Examining factors that influence elementary teachers' dress habits

Jill K. Camburn
Rowan University

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EXAMINING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS’ DRESS HABITS

by

Jill K. Camburn

A Thesis

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Approved by

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ABSTRACT

Jill K. Camburn
Examining Factors that Influence Elementary Teachers' Dress Habits
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Dr. Marjorie Madden
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The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that impact the attire that elementary teachers choose to wear to work. This study was conducted in an upper elementary school (grades three through five) in a large K-12 public school district in Camden County, New Jersey. The participants were 44 elementary, special education, and special area teachers whose teaching experience varied. Participants completed surveys in which they used a Likert-type attitude scale to assign ratings to various possible factors. Data from the surveys was recorded in percentages and organized into groups according to years of experience. Interviews were also conducted to obtain more information about teachers' points of view. A significant finding of the study was that teachers say they dress because of the hands-on nature of the job, to make a positive impression on parents/guardians, to set a positive example for students, and because of the effect their dress has on student behavior. Implications for future research include examining the previously mentioned factors individually to determine the impact that each has on the attitudes, behavior, and/or learning of students.
Acknowledgments

To my family, for your unwavering love and support; and to Dave, for your patience and encouragement.

Thanks to Dr. Madden, for your guidance and wit.

In loving memory of EDC, MEC, and AKC.
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Chapter One

Introduction

I believe that teachers, in gaining the right to dress as they please, have forfeited a few cubits in their stature as role models ... by comporting ourselves in dress and language that validate our position as role models, we make a strong impact.

(Henry B. Maloney)

Purpose and Rationale

The present study is intended to determine which factors impact the attire that elementary teachers choose to wear to work. On any given day, a visitor to an elementary school can see teachers dressing in any number of ways, from casually to professionally. While some teachers see it fit to wear business attire in the classroom, concern about young teachers wearing flip-flops and tank tops, and baring midriffs, tattoos, and piercings in the classroom has become a growing concern among administrators (Barker, 2003; Million, 2004). This range of dress is largely due to the belief that a teacher’s work attire is a personal matter, a First Amendment right protected by the Constitution (Lemley, 1980), and a right that teachers’ associations have been quick to defend (Simmons, 1996). But does a teacher’s attire really make a difference? Should teachers be concerned with the effect that their dress choices have on students, parents, and administrators?

Research has shown that school administrators exhibit a firm preference for dress that is anything but casual. A study by Lang (1986) reveals that administrators consider a teacher’s attire important at the time of an interview. In addition, more than three-
quarters of the administrators in Lang’s study admit that a classroom teacher’s attire can suggest his or her potential success as a teacher. Other research shows that administrators elsewhere feel that a teacher’s attire is indeed important. An email survey completed by Million (2004) says that principals from around the country believe that “professional dress for teachers [is] not only necessary, but [shows] respect for the school and [has] a positive impact on student behavior” (¶2).

While some teacher dress code policies have been created by proactive administrators who notice tattoos, body piercings, and provocative attire among their employees (Barker, 2003; Million, 2004), others have been the result of parental complaints that teachers are “wearing sloppy or sexually suggestive clothes” in the workplace (Simmons, 1996, ¶4). In an effort to voice her opinion on the issue, Rhonda Edwards wrote to an area newspaper. She says, “I find it interesting that a standard dress code for teachers seems to be difficult to enforce or develop...Is a knee-length skirt or a shirt that doesn’t rise above a woman’s navel too much to ask of our teachers?” (Edwards, 2003).

In addition, some researchers and administrators exhibit a valid concern for the effect that inappropriate or suggestive attire can have on elementary-aged children. Victoria Lackey, a PTA vice president in Charlotte, says, “Bellybutton rings have a great place in the world, but not in my child’s classroom. We don’t want kids coming home saying, ‘Oh, Mom, those bellybutton rings—we want one!’” (Barker, 2003). Rod Federwisch, a principal in California who receives complaints from parents about dress code double standards, says “…we can’t be hypocritical and expect less of teachers...Kids are looking to teachers for direction and guidance” (Barker, 2003). The
idea that teachers should act as positive role models, in their actions and in their dress, is one that is supported by a considerable amount of research.

Moreover, although research supports the notion that teachers should take care in selecting an appropriate and conservative wardrobe for work, there is little known about the factors that impact the attire that teachers choose to wear to work. Administrators may prefer a certain standard of dress among their teachers (Barker, 2003; Lang, 1986; Million, 2004; Simmons, 1996), but are teachers even concerned with the impression that their attire makes on those administrators?

Research fails to show the importance that teachers place on the many different dynamics, including administration, which influence their dress habits. This is a significant problem because teachers are broadly underrepresented in the issue. Perhaps if we investigate the teachers' point of view, we can gain a better understanding of the policy changes that can be made in order to make dress code policies more relevant to, and effective for, the teachers who are expected to adhere to them.

Overview of Methodology

Participants in the present study include 44 teachers in an upper elementary school (grades three through five) in a large township in Camden County, New Jersey that lacks a formal administrative dress code policy for teachers. The study consists of descriptive research using an ethnographic approach and employs two qualitative methods of data collection: surveys and interviews.

During this study, a Likert-type attitude survey will be distributed to all participants. The survey will first require participants to provide general demographic data (i.e. grade level, number of years of teaching experience, educational attainment, and
gender). Next, participants will be presented with a number of statements and will be asked to rate the influence that these factors have on their work dress habits. This will be done using a scale of 1 to 5 (1= strongly agree, 3= neutral, 5= strongly disagree). Finally, the survey will require respondents to choose a category of dress that most closely represents their daily work attire. At the end of the survey, participants indicate whether or not they would be willing to discuss the results of the survey with the researcher. After surveys have been returned, the researcher will analyze the data to look for trends in the responses. In particular, the researcher will look for those factors that seem to have the most impact on the teachers’ attire, as well as differences between the response rates of participants based on the number of years of work experience that they have attained.

