Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication

Summary and Keywords

Forms of dress, ranging from runway fashions and sports jerseys to traditional cultural apparel and religious garb, are central to contemporary social life and are intimately connected to issues of personal and social identity, communicating to others who we are or who we would like to be. Given this, dress style is a subject worthy of serious scholarly inquiry, particularly within the field of intergroup communication. Dress style—as well as other bodily accoutrements—has received some attention in disciplines across the social sciences, but has received less attention among those studying intergroup relations and communication. Prominent intergroup communication theories, such as social identity, uncertainty identity, and communication accommodation theories, teach us that clothing choices can reflect actual or desired group affiliations, demarcating group boundaries, shaping and reinforcing social identities, and influencing our perceptions of others. Dress style can also stem from a desire to reduce identity uncertainty, serving as a conduit for personal expression and self-discovery. Overall, intergroup dynamics play a prominent role in shaping dress style and body adornment practices across the globe.

Keywords: bodily adornments, dress, clothing, fashion, intergroup communication, intergroup relations, social identity, personal identity, self-categorization, uncertainty reduction

Introduction

> "What you wear is how you present yourself to the world . . . Fashion is instant language."
>
> — Miuccia Prada

Turn on the television, and you may well stumble across programs featuring style and fashion, or commentary on celebrity dress styles on the red carpet. Surf the web, and you may come across one of countless blogs or websites created by fashion leaders, for

date: 31 July 2017

fashion leaders. In the supermarket checkout aisle, you will probably see a barrage of fashion magazines and tabloids answering the question "Who wore it best?" In the United States, fashion magazines like *Vogue*, *Glamour*, and *In Style* collectively generate hundreds of millions of dollars in advertising revenue each year. Indeed, within the United States, the clothing industry was worth $225 billion in 2012, and its worth is projected to increase to $285 billion by 2025 (Wazir Management Consultants). Beyond the United States, the global apparel industry is massive and diverse, involving manufacturers, designers, creative executives, models, retailers, and marketers, among others, is worth approximately $1.1 trillion as of 2012, and is predicted to be worth approximately $2.1 trillion by 2025 (Wazir Management Consultants). In addition to the apparel industry, massive industries exist to produce cosmetics, hair products, and accessories, such as hats, belts, purses, and jewelry. Further, body-modification services provided by tattoo artists and piercers are popular worldwide. Given all of this, it is clear that many humans care quite a bit about fashion.

Fashion and dress style are an inescapable facet of our social world, even among those unconcerned with designer brand names and those who do not spend much time thinking about clothing and accessories. Forms of dress, ranging from runway fashions and sports jerseys to traditional cultural apparel and religious garb, are central to contemporary social life. Whether or not we are consciously aware of it, our dress style and fashion decisions are a form of communication that send a message to those in our social environment. What we choose to wear shapes and reflects our personal and social identities, informs perceptions of the self and others, and contributes to others' perceptions of us (see Kotthoff & Spencer-Oatey, 2007; Manusov & Patterson, 2006). Therefore, it is a topic worthy of critical thought and serious empirical as well as theoretical attention.

In addressing the topic of dress style together with other bodily adornments (e.g., jewelry, hairstyle, tattoos, piercings, and makeup), this article first reviews extant research on dress style across disciplines within the social sciences. To highlight the importance of dress style in the study of intergroup communication and relations specifically, the individual and group-level antecedents and consequences of clothing choice are analyzed through the lens of several prominent intergroup theories. Taken together, these theories suggest that clothing and dress style demarcate group boundaries, shape and reinforce social identities, influence our perceptions of others, reduce identity uncertainty, and serve as a conduit of personal expression and self-discovery.

date: 31 July 2017

Discussion of the Literature

The link between dress styles and social identities can take a number of forms. Dress styles are obligatory for membership in some groups (e.g., uniforms), are suggested/implied in some (e.g., "casual Fridays" at the workplace), and are purely optional in others. Individuals can shift between co-occurring identities when changing wardrobes, as by removing workplace uniforms and changing into "weekend" clothes, and can redefine traditional identities or create new ones through nonadherence to stereotypical dress norms (e.g., boys wearing dresses). Dress styles can hold symbolic importance for social groups and observers alike, and fashion forms the very core of one's membership identity in some groups (e.g., those in the fashion industry) as well. As fashions change and groups transform, previous links between dress style and group membership may disappear (e.g., transient fashion trends, or when a group determines dress style is no longer an important group norm). Among other groups, dress style norms remain relatively unchanged (e.g., U.S. Army uniforms). It is important to note that sometimes dress holds little to no symbolic meaning and is relatively or completely divorced from social identities for the wearer—for instance, some swimmers wear swimsuits because they are functionally necessary for the task of swimming or because they reflect one's personal identity as a swimmer. However, observers may still glean social identity information from this artifact, perhaps making an assumption that the individual is a member of the local swim team. Yet other swimmers may wear suits adorned with their team logos, linking the artifact with their group membership, and others may wear a full-coverage swimsuit to reflect their beliefs in the importance of modesty as members of certain religious or cultural groups. Thus, the connection between social identity and dress style is quite complex and multifaceted—it involves the nature of one's salient identity, the nature of the group, one's membership in that group, and sometimes the perspective of outside observers. The link can be weak, strong, temporary, permanent, symbolic, and value laden, or nonexistent for the wearer but not for observers.

Research Areas

Fashion and dress style have been studied by a number of allied social science disciplines, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, critical/cultural studies, and management. Sociologists and critical/cultural scholars often study dress as a source of inequality and power difference. Anthropologists are often interested in analyzing dress choices and textile industries as institutions and cultural practices. Personality, social, and evolutionary psychologists tend to be concerned with the intersection of dress and personality, personal identity, and human sexuality and mating. Management scholars are often concerned with the role of dress style in influencing organizational behavior and perceptions of professional competencies. However, comparatively less attention has

date: 31 July 2017

been devoted to dress as it relates to issues of intergroup communication and intergroup relations.

Personality and Social Psychology

Research within social and personality psychology indicates that dress both reflects individuals' personal identities and shapes others' impressions of them and their personalities. For instance, Naumann, Vazire, Rentfrow, and Gosling (2009) found that those with neat and healthy appearances tended to be lower in openness to experience and higher in extroversion, and those with stylish appearances tend to be more extroverted. Further, Kellerman and Laird (1982) found that when individuals were wearing glasses—itself sometimes a fashion statement, as with nonprescription glasses—their self-perceived performance on an intelligence test increased, and they rated themselves as more scholarly and competent. In a self-report study, those who wore glasses were actually less extroverted and open to experience than those who did not, suggesting a relationship between personality and accessory choice or a possible association between vision and personality type (Borkenau, 1991).

