

## Religious Dressing and Morality in Ilorin Metropolis of Kwara State, Nigeria

**Abdullateef RAJI**

Department of Sociology,  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
University of Ilorin,  
Nigeria

**Abubakar Yinusa MOHAMMED**

Department of Sociology,  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
University of Ilorin,  
Nigeria

**Ibrahim Olawale ADESHINA**

Department of Sociology,  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
University of Ilorin,  
Nigeria

**Khalid Olatunji RAJI**

Department of Sociology,  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
University of Ilorin,  
Nigeria

**Lanre Abdul-Rasheed SULAIMAN**

[rasheed\\_sulaimon@yahoo.com](mailto:rasheed_sulaimon@yahoo.com)

Department of Sociology,  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
University of Ilorin,  
Nigeria

**Abdulwasiu Adeyemi RAJI**

School of International Studies  
Universiti Utara Malaysia

---

## Abstract

Religion is conceived to be greater than an array of beliefs by some people as they are often translated into action. These actions are often showcased in a multitude of ways ranging from the erection of cathedrals of worship to dressing in a particular manner. A key purpose of religious dressing is to exemplify holiness or purity which is usually interpreted to mean morality. Morality entails actions viewed to be proper as distinguished from improper ones. It is in line with this that a study was carried out in Ilorin metropolis in order to establish if there is a significant relationship between the adornment of religious attires and the engagement in moral acts. The social control theory was employed to explain this phenomenon with purposive sampling used in the selection of respondents. The analysis was based on 210 respondents with the use of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences. The study revealed that the adornment of religious attires has a significant relationship with the engagement in moral acts. Based on this, the study recommends that people should be encouraged to dress to their religious requirement as long as the general public is not put in danger.

**Keywords:** Religious, Dressing, Morality, Illorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

---

## INTRODUCTION

The assumed relationship between dressing and behaviour is great. Dress can serve as a window-display of the social world, bounded by an unstated set of rules, conventions, customs, as well as rituals that direct daily interaction. To many people, clothing is a critical flame of religious identification. Religious dressing tends to signal acceptable behaviours. Wholly, it serves as a very active form of non-verbal communication. Ideas that are central to a religion are therefore expressed externally via an individual's look (Arthur, 1999). Clothing in terms of religion can be viewed in two different manners; the sacred and the secular. The secular is also regarded as the profane. The sacred clothing is meant to reinforce the practitioner's religion. It is meant to essentially serve as a "fresh breathe of air", reinvigorating the religious belief. A comprehension of how dress works within religious groupings require care to the intricacy of meanings attached to it. The dress of religious groupings can be used to ease social as well as ideological agendas. Clothing is often used for establishing conceptions of deviance. Therefore, dress as it pertains to religious creeds is not only a mark of individual pledge to the group but as well signifies the group's sway over personal lives.

Arthur (1999) postulates that dress serves as a visible and immediate indicator of how an individual fits into his/her system of religion. As an indicator of identity, dress can be employed to measure individual dedication to the values of the religious system. In numerous conservative groupings, the clampdown of individuality is predicted, in accordance to the beliefs of the religious creed. Through adherence to a firm religious value system, the most traditional of the religious creeds exert dominance over members' physical bodies. Stern conformity is usually seen to be connected with religiosity. Therefore, submission to firm codes of behavior is vehemently required. The internal body is left to control by the religious beliefs, especially as it entails food and sex. The external body is however much more visibly restrained. The exacting dress codes are obligatory because dress is seen to be emblematic of religiosity. Clothing becomes a symbol of social control as it could control the external body. While a person's extent

of religiosity cannot be impartially perceived, such symbols as clothing are employed as indication that the practitioner of the religion is on the "true path."

### **Statement of the Problem**

A common thread running through all religions in the world is the conception of the sacred and profane. The sacred represents all things seen to be astonishing, setting believers in engrossing feelings of reverence. This feeling directs people to safeguard what is considered to be sacred from defilement. The profane on the other hand refers to all things that are not sacred, including things that stand in opposition to the sacred as well as those that are apart from it but not in opposition (Ferrante, 2008). Also related to all religion is the ritual. These are the rules that guide the manner in which individuals are to comport themselves in the presence of the sacred as well as in everyday life. A good example of this is the hijab of the Muslims. Some of the verses that address this issue in the Quran goes thus: "O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their veils all over their bodies. That will be better, that they should be known (as free respectable women) so as not to be annoyed". (Quran 33:59) "Say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and protect their private parts (from sins); and they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what appear thereof..."(Quran 24:31). For the males, it is acclaimed not to put on garments that fall below the ankles (justislam.org 2016). For the Christians, the adornment of jewels is not allowed. The women are as well expected to always cover their hair (Bacchiocchi, 1995)

