Psychological Effects of Professional Dress Code of Students on their Studies and Behaviour at Delta State University, Abraka

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Abstract

The study examined the psychological effects of the professional dress code of students on their studies and behavior at Delta State University, Abraka. Two (2) research questions were raised and two (2) null hypotheses were formulated in the study. A survey design was adopted for this study. The study's population comprised all students and lecturers at Delta State University, Abraka. The population of the study is 21512 comprising 21512 students and 2745 lecturers in Delta State University, Abraka. The study sampled 1,000 respondents from Delta State University, Abraka, comprising 950 undergraduate students and 50 staff members. At the first stage, stratified random sampling method was used to select 950 undergraduate students and 50 staff to participate in the study. Secondly, a simple random sampling technique (balloting) was used to select respondents. This ensured everyone had an equal chance of being selected to respond to the instrument and reduced sampling bias. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Psychological Effects

of Professional Dress Code of Students on their Studies and Behavior Questionnaire (PEPDCSSBQ). The instrument was administered by the researcher and two research assistants familiar with the study area. 1000 copies of the questionnaire were administered and were all retrieved and used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while Chi-square statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The choice of mean to answer research questions is because the data collected was on an interval scale. On the other hand, using chi-square was because the study also sought to determine whether professional dress codes exert significant effects on students' studies and behavior. From the findings, it was concluded that the professional dress code has positive and negative psychological effects on students' studies and behaviour at Delta State University, Abraka. Therefore, it recommended that professional dress code is encouraged to curb indecency but the university should develop inclusive and flexible dress code policies that accommodate cultural and religious differences. Provide affordable options and resources for students from low-income backgrounds.

Keywords: *Psychological Effects, Professional Dress Code, Studies and Behavior, Nigeria*

Introduction

Education is internationally regarded as a critical element and foundation of national growth, prompting governments to promote inclusive education. Yet, contemporary fashion trends have undermined this aspiration, as exemplified by the pervasive inappropriate dressing among Delta State University, Abraka students. This phenomenon has spread throughout Nigerian higher education institutions, including Delta State University, Abraka, requiring urgent action to protect vulnerable students and maintain a conducive learning environment (Ola, 2023). Yahaya (2023) posits that decent dressing is essential in human life as it commands respect and preserves dignity. For students, modest attire earns respect from lecturers, guardians, and classmates while protecting them from potential harm and academic failure.

Indecent dressing, as Oyeleye (2022) notes, involves the intentional display of one's body, violating cultural and societal standards. This behaviour contributes to moral decadence, characterised by a decline in

societal moral values. Adeboye (2021) characterised indecent dressing as attire inappropriate for a specific context or occasion, clarifying that nudity in private settings, such as bathrooms or bedrooms, does not constitute indecency. Conversely, Adebayo (2023) defined indecent dressing as attire likely to shock or offends. Egwim (2020) described it as a deliberate display of typically concealed body parts, particularly among females.

Olori (2023) deemed such dressing provocative and morally unacceptable, reflecting societal moral decay. Nwagwu (2020) emphasised the need for students to reassess values and attitudes to make informed decisions. A dress code, governing attire in specific settings, promotes modesty and conformity to environmental norms. As the adage goes, 'dress dictates address.' University students must recognise the academic environment's expectations of decency, peace, and diligence. Rykrsmith (2022) indicates that attire significantly influences how others perceive us and our own mindset. Consequently, dressing in alignment with the desired image is crucial. Studies by Freeburg, Workman, and Lentz-Hee (2020) reveal that universities establish dress code policies to govern student appearance.

Adebayo (2023) emphasises the importance of upholding moral heritage in African society through adherence to dress codes, necessitating strong moral resolve. The benefits of dress codes include fostering discipline, preserving moral standards, minimising distractions, promoting classroom order, and instilling responsibility, decency, and character. Furthermore, dress codes prepare students for the professional realm by cultivating good dressing habits (Olori, 2023). The university emphasises the importance of modest and respectable attire. However, numerous stakeholders have expressed concerns regarding the prevalence of indecent dressing among students of both genders. Dressing extends beyond personal taste, comfort, and practicality. Students should consider the following criteria when choosing their attire: decency, social acceptability, affordability, and avoidance of distraction or disruption.

