

# The Relationship Between Clothing Preference, Self-Concepts and Self-Esteem.

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### ABSTRACT

The influence of an individual's dress practices on his/her sense of self has been studied for many years. The aim of the current research was to extend on previous findings, while examining the relatively unexplored area of individual's everyday clothing preferences and its relationship to their overall self-concept. Also in this study, the relationship between dimensions within proximity of clothing to self and self-esteem were explored. The convenience sample of 111 participants completed an online survey assessing their clothing preference, self-concepts, proximity of clothing to self and self-esteem. Results indicated a correlation between some clothing preference categories (Minimalists, Classics and Powerhouse) and self-concept items (Formal, colourless), which generally confirmed previous research. No significance was found between proximity of clothing to self and self-esteem.

## INTRODUCTION

Dress practices throughout history were developed for three primary reasons: protection, modesty, and decoration or ornamentation (Flugel, 1930; Horn & Gurel, 1981; Ross, 2008). Dress may serve as the need for adornment, for modesty, or for protection, or all of these in varying measures. However, they can also be argued against. In response to clothing as a need for protection, this may vary in different cultures, societies, and even within the same culture. Rouse (as cited by Barnard, 2002) refers to girls in the 1960's, who would brave snow drift's and below-freezing temperatures dressed only 'in the briefest of mini skirts and coats'. Also inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego wear little or no clothing showing that "clothing is not essential even in damp and chilly climates" (Flugel, 1930, p.17). Modesty as a main function for individual dress may also be dependent on culture. Flugel (1930) makes reference to Christianity's teachings and using clothing as a means of hiding the body to avoid feelings of sin and shamefulness. Every society and culture has its own conception of modest dress and behavior, therefore making it difficult to make the strong link between modesty as the main function of clothing. The opposite to modesty as a theory has also been proposed and is generally the more supported approach. That is dress as adornment, to attract attention to the body. This theory views individual's as having an instinctual need to express ones self through clothing practice.

Veblen (1953) was one of the first writers to declare that clothing did more than protect the body. His early theory of fashion consumption focused on the social status of clothing worn by women, which symbolized some of the core values of society. Clothing and fashion are often used to indicate and communicate social worth or status. With people often making judgments concerning other people's social worth or status on the basis of what they

wear. Clothing also serves to communicate membership of a cultural group both to those who are members of it and those who are not. It is a social process that creates cultural meaning and is a fundamental part of our communication in social interactions. Clothing has been creatively described as the second skin (Horn & Gurel, 1981) and the visible self (Roach & Eicher, 1972). As humans we communicate a great deal about ourselves through our personal style and dress. For Kaiser (1990), fashion is a symbolic production that differs from the concept of clothing. Fashion merges us with our emotional needs, and it expresses our inner individual personality by external marks and symbols, brands, and status items. The symbolic nature of clothing can incorporate styles, brands, retailer outlets, uniforms, and also membership to certain subcultures. The meanings that these produce can contribute to an individual's sense of who they actually are. Fashion affects both our self-concepts and our internal feelings (Tombs, 2010).

Research conducted (Atkins, 1976; Dubler & Gurel, 1984; Ryan, 1953) suggests a relationship between an individual's self-concept and what he/she wears. Piacentini & Mailer (2004) found clothing choices made by young people are closely linked to their self-concept, and are used both as a means of self-expression and as a way of judging the people and situations they face. The notion of the self-concept can be described, using an early definition by Rosenberg (1979, p. 7), as the "totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object". It includes a collection of beliefs about the kind of person he or she is (Hamacheck, 1987). Elements of self-concept can also include an individual's perceptions of his or her own characteristics, abilities, values, ideas, beliefs, and perception of themselves in relation to others and the environment (Burns, 1997). Self-concepts can be made up from a number of different dimensions including actual-self (how an individual perceives him/her self), the ideal-self (qualities that an individual would like to possess) and social-self (how an individual believes others perceive them). An individual's self-concept is

a dynamic structure that can change in accordance to the situation or social surroundings. Much research has looked at the influence of clothing on an individual's sense of self.

Within psychological research on clothing, there has been particular focus on the field of person perception. Which mainly addresses how others form perceptions of individuals through clothing choices (Peluchette, Karl, & Rust, 2006; Cardon & Okoro, 2009). Some studies have examined patient's attitudes towards medical professions attire, with others looking at the perception formed by recruiters in job interviews. One study found that clothing appearance often became an important factor in supervisory evaluations when the skills of two employees are equal and when employees interact with clients (Kelley, Blouin, Glee, Sweat & Arledge 1982). Often companies use work uniforms as a visible method of supporting certain organisation values. For example, employees of IBM were expected to be team players and conform to the corporate uniform of a dark suit, white shirt and tie, in order to uphold the corporate value of employee invisibility (Martin & Siehl, 1983). Research on how the dress of children affects the perception of intelligence among teachers found that teachers' judgments of intelligence were influenced by styles of dress (Behling & Williams, 1991).

Recent research has found that not only can it affect other people's perceptions of you but it can also affect how you perceive yourself. Adam Galinsky (2012) proposed that clothes have a cognitive effect on the individual wearing them. Resulting from a symbolic meaning attached to the clothing along with the actual wearing of the clothes. He coined the term, *enclothed cognition*, for this phenomenon. Enclothed cognition captures the systematic influence that clothes have on the wearer's psychological processes. It is part of a larger field of research that examines how humans think with, both their brains and their bodies, an area of study known as *embodied cognition*. His research found that whilst wearing a lab coat to perform certain tasks participants made significantly less errors than those who wore their

own clothes. They also found that, in relation to the symbolic meaning of the clothing, those who wore the lab coat believed to be a doctors' coat performed better on a task than those who wore the coat but believed it was a painters' coat. They believe that clothing holds symbolic meaning. They claim that the influence of clothes depends both on wearing the clothing and the meaning it invokes in their psychological schemas. People must ascribe a symbolic meaning to the article of clothing and actually wear it, for that clothing to have any measurable effect. Similarly, Zimbardo (1969) found that wearing a large hood and cape could increase an individuals' likelihood to administer electric shocks to another person. Other studies found that employees worked better on intelligence tests when wearing glasses even though their actual performance was not any better when wearing glasses (Kellerman & Laird, 1982).

The large majority of psychological research in the area of clothing practice and self-concept's has focused on the work place, with the comparison between formal and casual work attire. With research reporting that both have a direct impact on employee self-perception. Peluchette & Karl (2007) found respondents described themselves using certain adjectives depending on what clothing style they wore. Respondents felt more authoritative, trustworthy and competent while wearing formal business attire, but friendliest when wearing casual attire. People who are dressed formally use more formal language to describe themselves compared to those that wear more casual clothes (Hanover & Kuhen, 2006). Evidence suggests that not only does what one wears to work have an impact on self-perception but it can also have a direct effect on employees behavior and performance. A 1999 survey of employees (National employment law firm Jackson Lewis) found that 44% reported an increase in tardiness and absenteeism and 30% reported a rise in flirtatious behavior after the implementation of dress-down policies.

