
The Power of the Visual on Men and Women's perspective towards Provocative Dressing

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ABSTRACT

There have been several occasions where men involved in rape cases have told enforcers, the court, and even their victims that if it wasn't for how the woman is dressed, the crime would've not happened. Likewise, there have been occasions where judges and enforcers themselves called the attention of women to dress appropriately in public to avoid sexual assaults, however, this led to criticisms and campaigns involving women instilling their rights and freedom to wear whatever they like and highlighting that it is men who should be taught to respect and behave well. This study determined if man's behavior towards women gets affected by how they dress and if so, in what way their actions are affected by it. Through a survey and interview, the authors further found out the top reasons why women wear revealing clothes in public, and their belief towards men's response to it. Results show that men's behavior towards women really gets affected by how they dress, and it is affected in a way that men literally gets aroused when they see women wearing revealing clothes, moreover, it was found out that sexual objectification portrayed in films, advertisements, or anything published through media is a contributor to the objectification experienced by women in society. This study also shows that women strongly believe wearing provocative clothes can get the attention of men sexually and it is man's nature; in fact, this is what they tend to do if they would like to seduce a man or to just get their attention. These findings led to a conclusion that when women present themselves in a provocative dress in public, they are more likely to be seducing or sexually attracting men than any other reasons. In addition, though most rape victims are dressed with revealing clothes when they were raped, there are still a number of rape victims who are not dressed provocatively when the crime was committed. It is therefore concluded that rape and other related crimes can't be solved by just educating women how to dress appropriately, but it can minimize the number of incidents, thus give them lesser risk of becoming a victim. Recommendations include the passing of a decency law to regulate how people dress in public places and to stop the creation of films, advertisements, and other media platforms that portray sexual objectification.

Keywords:

Provocative Dressing, Suggestive Dressing, Sexual Objectification, Sexual Behavior, Power of the Visual

INTRODUCTION

Male and female have different personalities, beliefs, and mindsets; females generally see things differently compared to men (Schmitt, 2017). Psychologically speaking, females on average are higher than males in extraversion, anxiety, trust, and tender-mindedness (Feingold, 1994). They differ in terms of how they response to music; women are more likely to respond to music in a more emotional way than men (Furnham et al, 2009), females prefer popular music (Rawlings & Ciancarelli, 1997), and males

demonstrated more of a preference for bass music (McCown et al, 1997). Men and women also do not have the same attributes towards Intimacy, Emotional Expressivity, and Relationship Satisfaction; males have a more positive perspective of their own intimacy in relationships while women have a more negative perception of their own intimacy (Ubando, 2016), and they also greatly differ on how they communicate with other people; men expect competition in their friendships, thus they avoid communicating weakness and vulnerability, while females are comfortable discussing about their weakness and vulnerability, in fact, they may seek out friendships more in these times (Boundless, 2017). Generally, females often feel more comfortable to their friends than men do, and they value their friends by listening and communicating non-critically, communicating support, communicating feelings to enhance one's self-esteem, offering comfort, and encouraging personal growth. These are just a few, but these simply justify that men and women are really different.

In this research, men and women will be evaluated based on their perspective towards provocative clothing. Clothing serves as an important influence to how we socialize and meet people, and it acts as a symbol of social identity and status (Kaiser et al, 2001). Dressing can be seen as an act of saying that one is available to others, not only for appreciation and admiration but also for objectification (Lynch, 2007). Clothing reflects on one's identity and behavior exhibits in daily life (Woodward, 2008), in fact, in the study conducted by (Feinberg et al, 1992), the people were able to perceive the social information presented in clothes selected by others to accurately represent their personalities and significantly connects to how they view themselves. Clothing is informative; deviating from the norm makes it informative (Awasthi, 2017).

“Provocative” has been defined in dictionaries as an act to “serve or likely to arouse a strong reaction”, and has been tagged as a synonym for “Suggestive”. Suggestive Dressing means the deliberate exposure of one's body to the public to attract an attention (Oyeleye, 2013). It has been referred by (Egwim, 2010) as the behavior of someone, male or female that dresses to show off body parts such as the breasts, buttocks, and even clothing that needs to worn underneath, specifically those of the women's that commonly are covered. In addition, (Adeboye, 2012) further defined it as the wearing of clothes not suitable for the occasion or situation.

