

## Investigating Students' Awareness and Conformity towards University Dress Code

Roslilee Ab. Halim  
Mawarti Ashik Samsudin  
Nurul Nadia Abd. Aziz

### ABSTRACT

First impression is normally judged based on how a person is dressed. A person who appears with smart, clean and neat dress could portray a positive image and good qualities to the onlookers. Thus, the physical or outward appearance of students somehow reflects the students' inner values and eventually the image of the university. A preliminary survey conducted by researchers on 218 students revealed that more than 50 percent of them did not conform to the university dress code. In order to investigate the problem, researchers came out with this study which in specific aims to determine the level of students' awareness on university dress code and to identify factors contributing to the non-conformity of the dress code. Although the issues of dress code are not as much debated or studied as compared to students' achievements or academic issues in literatures, studies and researches should be undertaken so long the problem persists. Data for the study was gathered through questionnaires from 146 UiTM students who did not conform to the university dress code. The data was then analyzed using SPSS Version 20.0. The result showed that students are highly aware of the dress code policy and guidelines. However, despite their awareness, the majority of the students are found to disobey the dress code guidelines on most of the lecture days. Financial aspects are found to be the strongest factor among the four predictor factors in influencing dress code non-conformity. The findings are hoped to be beneficial to assist university administrators in handling the issue and implementing effective dress code policy.

**Keywords:** students, university dress code, non-conformity

### Introduction

Dress code is a set of rules or guidelines specifying the correct manner of dress while on the premises of an institution and sometimes specifying what manner of dress are prohibited. Most of higher learning institutions in Malaysia, especially the public universities usually implement a dress code policy in order to restrain students from wearing clothes that are not suitable with Malaysia's academic environment and disruptive to the educational process. As dress or physical appearance can reflect and create various expectations and assumptions to the onlookers, university administrators would generally want students to wear clothes that are able to reflect or portray positive image of universities.

A preliminary survey conducted by researchers on 218 UiTM students revealed that more than 50 percent of them did not conform to the university dress code policy as shown in Table 1. In spite of the fact that issues of dress code at higher learning institutions are not as much studied or debated as compared to the issues of academic achievement, researchers feel that studies and researches should be undertaken so long the problem persists. Therefore, in order to investigate the problem, this study was carried out to determine the level of student's awareness on university dress code and to identify the factors contributing to the non-conformity of the dress code.

Table 1: Preliminary Result on Students Not Conforming to the University Dress Code

| Group        | No. of Students | No. of Students not conforming to the dress code | % of students not conforming to the dress code |
|--------------|-----------------|--|--|
| Group 1      | 33              | 19   | 57.6   |
| Group 2      | 26              | 11   | 42.3   |
| Group 3      | 33              | 17   | 51.5   |
| Group 4      | 28              | 17   | 60.7   |
| Group 5      | 26              | 25   | 96.2   |
| Group 6      | 23              | 9  | 39.1   |
| Group 7      | 25              | 9  | 36.0   |
| Group 8      | 24              | 15   | 62.5   |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>218</b>      | <b>122</b>                                       | <b>56.0</b>                                    |

## Physical Appearance and Personality Judgments

Numerous literatures suggested and verified that first impression or personality judgments were made based on physical or outward appearance. Albright, Kenny and Malloy (1988) in their research stated that when the perceivers and the target have zero acquaintance (that is when people don't know each other), they will use information available to them which is the physical appearance in order to make personality judgments. Clifford and Walster (1973) also found that students' physical appearance was significantly associated with teachers' first impression and expectations on their students. Physically attractive students are often expected and assumed as more intelligent and capable to progress in school as compared to the unattractive students.

