

**OPINION SURVEY OF CHARACTERISTICS COMMUNICATED
THROUGH FORMAL AND CASUAL ATTIRE OF TEACHERS**

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to determine the various characteristics that is associated and communicated through different dressing styles of teacher. The research was done with two main objectives, i.e. to determine the characteristics communicated through formal attire of teachers and to determine the characteristics communicated through casual attire of teachers. A structured questionnaire was developed for the study and the data was collected from 360 undergraduate students of colleges of Chandigarh. The main findings of the study stated that in student's opinion, if a teacher is wearing formal attire then she is perceived to be more confident, organized and influential in comparison top when she wears casual attire. Also, if a teacher is wearing casual attire then she is perceived to be more approachable, enthusiastic and friendly in comparison to when she wears formal attire.

Keywords: Attire, Characteristics, Formal, Casual

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1. Introduction:

Clothing also known as attire, apparel, dress; is a collaborative term used for the items worn on the body that can be manufactured from textiles, animal skin or any other thin sheet of material combined together. One of the basic functions of attire is to communicate. A lot more is communicated through dress than we hold it responsible for. Attire can communicate an array of different things, including personal identity, one's relationship with others, and the type of situations in which one is involved. Thus clothing provides a plethora of information about the wearer without having to talk to that person (**Howlette, 2013**), thereby making it a very impressionable tool.

Clothing preferences may differ according to different situations i.e. formal, casual etc. People wear formal clothing in different situations, such as when at work, meeting someone new, or on a job interview. Formal clothing is often worn to follow regulations, and also serves to obtain respect, signaling professionalism and maintenance of social distance. Wearing formal clothing is associated with perceptions of more professionalism and also less approachability (**Butler & Roesel, 1989, 1991; Lukavsky, Butler, & Harden, 1995**). Formal clothing is thus psychologically related to formality and social distance, whereas casual clothing is related to intimacy and familiarity.

Ask students about their teacher's fashion sense and they will always recall someone who came dressed impeccably to their classroom or someone who was a disaster in fashion. Students surely notice more than they are given a credit for. In a classroom, a teacher forms impressions through a number of factors. Teacher's attire plays a major role in shaping students' perception of the teachers. **Lang (1986)**, in his study found that although there is no dress code for teachers but at the same time there are strong unofficial dress expectations and preferences for teacher dress among administrators. Thus this study was done to explore the various characteristics that could be communicated through teacher's formal or casual attire in student's opinion.

2. Literature Review:

The review started by looking at a study by **Adotey et al (2016)** on "The Relationship between Clothes and First Impressions: Benefits and Adverse Effects on the Individual". The purpose of

this qualitative study was to explore the basis on which people form first impressions of personalities they meet in relation to their clothing. A sample size of 31 respondents was selected for the study using purposive sampling. Interview method was adopted for the data collection. The results of the study suggested that the people form first impression based on their moral inclinations, economic, nonconformance to current fashion, health, fashion changes and much more. The data collected for the study also supported the findings of the earlier studies that clothing and first impressions are related. It was evident from the study that these first impressions are mostly based on visual cues such as clothing. In addition to this the study suggested that people form their first impressions based on their moral inclinations, economic, non-conformance to current fashion, health, fashion changes and much more.

Slepian et al. (2015) in his study on ‘The Cognitive Consequences of Formal Clothing’, studied the psychological consequences of clothing and tested whether wearing formal clothing enhances abstract cognitive processing. Previous studies provided evidence supporting the hypothesis. Wearing more formal clothing was associated with higher action identification level and greater category inclusiveness. Putting on formal clothing induced greater category inclusiveness and enhanced a global processing advantage. The association between clothing formality and abstract processing was mediated by felt power. The research findings demonstrated the nature of an everyday and ecologically valid experience. It was found that the clothing worn influences cognition impacting the processing style that changes how objects, people, and events are construed.

