

A discourse: Showing skin as an empowerment?

Evert Manuel Dela Pena, Jr.^{1*}, Jericho Manlapig Beltran¹, Maila Tobias Palpal-latoc¹

¹Central Luzon State University, Nueva Ecija, Philippines

*Corresponding author: edelapena@clsu.edu.ph

ARTICLE INFO

DOI:10.46223/HCMCOUJS.
soci.en.15.3.3306.2025

Received: March 18th, 2024

Revised: June 16th, 2024

Accepted: June 17th, 2024

Keywords:

feminism; objectification;
philosophy; show skin; women
empowerment

ABSTRACT

Women's empowerment is the epitome of intellectual awakening. The feminist's awakening triumphs over the oppressive lording of the patriarchal system through time. Women empowerment is sustained in the society for women savored rights that were deprived of them for a long time. Women's empowerment comes in many forms or expressions, including how they dress. However, it seems that the portrayal of power that is supposed to give respect to women's dignity only paves the way to discredit their pure intention. Women's empowerment through clothing harbors more objectification of women rather than seeing them as subjects. This philosophy research work used a qualitative approach that examined and analyzed the experiences of selected empowered women in wearing revealing clothing. Sixteen empowered women were purposively selected to participate in this study. The data shows that empowerment is present in wearing revealing clothing, but unfortunately, objectification is also present. The dichotomy in the data between empowerment and objectification was intellectualized through a philosophical discourse. Women's empowerment through "showing of skin" must be re-examined.

1. Introduction

Women undergo various kinds of oppression before their intellectual awakening. The gradual lumination only occurred when they start to fight for their rights and freedom. History demonstrates that out of all deprived groups in the world, women have suffered the most. Their suffering knew no bounds based on culture, race, region, or religion. They have been victims of abuse, molestation, violence, rape, poverty, malnutrition, ill-treatment - in a word all sorts of deprivation (Mandal, 2013). Even in the Middle Ages, some of them were considered witches and punished by stone to death. There are a lot of factors to be considered in terms of women's oppression, but the common theme for all is due to a patriarchal system or the rule of men. The patriarchal system sets women to a secondary class in society where they have to be servants of men. The socially constructed lens of women in a patriarchal system limits their opportunities and rights in society. It is opening a door of discrimination and violence. Fortunately, with the efforts of feminists throughout history, they managed to create a paradigm shift. A paradigm that is more inclusive and promotes equality. With women's efforts, there should be a system that will maintain their power in society. A power that sustains progress within the society; in a loose definition, we call it women empowerment or women supporting women.

Women's empowerment is a hard-earned status for females regarding social rights, positions, and movements. It is a process by which women sustain their power in the current

time. A thesis at the University of Dhaka shows that women's empowerment is the process of empowering women. Empowerment raises the status of women through education, awareness, literacy, and training. Women's empowerment equips and allows women to make life-determining decisions. They may be able to redefine gender roles, providing them more freedom to pursue desired goals (Mahbub, 2021). The unwavering control of women's rights and freedom was the main reason for the paradigm shift. It paves the way for women's awakening. Empowering women contributes to economic growth, where they freely participate in activities. Some accounts suggest empowering women is an investment in social development. Empowering women is the right thing to do and good for business (Women, 2011). It is not that easy to give a generic definition of what women's empowerment is other than sustaining power. The UN provides a lens that constitutes real women's empowerment. Women's empowerment has five components: women's sense of self-worth, their right to have and to determine choices, their right to have access to opportunities and resources, their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally (Taneja, 2012).

The given categories manifested in many ways, such as how women participate in social activities, such as how they dress, act, or even voice out. Historically, some of their actions are reactions to oppressors, especially in how they dress. In this paper, we would like to focus on women's empowerment through clothing. Clothing here should be noted as limited to daring or revealing clothes since this is the current trend. We will argue whether wearing revealing clothes gives an impact of empowerment to women or only opens a door to objectification. This philosophical paper tries to weigh the impact of showing skin, whether it produces progress in terms of predatory thinking or only supplies the fantasies of the oppressors. In this way, we can revisit some of the expressions of women's empowerment to be deconstructed. This opus paves the way to social progress by trying to limit some of the expressions of women's empowerment, most specifically in terms of current clothing style due to the possibility of leading to being taken for granted. This philosophical opus tries to offer an argument seemingly against women's clothing, but in deeper scrutiny, it is for all for women's protection and security. All of the points of this paper are made possible through merging philosophical points with qualitative empirical study.

