

## PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTIONS TO CLOTHING STYLES: A STUDY OF SOCIAL NORMS, TRENDS, AND PERSONAL IDENTITY IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

### RESEARCH ARTICLE

*This study looks at how globalisation and fashion trends in Nigeria are connected, focussing on how clothing is changing the way people see themselves and their communities. As globalisation continues to affect cultures and societies around the world, Nigeria, with its many ethnic groups and rich cultural legacy, is a unique example of how traditional clothing may mix with global fashion trends. The study looks at how Nigerian clothing styles have changed in reaction to the rise of Western fashion and how these changes have affected people's sense of self, their social position, and their group membership. This study looks at fashion trends in cities and towns in Nigeria to show how adopting global styles might affect people's mental and social health. The study looks at how clothes may be used to represent oneself and set oneself apart from others. It also looks at the conflict between keeping cultural traditions and following current, globalised clothing trends. The results show that younger people in Nigeria, especially in cities, are more likely to wear hybrid styles that mix traditional and global influences. However, older people still value cultural clothing as a way to show ethnic pride and social status. The study also looks at how clothes can show social mobility, focusing on how premium brands and Western-inspired attire can show success and belonging. But the study finds that those from lower socioeconomic origins may have trouble fitting in because they feel pressure to follow global fashion trends. The psychological impacts of clothing, such as how it affects self-esteem, body image, and social acceptance, are also looked at. In conclusion, the study shows how complicated clothing is as a social and psychological tool in Nigeria, where globalization has made it easier and harder for people to figure out who they are. The mixing of fashion trends shows how Nigerian culture is changing as global influences mix with local cultural values. This changes the meaning of clothes as a way to socialize and express oneself.*

**KEYWORDS:** Psychological Reactions, Clothing Styles, Social Norms, Trends, Personal Identity and Nigeria

### INTRODUCTION

Clothes are an important part of being human and serve both practical and symbolic purposes. It keeps you safe and warm while also letting you express yourself, develop your identity, and show off your social status (Davis, 1992). Researchers have looked at the psychological and sociological significance of clothes all over the world, focusing on how people use clothing to express their identity, follow social standards, and connect with others

(Tiggemann & Slater, 2014). Clothing in Nigeria is closely linked to cultural traditions, social and economic considerations, and trends around the world. Nigeria has a lot of different ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds, which makes it a great place to investigate how clothing affects people's sense of self and their mental health.

Clothing is no more only something you need to wear; in modern Nigeria, it is also a way to show your social status, personal identity, and whether you agree with or disagree with social conventions. Traditional Nigerian clothes like the agbada and dashiki are still popular in everyday life, showing pride in their culture. Globalization has brought Western fashion trends to other parts of the world, changing the way people dress, especially in cities (Adeyanju, 2017). Because of this, Nigerians have a lot of complicated options that affect how others see them and how they see themselves. Because of these two influences, traditional and global, we need to look into how clothes affect the minds of people in Nigeria.

Clothes are more than just a reflection of the outside world; they are also connected to self-esteem, body image, and social identity. Fashion is a strong way to build one's identity since it lets people show others their social roles, ethnic backgrounds, and ideals. How people feel about themselves based on what they wear is an important part of their mental health (Dittmar, 2009). In this way, clothing is a social and psychological artefact that affects how people see themselves and their social lives. But there isn't much research on the socio-psychological effects of clothes in Nigeria, especially when it comes to how clothing affects personal identity and societal acceptance. There hasn't been enough research in the academic literature on how clothing affects personal identity and social relationships in Nigeria. There is a lot of study on the overall link between fashion, identity, and how people see each other (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014; Kim & Kim, 2004), but not much that looks at Nigeria specifically. Nigeria's cities are growing quickly, and social media is becoming more popular. This has made fashion trends more worldwide, and they now coexist with traditional clothing styles. These new fashion trends are changing how people in Nigeria show who they are, deal with social expectations, and deal with societal constraints. Also, things like ethnicity, gender, and social class might affect what people wear. In Nigeria, which has a number of different cultures, clothes are a method to show who you are and what group you belong to. So, we need to know how these wardrobe choices affect things like social perception, body image, and self-esteem. Also, learning more about how Nigerians mentally respond to these different clothing rules can provide us a better idea of how fashion affects mental health and social integration. So, this study wants to look into how people in Nigeria react to different forms of clothes, especially how clothing fits in with social standards, personal identity, and new fashion trends. The study's goal is to learn more about the social and psychological roles that clothing plays in Nigerian society by looking at these aspects.

### **The Role of Clothing in Identity Formation**

Clothing is widely recognized as an essential part of self-expression and identity formation (Davis, 1992). According to Tiggemann and Slater (2014), clothing is a powerful tool through which individuals negotiate their personal and social identities. Clothing helps communicate individual preferences, attitudes, and socio-cultural positions. Bem (1972) says that how we see ourselves can be affected by how we act, like how we choose to dress. People often dress in a way that reflects how they want to see themselves or how they want to be seen by others (Schroeder & Zwick, 2004). This shows how clothes can affect how people see themselves. When it comes to Nigeria, the clothes people wear are typically a mix of traditional cultural traditions and modern fashion trends from around the world. This makes it hard to figure out how personal identification and society expectations work together.

