

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Casey Lane Anderson for the degree of Honors Baccalaureate of Science in Merchandising Management presented on March 5, 2014. Title: Appearance and Exam Performance.

Abstract approved:

Leslie Davis Burns

This undergraduate honors thesis was designed to investigate the relationship between students' appearances and their college exam performance. The hypothesis was that if a student wears clothing that causes him or her to feel fashionable, professional, attractive, or otherwise well put together, then that student will earn higher marks on exams and experience an increased overall level of success, in comparison to if they had worn more casual, unstylish, unprofessional, or unflattering clothing. A survey was designed to question a sample of students about how they were dressed during their midterm exams, why they dressed the way they did, how they felt about the way they looked, and their performance on the exams. Forty-two Oregon State University undergraduate students participated in the study by completing the online survey. The majority of students (81%) did not dress with the intent to succeed on the exam in that they did not do anything different or special to complete their overall looks on the day of their exams. The majority of the students (67%) also wore casual wear or sports wear. The few who dressed professionally performed very well on their exams. The results were largely inconclusive and further research is needed to confirm a positive relationship between dressing up for an exam and academic performance.

Key Words: dress, appearance, exam scores, academic success, psychology, encloded cognition, fashion, success

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Appearance and Exam Performance

By

Casey Lane Anderson

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I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University, University Honors College. My signature below authorizes release of my project to any reader upon request.

Casey Lane Anderson, Author

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APPEARANCE AND EXAM PERFORMANCE

INTRODUCTION

Throughout my college experience I have taken many exams and obviously some have gone better than others. I have heard my friends say “dress up for your exam,” or “look cute for your exam. You’ll do better.” It has led me to wonder – for how many of the exams in which I achieved a high score did I “dress up” or feel really good about the way I looked, and for how many of the exams in which I earned a less than desired score was I dressed down or feeling sloppy or casually dressed? Does the way students are dressed, or how they feel they look in regards to what they’re wearing, have an affect on their exam scores?

Many people have heard the phrase “dress for success” (Molloy, 1975). This refers to the research on how dressing professionally will positively affect how people perceive an individual (Goman, 2012). What I am aiming to discover with this study is whether or not there is a positive correlation between college students dressing with the intent to succeed on an exam and their performance on the exam. Also, I am curious what type of clothing or style of clothing the students who perform the best report to be wearing, and if all of the highest scoring students have a similar feeling about the way they looked or reason for dressing as they did.

Thesis Statement

If a student wears clothing that causes him or her to feel fashionable, professional, attractive, or otherwise well put together, then that student will earn

higher marks on exams and experience an increased overall level of success, in comparison to if they had worn more casual, unstylish, unprofessional, or unflattering clothing.

Definition of Terms

First, I wish to clarify some terms that will be used throughout the paper. When I use the word “dress” I mean overall appearance, including clothing, makeup, and hairstyle. I do not mean to include more permanent aspects of the appearance such as body decorations like piercing and tattoos. I am referring to aspects of ourselves that we may change on a daily basis. In the results section, I will discuss performance on midterm exams. When I say the student performed “well,” I am referring to a letter grade of B or an 80% or higher. When I say the student performed “poorly,” I am referring to a letter grade of C or a 79% or lower. I will also talk about the grades in terms of passing or not passing. A passing letter grade is a C or a 70% or higher, while a non-passing letter grade is a D or 69% or lower. I will use students, participants, and respondents synonymously.

Literature Review

The relationship between dress and success has been studied from numerous perspectives in the past and is all the time becoming a more relevant topic as fashion continues to innovate. What we wear influences how we feel and how people react to us and will likely continue to do so forever (Adam & Galinsky, 2012). The questions we must answer are why such feelings are created and how

can we manipulate this information to create an advantage? The related studies on dress and performance venture into the workplace, theater, and sports. The previous studies on dress in schools focus on uniforms, behavior, and instructor apparel. There have also been many studies about self-perception and embodied cognition, and how it relates to performance in general, which is very relevant to this research. I will conclude my review of background information with recent media advice about what to wear during exams and what questions I am left with.

