

Enhancing Dress Code Compliance among Pre-service Teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State: Leveraging Digital Content Creation (DCC)

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Abstract: *The study investigated enhancing dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in colleges of education in Benue State: leveraging digital content creation (DCC). Guided by three research questions and two hypotheses, the study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 1675 (1020 males and 655 females) pre-service teachers in public Colleges of Education (COE) in Benue State during the 2024/2025 academic session. Through the stratified sampling technique, a sample of 323 (198 males and 125 females) pre-service teachers participated in the study. A self-developed questionnaire was used for data collection. Using Cronbach's alpha, the internal consistency coefficients of 0.81, 0.76 and 0.78 were obtained for clusters I, II and III, respectively, while the overall reliability of the questionnaire was 0.77. Findings revealed that pre-service teachers often comply with dress code policies in colleges of education in Benue State, with no significant gender difference in compliance. Peer influence, social media trends, cultural norms, and economic factors, among others, are the factors influencing dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State. Digital Content Creation (DCC) influences dress code compliance to a high extent among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State, with no significant gender difference in the influence. The study recommended, among other things, that Colleges of Education in collaboration with the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should integrate professional dressing into the teacher education curriculum.*

Keywords: dress code compliance, pre-service teachers, colleges of education, Benue state, digital content creation (DCC)

INTRODUCTION

Education in generally, and teacher education in particular, is a vital tool and the bedrock of national development. However, certain developments over the past years seem to be militating against teacher education, especially in Benue State. Notable among them is the increasing obsession with contemporary fashion trends, exacerbating indecent dressing among pre-service teachers in colleges of education, especially in Benue State. Ojogbane, Amonjenu and Husseini (2020) stressed that it is increasingly becoming obvious that indecent dressing has gradually taken over the dress pattern of students in higher institutions of learning. Additionally, Ozougwu, Owoh and Osondu (2023) observe that students in tertiary institutions tend to wear anything they like because they are adults. Studies have reported high rates of inappropriate student attire across Nigerian tertiary institutions, creating distractions that disrupt effective teaching and learning (Ifedili&Ifedili, 2013). As a result, colleges of education in Benue State, like many other tertiary institutions, are implementing dress codes to counter indecent dressing among pre-service teachers.

Dress codes represent institutional identity, discipline, and professionalism. Ozougwu, Owoh and Osondu (2023) defined 'dress code' as the set of standards that organisations or institutions develop to help provide their members with guidance about what is appropriate to wear to work. In relation to tertiary institutions, Santos and Marasigan (2021) view dress codes as regulatory policies, or mandates composed and adopted by school administrators, that limit the discretion of students or otherwise compel them to follow certain types of behaviours. Citing Aniodo (2019), Ozougwu, Owoh and Osondu (2023) posit that the following dress styles should not be acceptable in the school for female students: transparent clothes, sleeveless tops, short knickers, body hugs, headgear (e.g., canopy head ties), bogus fashion, off-the-shoulder tops, spaghetti tops, wicket straps, mono straps, miniskirts, tight trousers and dresses, dresses and skirts with slits above the knees, and T-shirts and jeans which carry immoral messages, among others. For the male students: shirts or any wear revealing the armpit, T-shirts and jeans which carry immoral messages, short knickers above the knee when not required, earrings, long and bushy hair and beards, permed hair, jerry curls, plaited hair, and dreadlocks, among others. However, the compliance of these dress codes remains a concern, particularly in colleges of education.

In colleges of education, dress code compliance is an essential aspect of developing professionalism among pre-service teachers. Bodnaruk and Burka (2024) buttressed that the primary purpose of implementing dress codes is to ensure a professional and cohesive appearance that aligns with organisational image and values. In educational contexts, dress codes are viewed as solutions to address indecent dressing and cultural breakdown, promoting morality and decency (Mofoluwawo&Oyelade, 2018). However, in many colleges of education, including those in Benue State, non-compliance with dress code regulations has become increasingly common. According to Kaveh et al. (2015), approximately 28% of students showed non-compliance with dress code regulations. Abdi (2024) found low compliance with the dress code, attributing it to

reasons best known to students. Kiwango, Lyamtane and Jayasooriya et al. (2020) found that casual dress received significantly higher comfort scores than traditional formal attire. According to Katić (2025), pre-service teachers predominantly selected casual professional attire in blue and black colours, which signifies conformist, service-orientated values and modest prestige. Despite students' awareness and willingness to comply, researchers such as Ifedili and Ifedili (2013) and Asaju (2013) buttress that implementation of dress code policies remains problematic. In Benue State, observations across Colleges of Education indicate a growing departure from approved dress codes, as some students' wear sagging trousers, tight-fitting or transparent clothes, sleeveless tops, spaghetti blouses, and other outfits considered inappropriate for pre-service teachers. This non-compliance challenges the efforts of colleges of education to model values that support the integrity and reputation of the teaching profession.