The physical or outward appearance is basically anything that is visible to our eyes. It can be in the form of body image or a dress style. The facial expression, height, body weight, freckles, complexion, hair color or hair style are part of the body image. While the choice of clothing like wearing a head band, head scarf, earrings, cardigan, skinny jeans, sport attires, casual attires or formal attires are referred to the dress style. However, in many situations assumptions and expectations on a person's inner values and qualities were concluded mostly by a dress style. The choice of clothes and the characteristics of the clothes may transmit or reveal information about a person's personality traits, socioeconomic backgrounds, values, interests or interpersonal attitudes (Satrapa et al., 1992; Swafford et al., 2011). Johnson et al. (2002) said that clothing is one kind of non-verbal communication where persons can consciously or subconsciously encode multiple messages for others to interpret.

According to Dion et al. (1972) as cited in Satrapa et al. (1992), if persons' appearance and internal characteristics are correlated, then the personality traits which are associated with the characteristics inferred from appearance would form some kind of stereotypes. This would mean that people will have the tendency to generalize others' attributes and qualities based on their physical appearance. For example Arnold and Workman (2003) as cited in Swafford et al. (2011) reported that students who owned offensive T-shirts were more likely to engage in violent behavior, experience consequences of problem behavior, engage in substance abuse and have a negative attitude toward school. Therefore, the choice of cloth is very important in order for students to send the correct cues on their personality traits which at the end will reflect their good image.

## Dress Code Implementation and Its Importance

The students' dress code policy in UiTM has been implemented since 1976, under Act 174 Educational Institutions (Discipline) 1976. Under Part IV (General) [Second schedule, Part II, 3(a), (b), 6 and 25] provides:

### 3. General prohibitions.

A student shall not –

- (a) conduct himself, whether within or without the campus, in any manner which is detrimental or prejudicial to the interests, well-being or good name of the Institution, or to the interests, well-being or good name of the students, staff, officers, or employees of the Institution, or public order, safety or security, or to morality, decency or discipline;
- (b) violate any provision of any written-law, whether within or without the campus;

### 6. Attire and appearance.

A student shall be decently or appropriately attired while attending lecture, tutorial, examination, class, workshop or while involving either inside or outside campus or while present in any part of the campus.

### 25. Student Card.

(1) The institution shall issue to every student thereof an identification card to be called the Student Card which shall bear the photograph of the student and be in such form and contain such particulars as may be determined by the Students' Affair Officer.

(2) Every student shall have his Student card in his possession at all times within the campus and shall produce same when required to do so by an authorized person.

(3) A student shall wear his Student Card on his person in such manner, on such occasions and at such times a day, from time to time, be directed by the Students' Affair Officer.

In UiTM, student's dress code has been designated by UiTM Students' Affair Department. In general, the dress codes uphold the vision, mission and objectives of UiTM. For the good name and image of UiTM as an educational institution, the university needs to educate students to have or to portray the right image that will guarantee the marketable graduates for the future expectation of highly competitive employers. According to Burgess-Wilkerson et al. (2010), as educators, it is important that we provide students lessons on how to successfully navigate and comply with the expected dress norms of their employer. Today's generation needs to understand that one's appearance does influence the opinions that others have of them. According to Hanley (2009), she believes that in tough economic times, getting the company image right will help guarantee the future of organizations in a highly competitive business environment. Thus, dress code is very important to professionals and corporations. Furthermore, according to M. Monty (2006), a dress code may foster a positive work environment, maintain a company's image, protect its workers or dress code may also become subject to lawsuits if it's not carefully designed.

Gilbert (1999) in explaining the rationale for schools or educational institutions to adopt a dress code policy highlighted that dress code is important in promoting a more effective climate for learning, to create opportunities for self-expression, to increase campus safety and security, to foster school unity and pride, to eliminate "label competition", to ensure modest dress, to simplify dressing, and to minimize cost to parents. According to Padgett (1998), teachers agreed that students spend too much time worrying about what to wear or how they look instead of academics, students would be more understanding of cultural, ethnic, and economic differences if dressed alike, the classroom behaviors would improve if students were dressed professionally and her findings show that a uniform or strict dress code policy aids in reducing the number of student behavior problems and increases student academic performance.