John T. Molloy coined the phrase “dress for success” in 1975 with his bestselling book of the same name (Molloy, 1975). It refers to the proven concept that if we dress professionally, we will achieve greater results (Goman, 2012). The idea has two dimensions: how our dress affects the perceptions and behavior of others, and how our dress affects our own behavior. First, dress is a key part of communication, and we are able to achieve greater success because people are more receptive to our wants and needs. They want to work with us and they trust us because we look sharp, intelligent, and trustworthy. They feel we are worth their time, because we put a little time and effort into ourselves. Second, because we know we look good, we stand a little straighter, talk a little louder, and achieve better results because we know “the secret” – that dressing professionally will help us be better. A self-fulfilling prophecy occurs and we really do perform better.

Other than the business environment, studies have been conducted on dress in the performing arts and sports realms. Helen Gillet is a cello player who is certain her dress affects her performances (Swenson, 2010). She claims that her “costume” affects what she plays and that it takes a couple of hours before each performance to

put her look together. Her dress comes together with her music to create a unique look and feel each time she performs. Costume is important in theater, as well. Actors and actresses take their performance to a whole new level when they are in costume because it is easier to embody the role they are playing when in that character's clothes (Adam & Galinsky, 2012). This is one of the main reasons for the dress rehearsal.

In the world of sports, a uniform is much more than a marker of who is who (Frank & Gilovich, 1988). Athletes feel really ready to compete and give it their all once they've donned their uniform. It instills a passion and seriousness that is different than a typical practice day. Frank and Gilovich conducted a study in 1988 on the relationship between black uniforms and penalties earned. The color black has long been associated with evil and death and the results of the study showed that teams in both the National Football League and National Hockey League were more aggressive and earned more penalties when they were wearing black uniforms. For teams that had lighter-colored uniforms, when they transitioned to black uniforms there was an immediate spike in their penalty earnings. This shows that our clothing does affect how we act and how we perform.

The relationship between dress and achievement has been taken into the academic realm with studies on professional dress as it relates to behavior, the effectiveness of school uniforms, and the connection between dress and professors, both in what they wear effecting students' perceptions and what students wear effecting professor perceptions. At Mayfield Intermediate School in Virginia, they have implemented a Dress for Success program where every Monday the students

forgo their everyday clothes for fancier clothes like button-ups and blouses (Elementary, 2013). Students have reported that their Monday wardrobes make them feel important, confident, and more mature, and helps them to focus better on their studies.

David Brunnsma conducted a study in the public school system to discover whether or not school uniforms actually help students perform in their studies (Stainburn, 2005). Based on the results of his study, he concluded, that school uniforms do not make a difference at all in the students' academic performance. On the other side, Jane Pilcher says that "what to wear and where' is contingent upon contexts" and that ever since girls played dress-up when they were little, they have become accustomed to acting a certain way when wearing certain clothes (Pilcher, 2010). A uniform would put students in the school mindset and therefore an exam outfit would put a student in the exam mindset. A change in behavior at school leading to an improvement specifically in academic performance was not a claim made by either, however.

The relationship between professors and both what they wear and what their students wear can affect the academic performance of students at the university level. The results of one particular study strongly suggest "both business and non-business students have a higher opinion of their education experience when faculty members wear professional attire as opposed to business casual and casual clothing in the classroom" (Carr, Davies & Lavin, 2010). A female science professor wrote an article, however, insisting that she was a reasonably successful, midcareer, tenured professor who would never be mistaken for a businesswoman

because she never felt the need to wear business clothes in her classroom (Wearing me out, 2012). She is certain that when it comes to academic attire, there are major cultural differences among the disciplines, and in some departments it simply makes no difference on academic performance.

