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## How Workplace Attire Affects Employee Perceptions and Organizational Culture

Ethan Surrett

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How Workplace Attire Affects Employee Perceptions and Organizational Culture

by

Ethan Surrett

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Honors College of  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of Honors Requirements

May 2021



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## **ABSTRACT**

Companies invest millions of dollars into developing workplace attire policies in their organizations to control outcomes (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993). This research focuses on seeing the impact that workplace attire plays on employees' perceptions of themselves and their organization's culture. Through Qualtrics, an online survey instrument, information was gathered from respondents in various industries and workplaces all over the United States. These employees answered questions about the attire in their workplace, the impact of attire, the organization's policies, characteristics of their organization, the management of the organization, and execution of policies. Results illustrated that most respondents felt that workplace attire affected their workplace culture, made their work feel more important, and made them feel more confident in themselves. The survey results also revealed that casual and business casual attire styles are the predominant styles in today's organizations. In the end, this paper supports research showing that attire plays a significant role in impacting culture and employee's self-perception in the workplace.

This study sought to answer three research questions. Are trends in gender the same as in previous studies? Does age effect how an employee feels about the effects of workplace attire? Is the highest level of education a factor in determining how an employee views attire and the role it plays in the workplace?

***Keywords: Workplace Attire, Conformity, Legitimacy, Perceptions, Culture***

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I would like to express my great appreciation to my thesis advisor, Professor Russ Willis, for his valuable and constructive suggestions during the development of this work. His willingness to sacrifice time for this project is very much appreciated.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

EU	European Union
FedRamp	The Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program
IRB	Institutional Review Board
U.S.	United States
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

## **CHAPTER I: Introduction**

This thesis discusses the effects that workplace attire has on an organization's culture by how it makes employees feel, the messages the attire communicates, and the relationships and attitudes it affects. This study will examine several factors such as messages conveyed by workplace attire to individuals both inside and outside the organization and the perceived competency or relevancy in those meanings. The study will also examine the relationship between several factors of organizational culture and how employees feel their attire relates to these aspects. The importance of this study is to develop further research into the dynamics of organizational dress, primarily through the perceptions and opinions of those working within the organizations, and how these dynamics affect the culture of an organization.

The workplace attire of employees or members of an organization has many effects on employees and messages conveyed through the attire's attributes (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993). These attributes affect a plethora of dynamics of relationships both inside and outside of the organization itself. Research shows that the assumptions made based on attire during the first impression have relevancy in the perceived outcome of the remainder of the interaction (Chung et al., 2012). Controlling these interactions and dynamics is a focal point in modern organizations. Many of these organizations spend substantial amounts of money, roughly billions, managing these images through workplace attire. Organizations that spend billions on workplace attire understand that an organization's dress conveys meaning through both attributes and comparisons (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993). Employees display the significance of clothing in their interactions with others. Prior research into the employees' views of these dynamics shows that employees

with a high value on their attire use it to manage impressions of others and show that attire positively affects how they feel about themselves and their accomplishments (Peluchette et al., 2006).

This study examined these theories and the prevalence of the effects of workplace attire by surveying a sample of 316 employees working in a variety of business sectors across the United States. The survey included questions regarding the industry in which the employee worked, the organization's location, the workplace attire of their organization, how the attire makes them feel, changes they would make, satisfaction with management, and relationships with management. The results from this study should indicate the correlation between workplace attire and the culture of an organization. The results should also support the research stating that the workplace directly affects the interactions in an organization and supports the theory that workplace attire affects perceptions and that employees make conscious choices to control these perceptions.

Workplace attire conveys significant meanings through the attributes of the dress and the consistency in which these standards are held across an organization (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993). It is important to further the research and continue the discussion on the interpretations and the attitudes of employees in the workplace. Managing workplace attire around outside perceptions and employees' opinions is vital in ensuring the success of an organization. Although maintaining image is an important factor maintained in part by workplace attire, organizations should balance their image with the job satisfaction of employees to achieve optimal success through dress, as higher job satisfaction and significant managerial support increase employee commitment in any organization (Emhan, 2012).

## **CHAPTER II: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

Dress in an organization is a phenomenon that provokes a variety of impressions and meanings in the workplace. These impressions affect interactions in the workplace and the perceived legitimacy or credibility of those within an organization before the interaction occurs. Companies spend valuable time and money to control these actions positively for their organization (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993). This review will examine the aspects and the meaning of dress in an organization and some steps that organizations take to control them. Also, this report will discuss the self-perceptions and attitudes of members in an organization. It is important to note these attitudes because it affects members on an individual level and affects how these members create a complex system of social identity within the organization (Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997). This review will begin by discussing the perceptions of workplace attire from a variety of perspectives. Then, it will examine the policies and actions that companies take to control these meanings and perceptions. This paper will conclude with how new research can contribute to the understanding of employees' attitudes towards workplace attire and how this develops in an organization's culture.

### **Perceptions of Workplace Attire**

As stated in the introduction, dress in an organization is a phenomenon that provokes a variety of impressions and meanings in the workplace, and organizations spend a substantial amount of money controlling these aspects (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993). The phenomenon of workplace attire is that value placed on certain aspects of attire are not universal across interactions and that going too far in one direction can detract from

the value intended. For example, studies show that doctors lose credibility from dressing overly formal. While these doctors may maintain the appearance of professionalism, societal norms indicate that a doctor looks the most professional in medical uniforms. (Chung et al., 2012). Another important aspect to consider in the determination of meanings in workplace attire. Prior research indicates that women consider a variety of unique meanings associated with their dress and seek to find appropriate balances for them (Kimle & Damhorst, 1997). Balancing the attributes and meaning of workplace attire with the appropriateness of the industry and organization is an important facet of management and control that organizations consider. Among these aspects that management must consider are *employee conformity and legitimacy with the organization* (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993), *employee self-perceptions of the impact of workplace attire* (Peluchette & Karl, 2007), and *how women balance meanings unique to their gender* (Kimle & Damhorst, 1997). Key tenets of each aspect are summarized in the next section.

### ***Conformity and Legitimacy.***

There are two main factors that organizations can control through controlling the dress of their employees. These factors are employee conformity and legitimacy (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993). Conformity is generally seen as a way that organizations affect perceptions within the organization. The more conformed that workers are to the organization's image, the more they will buy into the organization's goals (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993). Legitimacy represents outside perceptions that dress can affect. A person's attire can define them as affiliated with an organization or have a certain credibility. These preconceived perceptions of how clothing affects certain aspects of legitimacy or credibility another individual can have in interactions develop at a young age. For

example, college students are shown to apply specific credibility characteristics for professors across various other instructor characteristics. Formal dress and business casual dress by professors in these cases can lead to students believing them to be more credible regardless of aspects such as preparedness or knowledge of the material (Lavin et al., 2010).

As stated above, employee conformity is a factor that organizations can control with their members' dress. Maintaining the homogeneity and conspicuousness of the members' dress are two ways that organizations can achieve conformity. Homogeneity refers to the level at which workplace attire is consistent amongst either the organization as a whole or within different departments. Conspicuousness refers to how the dress is unique to the organization (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993). Ultimately, the goal of conformity in an organization is to attach the members to the organization's identity and image. Using dress to accomplish these attachments gives employees a constant reminder of what they represent while in workplace attire. Research suggests that employees seek to influence how others evaluate the organizations they represent (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). In addition to attaching members to an organization through dress, compliance with policies such as dress codes can lead to compliance in other areas determined by the individual's role in an organization. By maintaining this compliance with an organizational standard, employees can maintain cognitive consistency through fulfilling different organizational standards (1993).

In contrast to conformity, legitimacy is a perception mainly coming from those outside the organization. Legitimacy does have some effects on perceptions inside the organization, primarily dealing with the legitimacy of power. Like conformity,

homogeneity and dress's conspicuousness play roles in affecting these perceptions (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993). Legitimacy deals with the perception that one can do the task required or the qualification to give opinions or advice. In different professions, these standards are applied regularly and can dictate the quality of interaction. For example, research indicates that people are more likely to have positive interactions with dentists and lawyers dressed formally than those dressed casually. These are generally viewed as the appropriate standards for that industry and can lead the lawyer or dentist to be easier to talk to, more capable, and more friendly (Furnham et al., 2013). Formal attire may not always be the best dress to indicate capability or legitimacy. For doctors, perceived competence and legitimacy are greatest when they are wearing medical uniforms (Chung et al., 2012). Organizations use conspicuousness to attribute legitimacy to their members. Clothing and accessories, such as name tags, can be conspicuous measures others can use to identify members of the organization (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993).