Research on dress code compliance among pre-service teachers reveals multiple influencing factors. Key factors contributing to non-compliance include freedom of choice, peer pressure, negative influence from foreign cultures through social media, and lack of specific penalties (Abdulrahman, 2023). Other barriers to compliance include changes in societal culture, defects in education, management shortcomings, and personal factors (Momeni&Asghari, 2020). Asaju (2013) added that implementation challenges significantly impact compliance, with haphazard enforcement and lack of institutional political will undermining dress code effectiveness. Factors such as social media influence, ambiguity of dress policy, lecturers' attitudes toward dress codes, financial constraints, and cultural perceptions of decency could also influence dress code compliance among pre-service teachers, necessitating measures to address non-compliance.

Traditional strategies such as student orientation, counselling, and disciplinary enforcement have been applied to enhance dress code compliance. Eldina and Yeni (2023) buttress that guidance and counselling lecturers employ individual counselling strategies to address dress code violations, helping students modify their behaviour and adapt to school environments. Asaju (2013) states that traditional strategies rely on manual enforcement by students' affairs units, security personnel, and lecturers. According to the author, traditional strategies face implementation difficulties due to inconsistent application and lack of institutional support. In addition, many pre-service teachers perceive these measures as punitive rather than developmental, leading to resistance or passive compliance (Smith, Kervick, Contreras-Montesano, Payne & Garnett, 2025). Moreover, traditional strategies like orientation, counselling and enforcement often fail to connect with the realities of today's digital-savvy pre-service teachers, who are more influenced by online trends and digital media. Hence, there is a growing need to adopt innovative strategies, such as Digital Content Creation (DCC), to enhance dress code compliance.

Digital Content Creation (DCC) has become a powerful tool for learning, communication, and self-expression across various disciplines in the modern digital age. Digital Content Creation (DCC) encompasses the development and editing of digital media, including multimedia content, images, and videos using specialised applications like Blender and Autodesk 3ds Max (Yousef et al., 2012). According to Dev and Lau (2015), DCC covers the creation of literally every genre of

consumable digital material. In educational settings, Kovacevic (2023) elucidates that digital content creation extends beyond PowerPoint presentations to the creation of questionnaires, websites, blogs, video presentations, tutorials, and podcasts. Operationally, DCC refers to the process of producing and sharing multimedia materials like infographics, videos, podcasts, blogs, and social media posts using digital tools and platforms. It allows people to communicate ideas creatively, engage audiences, and promote awareness on specific issues. For pre-service teachers, creating digital content that promotes the dress code can encourage reflection and positive peer influence. Through the creation of short videos, digital posters or social media campaigns, pre-service teachers can be able to internalise dress code policies with their everyday experience, thus encouraging compliance with those regulations.

Research demonstrates the effectiveness of Digital Content Creation (DCC) in influencing dress-related outcomes. Abdulrahman (2023) found that social media's foreign cultural influences significantly affect student dress code compliance, with 66% of violations attributed to digital platform exposure. Atika et al. (2024) found Instagram as the primary inspiration source for fashion trends, particularly Korean-style clothing among university students. The authors further revealed that students exhibit critical thinking in adapting social media fashion trends to personal preferences and socio-cultural contexts. Additionally, Ukaegbu, Berezi and Kuro-Berezi (2023) revealed, among other things, that young people copy most of their dress code from models, celebrities and stars showcased in the mass media. The findings of the study also showed that mass media content such as music videos, advertisements, films and drama, reality TV shows, fashion shows, beauty pageants, unsolicited messages and cyber-attacks exposes mass media audiences to indecent dressing. Furthermore, Chabala, N'cube and Mbewe (2024) revealed that the majority of students identified platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest as their main sources of fashion inspiration. According to the authors, respondents emphasised the role of visual content and influencers in shaping their style choices. These findings highlight the role of DCC in shaping students' dress behaviour.

Despite growing evidence linking digital media exposure and social influences to students' dress behaviours, little is known regarding how DCC can be used to enhance dress code compliance among pre-service teachers. Most existing research (e.g., Abdulrahman, 2023; Atika et al., 2024; Chabala, N'cube & Mbewe, 2024) focused on how social media and influencers encourage non-compliance, rather than how DCC can be leveraged to enhance compliance. In addition, much of the existing literature focused on university students, with limited attention to Colleges of Education, where dress code is particularly critical for pre-service teachers. Moreover, most of the reviewed studies were conducted outside Nigeria, undermining the applicability of those findings to local realities in Benue State. This study, therefore, sought to fill these gaps by investigating how digital content creation can be leveraged to enhance dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State.