An individual's self-concept can also have an impact on their personal clothing preference. One study found that upwardly career anchored women having an actual and ideal self-image of being professional, preferred to wear business like outfits more than other type outfits (feminine, casual, collegiate, or sexy) because wearing business-like outfits reinforced their self-image (Erickson & Sirgy, 1992). Could there also be a relationship with an individual's everyday clothing preference and their ideal and actual self-concepts? Researchers have tried to answer the question of why we all have our own clothing preference and why do we choose certain styles and not others. Compton (1962) found several important relationships between design and color preferences and personality and occupational interests, and concluded that people select fabric and color to help them conform to their image ideal-self. Although, Muzert (1980) believed that color preferences are affected by mood and the circumstances of the situation or time. Thus, persons who are depressed at the time they make the color selection opt for cooler colours, whereas persons who are happy tend to select brighter, warmer colors. The theory of self-image/ product image congruency proposes that a relationship exists between an individual's self-image and their consumption decisions (Erickson & Sirgy, 1992). Sirgy (1985b) developed the self-image congruence model that integrates the actual- self and the ideal-self components of the self- concept with product image to explain consumer behavior. Self-congruity refers to the extent to which a product image matches a consumer's actual self-image, and ideal-congruity refers to the extent to which the product image matches the ideal self-image. Sirgy postulates consumers who perceive the product image to be consistent with their actual self-image (self-congruity) are likely to be motivated to purchase and consume that product, satisfying the need for self-consistency (defined as the tendency to engage in behaviors that are consistent with one's own view of self). Similarly, consumers who perceive the product image to be consistent with their ideal self-image (ideal-congruity) are likely to purchase that product,

satisfying their need for self-esteem (defined as tendency to engage in behavior that allows individuals to approach one's ideal-self image). This model would suggest that when choosing items of clothing, you are likely to select styles that conjure up a positive image for you while also maintaining your identity. Therefore, making both the actual-self and the ideal-self important factors when it comes to clothing preference.

In addition to being symbolic of the self, clothing preferences are significant in the enhancement of self. When used positively, clothing contributes to feelings of self-acceptance and self-esteem. Clothing choices of individuals can be a reflection of how they feel about themselves, or how they want others to feel about them (Kwon, 1991). Kwon (1994b) found that positive feelings about one's clothing were found to enhance self-perception of emotions; sociability and occupational competency negative feelings reduced these. One theory that can be used to try to rationalise this would be the social comparison theory. In its original development Festinger (1954) theorised that people have a drive to validate their own opinions and abilities, accomplishing this through conscious or unconscious comparison with relevant others. When others validate the appearance of the body, self-esteem is heightened. Unconscious mimicking of others may also be used as a way of validating one's own decisions can be seen in the workings of Mirror Neurons, in some of the original research on mirror neurons it was observed that the same neurons in the prefrontal cortex of monkey brains "fire" both when a monkey perceives a gesture and when it performs a gesture (Gallese, Fadiga, Fogassi, & Rizzolatti, 1996; Rizzolatti, Fadiga, Fogassi, & Gallese, 1996). On human participants using PET scan and functional MRI evidence for a mirror neurons system also exists. Several brain regions are involved in both the perception and the execution of simple motor actions. When we observe someone perform a behavior, we activate the same pre motor areas in our brain that are active when we

perform the same action ourselves. With regards to how others might unconsciously influence our clothing preference, one consumer research study by Johnston (2002) showed evidence for imitation that has direct relevance for consumer behavior. In the experiments, participants were asked to eat ice cream and to judge its taste. Each experimental participant ate ice cream in the presence of a confederate, and the confederate was always the first to take a sample of ice cream. Unbeknownst to participants, the confederate was either instructed to eat a large sample or a very modest sample. The dependent variable in this research was the size of the sample participants took. As predicted, participants imitated the behavior of the confederate: They ate significantly more ice cream when the confederate had taken a large amount relative to when the confederate had taken a small amount. Also, Johnston showed that participants were not consciously aware of the influence of the confederate on their behavior. Returning back to the social comparison theory, part of it involves the way one views the self. Aesthetic standards are internalised and used in self-evaluation. Self-esteem can be regarded as a standard self-evaluation, although it can change depending on external events, such as responses from others, performance, expectations and changing roles (Baron & Byrne, 1991). Self-esteem is generally described as the overall feeling of self-worth and has been defined as a positive or negative feeling about the global self “constructed out of our evaluations of the things we do, of who we are, and of what we achieve in terms of our private assessments of the goodness, worthiness, and /or significance of those things” (Hamacheck, 1987, p. 14). As noted earlier the way an individual feels about his or herself can affect the choice of clothing and also that the clothes an individual decided to wear also affects his/her feelings about the self (Muzert, 1980; Compton, 1962; Kwon, 1991). In a study conducted by Tondl & Henneman (1994) participants attended a two-hour workshop “ Body-Image- What you weigh or what you wear”. The program involved nutrition research on healthy weight with body image aspects of clothing and self-esteem.

Three months later a sample of respondents reported an enhanced self-esteem and nearly all said they were using the information to make better clothing decisions.

With Maslow's hierarchical order of needs, clothing ranks in a basic physical need category along with food and shelter (Maslow, 1943). The human motivation theory is based on five basic human needs: physiological, safety, belonging or love, self-esteem, self-actualisation. These needs build on each other with one motivation needing to be fulfilled before moving on to the next, to finally reaching self-actualisation. Although Maslow (1943) equated clothing with the physiological need, there is "evidence that higher-order needs, such as belonging and self-esteem can be satisfied through clothing" (Lee, 1997, p. 3). The Proximity of clothing to self scale (PCS Sontag and Schlater, 1982) was devised to measure the psychological closeness of clothing to the self. This scale consists of multiple dimensions including clothing in relation to: (1) self as a structure; (2) self as a process – communication of self to others; (3) self as a process – response to judgment of others; (4) self-esteem – evaluative process, dominant; (5) self-esteem – affective process, dominant; and (6) body image and body cathexis. Individuals vary in their perception of clothing as an expression of the self and in the use of clothing in adaptive functioning for the self (Sontag & Schlater, 1982). The PCS has been suggested to have a positively relationship to perceived quality of life (Sontag, 1978), although research has also found a negative relationship between PCS and self-actualisation in older persons (Lee, 2005). Lee & Sontag (2010) interprets this finding as due to those with high PCS may be using clothing to strive to be self-actualised whereas those who are already more self-actualised may no longer need to rely on clothing for self-expression or it's function in the fulfillment of the need for self-actualisation. Might this also be the case for another higher-order need, self-esteem and its relationship with PCS?

The study of dress practices and their impact on society is a “scholarly pursuit” (Eicher, Evenson & Lutz, 2008, p. 1). Although there has been much research into the area of clothing and self-concepts, the majority has been concerned with work attire and the relationship between employee’s self-concepts and formal compared to casual work wear (Peluchette & Karl, 2007; Hanover & Kuhen, 2006; Ericksen & Sirgy, 1992) . Very little research has explored the area of every day clothing preferences. This study will try to investigate the relatively unexplored area of individual’s everyday clothing preferences and its relationship to overall self-concepts. Another aspect to this study is the relationship between PCS and self-esteem. Although the general consensus is that clothing itself can have both a negative and a positive affects on self-esteem (Muzert, 1980; Compton, 1962; Kwon, 1991), research into how peoples’ variations in their use of clothing as an expression of self and its impact on emotional needs, is mixed. This current research will try to see if there is any relationship between how closely a person believes clothing is a perception of themselves and their self-esteem levels. Three objectives were established to achieve the purpose of this study. They were to:

1. Describe the demographic of participants;
2. Determine the relationship between clothing preference categories and self-concept trait for both males and females.
3. Determine the relationship between dimensions within the Proximity of Clothing to Self Scale and self-esteem scores.

The research provided by this study will contribute to a better understanding of how dress practices can influence an individual’s sense of self. This is of great interest, as our sense of self can determine how we behave and interact with our environment. It is hypothesized that;

1. That females scoring high on Minimalist clothing preference categories will correlate with simple, formal, and colourless self-concept items.
2. That females scoring high on Classics clothing categories will also correlate with simple, formal, and colourless self-concept items.
3. That males scoring high on Powerhouse clothing categories will correlate with self-concept items Organised and Formal.
4. That males scoring high on Professional clothing categories will correlate with self-concept items Organised and Formal.
5. There will be a correlation between self-esteem scores and dimensions 4 of PCS self-esteem- evaluative process dominant, dimension 5 of PCS self-esteem- affective process, dominant and dimension 6 of PCS body image and body cathexis.

