

CLOTHING DEPRAVATION IN BENIN: CASE OF THE YOUNG GIRLS OF SAINTE RITA

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Abstract: *The objective of our study on the subject "Dressing depravity in Benin: case of young girls from the 8th District (Ste Rita) of the city of Cotonou", was to analyze the dress behavior of young girls from Ste Rita. Through this work we denounce the bad dress habits of young girls in the city of Cotonou, in this case those of Ste Rita and we invite them to raise their awareness. To do this, we made use of the non-probabilistic method based on the principle of reasoned choice. For the collection of information, we used techniques such as observation, interview and documentary research. As far as the tools are concerned, we used the observation grid and the interview guide as tools for collecting information. Starting from the hypotheses according to which the clothing of the young girls of Ste Rita is influenced by the dress fashion of the West and the dress of the young girls of Ste de Rita undermines modesty and leads to the depravity of morals, we have succeeded to the results according to which modernity and snobbery are the basis of this radical change in the dress behavior of young girls. These results confirm our hypotheses. It is up to these young girls, a change of mentality and an awareness to redo their image within society.*

Key Words: *Depravity, clothing, young girls, society, education*

1. INTRODUCTION :

The habit does not make the monk, they say. But is it not by the habit that we recognize the monk? Clothes show who we are and how we see ourselves. The way we dress is like a message we send to others. And who can suggest to them that we are conscientious, balanced, that we have good morals or shout at them that we are a rebel. In some way, we identify with our outfit or style of dress (Ahouandjinou, 2013).

In the past, dressing decently was a fashion to which all women wanted to conform because concerned about the way women were viewed and judged, they had to dress in such a way as to hide as many body parts as possible and appear on all occasions to their advantage (Attolou, 2016: 39). Thus, for Traore (2017), clothing in the African vision is just to allow man to protect himself against nature and to be able to dress in accordance with the wishes of society.

But nowadays the attire has lost its importance of the old days. Thus, in Cotonou, precisely in Ste Rita, the way young girls dress has nothing to do with tradition. Whatever the model, nothing is hidden on the bodies of young girls (Mone, 2017: 29).

His character is devalued by the younger generation. In the past, the mode of clothing referred to the rules and dress codes enacted by tradition. The fairer sex learned that there are a certain number of social norms to respect. Moreover, there was not even to argue. But the new generation of girls intends to assert themselves with a provocative and shocking new look. The clothing of young girls reflects their ignorance when they dress half-naked, exposing their private parts. They then dress in very light outfits, which reveals the most intimate parts of the body. These girls, sometimes unemployed, pupils and even students, attract everyone's attention.

For Mone (2017), the clothing of the young girl today becomes intolerable. It is observed that dressing badly while keeping the thighs exposed, becomes the characteristic of young girls at Ste Rita. In our cities, the trend has changed. Outfits that, for the most part, incite temptation and are cataloged as promoting depravity. Some young girls want at all costs to look like or imitate stars they idolize, losing sight of the fact that they evolve in different backgrounds and their realities are not the same. Other young people wear fashionable clothes to be in conformity with others but

others do it for fun, because they feel more beautiful and more attractive, because they have seen it on television. or on the internet and because it is a sign of ease.

In our streets, young girls like to expose the sensitive parts of their bodies in order to please, to be desired or even for some, to be in the movement. Many of them no longer care about the image they send back within their circle of friends than about the judgment that outsiders pass on them all day long. Even in places of education, it is clear that the outfits worn by young girls are not very Catholic.

In view of the extent of this phenomenon and its impact on the personality of young girls and on the image of their parents, it is wise to carry out an in-depth study of the theme in order to define its contours.

To do this, research questions were formulated:

- what is the style of dress of the young girls of Saint Rita of Cotonou?
- does the style of dress of the young girls of Sainte Rita obey the societal and cultural values of Benin?
- what to do to make the young girls of Saint Rita aware of adopting an acceptable style of dress?

