

## **Counselling Behavioural Therapy Approach: A Panacea in Dealing with the Dangers of Indecent Dressings among Nigerian Youths**

*O. A. Olakojo*

### **ABSTRACT**

*Indecent dressing is now a phenomenon among Nigerian youths. It has spread with strong tentacles in our society including churches, mosques and schools. This work sees Counselling Behavioural Therapy Approach as a panacea in dealing with indecent dressing and its dangers among Nigerian youths. The study uses Arnold Lazarus Behavioural Therapy to address the subject matter. Behavioural techniques adopted include modelling, relaxation, systematic desensitization, self-management programme and self-directed behaviour in dealing with such problem. It is discovered that indecent dressings and their dangers are viruses that ruin the society which should be dealt with seriously and in sincerity before it destroys the future of Nigerians. Based on the above, this study advocates that starting from the family, church and school to the larger society with all stakeholders playing their parts accordingly and as necessary indecent dressing should be discouraged in totality. Also, government should legislate against indecent dressing and have the appropriate dress code in our schools; these, among others would therefore serve as weapons in curbing the inappropriate mode of dressing among youths in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Counselling Behavioural Therapy Approach, indecent dressing*

### **INTRODUCTION**

There is a high level of subjectivism in people understanding of what indecent dressing is; it may be appealing to some people and unappealing to others (Chukwudi and Gbakoro, 2011). There are various ways by which youths engage in different indecent dressings. In Nigeria, certain dressing styles or codes are alien (Ibrahim and Haruna 2014). Dressing code tends to give a perception of one's ability to preserve specific heritage and social values. Female students engage in higher level of indecent dressing than their male counterpart (Bojos and Marquet 2000). Foster (1996) says that girls who frequently wear indecent dresses perceive

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*O. A. Olakojo* is a Lecturer in the Department of Educational Psychology, The College of Education, Lanlate, Oyo State, Nigeria. E-Mail: [olakojoalayide@gmail.com](mailto:olakojoalayide@gmail.com)

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themselves as special. According to Chukwudi and Gbakoro (2011), these girls have also been found to have greater intrusive interest in deep engrossment and their pervasive fantasies. Indecently dressed persons involve in that behaviour in order to attract the attention of the opposite sex (Buunk and Vanden 2000). Bojos and Marquet (2000) observe that the elitist, amorous, unprincipled and compensatory are the common class of persons with alarming cases of indecent dressing. With their seductive tendencies, the elitist are commonly observed among people from privileged and economically empowered background. Their dress codes are invariably seductive. They usually display their prominent features like the breast and pubic in attempt to promote themselves. Also, the amorous has sexually seductive behaviour commonly observed among people who avoid real intimacy, but play games by deceptively seducing their victims for economic purposes. The unprincipled class are those with unscrupulous, deceptive, arrogant and exploitative trends. As a cover up for feelings of inferiority, the compensatory dress to create an impression that they are relevant in society as others. This set of dressers (persons) merely attempt to form impressions that they are superior and exceptional.

In an attempt to explain the dimensions of indecent dressing, researchers come up with the down theory (theory of sexy or seductive dressing), reductionism (biological) theory and psycho-social or self-efficacy theory (Chukwudi and Gbakoro 2011). The down theory points at the dressing that attract attention, which invariably leads undergraduates mostly the female gender to wear “funny” or “indecent” cloths that are seductive and revealing. Bojos and Marquet (2000) support the down theory with the evidence that those who dress indecently on campus experience disturbances in relationship. Biological theory (sexual selection) refers to dominant looking man which the female sees as the near evaluate because of high testosterone level, which indicates strong genus.