## METHOD

### Participants:

A convenience sample of individuals over the age of 18, located in Ireland was recruited. Participants were contacted through social networking sites Facebook, Twitter and also through email. They were asked to complete an online survey which was implemented by the free online survey website docs.google.com. The sample consisted of 111 participants, 27 males and 84 females. Average age of participants was 31 ( $M=31.11$ ,  $SD=9.58$ ), with ages ranging from 21 to 74 years of age.

### Design:

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional questionnaires research design using correlation. The variables involved were female clothing preference categories (Bombshell, Bohemian, Mavericks, Eclectics, Minimalists, and Classicists), male clothing preference categories (Powerhouse, Professional, Workman, Sportsman and Rocker), 15 bipolar self-concept items, self-esteem and dimensions of proximity of clothing to self. Clothing preference categories and dimensions within proximity of clothing to self were the predictor variables. Self-concept items and self-esteem were the criterion variables.

### Materials:

Participants were supplied with a questionnaire that included a letter of information, a debriefing letter, a demographic information form, The Proximity of Clothing to Self Scale PCS (Sontag and Schlater, 1982), Clothing preference inventory, Malhotra's Self-Concept Scale (Malhotra, 1981) and The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). See Appendix A, for full research questionnaire.

*The Proximity of Clothing to Self Scale (Sontag and Schlater, 1982)*

The psychological closeness of clothing to the self is a 39-item scale. It is scored on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1: “Never or almost never true”, through to 6: “Always or almost always true”. The scale consists of multiple dimensions including clothing in relation to: (1) self as a structure; (2) self as a process – communication of self to others; (3) self as a process – response to judgment of others; (4) self-esteem – evaluative process, dominant; (5) self-esteem – affective process, dominant; and (6) body image and body cathexis. Each dimension was redefined by Lee (1997) as follows:

*Dimension One: Dress Practices in Relation to Self as Structure:* Clothing is one aspect of the self as an organised picture existing in awareness. Clothing, as a component of the material self, contributes to sense of unity with the person and constitutes part of the person’s identity. Clothing reflects or expresses one’s identity, personality, traits, self-regard, values, attitudes, beliefs, or moods. The person strives for consistency between clothing and self-image. Pictures of the self from the past may exist in memory. (p. 14)

*Dimension Two: Dress Practices in Relation to Self as a Process – Communication of Self to Others:* Clothing communicates information about one’s identity (personal, interpersonal, or group), values, attitudes, moods, and self-regard to others and facilitates the enactment of social roles. The person consciously selects or chooses clothing to convey messages about the self to others or to experiment with different identities. (p. 14)

*Dimension Three: Dress Practices in Relation to Self as a Process – Response to Judgments of Others:* The person imagines how the self appears to others through clothing. The person may respond affectively, cognitively, or behaviorally to an actual or imagined judgment of the self by others. Subsequently, the judgment may affect self-validation. (p. 14)

*Dimension Four: Dress Practices in Relation to Self-Esteem – Evaluative Process,*

*Dominant:* Clothing affects one's evaluation of self-worth, self-regard, or self-respect, generally expressed in terms of cognitive evaluation or affective evaluation. Specifically, clothing can positively or negatively affect one's sense of personal and interpersonal competence including personal efficacy, mastery of the environment, usefulness, social adequacy, and desirability. Through one's appearance in or use of clothing, the person engages in cognitive or affective evaluation of self, implicitly or explicitly in comparison with a personal or social standard. A person's evaluation of his or her clothing can affect his or her global self-esteem, or more specifically, confidence in his or her abilities, qualities, 7 personal features, or performances. Conversely, a person's self-evaluation or self-judgment can affect his or her attitudes or behaviors toward clothing. (pp. 14-15)

*Dimension Five: Dress Practices in Relation to Self-Esteem – Affective Process,*

*Dominant:* Clothing evokes a generalized emotional response or affect directed toward the self. This may take the form of positive or negative affect related to self-love, self-acceptance, or self-cathexis (i.e., satisfaction) and may have behavioral consequences. While the affective process results from implicit evaluation with respect to some ideal or standard for the material self, the emphasis is on the general or global feeling expressive of self-esteem. One's self-esteem also may affect one's feelings about or behavior toward clothing. Finally, the care that one gives to clothing reflects or affects care for or pride in oneself. This dimension does not refer to mood or to all emotions, but only to those emotions that are directed toward the self. (p. 15)

*Dimension Six: Dress Practices in Relation to Body Image and Body Cathexis:*

Clothing creates, modifies, or affects body image or body cathexis and may affect self-feelings. In turn, body image or body cathexis may affect clothing behavior. Body image or body cathexis may affect satisfaction with clothing and self-esteem. Clothing may enhance or reflect body satisfaction or compensate for body dissatisfaction. (p. 16)

During distribution of the questionnaire 2 items from the dimensions 2 and 5 of the PCS were accidentally omitted. An alpha reliability of the 6-item scale in dimension1 was .81, indicating the scale had good reliability. The alpha reliability of the 6-item scale in dimension5 was .88, indicating the scale had good reliability.

*The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)*

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale consists of ten items and is used to gather a measurement of a person's self-esteem. Participants responded on a four-point scale of agreement, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. It was designed to be a Guttman scale, meaning items represent a continuum of self worth statements ranging from statements that are endorsed even by individuals with low self-esteem to statements that are endorsed only by individuals with high self-esteem. Scores ranged from 10 to 40, with high scores illustrating high self-esteem. Half the items on the questionnaire are an expression of positive self-esteem (Questions 1,3,4,7,10). An example of positive question would be, 'On the whole, I am satisfied with myself' (Question 1). The remaining items are an expression of a negative self-esteem (Questions 2,5,6,8,9). An example of a question of this nature would be, 'I feel I do not have much to be proud of,' (Question 5). For the self-esteem scale, the internal reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) is .92

*Malhotra's Self-Concept Scale (Malhotra, 1981)*

Malhotra's (1981) self-concept scale was used as a measurement of participant's self-concepts. It consisted of 15 bipolar adjectives, examples included: Excitable/Calm, Complex/Simple and Formal/Informal. Respondent used a seven-point scale to indicate whether they were to the extreme left adjective or extreme right adjective. Participants were asked to rate each bipolar adjective's in terms of a) their actual-self and b) their ideal-Self, to

determine an overall self-concept rating. Malhotra's scale was used because it was developed as a valid and reliable method to measure self-concepts, person concepts, and images of products (Goldsmith et al, 1999; Goldsmith & Flynn, 2000).

### *Clothing Preference Categories*

Using reference from "What's Your Fashion Personality?" from female fashion magazine HarperBazaar.com and "The 10 Styles of American Man: Which one are you?" from male website esquire.com, a questionnaire was devised by the researcher to measure clothing preference for both males and females. It consisted of 6 statements describing different clothing styles for female and 5 statements for males. Participants used a seven-point scale of agreement for each statement. Ranging from 1 = strongly disagree through 4 = neither agree nor disagree to 7 = strongly agree. The higher the score the more participants pertain to that category. Female category statements included;

*Bombshells:* 'picking clothes that show off your feminine figure is important to you. You choose body-hugging, figure-flattering cuts. Deep V's tops and high heels are your preference. You avoid sack dresses, masculine tailoring, and anything with too much coverage. You prefer block colours, brights, white, and black. You are not afraid to draw attention to yourself with your clothing choices.'