### ***Employee Self-Perceptions of Attire.***

The idea that attire influences certain perceptions or outcomes is ingrained in American society and business culture. Prior research into employee perceptions indicates that when people dress to impress they experience positive self-perceptions on the interactions' outcomes. In these cases, employees feel more dependable, competent, productive, and friendly (Peluchette et al., 2006). Dressing for success can have different meanings depending on the desired effect the employee attempts to create. While dressing in formal attire, employees feel more authoritative, trustworthy, and competent, and those who dress in casual attire felt friendlier (Peluchette & Karl, 2007). Matching these feelings to professions can be a useful tool for dynamic dress within an



organization. According to earlier studies into these varying characteristics, the occupational attributes conveyed by men's and women's work attire contained two dimensions of sociable appearance and powerful appearance. In occupations and workplaces requiring more sociable attributes, workers must be perceived as friendly, courteous, and approachable and must possess all other sociable qualities. In these cases, casual dress may be more appropriate as it elicits many of these feelings in the employee. However, a worker in a high-ranking position would represent the company, thereby molding the company's image, so this worker can be perceived as being essential or powerful and, in theory, should dress in formal attire to perceive themselves as such. (Kwon & Johnson-Hillery, 1998). Another important aspect to consider in dress is an employee's sense of belonging to an organization. Akin to how managers of organizations control workplace attire, employees can feel more attached to an organization and its mission based on how they dress for work. Employees can use the dress requirements and the aspects of conformity and legitimacy they elicit to represent themselves as part of the organization (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993).

### ***How Women Balance Meanings.***

Workplace attire takes on a variety of different meanings for women than they do for men. Maintaining femininity and professionalism while keeping an ideal balance between the two is an ever-present challenge in the workforce. Women explore new ways to display desired aspects of competence and credibility in their organizational dress while remaining feminine and appropriate. A few of the meanings expressed by women's attire in organizations are conservatism, fashion, masculinity, femininity/sexuality, creativity, and conformity. These meanings act as opposing forces that women seek to

balance in their attires. Avoiding extremes and finding appropriate ways to dress that seemingly exhibit all these forces is paramount to a women's success in an organization (Kimle & Damhorst, 1997).

Women in the workplace tend to have different opinions on the appropriateness of differing attires than men. In prior studies, researchers found that women prefer dressing formally to work, whereas men like to dress more casually (Franz & D, 2001). These preferences stem from the belief that a woman's attire in the workforce has a more significant effect on their success. Women also are shown to believe that men do not feel any loss of self due to their limited range of appearance images and that body weight and image have much less of an effect on men. While women in organizations tend to believe that men have it easier with regards to dress, women value the opportunity to foster their aesthetic inclinations through dress (Kimle & Damhorst, 1997).

### **Dress Codes and Uniforms**

This section will discuss two studies into the effects that dress codes have on perceptions and how some organizations or occupations use dress codes and uniforms to control them.

The first study focuses on English traveling salesmen's attire through roughly a century leading up to the second world war (Popp & French, 2010). These commercial travelers were noted for the continuity in their styles of dress and their eccentric styles. The style served as a tacit dress code. Around the early parts of the nineteenth century, the style of dress was at its most formal and flashiest state within the study's parameters. Salesmen dressing more formally than the society-at-large created a link between the occupation and the salesmen. Using dress as an association method is common for

medical professionals (Chung et al., 2012). The ideas of dress codes establish legitimacy and competence in both the historical example and the modern one. Wearing attire that matches the occupation is one method of controlling dress that makes the professional seeming as though their opinion is more valid (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993). In these instances, controlling the dress matches the need for appropriateness to the occupation. Although formal dress might not always be the most appropriate, traveling salesmen incorporated the style into the art of selling. For their profession, formal attire as a means of standing out to capture an audience's attention was the most appropriate measure for the industry (Popp & French, 2010).

The next study examines the sociological impact of uniforms within an organization (Joseph & Alex, 1972). Organizations use uniforms in various ways, namely as methods of controlling the legitimacy and conformity as mentioned previously (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993). The use of uniforms can be the simplest method of accomplishing these factors. Organizations can use uniforms to eliminate individuality within the organization. Joseph and Alex's study looks at these components as they relate to social interactions or in social settings. They begin the study by discussing why organizations or groups use uniforms. They state, "The survival of a group rests in its ability to exert some degree of control over its members who must carry out the goals of their organization (Joseph & Alex, 1972)." Uniforms designate individuals to a group. For example, military uniforms and medical uniforms associate the wearer with the military or healthcare, respectively. Uniforms make the wearer's affiliation with a group or an organization visible and reduce the likelihood of confusing members and nonmembers. Other studies have shown that uniforms increase the possibility that one

will comply with a request. For example, one may be more likely to complete an order if it is given by someone in a guard's uniform (Bickman, 1974). Organizations use this to their advantage as a method of social placement. A uniform makes the wearing one-dimensional by attaching them to an organization. The feelings and social placement of uniform-wearing members can help establish conformity and legitimacy in a member (Joseph & Alex, 1972).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the attire within an organization has substantial effects on various perceptions in workplace interactions. Organizations spend large amounts of capital investment into the dress in their workplaces (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993). An organization can capitalize on the dress of its members by establishing legitimacy and conformity. One's attire in the workplace also has effects on how they view themselves. Dress can be used to feel more competent or effective in the workplace (Peluchette & Karl, 2007). New research into the effects that attire can have on the employee's perception of culture or the feelings it elicits from the employees will help researchers and organizations better understand how to manipulate dress codes and attires to benefit the organization. Managers from various sectors and industries can utilize information on employee perceptions to get the most from their employees.

### **CHAPTER III: Methods**

This research required the development and analysis of a questionnaire survey to examine the aspects of organizational culture affected by workplace attire through the opinions of those within a given organization using Qualtrics Survey Software. The survey was distributed to employees of organizations in various industries and markets all over the United States to ascertain employees' opinions on how their attire in the workplace affects many different aspects of the organization's culture, such as relationships, self-value, and pace of day-to-day activities. The survey's goal was to establish a link between employee workplace attire and their perceived link between that attire and these cultural aspects. The methodology for this research discusses the development of this questionnaire survey through the Qualtrics system, the distribution of the questionnaire surveys, and why this research method was chosen.

As mentioned above, the questionnaire survey was distributed to employees of organizations in various industries and markets across the United States. Employees accessed the survey through an email that explained the research the purpose of the study. That email also contained a secure link to the survey through Qualtrics survey software. The sample for the survey was reached through a process known as snowball sampling. The researcher and colleagues distributed the survey to any business contacts, family, acquaintances, and human resource professionals. Respondents to the survey were also encouraged to distribute the survey further to any contacts they had. Due to this sampling method, the largest region represented in the survey was respondents from the Southeast region of the United States. The researcher and colleagues distributed the survey over a

period of several months to as many contacts as possible with the goal of reaching at least 300 respondents.

Qualtrics Survey Software is a privately owned subscription-based survey software used to collect data and analyze that data for market research, customer satisfaction and loyalty, employee engagement, and brand testing ("The Leading Research", n.d.). Access to a Qualtrics subscription came through the University of Southern Mississippi. Following the survey's development, the Qualtrics system can be used to distribute the survey using an anonymous link, email, personal link, social media, app, or QR code. This survey was distributed through an anonymous link sent by the researcher and colleagues to the personal emails of business contacts, family, and acquaintances or, in some cases, through human resource professionals at an organization who further distributed the survey. Creators of Qualtrics surveys manage all the data collected, and all data collected is stored in a single secure data center, not in a cloud. Qualtrics is FedRamp authorized, which indicated that it maintains the gold standard of U.S. government security compliance. Qualtrics Survey Software also complies with the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework and the Swiss-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework that the U.S. Department of Commerce has set regarding the collection, use, and retention of personal information transferred from the European Union and Switzerland to the United States ("Privacy Statement", n.d.).

The software Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze the data collected through the survey. The software contains the ability to create cross-tabulations with different results found from the survey responses. This cross-tabulation software was used in the results and discussion portions of this research.