Studies have proven that what you wear has a big effect on how you feel about yourself and how you fit in with others. Dittmar (2009) says that clothes are more than just useful; they also show who you are by showing your cultural values, socioeconomic standing, and group membership. In Nigeria, which is a heterogeneous country, things including ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic class might affect what people wear. So, the way people feel about clothes, especially how they make them feel like they belong and give them confidence, is closely linked to social and cultural frameworks.

Clothing has been more than just a need for a long time because it is such a deeply embedded part of human civilisation. It is an important instrument for expressing oneself, building one's identity, and finding one's place in society. Over the years, researchers have come to regard clothes as a way for people to show who they are in terms of their personal, social, and cultural identities. In today's world, what people wear has a big impact on how they see themselves and how others see them. Clothes have a lot of psychological, social, and cultural meaning. To understand how they help shape identity, you need to look at both their symbolic meanings and the ways they are used to show who you are in a larger social context.

Many sociologists and psychologists have looked into how clothing may shape a person's identity. They all stress how clothing can be a powerful symbol **Davis (1992)** argues that clothing is a powerful means through which individuals convey their identities. Clothing is not merely a practical necessity; it is imbued with symbolic meaning that communicates a variety of social messages. These messages can include personal preferences, social status, cultural heritage, and affiliations with particular groups. The clothes one chooses to wear serve as a form of social signaling that reflects internal thoughts, values, and aspirations, often aligning with how an individual wishes to be perceived.

The significance of clothing in shaping personal identity is exemplified in the work of **Mead (1934)**, He says that people build their sense of self through their relationships with others. In this sense, clothes are a way for people to show who they are to others. People's clothes not only show who they are, but they also respond to social cues and expectations. For example, a business suit says that you are a professional, whereas informal or unusual clothing may say that you want to show a more relaxed or creative side of yourself. This link between clothes and self-identity is quite essential in cultures where people commonly utilise visual cues to figure out their social roles, socioeconomic class, and personal beliefs.

Clothes are very important for both personal and societal identification. **Tajfel and Turner's (1979)** Social Identity Theory helps us understand how clothing might show that someone is part of a group. This hypothesis says that people get some of their identity from the groups they belong to. People might belong to a group for several reasons, such as their race, religion, social status, or job. Clothing is a strong sign of group membership since it lets people connect with various social, cultural, or professional groups. Clothing is an important symbol of ethnic and cultural identification in many civilisations. For instance, traditional clothes like the **Agbada** for the Yoruba, **Dashiki** for the Igbo, or **Fugu** For the Hausa people in Nigeria, their clothes not only show off their own flair, but they also represent their ethnic pride and cultural heritage. Wearing traditional clothes makes people feel like they are part of a certain cultural group, which helps them feel linked to their heritage, community, and shared values. These dress choices are a way to show who you are and celebrate your identity within a wider social group, as well as a way to let others in the community know that you are a member.

In contrast, **globalization** has introduced Westernized clothing styles, which have become symbols of modernity and cosmopolitanism. As **Adebayo (2015)** highlights, The emergence of global fashion trends in cities, especially in places like Nigeria, has led to a mix of old and new styles in culture. This mix lets people switch between different identities, such cultural, global, and modern. For example, Nigerian teens could mix traditional dress with Western-style apparel to show both their native identity and their desire to keep up with global trends. This shows how identity can change in a globalized environment. Thus, clothing becomes a tool for negotiating and balancing personal and community identities in the face of evolving social, cultural, and economic landscapes. With the rise of social media, clothes have taken on new meanings as more and more people utilise fashion to shape and show off their online identities. Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest are all places where fashion influencers use clothes to construct their online selves. These influencers have a big impact on what people think is fashionable, desired, and stylish, and they help set trends. As **Schroeder and Zwick (2004)** the ability to show off your particular style through fashion has changed the way people utilise clothes to express themselves. Because social media is so visible, clothes have become a big part of people's digital identities. People deliberately choose what they wear to show the world a certain image or personality.

This event has complicated psychological ramifications. On the one hand, social media lets people show who they are through fashion by trying out different styles and personalities. On the other hand, it can put a lot of pressure on people to follow the latest fashion and cosmetics trends. As **Tiggemann and Slater (2014)** suggests that being around idealised images of beauty and fashion all the time might make people feel like they aren't good enough, especially young people who are still figuring out who they are. Wanting to get social approval through what you wear can have both good and bad consequences on your mental health, especially if you base your self-worth on how many likes or comments you get on social media. Clothes can definitely hurt your self-esteem and physical image, but they can also provide you a lot of psychological strength. The **enclothed cognition theory**, proposed by **Adam & Galinsky (2012)**, says that the clothes we wear can affect not just how other people see us, but also how we think, feel, and act. This hypothesis says that what we wear can change how our brains work and how we feel. For instance, wearing a business suit might make someone feel more capable and in charge, which could help them do better at work. In the same way, wearing clothes that match who you are, like garments that show cultural pride or personal ideals, may make you feel powerful, proud, and confident. In Nigeria, this empowerment via clothing is most clear in the wearing of traditional dress to show that you are proud of your culture in the face of global cultural influences. By opting to wear clothes like the **Agbada, Iro, or Buba**, In a world that typically values Western fashion, people show their connection to their cultural history and affirm their identity through their clothing. People can feel empowered when they go against global trends because it lets them take back control of their cultural identity and express their particular values and ideas through the clothes they wear.

