

EFFICACY OF SELF-ESTEEM TRAINING ON ATTITUDE TOWARDS CURBING INDECENT DRESSING AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS OF OKE-OGUN POLYTECHNIC, OYO STATE

BY

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Abstract

This study examined the efficacy of self-esteem training on attitude towards curbing indecent dressing among female students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Oyo State. A quasi-experimental pre-test, post-test control group design was adopted. The population comprised 4,113 female students, from which 120 participants were selected using convenience sampling based on availability and willingness to participate. Participants were assigned to experimental and control groups of 60 each. Data were collected using a researcher-designed 15-item Attitude towards Curbing Indecent Dressing Questionnaire (ATCIDQ), with a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.89. The experimental group received eight-week self-esteem training, whereas the control group continued with regular school and counselling activities. Mean, standard deviation, independent-samples t-test and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) were used for data analysis at the 0.05 level of significance. The pre-test result showed no significant difference between the experimental group ($M = 45.38$) and control group ($M = 45.71$), $t(118) = -0.35$, $p = .730 > .05$. At post-test, the experimental group recorded a higher mean score ($M = 56.82$) than the control group ($M = 46.93$), $t(118) = 11.95$, $p < .001$. ANCOVA also showed a significant group effect, $F(1, 117) = 142.772$, $p < .001$. The study concluded that self-esteem training was associated with improved attitude towards curbing indecent dressing among female students. Based on the results, it was recommended that guidance counsellors should incorporate self-esteem training into counselling programmes for female students to improve their attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing.

Keywords: *Self-esteem training, Attitude towards curbing, Indecent dressing, Female students and Oke-Ogun Polytechnic*

Introduction

A polytechnic is an institution where education is systematically organised and scientifically oriented towards developing students' knowledge, skills, and desirable attitudes. Polytechnics are expected to produce graduates who demonstrate good character, discipline, and responsible conduct beyond academic development. This makes institutional rules that support both academic and character development relevant to the educational process (Enaikele et al., 2026). One of such measures is the implementation of dress code policies, which are intended to promote appropriate dressing, encourage discipline, and create a conducive environment for teaching and learning (Ojogbane et al., 2020). Dress code implementation in Nigerian polytechnics has several benefits, including instilling discipline among students, reducing sexual abuse and harassment, and minimising distractions among students and lecturers. Appropriate dress standards may therefore contribute to the development of responsible conduct and acceptable moral values among students (Nwikpo et al., 2022; Dairo, 2023). In line with these objectives, Oke-Ogun Polytechnic adopted dress code policies as part of its measures for addressing indecent dressing and promoting acceptable standards of appearance among students.

Despite the dress code regulations guiding students' appearance, indecent dressing remains an issue among female students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic. Some female students consider certain dress regulations restrictive or inconsistent with contemporary fashion preferences, contributing to negative attitudes towards institutional

efforts to regulate dressing practices (Fadipe et al., 2024). Such attitudes are reflected in the wearing of short or tight-fitting dresses, skirts above the knee, transparent clothing, revealing tops and other forms of dressing restricted by the institution (Anierobi et al., 2021). The continued occurrence of these practices can affect the maintenance of acceptable standards of appearance within the polytechnic environment. Students' views about the purpose and enforcement of institutional dress regulations can also influence compliance with prescribed standards (Heidarzadeh et al., 2021; Ajisafe & Harrold, 2026). Some students regard such regulations as unnecessary limitations on personal expression and consequently show resistance or disregard for institutional expectations. This situation raises concerns about female students' attitudes towards efforts to curb indecent dressing at the Oke-Ogun Polytechnic. Persistent negative attitudes can limit the effectiveness of institutional measures and counselling efforts aimed at promoting decent dressing.

Students' attitudes towards efforts to curb indecent dressing can be influenced by their level of self-esteem. Experiences of criticism, ridicule or rejection concerning dressing can contribute to emotional distress and negative self-perceptions (Anarah & Unachukwu, 2022). Conversely, healthy self-esteem can promote confidence, self-acceptance and positive attitudes towards decent dressing. Self-esteem training, therefore, provides a counselling approach for addressing these issues by helping students recognise their personal worth, develop positive self-perceptions, resist peer pressure and make responsible decisions about their appearance. Urien and Urien (2025) described self-esteem as the attitudes and beliefs individuals hold about themselves. This relationship is supported by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1977), which explains that behaviour develops through the interaction of personal factors, environmental influences and behaviour. Thus, self-esteem training can strengthen students' confidence and self-acceptance, which can encourage more positive attitudes towards efforts to curb indecent dressing.

