

# ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF FASHION MAGAZINES ON FEMALE STUDENTS' DRESS PATTERNS IN EDO STATE POLYTECHNIC, USEN

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## Abstract

*This study investigates the influence of fashion magazines on the dress patterns of female students in higher institutions, using Edo State Polytechnic, Usen, as a case study. Anchored on the Media System Dependency Theory, it examines how frequently students engage with fashion magazines, the nature of their influence on dress choices, and whether these impacts are perceived as positive or negative. A cross-sectional survey design was employed; involving 392 purposively selected female students across departments. Descriptive statistics were applied in data analysis. Findings revealed that although fashion magazines are seen as educational and fashionable, their readership remains low, with students preferring digital platforms for fashion information. This finding has raised concerns about the declining relevance of print magazines while highlighting the growing dependence on online sources. While many credited fashion magazines for boosting style awareness and confidence, concerns were also raised about the promotion of indecent dressing and unrealistic beauty standards. The study concludes that fashion magazines play a dual role: enhancing fashion literacy and inadvertently influencing cultural and behavioural norms. Recommendations include culturally sensitive media content, wider online access, and integration of media literacy into curricula.*

## Introduction

Fashion is an aspect of identity, ideology, and culture. In modern societies, particularly in tertiary institutions among young adults, fashion serves a symbolic as well as communicative function. It gives voice to self-expression, social identity, hope, and indeed rebellion against expectations (Barnard, 2014). Fashion is closely connected with media as well, most notably fashion magazines, which have long played arbiters of style and directed individuals, and in particular women, as to what they consider beauty, dress codes, and self-worth (Baran, 2009).

In Nigeria, fashion is as much a sphere of cultural expression as it is of contention since Westernization is set next to Africa's cultural legacies. Nigerian fashion magazines such as Genevieve, TW (Today's Woman), and Complete Fashion usually call for the crossing of indigenous sensitivities with Western expectations, thereby creating hybrids of fashion identities (Abubakar & Omotayo, 2023). With female undergraduates, whatever effect such magazines might have is likely more specific. Such undergraduates find themselves at an age of transition of development of self and of society, where dress styles are usually more regulated by endorsement of colleagues, pop celebrities, as well as media coverage (Uwakwe & Ajayi, 2023). Research shows that fashion magazines do more than display fashions; they construct ideas of allowable femininity, ideal bodies, and morality. In Nigeria, it often creates conflict between cultural virtues of modesty and group identity and

modern, media-influenced ideals of individuality, sensuality, and consumption (Okonkwo & Nwachukwu, 2020). Portrayal of thin, light-skinned models wearing flashy dresses reinforces Eurocentric ideas of beauty and represses native expressions of culture (Eze & Chima, 2019). Furthermore, teen conduct and learning interests have been linked to fashion publications. Cameron & Ferraro (2004) argue that teen senses of needs versus wants can be distorted by fashion media, and teenagers may prioritize fashion over more substantial issues like learning or self-betterment. The concern is more prevalent within postsecondary settings, as consumers may be drawn to imitation of media personalities whose fashion sense is at odds with institutional norms or those of society in general. Media System Dependency Theory (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976) posits that individuals become increasingly dependent on media sources they know can meet their information, social, or emotional needs. In our case, fashion magazines function as much more than information tools but as emotional and inspirational beacons. Women students can rely on them as they navigate social environments, build identity, and gain social capital, particularly where such magazines hold up fashion as the key into confidence, success, and social acceptability (Baran & Davis, 2013).

Regardless of their presumed merits, the impact of fashion magazines on dress pattern consciousness remains controversial among scholars. While some scholars have focused on their educational and aesthetic contribution (Akobundu, 2009), others have condemned their ability to popularize improper dressing as well as erode cultural values (Omede, 2011). The enhanced availability of the magazines on the internet as well as in hard copies has widened their impact, cementing them as an impediment of female students' dress selection.

Against this background, this study investigated the influence of fashion magazines on the dress sense of female polytechnic students in Edo State Polytechnic. In particular, it is set to establish the rate of readership of the magazines, the positive or negative tilt of their influence, and the overall effect on cultural orientation, self-image, and research interests

## Statement of the Problem

Fashion magazines have had more and more impact on the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours of young women internationally in recent years. Whereas they not only display the most recent fashions of dress but also construct beauty standards, femininity, and social identities, fashion magazines have gained more appeal in female tertiary school attendees in Nigeria. With high-gloss covers, star profiles, and slick sections on style, the magazines communicate implicit notions of what is desirable, modern, and socially desirable regarding dress and looks.