Unfortunately, many students emulate the urban fashion trend, characterized by sagging pants and skirts below the waist, and revealing undergarments. Some males sport braided hairstyles and wear single earrings. It is essential to recognise that such attire is unprofessional and unacceptable in professional settings (Adebayo, 2023). Developing students into capable professionals is a primary objective of universities. Achieving this requires addressing the implications of indecent dressing

on career prospects. Inappropriately dressed students, regardless of gender, may be perceived as lacking professionalism due to excessive jewellry or revealing attire. Discipline-specific dress codes can improve academic performance and behaviour among Nigerian undergraduates, ultimately preparing them for professional settings (Adebayo, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

The implementation of professional dress code policies in Nigerian undergraduate institutions has sparked debate and controversy, with some arguing that it restricts students' self-expression and autonomy, while others believe it promotes professionalism and discipline. However, there is limited research on the psychological effects of dress codes on undergraduate students' academic performance and behaviour in Nigeria. This study aims to investigate the impact of dress codes on students' academic performance, behaviour, and psychological well-being, with a focus on exploring the potential benefits and drawbacks of dress code policies in Delta State University, Abraka.

Purpose of the Study

1. To examine the psychological effects of professional dress code of students on their studies and behaviour at Delta State University, Abraka

2. To find out strategies to improve the professional dress code of students in their studies and behaviour at Delta State University, Abraka

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in the study:

1. What are the psychological effects of the professional dress code of students on their studies and behaviour at Delta State University, Abraka?

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2. What are the strategies to improve the professional dress code of students in their studies and behaviour at Delta State University, Abraka?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated in the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between the psychological effects of the professional dress code of students on their studies and behavior in Delta State University, Abraka.

2. There is no significant relationship between the strategies to improve the professional dress code of students in their studies and behaviour at Delta State University, Abraka.

Review

Theoretical framework

This study's theoretical framework is based on Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Self-Determination Theory(Deci & Ryan, 2000). Social Identity Theory (SIT) explains that individuals derive a sense of identity and belonging from group membership. Professional dress codes can influence group identity and social categorisation (Hogg & Vaughan, 2015). Students' perceptions of dress codes can impact their sense of belonging and identity within the academic institution. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that human behaviour is motivated by three innate psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Professional dress codes can impact students' autonomy and self-expression (Katz & Fodor, 2023). Students' perceptions of dress code can influence their motivation and engagement in academic activities.

Positive effects of professional dress code on students' academic studies and behaviour:

A study by Oyewole (2017) found that professional dress code had a positive impact on undergraduate students' academic performance, as it

promoted a sense of responsibility and professionalism. Oluwatobi (2018) found that professional dress codes reduced incidents of indiscipline and improved students' behaviour, as students were more mindful of their actions and appearance. A professional dress code motivates students to complete their studies as they look forward to wearing complete professional attire at graduation. It gives them a sense of pride as it distinguishes them from other students (Oyewole, 2017). The primary and secondary schools are known by specific and centralised uniforms worn by all. The university has multiple professional dress codes that create a sense of diversity and interconnectedness.

Adebayo (2023) asserted that the university administration perceived professionalism as a positive impact of the professional dress code on students. University administrators believe that a professional dress code promotes a sense of professionalism among students, preparing them for the workforce. Administrators perceive a professional dress code as a sign of respect for the university, its values, and its traditions. A professional dress code is seen as contributing to a more focused and respectful learning environment. Administrators believe that a professional dress code helps students develop a professional image, essential for their future careers.

While local community perceptions of student professional dress codes vary (Olori, 2023), research suggests it significantly impacts how students are perceived and treated. For instance, studies have shown that students who dress professionally are often viewed as more competent, responsible, and respectful. This can lead to increased confidence and self-esteem, as well as better relationships with teachers and peers. In the same vein, from the community perspective, the professional dress code is appreciated because it inspires children and younger persons in the community who associate certain dress codes with a profession.

