



IMPACT OF PEER PRESSURE OF INDECENT DRESSING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN YOUTHS IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examines how peer pressure has become a salient determinant of adolescent behaviour and has shaped the developmental outcomes of Christian youths through indecent dressing in Kogi State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The total population of the study comprised Christian youths in Kogi State, Nigeria, who made up one million, seven hundred thousand, one hundred and four (1,700,104). Nine hundred and sixty-six (966) respondents were randomly sampled to represent the total population. Data were collected using questionnaire and interview. The data were analysed using version 30 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequencies and simple percentages were used for demographic variables, mean scores for research questions while independent sample t-test for testing the hypothesis. The finding revealed that peer pressure has negatively impacted the development of Christian youths through indecent dressing in Kogi State, Nigeria. The study recommends that Churches, youths and Christian leaders should lead by example, strengthening teachings on modesty, decency, dressing from Biblical perspectives, the purpose of dressing and Christian identity.

Keywords: Impact, Peer Pressure, Christian Youths and Indecent Dressing

Introduction

The concept, peer pressure among Christian youths is a global menace. The law of cause and effect comes into play in the development journey of humans from birth to adulthood; as a result, the biggest impact or influences on a person are the people around them and the environment in which the person finds him/herself. This impact begins from day one of one's birth and moves to a climax at adolescence. At the naive phase of life, the child gets heavily influenced by his/her small family cluster. The child gets influenced initially by the mother with whom he/she carries out his/her first smile before the wider society in each developmental stage. At the early stage, most parents influenced their children by talking to them, answering them when they made any sound, singing to them, and distracting them with toys. Gradually, they begin to learn the skill of taking their first step to walk, move around, go to school and mix with other children.

There are various stages and levels at which children are influenced from age 0 to adulthood. At ages 0-2 years, children spend more time with their mothers or caregivers. This is the time they learn from their mothers or caregivers. At this stage, they hardly know or care about the peer group and so are hardly pressured. Most of them at age 2 prefer to stay with their parents, and for that reason, protest on the first day they resume school. At ages 3-8 years, some are in nursery while others are enrolled on primary school. At this stage, they begin to learn to make friends with their classmates, though they are yet to fully trust their classmates because they are still naïve and tender. In the early years of their primary school education, children see their parents and family members as their best friends; thus, they usually report matters that transpire between them and their schoolmates to their parents. Towards their later years in primary school, they begin to covet their mates' dresses, toys, and shoes, and gradually graduate into liking what most of their mates like. According to medical experts, these children developed at their own pace, but these developmental indicators give a general idea of the changes to expect as a child gets older, both biological and influential changes (Okafor & Ajayi, 2022).

From the ages of 9-17 years through their secondary school education, children begin to get pressured by their mates little by little; they start forming cliques of like-minded individuals, and the child's growing

independence from the family and interest in friends will gradually begin to unfold as they develop their unique personality and opinions. They form stronger, more complex friendships and peer relationships, and become more passionate about being together with their peers. They become more conscious of the developing changes in their body. How they are looked at by others becomes a concern, although they still value their parents, but they get embattled at this point to choose who to obey between their parents and peers. They mostly indicate more interest in their peer group-related matters and indicate less affection toward parents; thus, some of them get challenged by schoolwork and begin to show more concern about future school and work plans and acquire more defined work habits. They become more complex, giving reasons for their own choices, whether right or wrong. All these changes in attitude, character and choices are obviously indicative of peer pressure (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2024).

As an influence of a social group on an individual, peer pressure is common among young people because, many times, teenagers feel social pressure to conform to the group of peers with whom they socialise. When an individual takes on the behaviours, attitudes, and styles of their peers because of the pressure of fitting in, this is peer conformity, which is also known as peer pressure (Cherry & Gans, 2023). They buttressed that influence could continue throughout a person's life, but it can also be modified through deliberate efforts. If not, it becomes a lifelong process where individuals, especially teenagers and youths, learn and internalise the values, beliefs, and behaviours of their peer groups.