*Bohemians:* 'You prefer breezy gowns, ethnic-inspired looks. You layer pieces, pairing new with vintage, combining multiple textures. You avoid plain shades, wearing a rainbow of colors highlights a carefree demeanor. You enjoy wearing swirly paisleys, pretty florals, and retro patterns.'

*Mavericks:* 'New designers, Avant-garde cuts, bold looks are important to you. You are not afraid to experiment with new fashion. You look for pieces no one else has and start your own trends. You seek out unique colors and trimmings.'

*Eclectics:* ‘It’s all about having fun with fashion for you. Bright colors, madcap pairings, and loud patterns are your fashion preference.

You avoid safe clothing, and never take yourself too seriously. You choose clothes that catch your eye and stand out.’

*Minimalist:* ‘Your clothes are sharp and smart with sleek, simple shapes in a monochrome, toned-down palette. The no-frills hue always works best for you. Black is your best friend. You keep it reserved never showing too much skin. You avoid loud colors, embellishments, and fanciful details.’

*Classicists:* ‘you prefer basics, simple staple pieces: T-shirt, blazer, white shirt, suit, and trousers. You stick to traditional clothes that you know work. You avoid trends, but when intrigued by a trend, you incorporate it into your look in a subtle way. Your clothes have clean lines and you avoid frills and fanciful cuts. You like pared- down colours usually wearing Black, white, navy, gray, and khaki.’

Male clothing statements included;

*Powerhouse:* ‘Power suits, seven-fold ties, and smart shoes are your clothing of choice.’

*Professional;* ‘You usually wear lightweight suits, slim-fit shirts, and dark neckties. For casual clothes you wear slim-fit shirts and jeans.’

*Workman:* ‘You dress casually: canvas or wool jackets, denim jeans, and work boots. You never really wear tailored clothes.’

*Sportsman:* ‘You wear technical sportswear and hoodies mixed with jeans and t-shirts.’

*Rocker:* ‘You usually wear leather mixed with denim and tailoring.’

Statements were used rather than images to control for negative/positive bias.

### *Letter of information*

The letter of information informed participants of the nature of the research, the aim of the study, how long the survey would take to complete, and what the data will be used for. It also informed them of their right to withdraw at any time and that all data and any information that they give will be kept completely anonymous. It also stated only persons over the age of 18 should participate. It ended with the researchers contact details.

### *Debriefing*

The debriefing section included the researchers and supervisors contact details. Participants were informed that responses were anonymous but to send an email to the researcher should they want an overall summary of the results. It also contained the contact details of support services Aware and Samaritans.

### *Demographic Information form*

This asked participants demographic information, which included; age, gender, relationship status, work status and whether work their requires a uniform.

### *Procedure:*

Participants were obtained through the social networking website [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and by email. Where potential participants were contacted directly and told that in the survey, they would be asked to answer some questions about their clothing preferences, self-concepts and self-esteem. Potential participants were also informed that participation was completely anonymous and they could withdraw at any time. Participants were also informed only to complete the questionnaire if they were over the age of 18. At the end of the questionnaire participants were debriefed and given contact

details for the researcher, supervisor and support services, they were also thanked for their participation and time. The online survey distribution was implemented using docs.google.com, which is a free online survey website. In total, 116 online surveys were completed in this way. All surveys were obtained from the 16<sup>th</sup> of February to the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2013.

## RESULTS

The total of usable responses from the convenience sample population (N=116) was 111. The remaining surveys were discarded due to the participants filling out the demographic questionnaire but failing to fill out any of the remaining questionnaires. Participants' data was entered in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v.18), where all analysis was carried out. Five items on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale were reversed scored and a new variable was calculated for total self-esteem. Six new variables were calculated using The Proximity of Clothing to Self Scale questionnaires. Which included: Dimension 1; Self as a structure, Dimension 2; Process I Communication of self to others; Dimension 3; Process II Response to judgement of others; Dimension 4, Self-esteem-evaluative process, dominant; Dimension 5, Self-esteem- affective process, dominant; and Dimension 6, body image and body cathexis. Fifteen new variables were created for the Self-Concept Scale (PCS), the sum of ideal and actual self-concept scores were calculated to get a total self-concept score for each of the items. See Table 1 for breakdown of new variables.

Table 1. *Computation of New Variables*

<b>Old Variable</b>	<b>Question Number</b>	<b>New Variable</b>
Self-Esteem	1-10	TotalSE
PCS	7,16,35,18,3,28	Dim_1PCS
	36,31,25,13,2,21	Dim_2PCS
	23,8,5,14	Dim_3PCS
	24,19,34,32,4,38,17,9	Dim_4PCS
	1,20,33,29,15,26	Dim_5PCS
	30,27,37,22,6,10,12	Dim_6PCS
Self-Concept (a); Actual +	1-15(a)	TotalSC 1-15
Self-Concept (b); Ideal	1-15(b)	

Three objectives were established to achieve the purpose of this study. They were to:

1. Describe the demographic of participants;
2. Determine the relationship between clothing preference categories and self-concept trait for both males and females.
3. Determine the relationship between dimensions within the Proximity of Clothing to Self Scale and self-esteem scores.

Objective one: *Describe the demographic of participants.*

There were a total of 27 males (N=27) and 84 females (N=84). Average age of participants was 31.11 (SD=9.58) with an age range of 21 to 74 years of age. Overall, 39 (35.1%) of participants were single, 48 (43.2%) were in a relationship, and 23 (20.7%) were married, with one missing response (.9%). A total of 78 (70.3%) participants were working full-time, 20 (18.0%) part-time, and 12 (10.8%) unemployed, with one missing response (.9%). Of those participant that were employed 29 (26.1%) wore a uniform in work, 66 (59.5%) did not, and 7 (6.3%) of participants answered other. Of which responses included; “I am required to wear clothes from the shop I work in”, “Smart clothes” and “Sometimes”. A summary of the characteristics of all participants is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. *Characteristics of Participants* (N=111)

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b><i>f</i></b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	27	24.3
Female	84	75.7
<b>Relationship Status</b>		
Single	39	35.1
In a relationship	48	43.2
Married	23	20.7
<b>Working Status</b>		
Full-time	78	70.3
Part-time	20	18.0

Unemployed	12	10.8
<b>Uniform</b>		
Yes	29	26.1
No	66	59.5
Other	7	6.3

Objective two: *Determine the relationship between clothing preference categories and self-concept items for both males and females.*

Using clothing preference statements devised by the researcher, participants were asked to rate each statement on a 7 point scale of agreement ranging from 1 = strongly disagree through to 4 = neither agree or disagree to 7 = Strongly agree. For the purpose of this study participants that gave a rating of 5 or above were of interest. On the Minimalist statement 19 (22.4%) slightly agreed, 15 (17.6%) agreed and 5 (5.9%) strongly agreed. The Classicists 14 (16.5%) slightly agreed, 17 (20%) agreed and 8 (9.4%) strongly agreed. For males with the powerhouse statement 3 (8.8%) slightly agreed, 4 (11.8%) agreed and no participants strongly agreed. For the professional statement 5 (16.1%) slightly agreed, 3 (9.7%) agreed and 1 (3.2%) strongly agreed. See full breakdown of rating of 5 or above for all clothing categories in Table 3.

