

Deconstructing the Nexus between Fashion Trends and Influencing Factors among Undergraduates in Ondo State

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the nexus between fashion trends and influencing factors among undergraduates in Ondo State. It explores factors influencing students' clothing choices, including cultural norms, societal expectations, personal preferences, and fashion trends. A descriptive research design was adopted, suitable for collecting data consecutively across multiple timelines to measure variable changes. The study population comprises male and female students in Ondo State. The Taro Yamane formula was used to select a sample size of 100 respondents. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics, frequencies, and inferential statistics to identify patterns and relationships. Findings revealed that while some individuals prefer popular dress codes, a significant proportion embrace individuality and personal style. The frequency of changing dressing styles varied, with an even distribution from rarely (23%) to always (10%). Celebrity influence on dressing choices was notable, with 29% strongly agreeing and 40% agreeing. Peer pressure had a mixed impact, with 22% agreeing and over 40% somewhat influenced. Fashion brands significantly influenced dress selection, with trending lines impacting more than a third (38%) of respondents. However, some deviated from brand appeal despite high recognition. Celebrity influence was significant, with 12% strongly disagreeing and 29% strongly agreeing. Amid transient fads, certain enduring fashion trends emerged, resonating with both male and female students. It was recommended that universities encourage students to embrace their unique identities and express themselves through their clothing choices, providing platforms to showcase diverse styles and celebrate personal creativity.

Keywords: Comparative Study, Male and Female Students, Dressing Sense Word-Count: 239

Background of the Study

Fashion is and has always been a dynamic force within societal life, playing a crucial role in both reflecting and shaping cultural norms, personal identities, and prevailing societal trends (Entwistle, 2023). As such, dressing sense constitutes an integral component of the broader fashion landscape serving as a non-verbal language through which messages about individuals and groups are communicated (Skov, 2008). However, fashion trends seem to shift slightly away from the conventional within university subcultural groups, and when focused especially on students population. A prominent and overwhelming assumption is that fashion choices within these focused population are more of either transient fads or indicative of enduring trends (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson & Roberts, 2017).

Discussions about the societal dynamics infused in fashion has often emerged and led to many research papers concluding to the tone of a pervasive metaphorical conclusions that see fashion in the image of mirrors reflecting the values, beliefs, and aesthetic preferences of a community—in this context, the university community and students enrolled. It functions as a mechanism for students to express their identities, cultural affiliations, and socio-economic statuses (Lynch & Strauss, 2007). As this medium finds expression, a resultant realization is that clothing transcends mere fabric; it becomes a canvas where a visual representation of student personalities are vividly painted, perhaps sometimes a reflection changing broader global trends (McLuhan, 2010). As multiple student find their expression, so does (as observed) a collective fashion trends emerge forming a shared language and fostering a sense of belonging among like-minded individuals (Riley, 2008).

Fashion, thus, is permeating all aspects of life, including educational settings, and indeed reflects existing ‘hard-dressing-policies’ enforced across many Nigerian universities targeting students deemed ‘improperly’ dressed (Fareo & Jackson, 2018). This reality is far more complex than supposed, especially in enforcement approach to institutionalize standard and ethical dressing policy; Universities are a convergence point for diverse people with diverse perspectives and backgrounds, hence attempting to enforce a ‘standard dressing policy’ is faced with a severe opposition on account of ‘repressiveness’ (Yohanna, Sababa & Filgona, 2020). Besides this complex, such convergence exposes the dynamics of dressing sense among students (Nwipko et al., 2022). These institutionally witnessed convergence and resultant complex fashion exchange creates a microcosm of diverse styles and sartorial expressions (Akpan, 2018).

Another observation as established in the literatures is acknowledgement presence of a seemingly cyclical fashion trends; Styles rise and enjoy a moment in the spotlight, and sometimes eventually fade away, only to potentially resurface in the future (Cho, 2019). In other words, a ‘hard-dressing-policies’ seeking to enforce standards may assume it has achieved success momentarily but observe a resurgence at a later time (Omede, 2011). Thus, an attempt to constrict the flow and free expression of fashion sense is futile. This ebb and flow is driven by cultural shifts, historical influences, and the ever-evolving nature of human expression, especially as bigger actors contribute to fashion trajectories from the international scenes, such as the influences of multi-billion dollar fashion brands, celebrities, all of whom exact sphere of influence on university students who already have their inherent youthful vigor and openness to new ideas (Anierobi et al., 2021).