Dress styles and physical appearance also shape our perceptions of others' personalities and interests. For example, Naumann et al. (2009) found a "distinctive" appearance is positively associated with perceptions of openness and with an interest in liberal politics; stylishness is associated with perceptions of higher self-esteem; and people with a neat appearance are seen as having higher self-esteem, and being more likeable, more religious, more politically liberal, and less lonely than messy looking people. Albright, Kenny, and Malloy (1988) found that neat (rather than sloppy) and formal (rather than informal) dress were both positively and significantly correlated with others' ratings of the wearer's conscientiousness. Taking all of this together, we see that visual appearance cues—specifically those involving dress and grooming—shape individuals' perceptions of others. However, the perceptions do not always match the dressers' actual measured personalities.

Psychologists have found that the message nonverbally communicated through dress style is highly context-dependent. For instance, Workman (1984) had informants rate the personality of, and make attributions about, individuals dressed appropriately for an interview for a groundskeeper position (overalls), appropriately for an interview for an orientation advisor job (suit), or inappropriately for either position. Those who were dressed in a suit were rated more favorably overall than those who dressed in overalls, regardless of the type of position. However, participants made different attributions for incorrect dress depending upon the type of position: the individual wearing a suit for the groundskeeper interview was attributed less choice in selecting his attire, whereas the individual wearing overalls for the orientation position was assumed to be less confident and less interested in the position.

date: 31 July 2017

In a study in which a confederate (male undergraduate student) purportedly going to an interview or tutorial wore a tie or not, Rees, Williams, and Giles (1974) found that the tie-wearing individual was rated as substantially more serious, conservative, intelligent, and ambitious, but less open-minded than the individual who did not wear a tie. Interestingly, the confederate was judged to be more intelligent when his dress style matched the social situation, that is, he was rated as more intelligent when wearing a tie and going to an interview, but less intelligent when wearing a tie and going to a tutorial—a less formal event. Importantly, the social appropriateness of certain forms of dress varies by culture and historical time period. Indeed, in 21st century America, wearing a tie to an interview is not always normative behavior, so it may not negatively influence intelligence judgments in certain sectors. For instance, not wearing a tie can signify that an individual is a member of the technology sector, known for relatively casual workplace dress.

Evolutionary Psychology

Sociologist and economist Veblen (1899) wrote about what he termed "conspicuous consumption," the notion that we purchase goods like clothing to demonstrate our wealth and social standing (i.e., as part of the "leisure class"). Veblen's notion of conspicuous consumption relates well to evolutionary theories of costly displays—namely the handicap principle—which states that signals that are somehow costly for the signaler are more likely to be honest, as this signaling cost prevents or helps reduce cheating (Searcy & Nowicki, 2005; Zahavi & Zahavi, 1997). An oft-cited example of the handicap principle is a male peacock's large and colorful tail, which signals fitness to female onlookers, and is costly to the male because it renders him more vulnerable to predation. Applied to clothing, expensive dress may serve as a handicap, honestly signaling an individual's wealth and social status. The signal (i.e., an ever-changing array of high-fashion clothing from the latest season) is costly in terms of its monetary price, and is honest insofar as only wealthy individuals can actually afford to signal (i.e., purchase and wear the clothing). Displaying one's wealth and status may yield more or better mating opportunities, increasing one's chances of propagating their genes to the next generation. This may be particularly true among males, as cross-cultural evidence suggests that, relative to males, females tend to more heavily value good financial prospects in potential mates (Buss, 1989).

Evolutionary research also indicates that women's clothing choices shift over the ovulatory cycle, so that women dress more provocatively (i.e., showing more skin) to look more attractive during their fertile phase, when impregnation is most likely (Durante, Li, & Haselton, 2008). This was especially true among single women with sexual experience, ultimately suggesting that clothing can serve as a fertility cue meant to attract mates and to compete with other females. Corroborating these findings, Haselton, Mortezaie, Pillsworth, Bleske, and Frederick (2007) found that among women, self-grooming and the attractiveness of their dress increases when a woman is fertile. Males value cues to youth, health, and reproductive potential in both short- and long-term female mates (Buss

date: 31 July 2017

& Schmitt, 1993), including an hourglass figure (Singh, 1993), large eyes, full lips, and clear skin (Grammer, Fink, Møller, & Thornhill, 2003; Thornhill & Gangestad, 1999), and females likely wear makeup and clothing meant to accentuate these features and to create a more youthful appearance when trying to attract male mates.

Sociology

A dominant theme of sociological research on dress is that clothing is highly symbolic and is linked to social life and issues of identity. Goffman (1956) suggested that as performers on the social stage, individuals consciously enact self-presentation through appearance cues to manage impressions, highlighting (or faking) certain aspects of their identity deemed normative or contextually appropriate, and hiding others from view. Evoking the idea of individuals as performers on a social stage, Featherstone (2010) noted that, in addition to changing one's appearance (e.g., dress) to reflect a desired identity, learning to "play the part" of who one would like to be is also important in the self-transformation process, as together physical and behavioral cues can elicit confirmation of our desired identity from onlookers. Indeed, altering one's appearance—through dress, makeup, hairstyles, accessories, and even plastic surgery—can lead to a transformation of one's personal identity and lifestyle, "upgrading [the self] to a newer level replete with positive possibilities, in line with the new body" (Featherstone, 2010, p. 196).

In the early 20th century, Gilman and Hill (1915) wrote a sociological text examining women's dress styles across cultures and time. In it they wrote, "Cloth is a social tissue . . . The more solitary we live, the less we think of clothing; the more we crowd and mingle in 'society,' the more we think of it" (p. 3), and "Our clothing, through its changeability and its variety, has become, even more than is an epidermis, a medium of expression . . . With clothing we may express a whole gamut of emotions from personal vanity to class consciousness" (p. 3). They noted five primary motives underlying clothing choices: protection, warmth, decoration, modesty, and symbolism (e.g., a top hat, while practically useful as a head covering, can also be considered a symbolic "badge of dignity" conveying status). They also discussed the social functions of dress and accessories. For example, wearing makeup demonstrated women's willingness to please men, and female jewelry was discussed as a way to enhance female beauty, so was purchased by men as a means of increasing "the value of his female property" (p. 79). Second-wave feminists generally echoed these sentiments, asserting that society's obsession with females' dress and outward appearance was oppressive to women (Jeffries, 2005). Postmodern feminists later rebuked this view, recognizing the power of dress, including makeup and high-heeled shoes, for females' agency, empowerment, and self-expression (Jeffries, 2005).