To answer these research questions, we postulate that: the dress style of the young girls of Ste Rita is depraved and does not obey the societal and cultural values of Benin and undermines modesty.

The objective of this study is to analyze the dress style of the young girls of Saint Rita of Cotonou. Specifically, these are:

- determine the direct causes of the change in dress behavior among the young girls of Ste Rita;
- show the negative consequences of the dress habits adopted by the young girls of Ste Rita.

2. METHODOLOGY :

2.1 Nature of the study

The nature of this study is qualitative. It aims to analyze the depraved dress behavior of the young girls of Ste Rita. The interviews conducted provide ample and reliable information on the issue.

2.2 Target population

The study population is all the subjects potentially concerned by the investigations required by research. The different targets selected for our investigation are:

- the young girls and boys of the secondary and higher level of Ste Rita;
- teachers of secondary and higher level of Ste Rita;
- the parents of pupils or students of Ste Rita.

2.3 Sampling

The sample of this research is first reasoned, insofar as the choice of subjects is based on the judgment of the researcher in relation to their typical or atypical character (e.g., extreme deviant cases). This type of sample makes it possible to study rare or unusual phenomena, with little representativeness of the entire population (Dufour and Larivière, 2012).

This technique makes it possible to have reliable and precise information from the subjects falling within the scope of our subject on clothing depravity. Moreover, this choice is made because of the nature of our research and taking into account the material and spatial means of the people with whom we have to talk. This technique is included in the non-probabilistic method and is based on the principle of reasoned choice.

2.4 Sample size

The desired sample size for a qualitative study is linked to the saturation of the data collected, which means that the sample is considered complete when the researcher has reached the theoretical saturation threshold (Aujoulat, 2014). Thus, the interviews are stopped when the respondents no longer provide new information on the research topic (Lorant, 2012). Indeed, we were hoping for a minimum of 31 interviews but we only achieved 22 before reaching saturation.

Table 1: Distribution of the sample

Listening population	Effective	Percentage (%)
Parents (men and women)	08	36,30
Young people (girls and boys aged 15 to 24)	10	45,50
Teachers	04	18,20
Total	22	100

2.5 Data collection tools and techniques

The data collection technique is the set of means for collecting information during field work. To collect information at Ste Rita, three main techniques are used, namely: observation, documentary research and interview.

The tools used are therefore: the observation grid and the interview guide.

2.5.1 Observing

The observation technique was used to supplement the interviews. Its objectives are to observe with the eyes in order to see if really at Ste Rita the young girls dress very badly and indecently. Thus, thanks to this technique, it was noticed this dress deviance of young girls.

2.5.2 Documentary research

Through this technique we went through several documentary centers such as the library of the National Institute of Youth, Physical Education and Sport (INJEPS) and the Council of Educational Activities of Benin (CAEB). Also, other sources of information were consulted through search engines such as google, firefox, google scholar.

2.5.3 Maintenance

The interview corresponds to the English word interview. "It is a process of scientific investigation, using a process of verbal communication to gather information in relation to the set goal" (Grawits, 2004:151). Thus, as part of this work, the interview was used using grids that served as benchmarks. This technique served as a guide for collecting information from the subjects. We recorded the interviews with a recorder.

2.6 Data processing

The data collected in the field were processed manually using Microsoft Word 2013. This involves analyzing the data collected through the design of a theoretical framework adapted to this type of study.

3. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS :

3.1 Presentation of the results from the interviews

Our survey results highlight the areas below:

- Perceptions of the subjects on the phenomenon of the sartorial depravity of the young girls of Ste Rita;
- The factors that influence the clothing choice of the young girls of Ste Rita;
- The direct consequences of this phenomenon on the reputation of these young girls;
- Perspectives to correct this way of dressing of the young girls of St. Rita.