Statement of the Problem

Colleges of education in Benue State, like many other tertiary institutions, are implementing dress codes policies to counter indecent dressing on campuses. However, many pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State continue to exhibit low compliance. Cases of inappropriate dressing, disregard for dress code, and negative attitudes toward dress code have become common on campuses. This issue raises concerns about the effectiveness of existing strategies aimed at promoting dress code and professionalism among pre-service teachers. Traditional strategies such as orientations, counselling, and enforcement have produced limited impact, as they often fail to connect with students' willingness to comply or reflect their digital lifestyles. Given that contemporary learners are influenced by online trends and social media, there is a growing need for innovative strategies that inspire genuine commitment to dress code compliance, such as the Digital Content Creation (DCC). However, little is known regarding how DCC can be leveraged to enhance dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Benue State, underscoring the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is how to enhance dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in colleges of education in Benue state: Leveraging Digital Content Creation (DCC). Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the level of dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State.
2. Identify the factors influencing dress code compliance among pre-service teachers.
3. Determine the extent to which Digital Content Creation (DCC) can influence dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State.
4. The influence of Digital Content Creation (DCC) on dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State as moderated by gender.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the level of dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State?
2. What are the factors influencing dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education Benue State?
3. What is the extent to which Digital Content Creation (DCC) can influence dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State?
4. What is the influence of Digital Content Creation (DCC) on dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State as moderated by gender?

Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female pre-service teachers on the level of dress code compliance in Colleges of Education in Benue State.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female pre-service teachers on the influence of Digital Content Creation (DCC) on dress code compliance in Colleges of Education in Benue State.

Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by Icek Ajzen (1991) serves as the foundation for this study. Ajzen posits that human behaviour is guided by three main factors: attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. According to TPB, these factors determine a person's intention to perform a behaviour, which in turn predicts the actual behaviour. In this study, the TPB illuminates dress code compliance among pre-service teachers as a planned action influenced by their personal evaluation of dressing professionally (attitude), the social pressures from peers and college expectations (subjective norms), and their confidence in meeting dress code policies despite possible challenges (perceived behavioural control). Digital Content Creation (DCC) supports these factors by shaping positive attitudes, reinforcing social norms, and enhancing perceived control, making the TPB a suitable framework for understanding how DCC can enhance dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Benue State.

METHODS

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey design is used to study a group of people by collecting and analysing data from a representative sample of the total population (Nworgu, 2015). The design is deemed appropriate because the study sought to collect data from a sample of pre-service teachers in colleges of education in Benue State, which is seen as representative of pre-service teachers in Benue State, Nigeria. In addition, the design does not require the manipulation of subjects in experimental settings, which is ideal in this context.

Participants

The population of the study comprised 1675 (1020 males and 655 females) pre-service teachers in public Colleges of Education (COE) in Benue State during the 2024/2025 academic session. The population consisted 417 (256 males and 167 females) pre-service teachers in COE Oju, 735 (450 males and 285 females) pre-service teachers in Federal College of Education (FCE) Odugbo, and 523 (314 males and 209) pre-service teachers in COE Katsina-Ala. A sample size of 323 (198 males and 125 females) pre-service teachers was used in this study. The sample size was calculated using Taro Yamene's formula for calculating sample size from a finite population.

Taro Yamane sample size calculation

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1675}{1 + 1675 (0.05)^2}$$

$$1+1675 (0.05^2)$$

$$1675$$

$$\hline 5.1875$$

$$n = 323$$

Sampling was done using the stratified sampling technique. In order to sample, the population was stratified based on the colleges of education under study, ensuring that both colleges were represented proportionately in the sample. By implication, each college of education was represented in the sample size based on their proportion in the population. Hence, the sample size consisted 80 (49 males and 31 females) pre-service teachers in COE Oju, 142 (87 males and 55 females) pre-service teachers in Federal College of Education (FCE)Odugbo, and 101 (62 males and 39 females) pre-service teachers in COE Katsina-Ala.

Instrument for Data Collection

The study employed a self-developed instrument titled Enhancing Dress Code Compliance among Pre-Service Teachers (EDCCPST) Questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire had two sections: Section A provided demographic information such as institution, gender, age and level of pre-service teacher, while Section B contained 45 items across three clusters with 15 items each. Cluster I assessed the level of dress code compliance among pre-service teachers using a four-point scale with response options: Always (AL), Often (O), Rarely (R), and Never (N) rated as 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. Cluster II measured factors influencing dress code compliance among pre-service teachers using a four-point rating scale with response options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) rated as 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. Cluster III assessed the influence of Digital Content Creation (DCC) on dress code compliance among pre-service teachers using a four-point rating scale with response options: Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE) rated as 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The instrument underwent face validation by three experts from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and was trial-tested on 30 pre-service teachers in Enugu State. The coefficient of internal consistency reliability was established in this study using Cronbach alpha. Reliability indices of 0.81, 0.76, and 0.78 were obtained for Clusters I, II, and III respectively, with an overall reliability of 0.77. These values meet the threshold suggested by Cohen et al. (2018), confirming the suitability of the instrument for data collection.

