

## Moral Decadence among University of Ilorin Students; Dress Code as a Question

<sup>1</sup>Abdulwahab Rafiu, (Ph.D); <sup>2</sup>Eniola. K. Ola-Alani, (Ph. D);

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Lawal, Musibau Adebayo (Associate Professor);

<sup>4</sup>Opara, Moses Chibueze

<sup>1,2</sup> Department of Adult and Primary Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

<sup>3,4</sup> Department of Arts Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

**Abstract:** The study used the dress code as a question to examine the degree of moral decadence among University of Ilorin students. Two research questions and two hypotheses were presented in the study, which used a descriptive survey research design. 160 students were chosen at random from four departments within the Faculty of Education, making up the study's population. A researcher's-designed questionnaire titled "Moral Decadence among University of Ilorin Students" (MDUIS) was employed to gather data. Two specialists in childhood education and psychology, respectively, evaluated the instrument's validity, and the Cronbach Alpha reliability method produced an index of 0.69. The study issues were addressed using mean and standard deviation, and the hypotheses were tested using Chi-Square. The findings revealed there is average level of indecent dressing among the students, and there is positive influence of dress code in curbing the menace of indecent dressing among students. It was also revealed that, there was significant difference in the level of indecent dressing on the basis of gender and there was no significant difference in the level of indecent dressing based on departments. It was recommended that decent dressing should be made part of the teaching so as to instill in the students, good moral standard, dress code act should be continuously maintained on the campus so it can be used as an avenue for curbing the menace of indecent dressing among the students in our tertiary institutions. Moreover, female lecturers should work hands-in-hands so as to map out strategies they can use in reducing level of indecency among female students, and the use of dress code in curbing the menace of indecent dressing among the students should not be departmental bias.

**Keywords:** Moral Decadence, Dress Code, Menace, Indecency, Decency

## Introduction

Nigeria finds itself at an important juncture in its history as it transitions resolutely into the twenty-first century. It is imperative that we, with a profound sense of responsibility, contemplate the existence of our nation. Nigeria is a country boasting a population of approximately eighty million individuals hailing from diverse socio-ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Despite having celebrated 63 years of political independence, Nigeria remains in its infancy concerning civilization and development. This nation is richly endowed with both human and material resources, yet it grapples with underdevelopment. The question that arises is: what is responsible for our nation's stagnation? Extensive research indicates that corruption, pervasive in both low and high levels of society, stands as the primary culprit. Corruption manifests even in secondary schools, where moral decay is evident. Indeed, Nigeria's moral values have deteriorated significantly, reaching an alarming low. Immorality now permeates our society to such an extent that the president has officially labeled Nigeria as a corrupt nation. Among the youth, particularly in secondary schools, corrupt practices are distressingly prevalent.

Seeing how morally bankrupt today's youth are is astounding. Particularly among the new generation, our society's moral, social, and educational standards have been severely eroded (Chima, 2023). Since society seems to have conflated acceptable and unacceptable, the question of moral degradation in our universities is increasingly controversial. Moral behaviour is the attribute of one's conduct and behaviour that promotes good behaviour and equitable interactions, according to Ugwu (2022). According to Muraino and Ugwumba (2024), morals comprise a communal adherence of particular thoughts, principles, behaviours, norms, and standards that are thought to be morally upright and culturally desirable. Additionally, Gert (2022) makes a distinction amongst obligatory and observational notions of virtue. According to the imperative description, decency ought to embrace a standard for behaviour that is recognised by community as a behavioural guide, whereas the descriptive definition sees morality as a set of rules established by any group, including society. Morality is essentially a collection of rules of behaviour that are formed by a nation, society, or organization and embraced by its citizens.

Since corrupt behaviour has a negative effect on the nation at large, it is a problem of society, and all society works hard to stop it from propagating. Ihuoma (2025) correctly notes that a civilisation that does not stop unacceptable conduct is doomed to fail. Anything that goes or behaviour that goes against cultural standards and laws is considered moral degeneration since it represents a basic conflict with the principles of that culture. According to some definitions, it is disruptive behaviour that goes against accepted standards of conduct. According to Rogers (2023), failure to comply brought on by pressure from peers, family upbringing, or external factors is considered moral degeneration. Parents who act in a disorderly way run a danger of teaching opinions like these in the children they raise, and some of them give in to rebellion because they are culpable or have the moral strength to enforce discipline.

Moreover, Afuye (2023) outlines a number of unacceptable practices in Nigerian universities, such as misuse of drugs, filthy fashion choices, sex assault, cult membership, teen pregnancy, sex trafficking, sexual misconduct, selling grades, protests by students, and more. According to Idensi (2024), decay in morality is a worldwide problem that exists in a variety of cultures and social groups, including both industrialised and developing nations. Bodily harm, physical assault, drug abuse, violence in schools, and murder are examples of immoral behaviours that have become common among young people and children all around the world.

