



Original Research Report

Assessment of Clothing and Teacher Credibility among Lecturers in Universities in South-East Nigeria

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Abstract: This study assessed Clothing and Teacher credibility among lecturers in Universities in South East, Nigeria. Three purposes guided the study while the study answered three research questions. The study covered a total population of 186 lecturers of Home Economics, Psychology and Fine and Applied Arts. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by five experts. Data collection was done with the help of four research assistants. A total of 178 instrument was returned making it 96% total return rate. The data generated from research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. In decision making, scores above 2.5 were accepted while scores below 2.5 were rejected. Major findings include: Twenty-three (23) constituents of teacher credibility among lecturers in South East Nigeria which includes that lecturers should dress decently and professionally at all times among others, Seven (7) ways teachers' clothing can affects learning including that students pay attention to lecturer's clothing, students are interested in the subject areas taught by properly dresses lecturers among others. Twenty (20) ways the clothing of lecturers can enhance credibility in lecturers in South East, Nigeria including not overdressing to class, using harmonizing colours among others. It was therefore recommended that University lecturers should maintain good clothing practices, government should provide wardrobe allowance to university lecturers among others.

Keywords: Clothing, Credibility, Lecturers, Teacher, Teacher Credibility, Universities.

1. Introduction

Clothing is one of the basic needs of man. Clothing refers to garments, clothes, raiment, apparel, or a covering. Ozor, Olubiyi and Okeke (2019) defined clothing as a great range of materials that are worn to protect and adorn the body, as well as communicate intent. Whereas Clothes refers to textile items worn on the body to keep a person warm and comfortable. Clothes are worn for many reasons. Sahoo (2018) identified various functions of clothing which include expressing individual lifestyle and attitude as well as social status and dignity. Meanwhile, Ozor, et. al. (2019) noted various reasons for wearing clothing which include: protection, enhancement of appearance, modesty, role identity, attraction, social status and traditional identity.

Initially, clothing was worn specifically to cover nakedness and to adorn the body, however recently clothing are worn for many reasons which ranges from physical, social and psychological reasons. Clothing also can be regarded as a medium of social communication. Sampson (2016) maintained that clothing is a powerful communicator. Dunbar and Segrin (2012) also emphasized that clothing is constantly used to measure and display status and a host of other social variables. Meanwhile, Kashem (2019) posited that people make judgment about other people based on their clothing, attributing it to a powerful appearance dimension or a sociable appearance dimension. Kashem (2019) further stressed that an individual personality can be revealed through appearance an ' choice of clothing can communicate responsibility, status, power and the ability to be successful. Clothing are usually selected to suit the activity or the work a person does. There are clothing for various activities and occasion. Clothing is used to show the wearers occupation and also used for the occupation as a functional clothing, such professional occupation includes nursing, security, police, army, lawyer, plumbing, teaching among others.

Teaching means imparting knowledge or skills. Isola (2019) defined teaching as an intimate contact between a more mature personality and a less mature one which is designed to further the education of the latter. It is the concerted sharing of knowledge and experience, which is usually organized within discipline like Home Economics which has components like Clothing and Textiles, Foods and Nutrition and Home management. Teaching provides stimulus to the psychological and intellectual growth of a person. A teacher is someone whose occupation is teaching. A teacher helps student to acquire knowledge, competence or virtue. A teacher that imparts knowledge to students in the university is referred to as a lecturer. A lecturer is a person who gives lectures, especially as an occupation at a university or college of higher education. In this study, the terms teachers and lecturers were used interchangeably.