Data Analysis

Data gathered were analysed using mean, standard deviations and t-test with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Mean and standard deviations were used in answering the research questions. Real limits of numbers were used to make decisions for research question 1 and 3 with 3.50-4.00 for Always/very high extent, 2.50-3.49 for Often/high extent, 1.50-2.49 for Rarely/low extent, and 0.5-1.49 for Never/very low extent. For research questions 2, a benchmark of 2.50 was used in making decisions. An item with a mean of 2.50 and above was

accepted and vice versa. The formulated hypotheses were tested using the independent sample t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

This section presents the result of data analysis and the interpretation of results in line with the specific purposes, research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

Research Question 1: What is the level of dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-Service Teachers on the Level of Dress Code Compliance

S/N	Item Statement	AL	O	R	N	\bar{x}	SD	Rank	Remark
1	I dress according to the approved dress code of my college.	95	131	96	1	2.99	0.78	10 th	Often
2	I wear clothes that reflect professionalism while on campus.	124	141	58	0	3.20	0.72	8 th	Often
3	I ensure my outfit complies with institutional rules before leaving for school.	118	176	28	1	3.27	0.63	6 th	Often
4	I adhere to dress code requirements during lectures.	95	152	66	10	3.03	0.79	9 th	Often
5	I wear footwear that meets my college's dress code standard.	84	139	83	17	2.90	0.85	11 th	Often
6	I comply with dress code even when supervision is minimal.	0	17	177	129	1.65	0.58	15 th	Rarely
7	I maintain decent dressing throughout the semester.	18	126	108	71	2.28	0.87	14 th	Rarely
8	I have been cautioned about inappropriate dressing.	48	115	124	36	2.54	0.88	13 th	Often
9	I comply with hair-grooming standards set by the college.	119	173	31	0	3.27	0.63	6 th	Often
10	I hardly wear clothes that carry immoral messages	131	169	23	0	3.33	0.61	2 nd	Often
11	I avoid wearing revealing outfits to classes.	122	179	22	0	3.31	0.59	5 th	Often
12	I comply with the dress code when attending college ceremonies.	132	164	26	1	3.32	0.63	4 th	Often
13	I keep my overall appearance neat.	145	152	25	1	3.37	0.64	1 st	Often
14	I remind peers to comply with the dress code.	68	134	89	32	2.74	0.90	12 th	Often
15	I consider compliance with the dress code as part of my training as a teacher.	137	156	30	0	3.33	0.64	2 nd	Often
Cluster Mean						2.97	0.24		Often

Key:AL = Always, O = Often, R = Rarely, N = Never, \bar{x} = mean, SD = Standard Deviation.

Result as presented in Table 1 shows that items 1-5, and 8-15 have mean ratings ranging from 2.50-3.49 set as benchmark for "Often Comply". This implies that pre-service teachers often comply with dressing according to the approved dress code of their college (\bar{x} = 2.99, SD = 0.78), wearing

clothes that reflect professionalism while on campus ($\bar{x} = 3.20$, $SD = 0.72$), and ensuring that their outfit complies with institutional rules before leaving for school ($\bar{x} = 3.27$, $SD = 0.63$) among others in colleges of education in Benue State. The result also shows that items 6 and 7 have mean ratings ranging from 1.50-2.49 set as benchmark for “Rarely Comply”. This implies that pre-service teachers rarely comply with dress code even when supervision is minimal ($\bar{x} = 1.65$, $SD = 0.58$), and maintain decent dressing throughout the semester ($\bar{x} = 2.28$, $SD = 0.87$) in colleges of education in Benue State. From the result, keeping overall appearance neat ($\bar{x} = 3.37$, $SD = 0.64$) with a rank of 1, is the most complied dress code policy among pre-service teachers in Benue State, while the least is complying with dress code even when supervision is minimal ($\bar{x} = 1.65$, $SD = 0.58$) with a rank of 15. Overall ($\bar{x} = 2.97$, $SD = 0.24$), the result shows that pre-service teachers often comply with dress code policies in colleges of education in Benue State.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female pre-service teachers on the level of dress code compliance in Colleges of Education in Benue State.