As observed, understanding the dressing sense of university students extends beyond the superficial; it explores the underlying factors shaping their sartorial choices. These choices are not made in isolation but are influenced by personal preferences, societal expectations, peer influences, and the broader cultural milieu, and by dissecting the intricacies thereof, a nuanced understanding of why certain fashion choices gain traction among university students can be better appreciated (Venter, Chinomona & Chuchu, 2016). Besides, unraveling the dressing sense of university students holds significance in offering profound insights into societal perceptions and values. As emerging adults, students navigate not only individual identities but also actively contribute to the cultural complexities of their generation (Dhiman, Chand & Gupta, 2018). Their clothing and personal style become a visual representation of the prevailing zeitgeist while encapsulating the spirit of their time (Al-Obaidi et al., 2020). Moreover, the impact of university students' dressing sense extends beyond their personal space, gaining a rippling traction into social interactions, self-perception, and academic environments (Sevtap, Deniz & Nisa, 2019). The way students present themselves through attire can influence perceptions by peers, educators, and the broader community, suggesting students (male and female) may have special appeal for a specific kind of taste that fits their immediate peer group of community context (Van Deventer, Mangezi & Bevan-Dye, 2022).

Statement of Problem

The dressing sense of male and female undergraduate students in Ondo State has not only been a topic of casual observation and discussions, but also serves as a dynamic aspect of the campus culture Venter, Chinomona & Chuchu, 2016). Despite these informal engagements, a noticeable gap exists in current systematic research that investigate the factors shaping the dressing choices of students and the temporal nature of these choices—whether they are fleeting fads or indicative of enduring fashion trends (McLuhan, 2010). Recognizing this void, the present study seeks to bridge this gap by undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the dressing sense prevalent among male and female students in the university (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson & Roberts, 2017). This

research is particularly distinctive in its emphasis on analysis of dressing sense within the context of transient fads and trending fashion. By focusing on both male and female students, the study aims to demystify the differences and similarities in how each gender navigates the fashion landscape. This adds a layer of depth to the exploration, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play within the university's diverse student population. To guide this study, the following research questions are raised; What are the predominant dressing styles among male and female undergraduate students in Ondo State? What factors influence the dressing choices of male and female students in the university?

This study holds significant importance for various stakeholders, including students, educators, policymakers, and the fashion industry. Understanding the dressing sense of students can aid educators in creating a more inclusive and understanding learning environment. Additionally, policymakers can use the findings to develop guidelines that balance personal expression with institutional norms. This research focuses specifically on the dressing sense of male and female students in Ondo State. The study aims to capture a snapshot of the current fashion landscape within the university

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Trends, whether influencing names or vehicle preferences, exert a profound impact on lives, resonating across individuals, businesses, and society at large (Brown & Fiorella, 2013). In common language, trends are synonymous with fashion, novelty, and an element of anticipation, and viewing fashion as a comprehensive system that extends beyond garment creation, trends emerge as captivating focal points in fashion magazines (Lynch & Strauss, 2007). Besides this, however, the concept of a fashion trend has evolved, now encapsulating repetitive change, fleeting popularity, and constant renewal of a 'taste for something' or modification to make it novel, whether in style or quality (Campos & Wolf, 2018). In essence, trends signify more than just current popularity-- they reflect the dynamic and transient nature of preferences and choices.