However, there's also evidence to suggest that strict dress code policies can have negative consequences, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds or marginalized communities. Such policies can perpetuate socioeconomic disparities and reinforce negative stereotypes. Ultimately, the perception of local community members on the professional dress code of students depends on various factors, including cultural context, socioeconomic status, and personal values. While some

may view professional dress as essential for students' success, others may see it as restrictive or elitist (Oluwatobi, 2018).

According to Freeburg, Workman, and Lentz-Hee (2020), the perception of parents and guardians on the professional dress code of students varies. Many parents believe that a professional dress code prepares students for the workforce and helps them develop a professional mindset. Parents often view a professional dress code as a sign of respect for the educational institution, its values, and its traditions. In the same vein, they perceive it to promote discipline and responsibility i.e. some parents believe that a professional dress code promotes discipline and responsibility among students. Sequel, if the professional dress code is suited to the profession it becomes an identity for the students and a source of motivation.

Academic Performance: It results in improved focus and concentration. A professional dress code helps students focus on their studies, avoid distractions and increase their motivation. Dressing professionally can also boost students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning. Dressing professionally fosters a positive attitude towards learning and academic activities. More so, Students who dress professionally are more likely to manage their time effectively and prioritize their academic tasks. Professional dress code promotes self-discipline, which is essential for academic success (Katz & Fodor, 2023).

Behaviour

Reduced indiscipline: professional dress code can reduce incidents of indiscipline and misbehavior among students. Improved respect for authority: Students who dress professionally are more likely to show respect for their lecturers and other authority figures. Increased sense of responsibility: Dressing professionally can promote a sense of responsibility and accountability among students. Better interpersonal relationships: a professional dress code can improve students' interpersonal relationships with their peers and lecturers. Reduced bullying and harassment: Dressing professionally can reduce incidents of bullying and harassment among students (Rykrsmith, 2022).

Psychological Effects

a) Boosted self-esteem: Professional dress codes can enhance students' self-esteem and confidence.

b) Reduced anxiety and stress: Dressing professionally can reduce anxiety and stress related to academic activities.

c) Improved body language: Professional dress codes can promote positive body language and nonverbal communication.

d) Increased sense of belonging: Dressing professionally can foster a sense of belonging and identity among students.

e) Positive impact on mental health: Professional dress codes can have a positive impact on students' mental health and well-being (Rykrsmith, 2022).

Social Effects

Improved social skills: Professional dress code can improve students' social skills and ability to interact with others. Increased professionalism: Dressing professionally can promote a sense of professionalism and expectations. Better representation of the institution: Students who dress professionally can positively represent their institution and promote a good image. Increased respect from the community: Professional dress codes can earn students respect from the community and promote a positive image of the institution. Preparation for the workforce: Dressing professionally can prepare students for the workforce and promote a smooth transition from academia to industry (Katz & Fodor, 2023).

Social Cultural Dynamics

According to Ola (2023), Nigeria's socio-cultural dynamics play a significant role in shaping the perception of professional dress code among students. The country's cultural diversity, with over 250 ethnic groups, influences the way students dress and present themselves in academic settings. In Nigeria, traditional attire is often worn on special

occasions, and students may incorporate these traditional elements into their everyday dress code. For instance, the "Adire" and "Ankara" prints are commonly worn by students, reflecting their cultural heritage. In another development, according to Oluwatobi (2018), religion also plays a significant role in shaping the perception of professional dress code in Nigeria. For example, Muslim students may wear hijabs or abayas as part of their professional attire, while Christian students may wear modest clothing that reflects their faith. The influence of Western culture and globalisation has also impacted the perception of professional dress codes in Nigeria. Many students, particularly in urban areas, adopt Western-style clothing as a symbol of professionalism and modernity.