date: 31 July 2017

Critical/Cultural Studies

Critical/cultural scholars have discussed fashion discourse, with an eye to how talk about dress helps express individuals' views on such issues as individuality, self-worth, consumption, morality, gender roles, sexuality, taste, and social standing (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). They have also explored how dress creates and reinforces social inequalities and power imbalances, and can be used as a tool for empowerment. For instance, in an interview study of Muslim women in the United Kingdom and Denmark employing a critical social identity perspective, Chapman (2016) found that experiencing stigma reinforced some women's minority social identity and empowered them to defend the group's practices, including veiling. Rejecting the notion of the veil as oppressive, one woman noted that, "Other people look at me like I'm an outsider" because of the headdress, which "just makes me more adamant to wear it because I don't see it as preventing me from doing anything, it doesn't make me less capable" (p. 360). Indeed, some women reported that they saw veiling as an agentic practice (e.g., the "choice" to veil) and a symbol of empowerment. For others, social stigma led to a renegotiation of their identity and veiling practices, as by discontinuing use or by wearing a "sparkly" rather than the typical black hijab to workplace events to challenge predominant representations of Muslim women as oppressed or passive (p. 359). In a similar vein, Droogsma (2007) found that American Muslim women have various functions for the hijab, including opposing sexual objectification, protecting close relationships (by saving one's beauty for one's husband), providing freedom from conformity to female appearance norms (e.g., fashion trends), and attaining more respect from Muslim and nonMuslim men alike.

In another example of dress as a tool for both marginalization and empowerment, Twigg (2007) has noted that dress can redefine what it means to age, arguing that elderly individuals are actively excluded from discussions of high fashion within the world of art scholarship. They are mostly excluded from the industry in the "real world" as well, where fashion is synonymous with youth and sexual virility, and old age is associated with sexual decline and death, and is accompanied by "drab" or "frumpy" clothing. In Alison Lurie's (1992) book, *The Language of Clothes*, the author takes a historical and interpretive look at fashion, observing that certain colors are associated with aging— namely, pastels and dark colors indicate fading from social life and mourning, respectively. Some older adults wear brightly colored clothes with vivid patterns, a type of "resort dress" perhaps reflecting a return to a vulnerable childlike state in old age (Lurie, 1992). There is also a substantial degree of dress policing by younger individuals and among older adults themselves, as demonstrated by cultural tropes like "mutton dressed as lamb," meaning dressing in a way that is somehow socially inappropriate for one's age (Twigg, 2007). Given all of this, social groups revolving around advanced age, including the Red Hat Society, help empower elderly women through "hyperfeminine dress," including prominent red hats (Barrett, Pai, & Redmond, 2012, p. 529). Dress is

date: 31 July 2017

central to the group's identity, with the theme song: "Red Hat, Red Hat, I'm just as proud as I can be. With my purple dress and my red, red hat. The Red Hat Society" (p. 531)

Critical/cultural scholars have described Western fashion industry as marked by newness, variety, quickly changing styles, and mass consumption (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). While some see fashion as frivolous and superficial, others see dress as a way to achieve the "good life"—indeed, fashion models travel the world and receive public attention (see Thompson & Haytko, 1997) and they demonstrate the potential (if illusory) benefits that fashion can bring us. However, while dress can empower, it can also reflect and reinforce the marginalization of individuals and groups.

Anthropology

Anthropologists explore dress as a means of identity formation and maintenance, and as a cultural ritual. In the anthropology of consumption, scholars have noted that purchasing things like clothing and accessories helps individuals create and authenticate the self (Arnould & Price, 2000), and clothing and accessories are particularly powerful social symbols because they are generally not separated from the individual in social settings in a way that other material possessions may be (Eckert, 1989). In her study of American high school life, Eckert (1989) found that jocks wore designer labels to symbolize their social standing, whereas burnouts consciously rejected "competitive dressing" and had more inexpensive wardrobes (p. 63).

Contrary to the notion that clothing is highly symbolic, van der Laan, and Velthuis (2013) asserted that, for some individuals, dress becomes a relatively mindless or nonconscious ritual behavior revolving around functionality and maintenance of a coherent, stable, and authentic identity. In their qualitative study of Dutch urban men's dress, van der Laan, and Velthuis found that, contrary to the notion of deliberate dress choices that reflect one's identity on any given day, "the daily ritual of getting dressed is more determined by routine and practical considerations" (p. 7). Rather than wanting to express an identity, many of the men interviewed wanted to fit in and remain "simple" and "inconspicuous." (p. 9).

Anthropologists also examine dress style choices as cultural practices. Cultural and subcultural groups are defined, in part, by the clothing and accessories their members choose to wear. Schouten and McAlexander (1995) define subculture in highly consumer-driven terms, emphasizing "a shared commitment to a particular product class, brand, or consumption activity" (p. 43). In their ethnographic study of Harley Davidson owners, Schouten and McAlexander (1995) found that subtle differences in dress style practices demarcated true grassroots "outlaw clubs" and Harley Owners Groups that are corporately promoted. Those in corporately promoted groups were found to have newer clothing that was used as a special-occasion costume, had cleaner grooming, and had fewer tattoos—their dress style was a "watered-down" version of outlaw clubs' fashion.

date: 31 July 2017

Further, in an ethnographic study of Islamic Egyptian women, Mahmood (2005) found that for some, the hijab is a cultural custom rather than a religious requirement. In conversation, one woman stated:

> It is the project of the government and the secularists to transform religion into conventions or customs . . . An example of this is the use of the veil as a custom rather than as a religious duty . . . These people are in fact no different than those who argue *against* the hijab and who say that the hijab is [an expression of] culture [and therefore a matter of personal choice], rather than a religious comment. So what we have to do is educate Muslim women that it is not enough to wear the veil, but that the veil must also lead us to behave in a truly modest manner in our daily lives, a challenge that far exceeds the simple act of donning the veil. (pp. 50–51)

This suggests that donning the veil is an agentic practice that can be used to cultivate piety, morality, and modesty.

Management and Organizational Studies

In popular culture, as in the management and organizational literature, individuals discuss "dressing for success," or dressing to impress current or potential employers and colleagues (Cho & Grover, 1978; Levine, 1988). Within the management and organizational literature, dress is often studied in relation to its organizational significance. As in social and personality psychology, many in this area have noted that organizational dress (e.g., clothing and accessories like name tags) conveys identity and shapes social perceptions. For instance, Forsythe (1990) found that video-recorded males and females wearing more masculine dress to a banking or marketing interview were seen as possessing more management qualities, were seen as more forceful and aggressive, and were more highly recommended for the position than those with less masculine dress. Similarly, Furnham, Chan, and Wilson (2014) found that dentists and lawyers in formal, rather than smart or casual, dress were seen as more professionally capable.