For me, this suggests that the attire of the professor sets the mood for the class and can have an effect on what students would feel they needed to wear in order to impress that teacher or to perform better in that teacher's class. The other side of the professor's opinions on dress making a difference in the classroom is that professors may subconsciously treat students whose attire they like better (typically students dressed more professionally) in a different way. When teachers have a better perception of certain students, they may for this reason give them a little more attention, or positive reinforcement, or grade them a little more forgivingly. So dress can affect a student's performance in the classroom in regards to how an instructor treats them, even if this special treatment is very subtle.

An intriguing study by Adam and Galinsky discusses what they call "enclothed cognition," and showed that clothing helps people embody and become who they want to be (Adam & Galinsky, 2012). They state that, "wearing a piece of clothing and embodying its symbolic meaning will trigger associated psychological processes." This would suggest that if students dress like a professor or an industry professional they will be more able to psychologically mimic that individual and more closely match their achievement level. There are other kinds of symbolism in clothing that may have an affect on the performance of an individual. Clothing can trigger an emotional connection in people's minds (Colls, 2004). Sometimes

wearing an article of clothing that was worn during a past achievement will put people in the mindset to seek the same level of achievement. Wearing designer clothes, for another example, has been known to make people feel more powerful and self-confident. However, “correlations between self-esteem and school performance do not indicate that high self-esteem leads to good performance,” as confirmed by a study done in 2003 on this relationship (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohs, 2003).

One researcher discovered that *how* people wear their clothes could affect their behavior, action, and performance (Candy, 2007). Sometimes people wear clothes in a way that keeps them in the conscious mind. This can either be distracting from the task at hand, or keep people in their conscious mind and more connected to what they are doing. The effect of clothing comfort on exam performance has been tested, and a study done in 2005 found a positive relationship between clothing comfort and exam scores (Bell, Cardello & Schultz, 2005). These researchers found that “the more formal the attire, the lower the comfort rating of that attire and the lower the exam score.” Collegefashion.net says “you’ll feel more awake and ready for your test if you’re dressed normally” (Zephyr, 2008). This begs the question, should students even make an effort to change the way they dress on exam day?

So what should students wear for an exam? I am trying to discover what clothing constitutes the best exam performance. What clothes make students feel more prepared, focused, or set for success in academics? Also, is there a correlation between fabulousness and exam success? I am interested in whether or not

students who feel empowered, attractive, and good about how they look and feel during an exam will achieve a higher score than students who do not feel “special” about how they look. How should students feel about the way they look when they go into an exam? Will being on trend make people feel smarter and more prepared? Will students who feel they look sloppy be distracted by this thought and perform more poorly on an exam? Does feeling well put-together contribute to focus? Does that extra bit of time getting ready before a test allow time for the brain to calm down or should they have used that time to study instead? Fashion can affect attitude, which can affect performance, so it makes sense that being in a good place with what someone has on, will help him or her get in the high achieving mindset and actually do better.

METHOD

Survey

I decided to design a survey that would be given to students after they completed an exam to ask them what they were wearing, and how they felt about what they were wearing, as well as the score they received. An anonymous survey was chosen as the method of data collection, as it was the quickest way of gathering a large pool of responses. It was also the safest way of collecting sensitive data like college exam scores. For this reason, all the data was self-reported and based on the students' perceptions.

The survey questions were separated into three main sections. First, I asked questions to ascertain what kind of students the responders were. I asked about grade point average, the amount of time the students typically spent studying for an exam and what kind of test taker they were. Second, I asked questions about the students' level of interest in fashion. I wanted to see how much time and effort they typically put into preparing their overall look. Third, I asked about the students' most recent exam. I asked about how much time and effort they put into studying for the exam, and also how important this exam was and whether or not it was for a class in their major. I asked about how much time and effort they put into preparing their overall look for the exam, how they felt they looked during the exam, and what they were wearing.

At the end of the survey, I included questions that asked if the students did anything extra or special to prepare their appearance for the exam. I asked whether they thought they performed better when they dressed-up for an exam and if they

tried to dress like someone who would have aced the exam (like a professor or industry professional). The final few questions asked about the students' age, gender, and major, and were included in order to see how each of these elements factored in to the results. The questions were a mix of multiple choice and free response. The complete survey is included in the appendix (Appendix A).

