



Dress Code Compliance in Academic Libraries: A Survey of Federal Polytechnic Bauchi, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examines dressing among students of the Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi. It looked at how the dress code of the Polytechnic is being adhered to by the students, and the insistence of library staff to ensure compliance. The design of the study was descriptive survey. Five specific research objectives with five corresponding research questions guided the study. A questionnaire was used to elicit responses across the various categories of the respondents (students), which were randomly selected according to their programmes of studies. The total of three hundred and fifty (350) questionnaires were administered to the users of the library using convenient sample technique; out of which two hundred and sixty-five (265) were retrieved and considered for analysis. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques, percentages and frequencies. The study revealed that most students abide by the Polytechnic dress code especially while visiting the library, also the library staff enforcement is highly appreciated by the respondents. It also found that indecent dressing affects library users' concentration on studies, it also causes disrespect, curse, temptation and rape. It is finally recommended that the Polytechnic Management, lecturers, officers, parents, and cleric, to strive hard to ensure strict adherence to decent dressings in our higher institutions of learning particularly Federal Polytechnic Bauchi.

Keywords: Dress Code, Indecent Dressing, Compliance, Library.

Introduction

At the beginning of the new session or semester, there are orientation programmes organized by the department or faculty on how students access the library resources and services as well as dress code compliance within the campus particularly when students visit the library. Again, dozens of banners were placed on campus indicating how students being dress code for various contraventions. For instance, students wearing tattered cloth (tattered Jeans and jeans with holes) and tight fittings dress (e.g., Jeans, Hip Star, Patra, Lactate etc.) that reveals the contour of the body are not allowed in the library as well as lecture environment. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2021), a dress code is a set of rules about what clothing may and may not be worn at a school, library, office, restaurant, and etc.

The Federal Government of Nigeria considered education as an investment that the nation can have for the quick development of the economic, social and human resources of its citizenry. It is the most important index of change in the social, economic and intellectual out-looks of any society. This cannot be achieved without a functional academic library, which is aimed at providing information resources to support teaching, learning and research needs of the academic community. Institutions issue certificates to graduating students not only based on academic performance but also must be found worthy in character. Oguchukwu and Ajayi (2020) stressed that a moral standard is a set of roles which guides an individual on how to evaluate right or wrong behaviour. They further said morality is simply the level of quality of behaviour of human beings and how they relate with others and the world. Morality is anything ethical, good, right, proper, honourable, just and principled which everybody is expected to adhere to. It is with the statement that students have to dress well for their education and research development in the library.

The students of the Polytechnic are therefore urged to adhere strictly to the dress code as enshrined in the student's handbook, while departments are directed to ensure compliance. Given the above directives, Muhammadu Wabi Library which was established in 1979 is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring compliance being a major point of call to all students of the Polytechnic. The library according to the Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi students' handbook 2016/2017 session (2016), has fifty thousand (50,000) volumes of textbooks and four hundred (400) journal titles, with a five hundred (500) seating capacity of users at a time. Again, the library has forty-one staff (41), made up of eleven professionals (11), eighteen (18) para- professionals and twelve (12) other supportive staff.

Clothing can be used as a medium of self-expression, (Kiran Molik and Raizas cited in Oguchukwu and Ajayi 2020). Clothing reflects the cognitive moral and social aspects of human life. Students are expected to dress decently and modestly in order to avoid attracting unnecessary attention which in turn arouses sexual urges from the opposite sex. However, some students tend to neglect the instructions given by the library and school management by adopting the clothing styles of others through the influence of peer groups, parents, teachers and social media. This negates the societal norms and values of the northern Nigeria community. This type of fashion crazy has made people lose value and worth before others. It has brought about lapses in moral standards (Otunba, 2019). The common intimation is that when students are punished for dress code violations, teachers are "slut shaming" girls by saying that their clothing is "disruptive to teaching and learning" (Dockerman 2014 as cited in Whitman 2020). Thus, it is this study need to understand the dress code compliance in academic library and maintain the laws, rules and regulations governing the usage of academic libraries.