## Theoretical Foundation

The theory of planned behavior serves as the main theoretical basis for this study. This theory is often used to predict and explain human behavior in certain contexts. Since the study of awareness and conformity to the university dress code are not much conducted by scholars, the relevant empirical studies related to this theory will be referred. Based on the theory of planned behavior, any behavior must be preceded by behavioral intention. According to Ajzen (1991), intention is assumed to dominate the motivational factors that influence behavior. He explained that intentions are signs of how hard people are willing to try and how much effort they are planning to implement such behavior; the stronger the intentions to engage in a behavior, the greater the likelihood of such behavior.

Figure 1: Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991; p. 182)

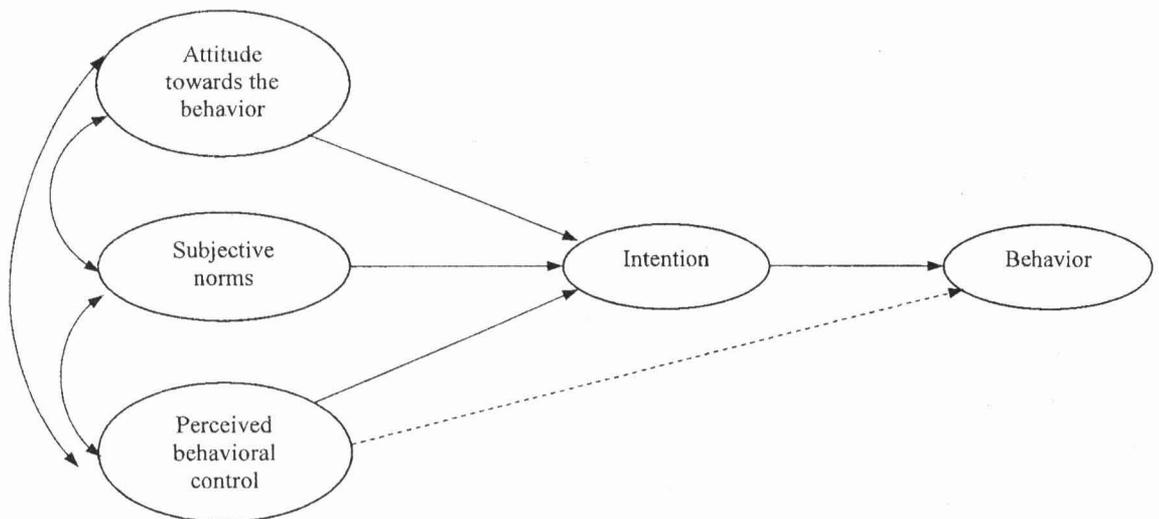


Figure 1 explains how attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control work as predictors to intentions and actions. The first predictor factor which is attitude is referred to the way of people thinking about something. Thus, in this study, attitude towards the behavior is referred to the student's positive or negative evaluation of conformity to the university dress code. The second factor that influences intentions and eventually behavior is subjective norms which are "beliefs that specify individuals or groups to think whether he/she should or should not perform the behavior....A person who believes that most referents with whom he is motivated to

comply think he should perform the behavior will receive social pressure to do so” (Lada, Tanakinjal& Amin, 2009; p. 68). In this study, peer pressure will represent the subjective norms. Peers’ beliefs are expected to influence students’ intention either to conform or not to conform to the university dress code.

The perceived behavioral control is also a significant predictor for behavioral intention. The perceived behavioral control can be defined as the extent to which a person perceived ease or difficulty of doing such behavior and it is considered to reflect past experience and anticipated obstacles and challenges (Ajzen, 1991). In this study, the perceived behavioral control is referred to the extent to which a student perceived ease or difficulty to conform to the university dress code. Two dimensions will represent the perceived behavioral control by students, which consists of self-discipline and financial factor. To summarize, this theory assumes that the more favorable the attitude and subjective norm towards the behavior, and the more of perceived behavioral control, the stronger the individual intention to perform the behavior under consideration should be (Ajzen, 1991).