The youthful exuberance, as popularly known, is due to ongoing developmental activities in their brain. Teen brains are so vulnerable and volatile; during early and mid-adolescence, the brain undergoes considerable neural growth and pruning, which creates changes in connectivity within and between various brain regions. This transition is characterised by many potential baits and traps for most teenagers. However, peer pressures are not limited to having negative impacts but also carry along their positive impacts. If properly brought up and mentored, Youths are the strength of any nation. Robson (2022) noted that it is only about the past two decades that scientists have been able to chart the neural changes across the core period of development of the teenage brain.

Christian youths are expected to live their lives in accordance with the principles of the Bible, such as love, uprightness, sexual purity, modesty in dressing and self-discipline. These values often stand in disparity to the popular culture promoted by their peers through social media, entertainment, and peer interaction. Consequently, many Christian youths find themselves struggling to maintain their faith and values in the face of external pressure to conform. This conformity is particularly obvious in areas such as alcoholic consumption, pre-marital sex, participation in cultism, disengagement from school work, drug abuse, indecent dressing and distancing themselves from families and friends.

Most Christian circles and youth ministries often place their emphasis on doctrinal teaching without adequately addressing the practical realities of peer impacts. This gap necessitates a focused investigation into the peculiar experiences of Christian youths in their interaction with peer impacts within and outside the church, this is why Despite parents, teachers and other caregivers' efforts to ensure the proper and healthy development of Christian youths, peer pressure and societal influence seems to prevail and impacts on the development of many Christian youths' ore negatively than positively in the mode of their dressing.

Kogi State is a state in the North Central region of Nigeria consisting of twenty-one local government areas. The state is a multi-ethnic state with multiple indigenous languages, with an estimated population of about three million five hundred and eighty-three thousand, eight hundred and eighteen (3,583,818). Out of which about 1.8 million are youths (Action Aid Nigeria, 2024). In the state, about 45% of the state's population is Muslim, about 40% is Christian, and the remaining 15% follows traditional ethnic religious minorities. Despite the effort of parents and the church in the proper upbringing of the youths in a godly manner, the challenge of indecent dressing among them continues to be a challenge to Christendom (Kogi State Government (KSG), 2021). It is against this bedrock that this paper examined the impact of peer pressure on indecent dressing on the development of Christian youths in Kogi State, Nigeria.

The Problem

The scripture says in Lamentations 3:27 that “It is good for a man that he bears the yoke in his youth”. This is because youths are known for strength and ability to stand, bear and persist under several difficult situations, but the fact remains that they are more vulnerable when it comes to influence, trials and temptations because they face heavy peer pressure to conform to the world’s trending activities from childhood, especially in this computer and internet era where secrecy is easily accessible.

Since the same information available for mature minds is also available for immature minds, Christian youths run into an identity crisis, a situation whereby they struggle between two opinions, a clash between societal expectations and Christian values. As they grow up trying to follow the teachings of Christianity, which presents the Bible as the ultimate manual for a successful livelihood, they also get pressured to compromise their moral values by their unbelieving friends and mates through peer pressure. Thus, they get engaged in behaviours that are against their religious principles, such as indecent dressing, premarital sex, alcohol consumption, participation in cultism, distraction from school work and keeping distance from family and friends, etc. In this confusion of conformity contentions, Christian youths may lose their true identity and purpose, which consequently impairs their proper development.

This loss of identity and purpose of the Christian youth is the main target behind the negative impact of such peer pressure. Consequently, Christian youths face external influences that negatively impact their faith, making them vulnerable to some unscrupulous members of other religions who delight in thwarting their uprightness and religious development, deceiving them into false friendship, indecent dressing, and ultimately corrupting their moral and Christian values. Christian youths are psychologically facing the problems of relationships, decision-making processes, which are inadequately attended to by the Church.

Thus, the inability to address some of these peer pressures or anti-social vices as exhibited by these Christian youths in the state has sparked unhealthy discussions. These negative impacts have impaired the image of the church which can further impeded her future glory, considering how the youths are the future leaders of the church and society at large viewing how no society will grow without having youths with good morals prompted the study of examining the “Impact of Peer Pressure of Indecent Dressing on the Development of Christian Youths in Kogi State, Nigeria”.