Table 2: T-test Analysis of the Mean Responses of Male and Female Pre-Service Teachers on the Level of Dress Code Compliance in Colleges of Education

Gender	Mean	SD	t-value	Df	Sig. value	Dec.
Male	2.96	0.24	-0.79	321	0.43	NS
Female	2.98	0.25				

$\alpha = 0.05$, NS = Not Significant

Result in Table 2 shows that a t-value of -0.79 with a degree of freedom (df) of 321 and a significant or probability value of 0.43 was obtained. Since the probability value of 0.43 is greater than 0.05 level of significance set as bench mark, the null hypothesis is accepted. Inference drawn is that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female pre-service teachers on the level of dress code compliance in Colleges of Education in Benue State. This implies that gender is not a determinant of the level of compliance of dress code among pre-service teachers in colleges of education in Benue State.

Research Question 2: What are the factors influencing dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education Benue State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-Service Teachers on the Factors Influencing Dress Code Compliance

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	SDev.	Rank	Remark
1	Peer influence	130	193	0	0	3.40	0.49	3 rd	Agree
2	Social media trends	145	178	0	0	3.45	0.50	2 nd	Agree
3	Cultural norms	124	199	0	0	3.38	0.49	4 th	Agree
4	Economic factors	153	170	0	0	3.47	0.50	1 st	Agree
5	Availability of suitable clothing	56	208	58	1	2.99	0.61	10 th	Agree
6	The attitude of lecturers	53	165	104	1	2.84	0.69	14 th	Agree
7	Mentor influence.	57	203	62	1	2.98	0.62	11 th	Agree
8	Flexibility of the dress code policy	72	186	63	2	3.02	0.67	8 th	Agree
9	Strict enforcement	90	215	18	0	3.22	0.53	5 th	Agree
10	Fear of sanctions	70	238	15	0	3.17	0.49	6 th	Agree
11	Lack of awareness	75	209	39	0	3.11	0.58	7 th	Agree
12	Students attitude towards dress code	63	191	66	3	2.97	0.66	12 th	Agree
13	Desire for social acceptance	56	194	67	6	2.93	0.67	13 th	Agree
14	Pride of non-compliance	4	174	87	58	2.38	0.79	15 th	Disagree
15	Students' perception of fairness of dress code	67	190	64	2	3.00	0.66	9 th	Agree
Cluster Mean						3.09	0.15	Agree	

Key:SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Agree, \bar{x} = mean, SDev = Standard Deviation.

Result as presented in Table 3 shows that items 1-13, and 15 have mean ratings above the 2.50 set as benchmark for accepting an item. This implies that respondents agreed that peer influence ($\bar{x} = 3.40$, SD = 0.49), social media trends ($\bar{x} = 3.45$, SD = 0.50), cultural norms ($\bar{x} = 3.38$, SD = 0.49), and economic factors ($\bar{x} = 3.47$, SD = 0.50) among others are the factors influencing dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education Benue State. The result also shows that item 14 has mean rating below the 2.50 set as benchmark for accepting an item, implying that pride of non-compliance ($\bar{x} = 2.38$, SD = 0.79) is not a factor influencing dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education Benue State. From the result, economic factors ($\bar{x} = 3.47$, SD = 0.50) with a rank of 1, is the most conceived factor among pre-service teachers, while the attitude of lecturers ($\bar{x} = 2.84$, SD = 0.69) with a rank of 14 is the least. Overall ($\bar{x} = 3.09$, SD = 0.15), the result shows that there are factors influencing dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in colleges of education in Benue State.

Research Question 3: What is the extent to which Digital Content Creation (DCC) can influence dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-Service Teachers on the Extent to which Digital Content Creation (DCC) can Influence Dress Code Compliance

S/N	Item Statement	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	\bar{x}	SD	Rank	Remark
1	Sharing social media content on dress code can create visible social feedback	159	164	0	0	3.49	0.50	4 th	HE
2	Using digital content to promote professional dressing	165	158	0	0	3.51	0.50	2 nd	VHE
3	Digital media can effectively promote dress code awareness.	182	141	0	0	3.56	0.50	1 st	VHE
4	Learning about dress code from digital content.	127	153	42	1	3.26	0.69	14 th	HE
5	Digital campaigns can change students' attitudes toward professional dressing.	142	164	17	0	3.39	0.59	11 th	HE
6	Creating digital content on dress code compliance would interest students.	143	150	30	0	3.35	0.64	13 th	HE
7	Watching short videos on dressing etiquette can improve compliance.	156	146	21	0	3.42	0.61	9 th	HE
8	DCC can make dress code rules more appealing to students.	146	152	24	1	3.37	0.63	12 th	HE
9	Social media can be used to reward compliant dressing among students.	110	158	55	0	3.17	0.70	15 th	HE
10	Engaging students in DCC can make them advocates of proper dressing.	173	135	15	0	3.49	0.59	4 th	HE
11	Digital campaigns can engage students on dress code compliance	157	150	16	0	3.44	0.59	8 th	HE
12	DCC connects fashion interests with professional expectations.	163	144	15	1	3.45	0.60	7 th	HE
13	Exposure to online examples of teachers' attire can influence compliance.	167	144	12	0	3.48	0.57	6 th	HE
14	Creating online content shape dress code behaviour.	182	125	16	0	3.51	0.59	2 nd	HE
15	Using DCC can bring lasting behavioral change in students' dressing habits.	150	156	17	0	3.41	0.59	10 th	HE
Cluster Mean						3.42	0.17	HE	

Key: VHE = Very High Extent, HE = High Extent, LE = Low Extent, VLE = Very Low Extent, \bar{x} = mean, SD = Standard Deviation.