Yan, R. et. al. (2011) in their study “Effects of Employee Clothing Formality on Consumers’ Service Quality Expectations and Store Image Perceptions”. The objective of this paper was firstly to understand whether and how sales employee clothing style would influence consumers’ perceptions of store image through their expectations of service quality. Secondly the study aimed to uncover how fashion orientation would influence the aforementioned relationship. A 3 (formality of employee clothing: formal versus moderate versus casual) A 2 (level of fashion orientation: low versus high) between-subject experiment design was conducted. Data collection was done from 105 university students in a laboratory setting. Research findings indicated that formality of employee clothing (i.e. formal business, moderate, or casual attire) served as a cue

in the retail environment for consumers to make inferences about the service quality expected to be provided by the sales employee. Furthermore, formality of employee clothing both directly and indirectly influenced consumers' perceptions of store image. This study adds to existing literature by uncovering the moderating role of fashion orientation in consumers' service quality expectations and confirms the function of service quality as an antecedent to store image. In addition to this it was also evident from the research that retailers should pay attention to the design of their salespeople's clothing because different clothing styles draw forth different evaluations from customers about the service quality provided in retail stores. The study also investigated the role of clothing formality in influencing consumers' service quality expectations.

2.1. Inferences drawn from the above studies:

Clothing communicates a lot more than we assume. How a person dresses sets a tone, image, and others reaction to this. The above studies demonstrated that clothing have an influence on cognitive style and on perceptions made out of appearances. Also there is a difference in perception made for a formally and casually dressed person. Even attire communicates a lot about the perception of intelligence and scholastic ability of both student and teacher.

3. Objectives of the Study:

1. To determine the characteristics communicated through formal attire of teachers.
2. To determine the characteristics communicated through the casual attire of the teachers.

4. Hypothesis of the Study:

H1: Teacher who wears formal attire to work is perceived to be more confident.

H2: Teacher who wears formal attire is perceived to be more organized.

H3: Teacher who wears formal attire is perceived to be more influential.

H4: Teacher who wears informal attire is perceived to be more approachable.

H5: Teacher who wears informal attire is perceived to be more enthusiastic.

H6: Teacher who wears informal attire is perceived to be friendly.

5. Delimitations of the study:

- The study was delimited to undergraduate girl students of Panjab University, Chandigarh.

- The study was delimited to opinion about only female teachers of Panjab University, Chandigarh.

6. Research design

- (i) **Sample of the Study:** the sample of the study included 360 student respondents selected randomly from first year (90), second year (90) and third year (90) of graduate courses from four colleges of Chandigarh.
- (ii) **Tools Used in the Study:** The data was collected using a 20 items questionnaire developed by the researcher. The tool was further divided into four parts. Section A included questions related to the personal profile of the respondents, like name, contact details and demographic variables of age, gender, marital status and education, family type and monthly family income. Section B included 5 point Likert-scale questions regarding the opinion of students on characteristics communicated through formal and informal attire of teachers.
- (iii) **Statistical Tools Used in the Study:** The data that was collected from the respondents was analysed using the following statistical tools:
- Claculating mean and ranks
 - Chi-square test was applied using SPSS software.

7. Data Presentation and Interpretations

Table 1: Students Opinion on Characteristics Communicated through Formal Attire of Teachers