### **Impact Clothing and Social Norms**

Clothes show what people think and believe in society. Goffman (1959) says that people utilise clothes as part of their "presentation of self" in everyday interactions, where they consciously shape their appearance to fit in with what society expects. Diverse cultures have very diverse ideas about what clothes are proper to wear, and these ideas serve as an unspoken guidance for how to act, especially when it comes to gender, class, and race. In Nigeria, people wear traditional clothes like the agbada or dashiki has traditionally been linked to respect and cultural pride. In contrast, Western dress has evolved to stand for

modernisation and global connection (Adeyanju, 2017). But cultural heritage isn't the only factor that affects what people wear. Social mobility and the necessity for people to follow social standards also play a role. Changes in clothing patterns, especially in cities, show how Nigeria's social, political, and economic situation is changing, where social class, position, and group membership are very important.

In Nigerian cities like Lagos and Abuja, for instance, wearing Western clothing like suits and business clothes is a way to show that you are professional, modern, and part of a higher social class (Adebayo, 2015). Traditional clothing is also often only worn on special occasions or by people who want to show their cultural pride or fight against globalisation. The relationship between Western and traditional dress, especially when it comes to social class and modernity, shows how clothes can show your social status and be a way to express yourself mentally.

### **The Impact of Clothing and Social Norms**

Clothing has been significant to people for a long time. It protects them and is a strong way to communicate. People use clothes to show who they are, their social rank, and their cultural background. Clothing also has a big effect on social standards and how people are seen in society. Social norms are the unwritten standards that govern behavior in a given group or society, and clothing plays a crucial role in reinforcing these norms. The way individuals dress can affect how they are regarded, the relationships they create, and their standing within society. In today's fast-paced world, when cultural traditions and global fashion trends sometimes clash, this complicated relationship between clothes and social conventions is especially important.

The main purpose of dress in society is to show that you follow the rules. Social norms are standards or guidelines for how people should act that are usually based on what society expects. Clothing is a powerful way to fit in with these expectations because it is one of the most visible and easy to get kinds of expression. In most cultures, clothing shows that the person wearing it follows specific social norms, including being professional, modest, or respectful of tradition. **Goffman (1959)** stresses that people play social roles through their clothes, showing themselves in a way that fits with what is expected of them in their social setting. His theory of the "presentation of self" is a way of saying that clothes helps people keep an identity that is acceptable in society.

In a number of societies, what people wear is based on societal norms that say what's proper for particular situations. In many Western cultures, for instance, wearing suits and ties to work is a symbol of respect for authority and following the rules of the workplace. In the same way, people often have to wear modest clothes in religious contexts to show respect for the holy. In **Nigeria**, clothing also plays a similar role, with traditional attire like the **agbada** for men and the **iro and buba** for women, it means being proud of their ethnicity and following cultural rules. However, in cities, clothing patterns have become more Westernised because of globalisation and the rise of Western media and fashion.

This change in clothing conventions is part of a larger trend towards globalisation and cultural integration, where local customs and global influences mix. **Adeyanju (2017)** says that bringing Western-style clothing to Nigeria has caused a mix of traditional and modern clothing, thus people wear both kinds of clothes depending on the situation. But these kinds of changes often cause conflict between old and new conventions, which can affect how people find their place in a society. One of the most obvious ways that clothes affect social norms is by showing what social rank someone has. For a long time, clothes have shown

where someone stands in a social order. In a lot of places, the type, quality, and brand of clothes people wear can say a lot about their financial situation, level of education, and professional achievement. **Veblen (1899)** came up with the idea of "conspicuous consumption," which means that people use things like clothes to show off their affluence and social status. This is still true today, as people buy expensive fashion brands to show off their social position. In Nigeria, clothes also show social standing, especially in cities where expensive clothes, jewellery, and cars are common. Traditional clothing, like the agbada, can also show social rank. For example, clothes that are very detailed and fancy can show that someone is rich and important. In these situations, what you wear isn't only a method to express yourself; it's also a way to fit in with a given group or social class. People who can't afford high-end brands may feel left out or forced to dress a certain way to join in with higher-status groups.

