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Teacher-Trainees' Awareness of Teaching Professional Dress Codes in Universities in Kilimanjaro Region, Tanzania

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Abstract:

This study investigated the extent to which teacher-trainees in universities in the Kilimanjaro Region were aware of professional dress code teaching. The research was guided by one research question and the theory of Reasoned Action by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1967. A convergent design using mixed methods research methods was adopted. The target population included 2600 teacher trainees, 4 Deans of students, 389 Lecturers and 40 Wardens. Purposive and stratified random sampling techniques were used to obtain 318 respondents, of which 300 were teacher-trainees, 8 lecturers, 2 deans of students and 8 university wardens. Data were collected through questionnaires and an in-depth interview guide. Validation of the research instrument was done by three MWECAU research experts. The reliability of the quantitative data was determined using Cronbach Alpha, while the reliability of the qualitative data was determined through triangulation. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using means, frequencies, and percentages with the aid of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 22 and presented in tables. The qualitative data were analyzed and interpreted thematically and presented in the form of narration and direct quotations. The study found that most teacher-trainees were aware of the Teaching Professional Dress Codes in Kilimanjaro Region. The study concluded that teacher-trainees were fully aware of the dress code and the mechanisms in place to abide by it towards professional development in universities in the Kilimanjaro region. The breach of the code is not because of ignorance but rather because of the reasons best known to them. The researcher recommended that the university administration, in collaboration with the student government, should continue to follow up on compliance with the dress code to attain a hundred percent. Training on dress code for teacher-trainees at the university level using guest speakers with work experience could help the teacher-trainees understand the actual expectations of the community they would be members of.

Keywords: Pertinence, University, dress code, wardens, trainees

1. Introduction

A dress code is a collection of guidelines that specify what clothing is acceptable in a certain environment. For instance, there are outfits ideal for attending church, participating in sports, attending parties, relaxing at home, and attending lectures. It addresses modest and good clothing that adheres to the values of the environment (Nwagwu, 2019). Since the majority of university students dresses indecently and do not represent their vocations, the dress code has become a serious worry. Students who are enrolled in multiple universities with the goal of pursuing a variety of professions are obliged to follow the dress rules for those professions. The first clothing codes were set for charitable schools in England in the 16th century. Currently, the issue of dress code has been adopted by various professional boards and educational institutions worldwide, Tanzania in particular. Tanzanian professionals are expected to dress nicely, choosing different outfits for different occasions or activities, where they can dress casually, smartly, and formally (URT, 2020). The higher learning Institutions in Tanzania, which prepare experts for various professions, have taken the issue of dress code with utmost importance.

Moshi Cooperative University (MoCU) by-law requires teacher-trainees to attend theatre/lectures/seminars/practical/library/computer laboratories/computer rooms, and any formal function of the University with presentable and acceptable clothing. During studies at the University, tight-fitting and dirty jeans, head stockings, caps, sports shoes, shorts, torn trousers, ponytails, trousers with six or more pockets, cloth depicting illegal drugs, slovenly-looking clothes, trousers, and shorts that show underwear, unbuttoned shirts and sleeveless shirts, clothing that

reveal the torso (the cloth that reveals chest) shabby hair cutting/dressing dress codes are prohibited for male students. As well, tight fitting and dirty jeans, tightly fitting clothes and skin tights including gowns, trousers and skirts, dresses/skirts with excessive slits, dresses exposing the stomach, breasts, waist, thigh back and shorts/ skirts that do not cover the knees when seated, over adornment, Gowns/ skirts hanging above the knees are strictly prohibited for female students. (MoCU By-law 2015).