There were eight questions that helped pinpoint the main factors of the study: how the student felt about what they were wearing, and why they looked the way they did for the exam. There was one question that asked about the resulting score. The remaining twelve questions were included to help categorize the participants by age, gender, major, time spent studying for the exam, typical academic performance and test performance, as well as interest in fashion and typical time and effort spent preparing their overall appearance. A couple of questions were asked to categorize the value or significance of the test to the student. I wanted to sort the students and their responses this way, because these were the conditions that I predicted to also have a strong affect on the results of the study.

Procedure

The survey link was sent to students in five different classes, all offered through the college of business and one sorority. Those who participated did so voluntarily with no compensation. The survey was sent to students who had taken an exam for one of their regular classes within a week of receiving the email. The survey responses were collected over a period of two weeks. The study was

conducted in the middle of term, so the results refer to dress and preparation for college midterm exams. It was sent out via email by the professors of the courses and the sorority chapter president. Included were an informed consent statement and a link to the survey. The statement can be found in the appendix (Appendix B).

RESULTS

Participants

There were forty-two respondents to the survey. Of this, thirty-eight were female and four were male. There were twelve students aged 18-20, twenty-six aged 21-23, and four who were 24 or older. Twelve students were in the School of Design and Human Environment, and eleven more had another College of Business major. The remaining nineteen were a mix of Liberal Arts, Public Health and Human Sciences, and Science majors. The participants' GPA's ranged from 2.45 to 4.0, and their level of interest in fashion ranged from "not interested" to extremely interested. The majority of the students typically put at least some effort into completing their overall look, or their "dress" everyday, with only two saying they usually put no effort into completing their daily dress.

Findings

The following data sets are organized by relevant survey question. The scores were recorded as letter grades. Of the forty-two students, thirty-eight (90.5%) passed their exam and four did not. I will report on the amount of effort each student put into preparing his or her overall look on the day of the exam, how the student felt about what he or she was wearing, the student's level of interest in fashion, the differences between the genders, among the age groups, and how much each student studied. I will also report on what type of person the students believed they looked like during the exam, as well as how they feel they generally perform

when they like the way they look. I will conclude with a brief report on what the students were wearing.

Each student was asked to select how much effort they put into completing their overall look on the day of their most recent exam. Of the forty-two respondents: fourteen students scored an A on the exam (33%), fourteen scored a B on the exam (33%), ten scored a C on the exam, (24%) and four scored a D or an F on the exam (10%). For each of these scorers, this is how much effort each put into completing their dress (see also TABLE 1):

- Scored an A: 7% put “a good deal of effort” into completing their dress, 72% put “some effort” into completing their dress, and 21% put no effort into completing their dress on the day of the exam.
- Scored a B: 14% put “a good deal of effort” into completing their dress, 36% put “some effort” into completing their dress, and 50% put “no effort” into completing their dress on the day of the exam.
- Scored a C: 20% put “a good deal of effort” into completing their dress, 50% put “some effort” into completing their dress, and 30% put “no effort” into completing their dress on the day of the exam.
- Scored a D/F: 50% put some effort into completing their dress and 50% put no effort into completing their dress on the day of the exam.

TABLE 1.	No effort	Some effort	A good deal of effort
A 14 students	21%	72%	7%
B 14 students	50%	36%	14%
C 10 students	30%	50%	20%
D/F 4 students	50%	50%	0%

There were five students who reported putting out “a good deal of effort” to complete their dress, twenty-two who reported putting out “some effort” to complete their dress, and fifteen who reported putting out “no effort” to complete their dress on the day of the exam. This is how each of those students performed on the exam (see also TABLE 2):

- A good deal of effort: 100% passed the exam
- Some effort: 90% passed the exam and 10% did not pass
- No effort: 86% passed the exam and 14% did not pass

TABLE 2.	Passed	Failed
No effort 15 students	86%	14%
Some effort 22 students	90%	10%
A good deal of effort 5 students	100%	0%