Objective of the Study

This study assessed the impact of peer pressure of indecent dressing on the development of Christian youths in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Research Question

What is the impact of peer pressure of indecent dressing on the development of Christian youths in Kogi State, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the opinions of employed and unemployed Christian youths on the impact of peer pressure of indecent dressing on the development of Christian youths in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Issues

Youth Development

This is the period of their physical development, which is more obvious than other types of development. According to Rider (2024), youth development ages and stages refer to common characteristics of children and adolescents as they enter different phases of development through the years. Their ability to develop successfully depends to a great extent on the support and assistance they receive from the people and institutions around them.

Christian Youths

The concept of Christian youths in this study refers to young people within the defined youth age range who bear the name of Christianity as their religion. Some Christian Youths in the Bible include: David, Joseph,

Samuel, Josiah, Jeremiah, Mary, the mother of Jesus, Timothy, Absalom, Rehoboam, Esau, The Youths Who Mocked Elisha, among others.

Peer Pressure

The concept of peer pressure can be traced back to the necessity of social cohesion and survival in early human societies, where belonging to a group was vital for protection and resource acquisition (Thaw, 2024). Carnevale and Heberle (2025) opined that, when one is stimulated to do something, it gives rise to a change of attitudes, behaviours, or actions. They expatriated that it could be both positive, like encouraging healthy habits, and negative, leading to risky or harmful behaviours. As a result, they sometimes unguardedly influence themselves in ideas, values and behaviours either positively or negatively. Thus, they engage in acts and behaviours that they do not want to do, but because their friends do so that they can feel accepted and valued by their friends. This is similar to the teachings of Apostle Paul in Rom 7:19-21. Verse 21 says, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me". It is as a result of a kind of influence or impact prevailing over his person. This influence in operation becomes fixed in action in one's soul and becomes a law or a rule of action of one's being, so that when a person wants to do a certain thing, something else, another thing is present to prevail and subject the person to insistent demands. According to Ajokpaniovo et al. (2021), as Christian youths, living an exemplary life must be carried out among their peers such that no one can despise them as Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Tim 4:12: "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity". In most cases, peer pressure is carried out within a peer group.

Impact of Peer Pressure on Members

- i. Socialisation: a situation where individuals develop social skills, norms, and values within the peer group.
- ii. Identity formation: Peer groups can influence an individual's self-concept and sense of belonging.
- iii. Reference group: A peer group serves as a standard for evaluating oneself and one's own behaviour.
- iv. Social norms: Peer groups establish and enforce unwritten rules and expectations.
- v. Group dynamics: Peer groups normally exhibit characteristics like cohesion, communication patterns, and style of leadership.
- vi. Peer pressure: The force exerted by peers to conform to certain behaviours or attitudes.
- vii. Cliques: There are often small, tight-knit groups within a larger peer group, often with shared interests or characteristics.
- viii. Peer support: Emotional support, encouragement, and acceptance from peers.
- ix. Peer culture: Shared values, beliefs, and practices that define a peer group's identity.

Hall et al. (2023) confirmed that a person can belong to many peer groups simultaneously, but the fact remains that the groups can have a profound impact on an individual's development and understanding.

Indecent Dressing

Indecent dressing has become a topic of significant debate in modern society, particularly in religious circles. For Christian youths, clothing choices are often tied not only to cultural trends but also to spiritual and moral considerations. The concept of "indecent dressing" typically refers to attire that is revealing or immodest by cultural or religious standards. Indecent dressing typically refers to attire deemed inappropriate based on cultural, religious, or societal norms. In Christianity, indecent dressing often contradicts the values of modesty and self-respect emphasised in biblical teachings (Opoku, 2020). There are ongoing concerns in Christian communities that such dressing could negatively influence the spiritual and personal development of young people.

Causes of Indecent Dressing

Indecent dressing among Christian youths can be attributed to a combination of social, cultural, psychological, and religious factors. Kunz (2020), Kabir and Lee (2021), Pereira et al. (2021), Alshammari (2022) and Aliyu (2024) enumerated some of the following as causes of indecent dressings:

- i. Peer pressure and social influence.