Table 3. *Scores of agreement for clothing categories*

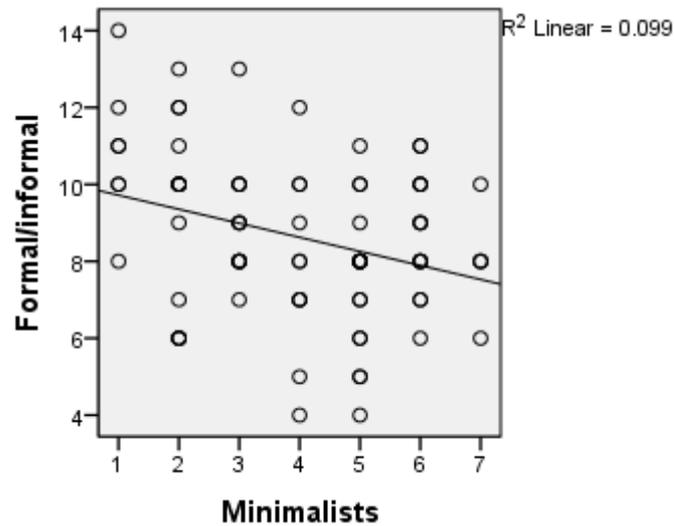
<b>Clothing Category</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Bombshells</b>		
Slightly agree	18	20.9
Agree	10	11.6
Strongly agree	6	7
<b>Bohemians</b>		
Slightly agree	11	13.1
Agree	8	9.5
Strongly agree	2	2.4
<b>Mavericks</b>		
Slightly agree	8	9.6
Agree	8	9.6
Strongly agree	3	3.6
<b>Eclectics</b>		
Slightly agree	8	9.4

	Agree	8	9.4
	Strongly agree	3	3.5
<b>Minimalists</b>	Slightly agree	19	22.4
	Agree	15	17.6
	Strongly agree	5	5.9
<b>Classics</b>	Slightly agree	14	16.5
	Agree	17	20
	Strongly agree	8	9.4
<b>Powerhouse</b>	Slightly agree	3	8.8
	Agree	4	11.8
	Strongly agree	0	0
<b>Professionals</b>	Slightly agree	5	16.1
	Agree	3	9.7
	Strongly agree	1	3.2
<b>Workman</b>	Slightly agree	7	22.6
	Agree	3	9.7
	Strongly agree	3	9.7
<b>Sportsman</b>	Slightly agree	7	22.6
	Agree	5	16.1
	Strongly agree	6	19.4
<b>Rocker</b>	Slightly agree	2	6.7
	Agree	3	10
	Strongly agree	0	0

#### Hypothesis 1.

A Kendall's tau-b correlation was used to test the first hypothesis that females scoring high on Minimalist clothing categories would correlate with high scores on simple, formal, and colourless self-concept items. There was a weak negative significant relationship between Minimalists and Formal/Informal self-concept ( $\tau\text{-}b = -0.22, p = .011, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ). There was a weak negative significant relationship between Minimalist and Colourless/Colourful self-concept ( $\tau\text{-}b = -0.2, p = .020, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ), therefore the null hypothesis was partially rejected. No significant correlation was found between Minimalists and Simple/Complex self-concept ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.001, p = .994, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ), partially accepting

the null hypothesis. See *figure 1* for illustration of negative relationship between Minimalist clothing category and formal/informal self-concept.



*figure 1. A scatterplot showing the relationship between Minimalists and formal/informal self-concept.*

## Hypothesis 2.

A Kendall's tau-b correlation was used to test the second hypothesis that females scoring high on Classics clothing categories would also correlate with high scores on simple, formal, and colourless self-concept items. A weak negative significant relationship was also found between Classicists and Colourless/Colourful self-concept ( $\text{tau-b} = -0.26, p = .002, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ), thus the null hypothesis was partially rejected. See *figure 2* for illustration. There was no significant correlation found between Classics and Formal/Informal self-concept ( $\text{tau-b} = -0.15, p = .086, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ). No significant relationship was found between classics and Simple/Complex self-concept ( $\text{tau-b} = -0.06, p = .505, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ). Thus partially failing to reject the null hypothesis.

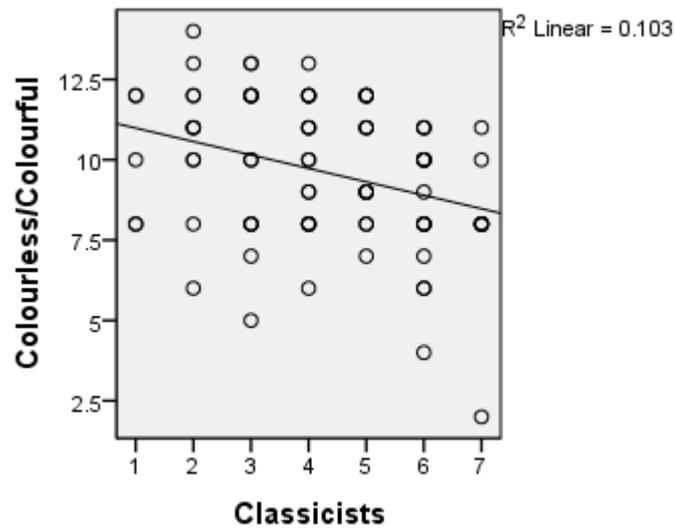


Figure 2. A scatterplot showing the relationship between Classicists and Colourless /Colourfull self-concept.

Hypothesis 3.

A Kendall's tau-b was used to test hypothesis 3, that males scoring high on Powerhouse clothing categories would correlate with self-concept items Organised and Formal. There was a moderate negative significant correlation between Powerhouse and Formal/Informal self-concept ( $\tau\text{-}b = -0.32, p = .037, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ). Therefore the null hypothesis was partially rejected. See figure 3. No significant relationship was found between Powerhouse and Organised/Unorganised self-concept ( $\tau\text{-}b = -0.15, p = .323, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ), thus the null hypothesis was partially accepted.

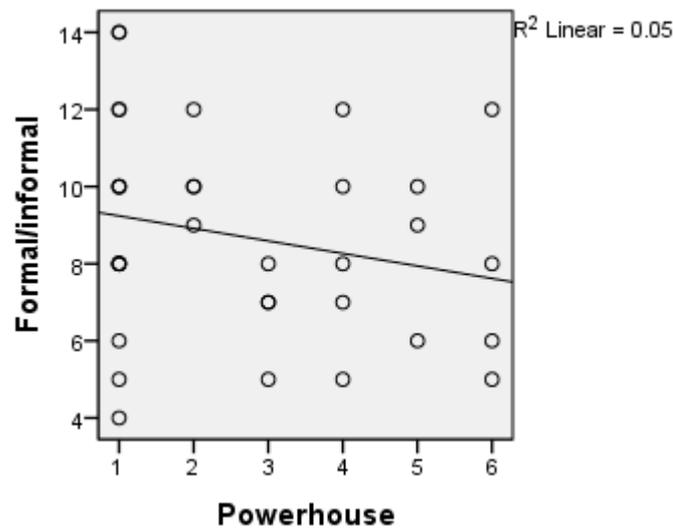


Figure 3. A scatterplot showing the relationship between Powerhouse and Formal/Informal self-concept

Hypothesis 4.

A Kendall's tau-b was used to test hypothesis 4, that males scoring high on Professional clothing categories would correlate with self-concept items Organised and Formal. There was no significant relationship found between Professionals and Formal/Informal self-concept ( $\tau\text{-}b = -0.2, p = .18, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ). No significant relationship was found between Professional and Organised/Unorganised self-concepts ( $\tau\text{-}b = -0.11, p = .47, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ). Therefore failing to reject the null hypothesis.