Also, social media has made clothes even more important for social standing. People use sites like Instagram and TikTok to show off their fashion choices, which creates a virtual "performance" of social standing. **Tiggemann and Slater (2014)** say that social media has made it so that wardrobe decisions are more and more based on how others see you. People, especially young people, are often exposed to the carefully chosen fashion choices of celebrities, influencers, and peers, which can make them feel that they have to follow certain styles or trends. Wanting to keep up with these trends might cause people to buy more clothes and try to fit in, which strengthens the link between clothes and social standards. Clothes are very important for making and keeping gender norms. In many cultures, clothing is gendered, which means that certain styles and types of clothes are linked to certain genders. **Butler (1990)** theorises that gender is not something you are, but something you do. People reinforce and reproduce gender norms by doing things that are exclusive to their gender, such as choosing what to wear. For instance, in most Western cultures, women are expected to wear dresses or skirts to show that they are feminine, and males are supposed to wear suits, trousers and shirts to show that they are masculine. These rules about what to wear support the idea that there are only two genders: male and female.

In Nigeria, societal norms also strongly support gendered clothing behaviours. Women generally wear the iro and buba, which show femininity and modesty. Men, on the other hand, wear the **agbada** or **kaftan** as a marker of masculinity and authority. However, global fashion trends have brought about significant changes in gendered clothing norms. As Western influences spread, fashion has become increasingly fluid, with both men and women experimenting with clothing that defies traditional gender boundaries. **Adebayo (2015)** says that more and more younger Nigerians, especially those who live in cities, are wearing androgynous clothing styles that mix parts of both men's and women's apparel. This development goes against long-standing rules about what men and women should wear, and it shows how society is changing in terms of gender roles and expectations. These gendered rules have a big effect on people's mental health. People often utilise clothing to either support or question their gender identity. For people who follow traditional gender roles, clothing might make them feel like they belong and are stable. But for people who go against these conventions, the psychological effects might be complicated. **Schroeder and Zwick (2004)** Those who don't follow traditional gender attire rules may feel both empowered and alone as they stand up for who they are while also facing rejection or being pushed to the side by society.

Clothes can help people fit in with others, but they can also keep people out of groups. In cultures where social norms have a big impact on what people wear, people who don't follow these rules may be left out, shamed, or pushed to the side. There are some types of clothes

that are socially acceptable in Nigeria and many other places. These styles are seen as signs of respectability and belonging. People who don't follow these rules may be considered as outsiders or rebels, which can have big effects on their social lives. People from lower socioeconomic origins who can't afford expensive or trendy clothes, for example, may be discriminated against or left out. **Goffman (1959)** talks about the idea of "spoiled identity," which means that people are judged depending on how they look or how well they match society's standards. This is especially clear in Nigeria when you look at the differences between those who live in cities and people who live in rural areas. Those who live in rural areas may have trouble keeping up with global fashion trends because they don't have enough money. People who can't afford to wear the latest designs could feel left out of some social groups or communities, especially in cities where fashion is a big element of how people connect with each other. Also, the increased focus on "global" fashion trends has made a divide between traditional, local fashions and Westernised forms that people frequently think are more stylish or current. People who wear traditional clothes may feel like they don't fit in since they may be seen as out of touch with modern trends. **Veblen (1899)** talks about the idea of "conspicuous consumption," which includes buying clothes and the societal effects of this behaviour. People who can't or don't want to follow the rules on what to wear may feel that they don't belong or are on the outside of the larger social group.

### **Gender and Clothing and Identity**

Gender is another critical factor influencing clothing choices and the psychological responses to clothing styles. **Harrison (1992)** says that the way people dress based on their gender helps shape and maintain cultural ideas about what it means to be a man or a woman. In Nigeria, gendered attire is very important for showing what men and women are expected to do, how they should act, and what their duties are. Men's traditional clothing, like the agbada or kaftan, frequently shows respect, authority, and leadership. Women's clothing, like the iro and buba, shows cultural femininity and societal roles (Adeyanju, 2017). But as global design trends become more popular, dress rules for men and women have changed. Androgynous styles have become more popular in modern Western fashion, which has made it more acceptable for both men and women to wear clothes that go beyond traditional gender roles (Dittmar, 2009). In Nigeria, especially in cities, younger people are more and more trying out clothes that show both global influences and their own personal style, which goes against traditional gender roles. For example, women are wearing trousers, suits, and other types of "masculine" apparel to work, while men are wearing more colourful and expressive clothing designs that are usually thought of as feminine. These changes can have a big impact on people's mental health. **Boulton (2002)** argues that clothing styles influence self-esteem and social acceptance. Individuals who embrace more progressive gendered fashion may experience greater feelings of empowerment and autonomy, while those who adhere to traditional clothing may feel a strong sense of cultural identity and belonging. In Nigeria, these evolving norms of gender and clothing often create a tension between modernity and tradition, which can affect individuals' psychological well-being depending on how they navigate this dichotomy. Clothing has long been recognized as a powerful tool in the construction and expression of gender identity. As one of the most visible forms of self-expression, clothing plays a crucial role in signaling gender, conforming to societal expectations, and shaping individuals' perceptions of themselves and their social roles. The relationship between gender, clothing, and identity is complex, as it is influenced by social, cultural, and historical factors that govern what is considered appropriate for each gender. In modern societies, clothing serves not only as a means of dressing the body but also as a marker of gender identity, reflecting personal, societal, and cultural understandings of masculinity and femininity.