However, increasing reliance on fashion magazines is of grave concern. On the bright side, it can augment the self-confidence, creativity, and sense of fashion of the students. On the flip side, it can instil immoral dressing, consumerist thinking, body discontentment, and pressure to comply with media-driven canons of beauty often incompatible with cultural expectations or institutional requirements.

In Edo State Polytechnic, Usen, anecdotal accounts suggest that women have increasingly mimicked fashion styles learned through fashion

magazines; the periodical outcome being discipline issues, value crises, or conflicts with colleagues. Yet empirical data on the extent and nature of such influence is lacking. Missing is proper scholarship on the effect of conventional media such as fashion magazines, as opposed to social media, on dress behaviours under the specific Nigerian polytechnic sociocultural context.

This study therefore sets out to fill the research gap in this regard through an investigation of the influence of fashion magazines on female Edo State Polytechnic students' sense of fashion with an eye on the positive roles as well as the potential harm.

### **Research Questions**

To guide research work, the following research questions were set:

1. How frequently do female Edo State Polytechnic students engage with fashion magazines in printed and/or online format?
2. How do fashion magazines influence the dress styles of female Edo State Polytechnic students?
3. How is fashion magazine content perceived as having positive impacts on the dressing behaviours of students?
4. How have the contents of fashion magazines been viewed as having detrimental effects on cultural values and modesty for students?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Fashion media as cultural force**

Fashion magazines have evolved from being basic directories of fashion trends to powerful cultural artefacts that inform social behaviours, beauty standards, and identity construction. Barnard (2014) explains fashion as a medium of visual communication and symbolic self-expression that conveys signals of status, gender, ethnicity, and ideology. Fashion media, and magazines more than any other, have the ability of moulding these signals through choosing images and narratives that suggest what is fashionable, allowed, or desirable.

Magazines have special influence on young adults, an age group in the process of active construction of identity. As per Baran & Davis (2013), media messages often contain action templates, and individuals tend to model behaviours after presented lifestyles and systems of value. In fashion magazines, the influence is reinforced with highly photographic visuals, celebrity endorsement, and narrative lines connecting beauty with self-assurance, social success, and beauty.

#### **Dress Patterns and Media Influence Among Female Students**

Most studies have documented media's significant impact on female academics' dress conduct. Fashion media, as Cameron and Ferraro (2004) describe, typically instil youth readers with unattainable norms that result in accepting styles with no basis in individual or cultural belief, but in beauty portrayals by celebrities and models. Such representation always focuses on thinness, European beauty traits, and sensuality, transmitting body discontentment as well as identity crises to female teenagers.

In Nigeria, fashion magazines like *Genevieve*, *TW* (Today's Woman), and *Complete Fashion* exist as national guides to style as much as they do bearers of Western beauty ideals. As Abubakar & Omotayo (2023) observe, such magazines typically feature light-skinned, thin models wearing Western clothing, subtly reinforcing the argument that such characteristics equate with elegance and being modern. Uwakwe & Ajayi (2023) continue to argue that greater digitization of fashion media the media of social media sites as well as online magazines is extending the reach and influence of such representation, often through non-traditional cultural screens.

Female students, being amongst the most fashion-forward age groups, remain highly at risk. According to research, they have the tendency of copying celebrities or online influencers whose style of dress might be inconsistent with cultural norms or

institutional requirements (Omede, 2011). Such conflict between contemporary fashion norms and cultural expectations is responsible for fuelling debate on "indecent dressing" on Nigerian campuses.

#### **Positive and Negative Effects of Fashion Magazines**

Fashion magazines have pros of their own. With good editing, they can enhance fashion literacy, enhance self-esteem, and instigate creativity in individual grooming (MacSween, 2023). Many readers have encounters with diverse styles, ideas on grooming, as well as cultural expressions of fashion, that can contribute towards self-realization as well as empowerment.

However, critics emphasize the negative social and psychological effects. Fashion magazines have been blamed for:

- **Immodest clothing:** Continued portrayal of minuscule dresses injects sensuality in fashion attitudes, which may be inconsistent with native sensibilities (Eze & Nwankwo, 2021).
- **Materialism:** Repeated exposure to high fashion results in consumerist thinking in which social value is connected with looks and things (Ehrenreich & English, 2008).
- **Body dissatisfaction:** Slim, idealized models can trigger body image concerns amongst readers with an urge to fulfil the ideal (Seid, 2021).
- **Reduced educational focus:** Fashion fixation among some pupils supplants learning priorities (Okonkwo & Nwachukwu, 2020).