Psycho-social theory or theory of efficacy is pioneered by Bandura, who defines self-confidence as the ability to recognize and execute the causes of a given course of action to solve a problem or accomplish a task. Some people have a stronger sense of self efficacy while others do not (Bandura 1993, 1996 and 1997). Self-efficacy also helps to determine how resistant these girls will be in the face of societal oppositions to their seductive dressing (Bandura 1997). Carvajal (2000) as cited in Chukwudi and Gbakoro (2011) finds out that indecent dressing in females holds maladaptive idea about themselves with the view that they discovered that the beliefs held by these girls hamper them to perceive their experiences realistically and encounter problem when they dress indecently.

Arnold Lazarus, a scholar, psychologist, linguist, journalist and proponent of behaviour therapy among other radical behaviourists like Skinners (1971), Bandura (1977) and Kazdin (1978) posits that counselling behavioural therapy is the appropriate approach to deal with indecent dressing that is rampant among youths of today.

### **Meanings of Indecent Dressing**

The meaning of indecent dressing varies from country to country, culture to culture and religion to religion. What is wrong in one country may be right in another country and what is said to be right in one culture may be wrong in another culture. Same is applicable to religion. The fact still remains that the influence of Europeans culture acquired by Africans has adverse effect on African behavioural pattern including mode of dressing. Indecent dressing is deliberate exposure of one's body to the public which is against the norms and values of the society.

Sentiments on indecent dressing are religiously and culturally influenced (Chukwudi and Gbakoro, 2011). From the religious perspective, people are expected to dress modestly especially the women (Chukwudi and Gbakoro, 2011). Women should not expose their vital parts by wearing short skirts, sleeveless clothes and transparent wears (Ibrahim and Haruna, 2014). This is to avoid attracting unnecessary attention which in turn may arouse sexual urge from opposite sex (Chukwudi and Gbakoro, 2011). According to Chukwudi and Gbakoro (2011), certain styles of dressing are regarded by many people as a serious threat to cultural values of a society.

From the cultural perspective, the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are beautiful to behold in their various traditional attires (Ayeleso 2014). The Hausa/Kanuri/Fulani people are grouped together under Hausa because of similarities in their culture, dressing and language; they have the same religion with common beliefs; they have decent mode of dressing. The Yorubas have a rich mythological history which dates back to Oduduwa as their progenitor, and are far-away from indecent dressing because it is one of their major traditional beliefs to dress decent in the society. The Igbos are highly creative and technocratic in nature; they do well in business and technology, and they also have decent dressing pattern but also share part of Yoruba style of dressing (Ayeleso, 2014). There is no part of Nigeria even in the minority that its cultural values permit indecent dressing. Agboola-Bello (2016) sees anything that is put on that can irritate, appall, intimidate and rouse the sexual urge of the opposite sex as indecent dressing which is applicable to both males and females.

It is just unfortunate that the reverse is the case among the youths who have acted in deviant of their cultural beliefs and values. According to Chukwudi and Gbakoro (2011), dressing has lost most of its values in this age of unisex and gender cross over.

### **Various styles of Indecent Dressing among Youths in Nigeria**

The most important reasons for wearing cloths is to cover the nakedness. This reason has turned into negative due to the fact that the purpose is no more achievable when indecent dressings are allowed. Indecent dressing can be used to gratify internal sexual pressure that is present within individuals (Chukwudi and Gbakoro, 2011). Dressing has lost most of its values as a result of globalization and modernation. Erroneously, youths in this age believe that the more naked one is, the more he/she is acceptable among their peers (Abdul-Noowin, 2017). Any man who dresses with his trousers or shorts below the waist level is dressing to attract women. Equally, a woman who exposes her cleavage (v-shape of the breast) and wears contour-exposing skin tight dresses and probably exposes her thighs and beads is doing this mainly to seduce unsuspecting men around.

Today, some parents would even permit and encourage their children to wear appalling dresses and attires that are not acceptable in the society (Agboola-Bello 2016). According to Ifeoluwa (2016), there are various styles of indecent dressing, including sagging, hot bosom and low waist. These are common among artistes and footballers. Some forms of indecent dressing are a product of modelling top movie stars. Agboola-Bello (2016) further explains that musicians and actresses are imitated by the youths and they do dress half naked to school, all in the name of fashion. Like in movies, character dressing code is designed to suit the part such a character plays. These movie stars dress to complement the parts they play in a movie. For instance, you cannot expect a person who acts as a prostitute in a movie to dress like a Pastor in that movie.