Clothing has long been used as a marker of gender identity, helping individuals express their adherence to societal gender roles. **Butler (1990)**, In her revolutionary work on gender performativity, she argues that gender is not something you are born with, but something you do through your actions, such as what you wear. Butler says that people show their gender identity through many social cues, and clothing is one of the most obvious and important ways to do this. For example, in many cultures, ladies are expected to wear skirts or dresses to show that they are women, while men are supposed to wear trousers and suits to show that they are men. In the early 20th century, clothing became tightly gendered as a way to control society (Tannock, 1999). This is when ladies started to wear dresses and men started to wear trousers. This split isn't only about style; it's also about how men and women act. As **Goffman (1959)** Clothes are an element of the "presentation of self," which shows who you are socially, according to him. Clothes are so gendered in our society that people are generally expected to wear them without question. People who don't follow these rules may be shunned or looked down upon.

In a lot of societies, strict rules on what men and women can wear help to promote the idea that there are two genders, which is one of the most obvious ways that people learn about gender. In this situation, clothing isn't just a matter of personal choice; it's also a societal need that helps people fit into their given gender roles. But this strict divide is becoming less and less common as modern fashion changes and people want to show more fluid and varied ideas of gender. Expectations about gender have a big effect on social rules about clothes. **Connell (2005)** talks about how gender norms tell people how to act and express themselves in ways that are acceptable in society. Clothing is a big area where these norms are enforced. In countries where strict gender roles are common, clothing is a way to make sure that people follow these duties. For instance, in many African cultures, like Nigeria, men and women wear very different traditional clothes. Women are required to wear dresses or skirts, while males are expected to wear trousers and tunics. **Adeyanju (2017)** reminds out that these conventional clothing rules are based on deeper cultural ideas about gender roles, where clothing is used to control people and prove their identity. But in the last few decades, more and more people have started challenging and reinterpreting these rules. The rise of **gender-neutral** and **androgynous** fashion reflects a broader shift in how individuals approach clothing as a form of self-expression, pushing back against the binary system that has long dictated what is "appropriate" for men and women to wear. **Simmons (2007)** says that clothing can disrupt established gender norms because more and more people are choosing to wear clothes that don't fit their gender to show who they are. This change has made clothing choices more diverse, giving people the chance to try on styles that were once thought to be only for one gender. For instance, women today may feel free to wear pants or suits, which used to be only for men, without getting as much criticism from society as they would have in the past. On the other hand, males are trying on more colourful, expressive clothes that are usually thought of as feminine. The growing acceptance of non-binary and gender-fluid clothing, especially in places that are known for being trendy, is a big change from the strict gender conventions of the past. This forces society to rethink what is appropriate attire for each gender **empowering individuals** to express and assert their gender identity. Clothing serves as a form of personal empowerment, allowing individuals to communicate their gender identity to the world. **Adam and Galinsky (2012)** came up with the idea of "enclothed cognition," which says that the clothes people wear not only change how other people see them, but also how they think and act. For instance, dressing professionally can make someone feel more in charge and capable, while wearing clothes that show their gender identity can raise their self-esteem and help them see themselves in a positive light. Women can feel more empowered and stronger when they can wear clothes that show who they are,

whether those clothes are traditional or modern and gender-neutral. **Connell (2005)** talks about how gender roles can be confining, but people can combat these roles by choosing clothes that express who they are and their freedom. When men wear clothes that don't match with established gender roles, they can be more flexible and varied in how they show their masculinity. This lets them try out different looks and explore what it really means to be a man.

### **Effect of Clothing on Social Identity and Group Membership**

Clothing is a significant factor in establishing and maintaining social identity. **Social Identity Theory** (Tajfel and Turner (1979) stress how important it is for a person's concept of self to be shaped by their group participation. Clothes can show what groups a person belongs to, such as ethnic, religious, or social groups. In Nigeria, clothes are a big part of showing who you are ethnically. Traditional clothes like the **agbada** for the Yoruba, **isiagu** for the Igbo, and **fugu** for People often wear the Hausa with pride, which shows ethnic pride and group unity.

But the link between clothes and social identity is complicated, especially in multicultural countries like Nigeria, where clothes from around the world have mixed with clothes from Nigeria.

**Davis** Fashion is both a way to fit in and a way to stand out, according to (1992). People can show what group they belong to by the clothes they wear. This could be an ethnic group, a socio-economic class, or a worldwide fashion movement. Not only do social norms affect these decisions, but so does the person's desire to fit in with or stand out from a certain group. Globalisation has made it possible for people in Nigeria to wear global fashion trends, which has led to the rise of hybrid styles that mix traditional and modern components. These mixed dress styles show how Nigeria's social dynamics are changing, and they have deep psychological effects since people may feel both empowered and anxious about their status in both local and global groups (Adeyanju, 2017). Clothing has traditionally been a powerful way to show who you are. It not only serves the purpose of dressing the body, but it is also a visual language that shows who you are socially. Clothing is a big aspect of cultural and social contexts. People use it to show that they belong to certain social groups, ethnic groups, and socio-economic classes. Clothing has a number of different effects on social identity and group membership. It affects not just how other people see a person, but also how that person sees themselves in a certain social setting. This chapter looks at the complicated connection between clothing and group identification. It looks at how clothing can show that someone belongs to a group, how it can set groups apart, and how it helps build and keep social identities. Clothes can show what group you belong to and what your social status is. **Tajfel and Turner (1979)**, According to their Social Identity Theory, people define themselves by the social groups they belong to. These groups then affect how they think, act, and feel like they belong. People's dress choices are a clear and obvious sign of the social groupings they belong to, whether those groups be based on race, religion, profession, or socioeconomic status. People can show that they belong to a certain group by wearing certain styles of clothing. This strengthens their identification and their acceptability into that group.

