Enclothed Cognition

Researchers have known for some time that wearing a particular kind of clothing can affect how people perceive themselves. Recently, however, researchers have discovered that clothing may affect more than just how we feel about ourselves. The clothes people wear may also change their ability to process information and perform tasks, a phenomenon known as enclothed cognition. Certain clothing can have a particular meaning or association and wearing this clothing may cause people to think and act in a way that reflects this association.

Now listen to part of a lecture in a Psychology class.

(male professor) OK, so scientists did an experiment that demonstrated how this works. The study used long white lab coats just like medical doctors wear here in the US. Now, what traits do we associate with doctors? For one thing, we know they’re observant. They need to pay attention to detail. So, researchers wanted to see if people who weren’t medical doctors would show this behavior while wearing lab coats.

Here’s what they did. They got two groups of volunteers and in one of the groups each of the volunteers was given a lab coat to wear. And in the other group, each volunteer was just shown a lab coat. It was put on a table in front of them and they were told to look at it. And in each case, of course, the volunteers were told that these were doctors’ lab coats.

So, to test their abilities, the volunteers had to look at two pictures that were almost the same but not quite. Then the participants had to see how many differences they could notice between the two pictures. And here’s the interesting thing: the people who were wearing doctor’s lab coats notice more differences than the people who just looked at the lab coats. So, the researchers concluded that by actually wearing the lab coats, people started to act like doctors, to be more observant and better noticing small details.

In the lecture, the professor gives an example of the lab coats which doctors wear to clarify how the concept of enclothed cognition applies to actual circumstances.

In this example, the professor states that two groups of participants, one of them wear the lab coat, looked at the pictures had differences. As a matter of the fact, he said that the volunteers had to look how many differences they could find in the pictures. Then he told that it shows the individuals wears the lab coats had found more differences between pictures.

With that said the professor moves on to mention that peoples shows more observation and better distingushing details by wearing the lab coats.

In the lecture, the professor gives an example of the behavior of volunteers who wore medical doctor's coats to clarify how the concept of enclothed cognition applies to actual circumstances. In this example, the professor states that associations of wearing a specified cloths on groups of participants while the volunteers was distinguishing pictures that were similar but had some differences. As a matter of fact, he said that the volunteers had to look for how many differences they could find in the pictures. Then he told that the individuals who wore lab coats had found more differences between the pictures. With that said, the research moves on to mention that people show greater observational ability and are better able to perceive differences when wearing lab coats.

Explain how the example from the professor's lecture illustrates the concept of enclothed cognition.