Result as presented in Table 4 shows that items 2, 3, and 14 have mean ratings ranging from 3.50-4.00 set as benchmark for "Very High Extent". This implies that to a very high extent, using digital content to promote professional dressing (\bar{x} = 3.51, SD = 0.50), digital media can effectively promote dress code awareness (\bar{x} = 3.56, SD = 0.50), and creating online content shape dress code behaviour (\bar{x} = 3.51, SD = 0.59) can influence dress code compliance among pre-service teachers

in Colleges of Education in Benue State. The result also shows that items 1, and 4-15 have mean ratings ranging from 2.50-3.49 set as benchmark for “High Extent”. This implies that to a high extent sharing social media content on dress code can create visible social feedback ($\bar{x} = 3.49$, $SD = 0.50$), learning about dress code from digital content ($\bar{x} = 3.26$, $SD = 0.69$), and digital campaigns can change students’ attitudes toward professional dressing ($\bar{x} = 3.39$, $SD = 0.59$) among others can influence dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State. From the result, digital media can effectively promote dress code awareness ($\bar{x} = 3.56$, $SD = 0.50$) with a rank of 1, is the most conceived influence, while the least is that social media can be used to reward compliant dressing among students ($\bar{x} = 3.17$, $SD = 0.70$) with a rank of 15. Overall ($\bar{x} = 3.42$, $SD = 0.17$), the result shows that Digital Content Creation (DCC) can influence dress code compliance to a high extent among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State.

Research Question 4: What is the influence of Digital Content Creation (DCC) on dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State as moderated by gender?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-Service Teachers on the Extent to which Digital Content Creation (DCC) can Influence Dress Code Compliance

S/N	Item Statement	Male		Female	
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD
1	Sharing social media content on dress code can create visible social feedback	3.51	0.50	3.46	0.50
2	Using digital content to promote professional dressing	3.51	0.50	3.52	0.50
3	Digital media can effectively promote dress code awareness.	3.56	0.50	3.58	0.50
4	Learning about dress code from digital content.	3.29	0.67	3.21	0.70
5	Digital campaigns can change students’ attitudes toward professional dressing.	3.36	0.57	3.43	0.61
6	Creating digital content on dress code compliance would interest students.	3.37	0.65	3.32	0.64
7	Watching short videos on dressing etiquette can improve compliance.	3.42	0.60	3.42	0.64
8	DCC can make dress code rules more appealing to students.	3.34	0.65	3.42	0.60
9	Social media can be used to reward compliant dressing among students.	3.15	0.74	3.20	0.62
10	Engaging students in DCC can make them advocates of proper dressing.	3.52	0.59	3.44	0.59
11	Digital campaigns can engage students on dress code compliance	3.43	0.59	3.44	0.59
12	DCC connects fashion interests with professional expectations.	3.48	0.60	3.40	0.60
13	Exposure to online examples of teachers’ attire can influence compliance.	3.43	0.58	3.56	0.55
14	Creating online content shape dress code behaviour.	3.52	0.59	3.51	0.60
15	Using DCC can bring lasting behavioral change in students’ dressing habits.	3.42	0.61	3.40	0.57
Cluster Mean		3.42	0.16	3.42	0.17

Key: \bar{x} = mean, SD = Standard Deviation.

Result as presented in Table 5 shows that items 1-3, 10, and 14 have mean ratings ranging from 3.50-4.00 set as benchmark for “Very High Extent”. This implies that to a very high extent, sharing social media content on dress code can create visible social feedback ($\bar{x} = 3.51$, $SD = 0.50$), using digital content to promote professional dressing ($\bar{x} = 3.51$, $SD = 0.50$), and digital media can effectively promote dress code awareness ($\bar{x} = 3.56$, $SD = 0.50$) among others can influence dress code compliance among male pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State. The result also shows that items 4-9, 11, 12, 13, and 15 have mean ratings ranging from 2.50-3.49 set as benchmark for “High Extent”. This implies that to a high extent learning about dress code from digital content ($\bar{x} = 3.29$, $SD = 0.67$), digital campaigns can change students’ attitudes toward professional dressing ($\bar{x} = 3.36$, $SD = 0.57$), and creating digital content on dress code compliance would interest students ($\bar{x} = 3.37$, $SD = 0.65$) among others can influence dress code compliance among male pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State.

