

Impact of Teacher Attire on Students' Views of Teacher Credibility, Attitude Homophily, and Background Homophily within School-based Agricultural Education Programs

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Abstract

School-based agricultural education teachers can face conflicting role obligations and conflict when contradictory expectations accompany their positions, making the daily selection of what to wear difficult for these educators. The decision is crucial, however; dress sends strong messages of the profession to others, including students. We used a multiple case study design to examine the impact of teacher attire on students' perceptions of attitude homophily, background homophily, and teacher credibility. Findings indicated differing perceptions of business professionally, business casually, and casually dressed agriculture teachers between cases. Further, data suggested students' expectations for teacher attire varied by content matter, with agricultural mechanics content requiring more casual clothing. We recommend teachers wear business casual clothing most frequently in order to moderate between students' teacher-related and agriculturalist-related expectations, while shaping students' views regarding the professionalism of the agricultural, food, and natural resources industry.

Keywords: teacher attire, professional, teacher credibility, attitude homophily, background homophily

Introduction/Conceptual Framework

The global agricultural, food, and natural resources (AFNR) industries are facing the challenge of supplying a growing population with safe, affordable food from limited resources (STEM Food and Ag. Council, 2014). As technology and social systems evolve, the business of agricultural production is requiring more expertise in an increasingly diverse array of disciplines. A robust human capital pipeline has been identified as the vehicle capable of building an AFNR workforce prepared to conquer this challenge. However, the industry has struggled to fill that pipeline with scientists prepared to work in agricultural positions. Universities have been producing one-twelfth of the graduates needed to fill the nation's AFNR positions, suggesting a need to increase the number of students interested in entering that human capital pipeline.

One of the barriers to recruiting students to AFNR degree programs is the lack of awareness students have regarding the scope of careers within AFNR industries (Coalition for a Sustainable Agricultural Workforce, n.d.; National Academy of Sciences, 2009). "The diverse and broader student body is generally unaware of the multi-dimensional and challenging nature of the

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agricultural disciplines and the exciting career opportunities open to them” (National Academy of Sciences, 2009, p. 4). The STEM Food and Ag. Council (2014) recognized “the growing need for young, talented people in a variety of fields and disciplines to consider embarking on a career in the food and agriculture industry” (p. 14) as a key issue compounding the global hunger problem, and recommended that institutions “raise awareness among young people about the abundance of professional opportunities in food and agriculture” (p. 52). The Coalition for a Sustainable Agricultural Workforce (n.d.) stated that “misconceptions steer students in the basic sciences away from careers in the agricultural sciences” (overview, para. 5).

School-based agricultural education programs can assist in filling the human capital pipeline, as agricultural education courses maintain a dedicated focus on career exploration and college and career readiness across the AFNR disciplines (DeLuca, Plank, & Estacion, 2006; Roberts, Harder, & Brashears, 2016). Smith (2010) found enrollment in school-based agricultural education classes to be associated with positive perceptions about agriculture. Dyer, Breja, and Wittler (2002) reported previous enrollment in a school-based agricultural education program to be one of the most important factors in students’ completion of a postsecondary degree in a college of agriculture.

As the leader of the school-based agricultural education program, the agriculture teacher is an influential mentor in guiding students toward the various science-based careers within the AFNR industries (Terry & Briers, 2010). As representatives of the larger AFNR industry, agriculture teachers offer many students their first impressions of the skills needed for, knowledge required by, and culture found within AFNR careers. Included in the formation of these first impressions are the teachers’ physical attributes and behaviors (Carney, Colvin, & Hall, 2007; Simons, 1995). Attributes can include aspects out of the teacher’s control, such as age and gender, and those within the teacher’s control, such as attire (Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009). These first impressions can shape students’ perspectives regarding the similarity between their own concepts of self and perceptions of occupations within AFNR, a powerful factor in occupational choice (Gottfredson, 1981).

