



# Teachers' Attire: Preschoolers' Perceptions about Good Teachers



Erika Shepherd and Celia Naso  
 Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sham'ah Md-Yunus  
 Eastern Illinois University

## Sample

- 21 preschoolers
- Ages 2-5
- 11 female, 10 male
- 8 classrooms in two school districts in East Central Illinois

## Theoretical Framework

- Kohlberg's (1958) Theory of Moral Development

## Literature Review

- Mosca & Buzza (2013) found that teacher attire *did not* affect student perception
- Joung & Miller (2007) reported that teacher attire *did* affect student perception
  - casual clothing connoting friendliness, fairness, and interestingness
  - moderate clothing perceived as friendliness, organization, interestingness, understanding, and discipline
  - conservative clothing suggesting organization, knowledge, & disciplinary skill

## Methods

### Observations:

- Each classroom was observed twice
- Each observation lasted 20 minutes
- Researchers recorded how the teachers were dressed
- Using the checklist, researchers recorded how the students interacted with their teacher

### Student Surveys:

- Students individually surveyed on perceptions of teacher attire

### Research Instruments:

#### 1. Checklist

- Researchers recorded the frequency of student behaviors related to comfort with teachers and peers, especially in relation to teacher attire
- Used a Likert scaled ranging from 1 to 4 [1=not observed, 2=seldom, 3=frequently/most of the time, 4=often]
- Sample items:
  - Children feel comfortable to interact with the teacher
  - children make comments about teacher's attire

#### 2. Survey

- Showed students images of teachers in various attire
- Asked students to rate each teacher as good, bad, or neutral
- Students were also asked to point to certain images to answer questions like, "Which teacher looks the most fun?"
- Sample Images:
  - Teacher wearing tie
  - Teacher with tattoo

## Data Analysis

- The Checklist was analyzed descriptively by reviewing the observations using:
  - Frequencies
  - Categorizing according to type of dress (formal, casual, informal)
- The survey questions were analyzed by:
  - Frequencies
  - Comparing picture responses

## Abstract

The study investigates the relationship between teacher attire and preschoolers' perceptions on what a good teacher looks like.

In a mixed-methods study, student surveys and observations were employed in 8 preschool classrooms.

Findings demonstrated that teacher attire did not have a significant effect on preschool students.

## Research Questions

1. Does teachers' attire affect preschooler's perceptions of their teachers' character traits?
2. Does teachers' attire influence preschoolers' social interaction with their teacher?

## Survey Results

### INSTRUMENT

#### Survey Questions

School Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Child Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Which teacher looks the most fun? C, B2
2. Which one of this people would you like to be your teacher? B2
3. Can you point to two pictures with meanest teacher? F, D
4. Can you point to two pictures with good teacher? B2, A1
5. Tell me by saying good or bad teacher:
  - a. Wearing Tie: Good
  - b. Wearing glasses: Good
  - a. Have tattoo: Good
  - b. Wearing jeans: Good
  - c. Hair up or hair down: Down
  - d. Wearing a lot of make up: Neutral
  - e. Wearing big earrings: Neutral
  - f. Wearing dress: Good
  - g. Wearing Flip flops: Neutral
  - h. Chewing gum: Neutral
  - i. Wearing dirty clothes: Bad
  - j. Wearing wrinkled clothes: Good
  - k. Wearing jewelry: Good
  - l. Wearing nail polish: Good

## Findings

1. Teachers' attire did not affect preschooler's perception of their teachers' character traits.
2. Teachers' attire did not influence children's social interaction with their teacher.

## Limitations

- Time restraints
- Participant limitations

## Checklist Results

### Formal Clothing

Item	1	2	3	4
1 Children ask questions	1		1	1
2 Children feel comfortable to interact with the teacher			1	2
3 Children used eye contact while looking at the teacher		1	2	
4 Children listen to teacher / attentive, eg. understand the directions and instructions				1 2
5 Children are smiling		2	1	
6 Children make comments about teacher's attire	3			
7 Do the children show body language	1		2	
8 Children do not mess around with their classmates.	1		1	1
9 Children are not distracted by any article of clothing that a teacher is wearing.	1			2

### Casual Clothing

Item	1	2	3	4
1 Children ask questions				3
2 Children feel comfortable to interact with the teacher				3
3 Children used eye contact while looking at the teacher			2	1
4 Children listen to teacher / attentive, eg. understand the directions and instructions				1 2
5 Children are smiling				3
6 Children make comments about teacher's attire	3			
7 Do the children show body language		1	2	
8 Children do not mess around with their classmates.			1	2
9 Children are not distracted by any article of clothing that a teacher is wearing.	2		1	

### Informal Clothing

Item	1	2	3	4
1 Children ask questions				5
2 Children feel comfortable to interact with the teacher				5
3 Children used eye contact while looking at the teacher			4	1
4 Children listen to teacher / attentive, eg. understand the directions and instructions				2 3
5 Children are smiling				2 3
6 Children make comments about teacher's attire	5			
7 Do the children show body language	2	3		
8 Children do not mess around with their classmates.		3	2	
9 Children are not distracted by any article of clothing that a teacher is wearing.	2			3

## References:

- Joung, H.-M. & Miller, N. J. (2007). Examining the effects of fashion activities on life satisfaction of older females: Activity theory revisited. *Family and Consumer Science Research Journal*, 35(4), 338-356. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077727X07299992>
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- Mosca, J. B., & Buzza, J. (2013). Clothing and the affects on a teachers image: How students view them. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 6(1), 59-66. <https://doi.org/10.19030/cier.v6i1.7603>