However, if the professional dress code attire is cultural it may engender emotional attachment and love. Oluwatobi (2018) asserted that incorporating cultural elements into professional dress code attire can indeed foster emotional attachment and love for learning among students. Wearing attire that reflects cultural heritage can instil a sense of pride and connection to one's roots. Cultural identity i.e. incorporating cultural elements into dress code attire can help students develop a stronger sense of cultural identity. When students see themselves reflected in the dress code attire, they may feel a greater sense of belonging to the educational institution.

Ethnographic Studies

Ethnographic studies have highlighted the complexities of dress code perceptions in Nigerian academic settings. For instance, a study among students at the University of Maiduguri revealed that exposure to foreign mass media content influenced their dress culture, with many students adopting Western-style clothing (Ahmed, 2020).

Negative effects of professional dress code of students on their Studies and Behavior

Adeyemo (2019) found that professional dress code had no significant impact on undergraduate students' academic performance, as students' motivation and interest in learning were not affected by their attire. Another study by Ajayi (2020) found that professional dress codes negatively impact students' behaviour, as some students felt restricted and uncomfortable in their attire, leading to decreased self-esteem and confidence. Some disciplines do not seem to have any known

professional dress code which could create an inferiority complex and depression for such students.

Rykrsmith (2022) opined that university administration perceived professionalism as a negative impact of professional dress code on students such as restriction of personal freedom for instance, some administrators acknowledge that a professional dress code may be perceived as restrictive to students' freedom and self-expression. They may recognise that a professional dress code may not be inclusive of diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The university administration expresses concerns about the practicality and fairness of enforcing a professional dress code. Some university administrations struggle to balance professionalism with students' desire for comfort and self-expression.Freeburg, Workman, and Lentz-Hee (2020) are of the view that parents perceived that professional dress code may be a restriction of personal expression. Parents and guardians feel that a professional dress code restricts their child's personal expression and creativity. They also perceived it to an additional financial burden. Parents may view a professional dress code as an additional financial burden, particularly if they are required to purchase specific attire. Parents and guardians believe that a professional dress code does not allow students to express their individuality and personal style (Rykrsmith, 2022). However, if the professional dress code fabric is foreign, it can potentially cause dissatisfaction among students. Students may be uncomfortable wearing fabrics they are not familiar with. They may have personal preferences for certain fabrics. Some students may have sensitive skin and wearing foreign fabrics can cause irritation or allergic reactions (Adeyemo, 2019).

Academic Performance

Restriction of self-expression: Professional dress code can limit students' ability to express them and showcase their personality. Uncomfortable attire: Students may feel uncomfortable in professional attire, leading to distractions and decreased focus. Financial burden: Professional dress code can impose an additional financial burden on students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. Cultural insensitivity: Professional

dress code may not accommodate cultural or religious differences, leading to feelings of exclusion. Decreased motivation: An overly restrictive dress code can lead to decreased motivation and enthusiasm for learning (Rykrsmith, 2022).

Behaviour

Rebellion and non-compliance: Students may rebel against the professional dress code, leading to non-compliance and disciplinary issues. Decreased autonomy: Professional dress codes can be seen as restrictive, leading to decreased autonomy and self-expression. Negative impact on mental health: Professional dress codes can negatively affect students' mental health, particularly those who feel uncomfortable or restricted. Stereotyping and stigma: Professional dress code can perpetuate stereotypes and stigma, particularly against students from certain cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds. Decreased creativity: Overly restrictive dress codes can stifle creativity and self-expression. Appearing dirty: Many students struggle to maintain the hygiene required by a constant professional dress code

Psychological Effects

Decreased self-esteem: Professional dress codes can negatively impact students' self-esteem, particularly those who feel uncomfortable or restricted. Increased anxiety and stress: Dressing professionally can increase anxiety and stress related to academic activities. Negative body image: Professional dress code can perpetuate negative body image and low self-esteem. Decreased sense of belonging: Professional dress code can lead to a decreased sense of belonging and identity among students. Negative impact on emotional well-being: Professional dress codes can hurt students' emotional well-being and mental health (Katz & Fodor, 2023; Rykrsmith, 2022).