In addition to the surveys, the researcher will conduct interviews with randomly selected participants (whose identity will remain confidential) to discuss what they consider to be the single biggest factor that influences their work attire. The researcher will use these findings to enhance the survey findings.

Limitations

General limitations include the small sample size for this study. Due to significant restrictions on time and resources, the participants in this study have been selected from the researcher’s internship placement and will most likely include fewer than 60 individuals. This being said, the likelihood of the results being generalizable to an entire population is relatively low. Yet any trends that I identify may warrant future investigation into the effects that those specific factors have on teachers’ dress habits.

One threat to validity could be statistical regression on the survey if the participants tend to regress toward an average rating on the rating scale. Another
limitation could be a lack of response to the open ended option on each survey item. For each item, a space is left for participants' thoughts, but failure to provide these responses may leave me with mere numbers from the surveys, instead of with comments that help contextualize the ratings. Experimenter effects could also become an issue if too many of the participants become aware of the purpose of the study before completing the attitude survey. I must handle this aspect carefully, since I will be completing an internship at the research site before, and during, the data collection period.

Definitions

The reader should understand that, for the purposes of this study, the terms "elementary" and "upper elementary" refer to grades three through five. It is also important to note that the term "administrator" refers to individual school principals, as well as to district superintendents. In addition, the terms "dress code" and "dress code policy" refer to formally agreed upon (either orally or in writing) standards of attire. For the purposes of data organization, the term "experience group" refers to the categorization of responses based on the number of years teaching experience that the participant has attained.

Organization

Chapter two of the research report begins with an overview of how the chapter is organized, includes a review of literature findings that are relevant to the issue of teacher dress, and concludes with a summary of the research and how it is related to the present research question. Chapter three provides the reader with the general methodology of the present study, including descriptions of the context, participants, data collection instruments used, procedures, and data analysis. Chapter four presents a discussion of the
findings of the study, and chapter five discusses the implications of the findings.
Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

If a person were to take a walk through an elementary school on any given day of the week, he or she might be surprised to see the variety of ways in which teachers therein were dressed. Some teachers may be dressed in formal pantsuits or skirtsuits; some may sport dress pants and conservative blouses or button-down shirts; others may be dressed more casually in khaki pants, corduroys, or jeans. To some onlookers this image is the norm in the field of education, but to others, this variety of attire in the professional teaching environment is baffling. Why are so many teachers dressing down? This review presents a legal basis for the inconsistency of teacher dress, administrators’ views on the issue, and suggestions that the teachers’ position as role models may have much to do with the present debate.

Legal Foundations

The foundation for this issue lies in legal terms. Presently, the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution protects teachers’ choices when it comes to dressing for the workplace. Lemley (1980, ¶4) points out that “the U.S. Constitution does provide citizens (teachers)…freedom of speech and it is fairly well settled that the way a person dresses…is symbolic expression.” In some instances where districts have established teacher dress codes, local teachers’ unions have forced repeals, saying that the codes violate teachers’ personal liberties. For example, when a school principal in Norfolk, Virginia attempted to establish a dress code for teachers, they fought back by going to the board of education. The principal argued that she made her decision based on complaints
from parents about teachers donning "sloppy or sexually suggestive clothes", but the
president of the teachers' union "attacked the proposed plans and urged school officials
to abandon the idea" (Simmons, 1996, ¶5). At Lyle S. Briggs Fundamental in Chino,
California, the union is just as strong. When the principal there tried to introduce a basic
dress code for teachers, he was shut down because his attempt was perceived as an
infringement on academic freedom (Barker, 2003). In the past, though, many dress codes
have been created in response to parents' complaints that teachers dress too provocatively
or carelessly, such as in the Norfolk case, and also in response to teachers' complaints
about a lack of respect from students. Sternberg (2003) cites an incident in Colorado
Springs where provocative attire sparked a dress code change. She says that when a
female teacher went out on the playground wearing a mini-skirt and a thong, a "senior
teacher came in outraged" because she thought the other teacher wasn't wearing
underwear.

A common result of these issues being paired with powerful unions has been the
creation of a myriad of district policies with dress codes for teachers that are leniently
worded, and that advocate professional-type dress without actually requiring it. For
example, a code in Los Angeles Unified suggests that teachers "come neat and clean"
while another at Alleghany Highlands Public Schools (Norfolk, Virginia) declares that
"dress should reflect the professional position of the employee" (Barker, 2003). In
Sayreville, New Jersey, the district superintendent refers to certain types of attire as
"strongly encouraged but not required" (Sternberg, 2003). In this same manner,
administrators across the country attempt to persuade their teachers to dress a little more
thoughtfully and a little more conservatively, while still avoiding vigorous wording that
will trigger union action.

