

## **SOCIO ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING CLOTHING BEHAVIOUR OF FEMALE UNDERGRADUATES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: NIGERIAN SOUTHWEST INSTITUTIONS EXPERIENCE**

**OTUNAIYA AYODELE OLUSEYI, PhD**  
Department of Fine and Applied Arts  
School of Vocational Education  
Federal College of Education, Abeokuta.

&

**SAMUEL RUTH OPEOLUWA**  
Department of Fine and Applied Arts  
School of Vocational Education  
Federal College of Education, Abeokuta.

&

**AKINBOLA TOLUWALOPE JOAN**  
Department of Fine and Applied Arts  
School of Vocational Education  
Federal College of Education, Abeokuta.

### **Abstract**

*Clothing is a reflection of a society's culture, tradition, beliefs, weather conditions, history and spiritual identity. It communicates the wearers' innate character, personality, societal class and moral values. This study examined socio economic influence on clothing behavior of female undergraduates in selected tertiary institutions in South Western Nigeria. A structured, pretested and validated questionnaire with test-retest reliability index ranging from 0.94 to 0.99 was administered to one thousand and sixty seven (1,067) female undergraduates randomly chosen from six (6) universities in South Western Nigeria. Data obtained were subjected to Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistical method to analyse relationship between variables and student t-test. Mean (X) and Standard Deviation (Sd) were used to rank identified factors. The study revealed that socio economic factors and foreign culture have a significant influence on female undergraduates clothing behavior. It however revealed a weak link between parental social status and female undergraduates clothing behavior. There is urgent need to re-orientate them on the indigenous and ethnic values embedded in the traditional dress culture to maintain the identity of the study area in the comity of nations; projecting the image of the society to other societies and the international communities at large.*

**Keywords: Clothing Behaviour, Socio-economic Status, Foreign Culture, Tertiary Institutions, South Western States.**

## **Introduction**

Bert (2010) confirmed a statement made by Olugbenga (2008) that there is always a reason why clothing is worn. Previous researches on women and fashion appeared to have concentrated their efforts on changes in fashion trends while few adjudged several reasons for such changes. Most of these earlier researches also premised on the assumption that western culture and civilization are the culprits for these changes. This research attempted to bridge this knowledge gap by identifying the socio economic factors influencing female clothing behavior in Nigeria.

In the Nigerian society, clothing serves more purposes and functions than just securing the external body from storm or weather. It is also regarded as a reflection of the wearer's personality, societal class and moral values. This gave birth to the Yoruba adage which states that "Irinisi ni isonilojo" meaning "First impression lasts long" History reflects an expression of uniqueness and a cultured way of life where clothing tradition are passed down from generation to generation. Much value was placed on the sanctity of proper dressing. Culturally, the indecent exposure of the female body was regarded as an anathema and jealously guided against, offenders were considered in the society as loose and uncultural. Isabel (2010) in an earlier study supported this when she stated that in today's world Nigeria's rich cultural heritage in the area of clothing is being gradually eroded by subsequent imposition of an alien culture. Asma, Aywsha and Hussein (2008) noted that the tremendous acceleration of fashion changes that occurs in contemporary society has been the subject of much social criticism. Odeleye (200) and Cassidy (2011) observed that these culturally unacceptable clothing habits are not limited to a particular class of women; it cuts across the entire socio-economic status; irrespective of educational status. In order to weigh the value of such commentaries, one must get an insight into the real factors influencing clothing behavior of women, hence the need for this study.

This study identified the socio economic factors influencing the clothing behavior of female undergraduates. The relationship between their clothing behavior and their parents' socio economic status was also assessed. It further investigated the influence of foreign culture on their clothing behavior. The Nigerian tertiary institutions accommodate a large percentage of the female gender whose future is germane to the development of the nation. Therefore it is believed that these group of people need to be exposed to relevant information that will guide them towards responsible and safe sexuality. The need to re-orientate them on the indigenous and ethnic values embedded in the traditional clothing culture is the reason for this study.

## **Research Questions**

1. Are female undergraduates clothing behavior influenced by socio economic factors?
2. What are the socio economic factors influencing the clothing behavior of female undergraduates?
3. Does foreign culture have any influence on the clothing behavior of female undergraduates?

## Research hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** Socio economic factors have no significance influence on Clothing behavior of female undergraduates.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant influence of foreign culture on the Clothing behavior of female undergraduates.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between female undergraduates clothing behavior and their parents' social status.