Objective three: *Determine the relationship between dimensions within the proximity of Clothing to self scale and self-esteem scores.*

Descriptive statistics including means (M) and Standard Deviation total self-esteem score and each of the PCS dimensions are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Mean and standard deviation for variables

Variable	M	SD
Total Self-Esteem	19.52	5.44
PCS; Self as a structure	20.31	6.37
PCS; Communication of self to others	18.96	6.6
PCS; Response to judgment of others	12.37	4.48
PCS; Self-esteem, evaluation	31.68	8.25
PCS; Self-esteem, affective	27.26	5.91
PCS; Body image and body cathexis	29.73	7.97

#### Hypothesis 5.

A Pearson correlation was used to test hypothesis 5. No significant correlation was found between self-esteem and dimensions 4 of PCS self-esteem- evaluative process, dominant ( $r = -0.19, p = .845, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ). No significant relationship was found between self-esteem and dimension 5 of PCS self-esteem- affective process, dominant ( $r = 0.8, p = .404, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ). No significant relationship was found between self-esteem and dimension 6 of PCS body image and body cathexis ( $r = -0.07, p = .452, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ).

#### Other significant findings.

A Kendall's tau-b found a moderate positive significant relationship between Minimalists and Classics ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.38, p < .001, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ). A moderate negative significant correlation was found between Eclectics with both Minimalists ( $\tau\text{-}b = -0.33, p < .001, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ) and Classics ( $\tau\text{-}b = -0.33, p < .001, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ). A moderate positive significant

correlation was also found between Mavericks and Eclectics ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.47, p < .001, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ). A moderate positive significant correlation was found between Bohemians and both Mavericks ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.33, p < .001, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ) and Eclectics ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.47, p < .001, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ). There was a weak negative significant relationship between Bombshells and Classics ( $\tau\text{-}b = -0.24, p = .005, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ). For males there was also moderate positive significant relationship between Powerhouse and Professionals ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.4, p = .01, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ).

For females a Kendall's tau-b determined a weak positive significant correlation between Eclectics and Colourless/Colourful self-concepts ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.19, p = .025, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ). There was also a weak negative significant relationship between Bombshells and Contemporary/Non contemporary ( $\tau\text{-}b = -0.17, p = .04, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ). For males there was a moderate negative significant relationship between Professionals and Contemporary/Non Contemporary ( $\tau\text{-}b = -0.45, p = .003, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ) and also a moderate positive correlation significant between professionals and Rugged/Delicate ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.31, p = .045, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ). With the Sportsman clothing category, there was a moderate positive significant relationship with Rational/Emotional ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.32, p = .036, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ) and Complex/Simple ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.47, p = .002, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ).

Using a Pearson's correlation a weak negative significant relationship was found between age and dimension 4 of the PCS self-esteem- evaluative process, dominant ( $r = -0.19, p = .048, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ). There was also a weak negative significant relationship between age and Dimension 5 self-esteem- affective process, dominant ( $r = -0.19, p = .048, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ).

A Kendall's tau-b found a weak positive significant relationship between dimension 1 of PCS self as a structure and the female clothing categories Bombshell ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.17, p = .042, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ), Bohemian ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.21, p = .011, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ), Mavericks ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.293, p = .000, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ), and Eclectics ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.228, p = .005, 2\text{-Tailed}$ ). There was a weak positive significant relationship between dimensions 2 of PCS communication of self to others and the

clothing categories Mavericks ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.23, p = .005, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ) and Eclectics ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.22, p = .008, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ). There was a weak positive significant relationship between dimension 4 Self-esteem- evaluative process dominant and Mavericks ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.25, p = .002, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ). A weak relationship significant was found with bombshells and dimension 5 of PCS self-esteem- affective process dominant ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.24, p = .003, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ), and dimension 6 body image and body cathexis ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.29, p < .001, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ).

For males using a Kendall's tau-b correlation there was a moderate negative significant relationship with the clothing category Workman and self-esteem scores ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.31, p = .038, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ). There was a moderate negative significant relationship with Workman and dimension 1 of the PCS self as a structure ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.33, p = .025, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ), dimension 2 Communication of self to others ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.39, p = .008, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ), dimension 4 self-esteem- evaluative process dominant ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.35, p = .019, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ), and dimension 5 self-esteem- affective process dominant ( $\tau\text{-}b = 0.36, p = .014, 2\text{-}Tailed$ ).

## DISCUSSION

### *Summary of Results*

The influence of an individual's dress practices on his/her sense of self has been studied for many years. The aim of the current research was to extend on previous findings, while examining some relatively unexplored areas. The main objectives of the study were to see if there was a relationship between individuals clothing preference and their self-concepts. Another aspect to this study was to determine if there was a relationship between proximity of clothing to self and self-esteem. Specific objectives established to achieve this purpose were to:

1. Describe the demographic of participants;
2. Determine the relationship between clothing preference categories and self-concept trait for both males and females.
3. Determine the relationship between dimensions within the Proximity of Clothing to Self Scale and self-esteem scores.

Based on the finding of this study, the following conclusions were drawn. Statistical analysis of the data supported three out of five hypothesis. Results indicated a relationship between clothing preference and self-concepts. Most of the correlation involved formal styles of dress (Minimalists, Classics and Powerhouse) and formal self-concept adjective (formal, colourless). These results were similar to findings in both Peluchette & Karl (2007) and Hanover & Kuhen (2006) studies that carried out on work place clothing. The correlation was weak but measureable between variables. No correlation was found between the 4 hypothesis of Professional clothing category and formal self-concept adjectives (formal, Organised). No correlation was found with the fifth hypothesis between self-esteem and dimensions 4 (self-esteem- evaluative process), dimension 5 (self-esteem-affective process) and dimension 6

(body image and body cathexis). Although research in the area is mixed, results for these variables, neither promote or reject previous literature.

### *Clothing Preference Categories and Self-Concept*

Due to the lack of literature on the relationship between self-concepts and every-day clothing preferences that integrated a variety of styles, hypotheses were chosen based on previous findings. Relationships were found between Minimalists and Classics and also between Powerhouse and Professionals, which validate the reason that both of the female categories and both of the male categories were hypothesised to correlate with the same self-concept items. Apart from the Professional clothing category, the correlations found in this study support previous research that individuals who wear more formal clothing use more formal language to describe themselves (Peluchette & Karl, 2007; Hanover & Kuhen, 2006).

Although professionals did not correlate with the hypothesised self-concept item, they did correlation with contemporary self-concept. Which is arguably how you could describe a clothing style of “lightweight suits, slim-fit shirts, and dark neckties, slim-fit shirts and jeans.” All significant findings on clothing preferences and self-concepts generally supported the previous research. Eclectics correlated with colourful self-concept and Sportman correlated with simple self concept. Sirgys (1985b) self- image congruence model integrates the actual- self and the ideal-self components of the self- concept with product image to explain consumer behavior. With this model and the example of Eclectics, Participants were more likely to wear clothing with ‘bright colors’ and ‘loud patterns’ to maintain self-congruity and match their self-concept of being colourful. With the results of this study according to Sirgys model participants clothing preference are a way of satisfying the need for self-consistency (defined as the tendency to engage in behaviors that are consistent with

one's own view of self). Indicating that participants preferred styles that conjure up a positive image for them, while also maintaining their identity.

