

REPLICATIONS AND REFINEMENTS

Under this heading appear summaries of studies which, in 500 words or less, provide useful data substantiating, not substantiating, or refining what we think we know; additional details concerning the results can be obtained by communicating directly with the investigator or, when indicated, by requesting supplementary material from Microfiche Publications.

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MODE OF DRESS AS A PERCEPTUAL CUE TO DEFERENCE*

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It has been found that mode of dress often serves as a cue for elicited behavior.² High status individuals, as perceived by their mode of dress, are treated differently.³ The present study deals with the influence of perceived mode of dress in a personal space zone. Hall⁴ propagated theories about zones of personal space. Fast⁵ reported on the differential behavior of persons as they invade the personal space of others. Shils⁶ designated as "deference" those acts of appreciation or derogation which accompany every action of interpersonal behavior. The granting of deference entails an attribution of superiority or inferiority.

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent mode of dress might influence observed behavior in a natural setting. It was predicted that mode of dress would serve as a perceptual cue and that individuals

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¹ The complete study is available from the first author at the address shown at the end of this article.

² Lefkowitz, M., Blake, R. R., & Mouton, J. S. Status factors in pedestrian violation of traffic signals. *J. Abn. & Soc. Psychol.*, 1955, 51, 704-706.

³ Bickman, L. Social roles and uniforms: Clothes make the person. *Psychol. Today*, April, 1974, pp. 48-51.

⁴ Hall, E. T. *The Hidden Dimension*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966.

⁵ Fast, J. *Body Language*. New York: Pocket Books, 1971.

⁶ Shils, E. Deference. In J. A. Jackson (Ed.), *Social Stratification*. Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1968.

intruding the personal space of conversationalists would behave in a more positive deferential manner when the mode of dress suggested higher status than when it suggested lower status. The study was conducted in a directed setting on two university campuses, under two conditions. The directed settings involved one female and one male observer, standing face to face in a corridor at a conversation distance three feet apart. The arrangements were such that passersby had to pass between the conversationalists, or avoid going through the areas altogether. In the first condition, the conversationalists wore what might be termed "formal daytime dress," the male in business suit, shirt, and tie and the female in a two piece suit with high heeled shoes. In the second condition, the conversationalists wore "casual" attire, more in keeping with campus dress, levis, tennis shoes, and T-shirts. Two other team members were stationed nearby to record the behavior of the persons approaching, passing through, or avoiding the directed settings.

The *Ss* were 120 persons passing through or avoiding the directed settings during a specific time period. They were believed to be students, faculty, or staff members, or visitors on campus. The behavior of every person passing through or avoiding the directed settings during the time of observation was observed and recorded.

On the first campus, analysis of the data resulted in $\chi^2 = 12.58$, 3 *df*, $p < .01$; on the second campus, $\chi^2 = 7.38$ 2 *df*, $p < .05$. Thus there was a statistically significant difference in the behaviors observed when "formal" dress was worn than when "casual" dress was worn. Positive deferential behaviors were observed more under the "formal" dress condition, and more negative deferential behaviors were observed under the "casual" dress condition.

The findings of this study lend support to theories in which mode of dress serves as a perceptual cue for status, resulting in differential behavior responses. Further study is advocated to determine whether similar deferential behavior will be found in other settings.

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