



## **Exposure to Abusive Families As A Correlate Of Indecent Dressing Among Adolescents In Tertiary Institutions In Enugu State, Nigeria**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the relationship between exposure to abusive families and indecent dressing among adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state using correlation survey design. The population for the study consists of all 4,973 undergraduates (in 200 and 300 level) in Enugu state tertiary institutions (2020/2021 academic session). The sample for this study was 375 undergraduates (211 females and 164 males). Three different instruments were used for data collection namely: Unstructured interview schedule with selected undergraduates, two different researcher developed questionnaire, one on indecent dressing titled “IDA” and the other on abusive families and indecent dressing titled “AFIDA”. The instruments were validated by three experts and subjected to test of internal consistency using Cronbach alpha which yielded coefficient of 0.78 for “IDA” and 0.80 for “AFIDA” respectively. Frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and t-test to test the null hypotheses. The results of the study revealed among others that indecent dressing is to a high extent common among adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state. The researchers recommend that parents should embrace positive emotional skills, good social skills, adequate conflict management and resolution skills to take care of the lapses that hinders adequate and proper child rearing which are implicated in indecent dressing.

**Keywords:** Abusive families, indecent dressing and adolescents.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Man’s existence and survival on earth to a great extent is gratifying when some basic needs are met. These basic needs are termed physiological needs in Humanistic Psychology because man cannot do without them. Put in another way, a physiological need means survival needs experienced throughout one’s life span on a daily basis such as water, shelter, oxygen, sex, food, rest and clothing. Clothing entails a wide range of what a person wears for adornment like dress, scarf, hat, shoes, hairstyle and makeup. Clothing serves the function of providing covering to man against insect and/or animal bites as well as harsh weather, for beautification and of course to show case the rich culture in every ethnic group. Africans including Nigerians are custodians of culture. Nigeria is a country known to have cultures, values, norms and aspiration despite the different ethnic nationalities. With about 256 ethnic groups in existence in the country, each has its peculiar culture which includes modes of greeting, burial, housing, marriage and dressing among others. With regards to dressing the three major tribes in Nigeria namely Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba has their acceptable mode of dressing but recently in this era of digital technology, the 21<sup>st</sup> century adolescents due to hyper exposure to mass media and internet have

misconstrued knowledge and information that sees their societal standard and demands as obsolete, outdated and out of vogue or fashion and thus choose nudity (indecent dressing) to decent dressing. This research work is borne out of close observation of what the researchers see every day along the street, market places, schools, offices, social gatherings and in the church depicting total collapse of discipline and moral among all the sector involved in child upbringing (agents of socialization) beginning from the family, school, church and community.

Man was created by God in His own image and man was the only thing created by God that was endowed with intelligence to discern between what is good/right and bad/wrong. This simple truth shows that man should adorn themselves in modest apparel to show God's glory but today most adolescents have gone hell wire that they do not even consider the place, event and occasion where they dress indecently to. Erhunse (2019) showed support to the above statement as he argued that the endowment of mental ability on man expects him to cover his nakedness and not exposing it.

Indecent dressing is rebarbative and indeed an eyesore to any responsible person. Victims of indecent dressing are reprobates. How do we explain the fact that a normal person without any mental history or case will choose to move on the street naked? Indecent dressing connotes prostitution inclination, demon possessed, waywardness, lack of positive self esteem, irresponsibility, no regard for one's self concept, seducing desire, poor integrity and moral bankruptcy. Indecent dressing among adolescents is too bad that most times, it is difficult to discern between a normal and psychopathological person. Sincerely, indecent dressing is made to be a sign of mental retardation, traits of madness and not a dictate of normality but adolescence stage continues to pose a problematic stage because of their indulgence in all manner of social and behavioural vices.

Different authors and researchers have attempted various definitions of adolescents. Williams and Taccone (2021) explained adolescence as a stage in human development characterized by several emotional, physical and cognitive changes. They assert that it is a period in human growth that occurs between childhood and adulthood with the age range from about 10 to 21 years. Inyang (2022) defined adolescence as a period of increased risk-taking that demands parental attention. Fletcher (2016) noted that adolescence is a dynamically evolving theoretical construct informed through physiologic, psychosocial, temporal and cultural lenses. Stehlik (2018) view adolescence as a period of biological, cognitive and social changes. Biologically, Stehlik noted that adolescence stage is physical transition depicted by the onset of puberty and termination of physical growth; cognition wise as changes in the ability to think abstractly and in different dimensions and socially as a period of preparation for adult roles.