Self-esteem can influence female students' attitudes towards dressing, as perceptions of attractiveness, body image, social acceptance and approval from others can affect clothing choices (Orobosheri, 2025). Self-esteem training is a counselling programme designed to help students develop healthier views of themselves and make responsible decisions about their appearance. The programme focuses on self-awareness, recognition of personal strengths, positive self-talk, decision-making, resistance to peer pressure and responsible dressing choices. These activities can help students place less emphasis on clothing, physical appearance and peer approval as sources of acceptance (Anierobi et al., 2021). The training also encourages students to examine the reasons for their dressing choices and consider their possible social and academic consequences. Consequently, the programme can support more thoughtful dressing decisions and positive attitudes towards efforts to curb indecent dressing. The application of self-esteem training can provide female students with personal resources for responding appropriately to dressing expectations (Hamza & Mohammed, 2024). The intervention can strengthen their ability to handle criticism, social pressure and peer influence while considering institutional expectations (Heidarzadeh et al., 2021). Guidance counsellors can support students in transferring these skills to real-life situations within and outside the Polytechnic through continued counselling (Bibire et al., 2022). The effectiveness of the intervention can therefore be assessed through changes in students' attitudes towards efforts to curb indecent dressing.

Essentially, several studies have examined indecent dressing, providing evidence on its causes, associated factors, attitudes, adherence to dress codes and consequences. Fadipe et al. (2024) investigated the causes and consequences of indecent dressing among female students in Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Oyo State, while Anierobi et al. (2021) examined body image and self-esteem as predictors of indecent dressing among female undergraduates in universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. Heidarzadeh et al. (2021) investigated students' attitudes towards professional dress code and their level of adherence to the code at Kerman University of Medical Sciences, Iran, whereas Urien and Urien (2025) examined the psychological effects of professional dress code on students' studies and behaviour at Delta State University, Abraka. Although these studies have contributed to understanding different dimensions of dressing practices, most relied on descriptive, correlational or survey approaches to examine existing conditions and associated factors, with limited

empirical evidence on experimentally tested counselling approaches for improving attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing. In particular, limited evidence appears to exist on the use of structured self-esteem training to improve students' attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing in Nigerian polytechnic settings. The present study therefore examined the efficacy of self-esteem training on attitude towards curbing indecent dressing among female students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Oyo State.

Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of the study was to examine the efficacy of self-esteem training on attitude towards curbing indecent dressing among female students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic. The specific objectives were to:

1. determine the pre-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing among female students in the experimental and control groups at Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Oyo State.
2. examine the post-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing among female students in the experimental and control groups at Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Oyo State.

Research Questions

1. What is the pre-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing among female students in the experimental and control groups?
2. What is the post-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing among female students in the experimental and control groups?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in pre-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing between female students in the experimental and control groups.
2. There is no significant difference in post-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing between female students in the experimental and control groups.

Methodology

The study adopted a quasi-experimental pre-test, post-test control group design. The population comprised 4,113 female students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Oyo State. Oke-Ogun Polytechnic was purposively selected as the study setting due to the observed prevalence of indecent dressing among female students. From the population, 120 female students were selected using convenience sampling technique based on their availability during counselling sessions and willingness to participate in the study. The selected students were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, after which informed consent was obtained. The 120 participants were assigned into two equal groups of 60 students each, comprising the experimental and control groups. The experimental group received self-esteem training, whereas the control group did not receive the training and continued with regular school and counselling activities. Data were collected using a researcher-developed 15-item Attitude towards Curbing Indecent Dressing Questionnaire (ATCIDQ). The instrument was subjected to construct, face and content validation by seven experts in the Department of Counselling and Human Development Studies, University of Ibadan. The items were rated on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The criterion mean for each item was 2.50, obtained from $(4 + 3 + 2 + 1) \div 4 = 2.50$. Since the ATCIDQ contained 15 items, the corresponding total criterion score was 37.50 (2.50×15). A total score of 37.50 or above indicated a positive attitude towards curbing indecent dressing, and a total score below 37.50 indicated a negative attitude towards curbing indecent dressing. This scoring procedure was applied to both the pre-test and post-test responses. A pilot test was conducted with 20 female students of The Polytechnic Ibadan who were not part of the main study. The ATCIDQ was administered to the same students twice at an interval of two weeks, and the two sets of scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. A reliability coefficient of 0.89 was obtained, indicating that the instrument was sufficiently reliable for the study.