		Strongly disagree N(%)	Disagree N(%)	Neutral N(%)	Agree N(%)	Strongly agree N(%)	Mean	Rank	Chi-square value	df	p-value
Item 1	teacher is influential	6(1.7)	5(1.4)	38(10.6)	112(31.1)	199(55.3)	4.37	R3	385.1	4	0.00**
Item 2	teacher is confident	0(0)	5(1.4)	22(6.1)	101(28.1)	232(64.4)	4.56	R1	357.0	3	0.00**
Item 3	teacher is superior	0(0)	29(8.1)	101(28.1)	103(28.6)	127(35.3)	3.91	R9	59.8	3	0.00**
Item 4	teacher is dominant	14(3.9)	85(23.6)	128(35.6)	65(18.1)	68(18.9)	3.24	R16	93.5	4	0.00**
Item 5	teacher is fair	3(0.8)	43(11.9)	101(28.1)	97(26.9)	116(32.2)	3.78	R11	125.1	4	0.00**
Item 6	teacher is dedicated	5(1.4)	23(6.4)	38(10.6)	122(33.9)	172(47.8)	4.20	R6	290.7	4	0.00**
Item 7	teacher is reliable	2(0.6)	44(12.2)	102(28.3)	102(28.3)	110(30.6)	3.76	R12	124.0	4	0.00**
Item 8	teacher is strict	2(0.6)	31(8.6)	103(28.6)	127(35.3)	97(26.9)	3.79	R10	155.4	4	0.00**
Item 9	teacher is enthusiastic	15(4.2)	23(6.4)	77(21.4)	98(27.2)	147(40.8)	3.94	R8	166.3	4	0.00**
Item 10	teacher is approachable	38(10.6)	135(37.5)	89(24.7)	66(18.3)	32(8.9)	2.78	R17	97.9	4	0.00**
Item 11	teacher is organized	2(0.6)	17(4.7)	19(5.3)	107(29.7)	215(59.7)	4.43	R2	450.1	4	0.00**
Item 12	teacher is experienced	0(0)	18(5)	72(20)	52(14.4)	218(60.6)	4.31	R4	259.3	3	0.00**
Item 13	teacher is motivating	15(4.2)	15(4.2)	59(16.4)	71(19.7)	200(55.6)	4.18	R7	320.2	4	0.00**
Item 14	teacher is friendly	32(8.9)	201(55.8)	113(31.4)	6(1.7)	8(2.2)	2.33	19	394.1	4	0.00**
Item 15	teacher is well prepared for class	8(2.2)	24(6.7)	19(5.3)	131(36.4)	178(49.4)	4.24	R5	332.3	4	0.00**
Item 16	teacher appeals to	21(5.8)	29(8.1)	111(30.8)	91(25.3)	108(30)	3.66	R13	105.9	4	0.00**

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Item 17	teacher is same as you	24(6.7)	202(56.1)	122(33.9)	4(1.1)	8(2.2)	2.36	R18	422.6	4	0.00**
Item 18	teacher is attractive	0(0)	80(22.2)	112(31.1)	68(18.9)	90(25)	3.38	R14	81.2	4	0.00**
Item 19	teacher is close to you	39(10.8)	233(64.7)	71(19.7)	9(2.5)	8(2.2)	2.21	R20	487.2	4	0.00**
Item 20	teacher has high status	32(8.9)	43(11.9)	133(36.9)	81(22.5)	71(19.7)	3.32	R15	86.7	4	0.00**

** Significant at 0.01 level

The above table suggests that there exists a significant association of teacher's ensemble and various characteristics communicated through it ($p < 0.01$ for all items) at 0.01 level of significance. It is evident from the table that the mean value of Item 2 (4.56) is maximum followed by Item 11 (4.43) and Item 1 (4.37). Since these attributes have received the maximum ranks therefore we can conclude that according to student's perception if a teacher is formally dressed in a classroom, the characteristics of being confident, organized and influential is communicated.

Therefore,

H1: Teacher who wears formal attire to work is perceived to be more confident is accepted

H2: Teacher who wears formal attire is perceived to be more organized is accepted.

H3: Teacher who wears formal attire is perceived to be more influential is accepted.

Table 2: Students Opinion on Characteristics Communicated through Casual Attire of Teachers