## Methodology

A preliminary survey to identify dress code conformity was conducted on 218 UiTM Pahang students. The result showed that more than 50 percent of the students did not conform to the university dress code as presented in Table 1. Further investigation was then carried out by researchers to determine the level of students’ awareness towards the dress code and also to identify factors contributing to the non-conformity of the dress code. Due to the time and budget constraints, samples for the study were drawn from 10 classes which were randomly chosen during lecture hours. From each of the class, researchers then use the purposive sampling technique where the selected samples of students that did not conform to the university dress code were identified based on the UiTM dress code guidelines. Each respondent was given a structured self-administered questionnaire designed by the researchers to be answered and returned straight away to ensure a high response rate. Researchers managed to collect 150 questionnaires from the respondents but due to incomplete answer, only 146 questionnaires were able to be used for the analysis.

The questionnaire was designed to capture some demographic information and data on students’ awareness towards university dress code in Parts A and B. Parts C, D, E and F were designed to capture information on predictor factors to the non-conformity behavior which were represented by attitude, peer pressure, self-discipline and financial aspects. Bahasa Malaysia was used in the questionnaire to ensure respondents will not have any language difficulty. A Five-point Likert Scale item was used where students were requested to rate each statement as 1-‘Totally Unaware’ to 5-‘Totally Aware’ for Sections B, B1 and B2; and 1-‘Strongly Disagree’ to 5-‘Strongly Agree’ for Sections C, D, E and F. The negative statements were recoded to positive statements for certain analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0 was used to conduct data analysis. The reliability test and normality test of data were carried out before chi-square test and correlation analysis were done. In analysing data with rating scales, the responses were tabulated where means and standard deviations were calculated.

## Reliability and Normality Analysis

Table 2 shows the result of reliability analysis for all items in the research instrument. The internal consistency was measured using the Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha. Measurement of internal consistency is intended to determine the reliability of the questionnaire as to ensure the study is free from random error. The reliability scores for all items extracted were high. Thus, the instrument is reasonably satisfactory to be used for testing the students’ conformity towards UiTM’s dress code. The result of Cronbach’s Alpha values ranging from 0.747 to 0.886 fulfills the minimum requirement level of reliability that is 0.6 (Sekaran, 2003). The values of Cronbach’s Alpha show that these instruments are good and reliable.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis Result

|                             | Number of items | Cronbach’s Alpha |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| General Awareness           | 9               | .844             |
| Female Dress Code Awareness | 8               | .853             |
| Male Dress Code Awareness   | 8               | .840             |
| Students’ Attitude          | 7               | .844             |
| Peer Pressure               | 7               | .886             |
| Self-Discipline             | 6               | .868             |
| Financial                   | 4               | .747             |

Test of normality for all items are used to determine whether a data set is well-modeled by a normal distribution or not ("Normality Test", n.d). In social science and education, data distribution with Skewness between  $\pm 2.0$  can be considered to be approximately normally distributed (Coakes & Steed, 2003). By referring to Table 3, all items are approximately normal.

Table 3: Normality Test Result

|                            | Skewness |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Female Students' Awareness | -.489*   |
| Male Students' Awareness   | -.154*   |
| Students' Attitude         | .517*    |
| Peer Pressure              | .185*    |
| Self-Discipline            | -.875*   |
| Financial                  | -.248*   |

\*Evidence of approximately normal distribution

## Findings and Discussion

### Demographic Analysis

Table 4 below shows the demographic analysis of the respondents participated in the study. Majority of the respondents who did not conform to the university dress code were female students which consisted 70.5% from the total respondents, and only 29.5% were male students. 93.2% of them also were students aged between 18 to 20 years old, while only 6.8% aged between 21 to 23 years old. Students from eight diploma programmes have participated in this study. The highest three participation came from students of Pre Diploma Commerce (25.3%), students of Diploma in Business Administration (19.2%) and Diploma in Wood Industry (17.1%).