The primary data collection method in business research is through surveys, interviews, case studies, statistical research, participant observation, or focus groups (Bell, Bryman, Harley, 2019). For this research, an online survey was created and distributed. This research method proved to be the quickest and most effective way to reach the respondents for their opinions on workplace attire. The Qualtrics Software System provided the research with the necessary tools to easily create, collect, store, and analyze the data. Surveys are also useful for receiving quick returns from geographically distributed locations (Lefever, Dal, Matthíasdóttir, 2007). Electronic data collection methods have higher response rates on average than surveys administered through telephone calls and regular mail. With technology advancements and increased internet usage, emailing surveys are becoming more popular (Baruch and Holton, 2008).

There are a few disadvantages to using online surveys for data collection that should be addressed. Many survey respondents may be hesitant when answering surveys due to concerns about the security of a survey. These employees have concerns that their responses may adversely affect their employment if their responses are released. These concerns are credible because electronic data collection poses the most significant risk of privacy and confidentiality breaches (Andrews, Nonnecke, Preece, 2003). Also, nonresponse bias is a primary cause of error in the conduction of surveys. A substantial portion of those who receive the survey may choose not to respond to the survey or to leave certain questions unanswered, which limits the data that can be collected in each sample (Hager, Wilson, Pollack, Rooney, 2003). While there are some disadvantages to using email distributed surveys, they are still the most efficient and effective method for conducting geographically dispersed data collection and analysis.

In conclusion, the use of Qualtrics Survey Software to develop a questionnaire survey resulted in the collection of data regarding the employees' perception of their organizational culture and how their workplace attire contributes to that culture. Conducting online surveys contains a few disadvantages, such as risk of an information leak and nonresponse bias. For this study, the advantages of using an online survey distribution method, such as quick distribution, faster response rate, and easy analysis of data, overcame the disadvantages to electronic data collection. After the collection of data through Qualtrics, the information was analyzed through SPSS, and the results were presented.

Survey questions were developed by the following categories: workplace attire, general work, management, and demographic information. Survey questions were developed using the above categories as guides.



## **CHAPTER IV: Analysis and Results**

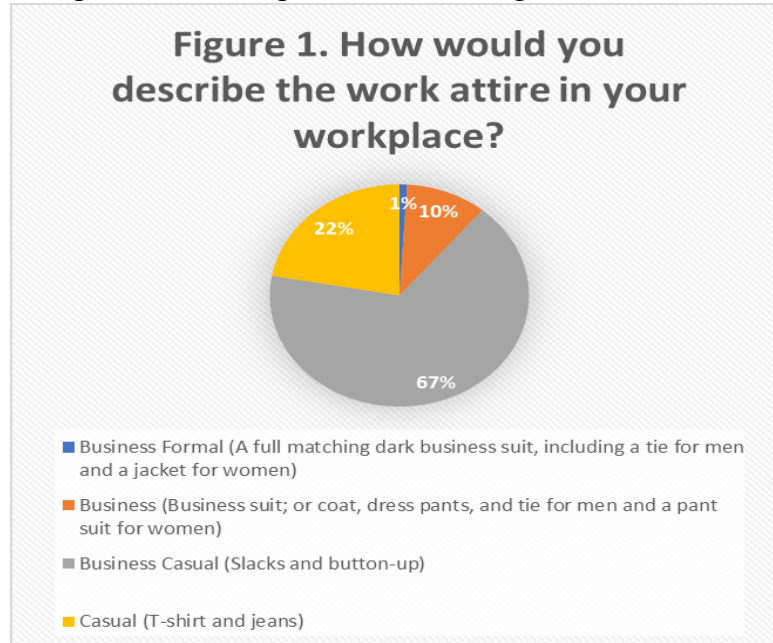
The survey used to conduct this research was distributed to employees in various occupations across the United States. The goal of the survey was to compile a list of responses to better understand how members of an organization feel about workplace attire and how it affects the organization's culture. The survey was comprised of four categories of questions: Workplace Attire, General Work, Management, and Demographic. Demographic information will be presented first.

The final section of the survey consisted of three questions regarding the demographic information of survey respondents. The first question of this section asked about the gender of participants. Most respondents were female, 175 (57.76%), and 128 (42.24%) were male.

Next, respondents were asked their current age. 204 respondents reported being at or between ages 35-54 (67.55%), and 48 respondents reported being 55 or older (15.89%). 39 respondents reported being at or between ages 25-34 (12.91%), and 11 respondents reported being under the age of 25 (3.64%).

The final question of the survey asked respondents about the highest level of education they have earned. 125 (41.39%) respondents reported having a Bachelor's Degree, 106 (35.10%) respondents reported having a Master's Degree, 41 (13.58%) respondents reported having achieved a Doctorate, and 14 (9.93%) respondents reported having a high-school diploma.

The first twenty-two questions on the survey asked respondents about the workplace attire and policies in their organization. First, respondents were asked to



identify a style of attire that best fit their organization. The results and descriptions of each style are listed in Figure 1. Most respondents noted that business casual was the best description of the attire in their organization,

211 (66.77%). 70 respondents answered casual (22.15%), 32 respondents answered business (10.13 %), and 3 respondents answered business formal (0.95%).

Next, respondents were asked if workplace attire affected their decision to work in a particular workplace. 241 respondents answered no (76.27%), and 75 respondents answered yes (23.73%). Respondents were then asked if workplace attire played a role in attracting them to a particular industry. 262 respondents answered no to this question (82.91%), and 54 respondents answered yes (17.09%).

The fourth question of the survey asked respondents about their level of agreement with the statement “Workplace attire affects my relationship with my coworkers and superiors.” A plurality of respondents agreed with the statement with 120 (37.97%) just agreeing and 27 (8.54%) strongly agreeing. 45 respondents disagreed with

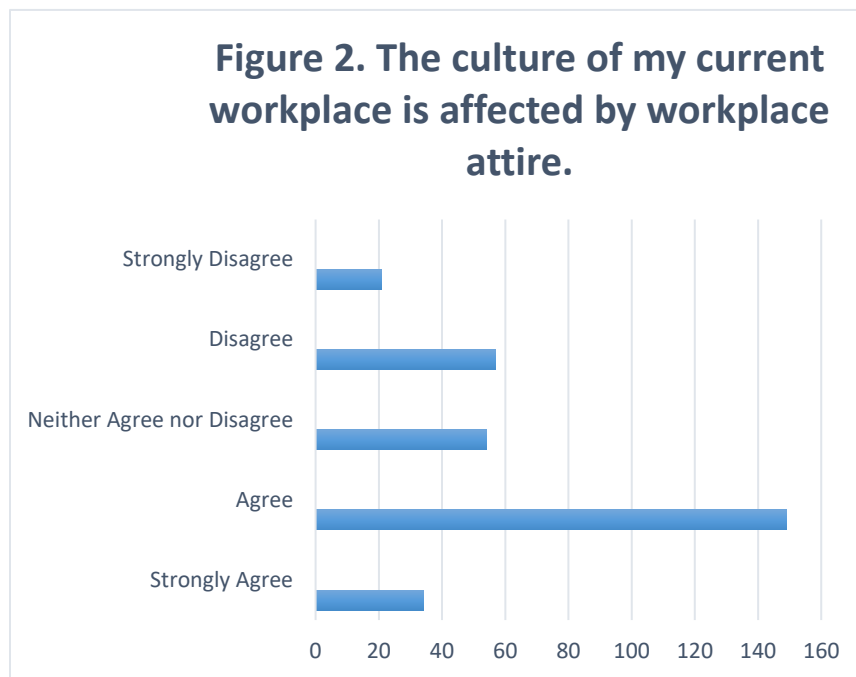
the statement (14.24%), and 15 respondents strongly disagreed (4.75%). 109 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement (34.49%)

The fifth question of this section asked respondents if workplace attire made their work feel more important. 130 respondents (41.14%) agreed that their attire made their work feel more important, 74 respondents (23.42%) neither agreed nor disagreed, 53 respondents (16.77%) disagreed, 43 respondents (13.61%) strongly agreed, and 16 respondents (5.06%) strongly disagreed.

