

A Research on Undergraduates' Clothes for Job Hunting*

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Abstract—The current situation of undergraduates' clothes for job hunting has been observed. This paper presents a survey on undergraduates' viewpoint on their clothes for job hunting and analyzes their expectations of the improvement on these clothes. Several pieces of advice are provided so that college students can be more decently and brilliantly dressed for job hunting.

Keywords—undergraduates; job hunting; clothes

I. INTRODUCTION

Dressing for a specific purpose, from which spiritual outlook, cultural cultivation and aesthetic taste can be reflected is quite different from dressing for casual. The way of dressing embodies both social culture and people's belief and the way of thinking. Appropriate dressing can help people earn respect and trust. Modern psychological research findings show that dressing plays a significant role in building one's confidence and in building a good "first impression". The sequential decisive factors are placed as "gender — age — dressing — appearance — gesture — facial expression — expression in one's eyes — attitude — range of approach — extent of contact".

Dressing occupies such an important position among all the factors; however, the ability of dressing properly can hardly be born with or obtained overnight. It is an acquired skill through learning. The clothes for job hunting are prepared for specific purposes on some very special occasion, which have its own features. College students can get short-term training and instructions to dress and present themselves in a more decent, smart and original way. Suitable clothes can enhance students' attraction and help them get recognized from others and can contribute to self-realization.

II. UNDERGRADUATES' VIEWPOINTS ON DRESSING FOR JOB HUNTING

Every one lives in a social group. Each group may have different clothing aesthetic psychology or even in the same group this clothing aesthetic psychology may differ in different time or period. When undergraduates are going to graduate from school for job hunting, they are full of curiosity and yearning towards their business wear. Based on their previous limited social experience and formal dressing experience, they try to know more about their business wear and hold very ambiguous understanding towards it.

TABLE I. UNDERGRADUATES' VIEWPOINT ON DRESSING FOR JOB HUNTING

Viewpoints towards dressing	Formal dressing	Casual dressing	Personalized dressing	Fashionable dressing
Scale	38%	5%	24%	56.7%

As shown in "Table I", 38% of the students surveyed are in support of formal dressing while 56.7% of them like fashionable clothes. 24% wants to be more personalized and only 5% of them think casual clothes suit fine. Hunting for a job is a stepstone to entering the society. Most of the students attach great importance to their future jobs so in order to leave a good impression on their potential employers they want to be well-dressed. For those who have a forceful and adventurous character, they prefer to be more fashionable. In order not to overreach them, a large number of students would rather hide their personality and choose formal

business clothing they are unfamiliar with.

The change of outlook derives from the change of one's heart, in other words, it is their attitude towards life and value that decide their choice on clothes. Those undergraduates are not very adaptable to the competitive society thus they see a sense of safety in dressing formally in job-hunting. The position one has in a group and the way he or she tries to communicate with employers all can be reflected by their dressing style. This can be formed by the life experience and through their growth. However, for most of the college students, they are always living in very apparent and pure environment which means they are not experiencing or toughening themselves in the real life. In that way, undoubtedly, they do not have their own fixed dressing

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style. Therefore, the business suit they choose are not so acceptable or in accordance with their social experience.

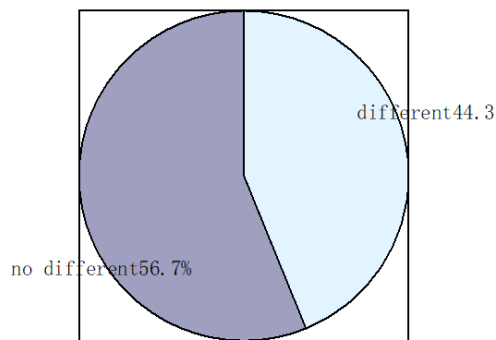


Fig. 1. Undergraduates' viewpoint towards whether dressing for job hunting should differ for male and female.

As shown in "Fig. 1", 44.3% of the students surveyed do not think differences should exist for male and female and the common business suit can meet the need of all. Some point out that the dressing should be chosen in line with the specific positions and employers, which may set higher requirements for the undergraduates to choose their dressing. 56.7% of the students consider that dressing for job hunting should be different as the genders differ and male's dressing ought to be more formal, modest and gentleman-like. Many of them stress that one must be dressed neatly. From the above it can be concluded that for many male students who are used to be dressed down, it will be harder for them to dress very neatly, not to mention formally. The reason is that many parents take their children's life into their own hands and do everything for them, leaving them no chance to learn how to take good care of themselves such as the daily choice of clothes. Students always put full mind to books and school. Dressings for females are more colorful and trendy. Some views are that female job hunters should put on some make-up, follow the trend, and shows respect to employers. The two points are stressing nearly the same idea. Generally speaking, dressing for job hunting counts a lot and it has come into students' notice.

III. ADVICE FOR JOB HUNTERS

A. Dressed in the Most Expensive Ones

A very useful tip shared by the most successful job hunters is to be dressed in the most expensive clothes. The reasons are as following. On the one hand, clothes are like the tools whose function is to attract people's attention and build your image to impress others. On the other hand, good, expensive and formal dressing is getting more and more popular, no longer just belongs to the kings or noble people.