2. Theoretical basis

2.1. Historical background of women's empowerment in clothing

Clothing is one of the necessities of people in their everyday lives. Culture, family values, media, and personality affect how people use clothing to communicate their identity (Tajjudin, 2019). Aside from a form of fashion, it is also thought to have symbolic power as a mode of political activism and has roles on social groups and dynamics that reflect on what is coming upon in society (Baudrillard, 1972 and Monneyron, 2001, as cited in Krim, 2023). Cultural beliefs are also a driving force in how women choose their clothing (Mejia, n.d.). Another factor that can be associated with this is the changing weather brought by the warming of temperature across the world, which has been about 0.20 degrees Celsius per decade since the 1980s (Lindsey & Dahlman, 2024).

Contextualizing the modern history of the showing of skin can be traced to the rise of décolletage, the showing of the upper chest, neck, and shoulder area, which was popularized in Europe during the 18th century. One leading cause of this is Marie Antoinette, the lavish queen of France. Amidst controversies regarding the kingdom dynamics during her time, she primarily

popularized the style, which is reflected in most of her images. French during the French Revolution started to swell over their breast, and the styles became popular across social classes (Funicello, 2017). In the 19th century, during the Victorian era when necklines were raised back, Kunzle (1982), as cited in Banner (1982), argued that the popularization of tightlacing dresses was not more on consciously opposing the Victorian dress reform but primarily actually popularized showing of their feet and legs instead of the upper body. In the 1920s, there was a popularization of flappers - short, sleeveless dresses typically accompanied by bobbed hair, that made them stereotypically considered sexual. The rise of the flapper coincides with the rise of more liberating women post-World War I and the women's fight for more equal rights, primarily in that period, the right to vote (Mckenna, 2024). In the late 20th century, the popularization of miniskirts, slip dresses, and crop tops symbolized a new revolutionary movement for women as it symbolized a move away from the social norms of having female independence and contesting traditional gender roles (Jackson, n.d.).

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, some generalizations claim women are more "conservative" in terms of clothing and fashion during the past centuries. This is primarily driven by the intense background of colonial norms established by the Spaniards and people's perception of women being more empowered today than ever. Women have worn clothes described differently in different parts of the archipelago throughout history. In pre-colonial times, women wore pandong or a lady cloak in Visayas and tapis or a wrap-around skirt in Tagalogs, which in Bikol is worn high enough to cover their breasts. Father Sanchez describes the blanket wrap-around in Visayas as decent but indecent in places like Pampanga and Tagalogs (Scott, 1994). Because of that, some Tagalog women wear a baro, a cloak, or a loose smock on top of the tapis (Scott, 1994). The entrance of the Europeans introduced the institutionalization of camisa, baro at saya, which covers the entirety of a woman's body down to her feet as the attire for women (Gonzales, n.d.). which emulates the Maria Clara image of a conservative and religious Filipina. The 20th century saw the entry of Traje de Mestiza and the Western, particularly the American influence, in women's clothing, which included miniskirts, pants, and themes based on popular culture in that particular era. People follow trends primarily driven by influencers, which satisfies the dresser (Fashinnovation, 2021).

