
AN ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON DRESSING STYLE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF BENUE STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the impact of globalization on dressing style of undergraduate students of Benue State University. The objectives of the study were to highlight the pattern of dressing by the undergraduate students, find out the source of knowledge of the pattern, analyse the impact of the style on the school community and to provide guides towards improving the pattern of dressing. Literature was reviewed on the concept of globalisation and its impact on the culture of developing countries. Open-ended direct interview and questionnaire were used as methods of data collection. The findings of the study indicated that the dressing style of majority of the students was indecent and completely unacceptable to the school community. Majority of the female students wear very tight, short and transparent clothes that expose parts of their bodies considered private. The situation was not different with the male students either. The main sources of their dressing knowledge were internet, Television, magazines and imitation from fellow students. Students have increased access to these sources of dressing information through globalization activities. The impact of this is negative as it was assessed to contribute to distractions for students and staff, sexual harassment and seduction, lack of concentration in academics by students and creation of negative image of the school. The paper recommends for moral lectures to be given to students in every department.

INTRODUCTION

Every ethnic group in Nigeria before the colonial era had its own unique and distinct cultural practices though with little element of cultural diffusion. These practices include belief system, arts, eating habit and dressing pattern. It was therefore not difficult to identify or recognise people from different tribes, for instance an Igbo or a Yoruba person (whether male or female, young or old) through the dressing pattern with the decency it deserves. The colonial state through Christian missionaries, colonial administrators and anthropologists interpreted, analysed, and assessed the cultural values as primitive, unproductive, irrelevant and conservative as compared to European cultural values which were seen as better in every ramification. This fact was pointed out by Okpaga (2006) when he said: All pre-colonial African states had their own cultural value system that enabled a smooth functioning of the society. The advent of colonialism brought about an assumption that everything indigenous was worthless. Colonialism reshaped the cultural value system of Africa to what it is today. This assumption was a means by which non-European nations were forced to abandon their ways of life. For non-Europeans themselves, the dynamics of colonialism even attracted their ways of life as more preferable or the only goal and others as backward and deserving to do away with. To worsen the situation, non-Europeans felt inferior of their own cultures and

therefore attempted to modernise along European ways of life. For this reason, indigenous cultures and other ways of life could not evolve into ideas that have life and meaning as they were portrayed as backward, in this wise, the colonizers provided ways in which indigenous cultures were substituted by their own. The extent to which this went was reflected in the adoption of Christian –European names, languages, craze for foreign wears and patterns of wearing them. Globalization which is been in used since the colonial era gained more popularity in the 1990s. It has encouraged and facilitated the establishment of and a revolutionary strong mass media whose main aim is to expose the developing countries to foreign values, norms and ideologies. This has led to a drastic change in the cultural life of developing countries. One of the end results of this is the contemporary craze-like dressing pattern among young people which feature mostly in institutions of learning. This study was therefore been undertaken to examine the impact of globalization on the dressing pattern of undergraduate students of Benue State University.

The Problem

The problem of this study is derived from the fact that globalization has brought unprecedented and largely unanticipated change in the global outlook (I.e. emergence of global economic systems). This change is manifested in the alteration of the economic structures, means of production, distribution of goods and services, enhanced communication network and cultural diffusion. One of the overwhelming effects of the diffusion is the abandonment of indigenous cultural practices and values. The most visible of this change is reflected in choice of foods, wears and patterns of dressing. This study was informed by this prevailing reality in Nigeria to embark on an examination of the dressing pattern of undergraduate students of Benue State University.

Research Questions

The fundamental questions that arose from the study were as follows:

- a) What is the mode of dressing of undergraduate students of Benue State University?
- b) What is the source of knowledge of the dressing pattern of undergraduate students of Benue State University?
- c) What is the impact of the dressing pattern on the school community?
- d) What should be done to ensure appropriate dressing pattern among the students.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this paper was to assess the impact of globalization on the dressing pattern of undergraduate students of Benue State University. The specific objectives were basically to:

- a. Highlight the pattern of dressing by Benue State undergraduate students
- b. Find out the source of knowledge of the dressing pattern
- c. Analysis the impact of the pattern of dressing on the school community
- d. Provide guides towards improving the pattern of dressing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Globalization

Conceptualisation of globalization has been one of the most debated issue among scholars. This is because it could mean different things to different people. This has divided scholars between its supporters and critics. According to merrian websters in Odozor (1997), globalization is the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked by free trade, free flow of capital and trading in cheaper foreign labour markets. It is seen as a convergence of economic, political and cultural systems. Okpaga (2006) sees globalization as the spread and integration of people, goods, finance, knowledge and culture across the planet. This is explained by European commission to mean the process by which markets and production in different countries are becoming increasingly inter-dependent due to dynamics of trade in goods and services as well as flows of capital and technology. Globalization has become the concept with which huge economic, political and cultural changes that characterise human society at the turn of the 21st century is interpreted. This is why Robertson (1997) refers to it as the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole. This has given rise to the description of the world as a global village or one world. Thompson (1999) classified globalization into cultural, political, economic, military and globalization of education and communication. Information technology such as computer technology, electronic e-mail, fax, internet, cellular mobile phones and world wide web (w.w.w) have helped to reduce the whole world into one village.

