 13.65%	35 6.46%	542 100%	3.55	Agreed
13	I usually experience poor comprehension due reduced attention caused by indecent dressing	161 29.70%	244 45.02%	88 16.24%	49 9.04%	542 100%	3.03	Agreed
14	I usually experience reduction in retaining learned materials due to distractions from indecent dressing	156 28.78%	273 50.37%	73 13.47%	38 7.01%	542 100%	3.17	Agreed
15	Mental images of indecent dressing by female students promotes mental stress	143 26.38%	258 47.60%	90 16.61%	51 9.41%	542 100%	3.14	Agreed
	Grand Mean						3.17	Agreed

Data in Table 3 shows that all the items have mean scores of 2.77 and above with a grand mean of 3.17 showing agreement. Explicitly, The findings also show the percentage of the respondents that agreed that exposure to indecent dressing among female students makes them lack concentration in class (38.01%), distracts them from reflecting on their studies (42.99%), causes them poor comprehension (45.02%), reduction in their ability to retain studied materials (50.37%), experience mental stress (47.60%). This shows that all the respondents agreed that indecent dressing of female undergraduates has a negative influence on the cognitive engagement of their male counterparts in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Research Question Four: What are the possible strategies for curbing indecent dressing among female undergraduate students in Anambra State?

Table 4. Mean Rating of Respondents on the Possible Strategies for Curbing Indecent Dressing among Female Undergraduate Students in Tertiary Institutions in Anambra State (N=542)

S/N	I believe that:	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	X	Remark
16	School should create awareness on proper dress codes for students using bill boards	263 48.52%	258 47.60%	13 2.40%	8 1.48%	542 100%	3.59	Agreed
17	Rules and regulation concerning dressing should be formulated and included in the student's handbook	257 47.42%	242 44.65%	23 4.24%	20 3.69%	542 100%	3.51	Agreed
18	Lessons on morality should be taught	244 45.02%	235 47.36%	51 9.41%	12 2.21%	542 100%	3.37	Agreed
19	Students who dress indecently to lectures should be sent out from the lecture halls	130 23.99%	288 53.14%	104 19.19%	20 3.69%	542 100%	3.43	Agreed
20	There should be an award for decently dressed students at the end of every academic year	125 23.06%	279 51.48%	105 19.37%	33 6.09%	542 100%	3.24	Agreed
Grand Mean							3.43	Agreed

Data in Table 4 shows that all items have mean scores of 3.57 and above with a grand mean of 3.43 showing agreement. This shows that all the respondents agreed that creating awareness on proper dress code (47.60%), Rules and regulation concerning dressing should be formulated and included in the student's handbook (44.65%), Lessons on morality should be taught (47.36%), and Students who dress indecently to lectures should be sent out from the lecture halls (53.14%) are possible strategies of curbing indecent dressing among female undergraduate students in Anambra State.

4. DISCUSSION

The study sought to determine the factors that sustain indecent dressing among female undergraduate students; ascertain the impact of indecent dressing of female undergraduate students on both the emotional adjustment and cognitive engagement of their male counterparts in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The study established that many factors such as imitation of western dressing style, peer/social group pressure, fashion in vogue and poor parenting sustain indecent dressing among female undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. It also revealed that indecent dressing among female undergraduates has a negative impact on both the emotional adjustment and cognitive engagement of their male counterparts in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Literature have shown that indecent dressing of female undergraduates is prevalent in Nigerian universities. Previous research revealed that indecent dressing among undergraduate female students has debilitating impacts on not only the female students that indulge in it but it also has a way on impacting on their male counterparts and male staff of the institution alike. The findings of the study validated the theory modernization theory by Max Weber which serves an anchor to explain how foreign cultures and dresses changed Africans ideology and mentality, to the extent that the female university students now see them as modern ways of dressing. This influence of modernization in adolescents dress style is not far fetched because adolescents form ties with peers outside the homes and engage in activities that suit their exuberance and promote their acceptance of one another. Again, university community affords students the opportunity of free life and dress style because they are no longer directly under the watch of their parents and guardians.

This finding aligned with the existing literature such as Anadi, Egboka, Anierobi (2011) who found that variety of factors contributed to the persistence of indecent dressing, including peer pressure, fashion in vogue and lack of self esteem. The finding also agrees with some scholars who reported that poor parenting, the negative influence of the internet, television programme and peers (Abdulkareem, Abdulkareem, Yusuf & Ibrahim, 2022; Ojogbane, Amonjenu & Hussein, 2020). Again, it validates the finding by Ukaegbu (2023) who showed that mass media and celebrities, fashion, advertisements, and music videos expose youths to indecent dressing.

The study's finding on the negative impact of indecent dressing of female undergraduate students on the emotional adjustment of their male counterparts in Anambra State supports the existing literature such as Nwikpo, Anierobi, Elumemuno, Ezennaka, Ezeonwumelu (2022) who showed that males are faster in approaching females with seductive clothing and would be enticed into the probability of having a date which no doubt, compromises their study state. This may be because after beholding indecently dressed female undergraduates, the minds of the male students would be filled with thoughts of nudity which could cause sensual tension within them, thereby, disturbing their emotional adjustment. The finding also agrees with Ibrahim (2020) that indecent dressing was associated with exposure to sexual harassment, rape and poor image on female students who dress indecently.