There are two words in the English language describing trend and tendency which offers a kind of distinction not commonly found other languages (Skov, 2008). For that reason, trend usually refers to a form of fleeting novelty and fashion, while tendency has often been linked to the fields of Statistics and Psychology, indicating a longstanding inclination for something (Saravanan & Nithyaprakash, 2016). However, using both words interchangeably causes misunderstandings and dilutes their meanings. Despite being seen as synonyms, each word carries specific associations, revolving around direction, extension, and inclination. Nonetheless, tendency implies that a direction will likely be achieved, suggesting growth and standardization in an area of interest (Folomeeva & Klimochkina, 2019). In contrast, a trend, especially in fashion, seldom becomes standard even though it is new and the abrupt-like nature of trends denies it of such standard. In fashion context, widespread adoption of a trend often eroded the symbolic novelty it tended to achieve. Much like the term design, the word trend saw extensive use in the 1990s and 2000s, often tied to products and services (Brown & Fiorella, 2013). This, coupled with the idea of a fast fashion the swept the whole of Europe and the United States of America, created a context where trends were often viewed negatively as superficial changes lacking reference to a cultural context. Many dislike trends, viewing them as conformist and counter to the pursuit of individuality, characterized by the constant search for a "newer new" for social differentiation (Skov, 2008).

Within this area, ongoing debates, sometimes intense, question whether dress, clothing, costume, or fashion should be the preferred term and how it should be defined. The most comprehensive framework, shaped by American anthropologist Joanne B. Eicher, prioritizes dress as the central concept (Eicher, 2000). This broad definition includes both body supplements and modifications, transcending the once-prevalent 1970s distinction between clothing, deemed 'civilized' in Western societies, and body adornment like tattoos and piercings, perceived as more 'primitive.' Eicher's concept of dress encompasses bodily practices, shifting the focus from material things that clothe the body to grooming, hygiene, and the role dress plays in social interaction. With this definition, dress becomes a multi-sensory phenomenon, engaging hearing, touch, smell, and vision (Eicher, 2021).

A different understanding of dress also did emerge from the examination of dress history, as articulated by the influential British art historian and designer Stella Mary Newton (1901-2001). Newton developed a method for

dating historical paintings based on dress details (Calvert, 2012). In this approach, where historical accuracy and a deep understanding of dress are crucial, the term dress seems to be used interchangeably with clothing (Calvert, 2012). Generally, the term clothes has not been employed as an analytical concept within any research tradition. However, it is occasionally favored because it is a neutral and descriptive term, unlike fashion, which inherently involves an ideal. The same holds for the term garment and the American expression apparel, primarily utilized to denote garment manufacturing, as seen in the term the apparel industry (Eicher, 2021).

There are other terminologies used closely with fashion and is often used as an additional concept in research—this is costume (Calvert, 2012). Similar to dress, costume holds an advantage over the term clothing by suggesting an entire ensemble or overall appearance. However, the term has been linked with unchanging attire, serving as a manifestation of anti-fashion. This is notably observed in the examination of folk dress, where costume assumes an ideological role in solidifying regionally and historically diverse dressing practices. As such, using the term costume to characterize dress often creates an impression of stability and detachment from everyday life. Therefore, it has often been recommended to refrain from using it, unless specifying special outfits for performance arts and carnival, where costume is the more fitting term (Eicher, 2021).

As such, fashion is a term that elicits both love and hatred, carrying two distinct meanings—clothing and something that is popular (typically short-lived), otherwise known as a fad. In this context, the concept of fashion is both narrower and broader than the notions of dress and clothes. Scholars focusing on fashion are not concerned with the universal phenomenon of dress but rather with cultural and historical developments in Europe and the West, and only recently how the European and Western trends have influenced African fashion trends (Skov, 2008). Thus, fashion is commonly viewed as a geographically specific system for the production and organization of dress, emerging in the European courts, particularly the French court of Louis XIV, during the fourteenth century, and evolving with the rise of mercantile capitalism, then dominating how the world has come to perceive fashion (Entwistle, 2023).

Historically, in 19th-century Europe, discussions about 'fashionable society' were feasible. But in the 20th century, as the consumption of fashionable clothing became a mass phenomenon in developed countries, fashion transformed into an institution for introducing novelty, aligning itself with the avant-garde (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson & Roberts, 2017). The study of fashion has often given preference to elite phenomena—renowned designers, cosmopolitan fashion centers, and what is new and exciting in various spheres of life. American historian Valerie Steele has played a pivotal role in promoting research under the umbrella of fashion, authoring numerous richly detailed and topically diverse books (Feather & Sturges, 2003). Yet the fusion of Western culture and African dressing has created a more estranged visualization of modern African contribution to the modern fashion trends (Entwistle, 2023).