Globalization gives a picture of a globalized world which involves 'net works' that structure human behaviour by requiring that people use particular standard which often emerge unintentionally (Grewal, 2008). This results into a kind of competition by nations to meet the global standard. He further argued that a globalized world is lop-sided because it serves the benefit of United States of America (USA).

Impact of Globalization on Culture

Globalization has both positive (for developed countries) and negative (for developing countries) impact. Its impact for developed countries is positive because it is a reflection of progress, development, advancement and growths. This is because of free trade and interaction among nations. It pushes economies towards higher levels of performances and growth in output (Henry, et al 2008). On the other hand, the developing countries observably seem to be negatively impacted upon by the consequences of globalization. To Robertson (1991), this is because the poor and often sympathetic nature of those countries make them to lose out in tapping the enormous positive fortunes brought by globalization which could enable them transform from third world to first world countries are debilitated with myriads of skewed and embarrassing anti-development characteristics. These features include political in stability, lack of or inadequate technologically oriented social and economic infrastructures and amenities, low productivity, low literacy level and a high prevalence of primordial problems of humanity such as hunger, diseases and ignorance. Robertson (1991) further pointed out that globalization is a dangerous development because it tends to erode the hitherto prevalent cultural practices and is accompanied by some social and economic crisis such as collapse of producer prices, low organisational performance, increase in

unemployment and poverty especially in Africa where there are no developed social and economic structures necessary for participation in globalization. The consequences of globalization in the area of culture are the most widespread and damaging. This is because they negate all the ideals of cultural relatively and pluralism such that today, there is a crisis of identity through impregnation with foreign values, politics and business are being powerfully transmitted across nations (Shaka, 2006). The entertainment and dressing pattern have also been globalised with attendant negative consequences. For instance, the western satellite networks through their news, films and music promote the culture of violence, perversion, vulgar language, crazy dressing pattern, drug addition and alcoholism. All these behaviour traits negate the values of the ancient religions and the continent of Africa (Ikonne, 2006). Instead of cultural exchange, there is a one way imposition and this subverts the values and cultures of the third world countries (Okpaga 2006), Shaka (2006) and Ikonne (2006) described globalization as an emergent form of western imperialism carried through cultural institution. Globalization therefore does not infer that the entire globe become westernised. But rather, all spheres must establish their position in relation to capitalist west. Thus, having a global standard to Maduagu (2006) clearly implies that some meet the standard while others do not and there is a pull to the standard. He pointed out that globalization not only pulls upwards but also down wards creating new pressures for local autonomy.

METHODOLOGY

The Study Area

This survey research was conducted at Benue State University (BSU) Makurdi. The University was established in 1993. One out of the six objectives for establishing the University was to promote, preserve and propagate the social and cultural heritage of the diverse people of the state. The University has two campuses known as first and second campuses. About 18,075 students are pursuing different degree programmes as at 2011/2012 academic session. The students' population is drawn from every state of the Federation and African continent. Currently, the University has about 930 academic and research staff and over 1,568 non-academic staff. BSU also has about 6 teaching faculties, 21 academic Departments, a Medical school, teaching Hospital, centres and Divisions. The University is located in Makurdi which is the state capital.

Sources of Data

The two sources of data used for this study were primary and secondary. Primary data was obtained directly from undergraduate students and staff of the university. To achieve this, the study purposively selected two faculties each from first and second campuses. That is faculties of social sciences and Education from first campus and faculties of Arts and Management Sciences from second campus of the University. The selected faculties were made up of the following departments: Social sciences six, Education four, Arts five and Management Sciences two. This brought the total number of academic Departments used for the study to seventeen (17). Accidental sampling techniques was used to select a representative sample size of fifteen (15) students across all levels of study from each

department in the selected faculties. The same sampling method was used to select a total of thirty (30) academic and non-academic staff respectively and administered with questionnaires. Total of forty (40) undergraduate students were also accidentally selected and interviewed. This brought the total size of sample to four hundred. Out of these, three hundred and eight – two (382) were retrieved

Presentation and Analysis of Findings

Table 1.7.1 Bio-Data of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	289	73
Female	105	27
Total	394	100
Age (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 20	61	15
20 -30	231	59
31 and above	102	26
Total	394	100
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Single	271	69
Married	98	25
Others	25	6
Total	394	100
Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christianity	379	96
Islam	15	4
Others	0	0
Total	Frequency	100
Level		
100 level	88	22
200 level	87	22
300 level	82	21
400 level	84	21
Academic staff	26	7
Non-Academic staff	27	7
Total	394	100

