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DRESSING CODE COMPLIANCE IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES ; A CASE STUDY OF IGBINEDION UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, OKADA

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Abstract

This paper evaluates the enforcement of dressing code in Igbinedion University Library, Okada. It reveals the effect on readers' concentration. Also, the justification for its introduction in a private initiative library was emphasized. The paper identifies ways of demanding compliance by the Librarians considering likely position posture of the affected students while suggestions were made to help reduce, if not curb indecent dressing that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the nations academic sector.

Key words: Dressing: Code: Compliance: Indecent: Enforcement: Library: Academics.

Introduction

A fundamental part of the problems that now exist in various higher institutions with morals and ethics, both in thought and practice is that contemporary experience is in certain respects radically different from that of the past. So far as morality is concerned, modern thinking tends to place emphasis on the idea of obligation as the core of morality. Little wonder then why Durkheim, the Sociologist, as reported by Baron et al (1991), said that 'moral rules are invested with a special authority by virtue of which they are obeyed simply because they command' and thereby we come to the notion of obligation. In his own view, Hare also quoted by Baron (1991) argued that the characteristic feature of moral rules and language is their imperative nature. Thus obligation to obey is again implied as the essential feature.

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Dressing Code Compliance in Academic Libraries

While following the same theme, Hartland – Swann also says that morals rules declare certain goals of conduct to be desirable or valuable in themselves, so that evaluation is involved. At this juncture, it is imperative to view the dressing code of conduct in the University Library as a desirable one since most of the readers are victims. In fact, the essence of this paper is to evaluate the level at which dressing code compliance is observed in the Igbinedion University.

This is necessary to emphasize the presence of moral rules and codes as part of the social fabric of a 'university' culture, and as one of the ways the culture expresses itself – as well as the diversity of these rules between (rather than within) cultures. Specifically, the study examined the establishment of rules governing dressing code, enforcement, compliance and opposition by the student readers as well as the moral justification of the rules.

Igbinedion University Library in Periscope

The Library dates back to November 1999, which occupies 4,256.97 square meters. It is made up of reading area, a store – room, the University Librarian's office, his Secretary's office and an open space that provides working area for about six library staff. Also a reprographic room exists within the complex.

The library collection is gradually increasing due to various accreditation exercises recently conducted. Also, a consistent policy of allocating funds for book purchases was also involved. Presently, the library has about 12,000 volumes of books and journals, and more than 80% of which are books and bound journals. Although it has so far not been possible to subscribe to any journal on a formal basis but issues of some 25 journals and other serials are occasionally received as donations. The collection is almost exhaustively made up of printed materials with limited item in non-print or electronic form (mainly in form of accompanying documents).

The College of Law Library popularly referred to as Okunozee Law Library situated on the premises of the College. It holds a vast collection of law

textbooks. The objectives of the Igbinedion University Library is to provide excellent information services, educational facilities for teaching –learning and research for both students and staff of the University. An Acting University Librarian heads the Library. A Graduate Assistant presently heads the Law Library. The library's acquisition and description of books is centralized. The staff strength is put at 17, which includes six professionals, one para-professional and ten supporting staff.

Dressing Code for Students in the University Lecture Rooms and Environment

It must be noted, however, that the action of the Librarian to maintain dressing code is guided by the rules concerning dressing code of conduct meant strictly for students while they are in the lecture hall, practical halls and the environments of the University. A brief look at the dressing code for students in the University according to the Igbinedion University, Okada Students' Information Handbook (2003) revealed the following:

“As the Igbinedion University, Okada is in its infant stage of progress, the University administration hereby enforces the **Dressing Code** for its students to achieve the supreme aim of the University to bring out ideal future citizens with high moral integrity and responsibilities. The University Administration takes the students into confidence that they will strictly adhere to the “Dressing Code of Conduct,” meant for them while they are in the lecture halls, practical halls and the environment of the University”.

Thus this study becomes imperative to measure the degree of compliance, reader's perception and their attitudes towards librarians while demanding compliance.

Before going to methodology let us attempt a cursory look at the theory of social influence. In many instances, our perceptions, attitudes, and actions are strongly affected by other persons, wither individually or collectively. In short our

behaviour and thoughts are very different from what they would be if we lived in total social isolation. The process through which others affect us in this manner is known as social influence.