Next, respondents were asked if workplace affected the pace of their work environment. The most common response to this question was “agree” with 108 respondents (34.18%), 79 participants neither agreed nor disagreed (25%), 73 participants answered disagree (23.10%), 37 participants answered strongly agreed (11.71%), and 19 participants responded that they strongly disagreed (6.01%).

Respondents were then asked if workplace attire affects how stressed they feel about meeting deadlines. 119 participants (37.66%) disagreed that their attire affects the stress that they feel, and 31 participants (9.81%) strongly disagreed. 117 respondents (37.03%) neither agreed nor disagreed that attire has effect on the stress that they feel. 39 respondents (12.34%) agreed with the statement, and 10 respondents (3.16%) strongly agreed.

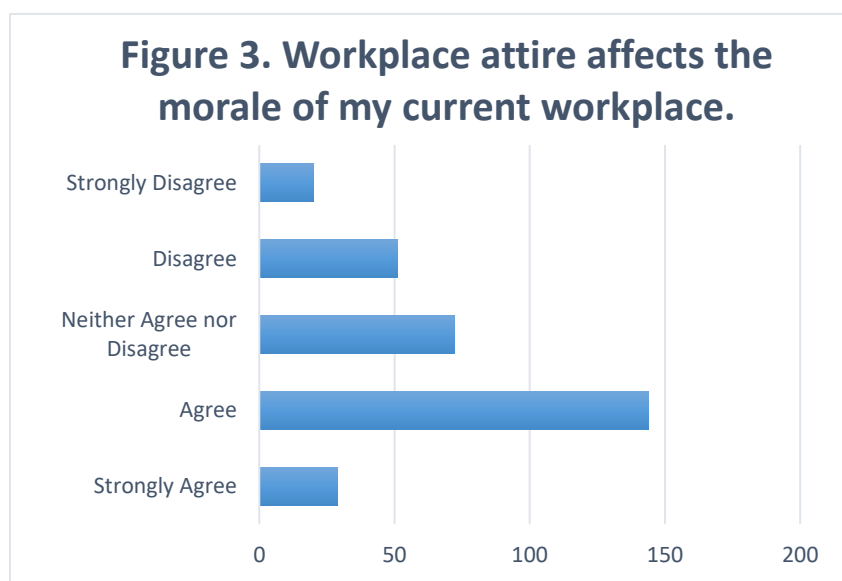
The eighth question of the survey asked respondents to respond to the statement that workplace attire affects the culture of an organization. Figure 2 Illustrates the results



of the question. 149 respondents (47.30%) agreed that workplace attire affects culture, 57 respondents (18.10%) disagreed, 54 participants (17.14%) neither

agreed nor disagreed with the statement, 34 participants (10.79%) strongly agreed, and 21 participants (6.67%) strongly disagreed.

As seen in Figure 3, most respondents most respondents agreed that workplace



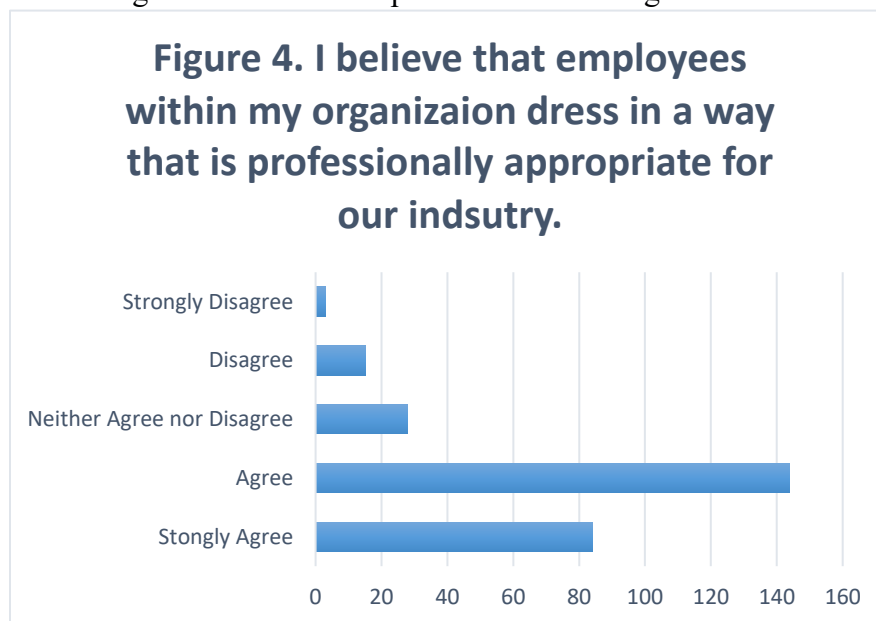
attire has an effect on the morale of their organization with 144 respondents (45.57%) agreeing. 72 respondents (22.78%) neither agreed nor disagreed that

workplace attire affected moral. 51 respondents (16.14%) disagreed. 29 participants (9.18%) strongly agreed, and 20 respondents (6.33%) strongly disagreed.

Next respondents were asked if their current organization had any formal, written policies regarding workplace attire. 201 respondents (63.61%) answered yes, and 115 respondents (36.39%) said no. If respondents answered no, they were asked if they believed that there should be written policies for their current organization. Of the 119 respondents who answered this question, 80 respondents (67.23%) said no, and 39 respondents (32.77%) answered yes.

For the next question, participants were asked if they would change the workplace attire at their current organization. 258 respondents (81.65%) answered no, and 58 respondents (18.35%) said yes. If respondents answered yes to this question, they were asked if they would change the attire to be more formal or less formal. 31 respondents (53.45%) answered that they would make the attire less formal, and 27 respondents (46.55%) said they would make the attire more formal.

Figure 4 illustrates respondent's level of agreement with the statement "I believe



that employees within my organization dress in a way that is professionally appropriate for our industry." 186 respondents

(58.86%) agreed with the statement, 84 respondents (26.58%) strongly agreed, 28 respondents (8.86%) neither agreed nor disagreed, 15 participants (4.75%) disagreed, and 3 respondents (0.95%) strongly disagreed that the attire in their current organization is appropriate for their industry.

Question 15 asked respondents if their organization's workplace attire policies are known and communicated to all employees. 136 respondents (43.04%) agreed that the policies are well known, and 85 respondents (26.90%) strongly agreed. 62 participants (19.62%) neither agreed nor disagreed. 30 participants (9.49%) disagreed that the policies are communicated or well known by employees, and 3 participants (0.95%) strongly disagreed.

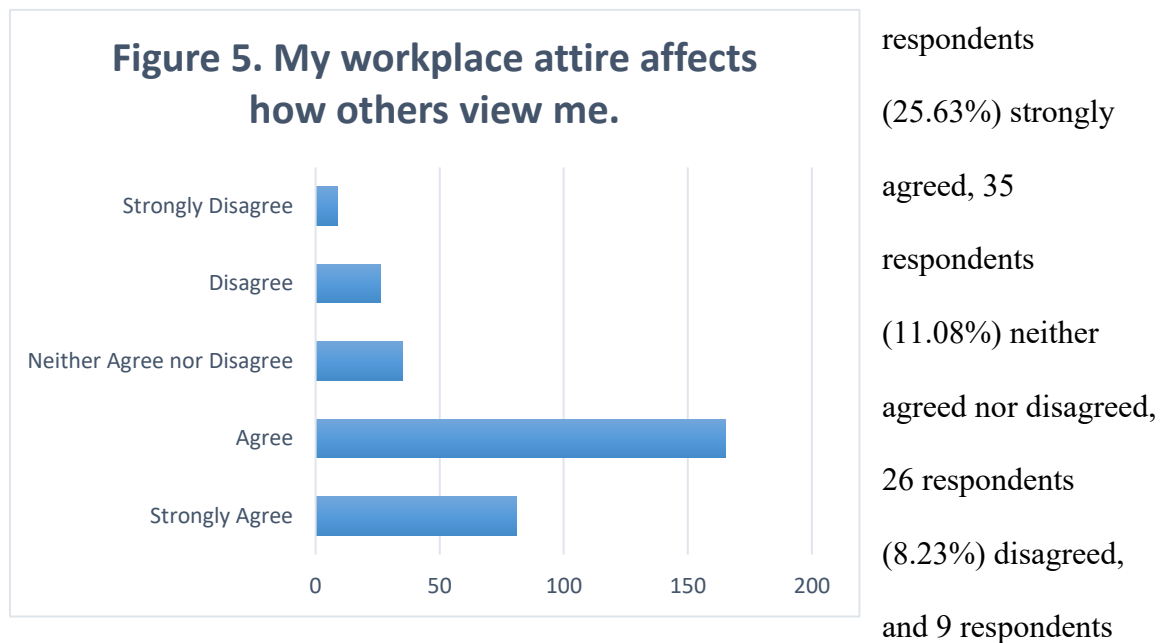
Next, survey participants were asked if workplace attire is addressed on my annual review. 270 respondents (85.44%) answered no, and 46 respondents (14.56%) answered yes, their workplace attire is addressed in an annual review.