There are different standards for dress that are often dependent on work environment and culture; sartorial choices display one’s roles, authority, and status within a profession (Morris, Gorham, Cohen, & Huffman, 1996). While district policies differ, employee handbooks have been found to maintain expectations of professional dress for teachers (Workman & Freeburg, 2010). Simmons (1996) posited that teachers can garner respect for themselves and their profession through their clothing, stating, “without question, dress sends a strong message about who teachers are as individuals and as professionals” (p. 298). Workman and Freeburg (2010) echoed the importance of attire within the teaching profession, stating the high influence teachers’ clothing had on the general public’s perceptions of the teaching profession. Previous research has displayed the impact of attire on students’ perceptions of teachers. The literature is replete with findings indicating teachers dressed in casual attire are preferred by students, who view them as approachable and flexible, but not well-respected (Butler & Roesel, 1989; Carr, Lavin, & Davies, 2009; Lukavsky, Butler, & Harden, 1995). Additionally, these casually dressed teachers are more likely to experience student misbehavior (Roach, 1997). Similarly, teachers dressed more professionally have been found to be less preferable and perceived as less connected to students, but overwhelmingly more competent (Butler & Roesel, 1989; Morris et al., 1996; Shoulders et al., 2017). Morris et al. (1996) stated, “the same formal clothing that serves to increase perceptions of credibility, intelligence, and competence, and to increase compliance, has been reported to have the effect of decreasing perceptions of likability or approachability” (p. 137).

Teachers can face conflicting role obligations and role conflict when contradictory expectations accompany their positions (Workman & Freeburg, 2010). Agriculture teachers not only represent the teaching profession, but also represent the AFNR industry. Careers within AFNR have historically been carried out in outdoor settings requiring manual labor, but currently encompass a vast array of scientific careers carried out within professional settings (National Research Council, 2009). Gordon (2010) stated that within educational subject areas in which sartorial expectations may conflict, the teacher must dress in a manner that displays the teacher's ability and willingness to engage in practices within the occupation. Shoulders et al. (2017) found that students' perceptions of agriculture teachers dressed in varying degrees of professional attire were dependent upon the students' previous experience within agriculture classes; students who had been enrolled in at least one high school agriculture course perceived agriculture teachers dressed less professionally as more competent to teach agricultural content. Further, they perceived those dressed more professionally to be less competent to teach agricultural content. These findings led Shoulders et al. (2017) to recommend that agriculture teachers actively select attire according to the messages they want to send to their students about the agriculture profession. They also recommended that further research be conducted "to determine how teacher attire impacts students' perceptions and expectations of the agriculture teachers" (p. 125). This study addresses their recommendation by examining the impact of teacher attire within the context of school based agricultural education programs on students' perceptions of agriculture teachers' credibility and perceptions of the similarity between their senses of self and their beliefs about the teacher as a representative of the AFNR industry.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Gottfredson's (1981) theory of occupational aspirations and expectancy violations theory (EVT) (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). According to the theory of occupational aspirations, an individual's self-concept, including items such as appearance, gender, social class background, intelligence, and vocational interests, competencies and values, is shaped over time and guides the individual toward and away from occupations that align with or are misaligned with this self-concept. As a child ages into adolescence, "each of the developing self-concepts is used as an additional criterion by which to make more critical assessments of job-self compatibility" (Gottfredson, 1981, p. 549). The elimination of jobs that are viewed as misaligned with one's self-concept occur in stages:

Occupations that are perceived to be inappropriate for one's sex are first eliminated from further consideration. Next, youngsters begin to rule out occupations of unacceptably low prestige because they are inconsistent with their social class self-concept. At the same time they rule out occupations requiring extreme effort to obtain in view of their image of their general ability level. Only in adolescence do youngsters turn to their more personal interests, capacities, and values as criteria for further narrowing their choices. Thus, the exploration of vocational alternatives in adolescence is largely within the set of occupations that were deemed compatible at earlier ages according to one's more visible social attributes...and one's sense of what is available with reasonable effort (Gottfredson, 1981, p. 549).

As occupations are further pursued, barriers related to accessibility cause individuals to choose between "sacrificing compatibility according to vocational interests, job level, or femininity/masculinity of the job" (Gottfredson, 1981, p. 549). Aspects further from the core of one's self-concept, such as vocational interests, are more readily given up than those that are more central to one self-concept, such as gender appropriateness of a job.