In every stage of an individual, there are problems which he/she must come across and they need to be solved for that individuals well being and all-round proper development. Adolescence is not an exemption. There are developmental problems which must be taken care of during the transition from childhood to adulthood. Developmental task simply means appropriate behaviour patterns and essential skills an individual is expected to acquire and exhibit at a particular stage of development in life. Some of the developmental tasks of adolescents as noted by Havighurst (1952) include: Adjustment to a new physical sense of self, cognitive or intellectual adjustment, development of expanded verbal skills, personal sense of identity, independence from parents, management of sexuality, personal value system and adaptation to the society and the world at large. Adolescents in adjusting to the society and the world at large encounter challenges ranging from peer relationship, peer acceptance, acceptance by colleagues in place of work among others. This is where most adolescents imitate and model indecent dressing from role models simply to belong and be accepted as Igbo adage says "If you cannot beat them, you join them". Of course in peer association/relationship, a person's acceptance is based on total compliance to the behavioural and social standard of the group.

Several authors and researchers have attempted definition of indecent dressing according to their various perspectives. Okafor and Uwalaka (2021) explained indecent dressing as one that violates religious and societal standards, sexually captivating, indiscipline mode of dressing marked by translucent clothes that exposes critical parts of human body meant to be covered and guided jealously. Oluwadare, Otunaiya and

Opeoluwa (2020) opined that indecent dressing is any dressing that erodes societal standard. Olorunda and Alayande (2018) noted that indecent dressing implies indecorous and arousing way of dressing contradictory to societal standard. Mohammed (2018) asserts that indecent dressing means intentionally disclosure of sensitive part of one's body to the public in contrast to societal norms and values.

From the fore-going definitions/explanations of indecent dressing the researchers wish to state that societal values and norms remains the criteria for establishing what is termed indecent dressing. The researchers in the context of this research work explains indecent dressing as unreasonable, profligate and charming mode of dressing antithetical to conventions or customs and parading it everywhere. This include perforated nose and ears with multiple ear rings, torn jean trousers and skirts, mini or short gowns and skirts, clothes that expose sensitive part of the bodies like laps, breast and buttocks, bewitching makeup (eyelashes and fingernails), dreadlock hairs and beards, colored hairs, wearing of inner shorts (tights) meant to serve as mini girdles for women with heavy hips as shorts and sagged trousers or low-waist among others.

Some researchers including Okafor et al (2021), Oluwadare et al (2020), Ibienetandu and Osondu (2020), Kwanuba, Sababa and Filgona (2020), A kpan (2018) and Olorunda etal (2018) have tried to explain indecent dressing using psychological designs like peer influence, parental upbringing, self concept, self image and self esteem. However, abusive family is another psychological construct that could be used to explain indecent dressing.

Some authors have varied opinion of abusive families. Okeke, Anene, Onyekwere, Umennabuikie and Chukwuemeka (2022) noted that an abusive family is one with features of conflict, violence, misunderstanding, quarrel, child abuse and neglect. Rudlin (2022) explained abusive home as one characterized by poor communication among members, regular misunderstanding, emotional or physical abuse among others. Rudlin further assert that in abusive homes, the parent often abuse their children and releases their negative emotions on them. Miller (2016) explained abusive families as one who are "a teensy bit messed up" to "ones who are crazy". Pamela (2022) observed that an abusive family is one that is mired in conflict, chaos, a lack of structure or indifference resulting in physical and emotional neglect of the children's needs. Pamela went further to explain that life in abusive family is emotionally tumultuous, tense relationships, secrecy is common and shouting is often the only means of communication.

The researchers in the context of this work explain abusive families as critical and tumultuous with complete absence of love, relationship, communication and understanding among members of the family. Also parental attention, control, care, direction, supervision, reproofing and correction is lacking in this type of family. Due to lack of parental discipline, victims of abusive families are mostly recalcitrant. An undeniable fact remains that where there is lack of parental guide and discipline to the children, they end up training themselves through any available means thus social media and peers' become their role models and teachers. Put in another way, when parents fail to train their children, alternative sources will do their parental duty for them.

Okeke and Anierobi (2020) supporting the above assertion stressed that our society is threatened if we refuse to raise our children the acceptable and Godly way. If that happens, we would have failed as parents. They emphasized that the interactions people have with their primary caregivers (parents and older siblings) have an everlasting impact upon their psychological and behavioural states. These caregivers are the one who are responsible for safety and protection, but even the slightest form of neglect can affect an individual's future. Whether the effect manifests into anti-social behaviour such as indecent dressing, troubled relationship or internal victimization, there exist a commonality between childhood bonds and adulthood behaviour.

