

Clothing as Communication:

How Person Perception and Social Identity Impact First Impressions Made by Clothing

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this Senior Thesis to my love James for dealing with me throughout its completion, Dr. Tracy Worrell for being the best mentor around and the only person on earth that can make statistics fun and Dr. Keith Jenkins for seeing me through the entire process.

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Abstract

This quantitative research study is aimed at discovering if different styles of clothing (in respect to this study: professional, casual or trendy) affect the way a model is perceived by others and if perceiver and target variables are influential in the perception process. It uses the *person perception* and *social identity theories* to understand both target variables (e.g., a model's clothing variation) and perceiver variables (e.g., a participant's clothing interest/satisfaction and group membership) in first impressions settings. The implemented research method consisted of a 41-question survey and visual experiment that was distributed in General Liberal Arts courses to 150 Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) students from a variety of colleges. The results found that a model was perceived differently based on the clothing style she was wearing, but concludes that further research needs to be conducted to find sufficient evidence that perceiver variables (e.g., a participant's clothing interest/satisfaction and group membership), also effect first impressions.

Keywords: clothing, person perception, social identity, first impressions, target variables, perceiver variables

Introduction

You know that old saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words”? This may be the best way to understand the influential role that clothing plays in communication. When a person has no spoken word to go by, they often form impressions of others based on visual cues, such as that person’s clothing. Clothing is a nonverbal tool and an expressive one at that. Nielsen and Kernaleguen (1976) refer to clothing as a part of appearance that provides data for perceptions. It is said to give off information about a person’s age, sex, personality, socioeconomic status, values and political ideologies (Satrapa et al., 1992). According to Feinberg, Mataro and Burroughs (1992), there are three reasons why clothing is important to research: (1) Clothing is used in daily activity (2) Clothes constitute a frequent public display and (3) Clothing choice is an easily manipulated symbol. Generally, clothing is frequently seen and diverse in nature. What you choose to wear may communicate a complex array of information about who you are to others around you (Howlett, Pine, Orakçioğlu & Fletcher, 2013), even when you may or may not be trying to communicate with them.

An immense amount of meaning and messages are communicated through the use of clothing (Dorrance, 2011). How a person interprets these messages in their process of forming impressions of others is related to the theory of *person perception*. People are said to use person perception by relying on externally available information, rather than relying solely on inner representational resources (Clark, 1997; Smith & Collins, 2009). For example, using a person’s clothing to make inferences about them. Even though an individual may not be providing verbal communication, their physical appearance is providing nonverbal external cues. In clothing literature, the nonverbal cue of clothing style has often been a variable of analysis, and researchers on the topic have manipulated styles of clothing to see what each one communicates

to a perceiver. The present study has also chosen to use clothing manipulation and variation to discover if simply changing a person's clothing style can affect the way that person is perceived by others. It will use three clothing styles – professional, casual and trendy – to see what types of messages these different clothing styles portray to a perceiver.

However, these messages are left to be interpreted by the perceiver, or the one viewing another person, who are said to be influenced by their own personal traits and cognitive structures when making perceptions of others (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). They can also be effected by their own group memberships which is related to the *social identity theory* or how a person sees themselves based on their memberships to certain social groups (Tajfel, 1974). Perceivers vary in their level of clothing interest and this effects the way they use clothing and also how they judge others based on their clothing. Each individual brings unique circumstances to the way they rate a person in different clothing styles, so the present study is also concerned with perceiver variables, or what might effect a perceiver's impressions of others based on their clothing.

As clothing studies have mainly focused on manipulating clothing styles, this quantitative research study will do the same to discover if different clothing styles may elicit different impressions. However, subsequently it appears a perceiver's own characteristics may also play a role in how they view others, so the study is additionally interested in finding out what contributes to a perceiver's clothing behavior and actions. By analyzing the variables of the person being viewed and the variables of the person doing the viewing, the present study takes into account all possible factors that could play a role in clothing perception. Appearance and clothing can be so familiar and visible we sometimes do not realize the significance of them in everyday life (Kaiser, 1997). With the help of the *person perception* and *social identity* theories

this study hopes to discover the prevalence of clothing as a daily communication tool and also what factors may play a role in how a person chooses to view others based on their clothing.

Literature Review

Clothing is considered a nonverbal source of communication in itself, which makes it an important aspect for communication analysis. It provides a plethora of information about a wearer without having to meet or talk to that person (Howlett, Pine, Orakçioğlu & Fletcher, 2013), making it a very impressionable tool. Three constant themes stand out in clothing research: (1) Individuals form impressions of others based on clothing cues, (2) Observers behave differently toward people depending on the clothing they wear and (3) Individuals appear to prefer clothing which communicates images similar to the images they have of themselves (Feinberg, Mataro & Burroughs, 1992). The present research study explores each of these themes in depth, with the use of the *person perception* and *social identity* theories.

Complex judgments based on appearance can be made in a fraction of a second (Todorov, Pakrashi & Oosterhof, 2009). This is why clothing studies predominately analyze clothing cues in first impression settings, giving participants limited time exposure to manipulated variables. If participants have too much exposure to a subject in a clothing study, they may pick up on or be influenced by other nonverbal or verbal cues, so first impression studies are vital for limiting bias and obtaining the best results. Clothing studies have predominately focused on two prevalent factors that affect first impressions: the observable traits of a '*target*' person or a person being viewed, and the personality traits and cognitive structures of a '*perceiver*,' or the person that's viewing the target (Burns & Lennon, 1993). This essentially means that certain characteristics or traits of an observed person can affect the way they are viewed by others, while performed and practiced behaviors of perceivers can influence the

judgments they make of other people– even without any physical or verbal interaction between the two parties.

Researchers like Howlett, Pine, Orakçioğlu and Fletcher (2013) focused on manipulating the traits of the *target person* in their study, which was done on the influence of clothing on first impressions. They found that simply changing the fit of a man's suit would cause perceivers to view him differently, as he was seen more confident and successful when he was in a tailored suit compared to when he was in a suit that could be purchased at a store, even when his face was omitted from the image. Satrapa et al., (1992) like Howlett, Pine, Orakçioğlu and Fletcher (2013), also focused on manipulating the *target person* in their study, which was on the influence of dress on the formation of first impressions. They found that models dressed in formal, informal and athletic wear were rated significantly different from one another on the levels of attractiveness, charm and sympathy. They too omitted the faces of the models in their research procedure, keeping the focus solely on the different clothing styles – which was an important aspect to implement in the present study to keep extraneous variables at a minimum.

Reid, Lancuba and Morrow (1997) took the opposite approach, focusing on *perceiver* variables in their study, which was done on clothing style and the formation of first impressions at the University of New South Wales. They found that the clothing style and sex of perceivers played a role in how that person perceived a target, as they were more favorable to those who were dressed similarly to themselves, in tandem with the third theme presented by Feinberg, Mataro and Burroughs (1992). Other researchers Burns and Lennon (1993) debated which was more influential - the perceiver's behavior or the target's, and concluded that characteristics of perceivers contribute as much to impression formation as does the characteristics of the target. This is why the present research study has chosen to analyze both factors: (1) How different

types of clothing a target person is wearing can elicit different impressions from perceivers and (2) How certain characteristics of perceivers can affect the way they rate and form impressions of the model. In order to understand these factors, researchers must first understand what attributes to each of them. With the help of the *person perception* and *social identity* theories, we will make sense of each of these variables.

Person Perception Theory

The *person perception theory* can be defined as “how individual perceivers select, interpret and integrate information about other people” (Smith & Collins, 2009, p.343). In clothing literature, person perception is often used to describe the cognitive processes used to make judgments of others based upon their appearance (Kaiser, 1997). There are three factors that affect person and social perception: (1) object or target variables (2) perceiver variables and (3) situational variables (Lennon & Davis, 1989). As mentioned, object and perceiver variables are the two focused on in this study. Situational variables are not important for this particular research because the study was not designed to be implemented in a situational or social framework and was staged. The researcher simply attended an existing classroom and asked students to take a survey and view an image of a target person whom was wearing one of three clothing styles. The manipulation of the clothing styles on the target person is considered the *observer/target variables* in relation to person perception.