Mbeya University of Science and Technology (MUST) have prepared the dress code guidelines to raise students' awareness of the dress codes. Students are required to wear clothes and appear in such a way that they cannot cause disturbance or interference. All clothing must be of appropriate length and fit. The skirts for female students must be headed and extended under the knees; excessively loose- or tight-fitting clothes are not permitted. Tops with spaghetti stripes and tops with excessively low necklines and halters are also prohibited. Moreover, female students are not allowed to wear sleeveless garments which do not completely cover the undergarments. Hats, caps, sweatbands, and other types of head covering are not supposed to be worn in public areas. Additionally, hair should be neat and clean. Males are not allowed to braid their hair and wear earrings. Tattoos or tattooing make-up are not allowed, sandals are forbidden, and cutoff shirts or unbuttoned shirts are not allowed. Furthermore, students are not allowed to wear clothes which are obscene, crude or indecent. Clothes that advertise or support the use of alcohol, tobacco products, illicit drugs, promiscuity, or violence are not permitted. Surging pants are worn below the waist, clothing that exposes under clothing/underpants shall not be worn, gang-related clothing is not allowed, and jewels that are health or safety hazards or that depict weapons of violence, drugs and alcohol should not be worn. All clothes shall be in a state of good repair, and students shall not dress in any manner reasonably deemed to be inappropriate and disruptive to the teaching and learning process as determined by the University management (MUST by-law 2019).

Cognizing of the importance of dress code, especially for the teaching profession, the higher learning institutions that train teachers in Tanzania have also come up with by-laws that give guidelines on how teacher-trainees should dress to bring a positive image of the profession and particular university. The by-laws of Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) (2015), Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE) (2015), Saint John University of Tanzania (SJUT) (2013) and MWECAU (2020) are cited here as examples. A teacher teaches not only by what he/she says but also by what he/she dresses. The by-laws of the different institutions give the dos and don'ts for one aspiring to become a teacher. MWECAU (2020) by-laws do not permit miniskirts, sagging pants, cut-out dresses, transparent clothes, capped sleeves, skintight, crazy jeans, tracksuits, bracelets, sleeveless tops, casual wear like Kanga, headscarves, slippers, shorts, high slit dress, haircuts style like kiduku and earrings for men. Students are requested to dress with decency, modesty, and smartness. In order to ensure that every teacher-trainee abides by the dress code law, the University has placed posters at the entrance gate to increase awareness of dress codes among the students. Additionally, the security guards make sure that the by-laws are well observed.

Despite the presence of such guidelines, numerous teacher-trainees have been seen wearing the different types of clothing such as jeans with holes, mesh or see-through clothing, pants that hang below the buttocks, extremely tight pants (as well as skirts and blouses that are too tight), dresses or skirts with excessive slits, dress that exposes the stomach, waist, chest, or back, shorts or skirts that do not cover the knees when seated, earrings for men, unbuttoned shirts, a dress that covers the entire face, pyjamas and flip flops or slippers (Amadi & Amadi, 2020). The dress code is important for promoting a more effective learning climate, creating opportunities for self-expression, increasing campus safety and security, fostering school unity and pride, eliminating "label competition", ensuring modest dress, simplifying dressing, and minimizing cost to parents (Gilbert, 2019). According to Padgett (2017), teachers concur that students spend too much time worrying about what to wear or how they appear rather than their academic performance. Students would have more understanding of cultural, ethnic, and economic differences if they dressed alike; classroom behavior would improve if students were dressed professionally.

Despite the guidelines and instructions stipulated in by-laws of different universities and governments on dress codes for civil servants and students, most students in various universities, especially teacher-trainees, still wear indecent dresses. Teacher-trainees leave one wondering whether they are aware of the dress codes or not, what is their perception towards dress codes, and what are the factors instigating them not to adhere to the dress codes in relation to the development of their profession. Ogoe (2022) recommended the sensitization program to address awareness of students' dress codes. This shows clearly that the problem still exists. Olorunda (2022) revealed the existence of a high rate of indecent dress codes among university students. Consequently, as the curriculum instructs on dress codes and the by-laws, there is a dire need to conduct a study to investigate the extent to which university teacher-trainees are aware of teaching professional dress codes in Universities in Kilimanjaro region.

2. Statement of the Problem

Most Tanzanian universities struggle with issues relating to student attire. The so-called clothing studies in universities have exacerbated the issue, and as a result, the administrations of these institutions are working nonstop to maintain control. Various rules about dress standards have been established (Olorunda, 2022). The benefits of a standardized dress code policy that is implemented and maintained over time appear to produce positive effects on students' dress behavior towards political and public ethical pertinence. Gotterbarn et al. (2018) and Quaye, Harper and Pendakur (2019) reported that controlling students' dressing at university has led to the improvement of campus morale and reduced discipline violations, increased school pride, and enhanced image of students and the institution in the community.