Let us focus on several key aspects of social influence – the many ways in which our thoughts or actions are changed by others changes our thoughts or actions. First, we will consider conformity. This refers to instances in which individuals alter their behaviour in order to adhere to existing social norms – widely accepted ideas or rules indicating how people should behave in certain situations.

In contrast to conformity, a second major form of social influence – compliance – is exerted directly by individuals rather than by beliefs or norms. Compliance involves efforts by one person or authority to alter the behaviours of one or more others through direct requests or similar tactics. Many techniques for enhancing compliance - for increasing the likelihood that a target person will say yes – exist.

Finally, in a third form of social influence – obedience – one person / authority simply orders others to change their behaviour in specific ways. Usually, the persons who issue such orders have some means of enforcing submission to them – they hold power over those on the receiving end. Surprisingly, though, direct orders can sometimes be effective even when the persons who employ them actually have little or no authority over the recipients.

Hypotheses

1. Age of the respondents would not have any significant correlation with dressing code compliance.
2. Sex of the respondents would not have any significant correlation with dressing code compliance.
3. Unacceptable dressing in the library does not significantly affect readers' concentration.

4. Dressing code compliance does not have any significant effect on dressing culture of the students.
5. Students have no significant awareness of library user education.

Methodology

Due to the nature of the study, the test statistics adopted for the study was chi-square. **The Library Users' Questionnaire (LUQ)**, which was designed by the researcher based on personal observation as a Librarian and compliance officer of the library was used for this study. It was a two parts, close -ended questionnaire. Part 1 contained personal data of the respondent while Part 2 contained twenty items, which centered on implementation and implications of dressing code compliance in the University Library.

The researcher administered questionnaire personally with the assistance of Law Librarian and his assistants to the sampled population. The sampled population was allowed to respond to it after their reading time each day the administration lasted. Seventy - five (75) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the library users. Only sixty -two (62) were found usable out of the sixty - six (66) returned for consideration for analysis. Therefore, sixty - two (62) were treated for the purpose of this study.

Dressing Code Compliance in Academic Libraries

Analysis of Findings

Decision Rule

At 5% level of significance, $t_{\text{tabulated}}$ is = 26.296. Therefore, accept null hypothesis if $t_{\text{calculated}}$ is less than $t_{\text{tabulated}}$. And reject null hypothesis if $t_{\text{calculated}}$ is greater than $t_{\text{tabulated}}$.

Test statistics

	Influence of age on dress code compliance	Influence of sex on dress code compliance	Whether dress code compliance affects concentration	Whether there is need for dress code regulations	Whether students are aware of code regulations
Chi – Square ^{a,b}	14.290	43.484	19.677	16.065	
Asymp. Sig	.006	.000+	.001	.066	

- 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 12.4
- 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 10.3
- 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 6.2
- 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 7.8.

From the above table, with $t_{\text{calculated}}$ sat 14.290 having 4 as degree of freedom and $t_{\text{tabulated}}$ at 26.296 at 5% level of significance, it was observed that ages of the respondents did not significantly affect the compliance with dressing code in the University under study. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Both stale and new, old and young student indulge in indecent dressing on campus.

Also, the above table given the same level of significance,

$t_{\text{tabulated}}$ at 26.296 and $t_{\text{calculated}}$ at 43.484, the researcher observed that sex of the respondents have significant correlation with dressing code compliance in

Igbinedion University hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. The study further revealed that female students are more affected than their male counterparts. In fact, a call was made by the wife of Executive Governor of Oyo State, Her Excellency, Mrs. Mutiat Olayinka Ladoja that Federal Government should enact laws against indecent dressing to put a stop to the act by female students in higher institutions of learning all over the country. She argued that through formulation of such laws, sanity could be restored to higher institutions. She also encouraged fellow students to be at the vanguard of campaign against these vices.

Moreover, the above table shows that unacceptable dressing in the library does not significantly affect readers' concentration. This is revealed when t calculated put at 19.677 is compared with t tabulated put at 26.296 with 5% level of significance. This however falls within the acceptance region hence the hypothesis is acceptable.