Undergraduates are well-dressed to leave a good impression on the interviewers. Before they find out the most suitable dressing style, it is proper to be dressed in the ones they think the best. Those formal and good-quality clothes are set for some special occasions to present a better oneself in a more stately, strong, and gracious way. A true story in the history may well explain the reasons. In 18th century, Lord Chesterfield has once told his son that faddish clothes

seems to be costly frill and very foolish, but it may be even more foolish not to dress in those fashionable ones. Decent dressing, more importantly, can gain one more acceptance. To put it this way, one can pay no attention to superficial appearance or superfluity but cannot ignore the evaluation and recognition from the society. This may well explain why many college students spend a large sum of money on expensive business dress that cannot be worn in daily life and some of them are just like wedding dress, worthy of much money while used only once. If they obtain the job, they may never wear it afterwards. Whether the business suit worth or not, the price should be judged by the employee. Whatever, it won't be worse than wearing some shabby clothes, thus leaving an impression that you are sloppy or lazy. Even if one dress inappropriately, the interviewer will probably give you a relatively positive evaluation out of his sympathy for your expensive clothes. After all, the good expensive clothes suggest your high value on the job hunting.

B. Dressed in the Most Proper Ones

It is widely accepted that expensive clothes do not equal to the proper ones. To buy expensive clothes is the first step to own the best dressing for job hunting. How can one dress them better if they cannot afford expensive clothes or present their own personality through the dressing? More suggestions are in want. Some students have taken great pains about their dressing and make-up in the hope of making a flawless impression. School of Fashion in Wuhan Textile University once held an exhibition named "Ideal Image". The clothes on the exhibition include business suit and sportswear and so on. Apart from the common suit and suit for office lady, there are also some edge-cutting Chinese suits with collar standing. Activities like these aim to provide some consultations on how to dress properly for undergraduates and they should be advocated to have more to arouse extensive attention to undergraduates' job hunting dressing and get more beneficial advice.

Rule one: clothes for job hunting should be neat, simple and graceful.

"Generally, you have to wear neatly, simply and gracefully." Wu Zhenqi, one member of Association of Costume and Image Designing in the university, points out. Cleanness and neatness is the basic requirement for good wearing which suggests the basic respect towards others and have nothing to do with money but your willingness. Some of the male college students do not pay much attention to their daily dressing. They had better be dressed more neatly in interviews. Females keep everything clean. However, some of them are used to dressing too personalized apparel; they find it is hard to accept formal ones. Different from the casual ones, working suits lay emphasis on the coordination and unification between the working environment and the suit itself. Some individual clothes can not be accepted by other people, distracting them as well as yourself.

Rule two: clothes for job hunting should be able to present the characters of your job.

Costumes can convey much information, for example, the characters and specialties of your job. In that case, your

dressings can even act as a business card. People can have an immediate understanding of your profession. Working in fields like trade, finance, assurance, law, marketing, people need to dress straight and narrow for they have to interact with their clients face to face. Shirt, suit pants and leather shoes will be the best for them to show their reliability. On the contrary, people work in the fields like design, advertisements, publishing which require creativity and inspiration can show their creativity on color and style of their clothes or free reign on art sentiment. However weirdness is not acceptable.

Rule three: clothes for job hunting had better in line with the company culture.

Employers have a vague anticipation of image designed in their mind for the employees which they have considered professionally. If the employees' dressing meet with their anticipation, they are more likely to get the job. People can make some efforts to collect information about the dressing style of the target company before they go to the interviews and try to dress more proper. In large- and middle-scaled state-owned companies, the relatively conservative dressings with a touch of casualness are more acceptable and popular. Quite a large amount of students spare no expense to buy the costumes, some of which cost thousands of Yuan but not worth the prices. One does not have to buy the expensive costumes but the ones that suit the job itself or that are very stylish instead of gaudy. Showy dressing may not have practical uses, resulting in the opposite to what one wishes.

Rule four: clothes for job hunting should best present the fashion.

Historical background can enormously affect the aesthetics judgment criteria of the public, especially fashion as public aesthetic culture is decided by the objective factors. Public aesthetics give birth to fashion. So the clothes designed are in accordance with their aesthetics and indicate the aesthetic trend. Specific dressings for undergraduates are decided by factors as their special identity, life phase and circumstances. They expect to be part of the whole society like others.

Nowadays, pursuing the spirit of simplicity, people want to release their anxiety and flee from the competitive society; pursuing the spirit of leisure, people want to abandon the complicated society which leaves them at a loss as to what to do; pursuing the spirit of natural color and feeling, people

want to escape from the mechanism in life and embrace the nature; pursuing the spiritual images, people want to get wild thoughts off their chest.