The issue of contention is that does the adherence to this lifestyle ensure morality? Obviously, the adherence to this lifestyle does not mean that they do not commit immoral acts. It remains a possibility that they do so more than the people who do not take to their lifestyle. The adornment of these religious dresses does not make one an automatic saint. Crimes have been committed by people who adorn these religious dresses. Do women who wear hijabs or men who wear their clothing above their ankle (for religious purpose) not engage in immoral acts? Do Christians who abstain from adorning jewels not engage in acts that are against their religion? Are the women who cover their hair more morally upright than those who do not?

### **Research Objectives**

Below are the objectives of this research paper:

- The examination of the relationship between the adornment of hijab/scarf and the engagement in moral acts.
- The examination of the relationship between the adornment of jewels and the engagement in immoral acts.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Religious Dressing**

In Islam, there are dress codes for both the male and female. Its purpose is to safeguard the society as well as encourage modesty in behavior as well as in dressing (islamsight.org 2017). Islam regards all females in high regard and the Islamic rubrics of covering are meant to shield

as well as protect their integrity and decency. Islamic intelligentsias throughout the history of the religion opine that keeping true to the dress code is a sacred duty to all Muslims. This statement is grounded on confirmation found in the Quran as well as the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (justislam.org 2017). The basis of the hijab is to shield the “awrah”. This differs in varying conditions and amongst individuals. The following are the guidelines covering the men’s Dress code: “Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and protect their private parts (from sins). That is purer for them. And Allah is well acquainted with all that they do”. (Quran 24:30). Though they are largely overlooked, other conditions of dress code for men include that:

- The navel to the knees should be well covered;
- It should be completely different from the clothing adorned by females;
- The clothing should not be see-through nor tight;
- Males should not to put on outfits made of silk, and jewels fashioned from gold. (justislam.org 2017)

In Christianity, there are prescribed codes of dressing. These include:

- The adornment of jewelry is prohibited;
- Women should always cover their hair;
- Cosmetic surgeries should not be done;
- The wearing of the opposite sex’s apparels is frowned upon. (Bacchiocchi, 1995)

## **Morality**

Morality refers to the distinction in decisions, actions as well as intentions between those seen to be upright and those viewed otherwise (Long & Sedley, 1987). Morality represents a set of rules derived from a certain religion, culture or philosophy. It can as well be derived from a standard considered to be universal (Stanford University, 2011). Morality is often referred to as “rightness” or “goodness”. It should be noted that religion is not starkly linked with morality. Hume (2007) cited that the most serious crimes have often been associated with some superstitious belief. Hence, it would be misleading to believe that all form of morality can only be derived from religion. Immorality represents a concept which stands in contrast with morality.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Social Control Theory**

This theory posits that via the process of social learning as well as agents of socialization, self-control is constructed which cuts short the tendency to take part in acts seen to be anti-social. The theory was proposed by Nye (1975) who set forth four forms of control:

- Direct- Through this, punishment is applied or threatened for immoral behavior with compliance being rewarded by authority figures;

- Internal- It is through this that an individual abstains from wrongful acts via conscience;
- Indirect- This is by identification with those who are capable of swaying one's behavior. This is because the actor's delinquency might bring about disappointment to parents and others whom the actor shares close relationship with; and
- Control via need satisfaction- If all the actor's needs have been met, there is no use in immoral acts.

Applying this theory to the study of religious dressing and morality, direct control entails compliance of an individual to the religious dress codes. Internal control entails the avoidance of immoral acts by the individual adorning the religious attire as a consequence of a developed conscience. Indirect control has to do with the individual adorning the religious attire and avoidance of immoral acts as a result of identification with religious figures. Control via need satisfaction occurs when the individual has found inner peace/satisfaction in religion. With this, the actor feels that there is no use in engaging in immoral acts.

## METHODOLOGY

This research work was carried out in the city of Ilorin, Kwara State. The city consists of multiple cultures, populated by Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani, Nupe, Hausa, Baruba, etc. In terms of religious composition, we have a significant numbers of Muslims as well as Christians. Multitudes of religious ceremonies take place in the city throughout the year.