Management scholars have also addressed clothing in the workplace as a means of asserting organizational control. While it certainly exists on an individual level, the notion of organizational control also exists on an institutional level—dress can keep employees "in line." For instance, Joseph (1986) noted that organizations with uniforms garner more organizational rule compliance from their members, and Joseph and Alex (1972) noted that organizations use uniforms as an emblem to clearly define group boundaries, to signify individuals' positions within the social hierarchy of the group, and to dampen individuality and in turn heighten conformity to organizational beliefs and goals.

Others have found that, in a health context, dress shapes doctor–patient perceptions and power relations. For instance, Barrett and Booth (1994) found that British children found doctors in white coats to be more competent, but less friendly, than doctors in more

date: 31 July 2017

casual dress, perhaps due to the symbolic power, authority, and sterility of the garment. On a general level, workplace dress symbolizes tenets and values of certain professions. For instance, in a qualitative analysis of nurses' dress, Pratt and Rafaeli (1997) asserted that white uniforms symbolize sterility, efficiency, health, and comfort. They found that certain dress styles were associated with distinct organizational identities at the hospital; street clothes were associated with the rehabilitation unit, whereas scrubs represented the care unit. Different types of nursing uniforms also signal different information to different individuals. For instance, older generations may prefer white nurses' uniforms due to their association with professionalism and approachability, but younger generations may prefer nurses' uniforms containing colorful prints because they see this type of garment as more approachable (Skorupski & Rea, 2006).

Fashion and Intergroup Communication

Dress style has serious implications for intergroup communication and intergroup relations. Evidence suggests that clothing and accessories can activate group stereotypes and shape our emotional and attitudinal responses toward outgroup members. For instance, Everett et al. (2015) found that individuals felt affectively more negative toward a Muslim woman with a veil versus a woman with no veil, and toward a Muslim woman with a full-face veil as opposed to a hijab. Similarly, subjects had stronger negative implicit associations in a response latency task (e.g., implicit association test) for Muslim women wearing veils relative to no veils, and for Muslim women wearing full-face veils relative to hijabs. Further, Mahmud and Swami (2010) found that women wearing a hijab were rated as less attractive and intelligent than those without a veil.

Dress not only influences the way others think about us, but also how they behave toward us; in essence, stereotypes activated through dress cues can contribute to overt discrimination on the basis of group membership. Harris and Baudin (1973) found that individuals who were dressed neatly rather than sloppily were able to solicit more help from strangers when requesting change, while Lambert (1972) found that those who were dressed neatly had more of their questions answered by strangers. Green and Giles (1973) found that middle-class, but not working-class, informants were more likely to disclose personal information right away to those wearing a tie. This makes sense in light of the fact that the tie is related to notions of status among middle-class Britons, but it symbolizes something else for their working-class counterparts (e.g., stuffiness), and has different meanings in different environmental contexts (e.g., wearing a tie to an interview versus an informal party).

Given the foregoing, we know that dress style is closely connected to social perceptions and notions of identity. (However, the specific *motivations* underlying individuals' dress style choices remain underexamined.) Next, a parsimonious selection of relevant and prominent intergroup theories and frameworks, including social identity and uncertainty

date: 31 July 2017

reduction theories, are evoked to understand dress style choices from an intergroup perspective. As nonverbal artifacts, clothing, accessories, makeup, and hairstyles all constitute forms of communication demarcating group boundaries and thus shape the nature of intergroup relations across the globe.

date: 31 July 2017

Theory

date: 31 July 2017

Social Identity Theory

According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), group membership is an important source of self-esteem, in that individuals are motivated to be a part of groups and to maintain a positive social identity. To become a part of groups—religious, racial/ethnic, athletic, or otherwise—individuals may adopt the clothing and dress style of the target group. For example, Muslim women wear hijabs and other loose-fitting, nontransparent coverings when in the presence of anyone other than their husbands. This dress style serves a specific function within the group and reflects its values, because anything besides the face and hands for women, and any area between the navel and knee for men, is private, and thus keeping themselves covered is a way to maintain physical modesty (Boulanouar, 2006). Further, in the Qur'an, human souls are portrayed as forgetting God, so the hijab veils ingroup members from God (Galadari, 2012) and reflects their religious identity. As additional examples, Jewish men wear yarmulkes and prayer robes, Scottish men wear kilts to mark their cultural heritage on special occasions like weddings, sports fans wear the jersey of their favored sports team on game day, and many white-collar workers don a suit and tie to set themselves apart from other social groups.

A positive social identity can be maintained by favoring or praising the ingroup and derogating the outgroup. In terms of dress code and fashion, groups may derogate outgroup members' dress styles and assert that their ingroup has the best dress (e.g., most fashionable, most modest, most respectful, highest quality) in order to maintain a sense of positive distinctiveness from outgroups. A positive group identity can also result from status-striving behaviors, such as striving to join a higher-status group or a higher position within a group's social hierarchy. Status striving can occur via social mobility (i.e., when individuals attempt to join other groups to move up the social ladder), or social creativity (i.e., where members search for shared group status but avoid competition with dominant outgroups), or social competition (i.e., when members compete with rival groups for status, often resulting in discrimination).

These three strategies are selected depending upon people's beliefs about the social hierarchy in which their group resides. When people think that their group's status position is stable and when moving to another group is not possible, people are likely to develop socially creative strategies. For instance, group members may come to consider previously mundane appearance-related artifacts as symbols of prestige and power for their group. When individuals are members of low-status groups and when boundaries are somewhat permeable, they can employ a social mobility strategy, striving for higher social standing by attempting to join a more respected, higher-status group, which can perhaps be accomplished by adopting the latter's communicative practices, including styles of dress (for instance, wearing expensive, prestigious brand-name clothing). When group boundaries are impermeable, and the social hierarchy is illegitimate or unstable, social competition can occur, in which the low-status group competes to occupy a higher

date: 31 July 2017

rank relative to other groups, perhaps using dress style in tandem with other techniques to get there. For instance, an African-American actor may wear a dashiki to the Oscars to promote his cultural group and its practices.