According to Tajjudin (2019), traditional communities do not accept foreign cultures, such as new trends in clothing, in their environment. The way women's clothing often reflects another theme about another gender issue: women's empowerment. As an idea to enable a woman to realize their identity and power in a multidimensional way fully, women's empowerment is also associated with clothing and the concept of freedom to wear whatever we want and whenever we want (Devi, 1998, as cited in Gitamani & Rupa Das, 2017). In an article by Perelburg (2022), women's clothing developed over time through changes in line with the wave of women's empowerment through feminism. Before the Industrial Revolution, restrictive corsets were the theme for women's clothing. In another sense, the idea of women's empowerment is being unapologetic on pure acceptance of oneself (Choi, 2023). According to Krim (2023), we can look at the trend in clothing as a form of empowerment in the new wave of feminism, which originated at first acknowledging the complexity of gender and various factors sought for political, economic, and social structural change, second having a women's right on her own body, and the third wave which aims for equality and parity. The new wave focuses on social media power, synonymous with trends (MacLaran, 2015, as cited in Krim, 2023). Women's freedom to dress in the present has been reflected in the individual empowerment perspective (D' Enbeau, 2023). However, a challenge is still managing how to balance the freedom of dress as a source of empowerment and the risk of living in a world that is not like a bubble.

2.2. Objectification of women

Objectification is one of the prominent terms that we often hear in the society. The term is full of complexity due to various attachments. In general parlance, the term is usually associated with negative connotations, which sometimes leads to the sexualization of humans. Martha Nussbaum suggests objectification is when we treat a “non-object,” such as a human being, as an object. It is when we try to see the person not as a person but as an object (Nausbaum, 1995).

Martha tries to save the term’s integrity by presenting that objectification is not always evil because there are situations in which objectification is necessary, especially in sexual life. She argues that objectification features may be good or bad depending on the context. (Sunstein was undoubtedly correct to emphasize the importance of context, and we shall dwell on that issue) some features of objectification, furthermore, we shall argue, may, in fact, in some circumstances as sustain suggests, be either necessary or even excellent features of sexual life. Seeing this will require, among other things, seeing how the allegedly impossible combination between objectification and equality, respect, and consent might be possible (Nausbaum, 1995). She focused more on the context of objectification. This objectification is always present; when you are listening to a live band, you no longer see the band as a person but as a speaker who produces music. When you eat at a fast food restaurant, the crew becomes an object, a means for your ends like serving you food or cleaning the tables. When you ride a public vehicle, the driver becomes the vehicle per se. The statements say that objectification is always present. The tendency to treat other people as an object is permanently active. This is why Nausbaum is trying to suggest that is a necessity, at least in a partially positive way. However, it doesn’t always go well, especially for women. The treatment of a band or service crew differs from the objectification of women.

The objectification of women is always filled with malice that becomes a form of women’s oppression or discrimination. There are a lot of factors to be considered in this social disease that affects women’s lives, like pornography, social anarchy, elitism, etc. Ever since, this struggle of women has been embedded in parts of the world. Catherine Mackinnon said that women’s intimate experiences of sexual objectification are definitive of and synonymous with women’s lives as gender females. It is said to yield an existence in which women can grasp self only as a thing (Mackinnon, 1989). Moreover, the said social disease is inseparable from the world. Metaphorically, Mackinnon noted that all women live in sexual objectification the way fish live in water. She suggests that this objectification of women is terrible and, unfortunately, always at hand. It is part of the brokenness of the society. Perhaps it is what Gabriel Marcel calls the broken world, where people forget to think or reflect. The abandonment of reflection opens the door to social discrimination and oppression. It opens the door for objectification, such as treating and seeing people as objects or becoming a means to their end. In trying to contextualize, it reflects to Marcel’s concept of a broken world.

Mackinnon blames pornography and the social order of dominance in this problem of women, for it affects the mind of the individual, most specifically, in her terms, the males. On the part of males as predators, we disagree, for we argue that oppression is genderless and anyone, regardless of their gender, is possible to become a predator. It is the will of the individual and not gender that decides whether to be a beast or a man. However, we want to subscribe to the idea of Mackinnon that objectifying women is always wrong. Treating a woman as an object is a dehumanization of the person and not gender itself. It affects the dignity of women’s lives and existence. The objectification of women comes in various forms, but

Mackinnon presents highlights on words as “speech-act.” Objectification, according to Mackinnon, is like a display from Playboy magazine, in which women are objectified and presented dehumanized as sexual objects or things for use through the torture of women and the sexualization of racism and the fetishization of women’s body parts to snuff films, in which actual murder is the ultimate sexual act, the reduction to the thing form of a human being and the silence of women literal and complete (Mackinnon, 1996). This end as women in commodities affects people’s minds and how they look at women. Mackinnon added that the human becomes a thing, and the mutual becomes one-sided. The given becomes stolen and sold, objectification defines femininity, and one-sidedness defines mutuality.