## Methodology

The statistical tools used in this study are:

1. Sectional and descriptive study design
2. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient statistical method

Descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages will be used to analyse the demographic information of the respondents. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient will be used to analyse relationship between variables and student t-test.

## Population under study

This study is targeted towards female students of tertiary institutions. The study population comprises of all female undergraduates studying in Nigerian Southwestern Universities.

## Sample size

A sample representative of female undergraduates in Nigerian Universities was obtained from a population of 3,760,000. The sample size was calculated using UNESCO 2012 Creative research system formula.

## Sampling technique

Stratified sampling method was used to select the six Universities used. Kerlinger (2003) A random sampling of one thousand, six hundred and sixty eight (1,668) respondents; consisting of one hundred and seventy eight (178) subjects (all females) each from six higher institutions from the six states in South western Nigeria was used for the study.

**Table 1: Population and sample size**

S/N	TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS	STATE	SAMPLE NO
1.	University of Lagos	Lagos	178
2.	Babcock University	Ogun	178
3.	University of Ibadan	Oyo	178
4.	Ekiti state University	Ekiti	178
5.	Federal University of Technology, Akure	Ondo	178
6.	Osun State University	Osun	178

## Research Instrument

A questionnaire titled “The clothing behavior assessment questionnaire” (CBAQ) was administered to gather data from the respondents. It was in three parts, the first part was to collect demographic data, the second part consisted of sixty one (61) structured questionnaire items which were made to reflect the focus of the study. It was fashioned with the response options of Agreed (A), Strongly Agreed (SA), disagree (D), and Strongly disagree (SD) The third part was adopted from the Personal data card developed by Faji (1998) for assessing socio economic factors in the home and family environment consisting of fourteen (14) structured statements. The questionnaire was validated by experts in the field for face and content validity. The reliability was determined by the use of test retest method.

## Results

**Table 2: Demographic characteristics of Respondents**

Description	Frequency	Percent %
<b>Age</b>		
14-20	465	46.2
21-30	478	47.5
31-40	47	4.7
41-50	11	1.1
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	705	70.1
Islam	289	28.7
Others	7	0.7
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	148	14.7
Single	833	82.8
Divorced	18	1.8
Others	3	0.3
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Yoruba	858	85.3
Igbo	84	8.4
Hausa	9	0.9
Others	61	6.1
<b>Average Monthly Allowance</b>		
Below 10,000 naira per month	636	63.2
10,000-30,000 naira per month	341	33.9
Above 30,000 naira per month	25	2.5

The results in Table 2 above shows the demographic characteristics of respondents. Most of the respondents are between the ages of 14-30 (94%) with only a few of them older than 30 (60%) years. Among the religious groups, majority of them are Christians 705 (70%) followed by Muslims 289 (28.7%) and others 7 (0.7%). Most of the respondents were still single 833 (82.8%) with few married ones 148 (14.7%) and others 3 (0.3%).

Ethnic bias of the respondents revealed that majority of them were Yorubas 858 (85%). Followed by Igbos 84 (8%). Hausas 9 (1%) and others of 61 (6%). Data collected on the respondents' financial status revealed that most of them 636 (63%) collect an allowance of below ten thousand per month (10,000) while few (34%) collect between ten (10) – thirty (30) thousand per month and others 24 (3%) above thirty thousand (30,000).

**Table 3**

**Research question 1**

Result of one-sample t-test to determine the influence of socio economic factors on female undergraduates clothing behaviour.

Hypothesis	Ho: =50%	t-value	Df	p value	Comment		
Ho: $\mu = 50\%$ Ha: $>50\%$		61.40	11.81	30.50	1001	<0.05	Significant
Ha: $\mu >50\%$							

The influence of socio-economic factors on their clothing behaviour was what this research question sought to answer. The mean score (%) of the aggregate influence of various identified socio-economic factors influencing female undergraduates clothing behaviour was compared against a threshold of 50%. Values higher than 50% (Strongly disagreed or disagreed) suggest an influence while values lower than 50% (Strongly disagreed or disagreed) revealed no influence. As shown in table 6, the mean score of the aggregate influence of socio-economic factors on their clothing behaviour was 61.40 which is significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) higher than 50% ( $t = 30.5$   $df = 1001$ )