Observer/Target Variables

Object or target variables are traits of a target person that effect the way they are viewed by perceivers (Lennon & Davis, 1989). The impressions of a target person can be influenced by factors such as their physical appearance and facial attractiveness, which are both constituted as

major sources of information in person perception (Nielsen & Kernaleguen, 1976). A person's physical appearance and facial attractiveness give off what are known as "visual cues" or nonverbal messages (Howlett, Pine, Orakçioğlu & Fletcher, 2013). Perceivers use these cues to make judgments of others, which is related to the first clothing theme: *Individuals form impressions of others based on clothing cues*. Clothing style and height are known as "static" cues, while facial expression, posture and body movement are known as "dynamic" cues (Naumann, Vazire, Rentfrow & Gosling, 2009). In order to analyze the effect of both, Nielsen and Kernaleguen (1976) examined physical appearance and facial attractiveness with the use of two types of pictures. The first type was a selection of facial images taken from a college yearbook and the second was a selection of clothed body images taken from fashion magazines with the faces omitted. Their results found that the responses to the facial images were significantly more varied than the responses to the images of just the clothed bodies, due to the face providing information of highly expressive nature (Nielsen & Kernaleguen, 1976). Because of their expressive information, facial features were omitted from this study with strict focus on the static cue of clothing and the effects caused by its variation.

Clothing Variation

By varying clothing of a model to portray a specific image to perceivers, a researcher is able to see different impressions elicited from each type (Burns & Lennon, 1993). Clothing variation is often a focus for clothing research because it is said to have a prolific impact on first impressions formed of a target person (Burns & Lennon, 1993). This is because clothing provides an efficient cue for the classification of others (Hamid, 1969). This is related to the second theme: *observers behave differently toward people depending on the clothing they wear*. Clothing is highly influential because it is an overt symbol that can easily be seen by others.

Even if one does not have a chance to communicate with a person, they can still infer general information about the external and internal qualities of that person just by looking at their clothing. In the past, researchers have taken a variety of approaches to measure perceivable differences caused by clothing variation. The previously discussed studies of Satrapa et al., (1992) and Howlett, Pine, Orakçioğlu and Fletcher (2013) are just two of many that have used clothing variation as a way of eliciting different first impressions of a target person.

A pioneer for clothing studies on person perception was researcher Paul Hamid, and his research conducted in 1969 focused on analyzing clothing differences between both males and females. Hamid (1969) placed four males and four females into four different types of clothing – (1) a school uniform, (2) casual attire, (3) work attire and (4) evening attire. These styles were selected because they were recognizable to the participant sample of college students whom would take his study (Hamid, 1969). Using these various styles, Hamid was able to find slight differences in how the models were rated, based on a variety of personality attributes such as, attractiveness, happiness and honesty (Hamid, 1969). However, as the study was a first of its kind, Hamid failed to omit the faces of his models as later studies like Nielsen and Kernaleguen (1976)'s did, and found these to be influential in perceiver's ratings. Later studies have since removed facial features as an adjustment for further investigation – making Hamid's study a template for many clothing studies to come.

Looking at how clothing studies have developed over time, it appears researchers after Hamid (1969) have also taken more focused approaches, analyzing clothing styles of just men or just females. For example, Soae Paek's clothing perception study done in 1986 manipulated the clothing styles of just females to fit four categories – conservative, daring, dressy and casual. Edna Bell's study in 1991 looked at male clothing styles using again a four style spectrum –

daring, casual, conservative and formal. Both studies were able to find differences in the way a person was perceived by participants based on their clothing style. Another set of researchers chose to study the clothing style of women, but channeled in on that focus even further. Graff, Murnen and Smolak (2012) analyzed different levels of sexualized clothing for young girls, analyzing two variations of one style, rather than a handful of diverse ones. They placed a young girl in varying styles of “sexualized” and “un-sexualized” – or neutral – clothing, finding these changes to be effective in the way a young girl was perceived (Graff, Murnen & Smolak, 2012).

Like Paek’s (1986) study, the current one focuses solely on clothing styles of females. As both genders have formerly been analyzed, either approach could have been chosen. However, as females have a larger clothing selection than men, the researcher decided to choose this group. The study uses three styles of clothing, ranging from informal to formal. In respect to previous studies, these styles are closely related to Hamid’s (1969) of casual attire, work attire and evening attire - but were adjusted to reflect today’s current fashions. They are referred to as ‘professional’ (work attire), ‘casual’ (casual attire) and ‘trendy’ (evening attire) throughout this study. Hamid’s (1969) use of ‘school uniform’ is not relevant. These styles were selected because they are representative of styles seen in everyday life and are recognizable to college students, whom are the subjects of the study.

In order to analyze the differences between the clothing styles, a set of characteristics were provided for perceivers to properly rate the model. The variety of attributes chosen for this study are based on five person information categories provided by Burns and Lennon (1993): (1) character traits (personality traits), (2) behaviors and activities (goals, actions), (3) attitudes, feelings and beliefs (thoughts), (4) demographic information (financial status) (5) physiological and biological traits (age, height, attractiveness). *Character traits* include: trustworthy,

intelligent and friendly. *Behaviors and activities* include: hardworking, likely to lead an exciting life and likely to experience personal fulfillment. *Attitudes, feelings and beliefs* include: confident and enthusiastic. *Demographic information* includes: successful, earns a high salary and likely to be successful at chosen occupation. *Physiological and biological traits* include: attractiveness. When analyzing the results of the study, these attributes were combined to create a perceiver's 'perception score' of the model—or target person—they viewed.

Using these or similar personality and behavioral characteristics, each of the previously discussed studies found significant differences in the way a person was perceived when manipulating their clothing style. However, these researchers also found that clothing variation alone did not have the capacity to independently influence certain perceptions (Smith, 1976). This is why it is important to analyze other factors that play a role in person perception – such as the perceiver variables, or what effects the perception of perceivers.

Perceiver Variables

While different types of clothing are said to elicit different impressions made of a target, certain characteristics of perceivers are also known to affect the way they rate that person. Perceivers' physical traits, personal traits and cognitive structures are all said to make a contribution to the way that person forms impressions (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). *Physical traits* can be understood as a perceiver's vision or hearing accuracy, *personal traits* as their goals, values, and personality and *cognitive structures* include their memory and knowledge structures (Lennon & Davis, 1989). All of these factors can be attributed to the *person perception theory*. As they have the potential to effect first impressions, we will uncover information about the behaviors and feelings of perceivers themselves that may lead them when making judgments of

others. This study is mainly concerned with two perceiver variables that are most likely to have an effect on first impressions involving clothing: (1) a perceiver's level of clothing interest and (2) a perceiver's level of satisfaction with their own dress.

Level of Interest

A perceiver's personal level of clothing interest can be defined as "the extent to which an individual is favorably predisposed to clothes" (Kaiser, 1997, pg. 295). This can include amount of time, money and attention spent on clothing (Kaiser, 1997). Kaiser (1997) states that people who spend much time, money, and energy on personal clothing and adornment are likely to exhibit a high degree of clothing interest. Bell (1991, as cited by Aiken, 1963) also states that an individual who is interested in and gains pleasure in wearing clothing, is more likely to judge others on the basis of clothing. Major findings have indicated that there is an important reaction between a person's inner personality and his or her preferences towards specific dress (Paek, 1986). For example, Bell (1991) found that the way a person evaluates others, tends to be influenced by their own degree of interest in clothing, which makes it an important aspect for analysis. A perceiver's level of interest can be considered a *personality trait* because it measures whether or not clothing is of value to that person, but also a *cognitive structure* because it requires an amount of perceiver knowledge of clothing and other related aspects.

A person's clothing interest is often expressed through their use of clothing cues (Bell, 1991). As we have previously discussed, there are different types of clothing cues in person perception. Some obvious cues that a person has a high clothing interest would be that person's persistent wearing of designer clothing or reading of fashion magazines (Bell, 1991). However, individuals differ in the extent to which they use and interpret nonverbal cues when forming

impressions (Kaiser, 1997). If one does not constantly read fashion magazines or stay up to date with the latest fashions and designers, they may not be receptive to such clothing cues as fashion brands or logos when they see them. Each perceiver has their own unique dimensions for encoding people and their individual differences can affect these dimensions (Lennon & Davis, 1989). This means that people differ in their use of perceptions, and a person's level of clothing interest may affect their ability to pick up on different clothing cues (Lennon & Davis, 1989).