There were thirty-six students who commented on how they felt about the way they were dressed during the exam. Of these, 47% had positive comments about their appearance and 53% had negative comments about their appearance. This is how each of these groups performed (see also TABLE 3):

- Positive comments: 94% passed and 59% earned a B or better
- Negative comments: 89% passed and 68% earned a B or better

TABLE 3.	Passed	Failed	Earned A or B	Earned C/D/F
Positive Feelings about Appearance	94%	6%	59%	41%
Negative Feelings about Appearance	89%	11%	68%	32%

The students were also asked to report on their level of interest in fashion. Of the forty-two participants, 21% said they had no interest in fashion, 36% said they were somewhat interested in fashion, 29% said they were very interested in fashion, and 14% reported “it’s my life.” Only one student that said he or she wasn’t interested in fashion reported putting “a good deal of effort” into completing his or her dress on the day of the exam, but the individual reported looking nice every day due to work obligations. 67% of the students who were at least “very interested” in fashion scored well on the exam (earning a B or better), and 33% of these students scored poorly on the exam (earning a C or lower).

The students were also asked, “do you feel as though you perform better when you like how you look?” 40% of the students selected either “absolutely” or “very possible.” All but one of this 40% passed the exam (and that student reported putting no effort into completing their dress on the day of the exam.) 60% of the students selected either “somewhat,” “no idea,” or “not at all.” Of these students, 88% passed the exam and 12% did not pass.

The amount of time that each student studied for the exam was surveyed. Three students studied less than one hour and they earned: one A, one B, and one C.

Seven students studied between one and two hours and they earned: one A, four B's, one C, and one D. Twelve students studied between two and three hours and they earned: four A's, four B's, three C's, and one D. Six students studied between three and four hours and they earned: three A's, one B, one C, and one D. Ten students studied between four and five hours and they earned: three A's, two B's, four C's, and one D. Finally, four students studied more than five hours, and they earned two A's and two B's (see TABLE 4).

TABLE 4.	<1 hr	1-2 hrs	2-3 hrs	3-4 hrs	4-5 hrs	>5 hrs
A	1	1	4	3	3	2
B	1	4	4	1	2	2
C	1	1	3	1	4	0
D/F	0	1	1	1	1	0

Shows the number of students who both studied the amount of hours (column) and received the grade (row).

Of the four males, two made no effort in completing their dress on the day of the exam. One of these two earned an A and the other earned a B. The other two males reported making some effort in completing their dress on the day of the exam and they both earned a B on the exam.

From the youngest age group, students 18-20, nine made some effort in completing their dress for the exam and they earned: six A's, one B, and two C's. One made a good deal of effort in completing his or her dress and that individual earned a C. Two put no effort into completing their dress on the day of the exam and these two earned a B and a D (see TABLE 5). From the middle age group, students 21-23, four put a good deal of effort into their dress and they earned: one A, two B's, and one C. Ten put some effort into their dress and they earned: three A's, three B's, two C's, and two D's. Twelve put no effort into their dress and they earned: two A's, six

B's, three C's, and one D (see TABLE 6). From the oldest age group, 24 and older, three students put some effort into their dress on the day of the exam and these individuals earned an A, a B, and a C. The fourth put no effort into his or her dress for the exam and that individual earned an A (see TABLE 7).

TABLE 5.	A	B	C	D/F
No effort 2 students	0	1	0	1
Some effort 9 students	6	1	2	0
A good deal of effort 1 student	0	0	1	0

TABLE 6.	A	B	C	D/F
No effort 12 students	2	6	3	1
Some effort 10 students	3	3	2	2
A good deal of effort 4 students	1	2	1	0

TABLE 7.	A	B	C	D/F
No effort 1 student	1	0	0	0
Some effort 3 students	1	1	1	0
A good deal of effort 0 students	0	0	0	0

Finally, the participants were asked to rate their dress against a list of five people and select the person who they were dressed the most similarly to during the exam. Of the forty-two respondents, thirty-seven students looked like a person either engaged in a leisure activity or a person at home, while only five students

selected either a business professional in their industry or a person on a date. 40% of the students reported looking like a person at home and these people earned: six A's, six B's, four C's, and one D. 48% of the students reported looking like a person engaged in a leisure activity and they earned: six A's, seven B's, four C's, and three D's. Two students selected a business professional from their industry as the person whom they looked the most similar to and both of these students earned an A on the exam. Three students selected a person on a date as whom they looked most similar to. One of these students earned a B and the other two students earned C's (see TABLE 8).