First Impressions

But why are teachers so inclined to push the envelope when it comes to what form of attire is appropriate to wear to work every day? It is my belief that many of the same teachers who are fighting these policies have already conformed to an expectation of professional dress at least once in their careers. I am, of course, alluding to the initial job interview. Whenever I prepare for an interview, the concern of what to wear weighs heavily on my mind. I want to find a look that says something about me as a person, but my main focus is to choose attire that helps me maintain an air of confidence and professionalism on my part. Nourie (1992) says, “Wonder why people get so dressed up for interviews if they don’t plan to dress that way on the job? Some of us should keep pictures of ourselves on interview days to remember just how good looking we are” (¶13). After all, first impressions can be tremendously telling to an administrator. In their book, Looking Terrific, Cho and Grove (1978) detail the importance of a first impression:

When you first enter a room, office, bus or business meeting, you have one free moment in which you receive the complete and undivided attention of those around you. In that instant, the people observing decide whether you are of interest to them or not. (p. 20)

While Cho and Grove do not relate this statement specifically to teaching, it can be assumed that an interviewer, perhaps a principal or a superintendent, can decide in that one free moment whether or not the candidate in question fits the image that their school wishes to maintain. If a teacher-candidate were to walk into a job interview wearing casual pants and a low-cut blouse, it is my assumption that the administrator might very well take one look at her and conclude that she does not take her career seriously. In that
one free moment, the administrator may favor moving on to the next candidate rather than spending time getting past the initial judgment about the first. Lang (1986) asked administrators a similar question: “When interviewing a candidate for a teaching position, does the individual’s attire influence your decision?” A positive response of 83.8% further supports the notion that administrators’ first impressions of teacher-candidates are important in interviews, and thus their attire can make a sizeable difference in whether or not they are considered for a position.

In the same study performed by Lang (1986), the author concludes that administrators do, in fact, exhibit biases based on the manner in which teachers dress. Among the population of administrators that Lang surveyed, it was found that approximately two-thirds of administrators believed that a teacher’s attire could be a sign of his or her potential success. Along with that notion was a very strong belief among participants that an interviewee’s attire does, in fact, impact administrators’ hiring decisions. The participants in Lang’s survey seemed to place an emphasis on the importance of a teacher’s attire. 78.8% of the respondents even went so far as to say that colleges of education should “conduct seminars for student teachers on attire and physical appearance.”

**Dress and Discipline**

Moreover, Lang’s study (1986) shows that administrators exhibit strong opinions about the role that a teacher’s dress can play when it comes to classroom discipline. The results of his survey reveal that 82% of administrators believe that a teacher’s way of dress affects students’ behavior in the classroom. Additionally, 77.3% of administrators report that discipline is a greater problem for teachers who dress in a casual manner, as
opposed to those who dress more conservatively. Simmons (1996), a supervisor of student teachers, relates a specific incident where a teacher’s dress made a difference in classroom discipline. One of her students, a male student teacher who looked young and dressed like his students, was experiencing significant discipline problems. His cooperating teacher suggested that he try dressing more professionally as an attempt to make a distinction between himself and his students. “The result,” Simmons says, “was that he not only looked more like a teacher, he felt more like one. Most important, he soon began to act more like a teacher, and the students began to respect him as a teacher.”

Also, according to the findings of Grossnickle (1981), “teachers who dress ‘better’ have students who work harder and longer” (as cited in Nourié, 1992, ¶12). These examples complement the findings of Lang’s (1986) question of whether or not a teacher’s attire influences students’ behavior in the classroom. His findings show that 82% of the administrators surveyed do believe that a teacher’s dress can, in fact, impact the behavior of his or her students. In concurrence, another survey of principals across the nation finds that principals agree that “professional dress for teachers [is] not only necessary, but show[s] respect for the school and [has] a positive impact on student behavior” (Million, 2004).

**Teachers as Role Models**

Another argument for the importance of teacher dress, and one that the literature supports, is that teachers are integral role models for the students that they interact with on a daily basis. Throughout the length of the school year, students spend a significant amount of time engaging in face-to-face interactions with their teachers. With this in mind, Simmons (1996, ¶2) suggests that teachers “are wittingly or unwittingly role
models in everything they do, including the manner in which they dress.” I have often heard my professors and supervisors comment that if my students may not chew gum or run in the hallway, then I, as the teacher, must model the same. “Children copy our behavior—so our message must be consistent with our performance,” says Beverly Johns, past president of the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders. She continues, “Teachers are often astonished at the subtle ways they slip up on this. Students following a dress code not followed by the teachers themselves get the message that the rule is arbitrary and unfair” (Johns, 2000, ¶2-3). In some schools, such as Eastover Elementary in Charlotte, teachers are showing up for work with flip-flops, tattoos, sexy jeans, and body piercings. The principal describes it by simply saying, “Ooh, it [is] scary” (as cited in Barker, 2003).

Do we really want young children to think that this is acceptable dress and behavior within an elementary school? “Our expectations for students are so high, we can’t be hypocritical and expect less of our teachers,” says one principal, “Kids are looking to teachers for direction and guidance, not to be their buddies” (as cited in Barker, 2003). Jan Noble, president of the Colorado Springs Education Association, agrees with the previous statement, saying, “We want to make sure we are modeling the same behaviors we are asking students to demonstrate” (Bradley, 1996, ¶17). These statements clearly demonstrate the opinion that teachers act as daily role models for their students.

Some researchers insist that students who look up to their teachers as role models might desire to exhibit the same traits as they see modeled. Nourie (1992, ¶14) comments:
If students see teachers reading, for example, they may get the idea that reading is something that the teacher really values rather than gives lip service to. If the teacher is physically fit, students may see that good nutrition and exercise are important. If teachers vote and serve on juries, students see good citizenship in action. (¶13)

To continue this same idea, if students see a teacher who takes pride in his or her physical appearance, students may desire to do the same. One school in Goose Creek, South Carolina, chose to adopt a uniform dress code for teachers that mirrors the students’ policy. The school principal says that they adopted such a policy “to provide a role model for children and unity for...faculty” (Bradley, 1996, ¶8). Teachers at a school in Niagara Falls, New York have also taken the role model notion and put it to use. There, the women opt to wear skirts, dresses, suits or tailored pants, while the men sport dress shirts and ties (Bradley, 1996, ¶2). In effect, the teachers in Niagara Falls have taken it upon themselves to set an agreed upon standard of dress in order to demonstrate high expectations for teachers and students alike. Reading these two cases may cause some readers to wonder how certain groups of teachers can see an inert value in their mode of dress while other groups dismiss its significance altogether.