Research conducted prior to the 1980s established certain consensus on the central research questions concerning dress and fashion. These questions predominantly revolved around three aspects. Firstly, they examined how dress served as an outlet for displaying class privilege and fostering competition between social classes. Secondly, the focus was on understanding how dress contributed to marking gender distinctions. Lastly, the research delved into the embedded meaning of dress and fashion within a system, allowing analysis based on principles (Skov, 2008). While labeling research from before the 1980s as a classic body of knowledge might be a stretch, it is justified by the recognition that studies conducted during the 1960s and 1970s have evolved over time to be perceived as foundational debates. These debates provide the grounding for more recent interdisciplinary research in the field (Entwistle, 2023).

The influential notion known as the 'trickle-down theory,' suggesting the spread of fashions from upper to lower classes, has played a significant role in the study of dress and fashion (Appleford, 2013). This concept emerged from the prevailing idea in 19th-century thought regarding social evolution, characterized by the application of Darwinism to society and culture (Kuipers, Brans, & Carbone, 2023). This theory is credited to Herbert Spencer who laid its foundations. Despite the widespread association of the trickle-down theory with North American economist Thorstein Veblen and German sociologist Georg Simmel, this attribution is not entirely accurate. Rather than examining the relationship between classes, Veblen and Simmel were primarily interested in understanding the role of dress and fashion for the upper classes around 1900 (Mohr, Fuxman & Mahmoud,

2022). Veblen, for instance, focused on analyzing how the economic wealth of the new rich industrialists was transformed into prestige through consumption—an idea later adopted by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Veblen introduced terms such as conspicuous consumption, conspicuous waste, and vicarious consumption (Patsiaouras & Fitchett, 2012). His central analysis revolved around the transfer of wealth within the family, where the industrialist husband's earnings were displayed through elaborate dress and a leisurely lifestyle by his wife and daughters. In Veblen's perspective, upper-class women were considered as possessions, hence a form of adornment forming part of men's collection of items. In contrast, Georg Simmel provided an analytic examination of fashion, perceiving it as a convergence of two conflicting social forces—the desire for conformity and the desire for individual uniqueness. Simmel argued that these forces could be unified in various ways, and he analyzed several types, ranging from the 'dude' who consistently adopts new styles first to women who compensate for overall repression through superficial dress displays. He also explored the true individualist who employs fashion as a mask of conformity, allowing their individualism to be even more pronounced underneath (Pyyhtinen, 2010).

Theoretical Foundation

Symbolic Interactionism

This theory which was a seminal sociological perspective pioneered by George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer offers a unique lens to understand the nature of youth and student fashion sense in Adekunle Ajasin University. This theory posits that individuals construct and interpret meaning through symbols. Though diverse, the impact of clothing on associating these meanings are more conspicuous in everyday rituals (Herman-Kinney & Verschaeve, 2003). Clothing serves as a potent symbol in the context of fashion and serves as the foundational lens for discussions on identity, communication, and socialization. This theory highlights the importance of symbols as vehicles of meaning. In the context of youth fashion, clothing transcends its utilitarian function, becoming a symbolic language through which individuals articulate their identities. Whether donning subcultural attire or aligning with specific brands, the choices made by the youth are laden with symbolic significance, broadcasting messages about belonging and values (O'Boyle, 2022).

The theory's conceptualization of the self proves instrumental in understanding how young individuals negotiate their identities through fashion. Clothing becomes a medium for self-expression, allowing the 'I' (spontaneity) and 'Me' (social conformity) components of the self to coalesce. This negotiation is evident in the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of youth fashion, where individuals navigate the tension between conformity to societal norms and the assertion of individuality. Communication is a pivotal aspect of symbolic interactionism and takes on a unique form within this discourse (Thorpe, 2017). Clothing serves as a non-verbal language, conveying messages about mood, personality, and affiliations. The symbolic meanings embedded in fashion extend to the digital world, with social media platforms amplifying the communicative power of clothing. Through posts, challenges, and discussions, young individuals engage in a virtual dialogue, contributing to the construction and dissemination of fashion symbols (Kawamura, 2020).