For instance, in many cultures, the way people dress is closely related to their race and cultural background. For example, in Nigeria, traditional clothing like the **agbada** (worn by men) and the **iro and buba** (worn by women) are emblematic of specific ethnic groups like the Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa. Wearing these garments signals not only cultural pride but also ethnic affiliation. **Adeyanju (2017)** says that clothes in Nigeria can show both group identity and a sense of belonging to a group. These traditional clothes show a shared history, culture,

and set of beliefs that help people stay true to who they are within their ethnic community. Clothes can also show what your social and professional status is. In today's world, business clothes like suits and ties are often seen as signs of professionalism, affluence, and the ability to move up in the world. People who wear these kinds of clothes may be part of a professional or upper-class group, whereas people who don't wear them may be lower-class or not have access to specific social chances. Veblen (1899) talks about "conspicuous consumption," which is the idea that wanting to wear expensive or committee-associated clothes is a means to sided signalling. For instance, people perceive high-end brands like Louis Vuitton and Gucci not just as luxury things but also as signs of wealth and success, which makes the person who wears them look like they belong to an elite club.

Clothing is a big part of what makes people different from each other, both inside and outside of their own groups. **Goffman (1959)** says that clothing is one of the most important ways that people play their social roles and set themselves apart from others. Setting up boundaries that show who is in the group and who is not is a big part of social identity. Clothing is a way to show these boundaries on the outside, which keeps groups apart. The best example of this is how clothing may show the differences between different socioeconomic classes. People from diverse socio-economic origins may wear clothes that show how much money they have in many cultures. People who are richer may be more likely to wear designer clothes, whereas people who are less may be more likely to wear clothes that are less expensive or used. This difference isn't just about how much money you have; it's also about the cultural capital that comes with particular styles of apparel. **Bourdieu (1984)** talks about how people use cultural capital, including knowing about fashion and being able to buy expensive labels, to set themselves apart from those with lower status. This split makes an in-group of people who dress alike and an out-group of those who don't follow these fashion rules.

Also, clothes can be used to keep people out of social groups. For example, in schools, kids typically separate themselves into groups based on what they wear. Those who wear "fashionable" clothes are often included in popular social circles, while those who can't afford trendy clothes may feel left out or pushed to the edges. **Schroeder and Zwick (2004)** show how clothing choices in school settings can define group identity, with "in-group" members choosing clothing to show that they follow a set of social and aesthetic rules, while individuals who don't follow these rules may be left out or looked down upon. In some circumstances, clothes can be used to separate people based on their looks, marking them as "other." For instance, religious garb like the **hijab** worn by Muslim women, or the **kipph** Jewish men wear them to show that they are part of a group and to show their religious identity. These clothes can make people feel proud and like they belong to their religious community, but they can also lead to discrimination or exclusion from mainstream society because those who don't share the same views may see them as a sign of difference. **Goffman (1959)** talks about the idea of "spoilt identity," which means that those who look different from the norm are typically looked down on and pushed to the edges of society.

Clothing may also be a strong instrument in social and political movements, in addition to showing that you are part of a group. People have utilised clothing to protest, fight back, and bring about societal change throughout history. **The Civil Rights Movement** in the United States, for example, saw African Americans using clothing as a symbol of pride and resistance against racial inequality, with figures like **Rosa Parks** and **Malcolm X** famously wearing attire that expressed their political and social stance. In more recent years, movements such as **#MeToo** and **Black Lives Matter** have used clothes to question social standards and call for more fairness and equality. Clothing has also been utilised as a way to

fight back and bring about social change in Nigeria. When there is political upheaval in Nigeria, people have worn certain types of attire to show that they disagree with government policies or want justice. Wearing traditional clothes, which are commonly worn with modern clothes, is a method for Nigerians to show their identity in the face of political and societal problems. **Adebayo (2015)** notes that clothing in Nigeria, particularly in the context of social movements, is used to communicate solidarity, pride, and the desire for social change.