Table 4: Demographic Profile of Respondents

| Personal Variables     | Frequency  | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------|------------|----------------|
| <b>Gender</b>          |            |                |
| Male                   | 43         | 29.5           |
| Female                 | 103        | 70.5           |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>146</b> | <b>100.0</b>   |
| <b>Age (years old)</b> |            |                |
| 18 – 20                | 136        | 93.2           |
| 21 – 23                | 10         | 6.8            |
| More than 24           | 0          | 0.0            |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>146</b> | <b>100.0</b>   |
| <b>Programmes</b>      |            |                |
| AC110                  | 15         | 10.3           |
| EC110                  | 20         | 13.7           |
| SR113                  | 1          | 0.7            |
| PD002                  | 37         | 25.3           |
| AS117                  | 25         | 17.1           |
| BM111                  | 28         | 19.2           |
| BM112                  | 12         | 8.2            |
| CS110                  | 8          | 5.5            |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>146</b> | <b>100.0</b>   |

### Awareness towards UiTM Dress Code

Table 5 lists the 25 items of students' awareness towards UiTM dress code policy. All mean values are greater than 3.00 which show that respondents are aware of the university dress code policy and guidelines. In terms of general awareness, they are highly aware that they have to always wear student matrix card in the campus where

the mean score for this item is the highest at 4.51. However, they are least aware that they could be compounded for not wearing according to the dress code where the mean score is the lowest at 4.01.

As for female students' ratings on their awareness towards UiTM dress code, the mean score for all items are also above 3.00 which again show that female students are aware of their dress code guidelines. The highest mean score of 4.75 shows that female students seem to be highly aware that they have to wear *baju kurung* on Mondays and Fridays. While they seem to be least aware that they are allowed to wear only one pair of earrings when the mean score is 3.90. The ranking for statement "I must wear jeans/long pants that are not tight" is also quite low ( $M = 4.12$ ) which shows that the respondents have lower awareness on tight jeans or long pants as compared to other statements of awareness.

Male students' mean scores of awareness towards the dress code in Table 5 also have the same trend as female students' mean scores of awareness. All mean scores are higher than 3.00 which show the positive tendency of awareness. Male students seem to be highly aware of having to wear a collared and sleeved t-shirt where the mean score is the highest at 4.50. They are somehow least aware on having to tuck-in their t-shirts or shirts when the mean score is only 3.50.

Table 5: Students' Ratings on Awareness towards UiTM Dress Code

| Items  | Mean score  | Std. Deviation |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| <b>General awareness:</b>  |             |                |
| I must always wear student's matrix card in the campus.                    | 4.51        | .554           |
| I must not color my hair.  | 4.49        | .656           |
| I should wear according to the dress code.                                 | 4.35        | .533           |
| I am aware that UiTM Pahang has a dress code policy.                       | 4.34        | .579           |
| I must wear according to the dress code while attending lectures.          | 4.29        | .601           |
| If I don't wear according to the dress code, I cannot enter the exam hall. | 4.25        | .818           |
| Male and female students have their own specific dress code guidelines.    | 4.24        | .625           |
| The dress code policy is enforced on all days of lecture.                  | 4.07        | .749           |
| I could be compounded for not wearing according to the dress code.         | 4.01        | .788           |
| <b>Overall mean score for general awareness</b>                            | <b>4.28</b> | <b>.443</b>    |
| <b>Female Students' Awareness:</b>   |             |                |
| I must wear <i>baju kurung</i> on Monday and Friday.                       | 4.75        | .460           |
| I must wear attire which does not thin and revealing.                      | 4.44        | .555           |
| I must wear long skirt that does not split.                                | 4.38        | .690           |
| I must wear long-sleeved blouse/t-shirt.                                   | 4.25        | .696           |
| I must wear dress that does not tight.                                     | 4.25        | .670           |
| I must wear dress that long enough to cover my bottom.                     | 4.17        | .705           |
| I must wear jeans/long pants that are not tight.                           | 4.12        | .649           |
| I am allowed to wear one pair of earrings only.                            | 3.90        | .907           |
| <b>Overall mean score for female students' awareness</b>                   | <b>4.28</b> | <b>.475</b>    |
| <b>Male Students' Awareness:</b>   |             |                |
| I must wear a collared and sleeved t-shirt.                                | 4.50        | .629           |
| I must wear proper a shoe and not a slipper.                               | 4.48        | .628           |
| I must wear jeans/long pants that do not torn and patched.                 | 4.39        | .655           |
| I must wear corporate attire on Monday.                                    | 4.30        | .878           |
| My hair should be short.   | 4.09        | .741           |
| My hair style should not portray foreign cultures.                         | 4.09        | .830           |
| I must wear jeans that do not stringy and hairy-fur.                       | 3.93        | .873           |
| I must tuck-in my t-shirt/shirt.   | 3.50        | 1.00           |
| <b>Overall mean score for male students' awareness</b>                     | <b>4.16</b> | <b>.542</b>    |