The process by which individuals pursue and eliminate potential occupations relies on occupational images (also termed occupational stereotype within the literature) (Gottfredson, 1981). Generalizations made about an occupation, including “the personalities of people in those jobs, the type of work they do, the type of lives they lead, the rewards and conditions of the work, and the appropriateness of the job for different types of people” form the image by which individuals determine compatibility between the occupation and their concept of self (Gottfredson, 1981, p. 547). Studies examining occupational images have found that occupations are perceived similarly by the general population,

no matter what their sex, social class, educational level, ethnic group, area of residence, occupational preferences or employment, age, type of school attended, political persuasion, and traditional of beliefs, and regardless of the decade of the study or the specific way in which questions were asked (Gottfredson, 1981, p. 550).

However, ratings of occupations is dependent on homophily; individuals rate jobs perceived to be held by people similar to themselves as more favorable than those held by people less like them (Himmelweit, Halsey, & Oppenheim, 1952; Reiss, 1961).

As representatives of the AFNR industry, agriculture teachers offer students an opportunity to further define their occupational images of AFNR careers, as well as evaluate the homophily between themselves and AFNR occupations. According to EVT, the interaction between agriculture teachers and their students shape students’ expectations of what agriculture teachers should know and do, which can influence their perceptions of other agriculture teachers (Burgoon & Hale, 1988), and whether their concepts of self are compatible with the occupation of agricultural education (Gottfredson, 1981). Interaction with other agriculture teachers who behave in a way that is different from the students’ expectations can be viewed as positively or negatively:

Clothing behavior is an area for obvious application of EVT given that we hold expectations for what appropriate attire is and what certain types of dress mean when they violate these social norms. There is little doubt that style of dress influences the attributions made about the wearer” (Dunbar & Segrin, 2012, p. 2)

The theory of occupational aspirations was utilized to guide this study’s independent and dependent variables. The AFNR industry has been experiencing a shift in occupational image as its reliance on science-based and professional disciplines increases; a corresponding shift in how AFNR careers are viewed by those making occupational choices can reduce misconceptions about the industry and combat the shortage of qualified people interested in filling these positions. The value of attire on the general public’s views about a profession (Dunbar & Segrin, 2012), the role of attire in shaping perceptions of homophily and expectations of teacher competence (Morris et al., 1996), the influence of homophily on occupational image (Gottfredson, 1981), and the conflicting sartorial expectations of traditional agriculturalists, teachers, and scientific professionals (Dunbar & Segrin, 2012; Shoulders et al., 2017) warranted the examination of teachers’ sartorial choices as an independent variable possible of influencing the dependent variables of student-teacher homophily and student perceptions of teacher credibility.

Expectancy violations theory was also utilized to guide the design of the study. Because students’ previous interactions with teachers in their home school based agricultural education programs shapes their expectations regarding the sartorial choices of agriculture teachers, we utilized a multiple case study design. Case studies are useful in instances when the phenomenon to be investigated is not sharply distinguishable from the context in which it is observed (Yin, 2014).

Therefore, case studies are appropriate “when you want to understand a real-world case and assume that such an understanding is likely to involve important contextual conditions pertinent to your case” (Yin, 2014, p. 16). Because expectations of teacher attire are formed in part from previous interactions with agriculture teachers, and sartorial violations of those expectations can be viewed positively or negatively, we analyzed the impact of teacher attire on students’ perceptions of homophily with the teacher and teacher credibility by school, seeking to generalize to the theoretical propositions within the theories of occupational aspirations and expectancy violations rather than to populations (Yin, 2014).

Methods

This study utilized a series of quasi-experiments within a multiple case study design. Four school based agricultural education programs, purposively selected to include only programs wherein multiple sections of the same agriculture class were taught, were recruited to participate. A thorough description of each case’s context and treatment implementation follows the explanation of the purpose, objectives, treatments, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis, which were uniform across all cases.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of teacher attire on students’ perceptions of teachers’ credibility and homophily between themselves and the teacher.