3.1.1 Perceptions of the subjects on the phenomenon of the sartorial depravity of the young girls of Ste Rita

The phenomenon of depravity is not new, but it has grown to such an extent in recent years that it is becoming a little more of a social problem every day. Thus, speaking of the phenomenon of depravity in the dress of young girls, the subjects interviewed unanimously admitted to noticing a deviance in the dress of young girls. And for illustration, one of them is expressed in these terms:

Ah, it's another world here at Ste Rita, it seems huh. I am also a young girl but what I see in terms of clothing in my sisters is beyond me. It is better that they remain naked. Otherwise, how can we dress and what we are supposed to protect would be in plain sight? of course we are in the 21st century and being young, you have to be in the know, but there is exaggeration in their clothing. They hurt the sensitivity of people in circulation (J. A. Student, April 2018).

In the same logic, another interviewee thinks that "*young girls today dress very badly, they often undermine modesty in their way of dressing. I think that young girls should avoid wearing certain clothes in town, especially in the middle of the day. They think they are connected while they are increasingly deviating from our cultural values*". (G. H. Student, April 2018).

Further on, another interviewee, in the same vein, affirms that "*Not to lie, the way of dressing of us, young girls nowadays does not reflect our cultural values in any way*". (N. C. Pupil, April 2018).

To stick to the comments of the interviewees quoted above, we retain that in the city of Cotonou, precisely in Ste Rita, the phenomenon of clothing depravity is really in full swing and challenges today several educators and

observers. Approached, some relativize while others do not hesitate to talk about it seriously: *“My brother, today girls dress very badly, even in places of education. The clothing of young girls is becoming more and more problematic. By dint of aping Westerners, our young girls forget their own values. They go so far as to ignore the difference between evening dress and others”*. (M. A. Teacher, April 2018).

Nowadays, while our cultural values are tending to disappear, our moral values are falling. Thus, the new dress habits of young girls are worrying and controversial. Clothing has lost its importance from ancient times. His character is devalued by the younger generation. This is what an interviewee tells us when she declares: *“Today our young girls dress badly and that sickens me. They are not afraid to dress sexy in public places, it is to believe that the parents have resigned from the education of these young girls at home. Normally, a young girl before leaving the house, the mother must take a good look at her daughter”*. (B. T. Agent of the 8th District of Cotonou, April 2018).

In the same vein, another interviewee replies: *“the young girls no longer listen to us despite the many calls to order that we give them day after day. They always want to look sexy in the eyes of little boys by dressing indecently. They like the trend and always want to do what their girlfriends do in order to show off in the eyes of the little street boys, which is harmful”*. (J. O. Teacher, April 2018).

In addition, it should be noted that the points of view on the phenomenon of sartorial depravity vary from one subject to another. This is the case of an interviewee who strongly supports this change in the way girls dress, she declares:

Certainly, we are noticing a big change in clothing behavior among young people, but it is modernity. For example, me, I don't like to dress decently, I take good care of my body and being sexy is my style. In fact, we wear sexy clothes because that's what our friends wear. If you don't dress like that, you're taken for someone who is not trendy. So, we don't even consider you. Other times, other customs. The time of our parents has passed. It's the new generation. The world is changing and everything changes over time. We are at a time when clothes make the monk so we have to dress to assert ourselves. If the person likes to dress in sexy clothes, I don't see the problem. Each of us is free to live our own life. It is not a question of education as people say, but rather a choice. (M-C. G. Student, April 2018).

According to him, we believe that the way a person dresses depends on the trend of the moment. The style of dress that a person adopts is not necessarily linked to the lack of education or follow-up but to their aspirations and self-esteem and also the environment. The sexy style that a young girl adopts does not mean that she is promiscuous. This may be due to a pure and simple imitation of their friends, their entourage. Indeed, it is not uncommon to see that many young people are rejected by their peers because they do not adopt a certain style of dress or their way of doing things.