Lecturers wear different kinds of clothes to school where they interact with the students. Clothes worn by lecturers should be simple and smart such that it should not distract the students or the teaching process. Lewis (2019) noted that teachers outer garment tend to make strong impression; Lewis (2019) further noted that teachers should avoid tight, sheer, or revealing clothing, stay age appropriate when dressing, stock up wardrobe essentials, choose shoes for comfort and leave expensive jewelry and accessories at home. In support of this, Kashem (2019) stated that well-dressed lecturers are considered to be more organized, knowledgeable and better prepared. Since clothing communicates

value, status, intents, and many other variables, teachers should wear professional clothing in the discharge of their duties in order to promote credibility of the teacher or profession among the students and colleagues.

Credibility is a quality of something being believed, trustworthy, effective or reliable. Anderson, Kreegimae and Niiranen (2019) noted that credibility is a subjective measure and it is perceived quality that other people determine based on the interaction of numerous factors. Teacher credibility is one factor that impacts learning. The concept of teacher credibility refers to the believability of a teacher (Gray et al, 2010). Fisher and Frey (2018) noted that teacher credibility has twice the impact on learning than students' motivation does. The lecturer therefore should be credible for the student to believe whatever information they pass to them. Clothing has the potential to affect student's attitude towards teacher's credibility, likeability, interpersonal attractiveness and dominance (Joseph, 2017). Dunbar and Segrin (2012) also noted that clothing is an important aspect of communication that can influence the perception of wearer's credibility and attractiveness as well as a variety of other judgments. Dunbar and Segrin (2012) further noted that these perceptions are made by students about teachers and is a function of the type of behaviour expected from their teachers. As a result of these, it can be deduced that what teachers wear to discharge their duties is very sensitive as it may affect many things including teacher credibility. In line with this, Cehic (2015) noted that clothes are often the first thing that people notice about individuals and thus people form opinion of others through what they wear; it helps them to either conform or rebel. Furthermore Rykrsmith in Ojogbane, Amonjenu and Husseini (2020) noted that what one wears affects others perception of the person, the author continued by saying it is necessary therefore for one to dress in the image one wants to portray oneself. Meanwhile, Shoulders and Smith (2018) noted that teachers can garner respect for themselves and their profession through their clothing, thus the saying, "Without question, dress sends a story about who teachers are as individuals and as professionals". Meanwhile, Fisher and Frey (2018) also noted that teacher credibility enhance students' belief that they can learn from a particular teacher because this adult is believable, convincing, and capable of persuading students that they can be successful.

Fisher and Frey (2018) noted four components of teacher credibility which include- trust, competence, dynamism and immediacy. The way a teacher dresses can make the students to trust him or her. The dressing style of the teacher, whether he or she wears cooperate outfits, dresses casually, dresses professionally among others. All these are ways teachers can build trust in their students. Competence being the second component is the quality of being adequately or well qualified physically and intellectually. Dynamism as an aspect of teacher credibility according to Fisher and Frey (2018) refers to the passion in the teacher in the course of delivery of his/her lessons. That is being able to communicate the subject matter with enthusiasm. Finally, immediacy refers to accessibility and relatability as perceived by the students. Some Lecturers in South East, Nigeria dress in such a way that they show status to the students. This type of status makes it difficult for a mutual relationship with the students. Some lecturers' dresses to intimidate the students when they are meant to be close to the students. All these create distance between the students and lecturers in South East, Nigeria and in turns affect credibility of the lecturers. Accessibility and relatability can be enhanced with simple,

professional and appropriate clothing of the lecturer which in turn will enhance cordial relationship between teachers and students. It will as well increase students' attendance to class/lectures and in turn make the teacher teach with sense of urgency and openness while boosting teachers' self-confidence.