To meet this purpose, the following objectives were carried out for each of four cases:

1. Describe students’ attitude homophily, background homophily, and perceptions of teacher credibility after experiencing a lesson delivered by a teacher dressed in business professional attire, business casual attire, or casual attire.
2. Determine differences between students’ perceptions by treatment group.

Treatments

Two graduate assistants who were certified to teach high school agriculture but who did not have any previous interaction with students in the four sites served as guest instructors. The guest instructors were similar in age and in teaching experience, but were different genders. Once sites were selected, the guest instructors were randomly assigned to teach prepared lessons within each site. The same guest instructor taught the same lesson in multiple sections of the same class within a site, so attire was the only manipulated variable. In sites with two sections of the same class, guest instructors wore casual attire while teaching one section and business professional attire while teaching the other section. In sites with three sections of the same class, the guest instructor wore business casual attire to the third class. Form of attire was randomly assigned to each class within a site. Operational definitions for each form of attire was established through a review of literature (Morris et al., 1996) and was validated by an expert in apparel studies. See Table 1 for operational definitions of each form of attire.

Table 1

Operational Definitions of each Form of Attire for Male and Female Guest Instructors

Form of Attire	Operation for Male Guest Instructor	Operation for Female Guest Instructor
Business professional	Dress shirt with tie, dress slacks, jacket, brown or black shoes	Blouse and knee-length skirt and blazer, low-heeled brown or black shoes
Business casual	Dress shirt and khakis, brown shoes or boots	Dress shirt or blouse and khakis, flat shoes or boots
Casual	Polo or plain t-shirt, jeans, boots or flat casual shoes	Polo or plain t-shirt, jeans, boots flat casual shoes

Two 50-minute lesson plans were developed to meet the objectives within SBAE courses. One lesson was titled “How does ice cream get to our table?” and was aligned with The National Council for Agricultural Education’s (2015) Career Pathway Content Standards AS.01 (Analyze historic and current trends impacting the animal systems industry), FPP. 03 (Select and process food products for storage, distribution and consumption), and FPP.04 (Explain the scope of the food industry and the historical and current developments of food products and processing). This lesson was designed to be taught in introductory agriculture courses and food science courses. For SBAE programs with multiple agricultural mechanics courses, a lesson plan titled “Repairing an Extension Cord” was created, and aligned with The National Council for Agricultural Education’s (2015) Career Pathway Content Standards PST.01 (Apply physical science principles and engineering applications to solve problems and improve performance in AFNR power, structural and technical systems), PST.02 (Operate and maintain AFNR mechanical equipment and power systems), and PST.03 (Service and repair AFNR mechanical equipment and power systems). Lessons each included a full materials and resources list, intended student outcomes and learning objectives, an interest approach with guiding questions, a lecture with PowerPoints and student worksheets, a scripted demonstration with guiding questions, a student activity with guiding questions, and a summary activity. Lesson plans were evaluated for face and content validity by a panel of experts in teaching and learning and curriculum development within agricultural education. One researcher observed each instance of guest instruction to confirm fidelity of treatment, both within attire and the lesson delivery.

Instrumentation

Following Morris et al.’s (1996) procedure for evaluating teacher attire, we used a combined instrument to measure students’ perceptions of teacher credibility and homophily between themselves and the teacher. Teacher credibility was evaluated via 15 items with five-point bipolar descriptors. Five constructs are related to teacher credibility, and each were evaluated with the following descriptors: *competence* (expert/inexpert, reliable/unreliable, qualified/unqualified), *character* (selfish/unselfish, kind/cruel, sympathetic/unsympathetic), *sociability* (friendly/unfriendly, cheerful/gloomy, good-natured/irritable), *composure* (poised/nervous, relaxed/tense, calm/anxious), and *extroversion* (shy/outgoing, timid/bold, friendly/unfriendly)

(Morris et al., 1996). Previous analysis of internal consistency within constructs yielded .85 for competence, .86 for character, .76 for sociability, .91 for composure, and .80 for extroversion.