TABLE 8.	A	B	C	D/F
Person engaged in a leisure activity 20 students	6	7	4	3
Person at home 17 students	6	6	4	1
Business professional in affiliated industry 2 students	2	0	0	0
Person on a date 3 students	0	1	2	0

The participants were asked to describe what they were wearing and the responses included a wide range of apparel and level of detail in their descriptions. There was only one description that many of the students had in common. 43% of students reported wearing yoga pants or leggings with a shirt or sweatshirt. These students ranged widely in their exam scores and whether they felt positively or negatively about their appearance. About half rated the yoga pant and sweatshirt look as "some effort" and the other half as "no effort." Of those few who described a

more put-together and fashionable look, their scores were evenly A's, B's, and C's. For those who listed jeans, a sweatshirt, and sneakers, they were half and half on reporting positively about how they were dressed and negatively about how they were dressed. The scores of the students wearing jeans, a sweatshirt, and sneakers were evenly A's, B's, and C's as well.

Discussion

The relationship between exam score and level of effort exerted to complete the overall look for the exam may suggest that those who put more effort into their dress can earn a higher score. The score with the highest amount of students who made at least some effort was an A, but the C earners had a higher amount of students giving at least some effort (70%) than the B earners (50%). If we look at the exam score in terms of those who passed versus those who didn't, 100% of the those who made a good deal of effort passed, 90% of those who made some effort passed, and only 86% of those who made no effort passed, which is supportive of the theory that dressing with intent will help performance.

There were slightly fewer students who made positive comments (such as "I felt pleased," or "I liked how I looked") about their dress than students who shared negative comments about their dress (such as "I felt under-dressed" or "my clothes were unflattering"). Of those who left positive comments, 94% passed and 59% earned a B or better. Of those who left negative comments, 89% passed, which is only 5% lower than those who left positive comments, and 68% earned a B or better, which is almost 10% higher than those who commented positively about

their dress. This shows that how we end up feeling about the way we look during an exam does not necessarily have an effect on our score.

Of the 43% of students that were interested in fashion (either very interested or extremely interested) 67% earned a B or better and 33% earned a C or lower. So most of the students who are interested in dress and how they look did well on the exam. Of the students who had thought about dress and appearance having an effect on performance, all but one passed, which suggests that those who are more conscious of this correlation will pass exams. However many of the students reported having no or little confidence in a positive correlation between positive feelings of dress, and higher performance, and these students still mostly passed. But 75% of those that did not pass were in the “skeptic” group. All of this may hint at successfulness being more common in those who are fashion conscious, or those who are confident in the positive effects of dress, but with this group, the result is still largely inconclusive on this variable.

The amount of time the student spent studying for the exam did not have a significant relationship with exam performance, ironically, with the lowest scores being in the middle groups. For this reason, I do not think it affected the results of the relationship between dress and exam performance. Neither the students' genders, nor their ages showed any kind of effect on how they related dress to exam performance.

When I asked the students whom they felt they looked most similar to, the majority of respondents selected “a person engaged in a leisure activity” or “a person at home.” All of the students who did not pass their exams were in one of

these categories. We can assume that a student who is dressed like a person on a date is dressed fashionably, however, the grades were average in this category. The two students who dressed like a business professional in their industry earned A's. This suggests that wearing professional apparel in an exam may lead to a higher academic score.

