

Impact of dress on human psychology

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Clothes have a strong influence over the way other people perceive us; you may be talented and qualified, but sweatpants at a job interview probably won't communicate your ambition to a potential boss. "The formality of clothing might not only influence the way others perceive a person, and how people perceive themselves, but could influence decision making in important ways through its influence on processing style." Fashion trend today does not give precedence to comforts and practicality. Sometimes the dress, that goes beyond modesty and simplicity, which does not allow someone to sit or walk properly, is attracted by youth. This growing trend of self awareness for one's look has influenced every aspect of generation individual behaviour and is reflected in every sphere starting from social media platforms to real life purchase decisions. Colour can carry important meaning and can have an important impact on people's affect, cognition, and behaviour. Clothes have systematic influence on wearer's psychological processes. Minor clothing manipulations can give rise to significantly different inferences. Even small changes in clothing choice can communicate different information to a perceiver. Dress affects one's ideas about the self (e.g., attitudes, values, beliefs) as well as self-directed behaviours. This growing trend of self awareness for one's look has influenced every aspect of new generation individual behaviour and is reflected in every sphere starting from social media platforms to real life purchase decisions.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Clothing, Cognition, Fashion Trend, Psychological Processes

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Clothing, as one of the most visible forms of consumption, performs a major role in the social construction of identity. Clothing choices provide an excellent field for studying how people interpret a specific form of culture for their own purposes, one that includes strong norms about appropriate appearances at a particular point in time (otherwise known as fashion) as well as an extraordinarily rich variety of alternatives. One of the most visible markers of social status and gender and therefore useful in maintaining or subverting

symbolic boundaries, clothing is an indication of how people in different eras have perceived their positions in social structures and negotiated status boundaries. In previous centuries, clothing was the principal means for identifying oneself in public space. Depending on the period, various aspects of identity were expressed in clothing in Europe and the United States, including occupation, regional identity, religion and social class. Certain items of clothing worn by everyone, such as hats, were particularly important, sending instant signals of

ascribed or aspired social status. Variations in clothing choices are subtle indicators of how different types of societies and different positions within societies are actually experienced (Crane, 2000).

Bandura's (1977, 2008) intentional and unintentional messages concerning the communication of academic learning and social learning are emphasized in the social learning theory. Organizations have conveyed that attire has cultural and social significance (Carr *et al.*, 2009). Appropriate attire has determined the art of social and cultural styles and whether individuals are deemed trustworthy or believable may be influenced by their appearance (Dixon, 2007). Clothes have a strong influence over the way other people perceive us; you may be talented and qualified, but sweatpants at a job interview probably won't communicate your ambition to a potential boss. "The formality of clothing might not only influence the way others perceive a person, and how people perceive themselves, but could influence decision making in important ways through its influence on processing style." Formal clothing is typically introduced in settings that are explicitly not intimate—essentially making formal clothing "socially distant" clothing (Slepian *et al.*, 2015).

In one experiment, researchers photographed people in different colored clothes and then asked participants to rate the attractiveness of people in the resulting photos. They found that the color of clothing affects the way in which men rate both males' and females' attractiveness, and how women rate men's attractiveness. Interestingly however, clothing color did not influence women's judgement of other females (Roberts *et al.*, 2010). Roberts and his fellow researchers found that red clothes would tend to lead participants to rate subjects more favorably in terms of attractiveness compared to when they wore clothes of other colors. This result might explain the findings of a study which found that, when waitresses wore different colored t-shirts whilst serving in a restaurant, men would tend to leave higher tips for those wearing red tops than those with t-shirts of other colors. However, shirt color had no effect on the tips left by female customers (Guéguen and Jacob, 2010). Women were more likely to wear red on days of high fertility in their menstrual cycles (Eisenbruch *et al.*, 2015). Color can carry important meaning and can have an important impact on people's affect, cognition, and behaviour (Elliot and Maier, 2014).

Color red can influence psychological functioning. Maier *et al.* (2013) tested the hypothesis that red influences impression formation related to another person's abilities. They conducted three experiments examining the influence of red on the evaluation of male target persons. In Experiment 1, participants viewing red, relative to green, on the shirt of a person presented on a photograph perceived him to be less intelligent. This effect was strongest in a job application context compared to other contexts. In Experiment 2, focusing solely on the job application context, participants viewing red, relative to blue, on an applicant's tie perceived him to have less earning and leadership potential. In Experiment 3, participants viewing red, relative to green, on a job applicant's tie rated him as less likely to be hired, and perceptions of ability and leadership potential mediated this effect.