### Factors of Non-Conforming Behavior

The result of descriptive statistics for predictor factors which consist of students' attitude, peer pressure, self-discipline and financial is shown in Table 6. In terms of students' attitude, respondents tend to have positive attitude towards the dress code. They tend to disagree ( $M < 3.00$ ) with almost all negative statements of students' attitude (Likert scale of 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree). The mean score of 1.93 for item "*baju kurung* or similar clothes limit my movement" reflects that they tend to strongly disagree with the statement. While for

item "Dress code guideline does not match with my taste in fashion", mean score of 2.93 seems to reflect that they are somewhat neutral with the statement when the mean value is close to 3.00.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Predictor Factors

| Items   | N          | Mean score | Std. Deviation |
|---|------------|------------|----------------|
| <b>Students' Attitude:</b>  |            |            |                |
| Dress code guideline does not match with my taste in fashion.               | 146        | 2.93       | .944           |
| Dressing as dress code requirement is old-fashion and not up-to-date.       | 146        | 2.49       | .881           |
| I would wear whatever I like even though it is against the dress code.      | 146        | 2.14       | .929           |
| <i>Baju kurung</i> or similar clothes limit my movement.                    | 146        | 1.93       | .915           |
| Tight clothes and jeans are today's fashion which is not wrong.             | 146        | 2.41       | .980           |
| Students should wear up-to-date clothes.                                    | 146        | 2.77       | .918           |
| Students should always dress attractively even if it breaks the dress code. | 146        | 2.28       | .908           |
| <b>Peer Pressure:</b>   |            |            |                |
| I don't like to be called 'schema' among friends.                           | 146        | 2.76       | .999           |
| Friends will laugh at me if I wear according to the dress code.             | 146        | 2.37       | .954           |
| I want to be part of them who wear up-to-date fashion.                      | 146        | 2.47       | .903           |
| It is easier to fit in if I wear similar to my friends.                     | 146        | 2.43       | .946           |
| Friends think that I should wear similar to them.                           | 146        | 2.36       | .861           |
| Friends think that I shouldn't adhere to the dress code.                    | 146        | 2.20       | .819           |
| Friends think that those who wear according to the dress code are 'schema'. | 146        | 2.45       | 1.06           |
| <b>Self-discipline:</b>   |            |            |                |
| I am always prepared.   | 146        | 3.72       | .777           |
| I pay attention to details.   | 146        | 3.63       | .788           |
| I obey to rules and orders.   | 146        | 3.62       | .763           |
| I follow a schedule.  | 146        | 3.96       | .631           |
| I didn't leave my belongings around.  | 146        | 4.10       | .708           |
| I didn't forget to put things back in their proper place.                   | 146        | 4.01       | .695           |
| <b>Financial:</b>   |            |            |                |
| It wouldn't cost me a lot to wear as the dress code guideline.              | 146        | 3.48       | .956           |
| I have enough money to buy clothes according to the dress code.             | 146        | 3.64       | .894           |
| I do mind spending money on up-to-date clothes.                             | 146        | 3.35       | .922           |
| Due to cost, I wear whatever clothes that I have.                           | 146        | 3.23       | 1.07           |
| <b>Valid N (listwise)</b>   | <b>146</b> |            |                |