Cosbey (2001) states that individuals with low clothing interest are less likely to use clothing cues as a guide to forming perceptions because they are not able to pick up on them like those with high interest are able to. Due to the fact that they are unable to pick up on these cues, low interest clothing users may often make judgments of others based on the narrow clothing scope that is known to them. So, while it may initially be thought that those with a higher interest in fashion would be more subjective when judging others, Cosbey (2001) found that those with low clothing interest tended to project feelings about themselves onto the model they were viewing, while on the contrary, individuals with high clothing interest were actually more objective when rating models.

Paek (1986) also found that perceivers with high clothing interest had a keen preference for more daring, fashionable styles, than did subjects with low interest. This could be because perceivers with high clothing interest have a keen interest in current fashions and experimenting with new styles (Paek, 1986). Bell who later replicated this study also found a correlation between a perceiver's clothing interest and the way they viewed the models (1991). Because of this, the current study analyzes a perceiver's level of clothing interest in order to see if this plays a role in how they rate a model in different clothing styles.

But, not only does a perceivers' level of clothing interest effect the way they form impressions of others, it also has an effect on how they see themselves. Cosbey (2001) found that a perceiver's level of clothing interest also played a factor in the level of satisfaction he or she felt with his or her own dress. In general, how positively or negatively we feel about our own dress can influence our clothing choices (Kaiser, 1997). This is why it is important to understand not only the perceiver's clothing interest as a way of altering their impressions of others, but also their own level of clothing satisfaction as a way of understanding the view they have of themselves.

Level of Satisfaction

According to Howlett, Pine, Orakçioğlu and Fletcher (2013) judgments of others are made relative to the self and a person's own status may impact the judgments they make of others. This is related to clothing satisfaction, which can be understood as a perceiver's level of satisfaction with their own dress and clothing style, or essentially, how they feel about themselves. As a person's own status can affect their judgments, it can be said that a perceiver's level of satisfaction with their own dress may influence how they rate others. Cosbey (2001) found that a subject level of clothing satisfaction varied with the subjects overall level of clothing interest. Clothing satisfaction goes hand in hand with clothing interest, which is why the study analyzes this in addition to the previous variable. Clothing satisfaction is considered a *personality trait* because it concerns the perceiver's personal goals and values.

Since clothing satisfaction is dependent on a perceiver's own dress, we must understand what factors contribute to this. According to Yoon-Hee Kwon (1987), there are two factors that contribute to our general clothing behavior: (1) exogenous factors (weather, social activity and

wardrobe availability) and (2) endogenous factors (mood, perception of physical self, personality and clothing orientation). Clothing satisfaction concerns the endogenous factors such as mood and personality, as these are said to be affected by the way one perceives one's self (Kwon, 1987). Since our mood can be reflected into our clothing choices—as when we're having a bad day we may dress down and when we are having a good day we may dress nicely—it can be said that mood influences a perceiver's level of clothing satisfaction.

Kwon (1994) and Cosbey (2001) also found that self-perceptions such as sociability, emotional stability, dominance and work competency varied based on whether a person had a positive or negative feeling about their own dress. Cosbey (2001) found that when a person indicated high clothing satisfaction, they had higher levels of sociability than those who experienced low satisfaction. Kwon also found that a person who is confident with their clothing tends to have positive emotions (Kwon, 1987). For example, in relation to clothing satisfaction, someone comfortable in their attire may exude confidence, while one dissatisfied with their dress may experience self-doubt or anxiety (Cosbey, 2001). These emotions could play a factor in the way perceivers rate a target person. In relation to this, according to the theory of person perception and the use of perceiver variables, perceivers may relate characteristics of themselves to others when viewing them, which is referred to as supplementary projection (Lennon & Davis, 1989). An example of supplementary projection would be a successful person tending to see other people as successful (Lennon & Davis, 1989). Another factor that can effect these ratings is complementary projection that also has to do with the way a perceiver sees themselves. An example of this would be a person who categorizes him or herself as 'unfashionable' rating everyone else as 'fashionable' (Lennon & Davis, 1989) These extraneous factors are a part of a

perceiver's clothing satisfaction and have the potential to play a role in how that perceiver rates others based on a variety of characteristics.

Because of this, the study focuses on discovering each perceiver's personal level of clothing satisfaction in addition to their clothing interest to see if this plays a role in how they perceive different types of attire. In respect to this study, these two discussed factors are combined to see if a perceiver's personal level of clothing interest and satisfaction effects the way they rate a target person. Based on Cosbey's (2001) finding that a person's interest can affect their clothing satisfaction, the present study is assuming the two work in relation to one another and combines and analyzes both factors simultaneously with the use of one test. This clothing interest/satisfaction score is used to determine if there is a relationship between a perceiver's level of clothing interest/satisfaction and how they rate the clothing styles. The previously mentioned person information characteristics (such as intelligence, attractiveness, etc.) are used to help perceivers rate the target person in each style.

While these perceiver variables effect the way a person views other people, it is not simple enough to say that these are the only variables that effect the way a person forms impressions. Perceivers are also influenced by the practices of their everyday life, including their memberships to specific social groups and organizations which is related to the theory of *social identity*.

Social Identity Theory

A person's clothing choices are often determined by the kind of person one is and also the groups which they belong to (Kwon, 1987). This is related to the theory of *social identity* which is understood as the part of an individual's self-concept which derives from their own

knowledge of membership to social groups and the significant membership attached to that group (Tajfel, 1974). This is important for clothing research because people are often known to clothe themselves to acknowledge being part of a group (Satrapa et al., 1992). This can be attributed to the fact that clothes provide communication about the unique qualities of an individual and also the qualities that link that person to other members of society through the use of shared cultural/social patterns (Kwon, 1987).

Individuals not only use clothes to define and communicate their social identity to others (Feinberg, Mataro & Burroughs, 1992), they also use it as a symbol of their connection to others. So, while a perceiver's characteristics and behaviors may affect the way that person forms impressions of others, their social groupings can also affect the way that person sees themselves and the way they choose to dress. Some groupings that may play a role in a person's clothing choices include: gender groupings, memberships to group organizations or even their own categorized clothing style. We will also discuss how a target person and a perceiver can be affected by their own self-identity.

Gender

A common social group that presents differences in clothing style and preference are gender groups. Previous researchers have found that a perceiver's gender can affect the way they rate a model, meaning gender differences can be influential on impressions. For example, Hamid (1969) found that males and females tended to rate each other more harshly than they did individuals of their own gender. Similarly, Reid, Lancuba and Morrow (1997) found that men rated others less positively than woman based on their clothing. Reid et al., (1997) also found that women rated women in business clothing higher than men did, while Howlett, Pine,

Orakçioğlu and Fletcher (2013) found that men felt stronger about appropriate clothing in the professional workplace than women. This could be due to the fact that men and woman use clothing differently (Dorrance, 2011). Because of these previously found gender differences, the present study looks to see if there is a difference in the way males and females rate a model in the different clothing styles.

Group Memberships

Another factor in clothing selection is that people may wear clothing items that recognize their belonging to a certain social organization, club or group. For example, some of these clothing items include college sweatshirts, fraternity/sorority letters, football uniforms, or even music students wearing a t-shirt advertising their latest show – each one is “a significant symbol of who the wearer is and with whom he will identify” (Styer, 2012, pg. 1). Essentially, individuals select clothes that are in line with their personal identity (Feinberg, Mataro & Burroughs, 1992).

Another interesting idea that has resulted from clothing studies is that students from the same college or within the same major may tend to dress similarly. In their study done at the University of Sao Paulo, Satrapa et al., (1992) found that people from one college tended to dress in a similar way. They found that at the University of Sao Paulo, economics students categorized themselves with more formal clothing, communications students as more creative and unconventional and physical education students as sportively or athletic (Satrapa et al., 1992). However, their results did not find a significant relationship between a perceivers major and the way they rated the model. Since the present study did not categorize different clothing styles to different colleges at the Rochester Institute of Technology where the study takes place, it takes a

different approach to analyzing college differences. It uses the social identity theory to understand if people from the same college have similar views on clothing styles, rather than if perceivers prefer the clothing style that is related to their college.