The study commenced after ethical approval and permission to conduct the study had been obtained. The selected participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained before participation. Participation was voluntary, confidentiality of responses was assured, and participants were informed of the right to withdraw from the study without penalty. The ATCIDQ was administered to the two groups as a pre-test before the training commenced. The experimental group was exposed to an eight-week self-esteem training programme covering self-awareness, personal strengths, self-acceptance, positive self-talk, confidence building, responsible decision-making, resistance to peer pressure and responsible dressing choices. Each weekly session included practical activities and a related assignment to reinforce the training content. The control group did not receive the self-esteem training during the study period but continued with regular school activities. At the end of the eight-week training, the ATCIDQ was re-administered to both groups as a post-test. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Independent-samples t-test was used to examine the difference between the experimental and control groups at pre-test and post-test, whereas Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to determine the effect of the self-esteem training on post-test attitude scores after controlling for pre-test scores. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the pre-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing among female students in the experimental and control groups?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-test Attitude Scores

Group	N	Mean	SD
Experimental	60	45.38	5.33
Control	60	45.71	5.13
Total	120	45.55	5.23

Table 1 showed the pre-test mean attitude scores of female students towards curbing indecent dressing in the experimental and control groups. The experimental group recorded a mean score of 45.38 (SD = 5.33), while the control group recorded a mean score of 45.71 (SD = 5.13). The combined mean score for the 120 participants was 45.55 (SD = 5.23), indicating a positive attitude towards curbing indecent dressing before exposure to the self-esteem training. The experimental and control groups recorded very close mean scores, suggesting that the two groups had similar levels of attitude at pre-test. The result therefore provides a baseline for examining changes in attitude following the self-esteem training.

Research Question 2: What is the post-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing among female students in the experimental and control groups?

Table 2: Pre-test and Post-test Mean SD and Mean Gain Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Post-test SD	Mean Gain	Mean Difference in Post-test Scores	Difference in Mean Gains
Experimental	60	45.38	56.82	4.16	11.44	9.89	10.22
Control	60	45.71	46.93	4.88	1.22	-	-

Table 2 showed that the experimental group recorded a higher post-test mean attitude score (M = 56.82, SD = 4.16) than the control group (M = 46.93, SD = 4.88). The experimental group achieved a mean gain of 11.44, compared with 1.22 for the control group, resulting in a difference in mean gains of 10.22 points. The post-test mean difference of 9.89 points further indicates that female students exposed to self-esteem training demonstrated greater improvement in their attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing than those in the control group. This finding suggests that self-esteem training may have contributed to more positive attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing among female students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Oyo State.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in pre-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing between female students in the experimental and control groups.

Table 3: Independent Samples t-test Showing Pre-test Difference

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p	Decision
Experimental	60	45.38	5.33	-0.35	118	.730	Not. Sig
Control	60	45.71	5.13				

Table 3 showed that there was no significant difference in pre-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing between the experimental group ($M = 45.38$, $SD = 5.33$) and the control group ($M = 45.71$, $SD = 5.13$), $t(118) = -0.35$, $p = .730 > .05$. Since the p-value was greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This indicates that the two groups did not differ significantly in their attitude towards curbing indecent dressing before exposure to the self-esteem training. The non-significant difference suggests that the groups had comparable baseline attitude scores at the beginning of the study, providing a basis for examining changes following the self-esteem training.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in post-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing between female students in the experimental and control groups.

Table 4a: Independent Samples t-test Showing Post-test Difference

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p	Decision
Experimental	60	56.82	4.16	11.95	118	.001	Sig.
Control	60	46.93	4.88				

Table 4a showed that there was a significant difference in post-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing between the experimental group ($M = 56.82$, $SD = 4.16$) and the control group ($M = 46.93$, $SD = 4.88$), $t(118) = 11.95$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The experimental group recorded a higher post-test mean score than the control group, indicating a more positive attitude towards curbing indecent dressing among students exposed to the self-esteem training. The result indicates that the two groups differed significantly in their post-test attitude scores. To further examine the group difference after controlling for pre-test attitude scores, an analysis of covariance was conducted, as presented in Table 4b.