In order to do the present study, we will prioritise one aspect of immorality among students, specifically addressing the issue of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students. Indecent dressing is a prevalent trend among Nigerian higher education students. The way these students, particularly females, dress provocatively leaves much to be desired. Male students exhibit a different pattern of dress, often appearing disheveled and unattractive with unkempt hair. Indecent dressing is commonly referred to as "dress to kill" among undergraduate students (Banduru, 2023). Dressing is an integral part of culture, defining tribal or ethnic identity (Banduru, 2023). However, indecent dressing has emerged as a significant challenge in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Indecent dressing can be defined as the wearing of clothing that is unsuitable for a particular occasion or situation. It is indecent to expose one's body in society. It is evident that all tertiary institutions in Nigeria grapple with issues related to indecent dressing among both male and female students. Indecent dressing disrupts and distracts, encompassing attire such as spaghetti blouses, sleeveless tops, miniskirts, body-hugging outfits, visible tattoos, sagging pants, excessive makeup, and body piercings. Recognizing its adverse effects, various measures have been implemented to combat this problem, including the introduction of dress codes and legislation aimed at regulating student attire (Adebayo, 2024). These measures are based on societal norms governing clothing behavior within a group, such as folkways and customs (Olori, 2025).

Ozobo (2023) affirms that clothing serves essential functions, including protecting the body and reflecting one's desired appearance and cultural identity. Clothes contribute to a person's overall image and can convey information about culture and societal norms. In many cultures, clothing choices are governed by codes of conduct that dictate appropriate public attire. Exposure of breasts, for instance, is generally frowned upon.

Indecent dressing occurs when attire has a provocative or stimulating impact on those who view it, leading to arousal or discomfort (Egwim, 2024). While there is no universally accepted dress code, clothing serves definable purposes regardless of one's country or region. Clothing is a reflection of culture and helps establish tribal or ethnic identity. In addition to cultural identity, clothing serves ornamental and protective functions, shielding the body from harsh weather conditions and covering

intimate body parts (Omede, 2025). Unfortunately, many students on Nigerian campuses now exhibit indecent dressing as their predominant fashion choice.

For instance, at the University of Abuja, as in the case of the University of Ilorin, rules were established specifying that clothing must cover sensitive body parts such as the breasts, stomach, navel, and bare chest. Despite these rules, students on these campuses persist in dressing indecently, prompting the introduction of the dress code act by Professor Abdul Ganiyu Ambali, the former Vice Chancellor, in 2016.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Moral degradation is the root cause of obscene attire, which is undesirable and unpleasant in relation to the social setting or community where such behaviour is practiced. Everyone in the nation must work together and pay attention to this case in order to combat it, and this has been observed that all tertiary institutions in Nigeria, with University of Ilorin not excluded are struggling with indecent dressing for male and female. Indecent dressing is the mode of dressing or appearance that is disruptive and distractive, which includes spaghetti blouse, armless, miniskirts, body hug, rosy chicks, and tattoo, sagging, color hair, light makeup, and body piercing. Considering its adverse effects, many efforts have been made to curb the menace which includes the introduction of dressing code and legislation to checkmate students.

Dress reflects the place of Nigerian in the international community; Since the beginning of time, individuals of every civilisation have donned dresses; every society has its own distinctive style of dress. Fashion style is regarded as a sign that conveys meaning similarly to how words do. Nigerian corporate dress culture is a semiotic symbol from linguistic and anthropological perspectives. It is a symbol of a country's identity. Corporate culture encourages a feeling of identity, unites people in various backgrounds, and supports Nigeria's rich cultural legacy.

Nigerian is creative and talented in changing fashions and dressing according to occasion, dress culture promotes unity in diversity, discipline, and promote cultural heritage.

The researcher takes into account several school-related factors as tools that might alter the degree of inappropriate attire among University of Ilorin students in order to determine the cause and effect of this behaviour. Undergraduate students' sense of style is said to be influenced by school characteristics such as gender, department, and level. Therefore, the school factor continues to be an important issue that has to be researched and well controlled to improve undergraduate indecent dressings. This forms the thrust of this study to examine level of indecent dressing and the effects of dress codes in curbing the menace of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the level of moral decadence in terms of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students. This study therefore seeks to:

- Find out the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students.
- Investigate the influence of dress code in curbing indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students.
- Ascertain whether there is significant difference in the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students based on gender.
- Ascertain whether there is significant difference in the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students based on department.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions are raised to guide the study

- What is the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students?
- What is the influence of dress code in curbing indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students?

### **Research Hypotheses**

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students based on gender.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students based on department.