Social identity–oriented research on status striving tends to involve group prototypicality and stereotypes. Status can be maintained or improved when an individual is seen as a particularly prototypical member of a high-status group, and a nonprototypical member of lower-status groups. Individuals can also behave in accordance with positive stereotypes for their groups in order to attain or maintain high status. Of course, behaving prototypically or in accordance with positive stereotypes can include dressing in a manner typical of members of that group, and which is a source of pride for that group. For instance, in America, "preppy" dress, including a clean-cut appearance, boat shoes, and sweaters, signifies membership in a wealthy, well-educated, high-status group. In line with this, individuals can be highly attuned to brand labels and use them to judge other individuals' socioeconomic standing. For instance, American college students (primarily Caucasian), aware that Abercrombie is a high-status brand and Walmart is not, rate Caucasian and African-American individuals wearing Abercrombie sweatshirts as wealthier than those wearing Walmart sweatshirts (McDermott & Pettijohn, 2011). Those wearing Kmart sweatshirts were seen as least successful, compared with those wearing plain or Abercrombie sweatshirts. Race and clothing brand interacted to predict sociability ratings, so that African-American students were rated as having more friends when wearing less prestigious clothing (Kmart or no logo), whereas the opposite was true for Caucasian students (McDermott & Pettijohn, 2011). These patterns likely stem from stereotypes surrounding dress norms for Caucasian and African-American individuals.

date: 31 July 2017

Self-Categorization Theory

Self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) maintains that humans categorize themselves into a variety of categories with varying levels of abstraction. At the lowest levels of abstraction, we see ourselves as individual "selves" (i.e., a personal identity), whereas at higher levels of abstraction, we see ourselves as group members (i.e., a social identity) as well as members of humanity writ large. When a given social identity becomes salient or easily cognitively accessible, we tend to self-stereotype and depersonalize, seeing ourselves as an interchangeable part of the ingroup and adopting that group's norms, rather than perceiving ourselves as unique individuals and behaving in accordance with purely personal interests. We can depersonalize prototypical group members as well, seeing them as group members rather than individuals.

Adopting a group's norms can include sharing their attitudes, beliefs, and accommodating behaviors, such as dress choices, rendering the group that much more homogeneous. Indeed, dress style choices are often intertwined with social beliefs and attitudes. For instance, animal rights activists generally would not wear furs or leather, reflecting their anti-animal-cruelty stance. Further, those who identify as "punks" wear jewelry and clothing that is markedly anti-establishment, to correspond with their dislike of corporate social systems. Punk fashion ranges from nonpermanent clothing items, accessories, and facial makeup, to permanent (and thus high- cost) piercings and tattoos signifying an enduring commitment to the countercultural group and its belief systems. Indeed, the most "authentic" or "legitimate" members of the group may be those who demonstrate the highest commitment through permanent fashion displays (e.g., tattoos and piercings).

Viewing others' dress styles allows individuals to categorize others into social groups. For instance, Unkelbach, Schneider, Gode, and Senft (2010) note that traditional Muslim clothing (such as the hijab) is clearly visible and can, therefore, activate prejudicial thinking and stereotypes, contributing to discrimination. In line with this reasoning, they found that in an experimental job application-screening task, Muslim women wearing hijabs were rejected more frequently than women without hijabs. In a field experiment, King and Ahmad (2010) found that job applicants experienced more hostility and rudeness when they appeared to be Muslim, wearing a hijab.

When social identity is not salient, an individual may use clothing and accessories to signal aspects of his or her personal identity—to signify his or her uniqueness as an individual through lack of adherence to society's dominant fashion trends, as through buying one-of-a-kind thrift store items or crafting handmade clothing. Of course, these particular behaviors could also be characteristic of certain social groups, including the Amish, who make their own clothing due to their connection with pre-industrial practices, and so-called "hipsters," who seek to create new trends through somewhat daring,

date: 31 July 2017

unique, and anti-mainstream fashion choices. Thus, dress choices can signal identities at multiple levels of abstraction, ranging from the personal to the group level, and the dress styles associated with these identities may be overlapping or distinct from one another.

In discussing language attitudes, Giles and Rakić (2014) note that language cues can reflect multiple levels of abstraction at once—a Southern American accent simultaneously signals both one's national identity (American) and one's regional identity (Southern). These different levels of abstraction may become salient depending upon the situational and communicative context. In the same way, clothing and accessory choices can reflect several identities simultaneously—an engagement ring can signal both one's personal identity (e.g., future wife in an interpersonal dyad) and one's social identity as a woman more generally. Donning certain items of clothing can make specific identities salient—a dashiki may render culture particularly salient, whereas a soccer uniform may bring one's team membership to the fore, cognitively speaking.

date: 31 July 2017

Uncertainty Identity and Management Theories

Just as humans are motivated to have positive self-regard, they are also motivated to feel secure in their identity within the social landscape, because such certainty helps shape expectancies, builds confidence in one's behaviors, instills a sense of control, and can make life feel more meaningful (Hogg & Grieve, 1999). Individuals join specific groups insofar as they help reduce specific important areas of subjective uncertainty for a given individual in a given context (Hogg & Mullin, 1999). For instance, when a young woman is uncertain of her identity as an emerging adult, her organizational workplace identity may become salient, as the workplace is an uncertainty-reducing group for her. She may begin to dress in white-collar or more "mature" attire to demarcate her adulthood and identity as a professional, rather than a child or a student, and she may come to adopt the beliefs and behaviors that her fellow ingroup members share, perhaps including beliefs related to the importance of professional dress and a clean appearance.

In a similar vein, individuals may not know how to fit into a group, especially given constantly changing fashion trends and shifting group norms. Giles and Rakić (2014) note that uncertainty reduction theories—and the theory of motivated information management (TMIM) in particular—provide a useful framework through which to understand language attitudes, and the same can be said for dress style code and fashion. In line with uncertainty reduction theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) and TMIM (Afifi & Weiner, 2004), uncertainty regarding appropriate group dress style norms could contribute to negative emotional arousal (e.g., anxiety), particularly when the level of uncertainty experienced does not match one's desired uncertainty level. To reduce this uncertainty and the concomitant feelings of anxiety, individuals may seek out dress-related information, discussing dress norms and expectations with prototypical ingroup members so that they can dress in a more group-consistent fashion. Individuals could also engage in cognitive reappraisal, determining that the issue is not as important as they once thought, that they are not actually uncertain at all, or that they can tolerate the uncertainty (see Afifi, 2009). To stay abreast of the latest fashion trends, individuals can turn to influential fashion leaders in their group, observing how they dress as a way of learning group norms.

If individuals show a lack of certainty and a lack of understanding regarding group norms by dressing inappropriately, this could create an "uncertainty gap" (in the language of TMIM), raising questions among fellow ingroup members as to why, for example, a soccer team member is not wearing the appropriate uniform. Among other possible interpretations, fellow ingroup members may conclude that the nonconforming player is not committed to the team or is quitting the team. This norm violation may be grounds for removal from the group due to nonprototypicality. On the other end of the spectrum, individuals uncertain of group dress norms may seek to reduce their uncertainty by

date: 31 July 2017

observing or consulting a prototypical group member for guidance, or by adopting what they see as a prototypical style in an attempt to belong.