**Table 4**

**Research question 2**

**Mean score ranking of socio-economic factors influencing female undergraduates clothing behaviour**

Socio-Economic Factors	Mean	Rank
Peer group influence	73.69	1 <sup>st</sup>
Sense of belonging	70.81	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Clothing cost	66.84	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Social expectations	61.72	4 <sup>th</sup>
Income	59.22	5 <sup>th</sup>
Purchasing power	54.63	6 <sup>th</sup>

Item 30-43 in the clothing behaviour assessment questionnaire (CBAQ) measured socio economic influence on clothing behaviour of female undergraduates. It contained 14 items. 2

each measured six (6) identified socio economic factors viz peer group, sense of belonging, cost, socio expectations, income and purchasing power. The raw score for each of the two items were obtained for the calculation of their respective mean. Consequently, the mean score were ranked in order of magnitude. Peer group ranked first with a mean score ( $\times$ ) of 73.69 followed by sense of belonging ( $\times$ = 70.36) clothing cost ( $\times$ = 66.84), socio-economic expectation ( $\times$ = 59.22) and Income ( $\times$  = 59.22) with purchasing power coming last ( $\times$ = 54.63) The result of the analysis is as presented in the table above.

**Table 4**  
**Research question 3**

**Result of one-sample t-test to determine the influence of foreign culture on female undergraduates clothing behavior**

Hypothesis	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p value	Comment
<b>Ho: <math>\mu</math>= 50%</b>	59.71	11.39	26.98	1001	<0.05	Significant
<b>Ha: <math>\mu</math> &gt;50%</b>						

Items 1-29 in the clothing behaviour assessment questionnaire (CBAQ) measured foreign culture influence on female undergraduates clothing behavior. The calculated mean of foreign culture influence was compared against a threshold of 50% (strongly agreed or agreed) suggest an influence while values lower than 50% (strongly disagreed or disagreed) revealed no influence. As shown in table 4 the mean score of the foreign culture influence on their clothing behavior was 59.71 which is significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) higher than 50% ( $t=26.98$   $df=1001$ ).

**Analysis of Hypothesis 1**

**There is no significant influence of socio-economic factors on female undergraduate clothing behavior.**

The result of the data analysed showed a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) correlation between socio-economic factors and clothing behaviour of the female undergraduates ( $r=0.725$ ).

**Analysis of Hypothesis 2**

**There is no significant influence of foreign culture on female undergraduates clothing behaviour.**

Correlation result of data analysed showed a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) association between foreign culture influence and female undergraduates clothing behaviour ( $r=0.529$ ).

**Analysis of Hypothesis 3**

**There is no significant relationship between parental socio-economic status and female undergraduates clothing behavior.**

The correlation result of data analyzed to test the influence of parental socio-economic status on the female undergraduates clothing behaviour showed a weak relationship ( $r= 0.303$ ) though significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

### **Discussion of findings**

The study revealed a significant influence of socio-economic factors on clothing behavior of female undergraduates. This shows that clothing behavior is influenced by underlying factors. Bert, (2010) and Olugbenga, (2008) supported this when they stated that there is always a reason why clothing is worn. Kiran, (1999) while working on a similar study found out that in any age there were some force of work that tendered to restrict or impend change in clothing patterns. Paolucci et al (1977) stated that clothing choices are influenced by meaningful interaction the individual experience within various environments. Moody et al (2010) presented that clothing styles were influenced by physical environments, resources and the ability to use those resources.

The influence of six socio-economic factors were examined, the study revealed that out of socio-economic factors influencing female undergraduate clothing behavior, Peer group influence ranked first. This supports the findings by Mangan, Beaudoin, Jean and Robitaille (2003) that peer group tops the list of influencing factors on clothing behavior sense of belonging takes the second position. Clothing cost ranked third while Socio-economic expectations ranked fourth followed by income of the female undergraduates. Purchasing power was sixth with society status being the last.

The influence of foreign culture on the female undergraduates clothing behavior was statistically significant. The study concluded that foreign culture has significant influence on female undergraduates clothing behaviour. This leads credence to the fact that the cultural heritage of the study areas as far as clothing is concerned is being gradually eroded. The world has become global village with inter and intra cultural transference of which clothing behavior is not an exception. Charama, (2010) noted this when he stated that the Nigerian of the younger society is confronted with the grave danger of generation being totally disconnected from their roots culturally. Ahrold, Woo, Brotto and Meston (2007) also observed that the greater taste for civilization turned Nigerians against their tradition Ajayi (2006) observed that because African were said to be indoctrinated by Europeans, the level of acculturation of the whites culture by the blacks was rapid and fast to the extent that the culture of the whites fast diluted that of the Africans. Berry, Phinney, Sam and Wedder. (2006) recalled that the target to be like the white influenced all sects of African's life to neglect of theirs. They further reported the indoctrination of the blacks by the whites that anything that is white is good while anything that is black is evil.