The dress code in universities is still a problem. However, at each college gate, posters on the walls show how to dress in accordance with the college guidelines. Nonetheless, students still violate the dress codes. Despite the dress codes

and the stipulated implementations, the indecent dressing behaviors of students are noticed. Hence, there is a need for this current study to be conducted to investigate the extent to which university teacher-trainees are aware of teaching professional dress codes in universities in the Kilimanjaro region.

3. Research Question

- What is the awareness of teacher-trainees of teaching professional dress codes in the Kilimanjaro Region?

4. Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA or ToRA) developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1967. The theory explains the relationship between attitudes and behaviors within human action. It is mainly used to predict how individuals will behave based on their pre-existing attitudes and behavioral intentions. According to the theory, an individual's decision to engage in a particular behavior is based on the outcomes the individual expects from performing the behavior. The primary purpose of the TRA is to understand an individual's voluntary behavior by examining the underlying basic motivation to perform an action. TRA states that a person's intention to perform a behavior is the main predictor of whether they perform that behavior or not. This intention is known as behavioral intention and comes because of a belief that performing the behavior will lead to a specific outcome.

4.1. Strengths of TRA

Using the Theory of Reasoned Action, the researcher can determine the effectiveness of the training and decide whether it is helping the organization meet its business goals. This, in turn, helps organizations plan the right training to offer in the future. TRA emphasizes the focus on rational decision-making, which is when an individual makes a rational decision based on their attitude and beliefs. It recognizes that people consider the consequences of their actions before making choices, which provides a foundation for understanding and predicting behavior. In relation to the study, the theory helps the teacher professional university students to choose the right clothes to be worn in relation to their profession. The Theory also helps the students' teacher in his/her professional making to have positive attitudes toward the teaching professional dress codes.

The theory also promotes behavior change in an individual by identifying key beliefs, attitudes, and social norms related to specific behavior. In relation to the study, the theory enables university teaching professional students to modify their behavior in relation to dress codes, which suits university social norms.

4.2. Weaknesses of TRA

Since the TRA focuses on behaviors that people decisively enact, the theory is limited in terms of being able to predict behaviors that require access to certain opportunities, skills, conditions, and/or resources (Mishra, 2017). Bagozzi and Yi (2019) report that the performance of a behavior is not always preceded by a strong intent. In fact, attitudes and behaviors may not always be linked by intentions, particularly when the behavior does not require much cognitive effort.

4.3. Application of the Theory of Reasoned Action to the Study

The theory emphasizes individual decision-making, whereby when teaching, the professional dress code is well communicated. University teacher-trainees will understand that dressing professionally enhances their professional image and a positive impression and increases their chances of success in teaching professional settings such as job interviews. Additionally, the Theory accentuates the role of information in decision-making. To effectively teach professional dress codes, teacher-trainees need to be provided with clear and accurate information about what constitutes appropriate attire in the teaching professional context—for example, acceptable outfits.

The theory suggests that individuals are motivated by self-interest. In the context of teaching professional dress codes, it is important to highlight the potential rewards and incentives associated with adhering to them, such as career opportunities, teaching professional relationships, and growth.

On top of that, the Theory of Reasoned Action acknowledges that individuals are influenced by the social norms and behavior of others. Educators can influence this by creating a supportive and inclusive environment where dressing professionally is valued and encouraged. This can be done through discussions on the importance of teaching professional appearance among students.

5. Review of Empirical Studies

5.1. Teacher-Trainees' Awareness of Teaching Professional Dress Codes in Universities

The review of the empirical studies concentrated on the studies that were carried out outside Africa, Africa and eventually in Tanzania on teacher-trainees' awareness of the dress code.

Bahrami (2018) conducted a study on higher education of Indigenous Emirati Women's awareness of dress codes and how they balance the intricate demands of higher education with the social customs of a traditional society and the expectations placed on women in UOE.