Table 6 also indicates that peer pressure did not influence respondents' attitude towards the dress code. All mean scores are less than 3.00 show their disagreement on all statements of peer pressure in the questionnaire. They disagree least with the statement of "Friends think that I shouldn't adhere to the dress code" where the mean score is only 2.20. Nevertheless, a mean score of 2.76 which is closest to 3.00 for statement "I don't like to be called 'schema' among friends" somehow reflects the tendency to be neutral on the statement.

The descriptive statistics for self-discipline showed that all mean scores are more than 3.00 which indicate that respondents tend to agree that they are well self-disciplined students. Nevertheless, statement "I obey to rules and orders" received the lowest mean score at 3.62 which indicates the weakest agreement as compared to other statements. For the financial aspects, respondents tend to agree with all the statements ( $M > 3.00$ ). They agree that buying clothes according to the dress code wouldn't cost them much and that they have enough money to buy clothes according to the dress code.

Table 7: Overall mean score for four predictor factors

| Predictor factors  | Mean score | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|------------|----------------|
| Students' Attitude | 3.58       | .665           |
| Peers Pressure     | 3.57       | .723           |
| Self-discipline    | 3.84       | .566           |
| Financial          | 3.42       | .456           |

$M > 3.00$  shows a more positive respond towards the factors

In order to calculate the overall mean for all four predictor factors, all negative statements were reversed and recoded to positive statement. As shown in Table 7, there is no clear findings on which factor influences students' attitude of not conforming to the dress code. The mean score of more than 3.00 reflects that students tend to have positive attitude towards the dress code ( $M=3.58$ ), their peers seem not to influence them for not wearing clothes according to the dress code ( $M=3.57$ ) and they agreed that they are self-disciplined students ( $M=3.84$ ). However, by comparing all mean scores, financial aspects gained the lowest mean score ( $M=3.42$ ) which indicates that cost as the strongest factor among the four predictor factors which contributes to the students' act of non-conforming behavior.

Table 8: Cross tabulation between gender and dress code conformity according to the lecture days

|              | Monday     | Tuesday   | Wednesday | Thursday  | Friday     |
|--------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Male         | 38         | 13        | 19        | 12        | 17         |
| Female       | 98         | 23        | 14        | 30        | 98         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>136</b> | <b>36</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>42</b> | <b>115</b> |

Table 8 above shows the cross tabulation between gender and dress code conformity by lecture days in a week. Majority of the respondents conform to the dress code on Mondays (136 people) and Fridays (115 people). This is probably due to the declaration of Monday as the 'Corporate Day' and self-respect to Friday as a sacred day for Muslims. The other reason for female students to obey the UiTM dress code on Friday is due to their habit of wearing *baju kurung* as an honor to Friday. As it is well known, *baju kurung* is the most suitable clothes worn by the female students because they are loose and do not reveal the shape of their body, the cloth is long enough to cover their bottom and the skirt is not split (as outlined in the UiTM dress code). While on Tuesday to Thursday, the number of students conforming to the dress code is very low, which is not more than 40 out of 146 students.

Table 9: Cross tabulation between gender and dress code non-conformity according to the lecture days

|              | Monday    | Tuesday    | Wednesday  | Thursday   | Friday    |
|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Male         | 5         | 30         | 24         | 31         | 26        |
| Female       | 5         | 80         | 89         | 73         | 5         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>110</b> | <b>113</b> | <b>104</b> | <b>31</b> |

From Table 9 above we can see that students are not dressed according to UiTM dress code on most of the lecture days. From 146 respondents, there are more than 100 students who do not conform to the dress code on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Some female students also responded that they would only wear *baju kurung* if they are attending religious subjects (CTU) on that day.