Statement of the Problem

It is observed that the dress code at Federal Polytechnic Bauchi is not fully employed among students. Students were visiting the library with indecent dresses that are prohibited to wear while in the library. For example, a student visiting a library wearing short dress is unacceptable. Despite the fact that the library is the heart of any academic institutions that helps students with available information resources relevant to their course of study. It is expected for a student to visit the library for research and assignment that lead him/her to better results and grades in the future. Unfortunately, some students refuse to visit the library due to the rules and regulations ordain by the library and the dress code compliance is one of them. As a result, the library lacks its customers/users because of dress code. This negligence from the students may/might cause library avoidance among students. This and many more emancipate the researchers for carrying out this study.

However, educational institutions can help in producing enlightened citizens who are productive and at the end contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. This can be possible by being morally, socially and religiously law-abiding. Good and decent dressing earned acceptance and respect from people, while indecent dressing can induce sexual urges and sex scandals which will result in the spread of HIV-AID scourge and other sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. Students with these immoral behaviours will not be awarded a certificate, because they negate the basic principles for the award 'founding worthy in character and learning'. In order to curtain indecent dressing tendencies in our institutions, authorities concern should strive hard in ensuring strict adherence to the dress code. How this could be achieved is the gap that this study will fill.

Objectives of the study

The study is set to achieve the following objectives among others:

1. To find out whether students are aware of the Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi dress code particularly when they are visiting the library, and do they comply with it.
2. To know whether an indecent dressing in the library can cause distraction and lack of readers' concentration or it may cause disrespect, curse, temptation and rape among students of the polytechnic.
3. To find out the library staff insistence on the Polytechnic dress code compliance before entry into the library.
4. To know whether the students are aware of their religious' provisions on dressing as well as the general effect of indecent dressing among students and;
5. To recommend measures of ensuring strict adherence to the Polytechnic dress code.

Research Questions

The study is set to answer the following questions among others:

1. Are you aware of the Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi dress code particularly when you are visiting the library, and do you comply with it?
2. Are the indecent dressings in the library can cause distraction and lack of readers' concentration or it may cause disrespect, curse, temptation and rape among students of the polytechnic?
3. Does Library staff insist on compliance with the Polytechnic dress code before entry into the library?

4. Are you aware of your religious' provisions on dressing and the effect of indecent dressing among students?
5. What are the measures for ensuring strict adherence to the Polytechnic dress code?

Literature Review

Dress code compliance

Few studies have been discussed on dress code compliance. For instance, Aghasaleh (2018). studied dress code and uniform policies of 89 New Orleans public charter schools and findings revealed that the dress code and uniform policies, including the justifications for policy, specific policy rules, and possible consequences for noncompliance, are the primary units of analysis.

The vogue in our higher institutions particularly among ladies is their indecent dressing acts, which they claim is the contemporary trend in fashion. Ibrahim et al (2016) said the development of human civilization was the zenith of evolutionary development starting with savagery, moving on through barbarism and culminating in modernity.

Clothing can be used as a medium of self-expression, KiranMolik and Raiz, cited in Ogochukwu and Ajayi (2020) said clothing reflects the cognitive moral and social aspects of human life. They also cited Bill to describe clothing as a mark of identity and a means of non-verbal communication which can indicate a person's age, gender, marital status, religion and place of origin. Ibrahim et al (2016) described indecent dressing as dresses to show off parts of the body such as breasts, buttocks, or even underwear. They further said decent refers to conformity to generally accepted standards of respectable or moral behaviour. While decent dressing as dresses that are inline with society's norms, customs and values. Hence, people are expected to dress moderately and corporately especially in public places, as this will earn them respect and acceptability where ever they went. Indecent dressing as stressed by Otunbah (2019) boils to a high rate of promiscuity and immoral behaviours. She said women have sold their womanhood by exposing their womanhood parts of the body like breasts and buttocks. They are no longer handled with care.

It is not only mind-bogglingbut an eye sore to see students, especially females, going about half-naked if not stark naked. It is indeed the crazy era of nakedness. The head of any right-thinking individual bleeds when he/she sees female folks dressing nude. Yet when in public places or about to board a bike/motorcycle they behave as if their magic fingers can make these skimpy dresses longer than they really are, Otunbah (2019) further stressedour girls are known for putting on very short skirts, towel-like lines which barely covered their breasts, leaving the rest of the body untended'. Thus, most of these girls were influenced by pornography which let them develop the desire and need to practice and experiment with whatever they saw in films, videos, television, magazines etc.

It is indeed obvious that those students who have an interest in upholding traditional values are few when compared with what is generally obtainable in our society where laxity pervades all that we do today. Any girl who does not dress that way is a bush girl who does not know what is in vogue. This agrees with the statement made by Ibrahim et al (2016), the dressing style on campuses in private institutions of higher learning is under particular scrutiny, as it is often said to be inappropriate for a learning environment.