Summary

The preceding review of literature has explained that, while teachers reserve a certain Constitutional right to choose their attire as an extension of free speech, an administrative preference for less casual modes of dress clearly exists. Research points out that teachers who dress conservatively may have a better chance of securing employment, may experience fewer discipline issues in the classroom, and may serve as more positive role models for their students. At the least, they show respect for administrative dress codes that students are often expected to adhere to, and in essence
they truly model a “Do as I say and as I do” approach to the issue. While this review has demonstrated the significance that some researchers, administrators, and parents place on teacher attire in the classroom, it fails to provide any concrete evidence of the teachers’ point of view simply because the teachers’ voice has not been adequately presented in the available research. Therefore, this study is designed to turn to teachers in order to answer my research question, “Which factors influence what teachers choose to wear to work every day?”
Chapter Three

Research Design

Introduction

The following chapter discusses the research design and methodology of the present study. This chapter provides a description of the context, participants, and data collection instruments. It also details the procedures for collecting and analyzing the data.

Context

The site of the present study is an upper elementary school in a large district in Camden County, New Jersey. This school employs 65 teachers, in addition to other support staff, to meet the needs of approximately 700 students. Two on-site administrators, a principal and a vice principal, oversee the operations of the school. While the school has a comprehensive district administrative code, including a dress code for students, it lacks a formally documented dress code for teachers. The teachers in the school exhibit a wide range of work attire, from denim and khaki pants to business-like attire.

Participants

Of the 65 teachers invited to participate in this study, 44 chose to participate (39 women and 5 men) without any offer of incentive. The mean number of years of teaching experience among the participants is 12.5. The participants all teach grade three, four, five, or a combination in the following types of settings: general education, inclusion, self-contained special education, resource room, physical education, art, music, media center, and computers. Of the 44 participants in this study, 16 hold undergraduate degrees, 12 hold graduate degrees, and one holds a doctorate. In addition, 15 participants
have completed some graduate requirements.

**Instruments**

Two data collection instruments are used in this study. The first instrument is a one-page (front and back) survey that includes a demographic questionnaire and a Likert-type attitude scale. The demographic portion of the survey asked participants to identify the grade level(s) that they currently teach, the number of years of teaching experience that they have, their level of educational attainment, and their gender. Following the demographic portion is a section of nine individual statements to which the participants were asked to respond. These statements relate to different factors that could possibly influence a teacher’s choice of work attire, and each of the statements is accompanied by a rating scale. Participants were asked to rate the impact that each factor has on their work attire, using a scale of 1 to 5 (1= strongly agree, 2= somewhat agree, 3= neutral, 4= somewhat disagree, 5= strongly disagree). Participants indicated their choice by circling the corresponding number below the statement. In addition, participants were provided with a space in which to write comments about each item. Following completion of the rating items, participants were asked to choose one of five categories that best describes their typical work attire. They indicated their choice by placing a mark in the box next to one of the five category descriptions. Finally, participants were asked to indicate whether or not they would be willing to discuss results of the survey with the researcher. They indicated their choice by circling “yes” or “no” in response to the inquiry.

The second instrument is in the form of brief interviews that the researcher completed with consenting participants. In order to gain more insight as to the factors that teachers perceive to be of most impact on their dress habits, the researcher asked the
interviewees, “What is the single biggest factor that impacts what you wear to work?” In performing these interviews, the researcher hopes to identify other factors that may influence dress, but that were not included on the survey. In addition, the researcher can use the data collected during these interviews to enhance the findings of the survey instrument.

Procedures

Before distributing the surveys, the researcher used a blank roster of the teachers’ names and assigned a random number to each name. (This roster was kept separately from the surveys at all times and was only referred to at the end of the data collection period.) For the purpose of keeping track of which participants completed in their surveys, each survey was numbered and distributed to the corresponding participant. Each of the blank, numbered surveys was distributed via the participants’ mailboxes in the main office of the research site. Each survey was accompanied by an envelope, which was also numbered accordingly. Upon completion of the survey, participants sealed it in the provided envelope and returned it to a secure collection box in the main office. This box was checked and emptied by the researcher multiple times each day. As the surveys were returned, the researcher met with five of the participants to conduct brief interviews in order to gain more insight regarding the impact of certain factors on participants’ work attire.

Data Analysis

When all surveys have been collected, I will code the data by organizing the numbers and percentages of responses into several charts. First, I will look at the responses of the entire population in order to determine if any factors seem to have more
of an impact on teacher attire than the others. Next, I will organize the responses according to the teaching experience of the respondents. I will classify the data into the following experience groups: one to three years, four to ten years, 11 to 20 years, and 21 years or more. This will allow me to observe the results and identify any trends or differences in responses between the experience groups. I will also classify data according to the attitudes of tenured versus non-tenured respondents to see if any trends or differences exist between these two groups. Finally, I will organize the self-categorization data into experience groups in an effort to identify patterns or trends among the dress habits of teachers from the different groups.

Data obtained from the survey will be presented in a collection of tables. These tables will provide the number and percentage of responses within each category and/or group. Since the actual number of responses differs between experience, tenured, and non-tenured groups, I will rely on percentages to determine the presence or absence of trends within the data.