Table 4b: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of Post-test Scores

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	Decision
Pre-test attitude	14.478	1	14.478	0.702	.404	Not Sig.
Group	2944.520	1	2944.520	142.772	<.001	Sig.
Error	2412.970	117	20.624			
Corrected Total	5371.968	119				

Table 4b result showed that pre-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing, used as the covariate, was not significant, $F(1,117) = 0.702$, $p = .404 > .05$. This indicates that pre-test attitude did not significantly account for the variation in post-test attitude scores. However, the group effect was significant, $F(1,117) = 142.772$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in post-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing between the experimental and control groups was rejected. After controlling for pre-test attitude, the experimental and control groups differed significantly in their post-test attitude scores. The experimental group recorded a higher post-test mean score ($M = 56.82$) than the control group ($M = 46.93$), indicating that students exposed to self-esteem training expressed a more positive attitude towards curbing indecent dressing.

Discussion of the Findings

The finding revealed that female students in the experimental and control groups had similar pre-test attitude scores towards curbing indecent dressing, with mean scores of 45.38 and 45.71, respectively. This finding is consistent with the baseline comparability expected in a quasi-experimental study, where the groups should demonstrate similar initial characteristics before the introduction of an intervention. Although Anierobi et al. (2021) examined the relationship between self-esteem and indecent dressing among female undergraduates in Anambra State, their study provides a basis for understanding the connection between self-esteem and

dressings-related behaviour rather than directly explaining the similarity in the present study's pre-test scores. Similarly, Emmanuel and Ogundokun (2023) and Anarah and Unachukwu (2022) provide related evidence on the relevance of structured psychological and social skills training in addressing students' psychological and behavioural concerns. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory further explains that personal beliefs, environmental conditions and behavioural experiences interact in shaping attitudes and actions. The similarity in pre-test scores may be associated with the participants being drawn from the same polytechnic environment and having no prior exposure to the self-esteem training. This finding establishes that both groups had comparable attitudes at baseline, providing a suitable basis for examining changes following the training.

The finding showed that female students exposed to self-esteem training recorded a higher post-test mean attitude score of 56.82 than the control group, which recorded 46.93, with a mean gain of 11.44 for the experimental group compared with 1.22 for the control group and a difference in mean gains of 10.22 points. This finding is consistent with Hamza and Mohammed (2024), who reported that assertive training improved self-esteem among primary school pupils in Kano State, and Orobosheri (2025), who reported improvements in self-esteem following assertiveness training, cognitive behavioural therapy and solution-focused brief therapy among undergraduate victims of bullying. Although these studies examined self-esteem rather than attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing, their findings provide indirect support for the use of structured psychological training to promote positive personal development, and Anierobi et al. (2021) further established a relationship between self-esteem, body image and indecent dressing among female undergraduates in Anambra State. The greater improvement observed in the experimental group may be associated with training activities that addressed self-awareness, positive self-talk, self-acceptance, confidence building, responsible decision-making and resistance to peer pressure, which may have strengthened students' confidence in making responsible dressing choices. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory provides a useful explanation because personal experiences and environmental influences can shape attitudes and behaviour, suggesting that the structured training may have supported more positive attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing among the participating students.

The finding revealed that there was no significant difference in pre-test attitude towards curbing indecent dressing between the experimental group ($M = 45.38$, $SD = 5.33$) and the control group ($M = 45.71$, $SD = 5.13$), as shown by the independent-samples t -test, $t(118) = -0.35$, $p = .730 > .05$. The finding differs from Anarah and Unachukwu (2022), who reported different pre-test self-esteem mean scores for the experimental group ($M = 28.48$) and control group ($M = 42.11$) before social skills training, although their subsequent ANCOVA showed a significant treatment effect on self-esteem, $F(1, 54) = 8.143$, $p = .006$. The present finding also differs in outcome focus from Emmanuel and Ogundokun (2023), who examined self-esteem among secondary school students in relation to emotional intelligence training and cognitive restructuring therapy and reported a significant treatment effect on self-esteem after the training. The differences may be associated with variations in the study variables, participants, settings, interventions and sampling procedures. In the present study, the absence of a significant pre-test difference indicates that the experimental and control groups had comparable baseline attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing before exposure to the self-esteem training. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory provides a theoretical basis for understanding how personal experiences, environmental influences and behavioural processes interact in shaping attitudes and actions. From this perspective, the comparable baseline scores provide an appropriate basis for examining whether subsequent changes in attitude were associated with exposure to self-esteem training.