Some of the factors that aided in changing our modest form of dressing came through the mass media and the theatre, drama actors and actresses, musicians, fashion shows and beauty pageants, and so on. The dresses worn by them are exhibited by our youths in the name of civilization and fashion. Collaborating Elijah cited in Ogochukwu (2020) maintained that the dress pattern of the younger population has totally departed from what was obtainable in the past and can be best described as weird and embarrassing. In the same vein, Esiowu and Igbo cited in Ogochukwu (2020) report that many campus girls copy and wear such indecent provocative clothes meant for commercial sex workers. Certain names are now common descriptions of some dresses used particularly by female in tertiary institutions such as spaghetti, show-me-your-breasts, show-your-belly etc. All these depict immorality.

It is no doubt that indecent dressing among students who exposed most parts of their bodies has now become a source of worry to the Polytechnic management as well as the society in general, hence the introduction of dressing code, which is a policy statement outlining dresses that are not expected to be worn by students to attend lectures, libraries etc, and are termed 'indecent dressing'. Ibrahim et al (2016) viewed dress code as a set of rules, usually written and posted, specifying the required manner of dress at a school, office, club, restaurant etc.

According to the Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi Handbook (2016) indecent dressing are 'any type of dressing that exposes that part of the body that in most cases cause reasonable people to frown at your person'. Infact, dressing mode where 80%-90% of the bodies are exposed can be said to be indecent no matter how one believes in the natural way. Wise or civilized people dress corporately.

The Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi outlined the dressing code for the students of the institution in 1996 and said 'indecent dressing is a mark of irresponsibility and gives people the impression of your type of personality'. It further said the way you dress has a close relationship with your entire being Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi Handbook (2016).

Different indecent dress code for both Female and Male Students: Miniskirts, Braided hair, Tight skirt/Tight trousers, Jerry curling, Spaghetti and hand sleeves, painted nails, Slip trousers and skirts, Sleeves top, Transparent dresses, Boxers, one hand top/blouse and etc.

Indecent dressing may lead to campus prostitution, promiscuity among students, sexual harassment, rape, unplanned pregnancy, and wayward lifestyle among others (Ogochukwu and Ajayi, 2020).

Methodology

A correctional survey design was used in carrying out this study, in order to obtain data for the study a self-study questionnaire was used and administered across the various categories of the respondents' groups that were randomly sample according to their programmes of studies. A cross-sectional survey is a type of research design which examines a group of people at a single point in time (Neuman, 2007 as cited in Mohammed and Haliru 2019).

The target population of study comprises freshers' students of the polytechnic for ensuring the dress code compliance. During this study a number of the populations are one thousand nine hundred and fifty (1,950) freshers students based on the registry record. Convenient sampling techniques was used to select the sample size of this study. Again, the lists of the population are

long hence drawing random sample is difficult, therefore the researchers select the sample through 'lottery prototype' where two options wrote on the paper for students to select and 350 students were luckily selected yes from each school which comprised three hundred and fifty (350) sampling size. Out of this, 175 males and 175 females have been selected in order to have gender distribution control.

A total of three hundred and fifty (350) questionnaires were administered to the users of the library, out of which two hundred and sixty-five (265) were returned and considered for analysis. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques, percentages and frequencies.

Findings and Analysis Of The Study

The findings of this paper are presented and analyzed according to the research questions raised in the study.

Are you aware of the Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi dress code particularly when you are visiting the library, and do you comply with it?

Table 1a: Indicating the degree of dress code awareness by the respondents.

Options	Frequency	Percentages
Aware	237	89.5%
Not Aware	28	10.5%
Total	265	100%

From table 1a above, it is clear that 237 (89. 5%) respondents, indicated been aware of the existence of dress code of the Polytechnic under study while, only 28 (10.5%) of the respondents were not aware of the dress code.

Table 1b: The extent to which students abide by the dress code

Options	Frequency	Percentages
Yes	207	78
No	58	21.8%
Total	265	100%

From table 1b respondents were also asked whether they abide by the provisions in the dress code, 207 (78%) said Yes, they abided by the dressing code, especially when they are to visit the library while 58 (21.8%) said NO, they are not abiding by the dress t and this might be because the code is anti-social or not. Furthermore, the respondents were asked to express their opinion on the library staff insistence on dressing decently before gaining entry into library and the majority of the respondents' comments that the kind of dress that the polytechnic allowed them to wear are not the type of the dress that are wear outside campus.