While individuals can choose to dress based on group affiliation, like the college they belong to, a fraternity/sorority or even a club, opinions can also be based on a person's social, political or religious groupings (Cosbey, 2001). Some dress more respectfully than others based on certain beliefs they may have or religious organizations they belong to. However, ethnicity and religion is not a focus in this study, but may be something to explore in the future.

Group Similarities

Another found social grouping is that those with like styles tend to group together (Reid, Lancuba & Morrow, 1997). This means that *individuals appear to prefer clothing which communicates images similar to the images they have of themselves* (Feinberg, Mataro & Burroughs), which is the third constant theme in clothing research. In their study, Reid, Lancuba and Morrow (1997) found that perceivers gave more favorable ratings to people dressed similarly to themselves. Bell (1991) also found that individuals from homogenous backgrounds tended to have similar responses. This can be attributed to the fact that people choose clothing according to their social meaning and being part of a social group (Reid, Lancuba & Morrow, 1997). Because of these findings, the present study asks perceivers to categorize their own style. This information is used to see if there is a difference in the way a perceiver rates a model based on their own clothing style identification. For example, if a perceiver considers themselves to have a professional style, will they rate those in a professional style higher than another person

who categorizes with a casual style. This is done to see if individuals display a preference for the style of dress they themselves identify with.

Self-Identity

Individuals are also said to use clothing to improve their appearance and to create and maintain their own identity (Howlett, Pine, Orakçioğlu & Fletcher, 2013). Cosbey (2001) measures clothing as an enhancement of individuality; it is a way for an individual to distinguish themselves from a crowd. People use clothing and dress subconsciously to portray their social identity to others, but they also manage to identify with their clothing and in some cases it can be considered an extension of a person's inner self. For example, in a study on the effects a target person has on impressions, researchers Feinberg, Mataro and Burroughs (1992) found that the cues of social identity could only be picked up on if the clothing was specifically selected by the individual to be a true representation of that person's identity and self. In this study, the target person's self-identity is not relevant as the model does not particularly identify with the clothing she is wearing, keeping the focus solely on the types of attire and how each style may elicit a different response. However, we look at the self-identity of the perceiver by discovering what clothing style they categorize with themselves, as discussed in the previous section.

Based on the three presented clothing themes and their relation to the *person perception* and *social identity* theories, it seems important that we analyze all factors that could play a role in the way a perceiver rates a model in various clothing styles. Because of this, we look at not only how different clothing styles elicit different impressions of a model, but also how the perceiver variables of person perception (level of clothing interest/satisfaction) and a perceiver's

social groupings as discussed with the social identity theory (gender, major and own style) effect the way a perceiver forms first impressions of the target person in the different clothing styles.

Research Questions:

1. Do different clothing styles (professional, casual, trendy) affect the way a model is perceived based on the characteristics of: confidence, success, trustworthiness, intelligence, attractiveness, laziness, friendliness, enthusiasm, likeliness to earn a low salary, lead an exciting life, experience personal fulfilment, and be successful in chosen occupation?
2. Is there a relationship between a participant's personal level of clothing interest/satisfaction (their level of comfort with their own dress) and their rating of a model in different clothing styles?
3. Do participants from the same social group (gender, college or own style) tend to differ in their ratings of a model based on the aforementioned characteristics?

Method

In order to analyze the research questions, a 41 question pen and paper survey was distributed to 150 students at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), a privately endowed, coeducational university located in Upstate, New York. The surveys were distributed in six classrooms over a period of one week, in order to gather responses from students in a variety of majors at RIT. By choosing these classrooms, the researcher obtained results from students enrolled in all of RIT's nine colleges. These colleges include Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences (GCCIS), Kate Gleason College of Engineering (KGCOE), College of Liberal Arts (COLA), College of Imaging Arts and Science (CIAS), National Technical Institute

for the Deaf (NTID), College of Applied Science and Technology (CAST), Saunders College of Business (SCB), College of Science (COS), College of Health Sciences and Technology (CHST) and two from the University Services program, an exploratory program designed for first or second year undergraduate students who are undecided about a college major. In total, the survey was completed by 107 males and 43 females, which is an expected distribution caused by the 3:1 male to female ratio at RIT. The students ranged in age from 17-23 years old, with one outlier of 45 years old ($M=18.833$).

A pen and paper survey was selected due to the nature of this research project. In order to measure differences between different clothing types, more than one clothing style needed to be viewed. In respect to terminology, this study analyzed ‘clothing’ as opposed to ‘fashion.’ Previous studies done on clothing have focused on different fashion trends and cycles. This study is less fashion based and is more interested in analyzing differences between general clothing styles, which are our independent variables. To reiterate, the clothing styles selected for this study were professional, casual and trendy, as they are diverse but also frequently seen in everyday life. *Professional* was presented as a blazer and skirt, *casual* as jeans and a plain white t-shirt and *trendy* as jean shorts and a cropped shirt. A female model was chosen for this study because men’s scope of clothing variety is known to be less than women’s (Howlett, Pine, Orakçioğlu & Fletcher, 2013) and there is no solid evidence from previous studies that analyzing both genders is necessary or relevant.

In order to prevent subjects from discovering the study’s purpose, each participant—or perceiver—was asked to view only one of the clothing styles. In order to do this, three different surveys were created (see Figure 1.1). Each survey was identical besides the clothing style the model was wearing in the image. The same model was used in all three images and the face was

omitted from each image to avoid responses to dynamic facial cues and to minimize any bias elicited by the model (see Figure 1.1a). As a result, the study strictly analyzed the participant's (perceivers) influence on perceptions rather than the models (target person), as the only difference in each image is the clothing style worn. The total of 150 surveys resulted in a distribution of 50 surveys for each clothing style.

In order to analyze research question number one and discover if there was a significant difference between the way the clothing styles are perceived, participants were asked to rate the model they saw on a variety of personality traits which are considered the *dependent variables*. These include: confidence, success, trustworthiness, intelligence, attractiveness, laziness, friendliness and enthusiasm, followed by personal fulfilment traits including “likely to earn a high salary,” “likely to lead an exciting life,” “likely to experience personal fulfillment” and “likely to be successful in chosen occupation.” The traits were selected using Burns and Lennon's (1993) five person information categories. The models were rated using a semantic differential scale with “1” indicating they do not possess the characteristic, “7” indicating they strongly possess the characteristic and “4” as neutral. The numerical responses to these semantic differential scales were combined to create a ‘person perception score’ for each model, which were then tested against one another to find if there is a significant difference. By distributing the surveys in classrooms, researchers were able to control the surveys given to participants, ensure that no student saw more than one clothing style and that responses were not discussed amongst participants. It was important that participant responses were not discussed with one another because not every person saw the same model.

The second research question aimed to measure the relationship between a participant's personal clothing interest/satisfaction and how they rated the model. The participant's personal

clothing interest and satisfaction were measured using a variety of ‘clothing satisfaction’ and ‘clothing orientation’ questions answered with a likert scale from “Strongly Disagree” which was measured as the number “1” to “Strongly Agree” which was measured as the number “7”. The ‘clothing satisfaction’ questions were borrowed from a clothing interest, satisfaction and self-perception study (Cosbey, 2001). These questions asked participant’s about their personal clothing satisfaction in social situations. For example, “When I feel good about the clothes I am wearing, I usually take the lead in group activities” and “When I am displeased with the clothes I am wearing, I am inclined to be tense,” and others of similar nature. In accordance to the current study, ‘clothing satisfaction’ can be defined as the level of comfort a participant feels about their own style of dress, with a focus on social settings, due to the use of social identity theory in this study.

The ‘clothing orientation’ questions were borrowed from a clothing selection study (Kwon, 1987). Questions like “I tend to dress based on my mood” and “The clothes I wear sometimes affect my mood during the day” show how much of an impact clothing has on a perceiver’s everyday life. It also asked general clothing interest questions such as “I care about how I look” and “I tend to notice what other people are wearing.” The responses to these questions were then combined with the ‘clothing satisfaction’ questions, to derive a ‘clothing interest’ score for each participant. This was used to see if there is a relationship between a participant’s clothing interest/satisfaction and the way they rated the model they viewed.