Optimal Distinctiveness Theory

Optimal distinctiveness theory asserts that individuals have conflicting basic needs—on the one hand, they are motivated to be included in ingroups, but on the other hand they also seek to be distinctive from others (Brewer, 1991). Our self-categorization as an individual or group member is shaped by these needs. The function of the personal self is to maintain personal integrity and uniqueness, whereas the function of the social self (e.g., as an ingroup member) is to maintain security and social connection with others. As social connection and inclusion increase, our desire for differentiation may increase, and as differentiation increases, our desire for social connection may increase. The theory maintains that we choose the social identities that help balance our competing needs for distinctiveness and inclusion in a given context, and we more strongly identify with groups that allow us to optimally manage the two needs—groups to which we are connected but that provide distinctiveness in comparison with outgroups (see Leonardelli, Pickett, & Brewer, 2010).

This logic helps explain why, when given the opportunity, many individuals seek to be a part of subgroups within larger social groups, including subcultural groups and religious sects. These comparatively small groups allow for distinctiveness from the larger predominant groups, but are not so small that individual members are easily identifiable, as too much uniqueness is psychologically undesirable. They also allow social connection needs to be met in most contexts. According to the tenets of optimal distinctiveness theory, individuals dress relatively similarly to others in their group to maintain a sense of social connection with ingroup members. However, they do not dress identically to one another—and particular to other groups—to maintain a sense of distinctiveness from others. Thus, it is unsurprising that we see specific fashion styles characteristic of particular groups, and substantial clothing variations across groups—for example, those in Goth-oriented subcultural groups wear predominantly black clothing, whereas hippies wear fashions from the 1960s and 1970s, including tie-dye, bell-bottom jeans, and fringed suede vests. At a more micro level, individuals can refine their dress choices for optimal distinctiveness in each social context. For example, at a Comic-Con conference for comic enthusiasts, those interested in specific Anime programs may dress as their favorite characters, allowing for optimal distinctiveness among fellow Anime enthusiasts as well as for inclusion in the broader Comic-Con community.

date: 31 July 2017

Discussion and Future Directions
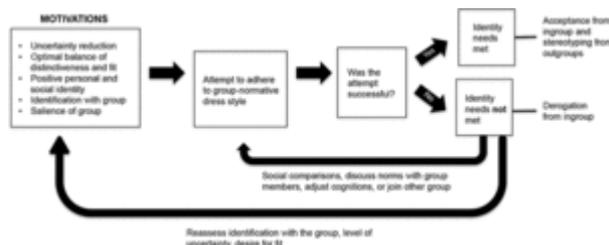
Click to view larger

Figure 1. Pathway model of dress style and intergroup communication.

The previously discussed literature and theory inspired the development of a pathway model of dress styles and intergroup communication (see Figure 1) to help guide more programmatic and cohesive research in this important area. The model includes both the antecedents and consequences of adopting, choosing not to adopt, or failing to adopt specific types of group-normative dress. Preeminent social identity and uncertainty reduction theories highlight a few key group-relevant motivations for clothing choices, namely, a desire for uncertainty reduction, a drive for fit (vs. distinctiveness) within a group, and the need for a positive social and personal identity, as well as positive self-esteem more generally. Higher levels of these inputs yield group-consistent dress choices, which are normative or prototypical of one's ingroup or desired ingroup (for socially mobile and communicatively accommodating individuals). Importantly, the model posits that individuals will be particularly motivated to dress in concordance with groups they highly identify with or that are most salient in a given social context.

If and when individuals become aware of a gap between their current dress style and dress style norms for their ingroup in a given context (e.g., "underdressing," "overdressing," or failure to adopt the appropriate uniform), they will be motivated to reduce that gap. Individuals' motivation levels will likely be moderated by their level of identification with the ingroup, their need for uncertainty reduction, and their need for positive social identity and self-regard. To reduce the gap, individuals can socially compare themselves and their dress choices with other ingroup members (see Meisel & Blumberg, 1990), paying particularly close attention to the most prototypical ingroup members. They can also engage in intergroup communication, talking with group members about dress norms. If narrowing the gap between actual and desired dress seems undesirable or unattainable, individuals may choose to join a different group with more desirable and attainable standards of dress, or they may make cognitive and perceptual adjustments, mentally lessening the perceived importance of dress and instead focusing on conforming to the group in non-dress-related arenas (e.g., language use). However, individuals who do not dress in a group-normative manner may be derogated, ostracized, or relegated to a lower social standing relative to more prototypical group members. Thus, failure to adhere to group dress style norms may also lead individuals to reassess their motivations for adherence—their level of identification (or desired identification) with the group, their level of uncertainty (which may have

increased when norms were not met), and their desire for fit within the group. To reflect this possibility, the model contains two possible feedback loops.

When an individual has made a successful group-consistent dress style attempt, he or she will likely receive kind treatment and acceptance from fellow ingroup members. Positive psychological consequences of group-normative dress style can include reduced uncertainty, finding the optimal balance of distinctiveness and acceptance within the group, and receiving a self-esteem boost resulting from, and corresponding with, a more positive social identity. However, persistent dress style gaps can prevent these desirable outcomes from being attained, prompting disapproval and derogation from fellow ingroup members, who see the individual as an "outsider." On a broader level, group-normative dress can prompt activation of group-related affect and cognitions, including positive affect and feelings of camaraderie for ingroup members, and potentially leading to stereotyping and discrimination among outgroup members on the basis of appearance alone.

Using the proposed path model as a guide, future research could test specific components of the model, with an eye to cognitive, emotional, and behavioral antecedents and consequences of dress style choices and dress style gaps. For instance, research could explore conditions under which those experiencing failed group-normative dress attempts will continue to try to adjust their style to fit in with the group rather than simply abandoning the group and joining another. Additional research could explore the role of prejudice and discrimination on the basis of dress style in shaping individuals' subsequent clothing choices, and could explore which appearance cues activate which sorts of stereotypes and how we could seek to reverse or lessen these pernicious appearance-based stereotypes. Because there are a variety of behavioral and communicative cues to group membership beyond dress style, future work could explore the role of dress cues alone versus dress cues in combination with other group membership signals (e.g., language use, accent, gestures) in shaping interpersonal perceptions. Ultimately, as an omnipresent and socially significant facet of modern human life, particularly due to their intersection with social identity and intergroup relations, dress style code and fashion are an area ripe for exploration.