Are the indecent dressings in the library can cause distraction and lack of readers' concentration or it may cause disrespect, curse, temptation and rape among students of the polytechnic?

Table 2: Indicating the effect of indecent dressing on readers' concentration in the library

Options	Frequency	Percentages
Distract readers concentration	65	25%
Causes disrespect, curse, temptation and rape	200	75%
Total	265	100%

Table 2 above expresses that indecent dressing is distracting the readers' concentration on their studies, 65 (25%) as indicated by the respondents, while, the majority of the respondents 200 (75%) believed that indecent dressing causes disrespect, curse, temptation and even rape among students of the polytechnics.

Does library staff insist on compliance with the Polytechnic dress code before entry into the library?

Table 3: Indicating the degree of library staff insistence on the Polytechnic dress code.

Options	Frequency	Percentages
Very insist	156	58%
Insist	97	38%
Less Insist	7	2%
Not Insist at all	5	1%
Total	265	100%

As shown in table 3 above, 156 (58%) of the respondents said that library staff were highly insisted on dressing decently before gaining access to the library while, only 5 (1%) of the respondents said that they were not insisting on students to dress decently before access into the library thus, these are the minority opinion.

Are you aware of your religious' provisions of dressing and the effect of indecent dressing among students?

Table 4: Indicating respondent's awareness on religious' provisions on dressings.

Options	Frequency	Percentages
Aware	247	93%
Not aware	18	7%
Total	265	100%

As shown in table 4 above, it is amazing to note that 93% of the respondents claimed to know their religious provisions on decent dressing only 7% shows ignorance of their religious provisions.

What are the measures for ensuring strict adherence to the Polytechnic dress code?

Key: Yes or No

Table 5: Measures of enhancing dress code adherence.

Options	Frequency & Percentage (Yes)		Frequency & Percentage (NO)	
Insistence on obeying dress code law by the Polytechnic Management	246	92%	19	8%
Constant enlightenment by the Polytechnic Management through lectures, fosters, sign post etc	237	89%	28	11%
Preaching by clerics on the decent dress in mosques and churches	257	96	8	4%

From the table 5 above 246 (92%) of the respondents agrees with the insistence on adherence to the dress code, and very few of them 19(8%) disagreed with the statement. This corresponds with the item 2 statement, the majority of the respondents 237 (89%) said constant enlightenment by the Polytechnic Management through lectures, fosters, sign post etc will enhance decent dressing among students, while the rest of the respondents 28(11%) disagreed with the statement. Moreover, 257 (96%) agreed on preaching by clerics on decent dressing in mosques and churches will increase decent dressing for students of polytechnic, and only 8(4%) responded negatively. Thus, concerning the above statements as suggested by the respondents are the measures that will enhance dress code compliance in the Polytechnic particularly when students visit the library.

Discussion of Findings

Are you aware of the Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi dress code particularly when you are visiting the library, and do you comply with it?

Based on the above question majority of the respondents were aware of the existence of the dress code of the Polytechnic under study and they abided by the dressing code, especially when they are to visit the library but there is a lack of dress code compliance among users of the library even though the library staff insistence on dressing decently before gaining entry into the library. Moreover, the majority of the respondents commented that the kind of dresses that the polytechnic allowed them to wear are not the type of the dresses that are worn outside the campus. This showed that there is a lack of dress code compliance on campus and outside campus among students, this may be as a result of a lack of awareness or negligence by the polytechnic authority and staff general.

However, dress code compliance among students is paramount because it is a medium of socio-cultural and religious expression, and a form of communication that send messages about who you are, who you want to be, and where you came from. This gave Federal Polytechnic the liberty to

issue a student handbooks to the students for guidance on the rules and regulations of the polytechnic. The Polytechnic library, on the other hand, placed notice on the rules and regulations especially areas that related to the dress code that guide students to avail themselves of resources, services and facilities of the library.

Are the indecent dressings in the library can cause distraction and lack of readers' concentration or it may cause disrespect, curse, temptation and rape among students of the polytechnic?