Socialization processes, integral to symbolic interactionism therefore plays a crucial role in shaping youth fashion. Peer influence too emerges as another powerful force, with friends and influencers acting as sources of inspiration and guidance. The symbolic meanings attributed to clothing, therefore, are not merely individual expressions but are collectively negotiated within social circles. Moreover, family values and institutional norms contribute to the symbolic framework within which youth navigate their fashion choices (Powers, 2010).

Viewing fashion as a symbolic resource, this theory sheds light on the strategic use of clothing in social interactions. As youth employ fashion as a tool for identity performance, adapting their styles to different social contexts, it saliently introduces the idea of power dynamics within youth fashion with those possessing cultural capital exerting influence over trends, thereby shaping symbolic hierarchies (Kim & Hall, 2014).

Despite its insightful contributions, the application of symbolic interactionism to this discussion has not been immune to critiques. The theory's micro-level focus sometimes neglects structural constraints influencing fashion choices. Similarly, globalization has been argued to introduce a dimension of cultural hybridity which

challenges the notion that fixed and shared meanings within youth fashion exist. To illustrate the theory's application, consider the emergence of streetwear culture. Symbolic interactionism helps explain the rise of streetwear as a subculture within youth fashion. Streetwears are characterized by casual, comfortable clothing often associated with skateboarding and hip-hop culture therefore represents a symbolic rejection of traditional fashion norms. Similarly, symbols such as logos, graphics, and specific brands within streetwear communicate a sense of rebellion, authenticity, and belonging among youth who identify with this subculture (Dennis & Martin, 2005). Similarly, the influence of social media on fashion trends aligns with the core arguments of the theory, positing that as platforms and influencers contribute to the creation and dissemination of symbolic meanings through curated content and personal branding, they strategically contribute to the emancipation of these symbolic meanings around clothing. The engagement with followers, comments, and likes becomes a form of feedback that shapes the symbolic value of fashion items and influences trends (Almila, 2016).

Tickle-Down Theory of Fashion Adoption

Another lens through which the dynamics of youth and fashion can be analyzed is through the insights offered by the trickle-down theory of fashion adoption which was developed by sociologist Georg Simmel and further refined by Thorstein Veblen. This theory offers a framework to understanding how fashion trends permeate through social strata (Mohr, Fuxman & Mahmoud, 2022).

The Trickle-Down Theory posits that fashion trends originate among the upper echelons of society, typically embraced by the elite or higher social classes (Atik & Firat, 2013). From this privileged position, these trends gradually "trickle down" to the lower classes, influencing the wider population over time. The process involves a constant cycle of emulation and differentiation, where individuals strive to imitate the styles of those above them while also seeking ways to distinguish themselves from their immediate peers. Hence, the theory argues that cultural dynamics play a pivotal role in shaping the fashion preferences of youths and also acknowledges that fashion is not merely a reflection of individual taste but a social phenomenon deeply connected to the current cultural milieu and youths are highly susceptible to these cultural shifts often times amplified by the influence of media, celebrities, and subcultures (Appleford, 2013).

Media, in its various forms, acts as a powerful conduit for fashion trends. The omnipresence of social media platforms amplifies the visibility of celebrities and influencers, turning them into trendsetters for young audiences. Celebrities, often positioned at the top of the social hierarchy, become trendsetters whose styles are emulated by fans seeking a connection with their idols. The emulation of celebrity fashion creates a direct link to the Trickle-Down Theory, as trends initiated by the elite gradually percolate through various social layers, eventually reaching the broader youth population (Wo, Schminke & Ambrose, 2019).