The study sought to identify and comprehend the issues which affected the educational changes that were taking place, including culture, gender, religion, and the influence of Western education processes and the desire of an indigenous population to raise their educational practices to an internationally recognized benchmark. The study found that external factors influenced dress codes among students in higher education for women. This study focused much on the higher education women's dress codes and their impacts on social and cultural aspects. However, the perception of student-

trainees on dress codes was not addressed at all. Thus, the current study bridged the gap by investigating the extent to which university teacher-trainees are aware of teaching professional dress codes in universities, specifically in the Kilimanjaro region.

In a study carried out in Nigeria, Lorestani (2019) focused on awareness of dress code factors: interns' and trainees' perspectives using a cross-sectional research design and regression analysis. Data analysis techniques found that the negative attitude of some students towards dress etiquette and the resultant indecent dressing among University students was largely "a product of modelling top movie stars". The study argued that students' negative attitudes towards dress codes are a product of many things, including being influenced by top movie stars or the entertainment industry in general. The study concluded that, as a result of globalization trends, a drastic change in the cultural life of African countries has been promoted vigorously by Television, Radio, Newspapers, Magazines, and the Internet since the 1990s, thus bringing into Africa foreign values, norms and ideologies from the West. The previous study informed the current study on the dress code aspects of trainee students. The findings of the study were inadequate to justify the extent to which students were aware of dress codes in universities. However, this study sought to investigate the extent to which university teachers and trainees were aware of dress codes in the Kilimanjaro region.

Kaveh et al. (2019) surveyed the effective factors in students' adherence to the university dress code policy in Ghana using the Theory of Reasoned Action. A cross-sectional research design was used, and data were collected through a questionnaire. Factor data analysis technique was employed to analyze the data. The study found that some students fail to recognize the need to adjust their dress appearance as they transition to professional life because they think such an issue is of minor consequence. It was noted that one such aspect of the influence of the West through media was what Ikwuba referred to as the "craze-like dressing pattern among young people, which features mostly in institutions of learning". The study has shown the extent to which university students adhere to the dress code. The study used a cross-sectional research design, which helped the researcher collect a large amount of data. Still, the findings do not adequately show the extent to which students are aware of dress codes in high-learning institutions. The current study used a convergent design to get more data on the emotions/ feelings of the respondents and establish the extent of their awareness of the dress codes.

Radebe (2019) conducted a study in South Africa aimed at investigating the understanding of learner representatives of their involvement in drawing up and implementing the dress code of a school in South Africa. A qualitative approach, modelled on a case study, was used to explore the experiences of learner representatives in drafting and implementing the learner dressing code in their respective schools. Six learner representatives from six colleges in the Johannesburg Ekurhuleni District, who are Representative Council for Learners (RCL) and members of the college Governing Body (CGB), were interviewed. It was found that the learner representatives were not fully involved in drawing up the dress code for learners. Learner representatives' presence in the SGB is tokenistic because they were side-lined when drafting the dressing code for learners. The study further found that learner representatives wanted a review of some of the rules contained in the code of conduct for learners, including the policy on hair and dress code. The study used a qualitative approach, something which helped to get the emotions of the respondents. However, the current study used a mixed approach to get various information/data, which helps generalize the extent to which students are aware of university dress codes. Furthermore, the current study was conducted to prove whether the results obtained in South Africa can be the same as those obtained in Kilimanjaro region.

Malabwa & Mnjokava (2022) carried out a study on the awareness of teachers' dress codes and students' professionalism and competence in Tanzania. The study reported that, since teachers are entrusted with the students, they must create a positive environment by ensuring that they teach effectively and that they set good examples of behaviour for the students to emulate and develop their own behaviours. To ensure that order is maintained by teachers in the schools, the teachers' professional code of conduct has been developed, and it is implemented in both public and private schools. The code calls for teachers to be responsible to the children under their care, the community in which they live, the teaching profession, the employer, and the state (TSC, 2017). The study shows how teachers are adhering to the current dress code as a way of inspiring their students. However, the findings are inadequate in clearly showing the extent to which students are aware of dress codes in the universities in the Kilimanjaro region. Hence, there was a need to conduct a current study to fill the gap by using a mixed methods approach whereby the researcher would be able to capture a large number of respondents' ideas together with their emotions on dress codes.