Cameron & Ferraro argue (2004) that the magazines implicitly equate fashion with success in a way that the majority of youth readers internalize the belief that beauty is the formula of happiness and acceptability. Such belief bias can impact decision-making, lifestyle, together with discipline choice among female undergraduates.

#### **Cultural Identity, Modesty, and Resistance**

Even with the overriding effect of global fashion standards, numerous female students continue to consider cultural values while dressing. Works conducted by Abdullahi (2024) and Prayanti et al. (2024) identify a re-emergence of cultural pride whereby the students combine African sensibilities with contemporary styles. The synthesis permits the ability to convey individuality while being in sync with religious or moral values.

Not all students, however, respond equally. Exposures to foreign styles through magazines usually result in inner conflict as students grapple with traditional modesty versus contemporary self-expression (Aliyu & Okafor, 2021). The tension supports media literacy education that enables teenagers to scrutinize media messages rather than absorb them uncritically.

#### **Empirical Review**

Uwakwe & Ajayi (2023) conducted a mixed-method study examining how exposure to media affects fashion identity among female university students in Nigeria. Their research showed that students frequently consumed fashion magazines, often drawing inspiration from celebrity features and popular fashion content. This aligns with the present study in terms of focusing on female students in tertiary institutions and recognizing the media's role in shaping identity. However, while their research spanned several universities across the country, the current study zooms in on a single institution; Edo State Polytechnic. Usen factors like economic conditions and institutional dress codes may differ significantly. Abubakar & Omotayo (2023) explored the development of hybrid fashion identities among undergraduates in Northern Nigeria. Using interviews and content analysis, they found that students often grappled with the challenge of balancing traditional clothing norms with modern Western styles promoted in fashion magazines. This is similar to the current study's focus on how fashion media can lead to value conflicts in dressing. Still, their research is rooted in a primarily Islamic context, whereas this study is set in a more religiously and culturally diverse environment, which might result in different responses to fashion influences.

In a related study, Eze & Chima (2019) analysed Nigerian fashion magazines and found that Eurocentric beauty standards, like lighter skin, slim figures, and Western clothing, were heavily favoured. They argued this marginalizes local cultural aesthetics. This concern overlaps with the current study, particularly in relation to how female students perceive beauty and self-worth. However, while Eze & Chima focused on the

content of the magazines themselves, the current research looks at how these portrayals affect students' real-life dressing behavior. Okonkwo & Nwachukwu (2020) looked into the clash between media-promoted fashion and traditional societal norms. Their study showed that students who adopted magazine-inspired outfits, especially those seen as revealing often faced criticism from families and school authorities. This supports the present study's aim to explore how media influences conflict with institutional and cultural expectations. The main distinction is in the scope: their study covered three polytechnics in South-eastern Nigeria, while the current research offers a more focused lens on Edo State Polytechnic, potentially yielding richer contextual insight.

Although Cameron & Ferraro (2004) conducted their research outside Nigeria, their findings are still relevant. Their long-term study found that fashion media could shift teenagers' priorities, sometimes undermining academic commitment. This relates to a key concern of the current study: whether reading fashion magazines takes attention away from academics. Still, it's important to consider the cultural gap, as their research was based in a Western consumer context that differs from the Nigerian polytechnic environment.

### Theoretical Framework

This study draws primarily on Media System Dependency Theory (MSDT) and Cultivation Theory. These theories collectively offer valuable lenses through which the influence of fashion magazines on female students' dressing choices can be interpreted.

#### Media System Dependency Theory

The Media System Dependency Theory (MSDT) is a structural approach to media effects developed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur in 1976. The theory argues that the degree of media influence on individuals is directly related to the level of dependency individuals have on the media for fulfilling specific needs (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). These needs include understanding one's social environment, orientation in decision-making, and entertainment. The more individuals rely on media to meet these needs, the greater the media's influence on their attitudes and behaviours.

MSDT is particularly relevant in contemporary media culture, where audiences; especially youths are bombarded with visual, emotional, and symbolic cues from various media sources. In the case of fashion magazines, the theory helps explain why students may become highly influenced by the fashion trends, celebrity endorsements, and beauty standards promoted through such media. For female students navigating issues of body image, peer belonging, and social identity, dependency on fashion media may become intensified during periods of psychological or social uncertainty (Baran & Davis, 2013).

