

Re-Traditionalisation, Competition or Aided Warfare? Interrogating the Drivers of Western and Local Fashion Among Female Students in Two Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

Nigerian universities have come to represent a place where Western and traditional fashion frequently interact. Though the manifestations of this “interaction” are multiple (in terms of competition, acculturation, collaborations and even conflict), factors such as globalization, government, university authorities, the media, individuals, and religious groups have increasingly, served as drivers. Acting as drivers, not only do these factors influence and sometimes determine what is fashionable in support of one of the two, but there is a growing trend where some of these factors have forcefully determined what is acceptable or unacceptable in the university. This paper locates the contestations between Western and traditional fashion in terms of re-traditionalisation, competition and/or aided warfare among female students of two public Nigerian Universities: University of Lagos and University of Ibadan, and two private universities, Babcock and Covenant. Also, based on an examination of these emerging trends among female students at the selected universities, the paper engages two interrelated questions: What are the representations of these factors (drivers) in Nigerian universities? And second, to what extent is the contestation between Western and local fashion on university campuses in Nigeria determined or influenced by these drivers? To engage these questions, a number of In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) on fashion on four Nigerian University Campuses were undertaken to get responses from relevant stakeholders.

Keywords: Re-traditionalisation, Fashion and non-fashion factors.