The Philippines is known to be the third largest Catholic country in the world next to Brazil and Mexico, and the fifth largest Christian country with 93% of the population being adherents (Pew Research Center, 2011). The Philippine Catholic Church has been very transparent to what the bible says in terms of dressing, which information is visible in strategic locations inside and outside churches. This type of clothing has been deemed as “decent” by Father Marvin Mejia who was the Secretary General of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (Coconut Manila, 2014). However, this has been the opposite when it comes to how Filipinas behave; they are characterized to be conservative and liberal towards social issues (Cornelio, 2014), and it is undeniably usual to see women wearing revealing clothes in public places.

In a social context, the recognition of the human body is mediated by clothing and other social symbols (Awasthi, 2017), thus Provocative Dressing has been determined to lead to Sexual Objectification (Gurung & Chrouser, 2007). Sexual objectification occurs when a person is characterized by their body

parts or sexual functions, wherein an individual loses his identity, and is solely recognized for his physical sexual attributes (Bartky, 1990). Sexual Objectification is common with both men and women (Aubrey 2006), but it is more likely to happen with women (Harris, 2016), which brings negative effects; it creates the idea of self-objectification that leads to continuous self-monitoring, which creates a state of self-consciousness that makes one feel ashamed and anxious (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), however, it has been determined that these emotional consequences if caused by objectification will only last for a very short period of time (Koval et al, 2019).

Though this study might create issues for its sensitive content and results, it will surely contribute to one's knowledge and understanding towards sociology and psychology. Results may be unacceptable to certain groups, but this for sure will serve as a realization to many.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researchers used a descriptive approach to analyze and interpret data presented. Respondents for this study were a total of 870 individuals who reside in Quezon City, the largest city in the Philippines by population. 385 women were asked to learn about their perception towards provocative dressing, 385 men were asked for their perspective towards their partners' way of dressing, and 100 fathers who have a conservative perspective on how their daughters should dress in public were asked to know their reasons behind such principle. Data were gathered through a review of published and unpublished research, analysis of news articles, an online survey, and over-the-phone interviews. Responses for open-ended questions were collated thematically, and frequency and percentage were used to measure the results. Data collection lasted for 2 months and 2 days that started on the 17th day of June 2020 and ended on the 18th day of August of the same year.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Both men and women believe that women who wore provocative clothing are more sexually appealing, more attractive, less faithful in marriage, more likely to engage in sexual teasing, more likely to use sex for personal gain, more likely to be sexually experienced, and more likely to be raped than when wearing conservative dresses (Cahoon & Edmonds, 1987). According to (Loughman & Pacilli, 2014), the act of seeing female as sex objects is called Sexual Objectification, and it has been proven to affect a woman's confidence and social well-being negatively (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Ironically, Sexualization has been the standard for female characters in films globally, whereas women are twice as likely as boys and men to be shown in sexually revealing clothing, partially, or fully naked, and are five times as likely to be referenced as attractive (Smith et al, 2014), while according to Prof. Francesca Guizzo of the Department of Developmental and Socialization Psychology of the University of Padova, Italy, undressed and sexy bodies in western countries are accustomed to be used as decorative objects or instruments in advertisements to attract new customers, this however has been determined to be a reason why Sexual Objectification is present in society. When people get exposed often to bikini-clad models dressed over sports cars or to actresses dressed with revealing clothes on television, they tend to see female sex as a mere sexual object (Guizzo et al, 2016), in fact, this has been proven to be a source of sexual satisfaction and also responsible for wrong temptation and sexual aggression among men in the patriarchal society (Ahmed, 2016). These were supported by the study conducted by (Rudman & Borgida, 1995), who found out that after watching television commercials with women treated as

sexual objects, male interviewing a female confederate job applicant tends to sit closer and asks her more inappropriate questions.

The visual has a huge impact to men, they sexually respond to women showing skin and wearing revealing clothes (Prager, 2016). In fact, in an interview with 385 men in Quezon City, the authors of this study have determined that 91.16% of men getaroused when they see a woman's cleavage while86.49% gets aroused when they see a woman's legs, and aside from getting aroused, 74.8% of themthink that they are intentionally being seduced by women who wear revealing clothes.