Three core relationships are central to the theory: the media-society, media-audience, and audience-society linkages. These relationships illustrate how media not only respond to societal values but also actively participate in shaping them particularly when traditional sources of guidance (e.g., parents, religion, or culture) are weakening or contested. For instance, in many urban and semi-urban Nigerian communities, traditional dress codes are gradually being replaced or diluted by globalized fashion influences. Female students may thus depend more on magazines like *Genevieve* or *Complete Fashion* to make sense of what is considered stylish, modern, or acceptable in the public sphere.

The MSDT also emphasizes the situational and contextual nature of media dependency. In the context of Edo State Polytechnic, a student's reliance on fashion magazines might stem from a combination of factors: a desire for social acceptance, the pressure to look trendy or limited access to parental or cultural mentorship. The theory therefore allows for a nuanced understanding of why fashion magazines might wield considerable influence on dressing patterns, even when their direct readership is reportedly low. As long as the media content satisfies cognitive or emotional needs,

its influence remains potent.

#### Cultivation Theory

While MSDT explains how and why individuals become dependent on media, Cultivation Theory, developed by George Gerbner and colleagues, explains how repeated exposure to media content over time shapes an individual's worldview. Originally applied to television, the theory has been extended to include all forms of mass media, including fashion magazines, online influencers, and digital fashion platforms (Gerbner et al., 2002).

Cultivation Theory posits that media act as long-term socializing agents, subtly and cumulatively influencing beliefs, values, and perceptions about reality. It distinguishes between first-order effects (beliefs about facts) and second-order effects (beliefs about norms and values). For example, a female student who repeatedly sees ultra-slim models with perfect skin and expensive clothes may begin to believe that this is the societal ideal of beauty (first-order effect) and may also adopt the belief that such a look is necessary for social success or attractiveness (second-order effect).

In the context of fashion magazines, this theory explains how consistent exposure to curated fashion content leads students to internalize certain fashion norms—even if they do not consciously aim to imitate them. These norms may include the glorification of Western fashion styles, the normalization of revealing or body-hugging clothes, and the perception that material consumption is linked to social relevance. Over time, students' own dress choices may begin to align with these mediated ideals, often at the expense of cultural or institutional dress codes.

Furthermore, Cultivation Theory helps contextualize the psychological effects of media exposure, such as body dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, or pressure to conform to unattainable standards. Cameron and Ferraro (2004) observed that fashion media often foster a desire among teenagers to appear like models portrayed in magazines, regardless of how realistic or healthy such aspirations are. In Nigerian tertiary institutions, where peer validation plays a critical role in social interactions, these media-influenced perceptions can directly impact how students dress, perceive themselves, and judge others.

#### Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to investigate the influence of fashion magazines on the dress patterns of female students at Edo State Polytechnic, Usen. The study population comprised all female students across various academic departments, estimated at 1,876 students in the 2024/2025 academic session. To determine a representative sample size, Yamane's formula was applied, resulting in a representative sample size of 329.7, approximately 330 female students. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that only participants with relevant exposure to fashion-related media were included in the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Data collection was carried out through face-to-face administration of the questionnaires, resulting in a 100% response rate, thereby enhancing the credibility of the dataset. The collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25, descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and tabular presentations, were employed to facilitate a comprehensive interpretation of the findings.

#### Data Presentation and Analysis

To obtain the necessary data for answering the research questions, 330 questionnaires were administered to female students of Edo Polytechnic, Usen, during the 2024/2025 academic session. All distributed questionnaires were successfully retrieved, providing a complete and reliable dataset for analysis. The findings are presented in tables, each aligned with a specific research question. Every table includes a descriptive title and is followed by a brief interpretive note to facilitate clear understanding of the results.

Table 1: Frequency of Fashion Magazine Consumption

| Response Category | Frequency  | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|------------|----------------|
| Frequently        | 73         | 22.1%          |
| Occasionally      | 158        | 47.9%          |
| Rarely            | 69         | 20.9%          |
| Never             | 30         | 9.1%           |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>330</b> | <b>100%</b>    |

From the table above, nearly half of the respondents (47.9%) reported that they occasionally read fashion magazines, while 22.1% engage with them frequently. A smaller proportion (9.1%) indicated they never interact with such content. These figures suggest that exposure to fashion magazines is widespread among female students, although the degree of engagement varies.