Social Effects

Social segregation: Professional dress codes can perpetuate social segregation and exclusion. Decreased social skills: overly restrictive dress code can limit opportunities for socialisation and the development of social skills. Negative impact on relationships: Professional dress code can negatively impact relationships between students, lecturers, and

peers. Decreased diversity and inclusivity: Professional dress code can limit diversity and inclusivity, particularly if it does not accommodate cultural or religious differences. Negative impact on campus culture: Professional dress code can negatively impact campus culture and student life (Katz & Fodor, 2023).

Long-Term Effects Professional Dress Code

The long-term effects of professional dress code on students' academic journey and career preparedness can be significant (Katz & Fodor, 2023). Academic Journey

1. Improved discipline and responsibility: Wearing professional attire can instill a sense of discipline and responsibility in students, which can translate to other areas of their academic life.

2. Enhanced confidence and self-esteem: Dressing professionally can boost students' confidence and self-esteem, leading to improved academic performance and participation.

3. Better time management and organisation: Adhering to a professional dress code can help students develop better time management and organisation skills, as they learn to prioritise and plan their daily routines.

4. Increased respect for the educational institution: Wearing professional attire can demonstrate students' respect for the educational institution, its values, and its traditions.

Career Preparedness

1. Development of professional skills and habits: A professional dress code can help students develop essential professional skills and habits, such as attention to detail, punctuality, and respect for authority.

2. Enhanced employability: Employers often view professional attire as a reflection of a candidate's professionalism, work ethic, and attention to detail. Students who dress professionally may have an edge in the job market.

3. Preparation for workplace culture: A professional dress code can help students adapt to workplace culture and expectations, reducing the risk of cultural shock or misunderstandings.

4. Networking and professional relationships: Dressing professionally can facilitate networking and professional relationships, as students are more likely to be taken seriously and be viewed as credible professionals.

Long-term Benefits

1. Increased self-awareness and personal branding: A professional dress code can help students develop a sense of self-awareness and personal branding, essential for navigating the professional world.

2. Improved communication and interpersonal skills: Dressing professionally can facilitate effective communication and interpersonal skills, as students learn to present themselves confidently and respectfully.

3. Enhanced adaptability and flexibility: A professional dress code can help students develop adaptability and flexibility, as they learn to navigate different social and professional contexts.

4. Increased sense of professionalism and work ethic: Wearing professional attire can instill a sense of professionalism and work ethic in students, essential for achieving success in their chosen careers.

Economic Status on Professional Dress Code

Adeyemo (2019) economic status can significantly impact an individual's ability to adhere to a professional dress code. Individuals from lower economic backgrounds may struggle to afford professional attire, which can be a significant financial burden. Individuals from lower economic

backgrounds may have limited access to resources like laundry, dry cleaning, or tailoring, making it difficult to maintain professional attire. Individuals from lower economic backgrounds may have to prioritise basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare over purchasing professional attire. According to Ola (2023) who noted that individuals from higher economic backgrounds may be perceived as more professional due to their ability to afford high-quality, professional attire. Adhering to a professional dress code can be a key factor in social mobility, as it helps individuals from lower economic backgrounds to be taken more seriously and access better job opportunities. Wearing professional attire can boost an individual's confidence and self-esteem, regardless of their economic background.

How negative psychological effects of dress code manifest in real scenarios affecting student mental health and Academic performance

According to Adebayo (2023), negative psychological effects of dress code can manifest, affecting student mental health and academic performance:

Scenario 1: Body Shaming and Low Self-Esteem

A female student was reprimanded for wearing a dress deemed too short by the school administration. She feels embarrassed, ashamed, and self-conscious about her body. This experience leads to low self-esteem, negative body image, and anxiety.

Scenario 2: Financial Burden and Stress

A student from a low-income family is required to wear expensive, branded uniforms. The financial burden of purchasing these uniforms causes significant stress and anxiety for the student and their family. This stress affects the student's academic performance and overall well-being.