Respondents were then asked if the day-to-day attire of employees in the workplace is different than the written policies. 136 respondents (43.04%) disagreed, 104 respondents (32.91%) neither agreed nor disagreed, 34 participants (10.76%) strongly disagreed, 34 participants (10.76%) agreed, and 8 respondents (2.53%) strongly agreed that workplace attire of employees is different than the policies.

To follow up the previous question, respondents were asked if their organization disciplined employees for not adhering to written dress code. 212 respondents (67.30%) said that no, employees are not disciplined, and 103 respondents (32.70%) answered yes.

Next, respondents were asked if they felt that workplace attire affected how others viewed them. Figure 5 illustrates the results of responses to this question. 165

respondents (52.22%) agreed that workplace attire affects how others viewed them, 81



(2.85%) strongly disagreed.

Question 20 asked respondents if workplace attire made employees feel confident in themselves. 170 respondents (53.80%) agreed that workplace attire made them feel confident, and 73 respondents (23.10%) strongly agreed. 56 respondents (17.72%) neither agreed nor disagreed, 14 respondents (4.43%) disagreed, and 3 respondents (0.95%) strongly disagreed.

The final two questions of this section asked respondents about how they believed workplace attire affected the overall performance for which they worked. The first of these two questions asked respondents if attire had a positive affect on outcomes. 145 respondents (46.03%) agreed, 81 respondents (25.71%) neither agreed nor disagreed, 42 respondents (13.33%) strongly agreed, 36 respondents (11.43%) disagreed, and 11

respondents 3.49%) strongly disagreed. To follow up this question, respondents were asked if they believed workplace attire negatively affected outcomes in the workplace. 148 respondents (46.84%) disagreed, 91 respondents (28.80%) neither agreed nor disagreed, 48 respondents (15.19%) strongly disagreed, 21 respondents (6.65%) agreed, and 8 respondents (2.53%) strongly agreed.

The second section of survey questions consisted of six general work questions. The first of these questions asked respondents to identify the industry in which they work. 65 participants (21.04%) work in education, 45 respondents (14.56%) work in accounting, finance, or banking, 27 respondents (8.74%) work in marketing or sales, 19 participants (6.15%) work in the non-profit sector, 17 participants (5.50%) work manufacturing jobs, 15 respondents (4.85%) work for the government, 11 respondents (3.56%) work in the information technology industry, and 7 (2.27%) respondents work in hospitality and tourism. If none of these options described the industry in which a respondent worked, they were prompted to list the industry. 103 respondents (33.33%) listed an industry. The listed industries included: healthcare, market research, utility, religious institutions, ecological, construction, legal affairs, oil and gas, journalism and media, transportation, military, law enforcement, real estate, social work, athletics, biotechnology, civil engineering, and wildlife and fisheries.

The next question requested respondents list the state where the current organization for which they work is located. Participants were located in the following states: Mississippi, Louisiana, North Carolina, Texas, Iowa, North Dakota, Massachusetts, Georgia, Alabama, Missouri, California, Tennessee, Louisiana, Arizona, Florida, Colorado, Wisconsin, South Carolina, Connecticut, Indiana, Montana,



Minnesota, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Oregon, Nebraska, Michigan, and Maryland. Of the states listed, the majority of respondents were from Mississippi.

The third question of this section asked respondents to identify how long they have worked for their current organization. 126 respondents (40.91%) have worked in their organization for ten or more years, 83 respondents (26.95%) for 1-4 years, 70 respondents (22.73%) for 5-9 years, and 29 (9.42%) respondents for less than a year. Participants were then asked to indicate whether they planned to stay with their current organization for the next five years. Most respondents answered yes, 251 (82.03%). 55 respondents (17.97%) answered no.

For the fifth question of this section, respondents reported how many employees worked for their current organization. 119 participants (38.51%) reported working for organizations with greater than 500 employees, followed by 68 participants (22.01%) responding that they work in organizations with 1-25 employees. 66 respondents (21.36%) reported that 101-500 employees work in their current organization. 33 respondents (10.68%) work in organizations with 26-50 employees and 23 respondents (7.44%) in organizations with 51-100 employees.

In the final question of this section, respondents were asked to identify what position they hold in their current organization. 127 respondents (41.23%) identified themselves as general professionals. 83 participants (26.95%) answered mid-level management, 51 participants (16.56%) were top-level managers, 16 respondents were entry-level employees, and 9 respondents (2.92%) were front-line employees. 22 respondents (7.14%) identified with a position not listed and were prompted to give their position in their organization. These respondents gave the following as their respective

positions: project manager, owner, back office employee, office manager, lecturer or teacher, contractor, realtor, public relation liaison, director, owner, executive assistant, salesperson, intern, and self-employed.

The third section of the survey asked respondents four questions about the management of their current organization. The first question of this segment asked how often the respondent had contact with customers or clients. 171 respondents (56.44%) have daily contact with clients, 36 respondents (11.88%) have contact with clients sometimes a week, 34 participants (11.22%) have no contact with clients, 32 participants (10.56%) have contact with clients sometimes a month, and 30 respondents (9.90%) have contact with clients at least once a week.

Next, respondents were asked to agree with the statement “I am satisfied with the management/leadership in my organization.” 124 respondents (40.92%) agreed with the statement, and 115 respondents (37.95%) strongly agreed. 33 respondents (10.89%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. 29 respondents (9.57%) disagreed, and 2 (0.66%) respondents strongly disagreed.

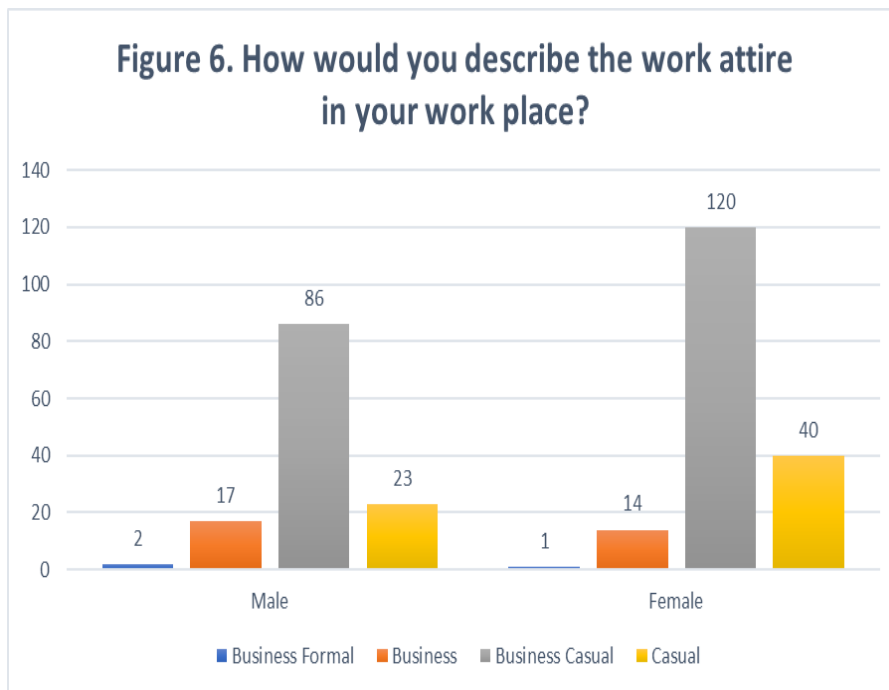
The third question of this section asked respondents whether management at their organization wears similar attire as themselves. 274 participants (90.73%) said yes, and 28 participants (9.27%) said no.