The information on table 1.7.1 indicated the distribution of socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. The data revealed that 73% (289) were male while 27% (105) of them were female. This indicated that majority of the respondents used for this study were male. The data also indicated that 15% (61) of them were aged below 20years, 59% (231) were between the age of 20 and 30years and 26% (102) of the population studied were aged 31 years and above. This implies that majority of the undergraduate students of BSU were aged

between 20 and 30years. With reference to their marital status, 69% (271) were single, while 25% (98) were married and 6% (25) were separated, divorced or widowed. The religious affiliation of respondents revealed that majority of them 96% (379) were Christians, 4% (15) Muslims and non for any other type of religion. Furthermore, the respondents' academic level revealed that 22% (88) were 100 level students, 22% (87) were in 200 level, 21% (82) were in 300 level and 21% (84) were 400 level students. This means that majority of the respondents used for this study were 100 and 200 levels students. In the same vein, both academic and non-academic staff were 7% (26) and 7% (27) respectively.

The general description of dressing style given by all the respondents used for this study was that of indecent one. The overall atmosphere of dressing was said to be an unpleasant one; majority of the female students were described to dress most times with very tight, transparent or body-exposing materials that expose their thighs, breasts, chests, pants, stomach and abdomen. There is no difference even when they wear trousers. One of the male respondent had this to say:

It is unfortunate that not just BSU students alone but about 80% of girls in all the institutions of higher learning in Nigeria enjoy indecent dressing without any sense of shame. They expose their bodies especially private parts all in the name of new innovation or western way of dressing. It has become a culture in BSU that dressing should not cover ones' private parts. Even boys expose their chest and buttocks in the name of a style called 'low waist'. Introduction of dress code has not helped matters due to lack of enforcement by the school. (A 200 level male students of sociology, 2012).

Most female students prefer to wear under size clothes irrespective of their sizes and heights. Sometimes, they force themselves into clothes meant for children in the name of wearing fitting clothes. The general appearance and hair styles of such students make it difficult for some of them to be differentiated from lunatics. To some of them, BSU is a fashion parade ground. This dressing style is said to be worse in the second campus of the University where theatre Arts Department is and hostel for their students. One three hundred level Sociology student pointed out and said "the level of indecent dressing among theatre Arts students is worse, it is simply madness. These students are simply taking us back to era of Adam and Eve. That is the direction they are going". The study further revealed that it is very difficult to identify the ethnic groups or tribe of an individual based on dressing style. It was very easy in the olden days to identify for instance a Tiv person or Idoma through dressing style. This was because every tribe in Benue State has its own cultural wears and style of dressing. Instead of this now, it is rather easier to imagine a student's level of insanity based on the dressing style. One of the respondents (a male lecturer in Psychology Department) expressed his feelings when he said:

I think this generation of young people are mentally sick because I can't imagine a normal person will appear the way they do. Before now, it was only animals and lunatics that appear necked without feeling ashamed. But today, students both girls and boys go about almost necked and feel proud. Some of them appear like masquerades. Some of them find it difficult

to seat well in class. Something needs to be done or else, we will wake up one day and find them completely necked on campus. (A Psychology lecturer in BSU, 2012). The situation with the male students was not different. They were said to expose their chest and buttocks. The male students who indulge in this would refuse to button-up their shirts properly and pull low their trousers and expose their pants or boxers. This style is popularly known as 'low waist'. A fellow male 300 level Economics students described the incident dressing as madness. He further said:

There is no difference between those boys and the girls. It is because they don't have breast, if they have, they will also leave them outside like the girls. (A 300 level Economics Student, 2012). As a response to the question on the sources of knowledge of the dressing style, Internet, Television, films, magazines and imitation from fellow students were mentioned. This is an indication that the current culture of dressing is purely foreign and not indigenous. The dressing style has negative impact on the perpetrators, fellow students, staff and the entire school community. Some of the impact mentioned include distraction among students and staff, sexual harassments, contribution to the spread of sexually Transmitted Disease, (STDs), lack of concentration by both students and staff, waste of money, Seduction of male staff by such female students, stealing by some of them to buy such clothes, worry by the school authority, and negative image of the school. The impact of globalization on the dressing culture of undergraduate students of BSU was negative and destructive. Dressing is a means of communication and a social marker, it creates an impression of the kind of personality an individual is and ethnic dignity of the person. An individual therefore can be marked or described as irresponsible through a dressing style. The common dressing style among students of BSU is therefore an evidence of moral decay that deserves attention.

CONCLUSION

The dressing style of most students of BSU is totally morally unacceptable. It is capable of ruining the moral life and image of the school. An awareness of the gravity, source and consequences need to be created by the leadership of the school among the students. An appeal to the conscience of the students should be the starting point. An individual conscience is an inner judge or police that is very effective in its work because it directs and dictates what should be done saliently. This paper therefore opines that a moral oriented course (may be sociology of morality) should be introduced and made compulsory in all the departments.

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