Acknowledgment

date: 31 July 2017

Further Readings

Banister, E. N., & Hogg, M. K. (2004). Negative symbolic consumption and consumers' drive for self-esteem: The case of the fashion industry. *European Journal of Marketing*, *38*, 850–868.

Cardon, P. W., & Okoro, E. A. (2009). Professional characteristics communicated by formal versus casual workplace attire. *Business Communication Quarterly*, *72*, 260–355.

Conner, B. H., Peters, K., & Nagasawa, R. H. (1975). Person and costume: Effects on the formation of first impressions. *Home Economics Research Journal*, *4*, 32–41.

Crane, D. (1999). Gender and hegemony in fashion magazines. *Sociological Quarterly*, *40*, 541–563.

Cwerner, S. B. (2001). Clothes at rest: Elements for a sociology of the wardrobe. *Fashion Theory*, *5*, 79–92.

Davis, F. (1992). *Fashion, culture and identity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dunn, J., Lee, T., Percelay, J., & Goldman, L. (1987). Patient and house officer attitudes on physician attire and etiquette. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *257*, 65–68.

El-Geledi, S., & Bourhis, R. Y. (2012). Testing the impact of the Islamic veil on intergroup attitudes and host community acculturation orientations toward Arab Muslims. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *36*, 694–706.

Fischer, A. H., Gillebaart, M., Rotteveel, M., Becker, D., & Vliek, M. (2012). Veiled emotions the effect of covered faces on emotion perception and attitudes. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *3*, 266–273.

Forsythe, S. M., Drake, M. F., & Cox, C. A. (1984). Dress as an influence on the perceptions of management characteristics in women. *Home Economics Research Journal*, *13*, 112–121.

Gherardi, G., Cameron, J., West, A., & Crossley, M. (2009). Are we dressed to impress? A descriptive survey assessing patients' preference of doctors' attire in the hospital setting. *Clinical Medicine*, *9*, 519–524.

Gibbins, K. (1969). Communication aspects of women's clothes and their relation to fashionability. *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *8*, 301–312.

Hamid, P. (1969). Changes in person perception as a function of dress. *Perceptual Motor Skills*, *29*, 191–194.

date: 31 July 2017

Kanzler, M. H., & Gorsulowsky, D. C. (2002). Patients' attitudes regarding physical characteristics of medical care providers in dermatologic practices. *Archives of Dermatology*, *138*, 463–466.

Kwon, Y. H., & Johnson, H. J. (1998). College students' perceptions of occupational attributes based on formality of business attire. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, *87*, 987–994.

Lennon, S. J., & Miller, F. G. (1984). Salience of physical appearance in impression formation. *Home Economics Research Journal*, *13*, 95–104.

Lynch, A., Stalp, M. C., & Radina, M. E. (2007). Growing old and dressing (dis)gracefully. In D. C. Johnson & H. B. Foster (Eds.), *Dress sense: Emotional and sensory experiences of the boy and clothes* (pp. 44–55). Oxford: Berg.

Pack, S. (1986). Effect of garment style on the perception of personal traits. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, *5*, 10–16.

Saroglou, V., Lamkaddem, B., Van Pachterbeke, M., & Buxant, C. (2009). Host society's dislike of the Islamic veil: The role of subtle prejudice, values, and religion. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *33*, 419–428.

Wilson, E. (1985). *Adorned in dreams: Fashion and modernity*. London: Virago.

References

Afifi, W. A. (2009). Successes and challenges in understanding information seeking in interpersonal contexts. In S. Wilson & S. Smith (Eds.), *New Directions in interpersonal communication* (pp. 94–114). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Afifi, W., & Weiner, J. (2004). Toward a theory of motivated information management. *Communication Theory*, *14*, 167–190.

Albright, L., Kenny, D. A., & Malloy, T. E. (1988). Consensus in personality judgments at zero acquaintance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *55*, 387–395.

Arnould, E. J., & Price, L. L. (2000). Authenticating acts and authoritative performances: Questioning for self and community. In S. Ratneshwar, D. G. Mick, & C. Huffman (Eds.), *The why of consumption: Contemporary perspectives on consumer motives, goals, and desires* (pp. 140–163). London: Routledge.

Barrett, A. E., Pai, M., & Redmond, R. (2012). "It's your badge of inclusion": The Red Hat Society as a gendered subculture of aging. *Journal of Aging Studies*, *26*, 527–538.

Barrett, T. G., & Booth, I. W. (1994). Sartorial eloquence: Does it exist in the pediatrician–patient relationship? *British Medical Journal*, *309*, 1710–1712.

date: 31 July 2017

Berger, C. R., & Calabrese, R. J. (1975). Some exploration in initial interaction and beyond: Toward a developmental theory of communication. *Human Communication Research*, *1*, 99–112.

Borkenau, P. (1991). Evidence of a correlation between wearing glasses and personality. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *12*, 1125–1128.

Boulanouar, A. W. (2006). The notion of modesty in Muslim women's clothing: An Islamic point of view. *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, *8*, 134–156.

Brewer, M. B. (1991). The social self: On being the same and different at the same time. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *17*, 475–482.

Buss, D. M. (1989). Sex differences in human mate preferences: Evolutionary hypotheses tested in 37 cultures. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *12*, 1–49.

Buss, D. M., & Schmitt, D. P. (1993). Sexual strategies theory: An evolutionary perspective on human mating. *Psychological Review*, *100*, 204–232.

Chapman, M. (2016). Veil as stigma: Exploring the role of representations in Muslim women's management of threatened social identity. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, *26*, 354–366.

Cho, E., & Grover, L. (1978). *Looking terrific: Express yourself through the language of clothing*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Droogsma, R. A. (2007). Redefining hijab: American Muslim women's standpoints on veiling. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *35*, 294–319.

Durante, K. M., Li, N. P., & Haselton, M. G. (2008). Changes in women's choice of dress across the ovulatory cycle: Naturalistic and laboratory task-based evidence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *34*, 1451–1460.

Eckert, P. (1989). *Jocks and burnouts: Social categories and identities in the high school*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Everett, J. A., Schellhaas, F. M., Earp, B. D., Ando, V., Memarzia, J., Parise, C. V., . . . Hewstone, M. (2015). Covered in stigma? The impact of differing levels of Islamic head-covering on explicit and implicit biases toward Muslim women. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *45*, 90–104.

Featherstone, M. (2010). Body, image, and affect in consumer culture. *Body and Society*, *10*, 193–221.

