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Introduction

Many definitions have been resorted to by synthesis of literature in trying to arrive at the word fashion. Jeanette and others define fashion as ‘a continuous process of change in style of dress that is acceptable and followed by large segment of the public at any particular time’, Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, defines fashion as ‘the prevailing style during a particular time’. Paul Nystran, an economics Professor who was the first to apply economics to fashion, defined fashion as ‘Nothing more or less than the prevailing style at any given time’.

Fashion goes beyond the above definitions, it concerns every method of enhancing the beauty and dignity of human body. These methods include additive, subtractive and extension methods. Additive method of body adornment includes the use of textiles, styled in various ways to adorn and dignify the body by covering some desired parts or most of it lustfully, or graciously for various aesthetics or functional effects. The use of footwear, headgears, coiffure, bangles, anklets, earning, necklaces and beads fall within these category. Subtractive application of fashion includes the use of body mutilations such as facial and body scarification, body painting, cicatrisation, tattooing, etc. as means of body adornment. Extension method include the use of optional items such as handbags, purse walking sticks, etc (Okeke, 1996). Additive method of body adornment is the focus of this study, hence the definition of fashion may be limited to dress and personal decorations worn by men, women and children. Fashion then may be defined as the prevailing styles or group of styles in dress and accessories worn by a group of people at a particular period. Whenever a style is acceptable and worn by a sufficient number of people, it becomes fashion.

Dynamism of fashion in this context means a force that produces change, action or effect on fashion as it relates to clothing, since human taste in fashion is ever changing. Clothing is an important feature in human physical appearance. It includes all the different types of garment, accessories or ornaments worn by people in order to protect, adorn or communicate an intent (Adebule 2008). Clothing therefore serve as means of communication.

Two theoretical perspectives are crucial in explaining clothing communication as stated by Buckley and Roach (1994), these are: symbolic interaction theory and impression formation theory. Symbolic interaction theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction as a basis for minimal outward clues. While impression formation theory states that the viewer perceives another person, he gathers information about the person and processes this information in his mind to form coherent impression that enables a definition of others. Both theories recognize the importance of clothing as symbol that communicates information in human interactive situations. This aids in the establishment of self identity and in the identification of others.

Vanderholf (1988) observed that clothing is a non-verbal communication which uses its symbol to form vocabularies by which wearers tells observers who they are and observer, form impressions on
wearers, based on their clothing style. This means that clothing presents visible clue to the characteristics of the wearer. Thus, through clothing, people make assumptions and passed judgment about individual’s emotional, moral, educational and social status (Faiola and Pullen, 1982). Individual’s clothing also tells whether the wearer is conservative or daring, out-going (sexy) or reserved, casual or organized, a leader or a follower, confident or unsure (Adebule 2008). Clothing communicates an individual’s personality (Behling and Williams, 1991). Clothing communicates cultural components and its interactive nature such as social status, political beliefs, occupation, sex roles, economic position, technical changes industrialization as well as aesthetic ideals (Sote 2003).

Four major elements as stated by Foster (1990) determine the image an individual presents through clothing. These include: fit, colour, texture and accessories. Clothing styles such as very tight clothes may be sexy, showing off and unflattering, mini clothes with roomy fit, suggest relaxation, informal and confident (Rouse 1999, Weber, 1990).

Different people because of their unique background (i.e. Religion, culture, education, etc.) evaluate and perceive clothing clues and messages in their own views. How clothing style is perceived depends entirely on the point of view or frame of reference of the person making judgement i.e. his age, social status, academic standing, morality, feeling (emotional stability, values and lifestyles) (Vanderoff 1988). Although dress codes are unwritten and clothing messages may sometimes be misinterpreted and falsified, all situations and occasions have parameters or boundaries of clothing that are expected and accepted by diverse culture. People are therefore judged by the appropriateness of the clothing styles they wear for each occasion and activity. Foster (1990), hence concluded that there is a correlation between an individual’s clothing and his success or failure, acceptance or rejection not only in interpersonal relations and professional careers but also in educational pursuit and marriage.

University is the seat of knowledge and citadel of learning where society give respect to her output, therefore the mode of dressing of the university undergraduates should be a model to be emulated by the less privileged in the society. Their mode of dressing should communicate such favourable intents as: self respect and sense of responsibility, sound moral values and respect for dignity of womanhood. Hence, it is against this background information that it is necessary to study the dynamism of fashion among the female university undergraduates and its effect in the sight of the beholders.