Individuals or groups responsible for ensuring effective dressing among lecturers and students in universities include: Home Economics Lecturers, Fine and Applied Art lecturers and Psychology lecturers. Home Economics lecturers in federal and state universities in South East, Nigeria equips learners with knowledge and skills in clothing selection practices, choice of colours and wardrobe planning and management. They are involved in teaching and research activities in clothing and clothing related areas. Fine and Applied Art Lecturers who are specialist in fashion and textiles equip students with knowledge and skills in operational practices in fashion. They are involved in teaching and research activities in fashion, textiles, graphics and color. They are also knowledgeable in color combination, matching outfits and fabric selection behaviour. Meanwhile Psychology lecturers in federal and state universities in South East, Nigeria equips learners with knowledge and skills in personality, personality development, character formation, social development, moral development and ethical development among individuals. Page | 143

Teacher credibility affects learning among students. Meanwhile, it is worthwhile to note that the main aim of schooling is for transfer of knowledge and if this aim is defeated, schooling has no value again. This is why the concept of teacher credibility in relation to their dressing cannot be overemphasized. Lecturers in South East, Nigeria are expected to dress with respect to the standard of the teaching profession. Many studies have been carried out on the impact of teacher clothing on student's perception and students' behaviour in secondary schools, Kashem (2019), Shoulders & Smith (2018), and Sampson (2016). However, very few studies have accessed clothing and teacher credibility among lecturers in universities in South East Nigeria hence the study.

1.1. Statement of Problem

Clothing is a medium of communication, it communicates status, intent, identity, culture, social variables among others. Clothing also influences the perception of the wearer's value, worth, educational level, credibility and many other attributes. These perceptions are made consciously about the people one meets especially at first sight. These judgments and the complimentary perception are made by university students in South East Nigeria about their lecturers. Lecturers are people held in high esteem in South East Nigeria. Meanwhile, fashion trends, competition, technology, social status and other factors has affected so many things including the way the lecturers dress to work, some want to show off while some go into unhealthy competition with the non-teaching staff, thereby wearing different kinds of clothing. Meanwhile the lecturing job is one of the highly placed professions in Nigeria (south East in particular). If the clothing worn by the university lecturers do not fall within this code of dressing, the likelihood that it will affect their credibility is very high. Hence the study tends to find out the implication on teacher credibility if the lecturers do not dress appropriately.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study was to assess clothing and teacher credibility among Lecturers in Universities in South East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain constituents of teacher credibility among lecturers in Universities in South East, Nigeria.
2. Determine ways teachers' clothing can affect learning in Universities in South East, Nigeria.
3. Determine ways of enhancing credibility in lecturers in universities in South East, Nigeria.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research question guided the study;

1. What are the constituents of teacher credibility among lecturers in Universities in South East, Nigeria?
2. In what ways can teachers clothing affect learning in Universities in South East, Nigeria?
3. What are the ways of enhancing credibility in lecturers in universities in South East, Nigeria?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Design for the Study

The study utilized survey research design. Survey research design involves the use of questionnaire to gather opinion of respondents (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2008). This was considered most appropriate for the study because the study used questionnaire to seek the opinion of the respondents on the constituents of teacher credibility, ways teachers' credibility affect students learning and various ways of enhancing credibility in lecturers in South East Nigeria.

2.1.1. Ethics Statement

The study ethical approval was received from the faculty of Vocational Technical Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. Informed consent was gotten in writing from the participants.

2.2. Area of the Study

The study was carried out in four universities from the five states in South East, Nigeria where Home Economics is studied.

2.3. Population and Sample

The total population for the study was made up of 186 academic staff (Home Economics, Psychology, Fine and Applied Arts lecturers) from four universities in South East, Nigeria where Home Economics is studied. There was no sampling because the population strictly comprised the groups responsible for ensuring effective dressing among lecturers and students in universities.

2.4. Instrument for Data Collection and Study Procedure

Structured questionnaire titled Clothing and Teacher Credibility Questionnaire (CTCQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by five experts from the Department of Home Economics and Hospitality Management Education, Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education.

2.5. Data Collection Technique

Data collection was done with the help of four research assistants. The research assistants administered the questionnaire individually to the respondents. On the spot explanation of the questionnaire items was made to ensure that the respondents understand the questions, respond adequately and enhance the return rate. A total of 178 instrument was returned making it 96% total return rate.