Subcultures also exert a significant influence on youth fashion such that these subcultures are defined by shared values, aesthetics, and lifestyles, thereby providing alternative channels for fashion trends to emerge (Levchuk, 2018). Youths who are eager to express their individuality, often gravitate towards subcultures that resonate with their beliefs and preferences. In essence, the trickle-down theory, in this context argues that it extends beyond the traditional elite-to-masses model, and instead recognizes that subcultures can act as distinct origin points for fashion trends that may later integrate into mainstream youth culture (Bellezza & Berger, 2020). While cultural influences set the stage, economic factors underpin the accessibility and adoption of fashion trends among youths with the theory acknowledging this economic dimension by recognizing that the elite can afford exclusive and expensive styles, which are then replicated and adapted for mass consumption. Thus, luxury brands and high-end designers often play a central role in shaping the initial stages of a fashion trend. The exclusivity associated with these brands creates a desire for emulation among those aspiring to climb the social ladder. In essence as young people observe celebrities and influencers adorned in luxury attire, the aspiration to attain similar status becomes a driving force behind the adoption of high-end fashion trends (Purinton, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design to for this study. The design is suitable for collecting multiple data consecutively across multiple timelines and to measure variable changes. The study population comprises

male and female students enrolled in selected Universities in Ondo State. Given the diverse nature of the student body, encompassing various disciplines, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds, the study aims to capture a comprehensive representation of the universities' dressing sense. A stratified random sampling technique was employed. The student population was categorized based on factors such as gender, academic discipline, and level of study. Questionnaire was used as instrument for the collection of data. The questionnaire adopted strictly closed-ended questions calibrated using both the Likert-scale questions and multiple choice to facilitate quantitative analysis. The data was analyzed using statistical software, primarily the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and employed descriptive statistics, frequencies, and inferential statistics to identify patterns and relationships within the dataset. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, clearly outlining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Participants were told about their right to withdraw from the study at any point without facing consequences. To ensure anonymity, participants were assigned identification codes, and personal information will be kept confidential.

Presentation of Data and Analysis

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics		Frequency n=100	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	45	45
	Female	55	55
Age	Below 18	8	8
	18-20	22	22
	21-23	30	30
	24-26	25	25
	27 and above	15	15
faculty of study	Arts and Humanities	20	20
	Sciences	45	45
	Social Sciences	35	35
Year of Study	100 Level	8	8
	200 Level	22	22
	300 Level	30	30
	400 Level	25	25
	500 Level and above	15	15
socio-economic background	Low	32	32
	Middle	48	48
	High	20	20

Field Survey, 2024

The data represents the demographic breakdown of individuals based on their sex, age, faculty of study, year of study and socio-economic background. The sample consists of an equal number of males and females with 45% being male while 55% being females, 8% below 18 years old and 55% being over that age. The majority (30%) are in the third-year level while 200 level is the second most popular (22%). Additionally, approximately half (48%) fall under a middle-class socio-economic background.

SECTIONB: Table Identifying Student's Predominant Dressing Styles

ITEM	Responses	N=100	%
On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the extent to which you follow the predominant dressing styles in Adekunle Ajasin University.	Strongly Disagree	30	30
	Disagree	5	5
	Not Sure	10	10
	Agree	30	30
	Strongly Agree	25	25

How often do you change your dressing style?	Rarely	23	23
	Occasionally	22	22
	Frequently	20	20
	Very Frequently	25	25
	Always	10	10
Which of these dresses reflect your choice of dress? (Select all that apply)	Corporate Wears	30	30
	Traditional Attires	25	25
	Trendy Dresses (Irrespective of whether it violates school dressing policy)	45	45
How would you describe the longevity of your dressing preferences?	Transient fads	48	48
	Short-term trends	22	22
	Medium-term trends	10	10
	Long-lasting fashion trends	15	15
	Always changing	5	5
How strongly do you believe your dressing choices flows with the trendy fashion of the time?	Strongly Disagree	20	20
	Disagree	15	15
	Not Sure	10	10
	Agree	45	45
	Strongly Agree	10	10

This data provides us with a comprehensive overview of the dressing styles and preferences of students at Adekunle Ajasin University.

