

The Effect of Teachers' Dress Attire on Student Learning

California Lutheran University
Graduate School of Education

By: Samantha Whitney

May 2022

Introduction

- Research design: three-week long mixed-method quasi-experimental study where students were assessed to see how well they retained information while the teacher dressed casually, dressed in business casual attire, and in business attire and then compared the three different assessment scores.
- In addition, the researcher gave out a survey to sixth-grade teachers asking their opinions on their dress and how credible students view them based on their attire.

Purpose of the Study

- The purpose of this mixed-method study design is to determine the influence of teachers' attire on students' academic achievement along with teachers' own perceptions of how their dress influences their professional practice.
- By conducting this research, it will help build upon previous studies that have explored the effects of different dress codes in schools.

To meet the purpose of the study, the following objectives were carried out:

1. Identify students' test scores based on teacher dress attire.
2. Determine teachers' opinions on their dress attire and student learning.

Relevant Literature

- According to Bandura's view, a teacher's dress attire not only affects what the students perceive, but how the teachers view themselves.
- “Studies have found that teachers that dress more professionally are perceived as more knowledgeable while casually dressed teachers seem friendlier, thus formal or professional attire is more positively perceived by students” (Lavin et al., 2010, p. 51).
- “Teachers should not dress in the exact same fashion as their students however, if a teacher is always wearing a suit or dress, they can be perceived as unapproachable” (Hannah, 2013, p. 9).
- Sampson concluded that teachers who were professionally dressed received more respect and better behavior from their students and it had a major impact on students' behavior and learning.

Variables

- Control variables: the grouped sixth-grade students, the time of day, dressing the same for all five days each week, and lastly the type of questions.
- Independent variables: three different teacher outfits for three different weeks (Casual, Business casual, and Business attire).
- Dependent variable: student academic success (exit ticket information).

Role as the researcher

Specific lenses I brought to this research study:

1. A thorough understanding of the current dress code in schools, specifically the school site where research is being conducted.
2. Knowledge on the cognitive and emotional development of children in the United States.
3. An appreciation for the educators who teach at a middle school level.
4. For both professional and personal reasons, the desire to highlight the importance of teacher dress code in the school district.

Methodology

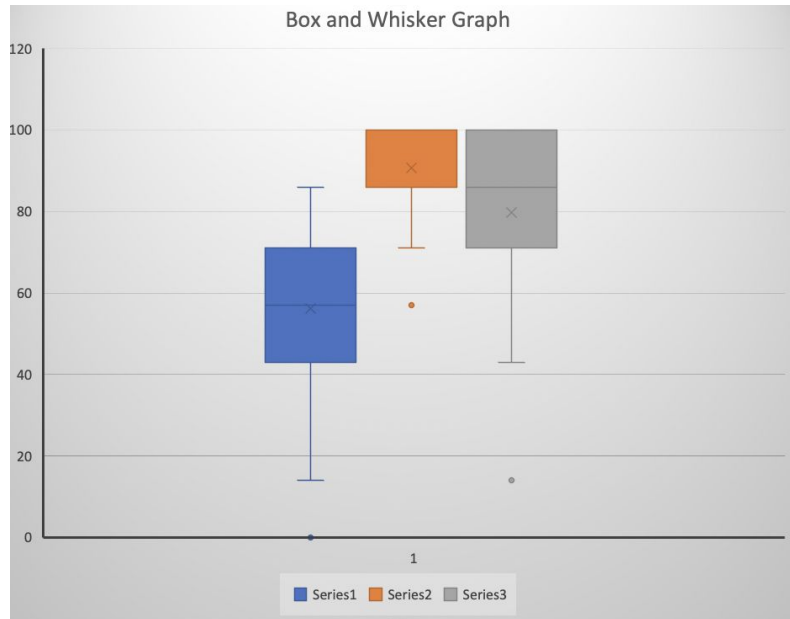
- Students' achievement was tracked based on what the teachers wore, and then analyzed exit ticket scores between the first, second and third week. The data was compared week by week to ultimately determine how teachers' dress affects students' academic achievement and draw conclusions based on the results received.
- At the end of each week, the students took a pre-written exit ticket formative assessment on CANVAS, an online educational platform. The researcher obtained this information and converted it into a Microsoft Excel document in order to keep track of data. This helped the researcher calculate overall daily scores for the students.
- The instruction was consistent with normal lesson plans the teacher would typically teach and supplemented with guided practice followed by the typical weekly exit ticket.

Methodology continued....

- The researcher created a survey on paper which was given to six other sixth grade teachers at the same school. The focus of the questions will help support the overall research questions for the study.
- The qualitative results will help explain the quantitative data and therefore help the researcher come up with the ultimate conclusion.
- For the survey given to other sixth grade teachers, the researcher created a consent form and obtained permission from all teachers willing to participate in the study.
- More emphasis will be placed on data collected from students, than survey data from teachers. It is more objective data as opposed to teacher opinion data.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1-Box Plot



- Series 1=Week 1 (Casual Dress)
- Series 2=Week 2 (Business Casual Dress)
- Series 3=Week 3 (Business Dress Attire)
- According to the one-tailed p-value that was analyzed, the interventions used in week two proved to be statistically significant in comparison to week one and week three

Research Question 2

Anonymous Teacher Survey				Comparison Chart		
FEATURES	SURVEY #1	SURVEY #2	SURVEY #3	SURVEY #4	SURVEY #5	SURVEY #6
QUESTION #1 Do you believe your teaching changes based on your dress attire?	YES	YES	UNSURE	NO	NO	NO
QUESTION #2 Do you feel you interact with students differently based on your attire?	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
QUESTION #3 Do you believe students see teachers as more credible based on the way they dress?	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES

- The teachers who believed their teaching changed based on dress attire and also believed that they interact with students differently and students see them as more credible.
- Teachers who believed their teaching does not change based on dress attire also believed they do not interact differently with students and students do not see them as any more or less credible based on their attire.

Hypothesis

- The *null hypothesis* used for this research was: H_0 : Teachers dress attire has no effect on students' academic achievement in the middle school classroom.
- The *alternate hypothesis* was: H_1 : Teachers dress attire has an effect on students' academic achievement in the middle school classroom.
- Two-way ANOVA hypothesis test shows that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H_1) was accepted.

Limitations

- Short amount of time
- Sample Size
- Signed permission forms
- Answering questions to the best of their ability

Important Takeaway

- The benefit of this research is providing awareness to teachers on how to dress appropriately at school for greatest benefit to the students.
- Results show that there were significant differences in assessment scores between the three different types of teacher outfits and students learn best when a teacher is dressed in business casual attire
- Teachers are unaware what is considered appropriate attire versus inappropriate. If school districts provided a more detailed dress code with their ideal dress attire, teachers would be better informed of what to wear in the classroom.
- The researcher then looked for commonalities throughout the teacher surveys and found that teachers believe that they feel more professional when dressing nicer.

Thank you for listening!

If you have any questions please contact me at:

swhitney@callutheran.edu

Or my faculty advisor at:

brandyyee@callutheran.edu