- ii. Media and celebrity influence
- iii. Lack of proper guidance
- iv. Desire for attention and self-expression
- v. Cultural and societal norms
- vi. Ignorance or misinterpretation of religious teachings
- vii. Rebellion against authority.

Impact of Peer Pressure on Indecent Dressing

One of the virtues expected from a Christian youth is to appear decent in his or her appearance in appearance. However, peer pressure has impacted many Christian youths negatively in their mode of dressing, which has affected their development. Obadeyi (2020) and Abioje (2021) asserted that some Christian youths are made to dress indecently due to the pressure from their peer. They added that some Christian youths have involved themselves in stealing and ungodly exhibition due to their desperate quest for indecent dressing to gain social acceptance. They are involved in this to entice and seduce other people, forgetting that they are Christ ambassadors, and it is against Biblical principles.

Furthermore, Edeh and Ike (2022) opined that, as Christian Youths struggle with internal conflicts between secular fashion and Biblical principles for decency, most of them are said to have feelings of being left out as they attempt to adhere to modest dressing standards which differ significantly from popular styles among their friends or classmates. In the same reflections, Mordi (2021) pushed that Christian youths in urban environments face more of this peer pressure of dressing indecently and provocatively, as they often associate dressing with social status, popularity, and modernity. They buttressed that indecent dressing attracts disfavour from the public.

According to Olatunde (2020), Thompson and Heinberg (2020), Boateng and Anim (2022), indecent dressing has exposed so many Christian youths to sexual harassment, unnecessary negative feelings on the opposite sex and prostitution. They stressed that indecent dressing has distracted some Christian youths to be distracted and lose focus in their academic pursuit. All these caused quarrels and misunderstandings between them and the parents.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design, and the target population were Christian youths from 21 LGAs in Kogi state, Nigeria. A simple random sample population of 966 respondents out of 1,700,104 was used for the study. A structured questionnaire and scheduled interview were the instruments employed for data collection. The data analyses were based on the responses from 966 respondents out of the sampled 1,152 Christian youths. The respondents were randomly selected from 72 churches that have more issues of indecent dressing among the Christian youths. The vetted questionnaire was administered by the researcher. The data was analysed using version 30 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The mean scores for the items were based on a four-point Likert scale, and the midpoint average for the decision for items or variables was fixed at 2.50. This implies that a mean score of 2.50 and above indicates agreement (positive response) with the suggested notion of items, while a mean score of below 2.50 implies disagreement (negative response). The information from the interview was used as supplementary data in the analysis. The hypothesis was tested with a t-test statistic at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results are presented according to the demographic variables of the respondents based on occupation status (employed/unemployed), research question and hypothesis.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	608	62.9
Unemployed	358	37.1
Total	966	100.0

Table 1 reveals that 608 (62.9%) of the respondents were employed Christian youths, while 358 (37.1%) were unemployed. In this distribution, employed respondents outnumbered their unemployed counterparts.

Research Question: What is the impact of peer pressure of indecent dressing on the development of Christian youths in Kogi State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Opinions of Employed and Unemployed Christian Youths on the Impact of Peer Pressure of Indecent Dressing on the Development of Christian Youths in Kogi State, Nigeria

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Peer pressure has made some Christian youths dress indecently	504	423	21	18	3.46
2	As a result of peer pressure, some Christian youths who are desperate for indecent dressing get involved in stealing other people's dresses just to be accepted in their peer groups.	293	624	32	17	3.23
3	As a result of peer pressure, some Christian youths dress indecently for social acceptance.	458	428	69	21	3.37
4	Some Christian youths who dress indecently as a result of peer pressure entice some people to lust after them	320	581	44	21	3.24
5	The Peer pressure of dressing indecently among some Christian youths causes disrespect for cultural and societal norms	396	482	67	21	3.30
6	Through peer pressure, some Christian youths arouse unnecessary feelings of their opposite sex towards them as they dress indecently	329	551	70	16	3.23
7	Some Christian youths who dress indecently due to peer pressure attract disapproval from some members of the public	369	496	81	20	3.26
8	Indecent dressing of some Christian youths has caused distractions in academic performance, as some students find it challenging to focus on their studies.	330	538	77	21	3.22
9	Peer pressure has caused a quarrel between some Christian youths and their parents because of indecent dressing.	300	559	85	22	3.18
10	Peer pressure has exposed some Christian youths to sexual harassment for their indecent dressing.	274	585	86	21	3.15
Aggregate						3.26