Force comes to define consent as pictures and words become the forms of possession and use through which women are possessed and used (Mackinnon, 1996). This objectification of women prevents society from looking at them as a person who deserve to be treated as a being. The treatment of an object is not similar to the treatment of a person. The experience from an object is different from an experience with a person. The person comes with dignity, a unifying presence of grace, not like an object just for the temporary serving of man. The presence of an object cannot replicate the presence of a person. Humans have a supreme dignity, which cannot be deduced from animals or other coexistence. The deduction of women as objects distorts women’s dignity. In Mackinnon’s lens, men deduce women into objects through words. She said that in society, nothing is without meaning.

Nothing has no content. Society is made of words whose meanings the robust control, or try to. At a certain point, when those they hurt become real, some words are recognized as the acts they are (Mackinnon, 1996). Furthermore, discrimination is not divided into acts on one side and speech on the other. Speech acts. It makes no sense from the action side, either. Acts speak. In social inequality, so-called speech can be an exercise of power that constructs the social reality in which people live, from objectification to genocide (Mackinnon, 1996).

Words contain meaning that paves the way to women’s oppression. She clarified that it is not words per se but the meaning and experience it conveys. A word of what they think of a woman, what they do to a woman, and where women belong. Telling a stranger woman in the street that she is hot or sexy is a kind of oppression, for the words convey experiences and meaning, which leads to an object of the mind. It is leaning toward something prerogative that possesses the “subject.” Mackinnon said this process of empowerment (words) of the perpetrator and traumatization of the victim occurs not because of the content of the words in the usual sense but because of the experiences they embody and convey. For this function of words carrying lived reality from one place to another, it matters that the physical tortures that accompany the words are being inflicted on a mass scale on women as a group (Mackinnon, 1996). As long as it goes unnoticed, it continues to predate, oppress, and discriminate women. The answer of Mackinnon to this social decease is to remove everything that commercializes women, like pornography and other commodities, which We argue is far from possibility. Sexual predators are in their hiding, comfortable places, always looking for someone to devour.

3. Methodology

This is a qualitative study that uses philosophical lenses as its foundation. It aims to make a philosophical discourse from the data gathered regarding showing skin as women’s empowerment.

Snowball sampling was used in this opus to determine the qualifying respondents regarding empowerment. We interviewed sixteen empowered women regarding their experiences of wearing revealing clothing. The qualifications are (i) Biologically women, (ii)

should be eighteen years old or above, (iii) have experience in modeling or pageantry, (iv) fond of wearing revealing clothes.

The authors started the data gathering using semi-structured interviews. With the respondents' consent, we recorded the interview via phone recorder for 20 - 30 minutes. The authors asked about the socio-demographic information of the respondents, their knowledge about women empowerment, their experiences in modeling/pageantry, and their personal experiences wearing revealing clothes.

The author used thematic analysis to analyze the gathered data and critically discuss it. The collected data were transcribed and analyzed, which led to the resulting themes. The given analysis method reveals the similarities and differences between the gathered narratives and ends with a synthesis used as material for philosophical discourse.