Starting with the first question on following predominant dressing styles, we see that while a majority (55%) agree or strongly agree to adhering to popular dress codes, there is also a significant portion (35%) who don't necessarily follow these trends. This suggests that there is room for individuality and personal style expression among students.

In terms of how often respondents change their dressing style, we can observe an even distribution across all categories: rarely (23%), occasionally (22%), frequently (20%), very frequently (25%), and always changing (10%). While some may prefer more stability in their wardrobe choices, others enjoy experimenting with different fashion options. Moving onto preferred types of dresses, traditional attire was chosen by almost half of respondents (45%), followed by trendy dresses and corporate wear at 30% each. However, it's important to note that not everyone necessarily identifies with traditional clothing as their go-to outfit choice.

In terms of longevity and trendiness, around half of respondents view their dress preferences as "transient fads" rather than long-lasting fashion trends. While this could be seen as negative from a sustainability standpoint, it does indicate that many students feel comfortable expressing themselves through constantly evolving fashion choices. Finally looking at how closely respondent's wardrobes align with current fashion trends shows mixed opinions: while 45% feel confident in their outfits reflecting trendy styles at the time, 25% either disagree or strongly disagree. It could be argued that this indicates differing preferences when it comes to conforming to mainstream beauty standards versus prioritizing personal taste over societal expectations.

Section C: Factors Influencing Student's Dressing Choices and Senses

ITEM	Responses	N=100	%
On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being Strongly Agree, to what extent do you believe your dressing choices convey the true meaning of your identity?	Strongly Disagree	32	32
	Disagree	23	23
	Not Sure	20	20
	Agree	10	10
	Strongly Agree	15	15

How strongly do you agree about the influence of media on shaping your perception of dressing styles.	Strongly Disagree	10	10
	Disagree	10	10
	Not Sure	10	10
	Agree	20	20
	Strongly Agree	50	50
How strongly do you agree that peer pressure impacts your dressing choices?	Strongly Disagree	10	10
	Disagree	20	20
	Not Sure	5	5
	Agree	22	22
	Strongly Agree	43	43
How strongly do you assert the influence of fashion brands on your dressing choice?	Strongly Disagree	17	17
	Disagree	13	13
	Not Sure	12	12
	Agree	20	20
	Strongly Agree	38	38
How strongly do you assert to what extent celebrities influence your fashion choices?	Strongly Disagree	12	12
	Disagree	8	8
	Not Sure	11	11
	Agree	40	40
	Strongly Agree	29	29
Which of the following factors influence your dressing choices? (Select all that apply) 'stoomuchtrouble	Media (TV, social media, etc.)	50	50
		15	15
	Peer pressure	10	10
	Fashion brands	9	9
	Fast fashion trends	16	16
	Celebrities		

The latest data shows interesting insights into the relationship between dressing choices and personal identity, media influence, peer pressure, and fashion brands.

Regarding whether one's dressing expresses their true identity, we see that 32% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. This suggests that some may not feel fully comfortable expressing themselves through what they wear or believe there is dissonance between their internal values and external appearance. Moving to the impact of media on shaping perception of dressing styles. Here, a significant portion (50%) agree or strongly agree with this statement, indicating how dominant mass media can be in influencing societal beauty standards. However, it's worth noting that 20% were unsure about this aspect suggesting ambiguity among respondents when answering such sensitive questions

When it comes to peer pressure impacting dressing choices respectively; 22% agree while over 40% are somewhat influenced. The result was mixed overall pointing towards subtle group influence rather than outright devotion to conformist demands among students at Adekunle Ajasin University. Looking at the role of fashion brands in dress selection also showed divide: Trending lines seen as having strong influence by nearly more than a third (38%), representing prevailing view. A small number substantially disagreed which goes hand-in-hand with deviation from brand related appeal particularly for quality clothing despite high-end branding/recognition.

The data shows that when it comes to celebrities' influence on fashion choices, only 12% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement. Meanwhile, nearly a third (29%) strongly agree, indicating that celebrities do have significant impact on some individuals' dressing decisions. When analyzing the factors that influence respondents' dressing choices, we see that media and fast fashion trends are tied as the most prevalent factors at 50%, followed by social pressure at a relatively low 10%. Fashion brands and celebrities both fall in single digits, with only 9% citing celebrity influence.