### **Methodology**

The study concentrated on dress code and moral degeneration among University of Ilorin students. It used a descriptive survey study design, asking participants for their perspectives. This research design was chosen because the goal of the study is to determine the extent of indecent attire among students and how dress codes can help reduce the problem.

Undergraduate students from the University of Ilorin's faculties served as the study population, with the primary focus being on students from the Faculty of Education. From four of the faculty's nine departments; Arts Education, Sciences Education, Social Sciences Education, and Adult and Primary Education, a sample of 160 students was chosen at random. As a result, 160 undergraduate students from all four departments made up the sample used for the study.

This study used a self-made questionnaire called "Moral Decadence among University of Ilorin Students" (MDUIS) as its tool. The survey consisted of two closed-ended sections, A and B. The demographic data of the respondents, including their department and gender, is included in section A. In contrast, section B included 20 questions about the degree of indecent dressing and how dress codes can reduce it. The tool included a four-point Likert scale for responses, with SA standing for

"strongly agree," A for "agree," D for "disagree," and SD for "strongly disagree." Experts in the fields of psychology and childhood education verified the research tool, and the Cronbach's Alpha reliability method was used to determine the instrument's reliability; the results showed a value of 0.69. Chi-Square was used to evaluate the two hypotheses that were developed after the data was analysed using inferential statistics and descriptive statistics for the research questions posed.

## Results

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyse the data (SPSS 23.0). The findings' outcomes are displayed below:

**Table 1: Demographical Data of the Respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	72	45.0
	Female	88	55.0
	<b>Total</b>	160	100
Department	Adult and Primary Edu	40	25.0
	Arts Edu	40	25.0
	Sciences Edu	40	25.0
	Social Sciences Edu	40	25.0
	<b>Total</b>	160	100

Table 1 revealed that of the 160 participants in this study, 88 (55.0%) were female students and 72

(45.0%) were male students. This suggests that female students made up the majority of responders. Furthermore, it was discovered that 40 students were equally chosen from each of the departments sampled out of the 60 responses. Subsequently, it was concluded that the respondents were evenly selected among the four departments that were sampled.

## Research Questions

Two research questions were generated, and were answered with the use of mean and standard deviation.

**Question 1:** What is the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students?

The total responses from all of the students (respondents) who provided continuous data were transformed to discrete data and tallied, with a minimum of 10, a maximum of 40, and a range of 30 in order to determine the degree of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students. The cut-off score was 10, and this was

divided into three categories: Low, Average, and High. Students at the University of Ilorin were classified as having low, average, and high levels of indecent dressing based on scores between 10 and 20, 21 and 30, and 31 and 40. The table below displays the outcome.

**Table 2: Summary of the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students**

Ranges	f	%	Remarks
10 – 20	49	30.6%	Low
21 – 30	81	50.6%	Average
31 – 40	30	18.8%	High

The above table revealed that 49 (30.6%) of the total response showed low level, 81 (50.6%) of the total response showed average level, while 30 (18.8%) of the total response showed high level. This revealed that majority (50.6%) of the total response from the students showed that there is average level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students.

**Question 2:** What is the influence of dress code in curbing the menace of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students?

To determine the impact of the dress code on reducing the threat of indecent attire among University of Ilorin students, the sum of the continuous data responses from each respondent was converted to discrete data and had a minimum of 10, a maximum of 40, and a range of 30. This fell into one of two categories: either positive or negative influence. The cut-off was 15. Scores ranging from 10 to 25 and 26 to 40 were classified as both positive and negative effects of the clothing code on reducing the threat of indecent attire among students at the University of Ilorin. The table that follows displays the outcome.

**Table 3: Summary of the influence of dress code in curbing the menace of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students**

Ranges	f	%	Remarks
10 – 25	58	36.3%	Negative
26 – 40	102	63.7%	Positive

The above table revealed that 58 (36.3%) of the total response showed negative influence, while 102 (63.7%) of the total response showed positive influence. This revealed that majority (63.7%) of the total response from the students showed positive influence of dress code on the level of indecent dressing. This can therefore be concluded that there is positive influence of dress code in curbing the menace of indecent dress among University of Ilorin students.

### Testing the Hypotheses

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students based on gender.

**Table 4: Summary table showing significant difference in the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students based on gender**

		Level of Indecent Dressing							
		Low	Average	High	Total	df	Value	Sig.	Decision
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	14	39	19	72	2	1.14	.03	Significant
	<b>Female</b>	35	42	11	88	2			
<b>Total</b>		<b>49</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>1</b>			

From table 4 above, result shows cal. value = 1.14, degree of freedom (2). The null hypothesis is rejected since the significant value of 0.03 is less than 0.05 of Alpha level. This means that, there is gender difference in the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students. It was shown from the above table that, the level of indecent dressing among female students is higher than their female counterparts. Therefore, the null hypothesis above which stated that there is no significant difference in the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students based on gender is thereby rejected.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students based on department.