Table 10: Chi-Square test between gender and lecture days

|        | Mon  | Tue  | Wed  | Thu  | Fri  |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Gender | .172 | .313 | .000 | .882 | .000 |

The chi-square table above shows the association between gender and lecture days. The significance value of .000 for Wednesday and Friday, which is below .05 indicates that there is an association between gender and lecture day for Wednesdays and Fridays. The association on Wednesday could be because of co-curriculum activities which require them to wear a specific uniform or attire. The correlation analysis in Table 11 shows that each variables is weakly linear correlated to each other. The coefficient correlation of each variable is approaching to zero indicates the weakness of the correlations. It implies that the lower coefficient, the weaker the correlation between independent variables. The result also reported that there is no multicollinearity between variables.

Table 11: Correlation between variables

|                     | Student's Awareness | Attitude | Peers pressure | Self-discipline | Financial |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------|----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Student's Awareness |                     |          |                |                 |           |
| Attitude            | -.268**             |          |                |                 |           |
| Peers pressure      | -.078               | .470**   |                |                 |           |
| Self-discipline     | .270**              | -.146*   | -.196**        |                 |           |
| Financial           | -.179*              | .387**   | .472**         | -.134           |           |

\*\*Correlation is significant at  $p < 0.001$

\* Correlation is significant at  $p < 0.05$

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Students attending universities are generally those people of the late teenagers to adults. Due to the diverse composition, many policies were implemented in order to maintain conducive and healthy academic environment. Dress code policy is one of the tools used by the university administrators in ensuring students not to wear clothes that are not suitable with the academic environment or disruptive to the educational process. A preliminary survey among UiTM students which revealed more than 50 percent of the students did not conform to the university dress code has motivated researchers to carry out further investigation on the level of students' awareness towards the dress code and also the factors contributing to the non-conformity.

This study reveals several important findings. Students are found to be highly aware of the university dress code, be it male or female students. Almost all mean scores for awareness are higher than 4.00. Students are fully aware of the dress code policy being implemented by university administrator and they are also highly aware on how they should dress according to the dress code guidelines. However, despite their awareness, the majority of the students are found to disobey the dress code guidelines on most of the lecture days. The majority of them were found to conform to the dress code only on Mondays and Fridays which could be due to the declaration of Monday as the 'Corporate day' and the self-respect for Friday as a sacred day for Muslims. Thus, in order to encourage students to conform to the university dress code, a more creative approach should be implemented. The approach must be able to motivate and attract students to wear clothes as outlined in the dress code guidelines. Students should also be enlightened on the importance of the dress code. This would help them to appreciate and understand the reasons behind the policies being implemented in the university.

A brief interview with lecturers from the ten classes also revealed that 50 percent of them do not remind their students on the dress code. The groups of students who were being reminded and even warned by their lecturers were found to be more dress code-obedient. The students appeared to be tidier and more neatly dressed which shows that a greater involvement from lecturers is also needed in order to encourage students to conform to the dress code.

As for the factors contributing to the non-conforming behavior of students, there is no clear finding. Students tend to have positive responses towards all factors that have been studied where the overall mean score for all four factors which consist of students' attitude, peer pressure, self-discipline and financial aspects are above 3.00. However, financial aspects which gained the lowest overall mean score could be seen as the strongest factor among the four predictor factors in influencing students' non-conforming behavior.

As recommendation, the researchers suggest that future studies should be conducted where a larger sample and issue of honesty should be taken care of. Other factors such as personality attributes, perceived behavioral control or motivation should also be considered in order to have more accurate results. As dress code do not only teaches students to be obedient to university rules, but it also indirectly plays a major role in instilling a sense of integrity and an appreciation for values and ethics, thus the issue of dress code conformity should not be taken for granted.

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ROSLILEE AB. HALIM, MAWARTI ASHIK SAMSUDIN & NURUL NADIA ABD. AZIZ, Faculty of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Pahang. roslilee@pahang.uitm.edu.my, mawarti@pahang.uitm.edu.my, nurul\_nadia@pahang.uitm.edu.my