It is against this background that this research work intends to investigate the relationship between exposure to abusive families and indecent dressing among adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria. The study is guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses to be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of indecent dressing among adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state?
2. To what extent do male adolescents differ from their female counterparts in indecent dressing?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between exposure to abusive families and indecent dressing among adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state.
2. Gender is not a significant factor in abusive families and indecent dressing among adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state.

### **METHODS**

Correlation survey design was adopted for this study. This type of design seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables (Nworgu, 2015). In this study, the researchers sought to investigate the predictive power of exposure to abusive families (independent variable) on indecent dressing (dependent variable) among adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria through self reporting/evaluation. 4 tertiary institutions in Enugu state were selected for the study using purposive sampling technique (1 Federal government owned, 2 state governments owned and 1 private owned). The population of the study comprised all 4,973 undergraduate students in 200 and 300 level (2020/2021 academic session) from the faculties of Education and Arts. Selection of subjects for the study was via administration of indecent dressing questionnaire. The sample for this study was 375 students (211 females and 164 males) who acknowledged indulgence in indecent dressing through self reporting as observed in their responses to the questionnaire items.

Three instruments were used for data collection namely:

1. Unstructured interview schedule with selected undergraduates from the chosen institutions for the study. This helped to elicit vital information on abusive families and indecent dressing and also served as a guide together with information from related literatures to the researchers' construction of the questionnaire for the study.
2. A researcher developed questionnaire on indecent dressing titled "Indecent Dressing among Adolescents" (IDA). This has 20 items and the respondents are required to tick either "Yes" or "No" as it affects them.
3. A researcher developed questionnaire on the exposure to abusive families as a correlate of indecent dressing titled "Abusive Families and Indecent Dressing among Adolescents" (AFIDA). This consist of 20 items structured on a 4-point likert fashion ranging from strongly agree, agree, disagree to strongly disagree.

Three experts in Education validate the instruments. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha with overall reliability coefficient of 0.78 for "IDA" and 0.80 for "AFIDA" respectively. Three trained research assistants were engaged for data collection.

Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation) were used to answer the research questions. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used in testing the null hypothesis 1 while null hypothesis 2 was tested using t-test.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on the Level of Indecent Dressing among Adolescents in Tertiary Institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria.**

Range of Scores	Extent of Indecent Dressing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0-30	Low	13	3.47%
31-60	Moderate	47	12.53%
61-100	High	315	84.00%
Total		375	100

Table 1 revealed 3.47% as low, 12.53% as moderate and 84.00 % being the extent of indecent dressing among adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Level of Indecent Dressing among Adolescents in Tertiary Institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria by Gender.**

Gender	N	X	SD	Av.Mean	Remark
Male	164	3.61	1.45	3.09	High
Female	211	3.63	1.29	3.11	High

Table 2 reveal an average mean scores of 3.09 and 3.11 for both male and female adolescents respectively which is above the average mean score of 2.50. This implies that indecent dressing is common among female adolescents as well as their male counterparts.

**Table 3: Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Analysis on Relationship Between Exposure to Abusive Families and Indecent Dressing.**

Variables	X	SD	N	Correlation Index r	SIG
Exposure to abusive families.	30.10	4.14	375	.248	0.002
Indecent dressing	28.35	6.26			

Results in table 3 above shows the score of 0.002 as the calculated significant (p) value which is lower than 0.05 alpha level of significance at correlation r value of .248. This shows a significant relationship between exposure to abusive families and indecent dressing. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no relationship between exposure to abusive families and indecent dressing among adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria is rejected and the alternative accepted.

**Table 4: Summary of t-test Analysis of Gender Differences in Exposure to Abusive Families and Indecent Dressing**

Group	N	X	SD	Df	Cal.t	Crit.t	P<0.05
Male	164	3.61	1.45	373	-0.14	1.960	NS
Female	211	3.63	1.29				

Table 4 shows that at 0.05 percent level of significance and 373 degree of freedom, the calculated t = -0.14 is less than the critical t= 1.960. Therefore, null hypothesis 2 was accepted and the researchers conclude that gender is not a significant factor in exposure to abusive families and indecent dressing among adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria. It means that both male and female adolescents who are victims of abusive families indulge in indecent dressing.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed that adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria were to a high extent victims of indecent dressing. This agrees with the findings of Mohammed (2018), Erhunse (2019) and Kwanuba et al (2020) that in recent times in Nigeria, indecent dressing is a social phenomenon common among youths. Kwanuba et al (2020) went further to associate the spread of indecent dressing among adolescents to that of Covid-19 virus. Ibiyetandu et al (2020) assert that despite the decent culture in African society including Enugu state, Nigeria, present generation has diverted from the legacies of our great heroes. Olorunda et al (2018) observed prevalence of indecent dressing among youths in Nigeria which has already become the feature of their dress pattern.