The Measure of Perceived Homophily, which was developed by McCroskey, Richmond and Daly (1975) and updated in 1996 (McCroskey, McCroskey, & Richmond, 2007), was designed to measure perceived similarities between the source of information and the receiver (Rocca & McCroskey, 1999). The updated instrument measures three factors: attitude homophily, background homophily, and interpersonal attraction (McCroskey et al., 2007). Because of the necessity to maintain professional relationships between high school students and their teachers, we omitted questions related to interpersonal attraction from this study. Attitude homophily examines the perceived similarity between the attitudes of a source (in this case, the teacher) and a recipient (in this case, the student), and includes items such as, "This person shares my values." Background homophily refers to the perceived similarity between the backgrounds between a source and a recipient, and includes items such as, "This person and I grew up in similar settings." McCroskey et al.'s (2007) instrument included 17 items relating to attitude homophily and 10 items relating to background homophily. Their student-based tests of the instrument yielded internal consistency scores of .90 for attitude homophily and .84 for background homophily.

A panel of experts in agricultural education evaluated the combined instrument for face and content validity. Based on their recommendations, slight modifications were made to the attitude and background homophily scales to reduce respondent fatigue and eliminate items thought to be ambiguous or not applicable. The modified instrument yielded 10 items measuring attitude homophily and 7 items measuring background homophily.

A pilot test with 12 university freshmen was conducted to evaluate the validity and reliability of the combined instrument. Students were asked to view provided images of two individuals when completing the instrument. One image displayed a young, Caucasian male wearing jeans, a flannel shirt, boots, and a baseball hat while standing in a field, with his hands in his pockets. The other image displayed a young, Caucasian male wearing a large black jacket with a hood and sweatpants, gesturing aggressively to the camera, in a street with similarly dressed and mannered males behind him. The pilot test yielded internal consistency scores of .87 for attitude homophily and .88 for background homophily. Internal consistency scores for constructs within source credibility were as follows: .68 for competency, .95 for character, .77 for composure, .91 for extroversion, and .97 for sociability. Overall reliability for source credibility was .94. Divergent validity was calculated using dependent samples *t*-tests to assess perceived credibility and homophily between pilot test respondents and the individuals in the two provided images. Significant differences were found in all three areas; for attitude homophily, $t(11) = 8.07, p < .005$; for background homophily, $t(11) = 2.65, p = .023$; and for credibility, $t(11) = 3.26, p = .008$, indicating high construct validity within the instrument.

Data Collection and Analysis

The instrument was administered to students via paper and pencil at the conclusion of each lesson. All sites yielded a 100% response rate. Data was analyzed via descriptive statistics, between treatment groups within each site. The magnitude of differences between groups were calculated and interpreted via effect sizes (Cohen, 1988).

Case A

Case A included three Survey of Agriculture classes at a high school in a town of 35,000 residents. The high school teaches approximately 4,000 students in grades nine through 12. Within

the two-teacher agriculture program, consisting of one male agriculture teacher in the final ten years of his teaching career and one female agriculture teacher in the middle of her teaching career, the Survey of Agriculture courses are taught by the female agriculture teacher. After random assignment of treatments to classes, the male guest instructor taught the “How does ice cream get to our table?” lesson in business professional attire to a class of 13 students, in business casual attire to a class of nine students, and in casual attire to a class of 15 students.

Case B

Case B included two Survey of Agriculture classes and two Agricultural Mechanics classes at a high school in a town of approximately 3,200 residents. Approximately 600 students in grades nine through 12 are enrolled. The single-teacher SBAE program is led by a male agriculture teachers in the final five years of his teaching career. After random assignment of treatments to classes, the male guest instructor taught the “How does ice cream get to our table?” lesson in business professional attire to a Survey of Agriculture class of 11 students and in casual attire to a Survey of Agriculture class of 11 students. Additionally, the male guest instructor taught the “Repairing an extension cord” lesson in business professional attire to an Agricultural Mechanics class of 16 students and in casual attire to an Agricultural Mechanics class of 10 students.

Case C

Case C included three Survey of Agriculture courses at a high school at the outskirts of a larger city of approximately 500,000 residents. The high school enrolls 533 students in grades 10 through 12. The two-teacher SBAE program is led by two male teachers, one in the middle of his teaching career and the other in the final 10 years of his career. After random assignment of treatments to classes, the female guest instructor taught the “How does ice cream get to our table?” lesson in business professional attire to a class of 13 students, in business casual attire to a class of 14 students, and in casual attire to a class of 13 students.