The individual interviews will be transcribed and analyzed to determine whether or not the comments made by the respondents correlate with the findings of the survey results. Using the survey data and interviews, and by following the procedure listed above, the researcher will be able to collect the data necessary to investigate the question, “What are the factors that influence the dress habits of elementary teachers?”.
Chapter Four

Findings

Introduction

The following chapter presents the results of the survey and interviews. The data has been broken down into a number of charts and graphs for the purpose of interpretation and comparison across groups. (Each of these figures can be found in Appendix A.) Through analyzing the data in each category, I have identified five subsections within which to present the results. These five subsections are: 1.) the most influential factors of the study, 2.) the impact of experience groups, 3.) the impact of tenure versus non-tenure status, 4.) self-categorization of attire, and 5.) whether or not teachers support dress code policies.

Influential Factors

The data obtained in this study suggests that four of the eight factors included in the survey seem to have a notable impact on teachers' attire. These four factors are: making an impression on parents/guardians, the hands-on nature of the job, setting an example for students, and affect on student behavior. Figure 1 shows how participants rate the eight factors, in the order of most to least influential.

When asked to respond to the statement "I dress to make a positive impression on my students' parents/guardians", 86.4% of the participants indicated that they somewhat or strongly agree. This is consistent with the research, which points out that some administrative dress codes are created in response to parents' complaints that teachers dress unprofessionally (Simmons, 1996). A comment made by a teacher in an interview further supports this notion:
I want to present myself well to the parents. I spent a lot of years earning my degree and I want them to understand that I’m working hard to create a learning environment where I expect their children to work to their greatest potential, as well.

In effect, the participants in this study indicate that they are aware of the perceptions that parents and guardians have teachers based, in part, on the way they dress.

A second influential factor seems to be the fact that the hands-on nature of teaching impacts the attire that teachers choose to wear. A total of 81.8% of participants admit that they somewhat or strongly agree with this statement. Practical consideration of this finding might suggest that teachers who plan hands-on, interactive learning experiences for their students may be less likely to dress in more formal work attire.

Survey data suggests a third influential factor that 79.5% of participants indicated agreement with- choosing attire in order to set an example for students. This agreement seems to support the supposition that teachers can be pivotal role models for their students, and they must act- and dress- the part of a positive example (Barker, 2003; Bradley, 1996; Johns, 2000; Nourie, 1992; Simmons, 1996). It is also supported by the following interview comment:

My biggest factor...is the impression that I give my kids [students]. I spend more time with them than some of their family does, and I feel an obligation to be the best positive role model that I can be, including modeling how a professional woman looks and acts. I mean, how many kids claim they want to be a teacher when they grow up? It’s up to me to give them a positive frame of reference for what a teacher is.

The fourth survey statement, one that 70.5% of teachers agree with, is that the way a teacher dresses can affect the behavior of the students. In addition, one teacher said:

I want to present myself as a professional to my students and
I want to set myself apart from them. I want them to understand that I am not their friend; a partner in learning, yes, but not their friend.

Both the survey results and the previous teacher’s comment seem to support Lang (1986) and Million’s (2004) findings among administrators that the way a teacher dresses can affect student behavior, and that casually dressed teachers tend to experience more discipline problems in the classroom.

Does Experience Matter?

The data represented in Figure 2 seems to suggest that the number of years of teaching experience a teacher has may make a difference in his or her attitudes toward the factors that influence work attire. Consider, for instance, the most influential factor among the entire population- the effect that dress has on student behavior. Whereas 70.5% of the entire population strongly or somewhat agreed with the impact of this factor, analysis on the basis of experience seems to indicate that those teachers with the most experience recognize that their attire might impact the behavior of their students. This is reflected by the 75% of teachers with 11 to 20 years experience, and the 90% of teachers with more than 21 years of experience, who are in strong or somewhat agreement with the statement that the way they dress can affect the behavior of their students. Teachers with one to three years of experience report a significantly lower (66.6%) agreement.

Figure 2 also suggests that, while all experience groups tend to agree that they dress to make a positive impression on parents/guardians, inter-group differences in opinion exist. Whereas all four experience groups demonstrate an agreement rate of at least 75%, teachers with 4 to 10 years of experience seem to be most concerned with this
factor. This is shown by the 100% rate of agreement among this group of respondents.
Teachers with 21 or more years of experience also show a high rate of agreement (90%) with this statement. When it comes to the impact that the hands-on nature of the job has on attire, the data suggests a similar trend. Teachers with 4 to 10 years of experience agree with this statement the most (100%), followed by 90% agreement among teachers with 21 or more years of experience.

The results of the survey also suggest that each group of teachers differs in their agreement with the statement that they dress in a certain way to set an example for students. Teachers at the top of the experience scale seem to be most concerned with this notion (90% of those with 21 or more years experience agree), while only 46.2% of teachers with 4 to 10 years of experience agree.

**Does Tenure Matter?**

In general, there is a difference between the ratings that tenured and non-tenured participants assign to the factors. Overall, as shown in Figure 3, non-tenured teachers seem to assign lower ratings to all factors. Upon comparing the responses of the two groups, I found that a significant difference in the ratings (more than 10%) exists in three categories. The first of these categories is dressing to set an example for students. While 55.5% of non-tenured teachers agree with this statement, significantly more (85.7%) of tenured teachers show agreement, a difference of 30.2%. In addition, 88.6% of tenured teachers agree that they dress to set an example for parents and guardians, while only 77.8% of non-tenured teachers say the same. These two findings are consistent with the overall finding, which suggests that setting an example for students and their parents and guardians are two of the most influential factors that impact teachers’ attire. The most
significant negative finding of this comparison was the impact that teachers say dressing to impress administrators has on their attire. 33.3% of non-tenured teachers disagree with the notion that they dress to impress their administrators. This seems to be in contrast with the 60% of tenured teachers who are in disagreement, with 51.4% strongly disagreeing. While it was not a focus of this study, this difference may be due, in part, to the fact that non-tenured teachers have a desire to obtain a tenure recommendation from their administrators.