Decision Mean =2.50

Results in this table show the mean scores of 3.46, 3.23, 3.37, 3.24, 3.30, 3.23, 3.26, 3.22, 3.18 and 3.15. The aggregate mean is 3.26, which is higher than the decision mean of 2.50. This implies that peer pressure has impacted the development of Christian youths negatively through indecent dressing in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the opinions of employed and unemployed Christian youths on the impact of peer pressure of indecent dressing on the development of Christian youths in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of Independent Samples t-test on the Impact of Peer Pressure on Indecent Dressing on the Development of Christian Youths in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	P	Remark
Employed Christian Youths	608	32.47	4.80	964	1.57	1.98	0.12	Not Sig.
Unemployed Christian Youths	358	32.94	3.71					

Not Significant at $P > 0.05$

The independent samples t-test analysis in Table 3 revealed that there is no significant difference in the opinions of employed and unemployed Christian respondents on the impact of peer pressure of indecent dressing on the development of Christian youths in Kogi State, Nigeria. This is because the calculated p-value of 0.12 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, and the calculated t-value of 1.57 is less than the critical value of 1.98. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant difference in the opinions of employed and unemployed Christian respondents on the impact of peer pressure of indecent dressing on the development of Christian youths in Kogi State, Nigeria, is hereby retained. This implies that the opinion of

employed and unemployed Christian respondents on the impact of peer pressure of indecent dressing on the development of Christian youths in Kogi State is insignificant.

Discussions

From the analysis of data collected from the research questionnaire and hypothesis, the majority of the respondents shared their opinions that peer pressure has negatively impacted the development of Christian youths through indecent dressing in Kogi State, Nigeria. This finding aligned with assertions made by Obadeyi (2020) and Abioje (2021) that some Christian youths are made to dress indecently due to the pressure from their peer. They added that some Christian youths have involved themselves in stealing and ungodly exhibition due to their desperate quest for indecent dressing to gain social acceptance. They are involved in this to entice and seduce other people, forgetting that they are Christ ambassadors, and it is against Biblical principles.

Furthermore, the finding of the study is in line with the views of Edeh and Ike (2022) that, as Christian Youths struggles with internal conflicts between secular fashion and Biblical principles for decency, most of them are said to have feelings of being left out as they attempt to adhere to modest dressing standards which differ significantly from popular styles among their friends or classmates. In the same reflections, Mordi (2021) pushed that Christian youths in urban environments face more of this peer pressure of dressing indecently and provocatively, as they often associate dressing with social status, popularity, and modernity. They buttressed that indecent dressing attracts disfavour from the public.

According to Olatunde (2020), Thompson and Heinberg (2020), Boateng and Anim (2022), indecent dressing has exposed so many Christian youths to sexual harassment, unnecessary negative feelings on the opposite sex and prostitution. They stressed that indecent dressing has distracted some Christian youths to be distracted and lose focus in their academic pursuit. All these caused quarrels and misunderstandings between them and the parents.

Furthermore, the responses of interviewees attested that most of these indecent dressers probably do these because they have feelings of unattractiveness; they cause some innocent men to lust after them and get raped, disrespected or denied their deserved possessions at the end of the day. They stressed that indecent dressing blurs fruitful focus, diverts productive concentration, causes distraction in churches and schools where some students find it challenging to focus on their studies, causes quarrels between youths and parents, pastors and spouses.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the study concluded that the challenge of indecent dressing among Christian youths is societal and peer-driven. Many Christian youths in this state are distracted from fruitful focus, like the pursuit of their education, career, due to indecent dressing.

Recommendation

The study recommended the need for Churches and Christian leaders to strengthen their teachings on decent and modest appearance as emphasised in the Bible and discourage all forms of indecent dressing to show their Christian identity.

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