Table 2: Preferred Format of Magazine Access

| Format           | Frequency  | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|------------|----------------|
| Digital (online) | 188        | 57.0%          |
| Print (hardcopy) | 142        | 43.0%          |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>330</b> | <b>100%</b>    |

Data from table 2 reveals that digital formats are the most commonly preferred, with 57% of respondents accessing fashion content online. This reflects broader digital consumption trends among young people, aligning with the global shift toward internet-based media.

Table 3: Influence of Fashion Magazine Content on Dressing Style

| Influence Type           | Frequency  | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Strongly influence style | 119        | 36.1%          |
| Somewhat influence style | 96         | 29.1%          |
| Minimal influence        | 69         | 20.9%          |
| No influence             | 46         | 13.9%          |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>330</b> | <b>100%</b>    |

Approximately 65.2% of respondents in the above table acknowledged that fashion magazines either strongly or somewhat influence their style choices. This highlights the persuasive role of media in shaping appearance norms, consistent with the Media System Dependency Theory.

Table 4: Imitation of Celebrities or Models from Magazines

| Response Category | Frequency  | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|------------|----------------|
| Yes               | 135        | 40.9%          |
| No                | 195        | 59.1%          |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>330</b> | <b>100%</b>    |

From the table above, while 59.1% of respondents stated they do not consciously imitate celebrities or models, a notable 40.9% admitted they do. This suggests that aspirational role modelling remains a significant influence on students' fashion decisions, whether acknowledged or subconscious.

Table 5: Positive Outcomes Identified by Respondents

| Positive Effect                      | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Improved fashion confidence          | 191       | 57.9%          |
| Exposure to creative styling ideas   | 155       | 47.0%          |
| Learned professional dressing        | 113       | 34.2%          |
| Motivation to appear neat/attractive | 99        | 30.0%          |

The data show that the most commonly reported benefit was increased fashion confidence (57.9%), followed by exposure to creative styling ideas (47%). These outcomes reflect how media can fulfil psychological and social needs.

Table 6: Negative Outcomes Identified by Respondents

| Negative Effect                      | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Promotion of indecent/revealing wear | 198       | 60.0%          |
| Pressure to follow fashion trends    | 149       | 45.2%          |
| Feelings of body image insecurity    | 129       | 39.1%          |
| Distraction from academics           | 83        | 25.2%          |

Table 6 shows majority of respondents (60%) felt that fashion magazines promote indecent or revealing fashion, while 45.2% reported experiencing pressure to stay current with trends. These concerns align with Cultivation Theory, which suggests long-term media exposure can shape social perceptions and influence values.

Discussion of Findings

RQ1: How frequently do female Edo State Polytechnic students engage with fashion magazines in printed and/or online format?

The study revealed that 22.1% of respondents frequently read fashion magazines, while 47.9% engaged occasionally, making a combined 90% who interacted with fashion magazines in some form. In terms of access format, 57% preferred digital/online platforms, while 43% still accessed print copies (Table 1 & 2). This indicates that despite the global decline of traditional print readership, fashion magazines remain highly relevant, particularly in their digital form. This finding aligns with Abubakar & Omotayo (2023), who noted that Nigerian youths consume fashion content more through social media and online versions than traditional print. Similarly, Eze & Chima (2019) observed that although magazines are no longer dominant in their physical form, they retain significant influence via digital adaptations. The persistence of fashion magazine readership in this study also reflects broader African youth media trends. Okoye & Igwe (2020) found that 62% of Nigerian undergraduates used online magazines and fashion blogs as their primary source of style inspiration, while print usage had dropped below 30%. This corroborates the finding that Edo State Polytechnic students mirror the global migration from print to digital, while still maintaining a hybrid consumption pattern. The results also support Media System Dependency Theory (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976), which argues that individuals rely on the media that best serves their cognitive, affective, and behavioural needs. For female polytechnic students, the shift towards online magazine formats represents convenience, accessibility, affordability, and immediacy of fashion updates. This dependency is particularly evident in youths, whose social identities and fashion decisions are increasingly shaped by fast-paced, image-rich online media platforms.

RQ2: How do fashion magazines influence the dress styles of female Edo State Polytechnic students?