The final question of this section asked respondents if their managers were approachable with all problems. 160 respondents (53.16%) strongly agreed that their managers were approachable, and 98 participants (32.56%) agreed. 24 respondents (7.97%) neither agreed nor disagreed that their managers were always approachable. 17

respondents (5.65%) disagreed that they could go to their managers with all problems, and 2 participants (0.66%) strongly disagreed.

## CHAPTER V: Discussion

The results of the survey revealed some patterns in factors that affect an employee's perception on the effects of workplace attire in the workplace. The data also revealed some patterns that would challenge claims made in prior literature and research and some patterns that support prior research and claims. The first pattern in this dataset that contradicts previous research is the claim that women prefer dressing in more formal attire than men (Franz & D, 2001). The data from this survey would suggest that this



pattern may no longer be the case. 175 respondents (57.76%) to the survey identified as female. Of those 175 female respondents, roughly 69

percent of wear business casual attire to work compared to 67 percent of male respondents who wear business casual. Also, 23 percent of women wear casual attire, whereas 18 percent of male respondents wear casual attire. These numbers are illustrated in Figure 6.

Although previous research suggests that women are more likely than men prefer to wear more formal attire, the data shows that these preferences do not directly result in

women wearing formal attire in the workplace. The first of these are that since the 1990s workplace attire is becoming increasingly casual (Kwon & Johnson-Hillery, 1998). This trend is present in both male and female respondents of the survey as 92 percent of female respondents and 85 percent of male respondents wear business casual or casual attire to the workplace. Also, the data does not disprove prior claims that women value their ability to foster aesthetic inclination through dress or that women have more attributes of dress to balance (Kimle & Damhorst, 1997). Although not expressly stated in survey results, the descriptions of business casual and casual attire in the survey leave the largest room for interpretation.

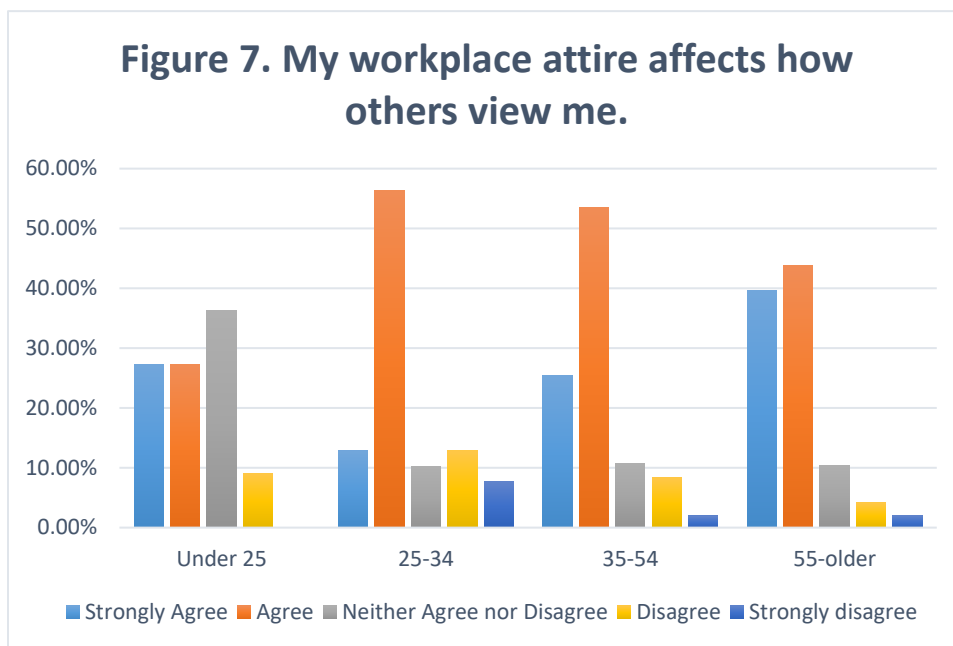
Another claim from prior studies that the data disputes is that women feel that attire has a more significant effect on their workplace success (Kimle & Damhorst, 1997). In most cases, men and women responded to questions in similar ways suggesting that men and women possess shared workplace attire opinions. Some of the data points that indicate prior research may be outdated or incorrect are that 43 percent of female respondents felt workplace attire affected relationships with coworkers and superiors. 59 percent of women felt that workplace attire affected the workplace culture, 77 percent felt that workplace attire affected how others viewed them, and 81 percent felt that workplace attire made them feel more confident. The percentage results for male respondents were 52 percent, 59 percent, 77 percent, and 73 percent, respectively. Although women were more likely to feel more confident in themselves based on their attire, these data points suggest less of a correlation between gender and attitudes about workplace attire.

In only one case, women answered differently than men with marginal significance. Table A1 in Appendix D shows this level of significance. The relationship

between style of attire in the workplace was marginally significant ( $p\text{-value}=.08$ ); however, as mentioned previously survey responses indicate that women are dress more casually than men. In all other instances, the relationship between any question and age was not significant.

Among age groups, there is not much difference in workplace attire. The trends common in every age group are that business casual and casual are the dominant attires for every age group. 64 percent of respondents younger than twenty-five years old wear business casual attire in the workplace, and 18 percent wear casual clothing. For respondents between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-four, 67 percent wear business casual, and 26 percent wear casual. 69 percent of respondents between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-four responded wear business casual, and 21 percent wear casual attire in the workplace. Lastly, 67 percent of respondents fifty-five or older wear business casual, while 19 percent wear casual dress to work. These statistics agree with the prior statements that since the 1990s, attire in the workplace is increasingly casual (Kwon & Johnson-Hillery, 1998). This data hints that the overall business culture and trends have a more significant effect on attire than generational groups.

There are stark differences in how the age of respondents impacted feelings of workplace attire. Table A2 in Appendix D shows the correlation of age with all questions



that are at least marginally significant. In each case presented, there is a negative correlative.

In this given data set, the negative correlation indicates that, as a respondent gets older, they are more likely to agree or strongly agree with the other questions. Figure 7 illustrates this point by showing each age group's beliefs of how workplace attire affects how others view them (p-value= 0.01). Also, the data from the survey shows that age plays a significant role on stress (p-value= 0.01). Other indications by the data are that age affects the feeling that attire plays a role workplace relationship (p-value= 0.04) and the belief that attire can negatively impact an organization (p-value= 0.05). The relationships between age and these questions mean that older respondents are more likely to notice the effects of workplace attire.

As stated previously, most respondents to this survey work in organizations that are in Mississippi or other states in the Southeast region of the United States. It is important to note that these geographic trends in the data could have affected survey

participants' responses. There was no apparent correlation between attire and feelings about dress for respondents living outside of this region. No respondents located outside of the southeast recorded wearing either business or business formal attire in the workplace.

The degree to which a person was attracted to a particular industry based on the standard attire had little effect on respondents' answers to various self-perceptions and culture questions. Respondents were more likely to be attracted to an industry where the attire was either business formal or business, 33 percent, and 25 percent, respectively. Admittedly, the sample size from the business formal attire group is too small to conclude this point. Only three respondents to the survey wear business formal attire in the workplace. Respondents attracted to an industry based on its attire agreed and strongly agreed that the attire made them feel more confident in themselves at much higher rates. 89 percent of those respondents either strongly agreed or agreed; the remaining 11 percent neither agreed nor disagreed.

Satisfaction with management played less of a role in determining employee perceptions than anticipated. Respondents who are satisfied with their current management agree with respondents who were not satisfied with similar rates regarding culture and attitudes in the workplace. The data indicate that being less satisfied with a manager did not make respondents more likely to view aspects of dress in the workplace negatively. Respondents whose managers dress similarly to them displayed a few different feelings than respondents whose managers did not. If a manager is dressed in similar attire as his employees, employees were more likely to agree that workplace attire affects relationships with coworkers and superiors and that workplace attire makes their



work feel more important. Most survey participants whose managers wore different workplace attire disagreed with both points.

Respondents answered questions regarding culture consistently. Survey responses to the broad statement “The culture of my current workplace is affected by workplace attire” was analyzed with responses to questions about more specific aspects of organizational culture, such as, relationships, pace, work feeling more important, positive outcomes and morale. Agreement with attire’s effect on culture had no correlation with employee’s feelings about how attire affects them personally, but most respondents agreed that workplace attire affects how others view them regardless of agreement that attire affects culture.