The final research question aimed to find if people who identified within the same social group, tended to have similar or different responses. On the final page of the survey, participants were asked to include some demographic information, including their gender and the college at RIT they belong to. The gender responses were analyzed to see if there was a difference in the

way males and females rated the model in the different clothing styles. The responses from students within the same college were analyzed against one another to see if there was a significant relationship between participant responses from the same college, or if there was a significant difference in the way the colleges responded from one another.

Lastly, participants were asked to identify their own style. Five different clothing styles were provided for them to choose from: professional, casual and trendy, as they were the styles viewed in this study and also alternative and athletic to provide more options. The response to this question was used to see if those who identified with the clothing style they viewed tended to rate that person higher than other participants who didn't identify with the clothing style they viewed. For example if a person with casual style viewed the casual model and rated that person higher than someone who categorized themselves as having professional style.

Results

RQ1: The first question to be answered is if the different clothing styles (professional, casual, trendy) effected the way the model was perceived based on the variables of confidence, success, trustworthiness, intelligence, attractiveness, laziness, friendliness, enthusiasm, and likeliness to earn a high salary, lead an exciting life, experience personal fulfilment and be successful in chosen occupation. We combined the ratings of each of these variables and averaged them to derive a participant's 'perception score' of the clothing style they viewed. However, before we could combine and average these variables, we needed to measure them for internal consistency. By running a Cronbach's alpa, we were able to find our reliability coefficient to be .861, meaning that there is strong internal consistency.

Once we found that our variables were reliable, we calculated the ‘perception scores’ for all 150 participant responses: 50 for each different clothing style. In order to measure if there was a significant difference between the scores for the different clothing styles, means of the participant’s ‘perception scores’ were analyzed against one other with the use of a one-way ANOVA test. Clothing variation was our *independent variable* and the perception score was our *dependent variable*. By computing a one-way ANOVA and comparing the average perception scores from the participants, a significant difference was found in how the three clothing styles were viewed ($F(2,147) = 12.03, p < .05$).

	Mean	S.D.
Professional	4.9767**	.81023
Casual	4.3333	.71666
Trendy	4.4000	.62520

**significant = $p < .05$

Further investigation using Tukey’s HSD was done to determine the degree of differences between the clothing styles. This analysis revealed that Style 1, or the professional style ($m=4.98, sd=.81$), was rated higher than both Style 2, the casual style ($m=4.33, sd=.72$) and Style 3 the trendy style ($m=4.57, sd=.77$). However Style 2 and Style 3, or the casual and trendy styles, were not rated significantly different from one another ($p = .889, p > .05$).

Professional Style vs. Casual Style

Based on these results, we decided to run a one-way MANOVA test to analyze detailed differences between the professional style and casual style based on each characteristic, as the one-way ANOVA test proved that there was a significant difference between these two styles.

Running a one-way MANOVA test, a significant effect was found ($Lambda$ (12,87)=.407, $p=.000$). Since our *Wilks' Lambda* is significant, we can interpret the results of our follow-up univariate ANOVA test that indicated there was a significant difference in how the professional and casual styles were rated for every characteristic besides trustworthiness, attractiveness, enthusiasm and likeliness to experience personal fulfilment. A comparison of means between the other significantly different variables found that when the model was dressed in the professional style she was perceived as more confident ($m=5.28$, $sd=1.32$), successful ($m=5.72$, $sd=1.26$) and intelligent ($m=5.66$, $sd=1.26$) than when she was in the casual style, in which she was rated less confident ($m=4.18$, $sd=1.08$), less successful ($m=4.06$, $sd=.82$) and less intelligent ($m=4.56$, $sd=1.20$). However, when wearing the casual style, the model was perceived as more friendly ($m=5.00$, $sd=1.21$) than in the professional style ($m=4.32$, $sd=1.15$) and more likely to lead an exciting life ($m=4.06$, $sd=1.20$) than in the professional style ($m=3.54$, $sd=1.28$). (For a comprehensive list of all variables see Figure 1.2)

Professional Style vs. Trendy Style

Next we analyzed the professional style against the trendy style, as there also appeared to be a significant difference between how these two clothing styles were perceived.

Running a one-way MANOVA test we again found that a significant effect was found ($Lambda$ (12,87)=.356, $p=.000$). This allows us to analyze the results of our follow up univariate ANOVA test that indicated the professional and trendy styles were rated significantly different from one another on all characteristics besides attractiveness, enthusiasm and likeliness to experience personal fulfilment. A comparison of means between the other significantly different variables found that the professional model was perceived as more hardworking ($m=5.62$, $sd=1.56$), intelligent ($m=5.66$, $sd=1.26$), trustworthy ($m=5.26$, $sd=1.26$) and successful ($m=5.72$,

s=1.26) than the casual model. However, the casual model was perceived as more friendly ($m=5.04$, $sd=1.26$) and more likely to lead an exciting life ($m=4.62$, $sd=1.31$) than the professional model. These differences were also present when comparing the professional style to the casual model, showing that the professional style was generally perceived as less friendly and less likely to lead an exciting life than the other styles.

RQ2: Next we wanted to analyze if there was a relationship between a participant's perceived level of clothing interest/satisfaction and the way they rated a model. In order to test for a relationship, we looked at the responses to each clothing types independently. We did this because we have already found that there is a significant difference in perception ratings of a model based on their clothing style and we don't want to analyze this variable again during this particular test. Instead, a participant's clothing interest/satisfaction becomes our *independent variable*, while the perception score remains our *dependent variable*.

In order to derive a participant's level of clothing interest/satisfaction, we combined their scores to 12 different clothing interest/satisfaction questions and averaged this number. We used a Cronbach's alpha to again test these variables for internal consistency to ensure they were reliable. By running a Cronbach's alpha, we were able to find our reliability coefficient to be .854, meaning that the variables are reliable and there is strong internal consistency. Once we found our variables were reliable, we calculated a 'clothing interest/satisfaction score' for each participant. We then analyzed these scores against the participant's perception score of the model they viewed, starting with the professional clothing style to see if a relationship was present. In order to analyze a possible relationship, we tested the scores using a Pearson correlation coefficient.

Professional Style

Running a Pearson correlation coefficient test, we found that the correlation between a participant's clothing interest/satisfaction and their perception of the professional model was not significant. A weak correlation was found ($r(48)=.056$, $p>.05$), therefore we cannot assume that there is a relationship between a person's level of clothing interest/satisfaction and the way they rate a model based on their clothing style – specifically professional style according to this instance.

Casual Style

Next we wanted to see if a relationship between a person's clothing interest/satisfaction and their perception score was present when they rated the model dressed in the casual style. Again, a Pearson correlation coefficient test was run to check for a possible relationship.

After examining the results of the Pearson correlation, again there was a weak correlation and no significant relationship was found between the participant's clothing interest/satisfaction and the way they rated the casual model ($r(48)=.272$, $p>.05$). Based on the results so far, no relationship appears to be present between a person's perceived level of clothing interest and the way they rate a model based on their clothing style.

Trendy Style

Finally, we analyzed the trendy style. Again, we ran a Pearson correlation coefficient to see the relationship. According to this test, there appears to be a weak correlation and no significant relationship between a person's perceived clothing interest/satisfaction and the way they rated the trendy model ($r(48)=.215$, $p>.05$). Overall this study did not find a relationship to be present between a person's clothing interest/satisfaction and the way they viewed a model based on any of the clothing styles the model was wearing.

RQ3: The final research question to be answered is if individuals from the same groups tend to have similar or different views from one another.

Gender Differences

First we wanted to analyze if there was a difference between the way males and females tended to rate the model in different clothing styles. Gender now becomes our *independent variable* and the perception score is still our *dependent variable*. In order to analyze this, we again looked at each clothing style independently as we found that there are differences in the way the model was perceived based on their clothing style and we don't want this to effect the test. In order to analyze for possible differences between the genders, we ran an Independent t-Test for each clothing style. The first clothing style we look at is professional.

Professional Style

An Independent t-Test was run to find if there was a significant difference in the way males and females rated the professional model. 33 males and 17 females viewed the professional model. However, no significant difference was found ($t(48) = .129, p > .05$). The mean score of the professional style for the males ($m = 4.92, sd = .731$) was not significantly different from the mean scores of females ($m = 5.09, sd = .959$).