Based on the study conducted by (Lennon et al, 1993), most rape victims were wearing provocative clothes when the crime was committed, and what this study says is not far from what (The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, and the Washington Post, 2015) has found out from a survey among College Students, whereas 6 out 10 women believe that women who go to parties wearing provocatively clothing are asking for trouble. Meanwhile, it was determined that 45% of rape offenders were partners or ex-partners of the victims, and 38% were knownto them other than as partner or family member, while only 18% were strangers (Oppenheim, 2019).

The male respondents of this study who are currently in a relationship were asked about their perspective towards their woman’s way of dressing; 86.23% said they are strict and conservative towards the way their wives and girlfriends dress. They were also asked about their reasons behind the principle and 96.08% of the 86.23% said that they don’t want their partners to become subjects of assault.

In regards of parents towards their daughters’ way of dressing, 100 fathers who do not allow their daughters to leave the house wearing revealing clothes were asked about their reasons.

Responses	Percentage	Frequency
To avoid being judged negatively by others	31%	31
To avoid maniacs	27%	27
It is unpleasent to their eye	27%	27
It is against their religious belief	15%	15

Table 1: Father’s responses to the question “Why do you restrict your daughter from going out wearing revealing clothes?”

31% said they don't want others to think that their daughters are easy. If men will see his daughter showing skin, she will be vulnerable to sexual assault or abuses.27% said that the society is now different; there are a lot of maniacs out there. Another 27% said because it is not pleasant to the eye as it reflects sex, profanity, immorality, and disrespect to her and her family, while 15% said it does not reflect his moral values; religious, wholesomeness, believing that, one should respect his body, thus it should be hidden and it should only be seen by her future husband.

Every man is a Sex Addict, but unlike addictions to alcohol, cocaine, and cigarettes, in which the craving is caused by external elements, sexual craving is a natural phenomenon (Karasu, 2017).The male’s brain on average is primed towards sexual conquest (Barsouk, 2018), thus are naturally sex excited, in fact, based in the study by (Fisher et al, 2012),young men thinks of sex 19 times per day on

average compared to women who had only reported to think of sex 10 times a day. Men's sex drive is not just higher than women's, but much more straightforward (Sine, 2013), and is more consistent over time and more consistent across individuals as well (Lippa, 2009), thus men being a sexual predator could be considered natural. These were further justified by the study conducted by the Institute of Applied Economic Research, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2014, which was participated by 3,810 respondents, 66.5% of which are women; 65% said that they will rape women who wear clothing that shows off the body, and 58.5% of the respondents also agreed that if women knew how to behave, there would be fewer rapes (France-Press, 2014).

Billy Sunday, the popular American baseball outfielder who became a most celebrated and influential evangelist, says, "Temptation is the devil looking through a keyhole; yielding is opening the door and letting him in". This was supported by (Arranza, 2019) in his article, where he mentioned that the Catholic's Prayer called "Our Father" manifests that people who wear seductive clothes are the temptation and the evil in its last line "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver from evil". He added that "Decency" causes respect, similar to how respect is earned by giving respect.

Responses	Percentage	Frequency
To show off	76.36%	294
To attract men	69.35%	267
To stand out	55.58%	214
To fit in with the crowd	44.41%	171
To acclimatize	40.51%	156

Table 2: Women's responses to the question "What are your Top 3 reasons of wearing provocative clothes in public?"

Women often argue that they wear revealing clothes due to the climate and because this type of dresses is what makes them comfortable. Though this may be acceptable depending on the situation, but it is contrast to what has been constantly observed in society, which has been vividly explained by (Omede, 2011); *"What the girls call skirts that they wear is just "one inch" longer than their pants, when they put on such dresses, they struggle to sit down, find difficulty in climbing machines (motorcycles), cross gutters as well as pick anything from the ground. Apart from the skimpy and tight fitting nature of these dresses, they are again transparent; revealing certain parts of the bodies that under normal dressing patterns ought to be hidden away from the glare of people."*