A paramount ruler Oba (Dr) Sikiru Kayode Adetona" supported this view which was recorded in one of the national dailies. "Ijebu News" (2003) He stated that in various homes in Nigeria presently, there are several families that lived without their local cultures. This confirms the feelings of an earlier study conducted by Lysonski et al, (2013) involving one hundred and sixty five (165) respondents in Lagos. Nigeria. He discovers that Nigerians were acculturated to a large degree in terms of cosmopolitan tendency, exposure to marketing activities of multinationals, English language usage, social interaction and global mass media exposure.

Uttoh-Ezeajugh and Chima (2010) of Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka also noted that Nigerian dress culture has been influenced by other cultures over the years and different

styles of Nigerian fashion have evolved from a mixture of Nigerian and other African dress culture as well as western dress culture.

The findings of the study revealed a significant relationship though weak between the clothing behavior of female undergraduates and their parental socio-economic status several reasons could be deduced for this. Market survey shows fashionable modernised wears can be purchased from various bend down boutiques at affordable cheaper price than those sold in boutiques. This may be responsible for the ability of respondents from low parental socio-economic background to be able to purchase them. Peer pressure was also discovered to be a highly influencing factor in clothing behavior. Lanchance, Beaudion and Robiltaille, ( 2003) noted that this may be responsible for the desperate attitude shown by some of the female undergraduates to dress in ways acceptable to the peers at all costs, they are ready to do anything to be referred to as one of the big girls on campus by their clothing behavior. This was fingered to be one of the reasons why they go into prostitution and the likes (Olugbenga, 2008)

### **Conclusion**

The objective of this study was to examine factors influencing clothing behavior of female undergraduates. This is with the aim of providing the needed theoretical and empirical bases to put a stop to the danger of producing youths who are totally disconnected from their roots as far as clothing culture is concerned.

The study revealed a significant influence on the female undergraduates clothing behaviour by socio-economic factors (peer group, sense of belonging, clothing cost, social expectations, income and purchasing power), parental influence and foreign culture.

One of the major factors responsible for the endangerment of our indigenous dressing culture is the misconception that they are no longer compatible with modern and societal demands in a global and modern world and should be allowed to die a natural death. This is because culture is viewed as static. Culture can no longer continue to be viewed; it is dynamic and should view as such. There is the urgency to modernize our dressing culture to attract national and international appeal to make it compatible with socio economic development.

Conclusively, it is very essential to take advantage of mass media to re-orientate the indigenous and ethnic value embedded in the traditional dress culture for the female undergraduates.

### **Recommendations**

In veiw of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Mass media should be maximized to re-orientate the youth on the indigenous and ethnic

values embedded in the traditional dress culture. Media managers and practitioners as gate-keepers must develop a Nigerian cultural inclination and consciousness that will allow for the production of programmes reflecting the Nigerian idiom, develop its own television rhetoric and creative ability. The broadcast houses should enforce in-house policy requiring that staff must air their indigeous name at least while on air.



2. Government and stakeholders should formulate policies that will project Nigerian dress culture as a tool for national identity and unity. Such policies should be monitored and enforced.
3. The Government and stakeholders should also create an enabling environment for the development of indigeous Textile industries. They should formilate policies and introduce incentives that will encourage the growth and development of the industry.
4. Authority of government parastatals amd educational institutional should enforce the wearing of traitional wears on Fridays to project the Nigerian culture. Traditional attires should also be regarded as an official dress during cultural national meetings and festivities.
5. All higher instituitons should enforce dress codes to discourage the excesses of westernized wears by the female undergraduates. Revealing clothes and short skimpy tops and the likes should be discouraged.
6. The film industries should be regularized. Programs projecting western cultures to the detriment of the indigenous culture should be discouraged. Radio and television jingles that promote moral values and sanctity of sex should be aired and relayed
7. Religious institutions should serve as dry-cleaning houses where morals are preached and societally acceptable dressing patterns are enforced.
8. Further studies on relationships between female undergraduates clothing and sexual behaviour should be carried out.

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