Literature Review

There is no way to talk about fashion without mentioning human culture, this is because fashion grows out of culture. The ways of life, customs, beliefs, values economy and technology of a people at a particular period in time influences their clothing styles. As culture changes, so does fashion. Fashion is related to culture and the time in which people lives (Adebule 2008). During the mid 14th century, fashion was limited to the royal class who dictate the pace of fashion. People were allowed to dress in a way that fit the class to which they belonged. People were poor and their clothes were simple and functional. Fashion belong to the royal class, who could afford costly fabrics and elaborate garments. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, a new era began, there was increased emphasis on science, art and exploration. This era is called Renaissance and it is often considered the beginning of modern times. By this period, European culture began to change more quickly and fashion reflects the changes. Trade increased, and new class of wealthy people arouse. They were not royalty but merchants. The way they display their new wealth was by wearing new clothes (Lupo and Lester 1987).
During the 18th Century the power of the royal class declined all over Europe, monararchies were replaced by other systems of government. The industrial revolution brought wealth to new groups. As the royal class lost political and economic power, their fashion leadership ended as well. Today, fashion originated from many sources i.e. fashion designers, famous athletes, politicians, entertainers, etc. Some fashion emanated from the street, jeans are a good example (Lupo and Luster 1987).

A multidisciplinary approach to human studies had led to the evolution of theories of adornment from prehistoric ages. Anthropologists, historians, social psychologists and economists have diverse perspectives on the role of clothing in the lives of people. Since dress is closely allied to culture, history or civilization, individual, group behaviours, system of government and economy, there are numerous views that are considered fundamental to adornment (Gurel and Beeson 1979). Most theories on the origin of adornment is based on the study of its use among simple societies. Although a few authors argue for a particular theory, most authors agreed that a combination of environmental, psychological, socio-cultural and religious factors are involved in the origin and evolution of clothing. Clothing is therefore used for the purpose of decoration, protection, attraction and status identification among others (Flugel, 1950, Craig, 1973, Akinwunmi, 1981). It is an expression of moral, social, cultural and political attitude of a culture. There is also a general agreement that the reason behind the continual use of an item for adornment might have deviated from the motive that led to its adoption (Diyaolu 2009).

Morris (1979) observed that there is need for enveloping garments as a means of concealing body signals which exist between sexes. Dixie (2004) opined that a culture can be so saturated with immodesty and that others must guard against becoming desensitized to it. Hence modesty is simply humility and holiness expressed in dress. Our wardrobes should express self control, moderation and restraint. What we wear should demonstrate that we live with a settled resistance to the ceaseless pull of the world (Diyaolu, 2009).

Vreeland (2002) pointed out that, since clothing makes up a major part of our appearance, it plays a vital role in the impressions people make on each other. First impressions quickly made and largely determined by appearance, are usually based on wearer’s clothing, hence clothing is a form of non-verbal communication process.

Lupo and Luster (1987), spoke about the theory of attraction, saying that the theory holds that the original purpose of clothing was to attract attention to the genital and their erotic functions, thus increasing the observers’ sexual interest in the wearer Goffman (1961) holds the same view and emphasized that Concealment and privacy stimulates interest, whereas familiarity results in difference. Although this theory is perhaps the earliest serious theory put forth by anthropologists, modification as later advanced by Bick (1968), stated that all people above the age of puberty may be treated as consumers and object of consumption in the sexual market. In this context, adornment may be seen as a symbolic system which provides a major indication of the individual’s willingness to participate in this market. Adornment then, as concluded by Mculhan (1968) is the frequent unconscious medium for each individual’s sex message. The desire to draw attention to oneself or to communicate the state of one’s availability or non-availability in the sexual market place, are important aspect in the complexity of statement surrounding the origin and use of clothing.

Roach and Eicher (1973) emphasized on body adornment, saying that, it has been historically traced to
be an integral symbol of sexual enticement, whether in the private or public it is obviously emphasizing the genital area by special ornamental or type of clothing which focuses attention on that area. The recorded covering for the male genitals, is an example. The ‘pasties’ over the nipples of a burlesque dancer is also an example for the female. Padding of men’s shoulder and women’s breast and hips emphasize difference in male and female body contours.

Dress used to entice members of the opposite sex may be considered within two settings: private and public. Private or intimate setting are best exemplified by the bedroom or boudoir where undergarment, sleeping garment, etc. are used to lure one’s spouse, lover or momentary companion into sexual involvement. Dress can be used for public announcement of sexual identity and an enticement to private settings. It may emphasize body characteristics and mannerism that has culturally defined as symbolic or sexual enticement. Emphasizing body characteristics beyond what the mode in dress prescribes has often provided the additional variable necessary for enticement.