I asked the students to describe what they were wearing during the exam and although a few people were very descriptive, the vast majority was not. Based on the descriptions I did receive, I loosely categorized the "outfits" into sweats/work-out clothes with 7% of students fitting this description; jeans, sneakers, and sweatshirts with 17% of students fitting this description; a unique, fashionable, or professional look with 14% of students in this category; and yoga pants/leggings with a sweater or sweatshirt - 43%, the majority, fit into this category (19% of students left no description of their clothing). Each of the categories had students earning A's, B's, and C's, students who made both some effort and no effort to complete their look, and students who left both positive and negative comments. This left me with almost no idea of what kinds of clothes may lead a student to perform better on an exam.

There are some key considerations we must take into account when analyzing the results of this study. First, the only method of data collection was a survey in which students were asked to self-report on their feelings, behaviors, and perceptions and there is no assurance of the accuracy of this information. The scores were not verified with the instructors of the classes, and an observer did not record the student's appearance. Second, the surveys were taken after the students

received their scores, not right after the students took the exams, so some thoughts and feelings could have changed or been lost in the time it took for the instructors to evaluate and distribute the scores. The scoring process can take anywhere from one day to one week and a few students even reported forgetting what they were wearing on the exam, let alone how they felt they looked.

Third, this study was conducted at Oregon State University in the Pacific-Northwest. Almost all of the students in this study wore yoga pants and leggings, jeans and sneakers, sweatshirts or “hoodies,” and workout clothes. With the top active-wear companies in the world, the unpredictable weather, and the very laid-back atmosphere, Oregon is unique in what students wear to class and around campus in comparison to other parts of the US and the world. It is difficult to evaluate an effect that fashionable clothing or professional clothing can have on students’ feelings about their appearance and their performance when unfashionable or unprofessional clothing may not be very different from this in Oregon. This study conducted on another campus, in another state will likely yield very different results.

CONCLUSION

For a study of only forty-two students and the reasons mentioned above, there is very little that we are able to conclude based on this study. My hope was to discover whether or not a student who wears clothing that causes him or her to feel fashionable, professional, attractive, or otherwise well put together, will earn higher marks on an exam in comparison to if they had worn more casual, unstylish, unprofessional, or unflattering clothing. There appears to be evidence based on this study in favor of a positive relationship between “dressing-up” and performing well on college exams, but further research is needed. A study that includes two separate groups of students, those who purposefully dressed well, and those who made no effort to alter their appearance will be needed to produce clearer results. I encourage readers to consult the section below on suggestions for further study.

Suggestions for Further Study

Due to time restrictions and the sensitivity of the study in regards to exam performance manipulation, there were many aspects of the study that had to be altered or condensed. I have many recommendations for further study on the topic of exam apparel and achievement. First, I recommend selecting and organizing the participants prior to the exam and at the beginning of the studying period. I would attempt to monitor and observe how the students study for the exam to see how this variable plays into the study and possibly eliminate self-reporting errors. It would also be interesting to survey the participants on their level of interest in fashion

prior to the study time to see if there is a difference in how the more fashion-conscious students prepare.

Another recommendation is to separate the participants into groups. I would encourage either one study with three different groups: people told to dress casually, people told to dress professionally, and people told to dress fashionably, or I would recommend separating the professional and fashionable concepts into two different studies. I recommend surveying the students prior to the exam to ask how they feel about the way they look and why they chose to wear what they did. I also recommend surveying the students immediately after the exam. Because we needed to ask the students to self-report their results in order to protect their privacy, many students took the survey a few days or more after taking the exam and their exact feelings and reasoning may not have been the same as how they felt during or immediately after the exam.

If possible, I recommend watching the students during the exam and taking notes about what exactly they were wearing, and how they interacted with their clothing during the exam. The actual clothing could then be studied to see if there is a pattern in which clothing was worn by the highest performing students. Notes could be made on how comfortable the students looked during the exam and whether they were frequently adjusting something about their clothes. I also recommend asking the professor to share the scores for each student to ensure an accurate report. My final recommendation is to conduct a study on the dress of professors and how their students dress on exam days and how those students perform on the exams.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Survey

Please answer all questions as honestly as possible. It is more important that you answer honestly than try to say what you think I want to hear. Use whatever language you prefer to explain your answers. Your responses are completely anonymous. This survey is completely voluntary and you may stop the survey at any time.