People in modern society are living a free but exhausting, noisy but lonely, convenient but helpless life. Conflicts and tension exist everywhere. A good knowledge of the mentality of modern people helps to keep pace with the times and have a profound understanding of numerous and complicated dressing styles. When people see through the appearance to enjoy the essence, they can get an all-around understanding. Dressing for job hunting is also an epitome of our society and reflection of people's attitude towards dressing. The more formal the costumes for job hunting are doesn't equal to betterness. Business suit now are mixed with some contemporary trends. Since college students are usually wearing casual clothing in daily life, it will be hard to change their dressing style in such a short time and can make them very uncomfortable. They hope to combine business suit and sportswear which are not contradictory. Casual dressing is the universal fashion criteria. All people are advocating leisure and enjoying the comfort of leisure. Casual suits, sports suits and the widely acceptable rule of wearing sportswear on Friday become popular, and the "business leisure" is designs that subconsciously and slowly blend in business suit and satisfy people's taste. For undergraduates, to stimulate the process of making business suit casual is to go with the development of the times.

IV. UNDERGRADUATES' EXPECTATIONS ON FUTURE WORKING SUITS

As shown in "Table II", 35.6% of the students surveyed think what they are wearing will come into conflict with their future dressing and they are ready to change. 32.2% of them do not think any conflict will exist but they are also willing to make some change as their future jobs require. 32.2% of the students agree that there are no conflicts and they won't change dressing style in the future and wear their casual clothes consistently. However, under the social circumstances, how long can they stick to their belief on dressing style is uncertain. In conclusion, most students are ready to change as the environment changes whether they are willing or not. This may go against the basic principle of dressing but they have their own views and decisions towards business suit.

TABLE II. WHETHER DRESSING IN COLLEGE STYLE CONFLICTS WITH SOCIAL TREND & STUDENTS ARE PREPARED TO CHANGE IT OR NOT

No contradiction and no change	Contradiction and change	Contradiction but no change
32.2%	35.6%	32.2%

College students are very vigorous and creative. They are eager to change their role and aspired for new dressing. From the "Fig. 2", 81.1% make it clear that they have their own views on their future business dressing. 18.9% of them do not have any now but they may in the future. At present, undergraduates attach great importance to their work as well as their working clothes. Working clothes are worn when employees are working, which should be not only nice but

also practical. Working clothes better satisfies the need of the job than other clothes and most undergraduates are willing to wear them. Students even have their own views. In one aspect, some think the working clothes should be decent and more importantly comfortable, thus people forget the constraint of these clothes and concentrate more on their work. On the contrary, some insist that working clothes can suggest their jobs and even present their advantages and

specialties just like walking advertisement which people are more likely to recognize and accept. Those are very commercially minded students. Some graduates think many styles of the working clothes are out of date now, dark colored and of poor quality. To create a better working environment, elements of fashion should be added, the colors be brighter and materials be finer. A larger number of students hope that the speed of improving working clothes

should be accelerated and kept pace with fashion. On working occasions, though formal clothes are required, if some creativity and elements of fashion can be added in, satisfaction and enjoyment will be increased. Some trend-setters think even working clothes can be designed more personalized that go with the wearers' personal style and present the aesthetic of the wearers.

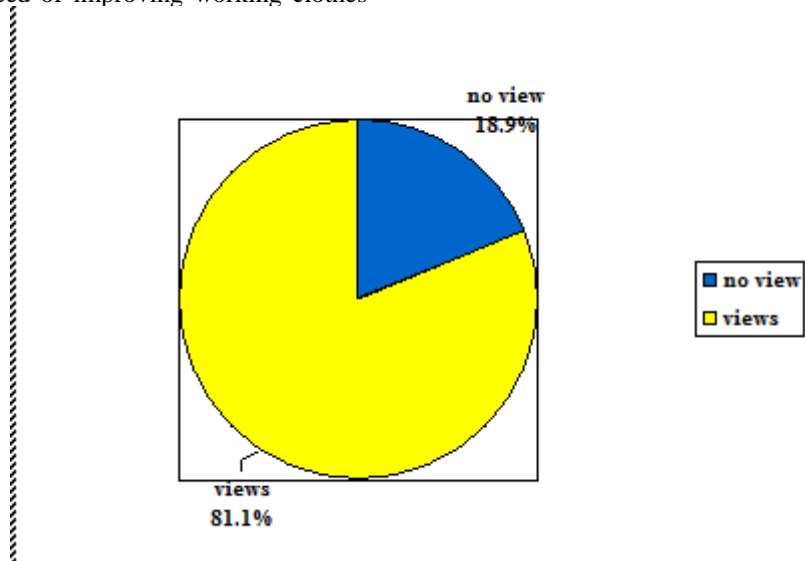


Fig. 2. College students' views on their future jobs.

V. CONCLUSION

Designing clothes for the graduates should be a comprehensive system socially and culturally for it is not only about how and what to wear but of profound social significance. For a harmonious and beautiful society, it is necessary to catch the hotspots in college students' dressing consumerism with keen eyes and then purposely adjust the clothing industry to create a healthy and positive prospect by paying close attention to their thoughts, listening to their heart and based on their need and offering guide on their clothes consumption. If the society, schools and individuals can make efforts together, so it is available to design better and more satisfactory job hunting dressing and promote the process of costume design. Graduates, they are the ones whose thoughts on working dressing best represent the new employees' hope. For the thoughts derived from reality and from the need of their inner heart; it is believed that a better tomorrow for job hunters and business suits is on the approach.

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