2.6. Data Analysis Technique

The data generated from research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Scores above 2.5 were accepted while scores below 2.5 were rejected for all the research question.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Mean ratings of responses of Home Economics Lecturers, Fine and Applied Art Lecturers and Psychology Lecturers on the constituents of teacher credibility among lecturers in Universities in South East Nigeria.

S/N	Constituents of teacher credibility	N ₁ =53	N ₂ =14	N ₃ =111	XG	SD	Remark
	He/she must be:	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	\bar{X}_3			
1.	Competent in the field of study	3.42	3.33	3.55	3.49	0.72	Agreed
2.	Trusted by his/her students	3.60	3.93	3.71	3.70	0.56	Agreed
3.	Dynamic	2.77	2.71	2.92	2.86	1.02	Agreed
4.	Close to students	3.57	3.79	3.49	3.53	0.74	Agreed
5.	Able to communicate effectively	3.02	3.21	2.87	2.94	1.20	Agreed
6.	Decently dressed	3.08	3.50	3.31	3.25	0.93	Agreed
7.	Flexible and spontaneous	3.55	3.79	3.67	3.64	0.48	Agreed
8.	A good listener	2.70	3.29	2.79	2.80	0.90	Agreed
9.	Able to communicate with high expectations consistently	3.51	3.43	3.50	3.49	0.50	Agreed
10.	Professionally dressed at all times	3.64	3.50	3.70	3.67	0.47	Agreed
11.	Able to address students by their names	3.74	3.86	3.86	3.82	0.39	Agreed
12.	Good looking in appearance	3.23	3.50	3.48	3.40	0.73	Agreed
13.	Believed by the students	3.19	3.00	3.44	3.33	0.86	Agreed
14.	A good collaborator	3.06	2.86	3.23	3.15	0.84	Agreed

15.	Able to adapt	2.57	2.57	2.66	2.62	1.04	Agreed
16.	Able to engage students	3.02	3.36	3.16	3.14	1.00	Agreed
17.	Empathic	3.32	3.14	3.51	3.42	0.72	Agreed
18.	Able to share best practice	3.38	3.43	3.40	3.40	0.82	Agreed
19.	Trustworthy	3.57	3.57	3.68	3.64	0.48	Agreed
20.	Caring	3.36	3.57	3.52	3.47	0.72	Agreed
21.	Value real world learning	3.28	3.64	3.19	3.25	0.88	Agreed
22.	Able to show self-confidence	3.60	3.64	3.50	3.54	0.50	Agreed
23.	Respectful	2.75	3.00	3.06	2.97	0.93	Agreed

Cluster mean $\bar{X} = 3.28$

Key: N1 = Home Economics lecturers; N2 = Fine and Applied Art Lecturers, N3 = Psychology lecturers; SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree, SD = Standard Deviation, \bar{X}_1 = Home Economics Lecturers (HEL); \bar{X}_2 = Fine and Applied Art Lecturers (FAAL), \bar{X}_3 = Psychology lecturers (PL); Total respondents = 178, $\bar{X} G$ = Grand mean

The result in Table 1 shows a grand mean of 2.62-3.70 which shows that the respondents agreed on the various constituents of teacher credibility among lecturers in Universities in South East Nigeria. Items 6, 10 and 12 which indicated that the teacher should be decently dressed, professionally dressed and good looking in appearance has a mean of 3.25, 3.67 and 3.40 respectively indicating strongly that the teachers clothing has strong relationship with credibility.

The standard deviation of all the constituents ranged from 0.39-1.20 indicating that the responses made by the respondents individually were not far from one another and also not far from the mean. Hence, the mean values can be regarded as valid.

Table 2: Mean ratings of responses of Home Economics Lecturers, Fine and Applied Art Lecturers and Psychology Lecturers on the ways teachers’ clothing (as it relates to credibility) affect learning.