This study was carried out using the survey research technique. The target population are individuals who have dealings with individuals who adorn religious attires. Hence, a purposive sampling technique was used. With this, a sample size of 215 respondents. Upon data collection, 210 questionnaires were found to be completed and useful. The analysis was therefore based on it with the use of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### Data Presentation

	Socio-demographic data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18-20	9	4
	20-24	52	25
	25-29	53	25
	30 and above	96	46
	<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>
Gender	Male	98	47
	Female	112	53
	<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>
Religion	Christianity	83	40
	Islam	127	60
	<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital Status	Single	76	36
	Married	131	62
	Divorced/widowed	3	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It was discovered from the gathered data that 9 (4%) of the respondents are in the age range of 18-20. Also, 52 (25%) of the respondents are in the age range of 20-24. Then, 53 (25%) are in the age range of 25-29. Lastly, 96 (46%) of the respondents are aged 30 and above. It was as well gathered from the study that 98 (47%) of the respondents are males with the remaining 112 (53%) being females. In terms of religion, 83 (40%) of the respondents are Christians with the remaining 127 (60%) being Muslims. In the aspect of marital status, 76 (36%) of the respondents are single, 131 (62%) are married with the remaining 3 (2%) being divorced/widowed.

### Hypothesis one

H<sub>1</sub>=There is a significant relationship between the adornment of hijab/scarf and the engagement in moral acts.

H<sub>0</sub>=There is no significant relationship between the adornment of hijab/scarf and the engagement in moral acts.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Hijab Length

Hijab length	Engagement in Moral Behavior		Total
	Yes	No	
Shoulder-length	59	9	68
Full-length	139	3	142
<b>Total</b>	198	12	210

Researcher's fieldwork (2017)

$\chi^2 c$ - 10.558,  $\chi^2 t$ - 3.841, DF-1 Alpha level-0.05

### Decision Rule

Since the  $\chi^2 c$  is greater than the  $\chi^2 t$ , the alternate hypothesis is accepted and the null is rejected.

### 4.3. Hypothesis two

H<sub>1</sub>=There is a significant relationship between the adornment of jewels and the engagement in immoral acts.

H<sub>0</sub>=There is no significant relationship between the adornment of jewels and the engagement in immoral acts.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Jewel Adornment

Jewel adornment	Engagement in immoral behavior		Total
	Yes	No	
Little	56	43	99
Much	83	28	111
<b>Total</b>	131	79	210

Researcher’s fieldwork (2017)

$\chi^2$ c- 7.753,  $\chi^2$  t- 3.841, DF-1 Alpha level-0.05

### Decision Rule

Since the  $\chi^2$  c is greater than the  $\chi^2$  t, the alternate hypothesis is accepted and the null is rejected.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was discovered in the study that there is a significant relationship between the adornment of hijab and engagement in moral behavior. This signifies that the adornment of hijab is against the engagement in immoral behavior. These set of people are well bounded by their religious doctrines. Also, the study discovered that the adornment of jewels leads to the engagement in immoral acts than those who do not. As per Christianity, the wearing of these jewels is synonymous with sin. Hence, some Christians who adorn jewels are less bounded by religious virtues and therefore engage in immoral acts. Following these, the study recommends that since religious dressing has a positive role to play in encouraging morality, it should not be the subject of conflict. Each should be allowed the right to dress to his/her religious taste in as much as the general public is not put in harm’s way.

### REFERENCES

- Bacchiocchi, S. (1995). *Christian dress and adornment*. Michigan, USA: Biblical Perspectives
- Ferrante, J. (2008). *Sociology: A global perspective*. (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Florence, USA: Cengage Learning
- Hume, D. (2007). The Natural History of Religion”. In Hitchens, C. (Ed.).*The portable atheist: Essential readings for the nonbeliever*. Philadelphia: Da Capo Press.
- Islamsight.org
- Justislam.org
- Long, A. A., & Sedley, D. N. (1987). *The Hellenistic philosophers: Translations of the principal sources with philosophical commentary*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Nye, I. (1975). *Family relationships and delinquent behaviour*. Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press
- Quran 24:30, Holy Quran.
- Quran 24:31, Holy Quran.
- Quran 33:59, Holy Quran.
- Stanford University (2011). *The definition of morality*. Stanford University: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.