### **The Psychological Impact of Clothing Choices**

Clothing influences not only social identity but also individual psychological well-being. **Dittmar (2009)** argues that clothes can be a way for people to express themselves, which can help their self-esteem and body image. People wear clothes to show off who they are, what they like, and how they feel. This can be good or bad for their mental health. Wearing clothes that fit with how you see yourself and how you want to be seen can make you feel better about yourself. On the other hand, not matching your internal identity with how you portray yourself might make you feel worse (Schroeder & Zwick, 2004). The psychological effects of clothes are especially strong in Nigeria because of the clash between traditional clothing styles and current, global design trends. For example, people who wear Western styles may feel more modern and able to move up in society, while people who wear traditional clothes may feel more connected to their culture and community but may also feel left out in some social situations (Adeyanju, 2017). People's self-image, how they see their own social value, and how they fit in with different groups in society are all affected by the clothes they wear.

### **The Psychological Impact of Clothing Choices**

Clothing is a great way to express yourself and is a big part of how you shape your own and other people's identities. Clothing may appear like a shallow or strictly practical part of everyday life, but it has a big effect on our minds. What we wear not only changes how other people see us, but it also changes how we see ourselves. Clothes can affect your mood, body image, self-esteem, and social behaviour in many ways. To fully comprehend how people deal with their identities, social lives, and mental health, you need to know how clothing affects their minds.

How you see yourself is an important part of mental health. It has to do with how people see themselves, their traits, and their role in the social sphere. Clothes are an important part of how people see themselves since they reflect who they are. What people wear can have a big effect on how they see themselves, whether it fits with their personal tastes, cultural beliefs, or social norms. **Bem's (1972) Self-Perception Theory** implies that people build their sense of self and identity by their actions and the choices they make outside of themselves. One of the most obvious things people do is wear clothes, and what they wear has a direct effect on how they see themselves. For instance, someone who wears a well-fitted suit to an important meeting may feel more capable, sure of themselves, and professional, which boosts their self-esteem. This link between how we see ourselves and what we wear is made stronger by **Adam and Galinsky's (2012)** the idea of "enclothed cognition," which says that what you wear can affect how your mind works and how you feel. This hypothesis says that the clothes people wear can change how they think, feel, and act in their minds. When clothes fit with how someone wants to see themselves, it boosts their sense of self-worth and ability to get things done. On the other hand, clothes that don't fit with who you are or the people you hang out with can hurt your self-esteem. For instance, someone who feels that they have to wear clothes that don't fit their own style because of social pressure or money problems may not like how they look or feel bad about themselves. People may feel anxious and worthless

when their internal identity and exterior presentation don't match up. This is because they can't figure out how to make their dress selections match who they really are.

Body image is how a person sees their own body and the feelings that go along with it. People's body image is closely linked to the clothes they wear since the clothes they wear change how they see their bodies. The fashion industry has a big effect on how people feel about their bodies since it promotes certain body types and beauty standards through clothes. These idealised images can either make people feel good about how they look or make them feel bad about their bodies and insecure. **Tiggemann and Slater (2014)** look into how clothes and fashion affect how people see their bodies, especially young ladies. People can feel more attractive and confident when they wear clothes that fit well, compliment their figure, and fit with what society thinks is beautiful. On the other side, clothes that don't fit right or follow unrealistic beauty standards can make people feel even worse about themselves, especially when they think they aren't meeting such criteria. For example, fashion publications and apparel ads often push the idea that a slim body is the best body type. This can make people who don't fit this body type feel bad about how they look. Research has shown that having a bad body image can lead to mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and eating disorders (Dittmar, 2009). This shows that body dissatisfaction has a lot of effects on the mind. People who feel detached from the idealised body types that fashion promotes may feel more psychologically distressed in environments where clothes are used to show beauty, social acceptance, or attractiveness. But as fashion grows more inclusive and shows a wider range of body shapes and representations, people may feel more accepted and empowered, which can lead to good changes in body image and self-esteem.

Clothing is often used to tell people apart in different social groupings based on things like race, gender, social status, and profession. For instance, in a business setting, the dress code or uniform shows that someone is part of a professional organisation. In ethnic communities, traditional clothing shows cultural identification and heritage. **Adeyanju (2017)** says that in Nigeria, the clothes people wear show not only who they are but also who they are related to. For example, people wear ethnic clothes to show pride in their culture or professional clothes to show that they are competent and respectable. People may regard you differently depending on what you wear because of the social norms that go along with different styles of clothes. **Veblen (1899)** shows how clothing can set people apart from each other, since what you wear can show what social class you are in and where you fit into a hierarchy. People who wear expensive or branded clothes are often seen as wealthy or high-status, while people who wear casual or cheap clothes are often seen as belonging to a different social class. How people see your clothes can affect your self-esteem and how you interact with others. For example, people may feel powerful or left out depending on how others see your clothes. Clothes also help define gender roles and expectations, which affects how people act out their gender identity. **Connell (2005)** suggests that clothes are an important part of forming gender identity because they help people fit in with what society expects of men and women. As gender roles change, clothing becomes an important way for people to show how they live and express their gender identity. For example, people who dress in ways that go against traditional gender roles may feel more powerful and face social backlash, depending on the situation.