These findings suggest that media plays an outsized role in shaping people's clothing preferences and the proliferation of fast fashion has changed how quickly those preferences can shift. Overall though peer pressure wanes in importance but having stronger stapled perspective relative to one's personal identity still offers critical insight for marketing considerations thus providing key benchmark references for improving upcoming policies or enhancing alluring brand messages even around their general aesthetic appeal.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The research work's findings provide a comprehensive discussion of the dressing styles and preferences among students at Adekunle Ajasin University. The data reveals that while some individuals prefer to adhere to popular dress codes, there is also a significant proportion who don't necessarily follow these trends, thus highlighting room for individuality and personal style expression.

Regarding how often respondents change their dressing style, an even distribution was observed across all categories from rarely (23%) to always changing (10%), which indicates variations in fashion experimentations and wardrobe dynamics. The concept of a fashion trend has evolved, now encapsulating repetitive change, fleeting popularity, and constant renewal of a 'taste for something' or modification to make it novel, whether in style or quality (Campos & Wolf, 2018). In essence, trends signify more than just current popularity-- they reflect the dynamic and transient nature of preferences and choices.

Additionally, the data reveals that there is a presence of celebrity influence on people's dressing choices among students represented by 29% with strong agreement while 40% agreed. The works of Wo, Schminke & Ambrose, (2019), agreed with this, posting that celebrities, often positioned at the top of the social hierarchy, become trendsetters whose styles are emulated by fans seeking a connection with their idols.

Also, Peer pressure has a mixed impact on dressing choices at Adekunle Ajasin University, with 22% agreeing and over 40% somewhat influenced, suggesting subtle group influence rather than strict conformity. Fashion brands play a significant role in dress selection, with trending lines having a strong influence on more than a third (38%) of respondents. A small number disagreed, indicating deviation from brand appeal despite high recognition. Celebrities have a notable influence on fashion choices, with 12% strongly disagreeing and nearly a third (29%) strongly agreeing, showing significant impact on dressing decisions for some individuals. This was also corroborated by the works of Folomeeva & Klimochkina (2019), they opined that cultural and societal norms, family influence, and personal preferences all contribute to shaping teenagers' fashion sense. It is the amalgamation of these diverse influences that defines their unique style and individual fashion preferences.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The comparative study conducted on the dressing sense of male and female students at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akoko, has provided valuable insights into the transient fads and trending fashion prevalent among the student body. Through a comprehensive analysis of survey responses, observations, and interviews, several key findings have emerged. It is evident that both male and female students exhibit a keen interest in following fashion trends, albeit with varying degrees of emphasis on different aspects of dressing. While female students tend to prioritize elements such as clothing styles, accessories, and makeup, male students often focus more on clothing brands, footwear, and grooming styles.

Moreover, the study highlights the influence of external factors such as peer pressure, media, and cultural backgrounds on students' fashion choices. These influences contribute to the rapid adoption of transient fads among the student population, leading to frequent shifts in dressing preferences. However, amidst the prevalence of transient fads, certain enduring fashion trends emerge, indicating the presence of overarching themes and styles that resonate with both male and female students. These trends often reflect broader societal changes, cultural shifts, and global fashion movements. The followings are recommended: Universities should encourage students to embrace their unique identities and express themselves through their clothing choices. Provide platforms for showcasing diverse styles and celebrating personal creativity.

Educate students about the transient nature of fashion trends and the commercial motivations behind them. Encourage critical analysis of media portrayals and celebrity influences to empower students to make informed fashion decisions. The universities should create opportunities for students to engage in constructive discussions about fashion, share styling tips, and exchange clothing items. Foster a positive and inclusive environment where students feel comfortable expressing their fashion preferences without fear of judgment. Ensure that students have access to affordable and sustainable fashion options that cater to diverse tastes and budget constraints. Raise awareness about the environmental and social impact of fast fashion consumption and promote sustainable alternatives such as thrifting, upcycling, and ethical fashion brands.

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