Casual Style

Next we ran the same Independent T-test for the casual style to see if there was any difference in the way males and females rated this model. 38 males and 11 females viewed the casual model. Again, no significant difference was found ($t(48) = .792, p > .05$). The mean score

of the casual style for the males ($m=4.27$, $sd=.708$) was not significantly different from the mean scores of females ($m=4.52$, $sd=.742$).

Trendy Style

Finally we ran an Independent T-test for the trendy model to see if gender differences were present in the ratings for this style. 36 males and 14 females viewed the trendy model. Again, no significant difference was found ($t(48) = .932$, $p > .05$). The mean score of the trendy style for the males ($m=4.43$, $sd=.644$) was not significantly different from the mean scores of females ($m=4.33$, $sd=.591$).

Similarities between Colleges

Next we wanted to see if participants from the same college tended to have similar ratings when they viewed the same model. College is our *independent variable* and the perception score our *dependent variable*. In order to measure for similarities between college responses, the means and standard deviations for all responses within one college were calculated for each style. If the calculated standard deviation was $<.5$, meaning all responses were within .5 standard deviations of the mean, we considered the responses to be significantly similar to one another. Unlike the previous tests, this level of significance has not been found statistically. The researcher is assuming there is a significant relationship in responses if all participants from the same college fell within .5 standard deviations of the mean, as this low standard deviation indicates the responses were relatively similar and did not significantly vary from one another. The marks (**) indicate that the responses from the members in that college were significantly similar based on the researchers significance test approach that has been

introduced for the sake of this study. N/A means there were no results obtained, and a missing standard deviation means there was only one participant from that college.

	Professional	Casual	Trendy
GCCIS	$m=5.02, sd=.388^{**}$	$m=4.27, sd=.188^{**}$	$m=4.46, sd=.792$
KGCOE	$m=5.52, sd=.785$	$m=4.38, sd=.753$	$m=4.40, sd=.632$
COLA	$m=4.73, sd=.865$	$m=4.29, sd=1.22$	$m=4.31, sd=.573$
CIAS	$m=4.72, sd=.428^{**}$	$m=4.35, sd=.105^{**}$	$m=4.08, sd=.353^{**}$
NTID	$m=4.92, sd=.000^{**}$	N/A	N/A
CAST	$m=5.17, sd=1.03$	$m=4.35, sd=.815$	$m=4.61, sd=.589$
SCB	$m=5.21, sd=.560$	$m=4.25, sd=.563$	$m=4.06, sd=.381^{**}$
COS	$m=4.92, sd=.670$	N/A	$m=4.35, sd=.721$
CHST	N/A	N/A	$m=5.17$
USP	$m=2.33$	$m=4.92, sd=.118^{*}$	$m=4.67$
Mean/SD of Population	$m=4.98, sd=.810$	$m=4.33, sd=.717$	$m=4.4, sd=.625$

These results showed us that the students from the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences (CIAS) tended to have similar ratings of all clothing styles, meaning the college was rather consistent. Also students from the Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences (GCCIS) had similar responses when rating both the professional and casual styles. Students from other colleges like KGCOE and COLA did not appear to have similar responses.

Participant's Clothing Style

The last test we ran was to see if a person who categorizes with the style they viewed (i.e. a person who categorized themselves as having a 'professional style' views the professional model) rated that person higher than other's who didn't categorize with the style they viewed. In order to analyze the differences between perception scores, we ran a one-way ANOVA test. A person's selected clothing style is our *independent variable* and their perception score of the model is our *dependent variable*.

Professional Style

We began by analyzing the results of the professional style. We did this by comparing the average perception score for the model from the six participants who identified themselves as having 'professional' style against the average scores of those who categorized with other styles. The participant distribution for the other styles are: Casual (30), Athletic (2), Alternative (4), and Trendy (8). By running a one-way ANOVA test, no significant difference was found, ($F(4,45)=.128, p>.05$). This means that there wasn't a difference in how the person who categorized themselves as having professional dress ($m=5.04, sd=.418$) rated the professional model, against those who categorized as having a casual ($m=4.96, sd=.753$), athletic ($m=4.71, sd=.530$), alternative ($m=5.19, sd=.845$) or trendy ($m=4.95, sd=1.31$) style of dress.

Casual Style

Next we analyzed the casual style to see if the 24 participants who categorized themselves as having a 'casual' clothing style rated the casual model differently than those who categorized with other styles. The participant distribution for the other styles are: Professional (2), Athletic (9), Alternative (10), and Trendy (5). Running the one-way ANOVA test found that

there was not a significant difference in the way participants with different clothing styles rated the casual model ($F(4,45)=1.35, p>.05$). This means that those who categorized themselves as having casual style ($m=4.36, sd=.629$) did not rate the casual style differently than those who categorized with professional ($m=3.58, sd=2.12$), athletic ($m=4.13, sd=.635$), alternative ($m=4.36, sd=.500$) or trendy ($m=4.82, sd=.921$) styles.

Trendy Style

The final test we ran for this study was to see if the six participants who categorized with the 'trendy' style rated the trendy model differently than those who didn't identify with the trendy style. The participant distribution for the other styles are: Professional (3), Casual (30), Athletic (5), and Alternative (6). Running a one-way ANOVA we found that there was not a significant difference in the way participants with different clothing styles rated the trendy model ($F(4,45)=.452, p>.05$). This means that those who categorized themselves as having a trendy style ($m=4.5, sd=.626$) did not rate the trendy style differently than those who categorized with professional ($m=4.83, sd=.289$), casual ($m=4.34, sd=.631$), athletic ($m=4.35, sd=.865$) or alternative ($m=4.42, sd=.592$) styles. Overall, there did not appear to be a difference in the way participants rated a particular clothing style they viewed, based on how they categorized their own clothing style.

Discussion

Running the proper tests to analyze our research questions, we found some interesting and significant results, and also some not so revealing data.

RQ 1: The first thing we analyzed was if the three clothing styles, professional, casual and trendy, were rated significantly different from one another. Running our test we found that

overall there did appear to be a difference in the way all three clothing styles were rated from one another, but after further analysis, we found that only the professional model was rated significantly different from the casual and trendy styles, while casual and trendy both did not appear to be significantly different from one another. This could be due to the fact that both the casual and trendy styles are rather similar in nature. This is a limitation of the current study and having a larger clothing variation could be an improvement for the future.

Once we knew that there was a significant difference between the professional style and the casual and trendy styles, we looked at each of our variables to see where the difference lay. In general, the styles of professional, casual and trendy were not rated significantly different from one another based on their attractiveness, enthusiasm or likeliness to experience personal fulfilment. As researchers Hamid (1969) and Nielsen and Kernaleguen (1976) found the characteristic of attractiveness to be highly linked to a person's facial features and we did not analyze these in our study, this variable may have been more difficult for participants to measure.

Looking at the differences between the professional and casual styles, the professional model was rated as more confident, successful and intelligent than the casual model, which can be seen as an expected result. Professional attire is likely considered a more proper form of dress, while the casual style of jeans and t-shirt is a rather plain choice of attire that doesn't say too much about the person wearing it. However, the casual model was seen as friendlier and more likely to lead an exciting life. This could be due to the fact that most participants who responded to the survey identified themselves as having 'casual' dress. Also, our study's population was college students, mostly freshman, who don't have much experience in the work place or don't usually wear professional clothing styles. This finding is similar to Reid, Lancuba and Morrow's

(1997) that college students tend to have more extreme ratings of clothing not seen in a university context, such as the professional style.

Analyzing the professional style against the trendy style, when the model was in the professional style she was seen as more hardworking, intelligent, trustworthy and successful than the trendy model, while the trendy model was perceived again as friendlier and more likely to lead an exciting life. Overall, the model dressed in the professional style was seen as less friendly and less likely to lead an exciting life than both the casual and trendy models. Again, this could be caused by our population of only college students who typically dress in more casual or trendy styles. Even though the professional style is seen as more confident, intelligent and successful - which are characteristics that can be compared to someone who is in the workplace, a person dressed in professional attire may come off as less-inviting than the other two styles. This can be due to the fact that professional wear is sometimes perceived as more serious. In the future, a wider scope of clothing styles, or perhaps even a narrower one, may provide more significant results. Another suggestion would be to use individuals from a variety of age groups, as this population appears to be more attuned to casual and trendy styles.