4. Result and discussion

In the discussion above, the clothing transition in women's lives was rooted in various ends. Women wearing daring or revealing clothes give an empowerment hold to their identity. It perhaps manifests through the feeling of confidence or loving their bodies more. With this grandeur feeling of wearing the said trendy clothing, it gives more flavor to the oppressor by filling the fantasy of the predators. Two themes emerge in this study of women wearing revealing clothes. One, it empowers women and two, it paves the way to a more intense oppression given by the predators. We conducted an in-depth interview with various women movers, which we characterized through models and former pageant contenders. We tried to ask about their experiences and perspectives regarding wearing revealing clothing to know the scheme of things in wearing one. We used critical analysis to produce themes from the given statements and made a way to have a philosophical discourse. Here are the following:

4.1. Result

Background and qualifications of the respondents

We interviewed sixteen respondents aged between 21 and 24 as the oldest. We have eight respondents who are fashion models at the same time, social media influencers. The eight others are former and active beauty pageant contenders. All of them confidently claimed that they are fond of wearing revealing clothing. They wear revealing clothes in their specific workplaces and often in public.

Experiences of women in wearing revealing clothes

The respondents claimed that they felt empowered when they wore the revealing clothes. Some of them said that *"my mood reflects on what I wear, like if I am happy and feel more confident, I wear them; if not, I usually wear hoodies or big shirts,"* and *"Aside from confidence, I feel very sexy. I'm wearing it not for others but for myself as I flaunt my own body"*. All of them said they feel more like themselves when wearing such clothes. The majority of them responded that it made them feel that they were sexy and they were standing out from the crowd, not intimidatingly but feeling autonomous in their bodies. Like *"It boosts my confidence and loving my body,"* *"I really can't explain, but I love and feel my body whenever I wear one,"* *"Wearing such clothes makes me feel that I have a place in the crowd, and as I feel power and confidence, I hope that other women would also feel confidence in wearing one,"* *"Since we are in a tropical country, I feel comfortable in wearing them."* It made them confident to go in public spheres in such a way that they are capable to disregard the negativity outside their homes and simply being confidently free. Aside from the coded themes such as confidence and

appreciating their bodies more, being comfortable or feeling comfortable also emerges. Wearing the said clothes makes them comfortable because it is easy for them to move and stay fresh in hot weather. In a study in 2021, it was mentioned that the Fashion industry is now a means of bread and butter for many people - especially women on social media. When over a hundred million blogs were analyzed, 50.9% were women. These bloggers post daily, either unboxing fashion items, reviewing them, or showing how to style clothes. By doing this, they build their reach, which is why many brands and retailers pay them to promote their offerings. In this way, the fashion industry has created a new career opening. It empowers many girls worldwide by making them independent and confident (Thornley, 2014, as cited in Maryam et al., 2021).

Table 1

Impacts on Women as They Wear Revealing Clothes

Themes	
Confidence	Empowerment
Appreciating their bodies	
Feeling comfortable	

Source. Themes emerged from the respondents

Experiences of women in wearing revealing clothes in public

Our respondents' feelings about wearing them boil down to positivity and empowerment. We asked them about their experiences in wearing them in public. Despite the encouraging statements of our respondents on what they felt about wearing revealing clothing, negative themes emerged from the analysis. Catcalled, sexualized, whistled, and anxiety are the coded themes in the question of the experiences of women outside. According to them, *"It is inevitable to be catcalled. When you pass by the construction workers or drivers, they call me with a random weird name, whistle, and wave. When I am in the mall, boys are looking at my private body parts, I feel annoyed."* *"I can't avoid the fact that people will look at me. In our house, my mother used to scold me and say, why am I wearing like that? Then outside, some gossipers labeled me as a prostitute or slut. There was also a time when I joined the pageant; then I was in jeans shorts, then a white top, it was fitted like a body fit, then we met a man across, and suddenly he moaned over us candidates, he was annoying"*. The majority of them experienced anxiety for the aggressive behavior of males over them. Some of them were catcalled and whistled in the streets, public markets, and public parks, which traumatized them to go outside. *"I was catcalled and whistled, and some randomly asked for my number. I felt harassed and sexualized. Moreover, I was confused by some saying that, ironically, I wear such clothes. Yet, I felt offended when I was sexualized"*, and *"Sometimes I'm not confident to go out wearing that because of people's judgments when it comes to skin coloration. It's like they will judge me anytime. That's why I don't feel like going outside because of people's judgment."* One of the respondents experienced unsolicited touch in their small family store business. *"We have a sari sari store. When it is my turn to sell in our store wearing home clothes, it feels normal, like the buyers, especially the truck drivers, don't pay any attention to what I wear. But when I wear just a shirt or short shorts, they'll hold my hand like that when I give them what the item is. Sometimes, sir, I even cried. Some people will suddenly ask me my name; I fear that."* Almost all of them experienced being stared at maliciously by the people around them, especially on the streets and in the public market. One of them said that she was receiving compliments from her circle of friends, but it turned out that it was the other way around from strangers. All of them responded that the predators or harassers were strangers to them.

