

The Effect of Background and Clothing Design on Personal Attraction Evaluation

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I. Introduction

In the modern society, people can make themselves look more potent and lead personal relationship more efficiently by making our appearance more attractive. Lapitsky and Smith (1981) found out that an attractively dressed writer was evaluated to write a better essay than unattractively dressed one. They also found out that clothing plays a more significant role as a halo effect in evaluating persons when their works were considered less competent. An evaluation of the attractiveness of a person differs according to the clothing design such as clothing color and style of the wearer. However, the evaluation may differ according to the situation or background. Joo and Lee(1999) found out that the image of softness and liveliness of the wearer was perceived differently according to background.

The objectives of this study were to examine how personal attraction evaluation of women's appearance varies according to background, clothing style, and clothing color of object persons; and to disclose which image affects to attraction evaluation.

II. Method

The research method was a quasi-experimentation with a between-subjects design. The experimental design was $2 \times 2 \times 5$ (background \times clothing style \times clothing color) factorial design using 3 independent variables.

The stimuli were 20 women's photographs (15 \times 23cm) which were output by computer simulation. The types of clothing were suits and casual wears: jackets with tailored collar/skirts and sweat shirts/pants with cotton fabric. The upper-and-lower clothes of navy blue/navy blue, navy blue/beige, red/beige, beige/beige, and white/beige were used in clothing color variables. The color numbers in Munsell system were 2PB 3/6 (navy blue), 4YR 8.5/2 (beige), and 2R 4/12 (red). The corridor of school and the park background were used for the background vari-

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able. After taking photographs of a woman in her twenties, the stimuli had been changed into the color of clothing by using the CAD system.

The semantic differential scale was used to evaluate image of personal attraction, and it was composed of 13 items of seven point bipolar adjectives. The adjectives describing attractive females were selected from the result of the pilot study on 50 college women and from the items of the previous research(Lee & Kang, 1998; Joo & Lee, 1999; Darmhost, 1990). The selected items were attractive, feminine, intellectual, smart, lovely, individual, refined, soft, prominent, natural, neat, elegant, and confident image.

Subjects were 367 college women in the metropolitan area of Seoul. The questionnaire was composed of the items of semantic differential scale which evaluates personal attraction and the stimuli, the wearer of experimental clothing. The data were analyzed by computer processing with SPSS program. Analysis methods used were three-way ANOVA, Duncan's multiple range test, and multiple regression analysis.

III. Results

3-way ANOVA was executed to investigate the difference of personal attraction evaluation according to background, clothing style, and clothing color. Background gave a significant influence on evaluation of smart image. Women on the park background were perceived higher in smart image than on the school. Clothing styles gave significant influences on 11 image items except prominent and confident image. Suits were evaluated higher in attractive, feminine, intellectual, smart, refined, neat, elegant image than shirts/pants, and shirts/pants were higher in lovely, individual, soft, and natural image. Clothing colors gave significant influences on 8 images. The navy blue upper and lower dresses were perceived lower in attractive and lovely image and the red/beige dresses were higher in feminine and prominent image. The beige upper and lower dresses were evaluated higher in soft and natural image, white/beige were higher in intellectual, smart, neat, and confident image, and navy blue/beige dresses were higher in neat image.

Prominent image had an interaction effect by the background, clothing style, and clothing color. Lovely, individual, and elegant image had interaction effects by the background and clothing style. Shirts/pants were rated more lovely on the park background than on the school, and suits less individual on the school than on the park. Suits were rated more elegant on the school background than on the park, while shirts/pants more elegant on the park than on the school. There were significant intention effects in evaluation of feminine, smart, refined, neat, elegant image by background and clothing color. The navy blue upper and lower dresses and beige upper and lower dresses were perceived lower in smart image on the park background than on the school. This means that wearing the same color of upper and lower clothes on the park was evaluated negatively because it had formal impression. The beige upper and lower dresses and white/beige dresses were higher in refined image on the school background than on the park,

while the red/beige dresses were higher in refined image on the park than on the school.

To investigate the image items which had effects on the attraction evaluation of women's appearance., multiple regression analysis was executed including the dependent variable of attractive image and the independent variables of the other 12 image items. Refined, feminine, prominent, and elegant image had effects on the attraction evaluation. The explanatory power of the four variables was 39.5%. Refined image was perceived the most in evaluating women's attraction and feminine, prominent, and elegant image followed.

IV. Conclusion

The results of this study support that the evaluations of women's attraction differ according to the background and the clothing of object persons. Moreover, refined, prominent, feminine images were important in enhancing women's attractiveness. Wearing the same dark color of upper and lower clothes was found out to be less attractive. The clothing color of light value was positively evaluated at schools. Wearing different colors for the upper and lower casual clothes was found out to be more friendly in the outdoors such as parks. Since clothing style and clothing color interact with background, wearing appropriate clothes according to the situation or background is important in enhancing women's attractiveness.

References

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