RQ 2: Next, we test for a relationship between a participant's personal level of clothing interest/satisfaction and the way they rated the model. We looked at each clothing style independently because we did not want the differences in clothing style to effect the data we were trying to look at. First we analyzed the clothing interest/satisfaction levels of the participants who viewed the professional style against their perception score of the same model. Based on the findings, there appeared to be no correlation between these two factors. Next looking at the casual style, we found again no correlation to be present between a participants' clothing interest/satisfaction and the way they rated the casual model.

According to Paek's (1986) original study, people with high clothing interest tend to be in favor of more fashionable clothing. In our current study, 'trendy' is representative of this type of fashionable clothing, so we wanted to see if Paek's findings holds true in the present study. However, it appeared our study found different results, as there was no relationship between the participant's level of clothing interest/satisfaction and the way they rated the model. Overall, opposite of Paek (1986) and Bell's (1991) results that found there was a correlation between a person's clothing interest/satisfaction and the way they rate a model, the results of this study did not find any evidence to conclude that a person's perceived level of clothing interest/satisfaction is related to the way they rated the model in any of the clothing styles. Perhaps by selecting students at random to participate in the study, we could not ensure that we would get individuals who would be considered of either high or low clothing interest. Also, we are assuming the participants clothing interest based on a variety of factors. In the future, researchers may want to get a better indication of how a participant categorizes their own level of clothing interest and satisfaction by asking more overt questions such as "Clothing is of strong importance to me" or even using open ended questions as a way of better understanding a participant's own opinions towards clothing. Also another improvement for the future would be to ensure that there are equal members of all groups present in their study. This could be done by running a pre-test or selecting students using a stratified sampling method to get both high interest and low interest clothing participants in the study.

RQ 3: The final research question analyzed if individuals from the same group tended to have responses similar to one another. We first analyzed the difference between the gender groups. Again, we chose to look at the results for each of the clothing styles individually, starting with the professional style. Comparing the responses from the males and the females of the

professional model, we found that the responses were not significantly different from one another and that both genders were actually rather similar in their responses. However, interestingly, the females rated the professional model slightly higher than the males, which is similar to Reid, Lancuba and Morrow (1997) finding that females rated other females in professional wear higher than men did.

Next we looked at the male and female responses to the casual model. Again, no significant difference was found, although there appeared to be a slight difference in the way both genders rated the model as the females rated this model higher than the males did. Finally we looked at the trendy style but again, no significant difference was found in the responses. However, the trendy style was the only style that got a higher average perception score from males than females. Overall, there appeared to be no significant differences in the ways the two genders rated the model, although the females appeared to have higher ratings than men did for every style besides the trendy style. While there was no significant difference in responses, the fact that females tended to have higher ratings of the models goes along with Hamid (1969) and Reid, Lancuba and Morrow's (1997) finding that women tend to rate less harshly than men. In the future, researchers looking to analyze this variable will want to ensure there is an equal distribution of both genders in their sample. A downfall for the present study is that RIT's population did not contain an equal distribution so therefore the study did not either, and there is not enough information to provide significant evidence that males and females rate styles of clothing differently. Also, if the angle of gender is of extreme interest, one might want to include images of both males and females in their study to see the differences that gender might present.

Secondly we analyzed if members from the same college tended to have similar responses to one another. Based on these results, we found that some colleges such as CIAS did

have similar responses to one another based on all of the clothing styles and GCCIS who also had similar responses for the clothing styles of professional and casual. Overall, there was some evidence to suggest that members from the same college tend to have similar impressions of others, but this wasn't true for all situations. So while Satrapa et al., (1992) didn't find a significant relationship between a participants major and the way they rated the model, our study did find some evidence that has the potential to be deemed significant in the future with a larger number of participants and more focus on this variable. A limitation was that there was not an equal number of individuals present from each college to view each clothing style. Some colleges only resulted in only one person viewing a style and in some cases, colleges did not view one of the clothing styles at all. In order for this to be replicated with more success in the future, the researcher may want to again select participants using a stratified sampling method to ensure there is an even number of individuals from each college present.

The last bit of information we analyzed was if a person displayed a preference for a model who was dressed in the style of clothing they themselves identify with. Again we looked at each style one at a time. As previously mentioned five styles were provided for a participant to categorize themselves: professional, trendy, casual, alternative and athletic. If a participant identified with the style they viewed, this was analyzed against the scores from the participants who identified with other styles. After comparing the means for each of the clothing styles, there didn't appear to be a difference in the way a participant rated the model based on his or her clothing style. So while Reid, Lancuba and Morrow's (1997) study found that participants rated individuals dressed in clothing similar to themselves higher than those they don't identify with, this relationship was not found in the present study. This could be caused by the fact that there

were uneven groups, and most participants categorized with 'casual' style. Again in the future, participants should be selected using a pre-test or a stratified sampling method.

Conclusion

Overall the findings of this study have succeeded in providing evidence to support RQ 1: Yes, there is a significant difference in the way a model is viewed in various clothing styles, which falls in line with the findings of previous studies of its kind. However, this difference only appeared to be present between the professional and casual, and professional and trendy styles. The clothing styles of casual and trendy appeared to be too similar to one another to be rated significantly different in the eyes of the participants. Also the participant group of college students appeared to be more attuned to trendy and casual styles which could have caused a difference in ratings. In the future, researchers might decide to include a more diverse or perhaps even a more narrow set of clothing styles, as well as use a larger sample size of individuals outside of just college students.

This study also found that, while the perceiver variable of clothing interest/satisfaction was a prevalent factor in Paek (1986) and Bell's (1991) study, there did not appear to be a significant relationship in the way participants rated a model based on their clothing interest/satisfaction. Therefore, our answer to RQ 2 is: No, there does not appear to be a significant relationship between a person's perceived level of clothing interest/satisfaction and the way they rate the model. However, previous research leads us to believe that these factors may actually play a significant role in how participants rate the model, so in the future researchers may want to introduce a better way of deriving a participants clothing interest, rather

than attempting to assume their clothing interest/satisfaction. Again this could be done by asking more overt questions or providing a free response element.

The study's results also found that, in relation to the second perceiver variable of memberships to social groups, a participant's gender did not play a significant role in the way they rated a model. However it did result in similar findings to Hamid's (1969) that females tend to have less harsh ratings than males. This could be caused by the fact that the models viewed were females, or that there wasn't an equal number of males and females rating the model. In the future, equal distribution is essential for finding significant results.

An interesting finding that resulted from analyzing college similarities was that although Satrapa et al., (1992) did not appear to find a relationship between majors and the way participant's rate a model, this study finds slight evidence to believe that individuals from the same college have similar clothing opinions based on their belonging to the same group. This would be an interesting angle to analyze in the future with larger populations and equal distribution of students from each college.

Finally, differing from Reid, Lancuba and Morrow's (1997) findings, this study found that participants did not show preference for models dressed in a clothing style similar to their own, over those they didn't categorize with. Again this could be caused by the fact that the present study did not have a proper way to categorize participants clothing style and that there was an un-equal distribution in the way participants rated themselves, as most individuals categorized with 'casual' dress.

The major downfalls of this study include uneven distribution of groups and also missing samples of the population in certain instances. Based on these findings, the researcher concludes

that using a random sample may not be the best way to obtain participants for a clothing study if a researcher wants to find significant results. As individuals differ in their use of clothing cues and their level of interest in clothing, the participants chosen for a study may yield completely different results. In the future, researchers will want to use pre-tests or stratified sampling methods to ensure they are reaching the proper population and that the individuals they are looking to analyze are present in their study. Running pre-tests to ensure participants fall into the correct categories and that each category is sufficiently filled would be a strong suggestion for the future. Also, using a free response element might be beneficial to allow perceivers to provide their own responses. This will allow researchers to gain a better understanding of perceiver variables and how perceivers will categorize themselves and rate a target person when no characteristics are provided for them.

In summation, this study succeeded in finding that which was already assumed: Different clothing styles effect the way a person is perceived. And, while previous research leads us to believe that a person's clothing interest/satisfaction can contribute to the way that person forms first impressions of others, the current research did not find significant evidence to support this claim and recommends a more appropriate sample selection for finding successful and significant answers for this prompted question in the future. What this study did find evidence to support is that individuals from the same college may have similar ratings of individual clothing styles based on their shared group membership. In the future, researchers may be interested in investigating this relationship and the effect that this variable has on clothing perception in first impression studies.