S/N	Ways teachers’ clothing can affects learning	N ₁ =28 \bar{X}_1	N ₂ =59 \bar{X}_2	N ₃ =24 \bar{X}_3	XG	SD	Remark
1.	Students will pay attention to lecturers’ clothing	3.51	2.71	3.35	3.35	0.79	Agreed
2.	Enhancement of interest in subject area taught by the properly dressed lecturers	3.28	3.50	3.50	3.44	0.89	Agreed
3.	May increase modelling inappropriate clothing by students	3.47	3.43	3.33	3.38	0.76	Agreed
4.	Students may model indecent dressing of the lecturers	3.32	3.07	3.38	3.34	0.77	Agreed
5.	Students may not believe the lecturer.	2.94	2.71	3.07	3.01	0.93	Agreed

6.	Students may not respect the lecturer who dresses indecently	3.09	2.64	2.95	2.97	0.89	Agreed
7.	There will be poor lecturer students relationship which can affect learning	3.17	3.21	3.08	3.12	0.80	Agreed

Cluster mean $\bar{x} = 3.19$

Table 2 shows the mean distribution of the ratings of the respondents on the ways teachers' clothing can affect learning. There are seven items with grand means that ranged from 2.93-3.44 which were agreed by the respondents as ways teachers' clothing affect learning.

The standard deviation of all the ways are less than 1.01. This indicates that the responses obtained by the respondents were not far from one another and also not far from the mean. Therefore, the mean values can be regarded as valid.

Table 3: Mean ratings of responses of Home Economics Lecturers, Fine and Applied Art Lecturers and Psychology Lecturers on the various ways of enhancing credibility in lecturers in Universities in South East Nigeria.

S/N	Ways the clothing of lecturers can enhance credibility in lecturers	N ₁ =53 \bar{X}_1	N ₂ =14 \bar{X}_2	N ₃ =111 \bar{X}_3	XG	SD	Remark
1.	Not overdressing to class	3.15	3.21	3.00	3.06	0.84	Agreed
2.	Using harmonizing colour	3.15	3.14	3.04	3.08	0.87	Agreed
3.	Using matching accessories	3.42	3.00	3.24	3.28	0.81	Agreed
4.	Dressing decently	2.70	2.86	2.93	2.85	0.90	Agreed
5.	Dressing professionally	3.23	3.50	3.23	3.25	0.77	Agreed
6.	Not following fashion trends	3.34	3.14	3.18	3.22	0.83	Agreed
7.	Showing a good command of subject area through dressing	3.19	2.93	3.06	3.09	0.86	Agreed
8.	Being able to communicate value through decent dressing.	3.09	2.86	3.14	3.11	0.80	Agreed
9.	Dressing to be trusted by the students	2.70	2.71	2.81	2.77	0.96	Agreed
10.	Avoiding revealing and tight clothing	2.55	2.71	2.41	2.48	1.03	Disagreed
11.	Choosing only decent clothing	2.74	2.43	2.47	2.54	0.96	Agreed
12.	Not modelling indecent dressing	3.13	2.93	3.23	3.17	0.73	Agreed
13.	Cautioning students with indecent dressing	3.19	3.14	2.86	2.98	0.94	Agreed
14.	Avoiding trending fashion	3.23	3.07	3.05	3.10	0.86	Agreed
15.	Attending lectures with professional clothing	3.43	3.07	3.20	3.26	0.77	Agreed
16.	Avoiding casual outfits	3.21	3.07	3.25	3.22	0.72	Agreed
17.	Covering all body parts adequately in dressing	2.72	2.86	2.79	2.78	0.92	Agreed
18.	Avoiding indecent dressing by the lecturers	3.34	3.00	3.05	3.13	0.83	Agreed

19.	Attending lectures promptly	2.87	2.86	3.33	3.16	0.82	Agreed
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Cluster mean $\bar{x} = 3.02$

The result in Table 3 shows the grand mean that ranges from 2.77-3.28 which shows that the respondents agreed on the various ways the clothing of lecturers can enhance credibility in lecturers in South East Nigeria except item 10 - avoiding revealing and tight clothing which has a mean of 2.48

The standard deviation of all the ways is less than 1.00 except item 10 - avoiding revealing and tight clothing which has a standard deviation of 1.03. This indicates that the responses obtained by the respondents were not far from one another and also not far from the mean. Therefore, the mean values can be regarded as valid.