Table 2*Effects on Women as They Wear Revealing Clothes*

Themes	Objectification
Catcalled	
Sexualized	
Whistled	
Anxiety	

Source. Themes emerged from the respondents

4.2. Discussion

Of our respondents, only one felt comfortable with the surroundings, and the rest felt uneasy. The majority of the respondents were traumatized or irritated by the treatment that they never deserved. In giving an analysis based on the narratives of women, it all boils down to objectification. Possessing words that convey meaning is a treatment of making the subject into an object.

In this study, we argue that there is a dichotomy between empowerment and objectification in wearing revealing clothes. Empowerment emerges in women's skin; however, opens the door for oppression. Empowerment in clothing is entangled with oppression. In a sense, women have lived in this dichotomy for the longest time. Efforts are made by different movers, together with support from other gender categories. Unfortunately, the dichotomy still exists. Women's oppression (objectification) continues to prosper, and there are a lot of factors to be considered. Still, we subscribed to MacKinnon's idea that as long as women are being commercialized, there will always be oppression (Mackinnon, 1996). Again, trying to eradicate social institutions that cater to women is seemingly impossible for it to become a profession and, at the same time, the investment given. So, other options should be given a spotlight in helping to lower the rate or, ideally, abolish the objectification of women. To this end, the authors present a new lens for wearing daring clothes as empowerment. One is that we have to revisit the categories that include so-called empowerment. In revisiting the categories, we may see that some are not beneficial or at least an illusion. It may lead us to a cartesian method that reviews every category skeptically. In the dichotomy presented, empowerment in daring clothes seems just an illusion because it doesn't impact societal change. One feels that it empowers her; however, it feeds the social decease.

With this regard, the feeling of possession of identity is a self-created imagination because it doesn't correspond to what is real. In revealing this imaginary power lies an object, a means for social deception. It creates a spear of unintended objectification from the public sphere. A study in 2019 regarding the effects of wearing revealing clothing stated that it triggers people into hyper-sexualization. They also shed light on the fact that the most pronounced dehumanization occurs for hyper-sexualized targets, that is, targets wearing revealing clothing and in suggestive postures (Bernard & Wollast, 2019). There is an irony in the existence of empowerment if it is not respected. Second, since showing skin opens the door to oppression, then we have to eliminate it to the category of empowerment. It is a backslash to women who think it empowers them. We have to eliminate it in the category so that it changes the way women feel because, again, there are things we can never control, such as oppressor's minds. Eliminating it, like women cease wearing those types of clothes, it starves the oppressor's fantasies. It stops the supply that feeds the minds of the beasts that wait to devour. The study in 2015 suggests that empowerment does not only revolve around autonomy but also to the extent

of a relationship that considers external reality. Unlike many other conceptions of autonomy, this does not exclude the idea that relationships can be empowering. However, this conception of autonomy is also insufficient for empowerment; empowerment also requires non-autonomy goods and changes in conditions external to the agent (Khader, 2015). Third, women's objectification is one of the unfortunate realities in this world. It is part of the brokenness of the world. It is a consequence of being exposed to sexuality from Kant's view. It was mentioned in an article in 2017 that the lowering of a person to the level of an object is not, for Kant, the only moral danger involved in the exercise of sexuality. He is also worried that 'sexuality exposes humanity to the danger of equality with the beasts. Here, Kant is concerned that sex will engage the human predisposition to animality, which John Rawls describes as a 'Physical and 'purely mechanical' self-love by which [Kant] means that it does not require the exercise of reason and is generally guided by instinct and by acquired tendencies and habits' (Papadaki, 2007).