Indecent dressings are not limited to females only but are applicable to males. Indecent dressing is simply dressing in a way that exposes ones private parts of the body. This evil has infiltrated the churches, mosques and other religious centres. In the context of this work, a lady who keeps her hair uncovered in the worship centres like the church or mosque is indecently dressed. Hair cover which is commonly known as hair tie is taken for granted in many churches today mostly Pentecostal churches. To them, hair tie means head tie. So, with hair (natural or artificial) on a woman's head, she feels it is needless to use tie because the tie is for the head and not for the hair. Wearing boxers out and putting on clothes that

show your chest is indecent dressing. Kayode-Afolayan (2015) adds that indecent dressing is any dressing that shows tip outlines, undies outline, bosom outline, bra outline, bra shape, womanliness outline. A skirt at the knee level is indecent. Ayeleso (2014) points out that Nigerians are perhaps the most fashionable set of people in the world. Ironically, some female students think that to be trendy and win the coveted “*most fashionable diva on campus*”; the more provocative, daring and skimpy their clothes are, the more their social status rises (Ayeleso 2014). Bachamas and Eijenden (2002) state that the experience these girls go through when wearing skimpy and revealing dresses was associated with the expectations of compliments, wishes and demands to be gratified. According to Abdul-Noowin (2017), the major causes of indecent dressing include:

- i. To free and escape from poverty
  - ii. Influence of Foreign European Culture
  - iii. Poor parenting
  - iv. Many church leaders do not preach against indecent dressing so as not to lose members
  - v. The influence of wrong use of internet
  - vi. Watching of sexy films and obscene pictures
  - vii. The influence of peer group
  - viii. Non-recognition of our cultural values
- A lot of dangers are attached with indecent dressing (Abdul-Noowin, 2017 and Olakojo, 2014). These include:
- i. Rape, prostitution, venereal deadly diseases and poor school grades
  - ii. It triggers sexual assault
  - iii. It leads to disrespect among young people
  - iv. Infestation of younger ones through imitation and stigmatization
  - v. It leads to decay in moral values.