6. Knowledge Gap

The reviewed studies, such as Bahram (2018), Lorestani et al. (2019), Radebe (2019), Malabwa and Mnjokava (2022), focused on how university teacher-trainees are aware of the teaching professional dress codes, while Kaveh et al., 2019; focused on the effective factors in students' adherence to university dress code policy. Apart from that, most of the reviewed studies were conducted outside Tanzania in countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa, where rules and regulations and the environment for the implementation of dress codes are quite different. One of the reviewed studies was conducted in Tanzania. However, it did not include the universities in Kilimanjaro region. This gap acted as an impetus to carry out this study on the extent to which university teacher-trainees are aware of teaching professional dress codes in universities in the Kilimanjaro Region.

7. Research Methodology

The study employed a convergent design under a mixed research method in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same time to understand the research problem in detail. The target population consisted of 2600 university teacher-trainees, 4 Deans of students, 389 Lecturers and 4 Wardens. Purposive and stratified random sampling

techniques were used to obtain 318 respondents, including 300 teachers-trainees, 8 lecturers, 2 deans of students and 8 wardens. Data was collected by using questionnaires for students and an in-depth interview guide for lecturers, deans, and wardens. The validation of the research instruments was done by three research experts in MWECAU in the field of research. A pilot test was conducted at one university in the Kilimanjaro region. Cronbach alpha was used to calculate the reliability of research instruments of Likert-scaled items only and obtained 721 of Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, while triangulation was used for the reliability of qualitative data. The researcher used qualitative and quantitative techniques for data analysis. For quantitative data, the researcher used descriptive statistics to analyze the collected data by organizing data in terms of frequencies, percentages, and means. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis through transcribing the interviews and coding, followed by developing and describing the theme. The researcher adhered to research ethics by maintaining confidentiality and anonymity and protecting the participants from any form of harm. No respondents were forced to participate in the study, and thus, participation was free for all respondents. The researcher preserved respondents' privacy by concealing their identities using pseudonyms. The privacy of participants was also retained by hiding the names of the organizations, individuals, tribes, and families in data presentations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, any information obtained from other sources was acknowledged to avoid plagiarism.

8. Findings and Discussions

8.1. Awareness of Teacher-Trainees on Dress Code towards Teaching Professional Development

The researcher intended to find out the responses from teacher-trainees regarding the extent to which they are aware of the dress code for teaching professional development. Data collection involved the use of questionnaires and in-depth interviews in the field. The responses provided by teacher-trainees were summarized and presented in table 1. Interviews were conducted with lecturers, the dean of students and Wardens. In presenting the data, the researcher treated strongly agree and agree together, undecided were treated alone and strongly disagreed and disagree were treated together for each Likert-type item. The respondents were required to rate their agreement levels on ten Likert-type items. Their responses are summarized in table 1.

	Statements	SD		D		U		A		SA		Mean
		f	%	f	%	F	%	F	%	f	%	
1	I am aware of the dress code policy in Tanzania	6	2	10	3.3	8	2.7	102	34	174	58	4.43
2	The dress code policy is enforced on all days of lecture.	10	3.3	24	8	18	6	139	46.3	109	36.3	4.04
3	Male and Female students have their own specific dress code guidelines											
4	If I don't wear according to the dress code, I cannot enter the exam hall	18	6	18	6	27	9	107	35.7	130	43.3	4.04
5	I am aware that my university has a dress code policy	8	2.7	8	2.7	21	7	84	28	179	59.7	4.39
6	I must not color my hair	23	7.7	19	6.3	51	17	81	27	126	42	3.89
7	I must always wear a student's identity card on campus	9	3	10	3.3	22	7.3	54	18	205	68.3	4.45
8	My hairstyle should not portray foreign cultures	22	7.3	32	10.7	38	12.7	101	33.7	107	35.7	3.8
9	I must wear according to the dress code while attending lectures	12	4	15	5	26	8.7	94	31.3	153	51	4.2
10	I could be compounded for not wearing according to the dress code	23	7.7	26	8.7	55	18.3	94	31.3	102	34	3.75
	Total mean scores											4.12

Table 1: Teacher-Trainees' Responses on the Extent to Which Students Are Aware of Dress Code towards Teaching Professional Development