Humans have tried to eliminate it throughout history; however, it continues to exist again, for it is part of the fissure of this world. Since we cannot do something about it, like a natural social disease that cannot be eradicated, then we have to protect women. In this protection, we mean that women should refrain or at least try to limit themselves from wearing revealing clothing styles because it presents a problem. It is a problem that cannot be solved, so we should protect ourselves. It is not about tolerating it but more about protecting oneself from the things we do not have control over. The minds of the oppressors are not something that we can shape because it is independent, and cannot do something about it. Since it is hopeless to change, we must eliminate it by protecting ourselves. Like the corruption problem, even history and human efforts cannot be undone. It is always at hand. This brand-new lens considers a perspective that suggests protection for women. It is not about tolerance of oppression but more protection against the things we cannot control. This new lens supports the laws against sexism. It is a help to lower the rate of being offended.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

We can never control things in this world, like how nature moves, pandemics, and even social diseases, which we pertain through social injustices, hunger, oppression, etc. With the things that are out of our hands, objectification of women is always present. There are various underlying factors, but MacKinnon says it is through the commercialization of women. Women are prone to this objectification due to pornography and other related commodities. With this end, oppression is always present, and we have to protect ourselves, especially those women out there. Women's sacrifice of confidence through clothing is the appearance of their protection aside from the law. The benefit they gain from wearing revealing clothes is a price they have to give up due to world problems and being in the world. This discursive analysis only suggests a point of view to ponder and does not claim to be absolute. The point of this opus is to give a new perspective to women and to empower women, even if it appears to be pessimistic. Again, this paper is a philosophical discourse for the pursuit of truth.

In the aftermath of this paper, there are recommendations from the authors to stretch this study. (i) The data is only limited from the viewpoint of models who confidently flaunt their bodies, which the authors believe represents the voices of empowered women. This study could be explored more through the lenses of various categories of Filipino women, such as religious, conservative, or even casual wearers of daring clothes, to understand their thoughts regarding showing skin as empowerment. (ii) This study is conducted in the Philippines with selected respondents. This study could be a stepping stone to compare or parallel to international studies or related studies. (iii) This study could be a standard basis for revisiting women's

empowerment. It may produce proposals of policies that could secure women and lessen objectification in society. (iv) This discourse could be an antithesis or thesis useful for creating another philosophical discourse.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We want to acknowledge and, at the same time, thank the sixteen brave women who confidently shared their narratives.

References

- Banner, L. (1982). Fashion and history [Review of the language of clothes; Fashion and fetishism: A Social history of the corset, tightlacing and other forms of body-sculpture in the west; Dress in eighteenth-century England; The history of haute couture, 1850-1950; The fashionable mind: Reflections on fashion, 1970-1981, by A. Lurie, D. Kunzel, A. Buck, D. de Marly, & K. Fraser]. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 13(2), 311-315. <https://doi.org/10.2307/203113>
- Bernard, P., & Wollast, R. (2019). Why is sexualization dehumanizing? The effects of posture suggestiveness and revealing clothing on dehumanization. *SAGE Open*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019828230>
- Choi, D. (2023). Empowered women in sexy clothing. *Crossroads of Dress and Adornment: Creativity, Culture, and Collaboration*, (49).
- D' Enbeau [Dr. Phil] (2023). *Is a revealing dress a source of female empowerment?* [Video]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4f68WFfFkz8>
- Fashinnovation. (2021). *The biggest innovations of 2021 in the fashion industry*. <https://fashinnovation.nyc/biggest-innovations/>
- Funciello, D. (2017). *Elbows, ankles and décolletage: Myths of 18th century women's fashion*. Schuyler Mansion State Historic Site. https://schuylermansion.blogspot.com/2017/03/elbows-ankles-and-decolletage-myths-of.html?m=1&fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR029TnC2LcvLOisrtOH0AX1v12WZAr0yKUFHZWroraGkTTN_cwzpNBTw_aem_Ac p67KXHZrfD6dq3S03hxyGVtqqaYO92WGVJhAvEO9xVGkR2InvSl-Ai3TQX97wA7h055eMF2NV6OQwioF4Yak2u
- Gitamani, D., & Rupa Das, B. (2017). Education and empowerment of women. *International Education and Research Journal (IERJ)*, 3(1).
- Gonzales, L. (n.d.) *The history of San Isidro: Told and retold*. National Printing.
- Jackson, L. (n.d.). *Mary quant & the mini skirt revolution*. Lottievjackson. <https://www.lottievjackson.com/mary-quant-mini-skirt-revolution>
- Kabeer, N. (2005). Gender equality and women's empowerment: A critical analysis of the third millennium development goal. *Gender and Development*, 13(1), 13-24.
- Khader, S. (2015). Beyond autonomy fetishism: Affiliation with autonomy in women's empowerment. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 17(1), 125-139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2015.1025043>
- Krim, S. (2023). *The role of luxury fashion brands in women empowerment: A historical perspective and proposal for modelling contemporary modes of participation*. <https://archives.marketing-trends-congress.com/2023/pages/PDF/291.pdf>