### **Arnold Lazarus Behavioural Therapy, a panacea in dealing with Indecent Dressing**

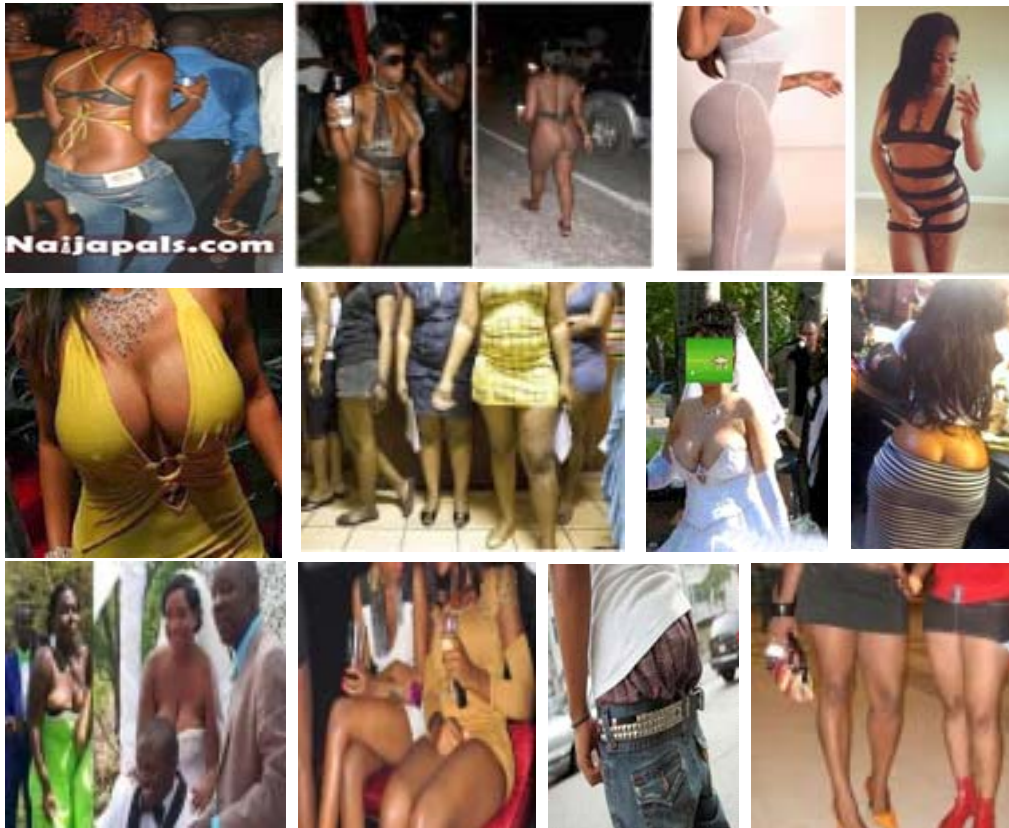
Relaxation is one of the therapeutic techniques and procedures that deal with behaviour of different kinds (Lazarus 1971). It strengthens the behaviour approaches to counselling and psychotherapy procedure that lend themselves to refinement through the scientific method (Kazdin 1982; Voltz and Evans 1982). Youths should try to improve and change their bad attitudes towards indecent dressing and emulate good and positive attitude towards decent dressing.

Modelling methods can also be used in dealing with indecent dressing (Bandura 1977). Observational learning, imitating, social learning and vicarious learning serve as the stimulus for similar thoughts, attitudes and behaviours on the part of the observers (Lazarus 1971). Bandura (1986) emphasizes the role of modelling in the development and the modification of much of human behaviours. Youths of Nigeria should have different people to serve as models who have decent dress code and pattern. Lazarus (1971) also talks about self-management programmes and self-directed behaviour. Self-management strategies, according to him, can be applied to many populations and many problems change can be brought about by teaching people to use coping skills in problematic situations. Youths can make decisions concerning specific behaviours they want to control or change including control of smoking, drinking, drugs, indecent dressing and so on. Self-directed behaviour on the other hand can provide the guidelines for change and a plan that will lead to change (Cormier W. and Cormier L, 1985). Youths should adopt the two therapeutic techniques to deal with the dangers of indecent dressings. Systematic desensitization is another therapeutic approach to deal with the dangers of indecent dressings (Lazarus, 1971). It has the longest track record of any behavioural technique in dealing with fears and its results have been frequently documented (Bandura, 1993). Youths nursing fear of getting husbands or wives in the future without enticing people with indecent dressing should do away with such anxiety (Olakojo, 2014).

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Indecent dressings and the dangers attached with them are viruses that ruin the society which should be dealt with or else the future of tomorrow leaders will be marred. Indecent dressing should be discouraged and other good behaviours should be imitated through modelling. Based on these, watching of sexy films and obscene pictures should be discouraged in our society. Parents should not handle their children with levity and should serve as role models to their children. The negative influence of peer group should be curbed. The religious leaders (Pastors, Imams) should always preach against indecent dressings and the dangers attached with them. The wrong use of internet should be dealt with through proper monitoring of internet activities by appropriate authorities set up by the government. Government should legislate against indecent dressing and have the appropriate dress code in our schools. They should equally legislate and empower any of its agencies to monitor and filter internet contents that flow into the Nigerian web. Finally, religious and moral instruction should assume it rightful

place in school curriculum and morals imparted to the students. Our media outfits should do well to stop the promotion of western culture in Nigeria as it is at variance with the Nigerian culture.



**Figure 1:** Examples of Indecent Dressing

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