The findings of the study showed that gender is not a significant factor in exposure to abusive families and indecent dressing. Both male and female adolescents were found to be caught in this trap of social behaviour. This finding however disagrees with those of Kwanuba et al (2020) and Erhunse (2019) who opined that girls are more victims of indecent dressing than boys. On the other hand, Olorunda et al (2018) and Akpan (2018) agreed with the findings of this study as they observed that both male and female adolescents are both addicted to indecent dressing but in various patterns.

Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between exposure to abusive families and indecent dressing among adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria. The researchers wish to state their support to the above findings because when unhealthy patterns such as parental negligence, child neglect, child abuse, incessant quarreling, regular misunderstanding, chaos and anarchy among others become the standard in a family as typical of abusive families, the detrimental effect on the children are significant affecting their all round development and healthy behaviours. This aligns with the findings of Olorunda et al (2018) that the family has serious influence on a child's development and thus parental influence is implicated in indecent dressing. They argued that when right values, beliefs and attitudes are correctly laid for a child, he is more likely to grow into a healthy adult in all aspects of life including his/her mode of dressing. Okafor et al (2021) stressing the impact of home environment on a child's development noted that parental instructions, observations, practices and activities are vital for their children proper healthy and moral upbringing while absence of these results in unhealthy behaviours. Supporting the above findings, Ibiyetandi et al (2020) affirm that parents are one of the most important factors that influence dressing habit of adolescents as they are the role models expected to teach their children the acceptable societal standard dressing and on the other hand correct and discipline indecent dressing.

## CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

1. Indecent dressing is to a high extent prevalent among adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria.
2. The level or extent of indecent dressing among adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria does not vary with gender. Female adolescents as well as their male counterparts were found to be victims.
3. There is significant relationship between exposure to abusive homes and indecent dressing among adolescents in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers recommend as follows:

1. Parents are advised to put their homes in order and save the destinies of their children. Psychologically, by definition a family entails more than one person and such due to varied personality traits and tendencies, conflicts, misunderstandings and resentments are inevitable but this can still be properly handled for the interest of the family. Therefore parents should adopt positive emotional skills, good social skills, adequate conflict management and resolution skills to take care of

all the lapses that hinders adequate and proper child rearing which are implicated in indecent dressing.

2. Parents have failed in their duty of child upbringing entrusted into their hand by God. They should adhere strictly to the scriptures stated in Proverbs 23: 13-14; Proverbs 13: 24 and Proverbs 29: 17. They should give adequate parental training and upbringing to their children to inculcate strict discipline, good moral values and acceptable characters in them.
3. Parents should note that any child they fail to train properly will no doubt bring shame and reproach to the family. Indecent dressing is a bunch of shame and reproach. Parents are advised to desist from collaborating, associating, pampering or supporting indecent dressing. Mind the type of clothes you buy for or appraise for your children. An indecent dressed female adolescent is a shame and reproach waiting to explode because if she is not raped, she will be sexually molested, pregnant, afflicted with sexually transmitted diseases and thus destroyed. Also an indecent dressed male adolescent is a potential member of all manner of secret cult, bad gang ranging from robbery, kidnapping to cyber fraud among others.
4. The church should sit up to their moral training and not be like “Prophet Eli” in the scripture. They should reject without any reservation the entrance of indecent dressed persons into the church premises as well as church services. The security personnel attached to various churches should be empowered by the appropriate authority to execute and enforce such moral discipline.
5. The community leaders (traditional rulers, elders and chief cabinets) should sign into law with appropriate sanctions on indecent dressing. Violators should be dealt with accordingly without any fair treatment/consideration.
6. Authorities in tertiary institutions should publish openly in the students’ handbook and boldly display on a billboard at strategic positions preferably every major entrance (school gate) the dressing standard expected from any person entering into the campus. Monitoring force should be appointed and commissioned for execution.

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