Forsythe, S. M. (1990). Effect of applicant's clothing on interviewer's decision to hire. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *20*, 1579–1595.

date: 31 July 2017

Furnham, A., Chan, P. S., & Wilson, E. (2014). What to wear? The influence of attire on the perceived professionalism of dentists and lawyers. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *43*, 1838–1850.

Galadari, A. (2012). Behind the veil: Inner meanings of women's Islamic dress code. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, *6*, 115–125.

Giles, H., & Rakić, T. (2014). Language attitudes: Social determinants and consequences of language variation. In T. M. Holtgraves (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of language and social psychology* (pp. 11–26). New York: Oxford University Press.

Gilman, C. P., & Hill, M. R. (1915). *The dress of women: A critical introduction to the symbolism and sociology of clothing*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Goffman, E. (1956). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday.

Grammer, K., Fink, B., Møller, A. P., & Thornhill, R. (2003). Darwinian aesthetics: Sexual selection and the biology of beauty. *Biological Reviews*, *78*, 385–407.

Green, W. P., & Giles, H. (1973). Reactions to a stranger as a function of dress style: The tie. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, *37*, 676.

Harris, M. B., & Baudin, H. (1973). Language of altruism: The effects of language, dress and ethnic group. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *91*, 37–41.

Haselton, M. G., Mortezaie, M., Pillsworth, E. G., Bleske, A. E., & Frederick, D. A. (2007). Ovulatory shifts in human female ornamentation: Near ovulation, women dress to impress. *Hormones and Behavior*, *51*, 40–45.

Hogg, M. A., & Grieve, P. (1999). Social identity theory and the crisis of confidence in social psychology: A commentary, and some research on uncertainty reduction. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, *2*, 79–93.

Hogg, M. A., & Mullin, B. A. (1999). Joining groups to reduce uncertainty: Subjective uncertainty reduction and group identification. In D. Abrams & M. A. Hogg (Eds.), *Social identity and social cognition* (pp. 249–279). Oxford: Blackwell.

Jeffries, S. (2005). *Beauty and misogyny: Harmful cultural practices in the West*. London: Routledge.

Joseph, N. (1986). *Uniforms and nonuniforms: Communication through clothing*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Joseph, N., & Alex, N. (1972). The uniform: A sociological perspective. *American Journal of Sociology*, *77*, 719–730.

Kellerman, J. M., & Laird, J. D. (1982). The effect of appearance on self-perceptions. *Journal of Personality*, *50*, 296–351.

date: 31 July 2017

King, E., & Ahmad, A. (2010). An experimental field study of interpersonal discrimination toward Muslim job applicants. *Personnel Psychology*, *63*, 881–906.

Kotthoff, H., & Spencer-Oatey, H. (Eds.). (2007). *Handbook of intercultural communication*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

van der Laan, E., & Velthuis, O. (2013). Inconspicuous dressing: A critique of the construction- through-consumption paradigm in the sociology of clothing. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *16*, 22–42.

Lambert, S. (1972). Reactions to a stranger as a function of style of dress. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, *35*, 711–712.

Leonardelli, G. J., Pickett, C. L., & Brewer, M. B. (2010). Optimal distinctiveness theory: A framework for social identity, social cognition and intergroup relations. In M. Zanna & J. Olson (Eds.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (pp. 65–115). New York: Elsevier.

Levine, D. (1988). Dressing for success: Nursing style. *Imprint*, *3*5, 50–54.

Lurie, A. (1992). *The language of clothes*. London: Bloomsbury.

Mahmood, S. (2005). *Politics of piety: The Islamic revival and the feminist subject*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Mahmud, Y., & Swami, V. (2010). The influence of the hijab (Islamic head-cover) on perceptions of women's attractiveness and intelligence. *Body Image*, *7*, 90–93.

Manusov, V., & Patterson, M. L. (Eds.). (2006). *The Sage handbook of nonverbal communication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

McDermott, L. A., & Pettijohn, T. F. (2011). The influence of clothing fashion and race on the perceived socioeconomic status and person perception of college students. *Psychology and Society*, *4*, 64–75.

Meisel, C. J., & Blumberg, C. J. (1990). The social comparison choice of elementary and secondary school students: The influence of gender, race, and friendship. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *15*, 170–182.

Naumann, L. P., Vazire, S., Rentfrow, P. J., & Gosling, S. D. (2009). Personality judgments based on physical appearance. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *35*, 1661–1671.

Pratt, M. G., & Rafaeli, A. (1997). Organizational dress as a symbol of multilayered social identities. *Academy of Management Journal*, *40*, 862–898.

Rees, D. W., Williams, L., & Giles, H. (1974). Dress style and symbolic meaning. *International Journal of Symbology*, *5*, 1–8.

date: 31 July 2017

Schouten, J. W., & McAlexander, J. H. (1995). Subcultures of consumption: An ethnography of the new bikers. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *22*, 43–61.

Searcy, W. A., & Nowicki, S. (2005). *The evolution of animal communication: Reliability and deception in signaling systems*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Singh, D. (1993). Adaptive significance of female physical attractiveness: Role of waist-to-hip ratio. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *65*, 293–307.

Skorupski, V., & Rea, R. (2006). Patients' perceptions of today's nursing attire. *The Journal of Nursing Administration*, *36*, 393–400.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Thompson, C. J., & Haytko, D. L. (1997). Speaking of fashion: Consumers' uses of fashion discourses and the appropriation of countervailing cultural meanings. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *24*, 15–42.

Thornhill, R., & Gangestad, S. W. (1999) Facial attractiveness. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *3*, 452–460.

Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Twigg, J. (2007). Clothing, age and the body: A critical review. *Ageing and Society*, *27*, 285–305.

Unkelbach, C., Schneider, H., Gode, K., & Senft, M. (2010). A turban effect, too: Selection biases against women wearing Muslim headscarves. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *1*, 378–383.

Veblen, D. T. (1899). *The theory of the leisure class: An economic study of institutions*. New York: MacMillan.

Wazir Management Consultants. (n.d.). Apparel market size projections from 2012 to 2025, by region (in billion U.S. dollars). In *Statista—The Statistics Portal*. Retrieved from **http://www.statista.com/statistics/279757/apparel-market-size-projections-by-region/**.

Workman, J. E. (1984). Effects of appropriate and inappropriate attire on attributions of personal dispositions. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, *3*, 20–23.

Zahavi, A., & Zahavi, A. (1997). *The handicap principle: A missing piece of Darwin's puzzle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

date: 31 July 2017

Lauren Keblusek

Department of Communication, University of California, Santa Barbara

Howard Giles

Department of Communication, University of California, Santa Barbara

date: 31 July 2017