Scenario 3: Restriction of Personal Expression and Identity

A student who identifies as non-binary is forced to wear gender-specific uniforms that do not align with their identity. This restriction causes feelings of discomfort, anxiety, and depression. The student feels that their identity is not recognised or respected, leading to a negative impact on their mental health.

Scenario 4: Bullying and Social Exclusion

A student who cannot afford to wear the latest fashion trends or branded clothing is bullied and socially excluded by their peers. This experience leads to feelings of loneliness, isolation, and low self-esteem.

Scenario 5: Cultural Insensitivity and Erasure

A student from a minority cultural background is forced to wear uniforms that do not accommodate their cultural or religious needs. This experience leads to feelings of cultural insensitivity, erasure, and marginalization.

These scenarios illustrate how negative psychological effects of dress code can manifest in real-life situations, affecting student mental health and academic performance. It is essential for educational institutions to consider the potential impact of dress code policies on students' well-being and to strive for inclusivity, sensitivity, and respect for diversity.

Strategies to improve professional dress codes of students

Professional dress code should be seen as a tool to enhance academic performance and behavior, rather than a restrictive measure. By striking a balance between professionalism and self-expression, Nigerian universities can create an environment that supports students' academic success and personal growth with a professional dress code (Adeyemo, 2019). Olori (2023) classified strategies to improve professional dress codes in universities as follows:

Improve Comfort and Practicality

1. Conduct student surveys: Understand students' concerns and suggestions on dress code.

2. Introduce flexible dress code options: Allow students to choose from a range of comfortable and professional attire.

3. Consider cultural and religious differences: Accommodate diverse backgrounds and beliefs.

Foster Inclusivity and Diversity

1. Develop inclusive dress code policies: Ensure policies are fair, equitable, and respectful.

2. Provide affordable options: Offer affordable professional attire options for students from low-income backgrounds.

3. Encourage student involvement: Involve students in dress code decision-making processes.

Promote Positive Body Image and Self-Esteem

1. Organize body positivity campaigns: Encourage positive body image and self-esteem.

2. Invite guest speakers: Share experiences and insights on body positivity and self-acceptance.

3. Create safe spaces: Provide safe spaces for students to discuss body image concerns.

Develop Professionalism and Responsibility

1. Integrate dress code into the curriculum: Teach professionalism, etiquette, and responsibility.

2. Invite industry professionals: Share insights on professional dress code and its impact.

3. Encourage mentorship: Pair students with professionals for guidance and support.

Enhance Campus Culture and Student Life

1. Host fashion shows and events: Celebrate diversity and creativity in professional attire.

2. Create dress code ambassadors: Appoint student ambassadors to promote a positive dress code culture.

3. Develop campus-wide initiatives: Encourage professionalism and responsibility across campus.

Monitor and Evaluate Dress Code Policies

1. Regularly review and update policies: Ensure policies remain relevant and effective.

2. Conduct student feedback sessions: Gather insights on dress code policies and their impact.

3. Assess academic performance and behavior: Monitor the impact of dress code on academic performance and behavior.

Methodology

Design

A Survey design was adopted for this study. The researcher used a survey design as an appropriate design because information was obtained on the psychological effects of the professional dress code of students on their studies and behavior at Delta State University, Abraka.

Population

The population for this study comprised all students and lecturers at Delta State University, Abraka. The study's population is 21512 comprising 21512 students and 2745 lecturers in Delta State University, Abraka.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for this study was 1000 respondents comprises 950 undergraduate students and 50 staff of Delta State University, Abraka. In the first stage, a stratified random sampling method was used to select 950 undergraduate students and 50 staff members to participate in the study. Secondly, a simple random sampling technique (balloting) was used to select respondents. This ensures everyone has an equal chance of being selected to respond to the instrument and reduces sampling bias. This is due to the large respondent population.