What Are Teachers Wearing to Work?

In addition to identifying the factors that seem to have the most impact on teachers’ attire, the survey also provided the teachers with an opportunity to categorize their typical work attire. Participants were presented with five different category descriptions and asked to choose one. Figure 4a provides a visual breakdown of the entire population’s response. The majority of participants (50%) say that they typically wear dress pants, dress/conservative shirts, or dresses to work. The next most popular category is khaki or corduroy pants/skirts, casual shirts, casual dresses. 32% of respondents say that this describes their typical work attire, and it is interesting to note that the bulk of these responses come from teachers with one to three years of experience (as shown in Figure 4b), which suggests that this experience group’s dress habits are the most informal. The next category, the most formal category, earned 11.4% of responses. These are the participants who say they wear business attire in the classroom. It is interesting to note (in Figure 4b) that all of these responses come from teachers with more than 11 years of experience, with most coming from the 21+ category. The fact that teachers with between 1 and 10 years experience do not say that their attire fits this category further
supports the research in saying that newer teachers dress more informally. In addition, one participant, a member of the 4 to 10 year experience group, made up the 2.3% of responses saying that they typically wear denim pants and casual shirts to work. Incidentally, two participants say that they wear jogging suits/sweat outfits to work, but both of these respondents happen to be the only two physical education teachers in the study.

It is interesting to note that 90% of teachers with 21 or more years of experience say their attire fits into the two most formal or businesslike categories. Additionally, 75% of the teachers with 11 to 20 years of experience also fit their attire into these two categories. Teachers with 10 and fewer years of experience say their attire tends to match that of the second and third categories, which ranges from dress pants to khakis or corduroy pants.

Do Teachers Support Dress Codes?

In addition to rating several factors as to their impact on attire and categorizing their typical attire, participants were asked to indicate their degree of support for the inclusion of dress codes in administrative policies. Overall, the entire population seems to support a dress code policy at least somewhat, as indicated by the data in Figure 5. According to this data, 72.8% of teachers indicate that they somewhat or strongly support the inclusion of a dress code for teachers. But is this sentiment fluid throughout the experience groups? Upon examination of the statistics for each experience group, I found that intergroup differences seemed to emerge. Members of the 11 to 20 year experience group show the most support for a teacher dress code. Following that group was the group of participants with 4 to 10 years of experience. 76.9% of these teachers admit that
they would accept a dress code for themselves and their colleagues. The group of
teachers with 21 or more years of experience followed, with data showing that 70% of
those teachers at least somewhat support a dress code. The group that seems to show the
least support for a dress code also happens to be the group that admits to dressing down,
this being the group of teachers with one to three years of experience, who only show
55.5% support for the inclusion of teacher dress codes.

Summary

In summary, the results of this study seem to indicate that certain factors have
more impact on teacher attire than others. In addition to this finding, the data supports the
notion that teachers’ attitudes differ depending on the number of years experience that
they have attained. In particular, non-tenured teachers assign lower ratings to many of the
factors listed on the survey. Teachers with less experience also tend to dress more
informally than their more experienced counterparts, and tend to agree least with the idea
of dress code policies.
Chapter 5

Summary and Discussion

Conclusions

The previous chapter presented the results of the study. In addition to those findings, it was surprising to observe the rating of two other factors: dressing as a form of self-expression and dressing to impress administrators. Figure 1 shows that 45.5% of teachers somewhat or strongly agree that they choose their dress as a form of self expression. Considering the legal basis of the dress code debate (as discussed in chapter two), this percentage seems low. After all, the reason that many districts fail to create or enforce dress codes for teachers is because teachers’ unions counter the policies on the basis that they violate teachers’ First Amendment right to free speech. The low support of this factor during the study might suggest that teachers and their unions cite the First Amendment if they feel their rights may be threatened, but do not truly value self-expression as an important factor. The second unexpected finding was that “making an impression on administrators” received the second lowest rating on the survey; teachers showed a mere 31.8% agreement with this assertion. According to Lang (1986) and Nourie (1992), administrators are cognizant of teachers’ attire beginning at the time of hiring. The finding that teachers seem to take administrators’ opinions into little account was unforeseen given what previous research has shown.

Chapter four also discussed the major positive findings of the study. While the number years of experience a teacher has seems to make somewhat of a difference between the opinions of the participants, overall the two sets of data point to four factors that appear to have a greater impact on what teachers wear to work. These four factors
are: the hands-on nature of the job, making an impression on parents/guardians, setting an example for students, and the effect that one’s dress may have on student behavior. The latter three findings are supported by the findings of related literature, as well as by the comments made by teachers during interviews. In the next section, I discuss possible implications for each of these highly-rated factors.

Implications

By conducting survey research, I was able to gather teachers’ opinions about a wide range of factors. After examining this data, I have identified ideas and possible implications for future research with greater specificity. The following paragraphs discuss these implications.

First, teachers agree that the hands-on nature of their job seems to affect what they can and cannot wear to work every day. As inquiry learning gains popularity in many schools and we see greater emphasis on hands-on teaching and learning techniques, it would be interesting to investigate the opinions and dress behavior of teachers who support this style of learning. Do teachers who apply these instructional methods have different attitudes about the importance of teachers’ dress in the classroom? These teachers may or may not agree with the participants in this study who say that their dress habits can affect student behavior.