Indecent dressing of female undergraduates has been shown to have a negative impact on the cognitive engagement of economic male students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. This may be because following the way the males are wired, beholding the sensitive parts of the female gender could no doubt arouses them sexually, consequently, concentration in academic activities would become challenging. This finding aligned with the existing literature, such as Terhile, Aondoana (2013) who found that provocative dressing, otherwise called indecent dressing distracts both the attention of the students and lecturers in lecture halls. It corroborates the findings by Nwikpo, Anierobi, Eluemuno, Ezennaka, Ezeonwumelu (2022) who showed that indecent dressing of female undergraduates students in southeastern, Nigeria, negatively impact the study engagement of male undergraduates. It also aligns with Selase and Mawuli (2013) who revealed that provocative dressing destructs the attention of both students and lecturers during lectures.

Finally, the findings showed that indecent dressing could be curbed through the following strategies: creating of awareness on proper dress codes for students using bill boards, education on proper dress codes, establishing and enforcing rules against indecent dressing and positive reinforcement of decently dressed students. This is factual because if indecent dressing is not handled with every seriousness it deserves, students would continue to dress indecently. This finding collaborates with Okafor, Nwokoro and Anyika (2023) who reported that indecent dressing could be curbed through education and awareness, setting clear dress codes, promoting dialogue, open communication and role modeling and positive reinforcement. It further aligns with Okafor and Uwalaka (2021) that indecent dressing can be curbed through adopting dress codes in higher institutions. Similarly, the finding validates the finding by Abdulkareem, Abdulkareem, Yusuf and Ibrahim (2022) who reported that curbing indecent dressing could be achieved if parents serve as a good model to their children, proper use of social media and enforcing dress codes in institution. This finding corroborates with Mofoluwawo and Oyelade (2012) that instituting dress codes, sanctioning defaulters are effective strategies in curbing indecent dressing in tertiary institutions.

In summary, the findings of this study support the existing literature that indecent dressing among female undergraduate students has a debilitating impact on their male counterparts. The implication is that if indecent dressing is not curbed in tertiary institutions in Anambra State, their male undergraduates would be negatively affected in terms of emotional adjustment and cognitive engagement. This findings has implications for theory and practice. Theories could be formed based on the findings of this study to show that indecent dressing among female students not only negatively affects them but also their male counterparts emotionally and cognitively. Practical steps could be adopted to curtail the incidence of indecent dressing among female undergraduates in Anambra State to protect the emotional adjustment and cognitive engagement of their male counterparts. Future researchers should leverage on the findings of this study to sharpen their focus on advancing this study by considering the moderating role of religious affiliation and value orientation on the impact of indecent dressing of female undergraduates on their male counterparts in Anambra State.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that indecent dressing among female undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State has negative impact on both the emotional adjustment and cognitive engagement of their male counterparts. It also concludes that indecent dressing among female students are sustained by many factors such as imitation of western dressing style, peer/social group pressure, fashion in vogue and poor parenting. Finally, the study concludes that curbing indecent dressing in tertiary institutions in Anambra State is possible through creating of awareness on proper dress codes for students using bill boards, education on proper dress codes, establishing and enforcing rules against indecent dressing and positive reinforcement of decently dressed students.

6. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Though the study has findings that could be of immense benefit towards advancing frontiers of knowledge, it has some limitations that could affect the generalization of its findings. The study was conducted with undergraduate students in only two public institutions in Anambra State which might not represent the true picture of the entire male students in all the tertiary institutions in the state. Moreover, questionnaire was the only means of data collection which could have some bias from the respondents. Considering the above, caution should be taken in generalizing the findings. Based on these limitations, the researchers recommend that future researchers could replicate the study using all the tertiary institutions in Anambra State with a different research design, method of data collection and analysis.

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommend the following:

- a. Stakeholders such as policymakers could come up with clear policies banning indecent dressing on university community. Such policies should be made available to students to guide their dress code in the university. Policymakers should also set up functional team to monitor implementation of the policy in universities in Anambra State.
- b. The Government both at the federal and state level should create programs to discourage indecent dressing among the youths especially female students. They could embark on aggressive campaign against indecent dressing through jingles, billboards, and through their legislative arms come up with laws against indecent dressing and ensure strict enforcement of them.
- c. School authorities should form advocacy groups for students and mount war against indecent dressing in the university community, They should also organize programs such as conferences, seminars and workshops to enlighten students on the negative impacts of indecent dressing on both students and staff alike. Schools should use jingles, billboards for creating awareness on the decent and indecent dressings. Furthermore, the existing rules against indecent dressing should not be treated with kid gloves against defaulters.
- d. Parents have the responsibility of instilling good morals on their children. They should begin from childhood to teach their children to dress decently. Parents should also serve as good models to their children especially on decent dress styles.
- e. School psychologists and counselors should be accessible to students to provide counseling and therapies to male students who fall victim of emotional maladjustment and poor cognitive engagement in school as a result of their exposure to indecent dressing by their female counterparts.

Acknowledgment. We thank Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka for providing the necessary facilities and resources conduct the research.

Data Availability. All data can be obtained from the corresponding author.

Conflict of Interest. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding. This research received no external funding.

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