Case D

Case D included two Food Science courses and two Survey of Agriculture courses at a high school serving a town of close to 2,500 residents. The high school enrolls approximately 400 students. The two-teacher SBAE program includes one female agriculture teacher entering the middle of her teaching career and one male agriculture teachers entering the final 10 years of his teaching career. After random assignment of treatments to classes, the female guest instructor taught the “How does ice cream get to our table?” lesson in business professional attire to a Food Science class of six students and a Survey of Agriculture class of 10 students. She also taught the same lesson in casual attire to a Food Science class of 14 students and a Survey of Agriculture class of 25 students.

Results

Case A

Students experiencing the lesson wherein the guest instructor wore business professional attire reported the most favorable perceptions of the instructor’s credibility (see Table 2). The guest instructor received the highest scores in attitude and background homophily from the group who saw him wear business casual attire. The instructor received the lowest scores in each area when dressed casually, but the difference between scores was as low as .01. Effect sizes were calculated via partial eta squared; the effect size for attitude homophily was .06, for background homophily

was .02, and for credibility was .04. According to Cohen (1988), each of these effect sizes is negligible.

Table 2

Mean Scores on Students' Perceptions of Guest Instructors' Attitude Homophily, Background Homophily, and Source Credibility for Each Treatment within Case A

	Attitude Homophily	Background Homophily	Source Credibility
Business Professional	3.39	3.05	4.31
Business Casual	3.40	3.14	4.07
Casual	3.21	3.01	4.06

Case B

Agricultural Mechanics Classes.

Students experiencing the lesson when the guest instructor wore casual attire indicated higher attitude and background homophily with the instructor than those that engaged with the guest instructor while he wore business professional attire (see Table 3). Additionally, the guest instructor was perceived as more credible when wearing casual attire than when wearing business professional attire. Effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's *d*, attitude homophily and credibility yielded high effect sizes (Cohen, 1988), with scores being .79 and .93, respectively. Background homophily yielded a small effect size of .21.

Table 3

Mean Scores on Students' Perceptions of Guest Instructors' Attitude Homophily, Background Homophily, and Source Credibility for Each Treatment within the Agricultural Mechanics Courses in Case B

Attire	Attitude Homophily	Background Homophily	Source Credibility
Business Professional	2.73	3.01	3.71
Casual	3.45	3.10	4.38

Survey of Agriculture Class.

Students experiencing the lesson when the guest instructor wore business professional attire indicated higher perceptions regarding attitude homophily, background homophily, and credibility of the instructor than did students experiencing the lesson with the casually dressed guest instructor (see Table 4). Effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's *d*, and were negligible, with attitude homophily scoring .08, background homophily scoring .18, and credibility scoring .05.

Table 4

Mean Scores on Students' Perceptions of Guest Instructors' Attitude Homophily, Background Homophily, and Source Credibility for Each Treatment within the Survey of Agriculture Courses in Case B

Attire	Attitude Homophily	Background Homophily	Source Credibility
Business Professional	2.90	3.03	4.10
Casual	2.85	2.90	4.05

Case C

Students experiencing the lesson when the instructor dressed in business casual attire noted highest perceptions on all three constructs (see Table 5). The instructor received the lowest scores in both homophily constructs when dressed casually, but received the lowest source credibility scores when dressed in business professional attire. Effect sizes were calculated using partial eta squared; attitude homophily revealed a negligible effect size of .04, background homophily revealed a similarly negligible effect size of .09, and credibility revealed a slightly higher, yet still negligible effect size of .17.