Secondly, teachers responded that they dress in a certain manner to make an impression on students’ parents and/or guardians. But what is the parents’ belief? It would be extremely interesting to conduct a study in which parents had an opportunity to express their attitudes about teachers’ attire. A study of this kind could help identify whether or not parents feel that teachers are presenting themselves appropriately to the
school community, and if they believe that teachers are earning the title of professionals. This type of research could be conducted in the form of questionnaires and interviews, and could be conducted either in a specific school or district-wide.

Third, since teachers seem to rate the notion of setting an example for students rather highly in this study, it may be useful to conduct a study in which students’ attitudes towards teachers are revealed. For instance, a study might examine whether students perceive a difference in a teacher based on the way that he or she dresses. Questionnaires and student discussion groups yield valuable information concerning students’ attitudes about teachers as role models. For instance, do children agree with experts who say that teachers can, and should, set an example for students? Do students perceive teacher dress as impacting their learning?

Fourth, since participants in this study said they dress in a certain way because it affects their students’ behavior, case studies could be conducted to investigate this further. Entire classrooms could be studied to investigate the effects of teacher dress on student behavior. In the first part of a two-part study, a teacher could come to work dressed in business formal (category 1 on the survey) or business casual (category 2 on the survey), and the researcher could chart frequency and types of student behavior. After a few weeks, the teacher could switch to more casual dress, such as khakis or denim, and the researcher could again examine the student behavior. If this were carried out in multiple classrooms, the data could be presented as case studies and could help determine whether or not a teacher’s attire really makes a difference in the way students behave.

The last three suggestions for future research have the potential to make a significant impact on the field of education. In particular, they could benefit
administrators and teachers. For instance, if the data from each of the studies suggests that parents do consider teachers’ attire to be important, that students look to their teachers as role models, and that the way a teacher dresses actually causes students to behave one way or another (or any of the three), teachers who never considered attire to matter may choose to take another look at the situation. Opinion is one thing in the field of education, but evidence is another. Perhaps exposure to these studies might persuade teachers to reconsider the implications of their attire, and they may, for instance, notice behavioral trends in their own classrooms that might be related to their professional actions. Follow-up studies performed by teachers in their own classrooms could help to build on the findings of these suggested studies. Ideally, this classroom research would circulate throughout the teaching community, leading to a subtle shift in teachers’ attitudes about the topic.

The same kind of positive findings within these studies could also benefit administrators who support dress codes for teachers. As mentioned in chapter two, in many districts, administrative dress code policies are met with fierce resistance from teachers’ unions. For now, unions aggressively debate dress code policies as a violation of teachers’ First Amendment rights. Would it be the same, however, if research provided evidence of the actual impact of teacher dress on the behavior of students?

In summary, in examining the factors that seem to impact the attire that elementary teachers choose to wear to work, this study suggests the need for further research in the area of teacher dress. In the end, the results of future research could have significant implications. On one hand, they could support the notion that teachers’ attire does matter, and that teachers should be concerned with the impact that their dress has on
parents' attitudes, and more importantly, students themselves. On the other hand, the results could suggest that the way teachers dress really seems to have no effect on students' attitudes, learning and behavioral performance. If the latter were found to be true- that teachers' dress has no observable effect upon student learning and behavior- then the debate over teachers' dress would likely remain an unsettled matter, as is the case with so many other issues that fall within the realm of the First Amendment's protection of free speech.
References


Edwards, R. (2003, August 26). Teacher dress isn’t too much to ask [Letter to the editor]. *USA Today*, p. 10A.


Appèndices
Appendix A

Tables and Charts
Figure 1
Impact of Specific Factors on Attire (Entire Population)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1 to 3</th>
<th>4 to 10</th>
<th>11 to 20</th>
<th>21 +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I dress to make a positive impression on my students' impressions</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I dress to make a positive impression on my students' impressions</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The hands-on nature of my job impacts the attire that I choose to wear.</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>90.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I choose my work attire as a form of self-expression.</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I choose my work attire as a form of self-expression.</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I choose my work attire as a form of self-expression.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>

Total number of responses: 9 13 12 10
Figure 3
Survey Results
Non-Tenured (NT) Versus Tenured (T) Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>The way I dress can affect the behavior of my students.</td>
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<td>11.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I dress to impress my coworkers.</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I dress to impress my administrators.</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I dress to make a positive impression on my students' parents/guardians.</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The way I dress reflects my educational achievement.</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The hands-on nature of my job impacts the attire that I choose to wear.</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>I dress in a certain way to set an example for my students.</td>
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<td>85.7</td>
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<td>14.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>I choose my work attire as a form of self-expression.</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I support the inclusion of teacher dress codes in district/school</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results Reported in Percentages

Total Responses: 44  NT: 9  T: 35

Key
1= Strongly agree  
2= Somewhat agree  
3= Neutral  
4= Somewhat disagree  
5= Strongly disagree
Figure 4a
Self-Categorization of Typical Work Attire
Entire Population

Category descriptions

1= M: Business suit and tie
   F: Pant or skirt suits

2= M: Dress pants, dress shirt, tie
   F: Dress pants, conservative skirt, conservative top (not revealing), conservative dress

3= M: Khaki pants, corduroy pants, casual top
   F: Khaki pants/skirt, corduroy pants/skirt, casual dress, casual top, casual shoes

4= Denim pants, casual shirt, sneakers or open-toe sandals

5= Jogging suit, sweat outfit, sneakers
Figure 4b
Self-Categorization of Typical Work Attire

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
<th>All groups</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Experience (Years)</strong></td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 +</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>All groups</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Category descriptions:

1= M: Business suit and tie
   F: Pant or skirt suits

2= M: Dress pants, dress shirt, tie
   F: Dress pants, conservative skirt, conservative top (not revealing), conservative dress