Respondent’s feelings about whether workplace attire influences how others view them had the strongest effect on culture and perceptions. As mentioned previously, most



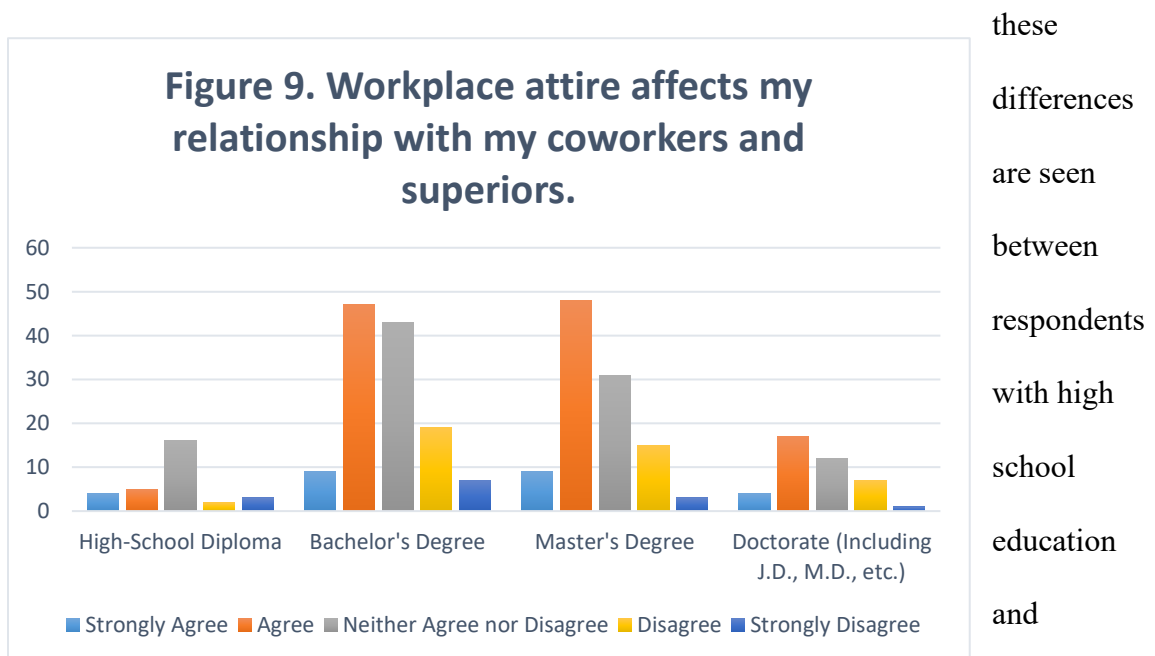
respondents  
recognized  
that  
workplace  
attire affects  
how others  
view them  
regardless of  
their views

on how attire affects culture; however, most respondents who disagree that workplace

attire how they are viewed also disagreed with the assertion that workplace attire affects culture. Figure 8 illustrates the correlation.

Feeling that workplace attire affects the views of others has a strong correlation with most other perceptions of workplace attire. 60 percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree that workplace attire affects how others viewed them also agree or strongly agree that attire affects workplace relationships. In contrast, 60 percent of respondents who disagree or strongly disagree with the former statement also disagree or strongly disagree with the latter. This pattern repeats itself with respondents' answers on if workplace attire makes their work feel more important. Most respondents agree or strongly agree that workplace attire makes them feel more confident in themselves, but respondents who do not feel that attire affects the view of others are more likely to disagree that attire makes them feel more confident.

Levels of education play a more significant role than most other demographic factors in determining one's acknowledgment of the effects of workplace attire. Most of



respondents with any degree of a college education. Figure 9 illustrates the relationship between how the level of education affects the belief that attire their relationship with their coworkers and their superiors. The figure shows that college-educated respondents were relatively consistent with acknowledging and agreeing with this point. In contrast, respondents with just a high school education were much more likely to take the middle ground on this response.

Table A3 in Appendix D shows some other points in which college-educated respondents differed from high school educated respondents. These points are that levels of education affected the attire worn to the workplace (p-value= 0.00), that workplace attire affected culture (p-value= 0.02), affected how others viewed them (p-value=0.00). In each of these points, college-educated respondents showed higher agreement levels than those without a college education. Also, education played a role in satisfaction with management (p-value= 0.05) and the belief that attire has positive effects on an organization (p-value=0.05). In most of these instances, the correlation is negative. The exception is with management satisfaction.

The negative correlation between age and attire in the workplace indicates that respondents with higher levels of education are more likely to dress in more formal styles of attire. In other cases of negative correlation, respondents with higher levels of education were more likely to agree that workplace attire affects culture, affects how others view them, and has positive effects on organizational performance. The positive correlation between education and management means that respondents with more education are less likely to be satisfied with management.

Respondents with a doctorate separated themselves from other levels of college graduates in two of the previously mentioned points. 90 percent of respondents with a doctorate agree or strongly agree that workplace attire made them feel more confident in themselves. Also, 98 percent of these respondents agree or strongly agree that attire affects how others view them. The remainder of the doctorate respondents neither agree nor disagree with either point.

The strong correlation between education and the self-perceptions of attire could have two possible causes. The first of these potential causes are that education leads to a greater appreciation or understandings of the role attire plays in culture and feelings. A more in-depth explanation of these feelings is that higher education levels tend to lead to a higher likelihood to work in top-level management, mid-level management, and professional positions. Throughout the survey, respondents in these positions were much more likely to agree that workplace attire affects culture and self-perceptions in various ways. These respondents were more likely to feel more confident in themselves based on their attire, agree that workplace attire affects how others view them, agree that workplace attire affects morale, and feel that workplace attire policies are effectively communicated. Education and job title show similar effects on responses to these survey questions. Although the trend of casual work attire is still present in these demographic groups, these correlated factors have a strong relationship with understanding and acknowledging the relationship and meanings of workplace attire in organizational culture.

The final correlations assessed from the data are how the different attire styles affect the aspects of culture and self-perceptions in responses. One element in these

analyses stuck out among the rest; respondents who dress casually to work are less likely than respondents with all other dress styles to agree to all components of culture and perceptions except for self-confidence. This data reaffirms several claims made in prior studies. The most direct claim supported by the data is that “dressing for success” has strong influences on employee self-perceptions. Employees who dress for success feel more dependable, competent, productive, and friendly (Peluchette et al., 2006). Another claim supported by the data specifically regarding how other perceptions are affected by dress is that dress has effects on the feelings and perceptions of competence and legitimacy of an employee (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993).

## **CHAPTER VI: Conclusion**

Overall, what was expected from the survey is that most respondents would acknowledge that their workplace attire affects the culture and the way they view themselves and others. The result of the study supported these expectations. Areas that tended to have a more significant effect on how respondents felt workplace attire impacted the organization were education, job position, style of attire, and the belief that workplace attire affects how others view them. The higher levels of acknowledgment by college-educated respondents of a correlation between workplace attire and factors of the organizational culture shows a connection with how managerial and professional roles impacted responses. The survey results also revealed a high correlation between the style of attire and feelings about workplace attire. Respondents who dress casually to work tended to be more dismissive or to disagree that attire impacts culture and perceptions.

Further research is recommended into why college-educated employees tend to agree that attire affects perceptions and culture at higher rates than high school graduates. An analysis into whether these feelings arise from a competitive nature in colleges, a societal status symbol, attitudes about different professors, or directly because of being more educated would better illustrate the role college plays. Further research would also be beneficial if controlled for equal representation from all styles of business attire. More trends may arise from a data set that includes a higher number of respondents who wear business formal or business attire in the workplace.

The results of the survey revealed that attire in the workplace is mostly casual or business casual. Employees in all industries and all age demographics were more likely to wear one of those two attire styles to work. Survey results also showed that attire plays

no role in attracting most respondents to a particular organization or industry. These results seem to be connected. If all sectors and workplaces become increasingly casual, the fewer opportunities employees would have to pick a location with different attire standards. Lastly, the survey results show that most respondents feel that workplace attire makes them feel more confident and has positive outcomes for the organization.

## **APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT LETTER**

Hello,

I am Ethan Surrett, a current student at the University of Southern Mississippi. For my undergraduate thesis, I am conducting research involving workplace attire and how it affects the attitudes and relationships within the workplace.