Data from Table 3 shows that 65.2% of respondents admitted fashion magazines strongly or somewhat influenced their style, with 40.9% imitating celebrity or model looks (Table 4). This indicates that magazines still act as trendsetters, providing templates of acceptable beauty and dress (Baran & Davis, 2013). The role of imitation reflects Cultivation Theory (Gerbner et al., 2002), as repeated exposure to glamorous portrayals encourages alignment with mediated ideals over time. Comparative studies support this. Okonkwo & Nwachukwu (2020) found that polytechnic students adopting media-inspired clothing often faced criticism for styles deemed inappropriate by cultural or institutional standards. Similarly, Uwakwe & Ajayi (2023) argued that university students often mirrored celebrity styles, reinforcing fashion as a social capital tool. In the Edo Polytechnic context, imitation may be moderated by cultural and institutional dress codes, but the aspirational element remains powerful, showing that magazines influence students' actual wardrobe choices rather than just their imagination.

RQ3: How is fashion magazine content perceived as having positive impacts on the dressing behaviours of students?

Findings in Table 5 show that 57.9% of respondents credited fashion magazines with boosting their confidence, 47% valued exposure to creative styling ideas, and 34.2% reported learning professional dressing habits. These results resonate with Barnard's (2014) view of fashion as a communicative tool, enabling self-expression and identity construction.

They also echo MacSween's (2023) argument that fashion media can foster empowerment and self-realization when engaged with critically.

This suggests that magazines play an informal mentoring role in grooming, especially in contexts where intergenerational guidance on contemporary fashion may be limited. In Edo State Polytechnic, such positive impacts contribute to building students' self-esteem and readiness for professional life. Moreover, the educational role of fashion magazines validates Akobundu's (2009) findings that fashion media can be used constructively to enhance literacy in dress coordination and social etiquette.

**RQ4: How have the contents of fashion magazines been viewed as having detrimental effects on cultural values and modesty for students?**

Negative perceptions were significant: 60% believed fashion magazines promote indecent dressing, 45.2% reported feeling pressured to follow trends, 39.1% experienced body image insecurity, and 25.2% linked fashion obsession with academic distraction (Table 6). These outcomes mirror Cameron & Ferraro's (2004) critique that fashion media reinforce unrealistic beauty ideals and misdirect youth priorities. Nigerian research further corroborates this; Eze & Nwankwo (2021) tied immodest campus dressing to magazine portrayals, while Okonkwo & Nwachukwu (2020) noted tensions between fashion choices and cultural expectations. Cultivation Theory offers a useful explanation here: continuous exposure to revealing outfits, Eurocentric beauty ideals, and materialistic lifestyles normalizes them over time, creating internal conflict when such ideals clash with local cultural or religious expectations (Aliyu & Okafor, 2021). Interestingly, some respondents reported adapting styles to remain "decent," showing active negotiation rather than passive adoption. This underscores media literacy as a crucial tool, enabling students to filter, reinterpret, and contextualize media messages within their cultural realities.

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

Based on the findings, the study concludes that fashion magazines are both culturally and socially relevant among female students at Edo State Polytechnic, but their direct influence on daily dressing habits is moderate at best. Students perceive these magazines as educative tools, helpful in understanding trends and improving fashion awareness. However, most students do not purchase or regularly read fashion magazines, relying instead on the internet and social media to stay current. The study also reveals that fashion magazines play a dual role in shaping students' dress patterns. While they contribute to fashion literacy and confidence, they also encourage unrealistic beauty standards, unhealthy fashion competition, and in some cases, indecent dressing. The Media Dependency Theory helps explain this influence, as students tend to rely more heavily on media that meets their needs, whether for entertainment, identity construction, or social acceptance. Therefore, while fashion magazines remain a valued medium, their influence is strongest when aligned with students' cultural values, financial realities, and moral expectations.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Fashion magazine publishers should focus more on promoting moral, modest, and culturally appropriate fashion styles. They should avoid content that glorifies indecent dressing or unrealistic beauty ideals.
- Since most students prefer free or affordable content, fashion magazines should expand their online presence through mobile apps, blogs, and interactive social media. This would increase access and readership among female students.

- Educational institutions should integrate media literacy and body positivity education into civic or moral instruction. This will help students engage critically with media content and make more informed choices regarding their dress and self-image.
- Students should be encouraged, through school campaigns or student-led fashion shows to appreciate Nigerian fashion and cultural dress. This would foster cultural pride and reduce the overreliance on Western beauty and style ideals.

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