The finding revealed that female students exposed to self-esteem training recorded a higher post-test attitude score towards curbing indecent dressing ($M = 56.82$, $SD = 4.16$) than those in the control group ($M = 46.93$, $SD = 4.88$). The independent-samples t -test showed that the difference was statistically significant, $t(118) = 11.95$, $p < .001$, and the ANCOVA result further indicated that the group difference remained significant after controlling for pre-test attitude, $F(1, 117) = 142.772$, $p < .001$. The finding is supported indirectly by Emmanuel and Ogundokun (2023), who reported that emotional intelligence training and cognitive

restructuring therapy improved self-esteem among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State; Hamza and Mohammed (2024), who found that assertive training improved self-esteem among primary school pupils in Kano State; and Orobosheri (2025), who reported improvement in self-esteem following assertiveness training, cognitive behavioural therapy and solution-focused brief therapy among undergraduate victims of bullying. These studies provide support for the use of structured psychological training to promote positive changes in self-esteem, although their outcome variables differed from the attitude towards curbing indecent dressing examined in the present study. Supporting the dressing-related aspect of the finding, Bibire et al. (2022) investigated the causes, effects and ways of curbing indecent dressing among students of colleges of education in Ilorin, Nigeria, and identified approaches for addressing the problem, although their study did not experimentally examine a counselling programme. The higher post-test attitude score recorded by the experimental group suggests that self-esteem training may have contributed to more positive attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing. This improvement could be linked to training activities that promoted self-awareness, self-acceptance, confidence and responsible decision-making. The finding can also be explained by Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, which emphasises the roles of observation, personal experiences and environmental influences in shaping attitudes and behaviour. From this perspective, the training provided opportunities for students to reconsider their dressing choices, strengthen their confidence and develop more positive attitudes towards decent dressing practices.

Conclusion

The study concluded that female students in the experimental and control groups had comparable attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing before the training, as there was no significant difference in their pre-test attitude scores. Following the self-esteem training, the experimental group recorded a significantly higher post-test attitude score than the control group, and the group difference remained significant after controlling for pre-test attitude. The study therefore concluded that self-esteem training was associated with improved attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing among female students of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Oyo State.

Implications of Findings for Counselling Practice

The finding that there was no significant difference in pre-test attitude between the experimental and control groups may suggest the value of conducting an initial assessment of students' attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing before planning counselling programmes. Guidance counsellors could use such assessments to identify areas of need and establish appropriate counselling goals. The higher post-test mean score and greater mean gain recorded by the experimental group suggest that structured self-esteem training may be useful in counselling programmes addressing attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing. The eight training components used in the study, namely self-awareness, personal strengths, self-acceptance, positive self-talk, confidence building, responsible decision-making, resistance to peer pressure and responsible dressing choices, could be incorporated into individual and group counselling sessions, seminars and practical exercises. The significant group difference after controlling for pre-test attitude also suggests that self-esteem training may form part of preventive counselling services. Guidance counsellors could use follow-up sessions to reinforce the skills addressed during the training and provide further guidance where needed. Collaboration with student affairs personnel and relevant academic units could support continuity of counselling activities within the Polytechnic and provide opportunities for continued support for students who require additional guidance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

1. Guidance counsellors should conduct periodic assessment of female students' attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing and use the identified needs to plan appropriate counselling activities.
2. Guidance counsellors should incorporate structured self-esteem training into counselling programmes for female students, with emphasis on self-awareness, personal strengths, self-acceptance, positive self-talk, confidence building, responsible decision-making, resistance to peer pressure and responsible dressing choices.

3. Oke-Ogun Polytechnic should provide opportunities for regular self-esteem development programmes through group counselling, seminars, orientation programmes and other student development activities that may support positive attitudes towards curbing indecent dressing.
4. Guidance counsellors should monitor students' responses to self-esteem training through periodic assessment and follow-up counselling, using the findings to identify areas requiring further support and adjustment of counselling activities.
5. The management of Oke-Ogun Polytechnic should provide adequate institutional support, including counselling facilities, appropriate time and opportunities for guidance counsellors to implement sustained self-esteem training and related counselling programmes for female students.

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