Colors can also be described in temperature terms, such as "warm" or "cool" as related to the dominant wavelength of the color. The cool colors (e.g., blue, green, purple) are generally considered to be restful and quiet, while the warm colors (e.g., red, yellow, orange) are seen as active and stimulating (Ballast, 2002). The concept RED is affectively quite salient. BLACK and GREY are bad, and WHITE, BLUE, and GREEN are good. YELLOW, WHITE, and GREY are weak; RED and BLACK are strong. BLACK and GREY are passive; RED is active. The color component Brightness, as determined by comparing data on WHITE, GREY, and BLACK, is strongly associated with positive Evaluation, but also with negative Potency (Adams, and Osgood, 1973). Weeden and Sabini (2005) found that there was some indication that attractiveness has an overall relationship with health among women, but little indication that male attractiveness relates to male health. Finally, color can encompass diverse meanings in different contexts and therefore elicit different behavioral responses. The ruby red surroundings of the Red Light District invite the perceiver to approach, whereas the flashing red lights of the fire brigade warn perceivers to keep their distance. Elliot and Maier (2012) argue that, in a similar way, red can undermine intellectual performance in the achievement domain (Elliot *et al.*, 2007; Maier *et al.*, 2008) but can enhance attractiveness in the affiliation domain (e.g., Elliot and Niesta, 2008; Niesta *et al.*, 2010). It is this affiliation context, more specifically the mating context in which men evaluate women's attractiveness.

Dogan (2015) examined the effect of materialism and proximity of clothing to self (PCS) on the older adult's ratio of feeling younger (RFY). Face-to-face surveys were conducted with 172 Turkish men and women, aged 65 and over. The findings reveal that materialism and PCS has negative relations, materialism has positive effect on the RFY, PCS has negative effects on the RFY. The results are discussed in relation to the consumption experiences of older people, actual self-image vs. desired self-image and alienation of older people to their clothing. In addition, the psychometric performance of the PCS scale on older people living in Turkey along with discussion of the limitations of these data, this article addresses the implications of older consumer experiences for actual and desired self-image. Minor clothing manipulations can give rise to significantly different inferences. Even small changes in clothing choice can communicate different information to a perceiver. On the evidence of this study it appears men may be advised to purchase clothing that is well tailored, as it can positively enhance the image they communicate to others (Neil *et al.*, 2013).

Adam and Galinsky (2012) introduced the term "encloded cognition" to describe the systematic influence that clothes have on the wearer's psychological processes. They offered a potentially unifying framework to integrate past findings and capture the diverse impact that clothes could have on the wearer by proposing that encloded cognition involves the co-occurrence of two independent factors—the symbolic meaning of the clothes *and* the physical experience of wearing them. As a first test of their encloded cognition perspective, they explored the effects of wearing a lab coat. A pretest found that a lab coat is generally associated with attentiveness and carefulness. They therefore predicted that wearing a lab coat would increase performance on attention-related tasks. In Experiment 1, physically wearing a lab coat increased selective attention compared to not wearing a lab coat. In Experiments 2 and 3, wearing a lab coat described as a doctor's coat increased sustained attention compared to wearing a lab coat described as a painter's coat, and compared to simply seeing or even identifying with a lab coat described as a doctor's coat. Thus, they suggested a basic principle of encloded cognition—it depends on both the symbolic meaning and the physical experience of wearing the clothes.

When people bought and wore a brand sportswear, they evaluated themselves as professional sports players

who were more committed to sports. Brand sportswear was useful for sport players to change self-evaluation and enjoy sports (Soozin *et al.*, 2015). When a particular style of dress comes in vogue or used by film stars and models, it is blindly followed by college students (Pathak, 2013). Fashion trend today does not give precedence to comforts and practicality. Sometimes the dress, that goes beyond modesty and simplicity, which does not allow someone to sit or walk properly, is attracted by youth. Untidy, shabby looking hair-styles, which are trendy, attract youngsters. Rather it reflects the deconstructive style preferences prevailing in post modern consumerist society. Loureiro and Breazeale (2016) investigated the effect of the nine most accepted factors of online shopping orientation on online purchase intention through perceived behavioral control and attitude toward purchase of clothing. They suggest that in-home shopping tendency, convenience consciousness, and impulse purchase are the most significant constructs in building consumers' online shopping orientation. Impulse and convenience for online shoppers appear to be more important than recreational shopping. Online shopping orientation seems to have a positive influence on perceived behavioral control and attitude toward purchase