Appendix

Figure 1.1

Attire's Role on Social Identity and Person Perception

You are invited to join a research study to look at the way different types of attire influence person perception. Please take whatever time you need to discuss the study with your family and friends, or anyone else you wish to. The decision to join, or not to join, is up to you.

In this research study, we are evaluating the way clothing influences a person's social identity and perception.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY?

If you decide to participate in this study you will be asked to take the following survey. We think this will take you approximately 5-10 minutes. Please be aware that this survey will ask you a few demographic questions.

The investigators may stop the study or take you out of the study at any time if they judge it is in your best interest. They may also remove you from the study for various other reasons. They can do this without your consent. You can stop participating at any time. If you stop you will not lose any benefits.

RISKS

This study is not intended to cause any physical or non-physical harm to you. No social, psychological or economic harm should be caused as a result of participating in this study. There may be other risks that we cannot predict.

BENEFITS TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

By participating in this study you will help researchers gain a better understanding of how attire influences personal and social decisions. However, we can't guarantee that you will personally experience benefits from participating in this study. Others may benefit in the future from the information we find in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your answers to the following questions will remain confidential and will not be shared with any parties besides the researcher and partnering professors apart of this research study. Your answers will be closely protected from unauthorized disclosure, tampering, or damaging.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right not to participate at all or to leave the study at any time. Deciding not to participate or choosing to leave the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled, and it will not harm your relationship with any researchers apart of this survey.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?

Please email Olivia Angerosa at ona8039@rit.edu or Dr. Keith Jenkins at kbjgbt@rit.edu if you have questions about the study, any problems, unexpected physical or psychological discomforts, any injuries, or think that something unusual or unexpected is happening.

Contact Heather Foti, Associate Director of the HSRO at (585) 475-7673 or hmfsrcs@rit.edu if you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant.

Social Identity and Person Perception Survey

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Each question will be answered using a scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree.' Please answer each question as it pertains to you personally.

1. I consider myself to be a very social person.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree - Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

2. I feel comfortable in most group settings.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

3. I am comfortable taking charge in group settings.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

4. When I feel good about the clothes I am wearing, I usually take the lead in group activities.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

5. I feel comfortable public speaking.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

6. When I am not satisfied with the clothes I am wearing, I do not like to talk in front of a group of people.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

7. I am inclined to be highly sociable when I feel good about the clothes I am wearing.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

8. I tend to keep in the background on social occasions when I am not satisfied with the clothes I am wearing.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

9. When I am satisfied with the clothes I am wearing I tend to be easy-going in manner.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

10. When I am displeased with the clothes I am wearing, I am inclined to be tense.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

11. I tend to dress based on my mood.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

12. I tend to dress based on the weather.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

13. I wear clothing that acknowledges my belonging to a group/organization (i.e. collegiate organization, athletic team, club, fraternity/sorority).

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

14. The clothes I wear sometimes affect my mood during the day.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

15. I wear different clothing depending on my mood.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

16. I consider myself to be a trendsetter.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

17. Choose the following clothing style that you categorize with most:

Professional - Casual - Athletic - Alternative - Trendy

18. I think that personal appearance is very important.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

19. I tend to notice what other people are wearing.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

20. I care about how I look.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Slightly Disagree -Neutral - Slightly Agree - Agree - Strongly Agree

21. On average, how much money do you spend a month on new clothing purchases: _____

22. On average, how many minutes a day do you spend getting ready for work/school: _____

23. On average, how many hours a day do you spend watching television: _____

24. On average, how many hours a week do you spend reading newspapers or magazines: _____

Please view the following image for a few moments and then use the provided scales to rate the model on the following characteristics. "1" indicating they do not possess the characteristic, "7" indicating they strongly possess the characteristic and "4" as neutral.

Figure 1.1a

(Each survey only showed one of the images)



Not Confident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Confident			
Unsuccessful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Successful			
Untrustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Trustworthy			
Unintelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Intelligent			
Unattractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive			
Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hardworking			
Unfriendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Friendly			
Unenthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Enthusiastic			
Earns a low salary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Earns a high salary			
Likely to lead an exciting life					1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Likely to experience personal fulfillment					1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Likely to be successful in chosen occupation					1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Age: _____

Gender: M F

College (CAST, COLA, etc.): _____

Major: _____

Year Level: _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Your responses are greatly appreciated!



Figure 1.2

Report												
Model Viewed	Confidence	Successful	Trustworthy	Intelligent	Attractive	Lazy	Friendly	Enthusiasm	Salary	Exciting Life	Personal Fulfillment	Occupation
1.0	Mean 5.280 N 50 Std. Deviation 1.3099 Minimum 2.0 Maximum 7.0 % of Total Sum 37.1% Variance 1.716	5.720 50 1.2623 1.0 7.0 41.0% 1.593	5.260 50 1.2586 1.0 7.0 36.9% 1.584	5.660 50 1.2554 1.0 7.0 39.4% 1.576	4.660 50 1.2715 1.0 7.0 33.0% 1.617	5.620 50 1.5635 1.0 7.0 40.8% 2.444	4.320 50 1.1507 1.0 7.0 30.1% 1.324	4.500 50 1.4178 1.0 7.0 33.4% 2.010	5.160 50 1.3303 2.0 7.0 40.1% 1.770	3.540 50 1.2811 1.0 5.0 29.0% 1.641	4.500 50 1.2164 2.0 7.0 33.7% 1.480	5.500 50 1.0738 2.0 7.0 40.6% 1.153
2.0	Mean 4.180 N 50 Std. Deviation 1.0821 Minimum 1.0 Maximum 7.0 % of Total Sum 29.4% Variance 1.171	4.060 50 .8184 2.0 6.0 29.1% .670	4.840 50 1.2675 2.0 7.0 33.9% 1.607	4.560 50 1.1980 1.0 7.0 31.7% 1.435	4.380 50 1.3536 1.0 7.0 31.0% 1.832	4.360 50 1.1021 2.0 7.0 31.6% 1.215	5.000 50 1.2122 2.0 7.0 34.8% 1.469	4.300 50 1.2495 1.0 7.0 31.9% 1.561	3.900 50 .8631 1.0 6.0 30.3% .745	4.060 50 1.2022 1.0 7.0 33.2% 1.445	4.260 50 1.1031 1.0 7.0 31.9% 1.217	4.100 50 .8864 1.0 6.0 30.3% .786
3.0	Mean 4.760 N 50 Std. Deviation 1.2216 Minimum 1.0 Maximum 7.0 % of Total Sum 33.5% Variance 1.492	4.160 50 .7384 2.0 6.0 29.8% .545	4.160 50 .9563 1.0 6.0 29.2% .913	4.160 50 .8889 1.0 6.0 28.9% .790	5.100 50 1.1824 1.0 7.0 36.1% 1.398	3.800 50 .8806 1.0 5.0 27.6% .776	5.040 50 1.2610 1.0 7.0 35.1% 1.590	4.660 50 1.3644 1.0 7.0 34.6% 1.862	3.800 50 .9897 1.0 5.0 29.5% .980	4.620 50 1.0859 2.0 7.0 37.8% 1.179	4.600 50 1.3093 1.0 7.0 34.4% 1.714	3.940 50 .9775 1.0 6.0 29.1% .956
Total	Mean 4.740 N 150 Std. Deviation 1.2819 Minimum 1.0 Maximum 7.0 % of Total Sum 100.0% Variance 1.643	4.647 150 1.2269 1.0 7.0 100.0% 1.505	4.753 150 1.2475 1.0 7.0 100.0% 1.556	4.793 150 1.2865 1.0 7.0 100.0% 1.655	4.713 150 1.2971 1.0 7.0 100.0% 1.682	4.593 150 1.4288 1.0 7.0 100.0% 2.042	4.787 150 1.2456 1.0 7.0 100.0% 1.551	4.487 150 1.3448 1.0 7.0 100.0% 1.809	4.287 150 1.2388 1.0 7.0 100.0% 1.535	4.073 150 1.2644 1.0 7.0 100.0% 1.599	4.453 150 1.2128 1.0 7.0 100.0% 1.471	4.513 150 1.2026 1.0 7.0 100.0% 1.446

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