Instrument

The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Psychological Effects of Professional Dress Code of Students on their Studies and Behaviour Questionnaire (PEPDCSSBQ). The instrument is divided into parts A and B. Part A is concerned with personal information about the respondents. Part B solicits responses to all the research questions. Each item was anchored on a four rating scale of: Strongly Agree (SA), Agreed (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with a corresponding nominal value of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Validity and Reliability

The instrument was validated in its face and content and it was checked whether or not the instrument would measure what it is supposed to measure its reliability equally determined via a pilot study using a test re-test reliability technique with a coefficient index of 0.85 was used.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument was administered by the researcher and two research assistants who are familiar with the study area. The researcher and research assistants visited the respondents in their offices and classrooms to seek their consent and administered the questionnaire on face-to-face basis. This was to ensure that the actual individuals for whom the questionnaire is meant, become the person who completes it. Also, it ensures that the researcher/ research assistants are available to explain any point that the respondents had difficulties in comprehending The questionnaire was filled on the spot and returned to the researcher. 1000 copies of the questionnaire were administered and were all retrieved and used for data analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while Chi-square statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The choice of mean to answer research questions is because data collected was on an interval scale. On the other hand, uusing chi-square was because the study also sought to determine whether professional dress codes exert significant effects on students' studies and behavior. A benchmark of 2.50 was established to accept any item with a mean rating of 2.50 or above as agreed while any item with a mean rating less than 2.50 was regarded as disagreeing with research questions.

Table 1: *Responses to the psychological effects of professional dress code of students on their studies and behavior*

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	STD	Mean
	Professional dress code helps students to focus on their studies and avoid distractions	320 32%	402 40.2%	177 17.1%	101 10.1%	3.16	.74
	Professional dress code promotes self-discipline	445 44.5%	289 28.9%	52 5.2%	214 21.4%	2.96	.90
	Professional dress code can improve students 'interpersonal relationships with	91 9.1%	306 30.6%	527 52.7%	76 7.6%	2.78	.79

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	STD	Mean
	their peers and lecturers						
	Students may feel uncomfortable in professional attire, leading to distractions and decreased focus	291 29.1%	286 28.6%	193 19.3%	230 23%	2.98	.82
	Professional dress code can impose an additional financial burden on students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds	400 40%	109 10.9%	131 13.1%	366 36%	2.94	.89

From Table 1, out of 1000 respondents, 320 (32%) and 402 (40.2%) respondents agreed that the professional dress code helps students to focus on their studies and avoid distractions while 177(17.1%) and 101 (10.1%) respondents expressed a contrary view. Also, 445 (44.5%) and 289 (28.9%) respondents agreed that professional dress codes promote self-discipline while 52 (5.2%) and 214 (21.4%) respondents disagreed with the statement. More so, 91 (9.1%) and 306 (30.6%) respondents agreed that professional dress codes can improve students' interpersonal relationships with their peers and lecturers while 527 (52.7%) and 76 (7.6%) respondents think otherwise. In another development, 291 (29.1%) and 286 (28.6%) respondents agreed that students may feel uncomfortable in professional attire, leading to distractions and decreased focus while 193 (19.3%) and 230 (23%) respondents disagreed. Finally, 400 (40%) and 109 (10.9%) respondents agreed that professional dress codes can impose an additional financial burden on students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds while 131 (13.1%) and 366 (36%) respondents opposed the statement.

Table 2: *Responses to the strategies to improve the professional dress code of students in their studies and behavior*

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	STD	Mean
	Understand students' concerns and suggestions on	350 35%	210 21%	317 31.7%	123 12.3%	2.94	.84

dress code						
Ensure policies are fair, equitable, and respectful	260 26%	95 9.5%	201 20.1%	444 44.4%	3.02	.84
Share experiences and insights on body positivity and self-acceptance	250 25%	250 25%	200 20%	300 30%	3.24	.77
Teach professionalism, etiquette, and responsibility	291 29.1%	286 28.6%	222 22.2%	201 20.1%	2.88	.77
Monitor the impact of dress code on academic performance and behavior	333 33.3%	196 19.6	256 25.6%	215 21.5%	2.92	.78

