

Basotho Cultural Shift: The Role of Dress in the Shift

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Abstract : Introduction: Dress is used daily and can be used to define culture, and through it, individuals form a sense of self and identity. One of the characteristics of culture is that it evolves; Basotho culture is no exception to this. It has evolved through rites of entry, significant ceremonies, daily living, and an approach to others. Most of these affect and have been affected by the local/traditional dress. The study focused on the evolution of culture, and the role played by dress as it is one of the major contributors to non-verbal communication. Methodology: Secondary data were used since most of the original cultural practices are no longer held dear in the value system and so no longer practiced. Interviews were conducted to get some insights from the senior citizens and their responses compared to those of the present adults. Content analysis was used for the interview data. Results: The nature of governance in Lesotho has clearly contributed to the current cultural state of confusion. The Basotho culture has indeed shifted, and the difference in dress code explains it. Acculturation, the alteration in environments, and the type of occasions Basotho attended lately contributed to the shift. Technology brought about a difference in the mode of transport, sports, household activities, and gender roles. Conclusion and Recommendations: It was concluded that since culture is imparted through socialisation, a change in availability of most Basotho women leaves little time left for socialisation with children and resorts to other upbringing patterns, most of which are not cultural; this has brought a cultural shift. In addition, acculturation has contributed massively to the value system of Basotho. The type of dress worn by Basotho presently shifts the culture, and the shifting culture also shifts the dress required to suit the present culture. Because of the type of mindset Basotho has now, it is recommended that cultural days be observed in schools, including the multi-racial ones, and media should assist in this information transmission. The campaigns regarding the value of traditional dress and what it represents are recommended. The local dressmakers manufacturing the Seshoeshoe and any other traditional dress need to be educated about the fabric history, fiber content, and consequent care to be in a position to guide ultimate consumers of the products. Awareness campaigns that the culture shifts and may not necessarily result in negative should be ventured. Cultural exhibitions should also be held ideally at places that hold some cultural heritage. The ministry of sports and culture, together with that of tourism, should run with cultural awareness and enriching vision with a focus on education as opposed to revenue collection.

Keywords : Basotho, culture, dress, acculturation, influence, cultural heritage, socialization, non-verbal communication, Seshoeshoe

Conference Title : ICAT 2022 : International Conference on Apparel and Textiles

Conference Location : Lisbon, Portugal

Conference Dates : April 14-15, 2022