The evolution of society is subject to profound upheavals which affect all levels of human life. "Other times, other mores" they say, and the radical change observed today in the way girls dress says a lot about this upheaval that is taking place in society. Between cultural values and modernism, young girls compete in elegance and extravagance.

Indeed, our results join the theory of Watson (1913), which affirms that the individual is a social and sociable being, rather malleable which modifies or regulates its conduct or regulates its conduct, adopts its character according to the stimuli of the external environment or in which he lives. From his analyses, it appears that our first hypothesis according to which *“The clothing of the young girls of St. Rita is influenced by the clothing fashion of the West”* is verified.

3.1.2 Factors influencing the choice of dress of the young girls of St. Rita

Young girls are looking for social integration. Thus, they need to forge themselves. To do this, they seek to identify with groups or people to be accepted. This identification can be done through a given style of dress that allows them to be part of a quickly identifiable group in the public space. This is the case of the young girls of Ste Rita who, for various reasons, indulge in dress practices that in no way correspond to our social values.

Thus, by finding the causes that lead to this change in clothing behavior among young girls, an interviewee declares: *“It is the effect of globalization and modernity. We cannot escape it”*. (A. E. Teacher, April 2018).

Another interviewee adds to these remarks by declaring: *“the vast majority of young people choose new clothing trends to follow the movement or friends. It is enough for two or more people to show a penchant for certain styles for others to follow them”*. (G. S. Student, April 2018).

Some girls wear fashionable clothes to be in line with others. One respondent does not say the opposite when she declares: *“I wear high waists because it's fashionable today, that's what people wear to be in the game, so I have to wear that too. Who will be neglected?”*. (O. M. Student, April 2018).

Further, another thinks that: *“In my opinion it is snobbery, they want to dress like young girls from the West. If you see them dressing in weird outfits such as Belly and buttocks out; Behind and Belly Outside, these girls claim to be fashionable. Yet they are almost naked. All because they imitate the daughters of women in telenovelas, but the realities are different”*, (M. G. Student, April 2018).

It emerges from the comments above that modernity and globalization have negative effects on the way girls dress. Because the snobbery shown by the young girls of Ste Rita tramples on our traditional values.

Indeed, according to social groups, moral codes, norms and customs, traditions vary, which is not without influence on clothing habits. Each individual, social group in a society always seeks to assert its identity through its clothing behavior. This is observed nowadays by the effect of fashion which requires that we conform to a style according to the given times. This is what Piacentini and Mailer quoted by Badaoui et al (2015) endorse by saying that clothes are used to signal the individual in a social group.

Moreover, with globalization which has favored the rapprochement and the opening of the countries of the world is not without effect on the African continent. This caused an alienation of the population vis-à-vis the dress behavior of the young girls of Ste Rita.

Herskovits (1950) affirms in the same way that our dress, our eating habits, our language, our music to name only certain aspects of our life where these influences are visible at first glance have changed a lot since the 16th century, because of these contacts.

3.1.3 Direct consequences of adopting new clothing habits

The wind of globalization in terms of clothing blowing on the West does not spare Benin. Thus, the young girls of Cotonou, precisely those of Ste Rita, do not miss any opportunity to show off with an outfit that is borderline extravagant.

Indeed, these young girls shock by their clothing. These, in the frantic race to get noticed, are working hard to be fashionable. You can no longer take a step in the streets without seeing the indecency at its highest point in the clothing of the girls. Their daily choice of attire is to some extent influenced by fashion and the wind of globalization, which hardly spares them. Thus, they set their sights on strings, low-waisted pants, quite visible underwear and other buttocks, mini-skirts, tights, body-cinchers, tight-fitting skirts letting out quarters of the thighs.