I am writing to you to request your involvement in a brief online survey. This survey will only take 5-7 minutes to complete and is completely confidential. This survey has been approved by the University of Southern Mississippi's Institutional Review Board with the assigned protocol number 20-423. I also encourage you to share the survey with your colleagues. Your responses to this survey will help me greatly in collecting the information I need to write my thesis.

Thank you,

Ethan Surrett

**Follow this Link to Survey:**

[https://usmuw.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3qu5lZg2NASOepf](https://usmuw.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3qu5lZg2NASOepf)



## APPENDIX B: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

### Workplace Attire

1. How would you describe the work attire in your workplace? (Answer the one that describes the dominant workplace attire at your current workplace)
  - ☐ Business Formal (A full matching dark business suit, including a tie for men and a jacket for women)
  - ☐ Business (Business suit; or coat, dress pants, and tie for men and a pant suit for women)
  - ☐ Business Casual (Slacks and button-up)
  - ☐ Casual (T-shirt and jeans)
2. Did workplace attire play a role in attracting you to a particular workplace?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
3. Did workplace attire play a role in attracting you to a particular industry?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
4. Workplace attire affects my relationship with my coworkers and superiors.
  - ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly disagree
5. Workplace attire makes my work feel more important.
  - ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly disagree
6. Workplace attire affects the pace of my work environment.
  - ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree
  - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
  - ☐ Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly disagree
7. Workplace attire affects the stress I feel about meeting deadlines.
  - ☐ Strongly agree
  - ☐ Agree

- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

8. The culture of my current workplace is affected by workplace attire.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

9. Workplace attire affects the morale of my current workplace.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

10. Does your current organization have any formal, written, policies regarding workplace attire?"

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

11. If the answer to question 10 is no, do you believe there should be formal, written policies regarding workplace attire at your current organization? (Answer N/A if question 10 was answered yes)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

12. If given the chance, would you change the workplace attire at your current organization?"

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

13. If the answer to question 12 is yes, which statement best describes the change? (Answer N/A if question 12 was answered no)

- ☐ I would change the workplace attire at my current organization to something more formal.
- ☐ I would change the workplace attire at my current organization to something less formal.
- ☐ N/A

14. I believe that employees within my organization dress in a way that is professionally appropriate for our industry.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

15. Your organization's workplace attire policies are well-known and communicated to all employees.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

16. Workplace attire is addressed on my annual review?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

17. How employees dress on a day-to-day basis is different from the written workplace attire policies.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

18. Employees are disciplined at my workplace for not adhering to the written dress code.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

19. My workplace attire affects how others view me.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

20. My workplace attire makes me feel confident in myself.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

21. Workplace attire positively affects the overall performance of the organization for which I work.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

22. Workplace attire negatively affects the overall performance of the organization for which I work.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

### **General Work**

23. Describe the industry in which you work.

- ☐ Accounting/Finance/Banking
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Hospitality/Tourism
- ☐ Information Technology
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Marketing/Sales
- ☐ Non-profit/Philanthropy
- ☐ Other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

24. Where is the organization for which you work located? (Please spell out state)

\_\_\_\_\_

25. Which of the following describes how long you have worked for your current organization?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-4 years
- ☐ 5-9 years
- ☐ 10 or more years

26. Do you plan to stay with your current organization over the next five (5) years?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

27. How many employees work for your organization?

- ☐ 1-25 employees

- ☐ 26-50 employees
- ☐ 51-100 employees
- ☐ 101-500 employees
- ☐ Greater than 500 employees

28. Describe the position you hold within your organization?

- ☐ Chief Executive Officer/Top-level management
- ☐ Mid-level manager
- ☐ Professional
- ☐ Entry-level professional
- ☐ Front-line employee
- ☐ Other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

### **Management**

29. In your current position, how much direct contact do you have with customers/clients?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Sometimes a week
- ☐ At least once a week
- ☐ Sometimes a month
- ☐ No contact

30. I am satisfied with the management/leadership in my organization.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

31. My manager wears similar work attire as me.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

32. My manager is approachable with all problems.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

### **Demographic**

33. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male

- ☐ Female

34. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 25
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-54
- ☐ 55-older

35. What level of education have you earned? (List highest)

- ☐ High-School Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Doctorate (Including J.D., M.D., etc.)

## APPENDIX C: TABLES

**Table A1. Gender**

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
1. How would you describe the work attire in your workplace? (Answer the one that describes the dominant workplace attire at your current workplace)	Equal variances assumed	.620	.432	-1.789	301	.075	-.122	.068	-.255	.012
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.764	258.727	.079	-.122	.069	-.257	.014

**Table A2. Age**

Correlations						
		34. What is your age?	4. Workplace attire affects my relationship with my coworkers and superiors.	7. Workplace attire affects the stress I feel about meeting deadlines.	19. My workplace attire affects how others view me.	22. Workplace attire negatively affects the overall performance of the organization for which I work.
34. What is your age?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.120*	-.151**	-.155**	-.113*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.038	.009	.007	.050
	N	302	302	302	302	302
4. Workplace attire affects my relationship with my coworkers and superiors.	Pearson Correlation	-.120*	1	.334**	.512**	.164**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038		.000	.000	.003
	N	302	316	316	316	316
7. Workplace attire affects the stress I feel about meeting deadlines.	Pearson Correlation	-.151**	.334**	1	.270**	.241**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.000		.000	.000
	N	302	316	316	316	316
19. My workplace attire affects how others view me.	Pearson Correlation	-.155**	.512**	.270**	1	.106
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.000	.000		.059
	N	302	316	316	316	316
22. Workplace attire negatively affects the overall performance of the organization for which I work.	Pearson Correlation	-.113*	.164**	.241**	.106	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.050	.003	.000	.059	
	N	302	316	316	316	316

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table A3. Education**

		<b>Correlations</b>					
		35. What level of education have you earned? (List highest)	1. How would you describe the work attire in your workplace? (Answer the one that describes the dominant workplace attire at your current workplace)	8. The culture of my current workplace is affected by workplace attire.	19. My workplace attire affects how others view me.	21. Workplace attire positively affects the overall performance of the organization for which I work.	30. I am satisfied with the management/ leadership in my organization.
35. What level of education have you earned? (List highest)	Pearson Correlation	1	-.177**	-.141*	-.225**	-.111	.113*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.015	.000	.054	.050
	N	302	302	301	302	301	302
1. How would you describe the work attire in your workplace? (Answer the one that describes the dominant workplace attire at your current workplace)	Pearson Correlation	-.177**	1	.213**	.312**	.112*	-.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		.000	.000	.048	.512
	N	302	316	315	316	315	303
8. The culture of my current workplace is affected by workplace attire.	Pearson Correlation	-.141*	.213**	1	.473**	.395**	-.077
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.000		.000	.000	.180
	N	301	315	315	315	314	302
19. My workplace attire affects how others view me.	Pearson Correlation	-.225**	.312**	.473**	1	.437**	-.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.274
	N	302	316	315	316	315	303
21. Workplace attire positively affects the overall performance of the organization for which I work.	Pearson Correlation	-.111	.112*	.395**	.437**	1	.122*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.054	.048	.000	.000		.035
	N	301	315	314	315	315	302
30. I am satisfied with the management/leadership in my organization.	Pearson Correlation	.113*	-.038	-.077	-.063	.122*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.050	.512	.180	.274	.035	
	N	302	303	302	303	302	303

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



## **APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL LETTER**

### **INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | [www.usm.edu/research/institutional-review-board](http://www.usm.edu/research/institutional-review-board)

### **NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project below has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services regulations (45 CFR Part 46), and University Policy to ensure:

- The risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered involving risks to subjects must be reported immediately. Problems should be reported to ORI via the Incident template on Cayuse IRB.
- The period of approval is twelve months. An application for renewal must be submitted for projects exceeding twelve months.
- Face-to-Face data collection may not commence without prior approval from the Vice President for Research's Office.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-20-423

PROJECT TITLE: How Workplace Attire Affects Organizational Culture

SCHOOL/PROGRAM: School of Management, Management

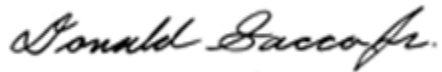
RESEARCHER(S): Ethan Surrett, Russell Willis

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Approved

CATEGORY: Expedited

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: November 5, 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Donald Sacco". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Donald Sacco, Ph.D.**  
**Institutional Review Board Chairperson**

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