Source: Field Data (2023)

Key: SD-Strong Disagree=1, D-Disagree=2, U-Undecided=3, A-Agree=4, SA-Strong Agree=5

Data in table 1 show that the majority of teacher-trainees (86.3%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they must always wear students' identity cards on campus. An extreme minority of teacher-trainees (6.3%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the item, and an extreme minority of teacher-trainees (7.3%) of them remained undecided. This means that most teacher-trainees are of the idea that wearing students' identity cards on campus is important and necessary since it is part and parcel of their professional code. During the in-depth interview, the Dean of students A said:

"The student-teachers are aware of the use of ID cards while they are on the university campus. However, some of them tend to ignore them, others wear them only when entering the lecture rooms, and when they are out, and they have a tendency to remove them." (Interview with Dean of Students A, 05/07/2023).

This signifies that some teacher-trainees do not take the use of IDs positively while at university. This might be because they consider it a burden, meaningless, or of less importance to their teaching profession.

Data presented in table 1 indicate that a significant majority of teacher-trainees (82.3%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they must adhere to the dress code policy while attending lectures. Only a small percentage of teacher-trainees (9%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this item, and an extreme minority of teacher-trainees (8.7%) remained undecided. These findings suggest that the dress code policy is an important consideration for most student-teachers. Consequently, institutions with dress code policies should consider providing clear guidelines and explanations for the policy's importance to encourage a positive culture of compliance and respect among student-teachers. Similar findings were reported by the study of Santos and Marasigan (2021) in Kenya, who revealed that clear guidelines and explanations for dress code policies are needed to help foster a positive culture of compliance and respect among students. The implementation of dress code policies alone may not be sufficient to ensure that students comply with them.

These findings concurred with the views provided by the Dean of student B during a face-to-face interview; he stated:

"The approaches used to enforce the use of dress code have to be changed to create an atmosphere of understanding of the importance of the dress codes towards their teaching professional development." (Interview with Dean of Students B 06/07/2023).

This infers that many students and teachers find it hard to adhere to the dress code policy because the method used to instruct on this specific issue is not friendly.

Data in table 1 show that most teacher-trainees (92%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they are aware of the dress code policy in Tanzania. Also, an extreme minority of teacher-trainees (5.3%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the item, and an extreme minority of teacher-trainees (2.7%) was undecided about the item. The data imply that most teacher-trainees are aware of the dress code policy in Tanzania and are likely to consider it when dressing for school, while a small minority could be less aware or have less concern about the policy. Additionally, the information collected from lecturer A revealed:

"The policy is available and it is known to the student-teachers since it has a great contribution to them for it creates confidence which allows them to concentrate effectively on their professional development." (Interview with Lecturer A on 05/07/2023).

The findings imply that, due to its importance, more friendly efforts should be applied so that more student-teachers become aware and find the meaning of adhering to this policy. This is supported by the study done in Nigeria by Lateef et al. (2019), which reveals that dress code policy can have a positive impact on academic performance as well as on student behavior and attitudes. Likewise, the studies highlight the importance of creating clear and consistent dress code policies, and of ensuring that teachers and students are aware of and understand these policies.

Data in table 1 show that most teacher-trainees (82%) either agreed or strongly agreed that male and female students have their own specific dress code guidelines. An extreme minority of teacher-trainees (9.3%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the item, and the extreme majority of teacher-trainees (8.7%) were undecided about the statement. The data suggest that most teacher-trainees are aware of the gender-specific dress code policies in place and consider them to be important, while a small minority is less aware or have concerns about the policies. During the face-to-face interview, lecturer B asserted:

"The gender-specific dress code policies are helpful to the teachers-trainees because they promote personal dignity among teachers-trainees hence enrich the teaching professional." (Interview with Lecturer B on 05/07/2023).

The study confirms that, due to their prominence, gender-specific dress codes for university teacher-trainees should be given more emphasis.

These findings relate to what was suggested by the studies done by Tladi and Lekhuleni (2019) in Ethiopia. They indicated that gender-specific dress code policies are important for creating a professional and respectful learning environment and can help prevent distractions and promote equality among students. Nevertheless, there may be concerns among some students, parents, and educators about the potential of gender-specific dress code policies to reinforce harmful stereotypes or to unfairly target certain groups of students.