The current study revealed that indecent dressing is distracting the readers' concentration on their studies, whereas, the majority of the respondents believed that indecent dressing can cause disrespect, curse, temptation and even rape among students of the polytechnics. Moreover, the Polytechnic library is one of the academic libraries that teach, instruct and guide students towards their library collections in order to help them with their assignments and research work for attaining a better grades in the examinations.

Again, academic libraries are established in higher institutions of learning to provide information resources that could support the teaching, learning and research needs of the academic community. The library environment should be conducive and silent for full concentration. This aligns with Arthur, Brafı and Kuranchie (2013) academic libraries play a significant role towards the achievement of the goals of tertiary institutions and hardly would academic institutions be able to provide for the academic, intellectual and other interests and information needs of students without the services of good libraries...they have been noted as an essential ingredient for research, successful teaching and learning.

Does library staff insist on compliance with the Polytechnic dress code before entry into the library?

This study discovered that the majority of the respondents said that library staff were highly insisted on dressing decently before gaining access to the library, and only a few of them responded opposite and their opinions are groundless considering the number of respondents (*See table 3*).

Hence, to ensure dress code compliance in our institutions of higher learning in general and in the Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi in particular conclusion has been drawn that: the Polytechnic authorities should station security officers at all entry points to send home students who are not dressed in compliance with the provisions of the Polytechnic dress code. The Polytechnic Management to create ways and avenues where notable speakers and role models could be invited to re-orient students on the need to maintain good conduct in dressing and other aspects of their lives. This view was in consonance with what Otunba (2016) said, people are expected to dress modestly especially women. This is to avoid attracting unnecessary attention which in turn arouses sexual urges from the opposite sex.

Are you aware of your religious' provisions on dressing and the effect of indecent dressing among students?

The study found that 93% of the respondents claimed to know their religious provisions on decent dressing and the majority of the Polytechnic students are either Muslims and or Christians who knew and believes in their religious provisions. To support this view the two religions (Islam and Christianity) need to be instructed their followers in several verses of the Holy Books to dress

decently and these would change the students' perceptions towards indecent dressing and ensure the dress code compliance among students within the library and even outside campus premises.

What are the measures for ensuring strict adherence to the Polytechnic dress code?

The finding of this study showed that majority of the respondents responded positively with the insistence on adherence to the dress code and they affirmed that constant enlightenment by the Polytechnic Management through lectures, fosters, sign post etc will enhance decent dressing among students. Again, students need to be preached to by their clerics to dress decently not only in their place of worship even in the library. Finally, serious measures that curtail indecent dressing need to be considered in the polytechnic. This will help students to interact peacefully and friendly.

Furthermore, respondents claimed to know their religious provisions on decent dressing and believed that God is the perfect Master in terms of morals, but why are they contravening the laid-down code in moral order as stipulated in the various religions? The study recommended that, parents must not be complacent in dealing with their wards from tender age to adulthood, while religious scholars (Mallams and Pastors) must reposition themselves to a moral training ground in Mosques, Islamiyya and Churches. Also, the community elders/leaders must join hands in ensuring strict adherence to the norms and values of our society so that our country gets the kind of future good-mannered leaders it deserves. Ogochukwu and Ajayi (2022) advised parents to encourage their wards to be of good behaviour and use clothes that are decent and promote cultural heritage. Again, Otunba (2016) stressed that when the right values, beliefs and attitudes are correctly laid at the childhood stage, such a child, is likely to grow to develop later in life well behaved.

Conclusion

Nigerians are religious people and both Islamic and Christian religions had encouraged and directed their followers to dress modestly so also Nigerian cultures do. This elicits respects and honour from respected people. It also saves one from harassment and hazards of being targeted for rape. Indecent dressings are frowned upon by respected and honoured people of society. The Federal Polytechnic Bauchi is not keeping quiet over this immoral act as such, they enacted a law termed 'dress code', which spells out dresses that are forbidding wearing while in school. They also asked lecturers, and other Polytechnic Officers and offices to ensure compliance. This will help in bringing sanity to the institution. Concentration among students can be achieved when there is appropriate dressing among students in the library and other places of study.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

1. The Polytechnic Management should continue to orientate fresh and returning students on the importance of decent dressing.
2. Parents should instruct their wards to be law-abiding and put on clothes that are decent and can promote cultural heritage at all times.
3. Religious clerics should preach good dressing and adherence to religious teachings.
4. The Polytechnic should put in strong structures for the enforcement of dress code and prosecution of violators.

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