3= M: Khaki pants, corduroy pants, casual top
   F: Khaki pants/skirt, corduroy pants/skirt, casual dress, casual top, casual shoes

4= Denim pants, casual shirt, sneakers or open-toe sandals

5= Jogging suit, sweat outfit, sneakers
## Figure 5
Survey Results for Entire Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The way I dress can affect the behavior of my students.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I dress to impress my coworkers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I dress to impress my administrators.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I dress to make a positive impression on my students' parents/guardians.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31.8</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The way I dress reflects my educational achievement.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The hands-on nature of my job impacts the attire that I choose to wear.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I dress in a certain way to set an example for my students.</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>I support the inclusion of teacher dress codes in district/school</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>administrative policies.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Total Responses: 44

### Key
1 = Strongly agree
2 = Somewhat agree
3 = Neutral
4 = Somewhat disagree
5 = Strongly disagree
Figure 6a
Survey Results by Experience Group
(1-3 years experience)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The way I dress can affect the behavior of my students.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I dress to impress my coworkers.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>I dress to impress my administrators.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>I dress to make a positive impression on my students' parents/guardians.</td>
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<td>55.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The way I dress reflects my educational achievement.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td>33.3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The hands-on nature of my job impacts the attire that I choose to wear.</td>
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<td>11.1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I dress in a certain way to set an example for my students.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I choose my work attire as a form of self-expression.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
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<td>I support the inclusion of teacher dress codes in district/school</td>
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<td>11.1</td>
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<td>44.4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>administrative policies.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Total Responses: 9

Key
1= Strongly agree
2= Somewhat agree
3= Neutral
4= Somewhat disagree
5= Strongly disagree
### Figure 6b
Survey Results by Experience Group
(4-10 years experience)

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>The way I dress can affect the behavior of my students.</td>
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<td>30.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>I dress to impress my coworkers.</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<td>7.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>I dress to impress my administrators.</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I dress to make a positive impression on my students' parents/guardians.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The way I dress reflects my educational achievement.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The hands-on nature of my job impacts the attire that I choose to wear.</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>46.2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I choose my work attire as a form of self-expression.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I support the inclusion of teacher dress codes in district/school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>53.8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>administrative policies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Responses: 13

**Key**

1 = Strongly agree  
2 = Somewhat agree  
3 = Neutral  
4 = Somewhat disagree  
5 = Strongly disagree
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<th></th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>The way I dress can affect the behavior of my students.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
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<td>8.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I dress to impress my coworkers.</td>
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<td>8.3</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>I dress to impress my administrators.</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I dress to make a positive impression on my students' parents/guardians.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The way I dress reflects my educational achievement.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The hands-on nature of my job impacts the attire that I choose to wear.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I dress in a certain way to set an example for my students.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I choose my work attire as a form of self-expression.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I support the inclusion of teacher dress codes in district/school</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total Responses: 12

Key
1= Strongly agree
2= Somewhat agree
3= Neutral
4= Somewhat disagree
5= Strongly disagree
**Figure 6d**  
Survey Results by Experience Group  
(21+ years experience)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The way I dress can affect the behavior of my students.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I dress to impress my coworkers.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I dress to impress my administrators.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I dress to make a positive impression on my students' parents/guardians.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The way I dress reflects my educational achievement.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The hands-on nature of my job impacts the attire that I choose to wear.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I dress in a certain way to set an example for my students.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I choose my work attire as a form of self-expression.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I support the inclusion of teacher dress codes in district/school</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Responses: 10

**Key**

1= Strongly agree  
2= Somewhat agree  
3= Neutral  
4= Somewhat disagree  
5= Strongly disagree
Appendix B

Participant Survey
The results of the following survey are confidential and will only be available for view and use by the researcher. Please read through each item and answer it to the best of your ability. For number 10, please be sure to review each category before making your selection.

What grade level(s) do you currently teach? ____________________________

How many years have you been teaching? ____________________________

What level of education have you attained? (circle one)
Undergraduate degree Some graduate Graduate degree Doctorate degree

Gender (circle one)
Male Female

Please answer the following questions using the scale below.
1= Strongly agree 2= Somewhat agree 3= Neutral 4=Somewhat disagree 5= Strongly disagree

1. The way I dress can affect the behavior of my students.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. I dress to impress my coworkers.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. I dress to impress my administrators.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. I dress to make a positive impression on my students' parents/guardians.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. The way I dress reflects my educational achievement.
   1 2 3 4 5
1= Strongly agree  2= Somewhat agree  3= Neutral  4=Somewhat disagree  5= Strongly disagree

6. The hands-on nature of my job impacts the attire that I choose to wear.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. I dress in a certain way to set an example for my students.
   1 2 3 4 5

8. I choose my work attire as a form of self-expression.
   1 2 3 4 5

9. I support the inclusion of teacher dress codes in district/school administrative policies.
   1 2 3 4 5

10. Which category best describes your typical work attire? (Please choose one.)
    F= female respondents   M= male respondents
    □ M: Business suit and tie
        F: Pant or skirt suits
    □ M: Dress pants, dress shirt, tie
        F: Dress pants, conservative skirt, conservative top (not revealing), conservative dress
    □ M: Khaki pants, corduroy pants, casual top
        F: Khaki pants/skirt, corduroy pants/skirt, casual dress, casual top, casual shoes
    □ Denim pants, casual shirt, sneakers or open-toe sandals
    □ Jogging suit, sweat outfit, sneakers

11. Would you be willing to discuss the results of this survey with the researcher?
    (circle one)
    Yes       No
    If yes, please include your name so the researcher may contact you regarding your opinions.