In the same vein, with t tabulated at 26.296 and t calculated at 16.065 at 5% level of significance, the study revealed that dressing code regulation does not significantly improve the dressing culture of the readers. In fact, the unstructured interview conducted during the study indicated that parents do acquire some of these "so – called indecent wears" for their wards. Hence what is acceptable to parents and denying library users' access into the library can not easily discontinue guardians. Lecturers and other principal officers should be encouraged to be at the vanguard of campaign against such indecent act.

In the final note, at 5% level of significance, t tabulated at 26.296 and t calculated at 19.032, the study shows that students of Igbinedion University, Okada, have no significant awareness of Library Users Education (LUE). Therefore, the null hypothesis, which says students have no significant awareness of Library Users Education (LUE), is accepted.

Summary and Conclusion

Summarily, the study revealed that dressing code enforcement in the library is a welcome idea in Igbinedion University Library, Okada. Also, any libraries that wish to enforce dressing code must equally put in place a good user education to adequately educate the reading populace.

In conclusion, therefore, the study confirmed the feelings of the researcher that male readers are not as blatant as female readers in the fashion stakes. While some library users viewed the neck deep V – shape cut on ladies blouse as something that makes the viewer wonder what little surprise they have in store and feel it is nice to leave something to the imagination, others concluded that it is not a pleasant view. The researcher equally opined that any top meant to be sexy or that makes the viewer feel like pulling your top back up an inch or more does not give you a tidy look hence should not be displayed in and around the library environment. In my own view, this will prevent the cases of related anti-social act (such as raping) in the library because there is a danger in bad dressing. Little wonder then why a ban on all forms of provocative dresses that revealed lighter parts of the students to curb sexual harassment on campus was announced on broadcast media by authority of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba – Akoko, Ondo State on Friday, 12th September, 2003.

Finally, I wish to state clearly that the much – needed social influence would be achieved if both the library users and library staff embrace conformity, compliance and obedience in their efforts toward enforcement of dressing code of conduct in the university library. Consequently, frequent arguments and misunderstanding ensuing from the ways librarians demand compliance would reduce to barest minimum.

Mention must be made that the multiple request method is effective. The researchers hereby recommend for the librarians to begin with a small initial request and then, when it is accepted, shift to a larger one but in quick succession too.

Recommendation

Karlin (1967) opines that individuals learn a culture as the result of their belonging to some particular society, and it constitutes that part of learned behaviour that is shared with others. In his own view, O’Kane (1994) corroborated this by saying culture is learned behaviour. It is not inborn, it must be distinguished from innate forms of behaviour, which are transmitted through heredity. He says culture is made up of those things people have learned to make, to do, or to believe. Hence, if we say new students learnt the act of indecent dressing from stale students is not over statement.

From the above we can deduce that indecent dressing among scholars nowadays is an imported culture. Therefore, in order to reduce the spate of uncontrolled dressing which is alarming and in fact one of the most critical issues of our time, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Tougher sanctions should be placed on the students with the consent of the parents and guardians. For instance, the use of jumper and other revealing dresses should be abolished within the university community (dormitory inclusive)
- Abuse of the use of cosmetics among female students should be discouraged while erring students must be severely punished
- Proper Freshers’ orientation must be conducted for at least one week. Both staff and students must be encouraged to attend.
- Routine classroom checks should be conducted by the compliance officers of various Colleges of the H.O.D. or Hall Warden just as the case may be, to identify and punish non-conformists. Even, lecturers that harbour such students should be punished as well.
- Parents and Guardians should form themselves into a Consultative Forum to discuss well-being of their wards. Also, oath of allegiance to people/decent dressing must be jointly signed and endorsed by each student and parents respectively.

Dressing Code Compliance in Academic Libraries

- Mention must be made too, that some students dress in an indecent way due to too much heat in the library. This is caused by poor ventilation. The library management is hereby advised to do something in this regard as a matter of exigency to alleviate readers suffering and to command their conformity to rules guiding the use of the library.
- Finally, all students must promise their unalloyed support for the upliftment of the ethics of the institution from time to time.

According to Solomon (1972), ethics are discernable objective rules and/or goals for human conduct. I hereby wish to submit that dressing code compliance is a necessity for any library. That is, what must be what could not possibly be otherwise. Library users should wear clothes that enhance their looks but that are not outrageous or immodest.

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