Table 5

Mean Scores on Students' Perceptions of Guest Instructors' Attitude Homophily, Background Homophily, and Source Credibility for Each Treatment in Case C

Attire	Attitude Homophily	Background Homophily	Source Credibility
Business Professional	3.08	3.05	3.80
Business Casual	3.29	3.07	4.41
Casual	2.85	2.90	4.05

Case D

Students experiencing the lesson when the guest instructor wore business professional attire reported highest perceptions of attitude homophily and source credibility (see Table 6). However, students perceived the greatest background homophily with the guest instructor when she wore casual attire. Effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's *d*, and yielded small effect sizes for attitude homophily (.25) and credibility (.38), and a medium effect size for background homophily (.56).

Table 6

Mean Scores on Students' Perceptions of Guest Instructors' Attitude Homophily, Background Homophily, and Source Credibility for Each Treatment in Case D

Attire	Attitude Homophily	Background Homophily	Source Credibility
Business Professional	3.22	2.68	4.07
Casual	3.09	2.91	3.75

Conclusions and Recommendations

Within Case A and C, the guest instructor received highest scores in both forms of homophily when dressed in business casual attire. Within Case C, he was also viewed as most credible when wearing business casual attire. However, within Case A, he was viewed as most credible when wearing business professional attire, which supports previous studies that concluded more professional attire led to increased student perceptions of teacher credibility (Butler & Roesel, 1989; Carr et al., 2009; Lukavsky et al., 1995; Morris et al., 1996).

Case B included two separate groups; one taught students about ice cream production in Survey of Agriculture Classes, while the other taught students how to repair extension cords in Agricultural Mechanics classes. While these students had the same background elements influencing their expectations of agriculture teachers, their perceptions of the same guest instructor were opposite one another. Agricultural Mechanics students perceived the guest instructor as most like them in both background and attitude and most credible when he was dressed in casual attire. Alternately, the Survey of Agriculture students perceived the guest instructor as most like them in both areas of homophily and most credible when he was dressed in business professional attire. These findings suggest that as occupational roles shift, so do students' expectations of agriculture teachers' attire (Workman & Freeburg, 2010). Gordon (2010) recommended that teachers dress in a manner that displays the teacher's ability and willingness to participate in occupational practices; the findings herein support this recommendation.

Case D was the only one wherein students' perceptions of the guest instructor's attitude and background homophily differed. Business professional attire yielded the highest attitude homophily scores, while casual dress yielded the highest background homophily scores. Perceptions of credibility were found to be highest among students engaging with the instructor when he was dressed in business professional attire. While these findings, in part, support those of previous studies associating high credibility with professional attire (Burler & Roesel, 1989; Morris et al., 1996; Shoulders et al., 2017; Workman & Freeburg, 2010), students' differing perceptions of attitude and background homophily may imply that students feel they share similar values as the professionally-dressed agriculture teacher, but may not feel as though their backgrounds are like those of the credible agriculturalist. The theory of occupational aspirations posits that misalignment between one's self-concept and occupational image can cause elimination of the occupation as a career option (Gottfredson, 1981), suggesting these students may struggle to see themselves as capable of following in the occupational footsteps of their agriculture teacher.

Students perceptions in all three areas differed between cases, as did the effect sizes of each of the scores. These findings support the tenets of EVT; previous experiences with teachers in

school based agricultural education programs shape students' perceptions of what a credible agriculture teacher looks like (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). Therefore, teachers should carefully consider their attire, as they play a role in shaping students' perceptions of those within AFNR careers. Further, their attire can influence whether students perceive AFNR occupations as compatible with their own concepts of self (Gottfredson, 1981).

When offered as an option, business casual attire produced highest scores most frequently. Additionally, business casual attire allows teachers to reach a "middle ground" between professional and casual attire, both of which have been shown to elicit negative perceptions among students in differing areas, and allows teachers to participate in the classroom responsibilities of the teacher as well as the occupational tasks of the agriculturalist. Lastly, business professional attire aligns with societal expectations of professional or scientific agricultural careers. These conclusions lead to our most definitive recommendation: SBAE teachers should dress in business casual attire when the educational situation allows. While specific lessons within agricultural contexts will require sartorial exceptions, business casual attire provides an avenue through which students can see themselves as professional agriculturalists and teachers can be perceived as credible, without one sacrificing the other. Finally, consistency among agriculture teacher dress can lead to higher, more consistent expectations regarding agriculture teachers as professional educators.

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