Jack (2015) investigated the phenomenon of buying 'virtual assets' for game avatars. Virtual Assets are items that are bought with real-world money for an avatar in-game; weapons, items, pets, mounts and skin customisations the most popular examples. Using Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) six gamers that regularly bought in-game assets were interviewed. IPA was chosen because of its emphasis on lived experience, and each participant had subjective experiences of gaming and purchase behaviour. Of particular focus in this study were the superordinate themes of motivations for purchase behaviour, the resulting psychological impact on the gamer, the social benefits of gaming and virtual asset purchasing, emotional attachment, self-expression through the avatar, impulsivity versus thoughtfulness in purchase intention, and the impact of a transaction machinery on the 'game experience'. Motivations that were found to be of particular importance were item exclusivity, function, social appeal, and collectability. It was found that virtual items enable the gamer to express themselves, feel real satisfaction, and build lasting friendships. Essentially, virtual assets and gaming mostly had a very positive impact on the participant's psychological wellbeing.

Implications for gamers and games production companies are considered.

Against the gender stereotype of females being more fashion-aware and conscious of others' clothes and makeup efforts than males, studies have also lifted the lid on men's insecurities with regards to clothes. Contrary to commonly held beliefs, men have been shown to be often more self-conscious than females with regards to their personal dress sense and the way in which they are viewed in public (Solomon, and Schopler, 1982).

Therefore, we need to understand the significance of clothing choices regardless of our gender. Whether you are male or female, your fashion choices can affect both your self image, the impression that you convey to others and in turn, the way in which people behave towards you. They can influence everything from the outcome of a sports match (Hill, and Barton, 2005) to an interviewer's impression of your ability to perform effectively in a job position (Forsythe, 2006). Males were found to try to impress their dates by emphasizing the security that they could offer the partner - for example, by exaggerating their financial position or by trying to demonstrate a preparedness to commit. Women, however, were deceptive with regards to their *body image*, exaggerating physical features in an effort to appear more attractive to their date (Benz *et al.*, 2005).

A new study looks specifically at how formal attire changes people's thought processes. "Putting on formal clothes makes us feel powerful, and that changes the basic way we see the world," says Abraham Rutchick, an author of the study and a professor of psychology at California State University, Northridge. Rutchick and his co-authors found that wearing clothing that's more formal than usual makes people think more broadly and holistically, rather than narrowly and about fine-grained details. In psychological parlance, wearing a suit encourages people to use abstract processing more readily than concrete processing. Research on the effects of clothing on cognition remains in its early stages. Another similar study showed that when subjects wore a white coat that they believed belonged to a doctor, they became more attentive, an effect that didn't hold when they believed the garment was a painter's. But clothing's psychological effects have been specified for only a couple of the ways the brain makes sense of stimuli (Pinsker, 2015).

Attitude is an expression of the feelings and values

are their motivating forces or directional forces that help the consumer to make a decision. In case of a value-expressive attitude toward a product, the consumers are motivated to consume it as a form of self-expression (Snyder and DeBono, 1985). This growing trend of self awareness for one's look has influenced every aspect of individual behavior and is reflected in every sphere starting from social media platforms to real life purchase decisions. This phenomenon of emboldened self expression and preference for no holds barred anonymous style has challenged the core social agenda of forecasting agencies. Thus it has pushed the forecasting agencies to reconsider the parameters of forecasting ushering in a new environment for modeling. The most befuddling is the unpredictable nature of selfie composition patterns leaving behind only the function of expression that is to increase one's social media presence and carve a niche for himself or herself. So the trend of the day is self expressive anonymous style that tends to remove social prejudices about fashion in the society. The lenience is towards flaunting what is theirs in spite of mimicking others rather going all the way to savor and appreciate what they and their close knit friends in the group engage and unravel upon. Further today's anonymous style trends opens up the societal expressions unheard and unseen ever before just evocative of the spirit of our moments that does not bother whether the content is worth artistic and meaningful which could give a hint or two about the individuals real existence and real needs.

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