In many societies nowadays, clothing has become an integral part of each individual’s body image. Hence, a person may change his or her body by changing the attire. By so doing clothing may be used as a means of attaining some desired characteristics of body image. During late adolescence stage most young people begin to become interested in selecting males and many females use clothing as a method of enhancing their sexual attractiveness. This may be accomplished through the exposure, concealment and emphasis of different parts of the body and through the use of erotic symbolism in clothing. The degree to which female uses clothing to attract males varies with the occasions or with the roles she is expected to play. Numerous authors have presented evidence to support the theory that women dress with the intention of attracting men. However, the majority of support for this premises is based on the interpretation of many people over time rather than on empirical research (Powell, 1963, Fisher, 1973, Goffman 1961, Diyaolu, 2009)

Research Hypothesis

The following three null hypotheses were developed to pilot the study

$H_{01}$ The Attitude of female undergraduate has no significant difference on dynamism of fashion

$H_{02}$ The female undergraduate clothing has no significant difference on the perception of the beholder

$H_{03}$ The perception of female undergraduate has no significant difference on the perception of the beholders.

Methodology

Sample:

The sample consists of 250 female undergraduate and 150 beholders randomly selected from four colleges in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ogun State, Nigeria. 75 male undergraduates and 75 male staff of the university constitute the beholders.

Research Instrument
A self designed questionnaire tagged: Dynamism of Fashion among Female Undergraduate Questionnaire (DFFQ) constituted the instrument for this study. The instrument has two sections (A and B). section A elicits the Demographic characteristics of the respondents (i.e Age, Sex and Colleges) while Section B comprises a – 20 question items each on dynamism of fashion, attitude, perception, clothing of female undergraduates and the beholders perception respectively. The four likert rating scale was adopted i.e.

Strongly Agree (SA) 4 points
Agree (A) 3 point
Disagree (D) 2 point
Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point

Validation/Reliability of the Instrument

The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validities through 3 experts in research methodology and evaluation. A reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained from a test retest sample of 120 respondents through a pilot study carried out within an interval of two weeks.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered to respondents during the working days of the week and hundred percent return rate was recorded.

Data Analysis

The t-test statistic was employed for analyzing the data collected

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Differences between Attitude of Female Undergraduates and Dynamism of Fashion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-table</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>1.960</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamism</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that calculated value of the ‘t’ (t-cal = 5.27) is greater than the table value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. This is a clear indication that there is significant difference between the Attitude of female undergraduate students of the university and the dynamism of fashion.

Table 2: Differences between the Clothing of Female Undergraduates and the perception of the Beholders
From Table 2, it can be seen that calculated value of the ‘t’ (t-cal = 0.65) is less than the table value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and 398 degree of freedom. This is clear indication that there is no significant difference between the clothing of female undergraduates of the university and the perception of the beholders.

Table 3: Differences between the Perception of Female Undergraduate about Fashion and the Perception of their Beholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-table</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clothings</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>1.960</td>
<td>Ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beholder perception</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 3, it is obvious that calculated value of the ‘t’ (t-cal = 0.66) is less than the value of the table value (1.960) at 0.05 level of significance and 398 degree of freedom. This is an evidence that there is no significant difference between the perception of female undergraduate about fashion and the perception of the beholders about the so called fashion of the female undergraduate of the university.

**Conclusion**

This study has considered Dynamism of Fashion among Female Undergraduates in the University and the effect in the sight of the beholders. Female undergraduates who must embrace the fashion culture should do so modestly and moderately. They should remember that self-confidence and satisfaction in life deepened much more than looking good. Although physical beauty may attract more attention, many people still respect persons who display modest qualities in their fashion practice. Provocative and negligible manner of fashion practice should be ruled out, a person’s worth should not only depend on the outer packaging but also reflect the inner value. Appearance at all times should complement one’s personality.

Based on the findings, it is therefore concluded that female undergraduates’ fashion practice has a negative effect in the sight of the beholders. Hence, the following recommendations were made.

**Recommendations**

i. The university authority should incorporate elements of good clothing norms to students, right from
the first year.

ii. There should be an intermittent awareness seminar on good clothing culture and appreciation for students in the university.

References


Dixic M. (2004): “Modesty Matters” in high way Portland, Oregon. 9 (7-4)


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