**Table 5: Summary table showing significant difference in the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students based on department**

		Level of Indecent Dressing							
		Low	Average	High	Total	df	Value	Sig	Decision
<b>Department s</b>	<b>APE</b>	08	20	12	40	2	0.83	.27	Not Significant
	<b>Arts</b>	18	21	01	40	2			
	<b>Science</b>	12	18	10	40	2			
	<b>Social/Sc</b>	11	22	07	40	2			
<b>Total</b>		<b>49</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>1</b>			

The result from table 5 above is cal. value = 0.83, degree of freedom (2). Since the significant value of 0.27 is higher than the Alpha threshold of 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that the degree of indecent clothing among University of Ilorin students is not determined by departments. The aforementioned data demonstrated that students exhibited the same degree of indecent dressing regardless of their department. Therefore, the null hypothesis above which stated that there is no significant difference in the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students based on departments is thereby accepted.

### Summary of Findings

According to the aforementioned findings,

- There is average level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students.
- There is positive influence of dress code in curbing the menace of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students.
- There is significant difference in the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students based on gender.
- There is no significant difference in the level of indecent dressing among University of Ilorin students based on departments.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings from the study indicate that University of Ilorin students exhibit an average level of indecent dressing. The respondents' collective responses reveal this average level of indecent dressing among the student body, suggesting that the issue of moral decadence, particularly in terms of inappropriate attire, is being effectively managed by the school authorities. This management is attributed to various strategies implemented by the school administration to uphold moral standards among both students and lecturers on campus. This perspective aligns with the viewpoint expressed by Banduru (2023), who emphasized that clothing is an integral part of a culture and serves to define one's tribal or ethnic identity. The challenge of indecent dressing has become prominent in Nigerian tertiary institutions, a concern supported by Ihuoma (2025), who warned that a society failing to address immoral practices would face dire consequences. Moral decadence, defined as any behavior or action that contravenes societal norms and values, poses a threat to the moral fabric of society.

Additionally, the results of the study indicate that enforcing a dress code has a beneficial effect on reducing inappropriate attire among University of Ilorin students. The comment from all of the respondents emphasises this beneficial effect, supporting the idea that the school administration efficiently controls moral degeneration, including indecent attire. This achievement is credited to initiatives

like the dress code guideline implemented by the school administration to curb immorality and uphold moral standards among instructors and students on campus. This viewpoint supports the claim expressed by Adebayo (2023), who underlined the significance of following recognised clothing codes as acceptable and proper. Similar dress code policies were also reported by Olori (2025) at the University of Ilorin and the University of Abuja, while some students on both schools continue to dress indecently. Professor Abdul Ganiyu Ambali, the previous vice chancellor, therefore introduced the dress code act in 2016 as an essential move to solve this issue.

According to the survey, there is a notable gender-based variation in the degree of indecent attire among University of Ilorin students. Indecent dressing among students is influenced by gender, according to the statistical analysis, which shows a significance value of 0.03 (below the alpha value of 0.05). In a detailed analysis, this supports the notion that a student's gender influences their propensity for moral degeneration. In particular, compared to their male peers, female students appear to be more immoral in terms of indecent attire, according to the report. Therefore, it can be said that there is a notable gender difference in the degree of indecent clothing among University of Ilorin students.

The results, however, show that there is no discernible variation in the degree of indecent clothing among University of Ilorin students according to their department. The statistical analysis indicates that the department of study has no appreciable effect on students' moral deterioration in terms of indecent dressing, with a significance value of 0.27 (higher than the alpha value of 0.05). This suggests that the degree of immorality in attire is constant across different academic fields. Consequently, it can be said that there is no discernible variation in the degree of indecent attire among University of Ilorin students according to their department.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the aforementioned, it was determined that the average degree of indecent attire among University of Ilorin students is present, and that the dress code has a beneficial impact on reducing the threat of indecent attire among students. Additionally, the results showed that while the degree of immorality among University of Ilorin students in all departments is the same, the gender of the students affects their degree of indecent dressing.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are proffer so as to establish means by which immorality among the students can be minimized;

- Decent dressing should be made part of the curricular prescription so as to instill in the students, good moral and ethical standard.
- In order to reduce the threat of students in our postsecondary institutions dressing indecently, the dress code act should be consistently upheld on campus.

- Female lecturers should work hands-in-hands and map out strategies they can use in reducing level of indecency among female students.
- Enforcing the dress code should be done without bias or discrimination in order to reduce the threat of students dressing indecently.

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