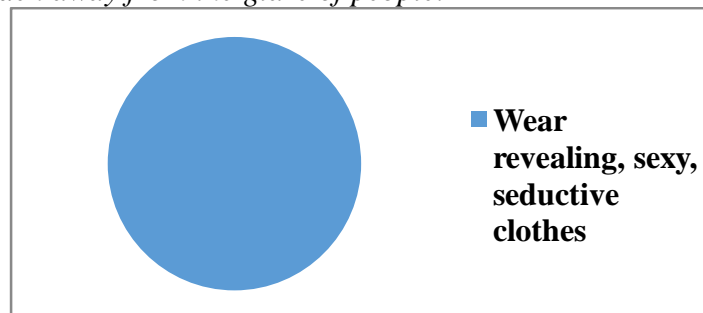


Figure 1: Women's responses to the question "What do you do to seduce or to attract a man sexually"?, or "What will you do you are to seduce or to attract a man sexually"?"

Results of this interview clearly show that women are aware that dressing provocatively will get the attention of men, and in extreme cases, will seduce them. Women who are in a relationship during the interview were asked also about their observation with their partners when encountering women dressed in revealing clothes in public and their behavior when talking about it; 97.40% said that their partners unintentionally or intentionally stare at women wearing revealing clothes in public, 89.09% said their partners are in denial when they talk about it, but 97.66% said that their partners tend to talk about such when they are with friends. 86.49% of them agreed that this is man's nature.

CONCLUSION

The researchers based on the findings of this study hereby conclude that men's behavior towards women really gets affected by how they dress, and it is affected in a way that men literally gets aroused when they see women wearing revealing clothes, moreover, it was found out that sexual objectification portrayed in films, advertisements, or anything published through media is a contributor to the objectification experienced by women in the society; all these happen because men's sexual addiction is natural. Listening to what the respondents have to say during the interview, the top three reasons why women wear provocative clothing are 1. to show off their healthy body that is a result of their hard work, 2. to attract men, and 3. to stand out from everyone else. Furthermore, results show that women strongly believe wearing provocative clothes can get the attention of men sexually, in fact, this is what they tend to do if they would like to seduce a man; however, this is in contrast to what they usually say towards dressing provocatively in public. The question now is why do women despite believing that it is men's nature to sexually respond to the visual, still wear provocative dressing? The answer to this is probably because they really want to receive that kind of response from men, unless they would like to prove something, because nobody would understand why someone will choose to jump into a swamp full of crocodiles, if she does not want to be killed, unless she would like to prove that she can out power the crocodiles. This however might lead to disastrous outcomes, whereas the person is to blame for jumping into a swamp full of living bodies which nature is to attack and kill, which is the same analogy to women presenting themselves in a way that makes men sexually aggressive due to his nature to sexually respond to the visual. When women were asked what they do to seduce or sexually attract men, all of them said they will wear sexy clothing that shows some skin. The authors hereby conclude that though some women dress provocatively in public, it does not always mean that they aim to be sexually objectified, however, it has been proven also that they are aware of the risk of getting the attention of men sexually and being assaulted when they dress that way. Therefore, women who wear revealing clothes are trying to be seductive and are trying to get the attention of men during the time of wearing it. Every time women would like seduce or get the attention of men, they present themselves wearing revealing clothes, therefore every time they wear revealing clothes, they would like to seduce or get the attention of men sexually.

It was also determined that though most rape victims are dressed with revealing clothes when they were raped, there are still a number of rape victims who are not dressed provocatively when the crime was committed. It is therefore concluded that rape and other related crimes can't be solved by just educating women to dress appropriately, but it can minimize the number of incidents, thus give them lesser risk of becoming a victim. Furthermore, it was determined that most rape cases involve people who know one another.

This study has also determined the perspective of women who are in a relationship towards their man's response when they see women who are dressed provocatively in public. Results show that women always catch their men looking at other girls in public, especially those who are showing too much skin, and they have exposed that this behavior gets so obvious when their partner are with their male friends; though they don't want to see their man talking about or looking at others, they generally accept it because of their belief that it is a man's nature.

The author hereby recommends the passing of a decency law to regulate how people dress in public places and to stop the creation of films, advertisements, and other media platforms that portray sexual objectification. Women are also suggested to be more cautious of their behavior around friends. These measures are expected to lessen crimes and sexual violence against women.

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