- Lindsey, R., & Dahlman, L. (2024). *Climate change: Global temperature*. Climate.gov. <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-global-temperature#:~:text=According>
- Lopez, J. V. M. (2021). *5 signs that will help you to understand how fashion reflects social changes*. Fashioninnovation. <https://fashioninnovation.nyc/fashion-reflects-social-changes/>
- Mackinnon, C. A. (1989). *Toward a feminist theory of state*. Harvard University Press.
- Mackinnon, C. A. (1996). *Only words*. Harvard University Press.
- Mahbub, M. (2021). *Women empowerment, definition, theory, process, practice and importance- An analysis*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353444239_Women_Empowerment_theory_practice_process_and_importance?
- Mandal, K. C. (2013). Concept and types of women empowerment. *International Forum of Teaching and Studies*, 9(2), Article 17.
- Maryam, M., Khalid, A., Khunti, N., & Mohan, M. (2021). Media, fashion and beauty: Influence on women empowerment. *Global Media Journal-Arabian Edition*, 3(3), 1-19.
- McKenna, A. (2024). *Flapper*. Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/flapper>
- Mejia, P. J. S. (n.d.) *The behavior of men towards provocative clothing of women*. <http://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3601502>
- Naussbaum, M. C. (1995). *Objectification*. <https://www.mit.edu/~shaslang/mprg/nussbaumO.pdf>
- Papadaki, E. (2007). Sexual objectification: From kant to contemporary feminism. *Contemporary Political Theory*, 6(3), 330-348. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.cpt.9300282>
- Perelburg, D. (2022). *The history of women's movement fashion*. L'OFFICIEL. <https://www.lofficielusa.com/fashion/womens-movement-feminist-fashion-history>
- Scott, W. H. (1994). *Barangay sixteenth-century Philippine culture and society*. https://ia802800.us.archive.org/32/items/BarangaySixteenthCenturyPhilippineCultureAndSociety/Barangay%20-%20Sixteenth%20Century%20Philippine%20Culture%20and%20Society_text.pdf
- Sunstar. (2019). *Fashion appetite vs the environment*. <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/amp/story/davao/weekend/fashion-appetite-vs-the-environment>
- Tajjudin, F. (2019) Cultural and social identity in clothing matters “Different cultures, different meanings”. *European Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 1(4), 21-25. <https://doi.org/10.33422/EJBS.2018.07.63>
- Taneja, S. (2012). *Women empowerment for inclusive businesses*. <https://ecosysteme.danone.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Danone-Ecosystem-Fund-Women-Empowerment.pdf>
- Women, U. N. (2011). *Women's empowerment principles: Equality means business*. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEAAsia/Docs/Publications/2016/05/WEP-Booklet-en.pdf>