For the female pre-service teachers, result as presented in Table 5 shows that items 2, 3, 13, and 14 have mean ratings ranging from 3.50-4.00 set as benchmark for “Very High Extent”. This implies that to a very high extent, using digital content to promote professional dressing ($\bar{x} = 3.52$, $SD = 0.50$), digital media can effectively promote dress code awareness ($\bar{x} = 3.58$, $SD = 0.50$), exposure to online examples of teachers’ attire can influence compliance ($\bar{x} = 3.56$, $SD = 0.55$), and creating online content shape dress code behaviour ($\bar{x} = 3.51$, $SD = 0.60$) can influence dress code compliance among female pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State. The result also shows that items 1, 4-12, 13, and 15 have mean ratings ranging from 2.50-3.49 set as benchmark for “High Extent”. This implies that to a high extent sharing social media content on dress code can create visible social feedback ($\bar{x} = 3.46$, $SD = 0.50$), learning about dress code from digital content ($\bar{x} = 3.21$, $SD = 0.70$), and digital campaigns can change students’ attitudes toward professional dressing ($\bar{x} = 3.43$, $SD = 0.61$) among others can influence dress code compliance among female pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State. Overall the cluster mean for the male ($\bar{x} = 3.42$, $SD = 0.16$), and female ($\bar{x} = 3.42$, $SD = 0.17$) shows that Digital Content Creation (DCC) can influence dress code compliance to a high extent among both male and female pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female pre-service teachers on the influence of Digital Content Creation (DCC) on dress code compliance in Colleges of Education in Benue State.

Table 6: T-test Analysis of the Mean Responses of Male and Female Pre-Service Teachers on the Influence of Digital Content Creation (DCC) on Dress Code Compliance in Colleges of Education

Gender	Mean	SD	t-value	Df	Sig. value	Dec.
Male	3.42	0.16	-0.05	321	0.96	NS
Female	3.42	0.17				

$\alpha = 0.05$, NS = Not Significant

Result in Table 6 shows that a t-value of -0.05 with a degree of freedom (df) of 321 and a significant or probability value of 0.96 was obtained. Since the probability value of 0.96 is greater than 0.05 level of significance set as bench mark, the null hypothesis is accepted. Inference drawn is that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female pre-service teachers on the influence of Digital Content Creation (DCC) on dress code compliance in Colleges of Education in Benue State. This implies that gender is not a determinant of the influence of Digital Content Creation (DCC) on dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in colleges of education in Benue State.

DISCUSSION

Level of Dress Code Compliance among Pre-service Teachers

The study found that pre-service teachers often comply with dress code policies in colleges of education in Benue State. According to the respondents, they often comply with dressing according to the approved dress code of their college, wearing clothes that reflect professionalism while on campus, and ensuring that their outfit complies with institutional rules before leaving for school, among others. However, they rarely comply with the dress code even when supervision is minimal and maintain decent dressing throughout the semester. This suggests a moderate but not absolute compliance with dress code policies among pre-service teachers. This finding is credible, as colleges of education are institutions where pre-service teachers are being prepared for a profession that requires decent dressing. Further analysis from the test of hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female pre-service teachers on the level of dress code compliance in Colleges of Education in Benue State. This finding is plausible because in Nigerian Colleges of Education, dress code policies are generally gender-friendly in enforcement.

The finding draws credence from previous empirical findings. The finding agrees with Katić (2025), who indicated that pre-service teachers predominantly selected casual professional attire in blue and black colours, which signifies conformist, service-orientated values and modest prestige. This suggests modest compliance with the professional dress code as revealed by the present study. A study by Kiwango, Lyamtane and Jayasooriya et al. (2020) found that casual dress received significantly higher comfort scores than traditional formal attire, which represents a modest form of dress as evidenced in the present study. Additionally, Kaveh et al. (2015) found that approximately 28% of students showed non-compliance with dress code regulations. This implies that the majority of the students often comply with the dress code, as revealed by the present finding. However, the finding disagrees with Abdi (2024), who found low compliance with the dress code, attributing it to reasons best known to students. Overall, the present finding therefore suggests that while pre-service teachers often comply with dress code policies, they rarely comply when supervision is minimal. Implicitly, Colleges of Education should treat professional dressing as part of teacher identity formation and embed discussions about appearance, conduct, and role modelling into professional studies courses.