From Table 2, out of 1000 respondents 350 (35%) and 210 (21%) respondents agreed that the school authority should understand students' concerns and suggestions on dress code while 317 (31.7%) and 123 (12.3%) respondents disagreed. Also, 260 (26%) and 95 (9.5%) respondents agreed that the school authority should ensure policies are fair, equitable, and respectful while 201 (20.1%) and 444 (44.4%) respondents disregarded the statement. More so, 250 (25%) and 250 (25%) respondents agreed that they should share experiences and insights on body positivity and self-acceptance while 200 (20%) and 300 (30%) respondents think otherwise. Also, 291 (29.1%) and 286 (28.6%) respondents agreed that they should teach professionalism, etiquette, and responsibility while 222 (22.2%) and 201 (20.1%) respondents are of another view. Finally, 333 (33.3%) and 196 (19.6) respondents agreed that the school authority should monitor the impact of dress code on academic performance and behavior while 256 (25.6%) and 215 (21.5%) respondents are against it.

Table 3: *Chi-Square Analysis of the psychological effects of the professional dress code of students on their studies and behavior*

	N	X	S.D	DF	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Professional dress code	1000	2.72	3.2				Accepted
Students' studies and behavior		2.82	7.4	10	0.67	1.96	

The data in Table 3 indicates that the calculated value of t is 0.67. This is less than the table value of 1.96 at a 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, arising from the above interpretation the null hypothesis of no significant was accepted or retained. Thus, there is no significance relationship in the psychological effects of the professional dress code of students on their studies and behavior at Delta State University, Abraka.

Table 4: *Chi-Square Analysis of the strategies to improve the professional dress code of students in their studies and behavior*

Variables	N	X	S.D	DF	t-cal	t-crit.	Decision
Strategies to improve professional dress code	1000	2.96	3.1	10	2.07	1.96	Rejected
Students' studies and behavior		2.82	3.6				

From Table 4, the calculated t-value of 2.07 was greater than the t-critical value of 1.96. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between the strategies to improve the professional dress code of students in their studies and behaviour at Delta State University, Abraka.

Discussion of Findings

Findings showed the psychological effects of the professional dress code of students on their studies and behavior at Delta State University, Abraka. This contradicts Oyewole (2017) who found out that professional dress code had a positive impact on undergraduate students' academic performance, as it promoted a sense of responsibility and professionalism. Oluwatobi (2018) also revealed that professional dress code reduced incidents of indiscipline and improved students' behavior, as students were more mindful of their actions and appearance. Thus, there is no significant relationship on the psychological effects of

professional dress code of students in their studies and behavior at Delta State University, Abraka.

It also revealed the strategies to improve the professional dress code of students on their studies and behavior at Delta State University, Abraka. This aligns with Adeyemo (2019), who posits that the professional dress codes should enhance academic performance and behaviour, rather than restrict it. By striking a balance between professionalism and self-expression, Nigerian universities can create an environment that supports students' academic success and personal growth. Thus, there is a significant relationship between the strategies to improve the professional dress code of students in their studies and behaviour at Delta State University, Abraka.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the professional dress code has positive and negative psychological effects on undergraduate students' academic performance and behavior at Delta State University, Abraka. University administrators believe that a professional dress code promotes a sense of professionalism among students, preparing them for the workforce. From the community perspective, the professional dress code is appreciated because it inspires children and younger persons in the community who associate certain dress codes with a profession. Parents and guardians believe a professional dress code prepares students for the workforce and fosters a professional mind-set. While a professional dress code can promote professionalism, responsibility, and respect for authority, it can also restrict self-expression, impose financial burdens, foster an inferiority complex and perpetuate cultural insensitivity.

Recommendations

Here fore, it recommended that universities should develop inclusive and flexible dress code policies that accommodate cultural and religious differences. The dress code policies should provide affordable options and resources for students from low-income backgrounds. It should foster a positive campus culture that promotes professionalism, decency, responsibility, and respect for authority. Students should be involved in dress code decision-making. The university management should monitor and evaluate dress code policies regularly to ensure they remain relevant

and effective. Local fabrics should be encourage as professional dress code.

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