### *Proximity of Clothing to Self and Self-Esteem*

The current study failed to reject the hypothesis that there would be a relationship between PCS and self-esteem. Clothing choices itself has been found to have an impact on self-esteem (Kwon, 1991; Kwon, 1994b, Henneman, 1994), but research into PCS and its influence on emotions perception has produced varying outcomes. Sontag (1978) suggesting PCS is linked to perceived quality of life and Lee (2005) who demonstrated a negative relationship with self-actualisation in older person. This current research was unable to spread any new light on this topic. This may have been due to limitations of the study or the lack of previous research may indicate no relationship is involved between the two variables. There was however a negative relationship between age and the two self-esteem dimensions of PCS. This would be supported by research by Lee (2010) who found a negative relationship between PCS and self-actualisation in older persons. With regards Maslow's hierarchical of needs, self-esteem is one of the higher order of needs. Younger individuals may still be striving for self-esteem, whereas older persons have already achieved it and no longer need to rely on clothing as an expression of self. Results also indicated a relationship between PCS (self as a structure) and clothing categories Bombshell, Bohemian, Mavericks and Eclectics. This would imply individuals who belong to any of these categories use clothing as an expression of the self. Minimalists and Classics were the only female clothing categories that didn't correlate with any of the PCS dimensions. This is interesting as these categories did actually correlate with self-concept items. It might be that individuals with a more subtle dress preference are unconsciously expressing themselves through their clothes whereas those with a more vibrant dress sense make a conscious effort to express themselves through their clothing

choices. This would support all previous research that suggests a relationship between an individual's self-concept and what they wear (Atkins, 1976; Dubler & Gurel, 1984; Ryan, 1953). Although the sample size for males was quite small (N=27) a negative correlation was found between the Workman clothing category and four out of five of the PCS dimensions. Indicating individual who prefer this style of clothing 'canvas or wool jackets, denim jeans, and work boots' do not use clothing as an expression of self. Workman clothing category also correlated with low self-esteem. This would be supported by the finding of Kwon (1991) that when clothing is used negatively it can have an effect on self-esteem. Although these findings are interesting results should be looked upon tentatively due to the limitation of the sample size for males. Therefore this result can't be generalized to the general population.

### Problems and Limitations

Whilst conducting the current study, one potential problem is that it relied on self-report questionnaires. The large majority of which were distributed to acquaintances of the researcher through social media sites. Although participants were reassured that responses were anonymous, due to the sensitive nature of some of the questions participants may have given some untrue answers on the self-esteem questionnaire. Also after some feedback from participants, directions on the self-concept scale were found to be hard to interpret. This may also have led to inaccurate answers, due to participants not fully understanding what was being asked.

The majority of participants were made up from the Dublin area only, so this might not have represented the whole population, therefore, results can't be generalised. The sample size of 111 is also quite small in terms of giving a general reflection of society. Also there were an uneven percentage of females to males, with significantly less males than females. A more even amount of both genders would have allowed for correlations between gender and

PCS to be examined. Also all significance for males that were reported in the current research may not have been an accurate representation of the whole male population given the limited sample size.

One aspect of the research that was neglected was to determine what clothing style participants were wearing at the time of completing the survey. This would have allowed for the theory of encloded cognition to be explored being that the influence of clothes depends both on wearing the clothing and the meaning it invokes in their psychological schemas.

Another limitation of this study was that although Malhotra's self-concept is a valid and reliable method to measure self-concepts, person concepts, and images of products, having bipolar items made it hard for participants to interpret. This may have been partially due to inadequate instruction on the part of the researcher and also the complexity of the scale for non-psychology students. It may have been beneficial to use another self-concept scale that focused only on one self-concept item at a time.

This study was based on cross-sectional data, which means it only can look at correlations but no causations can be obtained from it. It is also impossible to say whether it is an individuals clothing preference that predicts their self-concept, or if it is the self-concept that determines what type of clothes they wear.

### *Strengths of the Study*

One of the main strengths of this study was that there was good variation in age and occupations. Participants ranged from 21 to 74. Another strength of the study was that it explored correlations between variables, which has been relatively understudied thus far. This study extends the previous research by using more diverse clothing styles. As most of the previous research existing outside of Ireland, this further validates previous research by using an Irish population

### *Future Research*

Based upon the findings of this research, it is suggested that further research be conducted utilizing sample sizes with a more equal proportion of males to females. A more even amount of both genders would allow for correlations between gender and PCS to be examined.

Future research could also get a detailed account of what clothing style participants were wearing at the time of completing the survey. This could possibly establish whether the process of actually wearing the clothing has any influence on self-concept as proposed by Enclothed Cognition.

Utilizing a much larger sample sizes for further research into clothing preference and self-esteem would be beneficial. The research of Murzert (1980) on colour preference has indicated that mood has an influence on your colour preference and what one wears affects feelings about the self (Kwon, 1994b). Further research into comparing self-esteem levels with variations of clothing styles may be beneficial.

From this research a relationship was suggested between certain clothing categories and dimensions in the PCS. With a larger sample size further research into this would be beneficial to determine if individuals with more vibrant clothing styles use clothing more as a way of self-expression than individuals with a simple dress sense as findings from the current study would suggest.

A definite line of new research would be to determine a means of measuring clothing preferences for the multitude of styles that exists in today's society. Much of the measurements used in previous research are in relation to work place attire and use variations of formal attire. Also previous studies like Ericken & Sirgy (1992) for employed females clothing preference used images of styles that are quite outdated and not a general representation of the styles that exists in modern society.

### *Conclusions*

Understanding how dress practices can influence an individual's sense of self is of great interest, as our sense of self can determine how we behave and interact with our environment. This study was successful in elaborating further an area of study, which is still in the early stages of development. There was a relationship found between clothing preference categories (Minimalists, Classics and Powerhouse) and formal self-concept adjective (formal, colourless). No correlation was found between PCS and self-esteem. The study did find a positive relationship between certain clothing preference categories (Bombshell, Bohemian, Mavericks and Eclectics) and their proximity of clothing to self and also a negative correlation between Workman clothing category and PCS. Additionally, the study found a negative relationship between age and dimensions within PCS (self-esteem- evaluative process, dominant and self-esteem- affective process; dominant). These findings suggest that there is a definite relationship between clothing preference and self-concepts, relationships also exists between clothing preference and PCS. However the exploration of this topic is far from complete and in order to truly uncover all relationships further intensive research is required.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Research Questionnaire

#### *Information letter*

My name is Karla Keogan. I am a final year undergraduate student in Dublin Business School. I am conducting this research as part of a BA (Hons) Degree in Psychology.

In this survey, you will be asked to answer some questions about your clothing preferences, self-concepts and self-esteem.

This survey should take approximately 5 - 10 minutes to complete in total. Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may stop completing the questionnaires at any time, or withdraw your participation. You will not be identified in any of the questionnaires or demographic sheet and all answers given will be treated in the strictest confidence. Only those over 18 should complete the questionnaire.

All results are anonymous, but if you would like me to provide you with the overall results of my findings, please contact me on the email below. Thank you very much for your participation and time.

Kind regards,

Karla Keogan

Email; [REDACTED]

*Demographic Sheet***Please tick, or fill in your answer as appropriate**

1. Male  Females
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Single  In a relationship  Married  Other \_\_\_\_\_
4. Working status: Full time  Part time  Unemployed
5. If working, does your job require you to wear a uniform: Yes  No