- How many total hours do you typically spend studying for an exam?
 - Less than 1 hour
 - Between 1 and 2 hours
 - Between 2 and 3 hours
 - Between 3 and 4 hours
 - Between 4 and 5 hours
 - More than 5 hours

- What is your OSU grade point average? ____

- Do you feel you are a strong test taker?
 - No
 - Somewhat
 - Not sure
 - Pretty strong
 - Definitely

- What grade did you earn on your most recent exam? ____

- How much time did you spend studying for your most recent exam?
 - Less than 1 hour
 - Between 1 and 2 hours
 - Between 2 and 3 hours
 - Between 3 and 4 hours
 - Between 4 and 5 hours
 - More than 5 hours

- How important to you was this exam?
 - Not important
 - Somewhat important
 - Very important
 - Extremely important

- Was the exam in your major? ____

- What would you say is your level of interest in fashion?
 - Not Interested
 - Somewhat Interested
 - Very Interested
 - It's my life

Please add any comments about your interest in fashion:

- How much effort do you typically put into completing your overall look for the day?
 - No effort
 - Some effort
 - A good deal of effort
 - It is a long, important process

Please add any comments about how much time and effort you typically put into planning your daily outfits:

- How much time do you usually spend getting ready in the morning for a normal day?
 - Less than 15 minutes
 - Between 15 and 30 minutes
 - Between 30 and 45 minutes
 - Between 45 minutes and 1 hour
 - More than 1 hour

- How much effort did you put into completing your overall look for the day of your most recent exam?
 - No effort
 - Some effort
 - A good deal of effort
 - It was a long, methodical process

Please add any comments:

- How much time did you spend getting ready the morning of your exam?
 - Less than 15 minutes
 - Between 15 and 30 minutes
 - Between 30 and 45 minutes
 - Between 45 minutes and 1 hour
 - More than 1 hour

- How did you feel about the way you looked during the exam? (For example, did you feel underdressed, indifferent, pleased with what you had on, or felt like you were looking great?) Please share your comments:

- Did you do anything special to get ready for your most recent exam? (For example, did you wear a favorite outfit or put more effort into your appearance than usual)? Please share your comments:

- What were you wearing during the exam?

- Which individual is most likely to be dressed in the way you dressed for the exam?
 - Professor
 - Business professional in your industry
 - Person engaged in leisure activity
 - Person on a date
 - Person at home

- Do you feel as though you perform better when you like how you look?
 - Not at all
 - No idea
 - Somewhat
 - Very possible
 - Absolutely

- Have you ever dressed up or looked your best on an exam day in the hopes that it will make you feel better and thus perform better/achieve a higher score? Please share your comments:

- What is your gender? ____

- What is your age? ____

- What is your major? ____

Appendix B. Informed Consent Statement

Hello Student,

My name is Casey Anderson and I am an undergraduate student in the University Honors College. In order to complete my honors degree, I am required to design a thesis that will contribute to the knowledge of research in my field. As a Merchandising Management student, I have decided to study a topic that incorporates the concept of dress. Please help me by taking this survey and sharing your experiences and opinions.

This survey is completely anonymous and none of the information you provide will allow me to identify you. It should take 10 minutes or less to complete. Participation is completely voluntary and you may choose not to answer a question or end the survey at any time. I also ask that you be completely honest in answering all questions. You will not receive any compensation for completing this survey.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, do not hesitate to contact Casey Anderson by email at andercas@onid.oregonstate.edu or by phone at 541-977-4486. If you wish to hear about the results once the research is completed, feel free to contact me.

I appreciate your support of thesis research and my learning! Thank you for taking the time to contribute.

https://qtrial.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_bIXMYT5diwHW7Wt