### **Globalization and Fashion Trends in Nigeria**

As the world becomes more connected, Nigerian clothing choices have been greatly affected by global fashion trends. Social media, fashion blogs, and international news channels have

helped Western styles spread quickly, making them available to people all over Nigeria. **Schor** (2004) shows how global fashion trends can affect what people wear and how they buy things, which can change their identities and shopping habits. This global influence is especially strong in Nigerian cities, where younger people are more likely to wear clothes and follow trends from other countries. These trends around the world have a mixed effect on people's minds. People may feel more powerful because they can access global fashion and fit in with global standards of beauty and success. On the other hand, this can make people feel like they don't belong or are disconnected from local cultural values, especially if they can't afford to keep up with these trends (Adebayo, 2015). This tension shows how complicated the relationship is between clothing, personal identity, and social norms in Nigeria, where people have to deal with both global and local fashion trends.

Globalisation has changed every part of human society, from culture to the economy to social identity. Fashion is one of the most obvious areas where globalisation has had an effect. International trends, materials, and ideas have had a bigger and bigger effect on local clothing styles around the world. Nigeria is known for having a lot of different cultures, and this influence is especially clear in how traditional clothing is mixed with global fashion trends. Globalisation has not only brought new fashion trends to Nigeria, but it has also changed how people think about clothing's role in their identity, their group membership, and their ability to move up in society. The combination of traditional Nigerian fashion with styles from around the world is changing how people in Nigeria dress and interact with others.

Global fashion has had a big impact on Nigerian clothing, especially in cities where people are more exposed to Western media, fashion brands, and clothing trends from around the world. People in Nigerian cities like Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt are wearing a wider range of clothes that are more cosmopolitan. This is because more people are wearing Western-style clothes in addition to their traditional clothes. Fashion brands from around the world, like **Zara**, **H&M**, and **Gucci**, have become very popular with Nigerian consumers, who use these brands to show that they are wealthy, modern, and connected to the world. Digital platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest have a global reach, which has made international fashion even more important in Nigeria. Many fashion influencers, who live outside of Nigeria, show off styles of clothing that are popular all over the world. This makes Nigerian teens want to wear trendy clothes like streetwear, athleisure, and luxury fashion. As **Adeyanju** (2017) notes that more and more Nigerian youth, especially those who live in cities, are using global fashion trends to connect with their peers around the world and make their mark in the global fashion scene.

Nigerians have started to wear clothes that are popular around the world, but they haven't completely replaced traditional Nigerian styles. The mix of global trends with native styles has created a one-of-a-kind hybrid fashion culture that shows how modernity and tradition can come together. Nigerian designers have been at the forefront of this fusion, mixing traditional African textiles with global fashion in their collections. **Wale** (2018) highlights the work of Nigerian designers such as **Lisa Folawiyo**, **Deola Sagoe**, and **Folake Folarin-Coker**, who have successfully combined African prints, embroidery, and traditional tailoring with Western shapes, fabrics, and cuts. This mix makes clothes that people in the area and around the world will like.

Clothes have been an important way for people in Nigeria to show their cultural identity for a long time. Every ethnic group in the country has its own unique way of dressing, which is often tied to cultural practices, rituals, and religious observances. Traditional Nigerian

clothes like the **agbada**, **dashiki**, **iro and buba**, and **fugu** serve as symbols of ethnic pride and cultural continuity. These garments are worn during important ceremonies and festivals, such as weddings, religious celebrations, and political gatherings, reinforcing the cultural and social bonds within communities. The cultural significance of clothing in Nigeria extends beyond individual expression to encompass collective identity. Clothing has always been an essential means of signaling group membership, whether through ethnicity, religion, or social class. For example, **Yoruba** men often wear the **agbada**, a flowing, ornate garment that signifies status, while **Hausa** men wear the **fugu**, a wide-sleeved tunic, which is equally associated with cultural pride. Similarly, women from different ethnic groups wear distinctive styles such as the **ankara** fabric or **lace** dresses, often adorned with elaborate beadwork or embroidery, to express their ethnic heritage.

But with the rise of globalisation, these traditional clothing styles have become more and more mixed with styles from around the world. In Nigerian cities, especially among younger people, it's common to see people wearing western clothes like jeans, t-shirts, and suits. This change goes against long-standing cultural norms about clothing, which has led to a mix of traditional and modern styles. **Adebayo (2015)** Some Nigerians still follow traditional dress codes strictly, while others are adopting a more mixed style that combines global trends with local tastes. This shows a desire to find a balance between cultural heritage and modern global influences. In a world that is becoming more connected, clothes are a big way to show not only your culture but also your social status, professionalism, and personal success. As global fashion trends become more popular in Nigeria, the way people use clothes to get around social and work spaces has changed. As **Veblen (1899)** In his idea of "conspicuous consumption," he said that clothing has become a sign of social status, with rich people wearing international fashion brands to show where they stand in the social hierarchy. The rising demand for high-end fashion items in Nigerian cities is a clear sign of this behaviour that cares about status. Young people in Nigeria, in particular, have adopted global fashion trends as a way to show who they are socially and to feel like they are part of a global community. People now think of clothing as a sign of both their own culture and their awareness of the world and their success in business. Nigerians can look modern and cosmopolitan by wearing clothes from global brands. This puts them in line with international standards of beauty, wealth, and success

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