Factors Influencing Dress Code Compliance among Pre-service Teachers

The study showed that there are factors influencing dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in colleges of education in Benue State. Respondents agreed that peer influence, social media trends, cultural norms, and economic factors, among others, are the factors influencing dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State. However, they disagreed that pride of non-compliance is not a factor influencing dress code compliance among pre-service teachers. From the finding, economic factors emerged as the strongest influence, which is understandable in the context of Benue State. Many pre-service teachers in the State come from low or moderate economic backgrounds and may not always have the financial resources to regularly purchase cloths that align with the college dress code. Peer influence and social media trends also play important roles. Pre-service teachers, like many other students, spend a lot of time consuming online content and interacting with peers, where dressing is often used as a way to express identity and gain social acceptance. When certain styles become popular among friends or on social media, they can influence what pre-service teachers see as acceptable dress codes. Other factors such as cultural norms, attitude of lecturers, strict enforcement, and lack of awareness, among others, were conceived by pre-service teachers as essential in influencing dress code compliance. This finding is plausible because these factors reflect the daily realities of pre-service teachers.

This finding lends credence to Abdulrahman (2023), who found key factors contributing to non-compliance to include freedom of choice, negative influence from foreign cultures through social media, peer pressure, and lack of specific penalties. These factors align with the factors revealed in the present study. The finding also conforms with Momeni and Asghari (2020), who revealed barriers to compliance to include defects in education, management shortcomings, changes in societal culture, and personal factors. Asaju (2013) added that implementation challenges significantly impact compliance, with haphazard enforcement and lack of institutional political will undermining dress code effectiveness. The present finding therefore suggests that dress code compliance is shaped by various issues such as cultural, economic, social, and digital factors. By implication, rigid dress code policies without consideration of these factors may be unrealistic and counterproductive.

Influence of Digital Content Creation (DCC) on Dress Code Compliance among Pre-service Teachers

The study revealed that Digital Content Creation (DCC) can influence dress code compliance to a high extent among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State. Pre-service teachers clearly believe that DCC can play an influential role in shaping how they comply with college dress code policies. Regarding the moderating role of gender, the result shows that Digital Content Creation (DCC) can influence dress code compliance to a high extent among both male and female pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State. Further analysis from the test of hypothesis found no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female pre-service teachers on the influence of Digital Content Creation (DCC) on dress code compliance in Colleges of Education in Benue State. This reflects the shared digital experiences of male and

female pre-service teachers. The finding is plausible because both male and female pre-service teachers engage with similar digital platforms and are exposed to comparable digital influence. Hence, the influence of DCC on dress code compliance might apply to both of them.

This finding is consistent with previous empirical evidence. For instance, the finding agrees with Abdulrahman (2023), who found that social media's foreign cultural influences significantly affect student dress code compliance, with 66% of violations attributed to digital platform exposure. This demonstrates the influence of social media through digital content creation on dress code compliance as evidenced in the present finding. A study by Atika et al. (2024) found Instagram as the primary inspiration source for fashion trends, particularly Korean-style clothing among university students. This is a clear indication of the influence of digital content created via Instagram on dress code as revealed by the present finding. Additionally, Ukaegbu, Berezi and Kuro-Berezi (2023) revealed, among other things, that mass media content such as music videos, advertisements, films and drama, reality TV shows, fashion shows, beauty pageants, unsolicited messages and cyber-attacks exposes mass media audiences to indecent dressing, which aligns with the present finding. Furthermore, Chabala, N'cube and Mbewe (2024) revealed that the majority of students identified platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest as their main sources of fashion inspiration. According to the authors, respondents emphasised the role of visual content and influencers in shaping their style choices. Hence, the present finding adds to empirical literature buttressing the influence of Digital Content Creation (DCC) on dress code compliance among students' particularly pre-service teachers in colleges of education where professional dressing is critical. This implies that digital platforms can serve as effective tools for sensitisation and promotion of dress code compliance.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated how to enhance dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in colleges of education in Benue state: Leveraging Digital Content Creation (DCC). Consequent to the findings, it was concluded that both male and female pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education in Benue State often comply with dress code policies, particularly in formal academic settings, although compliance tends to be less consistent when supervision is minimal. Again, dress code compliance is influenced by several factors, with economic constraints, peer influence, social media trends, and cultural norms playing essential roles. The study further concludes that Digital Content Creation (DCC) has a high influence on dress code compliance among pre-service teachers in colleges of education in Benue State, with this influence cutting across gender.

Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings and the conclusions derived from the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Colleges of Education in collaboration with the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should integrate professional dressing into teacher education

curriculum. This can shape the understanding of pre-service teachers on professional dressing, thus enhancing dress code compliance.

2. College management should review existing dress code policies to ensure they are sensitive to the economic realities of pre-service teachers. Dress code policies should emphasise neatness, modesty, and professionalism over policies that reflect luxury and fashionable clothing, thus enhancing compliance.
3. Colleges of Education should adopt the use of Digital Content Creation through digital platforms available to pre-service teachers to promote dress code compliance. Short videos, posters, and images showing acceptable dress codes can be shared regularly to enhance compliance.

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