		Strongly disagree N(%)	Disagree N(%)	Neutral N(%)	Agree N(%)	Strongly agree N(%)	Mean	Rank	Chi-square value	df	p-value
Item 1	teacher is influential	21(5.8)	115(31.9)	182(50.6)	17(4.7)	25(6.9)	2.75	R17	228.6	4	0.00**
Item 2	teacher is confident	11(3.1)	256(71.1)	63(17.5)	5(1.4)	25(6.9)	2.38	R19	342.3	4	0.00**
Item 3	teacher is superior	3(0.8)	170(47.2)	153(42.5)	9(2.5)	25(6.9)	2.68	R18	250.9	4	0.00**
Item 4	teacher is dominant	19(5.3)	46(12.8)	91(25.3)	97(26.9)	107(29.7)	3.63	R7	376.4	4	0.00**
Item 5	teacher is fair	7(1.9)	51(14.2)	140(38.9)	77(21.4)	85(23.6)	3.51	R11	79.1	4	0.00**
Item 6	teacher is dedicated	4(1.1)	44(12.2)	119(33.1)	107(29.7)	86(23.9)	3.63	R7	131.7	4	0.00**
Item 7	teacher is reliable	40(11.1)	200(55.6)	88(24.4)	29(8.1)	3(0.8)	2.32	R20	125.5	4	0.00**
Item 8	teacher is strict	4(1.1)	80(22.2)	89(24.7)	94(26.1)	93(25.8)	3.53	R10	337.1	4	0.00**
Item 9	teacher is enthusiastic	4(1.1)	17(4.7)	25(6.9)	144(40)	170(47.2)	4.28	R2	82.0	4	0.00**
Item 10	teacher is approachable	2(0.6)	16(4.4)	11(3.1)	156(43.3)	175(48.6)	4.35	R1	138.1	4	0.00**
Item 11	teacher is organized	7(1.9)	121(33.6)	114(31.7)	66(18.3)	52(14.4)	3.10	R14	616.1	4	0.00**
Item 12	teacher is experienced	4(1.1)	40(11.1)	130(36.1)	98(27.2)	88(24.4)	3.63	R9	122.6	4	0.00**
Item 13	teacher is motivating	24(6.7)	85(23.6)	184(51.1)	27(7.5)	40(11.1)	2.93	R16	153.9	4	0.00**

Item 14	teacher is friendly	0(0)	22(6.1)	18(5)	182(50.6)	138(38.3)	4.21	R3	29.0	3	0.00**
Item 15	teacher is well prepared for class	19(5.3)	75(20.8)	83(23.1)	117(32.5)	66(18.3)	3.38	R13	153.9	4	0.00**
Item 16	teacher appeals to you	26(7.2)	42(11.7)	28(7.8)	125(34.7)	139(38.6)	3.86	R4	69.4	4	0.00**
Item 17	teacher is same as you	0(0)	57(15.8)	78(21.7)	126(35)	99(27.5)	3.74	R6	170.1	4	0.00**
Item 18	teacher is attractive	2(0.6)	79(21.9)	143(39.7)	45(12.5)	91(25.3)	3.40	R12	408.6	4	0.00**
Item 19	teacher is close to you	6(1.7)	138(38.3)	111(30.8)	46(12.8)	59(16.4)	3.04	R15	14.8	4	0.01**
Item 20	teacher has high status	2(0.6)	5(1.4)	107(29.7)	196(54.4)	50(13.9)	3.80	R5	302.6	4	0.00**

** Significant at 0.01 level

The above table suggests that there exists a significant association of teacher's ensemble and various characteristics communicated through it ($p < 0.01$ for all items) at 0.01 level of significance. It is evident from the table that the mean value of Item 10 (4.35) is maximum, followed by Item 9 (4.28), and Item 14 (4.21). Since these attributes have received the maximum ranks therefore we can conclude that according to student's perception if a teacher is casually dressed in a classroom, the characteristics of being easily approachable, more enthusiastic and friendly is communicated.

Therefore,

H4: Teacher who wears informal attire is perceived to be more approachable is accepted.

H5: Teacher who wears informal attire is perceived to be more enthusiastic is accepted.

H6: Teacher who wears informal attire is perceived to be friendly is accepted.

8. Conclusions

From this study, it is concluded that various characteristics are communicated through teacher's attire. In student's opinion, if a teacher is wearing formal attire then she is perceived to be more confident, organized and influential in comparison to when she wears casual attire.

In addition to this, in student's opinion, if a teacher is wearing casual attire then she is perceived to be more approachable, enthusiastic and friendly in comparison to when she wears formal attire.

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