Data in table 1 show that a great majority of teacher-trainees (87.7%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they were aware of the university dress code policy. An extreme minority of teacher-trainees (5.4%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, while an extreme minority of teacher-trainees (7%) was undecided about the statement. The majority of teacher-trainees (65.3%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they could be compounded for not wearing according to the dress code. An extreme minority of teacher-trainees (16.4%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, while an extreme minority of teacher-trainees (18.3%) was undecided about the statement. The data provide the implication that most teacher-trainees are aware of and comply with the university dress code policy, while a small minority is less aware or have no concerns about the policy. Furthermore, there could be some uncertainty or confusion about the enforcement of the policy among some teacher-trainees. Warden A, during the interview, commented:

"The enforcement of dress code should be strongly administered using professional personnel. This will help student-teachers to be convinced and adhere to the dress code without being forced." (Interview with Warden A on 06/07/2023).

This signifies that the student-teachers themselves should find meaning and the need for the dress code. The results are consistent with the study by Said (2021) in Sudan, who revealed that clear guidelines and effective enforcement are crucial for the successful implementation of dress code policies in universities.

Data in table 1 show that most teacher-trainees (69.4%) either agreed or strongly agreed that their hairstyle should not portray foreign cultures. While an extreme minority of teacher-trainees (18%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement of teacher-trainees. An extreme minority of teacher-trainees (12.7%) were undecided about the statement. Most teacher-trainees (69%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they must not color their hair. An extreme minority of teacher-trainees (6.3%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, whereas a great minority of teacher-trainees (17%) was undecided about the statement. The data generally suggest that most of the teacher-trainees are aware of and comply with the policies related to hairstyle choices and hair coloring, while a small minority is less aware or have no concerns about these policies. During the interview, the dean of student B stated:

"The hairstyles, especially coloring and hair cuttings, bring destructions among the student-teachers, and this will affect their entire professional since the behaviour is carried to the next stage when they complete their studies." (Interview with Dean of Students B on 06/07/2023)

This entails that, to better prepare the student teachers for professional development, effective follow-up should ensure they find meaning in practising the professional dress code, which will better prepare them to become great role models in the future.

The findings are in line with the study by Khoza and Makhubele (2019) in Uganda, which revealed that dress code policies are important for creating a professional and respectful learning environment in educational institutions, that they can help prevent distractions, and that they can promote equality among students.

Data in table 1 illustrate that a great majority of teacher-trainees (82.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed that their dress code policy is enforced on all days of lecture. An extreme minority of teacher-trainees (11.3%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the item, while an extreme minority of teacher-trainees (6%) was undecided about the statement. Most teacher-trainees (79%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they cannot enter the exam hall if they do not dress according to the dress code. An extreme minority of them either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, and an extreme minority of teacher-trainees (9%) was undecided about the item. The data generally exemplify that most student teachers believe that the dress code policy is consistently and fairly enforced throughout the academic term and that non-compliance carries consequences for their academic performance. However, there are some disagreements or concerns about enforcing and implementing the dress code policy among a small minority of the student population, and some teacher-trainees are undecided about these statements.

9. Conclusion

Based on the study findings, it can be concluded that teacher-trainees were fully aware of the dress code and the mechanisms in place to abide by it for professional development in universities in the Kilimanjaro region. They breached the code not because of ignorance but rather because of the reasons best known to them. However, compliance with the dress code is high.

10. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations to various educational stakeholders:

- The university administration, in collaboration with the student government, should continue to follow up the compliance to the dress code to attain a hundred percent. Training on dress code to teacher-trainees at the university level using guest speakers with work experience could help them understand the actual expectations of the community they would be members of. An inquiry could be conducted to establish the exact reasons for non-compliance by a group of teacher-trainees. This could give universities the best way of making all teacher-trainees take the code as a way of life rather than a requirement from elsewhere.
- The dress code policy should be included in the university admission letters and evaluated and reviewed periodically to determine any areas for improvement. This will also serve as a reminder to university students to adhere to the policy.

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