*PCS (Sontag and Schlater, 1982)*

Directions: Below is a list of statements that describe the way clothing may or may not relate to your self. Read each statement carefully. Please <u>circle</u> the number that best describes how often the statement is true of you.	Always or almost always true	Usually true	Often True	Sometimes true	Usually not true	Never or almost never true
Certain clothes make me feel good about myself.	6	5	4	3	2	1
What I wear and the way I wear it show others my attitudes.	6	5	4	3	2	1
My clothing reflects how I feel about myself.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Dressing up makes me feel important.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I care about what other people think of how I look in my clothes.	6	5	4	3	2	1
When I'm dissatisfied with a part of my body, I wear clothing that draws attention away from it.	6	5	4	3	2	1
What I wear is consistent with who I am.	6	5	4	3	2	1
It matters to me that people make judgments about the type of person I am by the way I dress.	6	5	4	3	2	1
When I feel good about what I am wearing, then I have confidence in myself.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I choose clothes that accent the parts of my body that I like.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I try to project a certain image of myself to others through my clothing.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I feel better about myself when I am well dressed.	6	5	4	3	2	1
When I buy clothing that looks good on me, I feel satisfied with my body.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I want my clothes to make a statement about me without any need for words.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I'm careful in wearing certain styles or brands of clothing because they affect how people respect me.	6	5	4	3	2	1
When I feel good about myself, I take care in getting dressed.	6	5	4	3	2	1
My clothing is a part of me, not just a simple possession.	6	5	4	3	2	1
The way I dress is important in giving me a sense of being in control of my life.	6	5	4	3	2	1
The clothes I wear help me to be who I am.	6	5	4	3	2	1
My self-confidence increases when I dress appropriately.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Taking time to dress up gives me a feeling of pride in how I look.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Through my clothing, I can show my values to others.	6	5	4	3	2	1
The way my clothing fits affects the way I feel about my body.	6	5	4	3	2	1
How I look in my clothing is important because I want others to accept me.	6	5	4	3	2	1

Directions: Below is a list of statements that describe the way clothing may or may not relate to your self. Read each statement carefully. Please <u>circle</u> the number that best describes how often the statement is true of you.	Always or almost always true	Usually true	Often True	Sometimes true	Usually not true	Never or almost never true
The clothes I like to wear help me feel self-assured.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I often wear certain clothing to let people know what kind of person I am.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I feel good about myself when I have something new to wear.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I avoid certain styles or colors in clothing that do not enhance my body build or figure.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I am a certain type of person, and my clothes reflect that.	6	5	4	3	2	1
When I look good in my clothes, I feel good about myself.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I look best in my clothing when I'm at the right weight for me.	6	5	4	3	2	1
My clothing shows others how I think and feel about myself.	6	5	4	3	2	1
When I wear clothes that make me feel good, I am better able to talk with others.	6	5	4	3	2	1
When I look good in what I wear, I feel content with myself.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I try to buy clothing that makes me feel attractive.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Clothes help me become the person I want to be.	6	5	4	3	2	1
My clothing gives others an idea about my interests or activities.	6	5	4	3	2	1
I wear certain clothing styles to change the way my body looks.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Good quality clothes that look good on me make me feel competent.	6	5	4	3	2	1

*Malhotra's Self-Concept Scale (Malhotra, 1981)*

These 15 items deal with self-concepts. You are asked to rate each item according to:

- a) Your actual-self
- b) Your ideal-self

Each self-concept item should be scaled from 1 to 7.  
1= extreme left, 7= extreme right

		a)Actual	b)ideal
1.	Rugged....Delicate		
2.	Excitable....Calm		
3.	Uncomfortable.....Comfortable		
4.	Dominating.....Submissive		
5.	Thrifty....Indulgent		
6.	Pleasant....Unpleasant		
7.	Contemporary...Non contemporary		
8.	Organized....Unorganised		
9.	Rational....Emotional		
10.	Youthful....Mature		
11.	Formal....Informal		
12.	Orthodox....Liberal		
13.	Complex.....Simple		
14.	Colourless....Colourful		
15.	Modest....Vain		

*Clothing preference categories***For females only.**

Below is a list of statements dealing with your clothing preference on a daily basis, you may agree or disagree with them. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item.

- 7 - Strongly agree
  - 6 - Agree
  - 5 - Slightly agree
  - 4 - Neither agree nor disagree
  - 3 - Slightly disagree
  - 2 - Disagree
  - 1 - Strongly disagree
- 
- Picking clothes that show off your feminine figure is important to you. You choose body-hugging, figure-flattering cuts. Deep V's tops and high heels are your preference. You avoid sack dresses, masculine tailoring, and anything with too much coverage. You prefer block colours, Brights, white, and black. You are not afraid to draw attention to yourself with your clothing choices  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
  - You prefer breezy gowns, ethnic-inspired looks. You layer pieces, pairing new with vintage, combining multiple textures. You avoid plain shades, wearing a rainbow of colors highlights a carefree demeanor. You enjoy wearing swirly paisleys, pretty florals, and retro patterns.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
  - New designers, Avant-garde cuts, Bold looks are important to you. You are not afraid to experiment with new fashion. You look for pieces no one else has and start your own trends. You seek out unique colors and trimmings.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
  - It's all about having fun with fashion for you. Bright colors, madcap pairings, and loud patterns are your fashion preference. You avoid safe clothing, and never take yourself too seriously. You choose clothes that catch your eye and stand out.  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Your clothes are sharp and smart with sleek, simple shapes in a monochrome, toned-down palette. The no-frills hue always works best for you. Black is your best friend. You keep it reserved never showing too much skin. You avoid loud colors, embellishments, and fanciful details.
- 

- You prefer basics, simple staple pieces: T-shirt, blazer, white shirt, suit, and trousers. You stick to traditional clothes that you know work. You avoid trends, but when intrigued by a trend, you incorporate it into your look in a subtle way. Your clothes have clean lines and you avoid frills and fanciful cuts. You like pared- down colours usually wearing Black, white, navy, gray, and khaki.
-

## For males only.

Below is a list of statements dealing with your clothing preference that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item.

- 7 - Strongly agree
- 6 - Agree
- 5 - Slightly agree
- 4 - Neither agree nor disagree
- 3 - Slightly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 1 - Strongly disagree

- Power suits, seven-fold ties, and smart shoes are you clothing of choice.

\_\_\_\_\_

- You usually wear Lightweight suits, slim-fit shirts, and dark neckties. For casual clothes you wear slim-fit shirts and jeans.

\_\_\_\_\_

- You dress casually: canvas or wool jackets, denim jeans, and work boots. You never really wear tailored clothes.

\_\_\_\_\_

- You wear technical sportswear and hoodies mixed with jeans and T-shirts.

\_\_\_\_\_

- You usually wear Leather mixed with denim and tailoring.

\_\_\_\_\_

*The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)*

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself.

If you ***strongly agree*** with the statement circle **SA**.

If you ***agree*** with the statement circle **A**.

If you ***disagree*** with the statement circle **D**.

If you ***strongly disagree*** with the statement circle **SD**.

- |     |  |           |          |          |           |
|-----|--|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1.  | On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.                                  | <b>SA</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>SD</b> |
| 2.  | At times, I think I am no good at all.                                     | <b>SA</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>SD</b> |
| 3.  | I feel that I have a number of good qualities.                             | <b>SA</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>SD</b> |
| 4.  | I am able to do things as well as most other people.                       | <b>SA</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>SD</b> |
| 5.  | I feel I do not have much to be proud of.                                  | <b>SA</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>SD</b> |
| 6.  | I certainly feel useless at times.   | <b>SA</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>SD</b> |
| 7.  | I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others. | <b>SA</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>SD</b> |
| 8.  | I wish I could have more respect for myself.                               | <b>SA</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>SD</b> |
| 9.  | All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.                     | <b>SA</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>SD</b> |
| 10. | I take a positive attitude toward myself.                                  | <b>SA</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>SD</b> |

*Debriefing letter*

If this questionnaire has raised any issues/feelings that you may want to discuss further, these support services may assist you:

Samaritans Emotional Support Service: (01)8727700

(<http://www.samaritans.org.uk/talk/branches/ireland.shtm>)

Aware Depression Support Service: 1890303302

(<http://www.aware.ie/helpline.htm>)

Should you require any further information about the research, please contact Karla Keogan by email: [REDACTED]

You could also contact my project supervisor, John Hyland by an email: [REDACTED]

All results are anonymous, but if you would like me to provide you with the overall results of my findings, please contact me on the email above. Thank you very much for your participation and time.