But these new dress habits adopted by girls are not without repercussions on the population. Sometimes these clothes are so captivating that drivers crash in traffic. This is what one interviewee told us in terms of: *“When you're in traffic and you see the pearls, panties, hips or legs of a person of the opposite sex, you're immediately distracted and in traffic, a second of inattention can have consequences dramatic. You can easily cause an accident because of the bad dress habits of these girls”*. (F. R. Family father, April 2018).

With these young girls, men are ready to risk their lives so as not to miss the spectacle they offer in circulation. With them, everything is done with tact to reveal the alluring sinuosity of the breasts and the posterior. Often these outfits give a bad image of the people who wear them, this is what a respondent informs us when she says: *“We can make them assimilate to groups of prostitutes or sex workers, when they wear clothes that are too conspicuous, it is easy to say to themselves that they are easy girls and that they have no virtue when this may not be true since they show private parts of their bodies to the public through their clothing and cause many problems for the people”*. (A. M. Nurse, April 2018).

To stick to the words of the interviewees, we retain that the bad reputation, hurting the sensitivity of the populations and undermining modesty are the consequences resulting from the dress behavior of the young girls. Taken by the whirlwind of fashion, modesty in clothing is relegated to second place. Exhibitionism is on the rise with the clothing styles of these young girls.

In view of the analysis made previously, it appears that our second hypothesis according to which: *“The dress of the young girls of St Rita undermines modesty and leads to the depravity of morals”* is verified.

3.1.4 Perspectives for correcting this way of dressing of the young girls of St. Rita

Concerned by the sartorial depravity of the juvenile layer, the interviewees call on the youth to strictly respect values. While it is true that part of the responsibility lies with the youth, the other lies with the media.

Soap operas, imported clips, only make the situation worse. The development of technology is not to be neglected. Each geographical area responds to its own principles and rules. Between advertising and social pressure, young people are constantly exposed to the diktats of fashion. Parents often pay the price. Because it is not always easy to manage the whims of their offspring on this subject. Gone are the days of parents choosing outfits for their children. The alienation of clothing is not without consequence on the cultural development of the country. It leads to a loss of the cultural identity of the individual. Dressing according to your culture is an important thing, the way you dress already gives an idea of who you are.

Faced with such a situation, an interviewee criticizes the parents for not having assumed their responsibility and suggests raising awareness among young girls, in these terms:

We should not force them to wear outfits that are different from our age. We will educate them to make them understand that it is in their interest to dress properly because a man who sees you naked has no curiosity to marry you. So, we have to raise awareness, send strong messages. The authorities also have to provide the financial and human resources and the police also have to play their role on the moral level. When we see a young girl dress indecently, we challenge her because she hurts morality. The State must play its role and the family too, it is the family that must embody the values. (A. G. Family father, April 2018).

If it is not snobbery, how to explain the fact of being African and wanting to dress like an American? Young people can be accused from the outset of making a break with their culture.

4. CONCLUSION :

Investigations on the subject entitled "Depravity of clothing in Benin: case of young girls from the 8th District (Ste Rita) of the city of Cotonou. were a good opportunity for us to understand the factors that influence the dress behavior of young girls and especially those that lead them to depravity. Indeed, our study has shown that individuals change their behavior according to stimuli from the external environment or in which they live. Hence the dress behavior observed in the young girls of St. Rita is influenced by the dress habits of the West. Further, our study showed that the snobbery shown by these young girls is not without negative effects on themselves and those around them.

In these situations, we therefore end up with the affirmation of our hypotheses according to which "The clothing of young girls is influenced by the dress fashion of the West" and "The dress of the young girls of St. Rita undermines modesty and leads to depravity of morals".

At the end of our research, we knew that the parents did not stand idly by in the face of this behavioral deviance shown by these young girls.

These results obtained challenge everyone. Therefore, each parent and each authority at various levels must be able to play a fundamental role in changing the mentality of these young girls.

Far from being an end, this research is the beginning of more substantial work that could lead to the development of concrete strategies to change the situation within families so that these girls can benefit from a good reputation in their surroundings.

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