3.4. Description/discussion

The study revealed twenty-three (23) constituents of teacher credibility. This implies that these constituents of teacher credibility were considered necessary and relevant to be possessed by lecturers in Universities in South East Nigeria. The twenty-three constituents of teacher credibility were built around the four components of teacher credibility as stated by Fisher and Frey (2018), this therefore implies that, for a teacher to be credible, he or she must the qualities stated above.

The findings as shown in Table 2 indicated seven (7) ways teachers' clothing affect learning. This implies that these ways teachers' clothing affects learning in Universities in South East Nigeria should be applied in teaching and learning. Fisher and Frey (2018) noted that teacher credibility has twice the impact on learning than student motivation does. In addition, Finn, Schrodtt, Witt, Elledge, Jernberg and Larson (2013) supported that teacher credibility has emerged as one of several key factors affecting learning.

The study in table 3 revealed that nineteen (18) out of the nineteen (19) ways of enhancing credibility were accepted by the respondents. Meanwhile item no 10 which is avoiding revealing and tight clothing was rejected by the respondent. Meanwhile Lewis (2019) stated that teachers should avoid tight, sheer, or revealing clothing, stay age appropriate when dressing, stock up wardrobe essentials, choose shoes for comfort and leave expensive jewelry and accessories at home. This implies that nineteen (18) ways of enhancing credibility in lecturers were considered important and relevant. In this regard, Kendra, (2022) noted that it is not appropriate to wear "an above the knee" dress when teaching, because it can be distracting for both the students and teachers, it can also send wrong message about professionalism and respect. However, Oseni (2008) asserted that attires or dresses in general provide subliminal cues as to the value and judgment of the wearer. In conclusion it can be deduced that clothing can be used to enhance credibility in an individual and that is why Lewis (2019) maintained that teachers outer garment tends to make strong impression.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that clothing is a very important concern for every individual especially university lecturers. Clothing apart from providing protection and modesty, plays a vital role in communication. Clothing showcases an individual's personalities, likes,

dislikes, identity, status and characteristics such as, attitude, temperament, trustworthiness, credibility among others. Credibility being one of the pieces of information that can be passed about an individual knowingly or unknowingly using clothing has been examined in this study. Credibility is simply the quality of something or someone being trusted and believed in. Teacher credibility therefore is the quality of a teacher being believed by the students which he or she is teaching. The four components of teacher credibility- trust, competence, dynamism and immediacy was linked to clothing to see how clothing can be used by these components to build teacher credibility. The study empathically assessed the various ways clothing can be used to promote teacher credibility among university lecturers in south east Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. University lecturers should utilize the knowledge gotten from the study to maintain good clothing practice; this can be achieved by retraining of lecturers on appropriate professional outfits.
2. Policy makers should organize training sessions for lecturers on professional attire.
3. Government should include wardrobe allowance to university lecturers to enable them dress appropriately in order to maintain the standard of education in the country.

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to lecturers of Home Economics, Psychology, Fine and Applied Arts and data analysts for their assistance.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

Author Contributions

GHA conceived the research idea, set the objectives and developed the manuscript, OOO proofread the work and UME carried out the methodology.

Data Availability Statement

Original contributions presented in the study are included in the article. Further inquiries can be directed to the appropriate authors.

Funding Information

The authors have no funding to disclose.

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Publisher: Department of Home Economics and Hospitality Management Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

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