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Clothing and Compliments

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INTRODUCTION

Compliments are the simplest, yet most effective form of positive social interaction, even when the two people interacting are meeting for the first time. People tend to perceive their compliments as being less valuable than what the receiver values their compliment as (Boothby & Bohns, 2020.)

Despite it being found that the art of complimenting is not a dying art (Perilloux, & Cloud, 2021) there seems to be a discrepancy in how people think about them.

We're looking at it through the aspect of clothing, researchers found (Gurney, et al, 2017) that people perceive aspects of an individual differently if they are wearing formal or casual clothing.

HYPOTHESIS

If a participant compliments an individual wearing casual clothing, then they will perceive their compliment as being less valuable as compared to formal clothing.

METHOD

Participant total: 41 Longwood students who signed up from Sona System

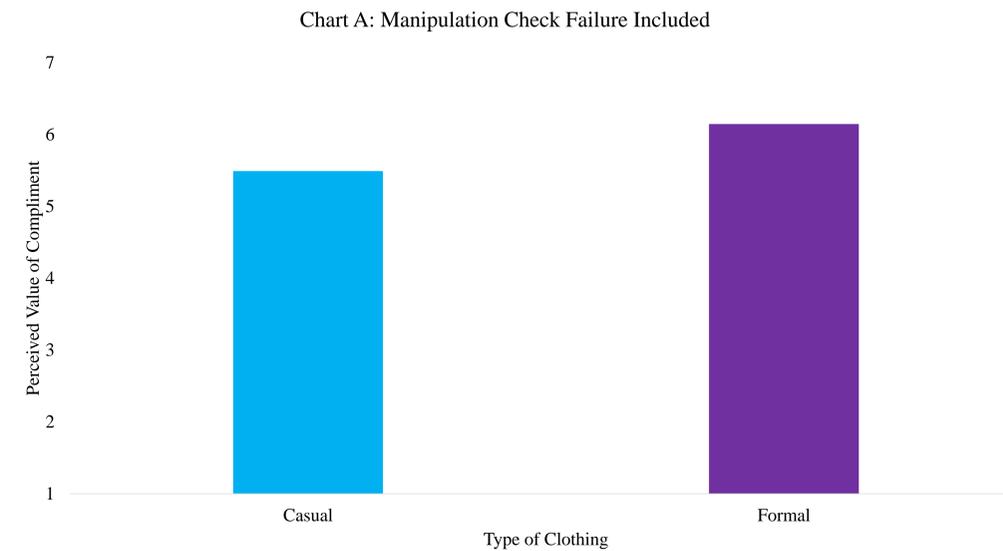
Participants would first receive a pre-survey. This survey asks for demographic information and consists of Likert scale questions (1-7) that ask how the participant thinks a compliment will make the person feel (how good, how pleased, and how flattered they would feel) (Boothby & Bohns, 2020.) They were then instructed to find and compliment the first person they see based on their clothing. A confederate waited in their path to receive a compliment wearing formal or casual clothing. The participant then returned to the testing area where they took the post-survey, with the same Likert scale questions of the first survey. There was also space at the bottom of the survey to briefly describe the attire the compliment-receiver was wearing. The confederate would message the researcher if they received the compliment from the individual or not and it was marked down on their survey.

Formal: Blue-White plaid shirt, black tie, and khaki pants

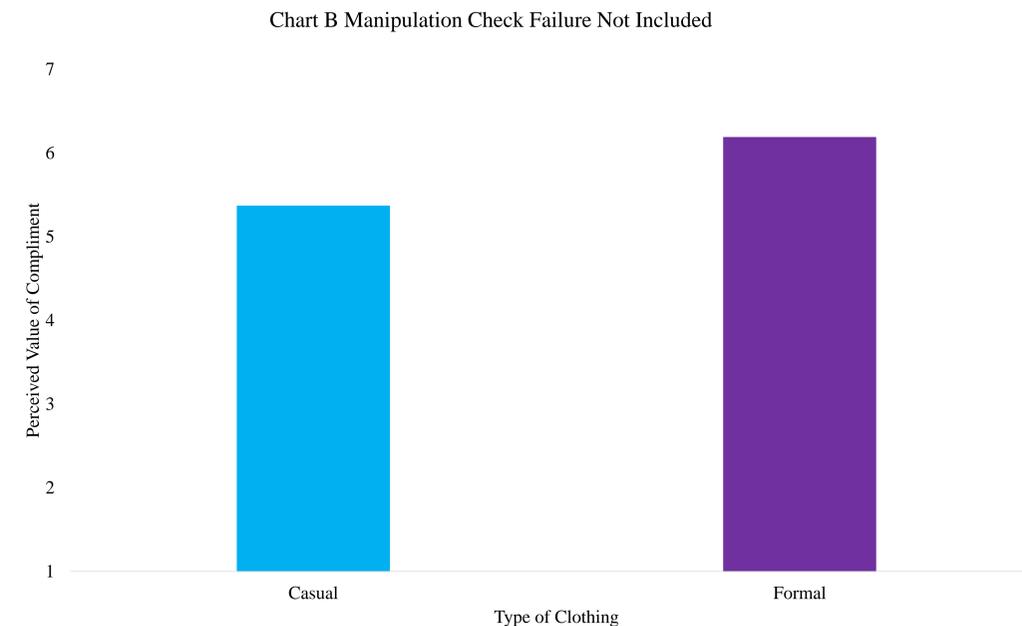
Casual: Black graphic t-shirt, blue jeans, and a grey wool beanie.

RESULTS

[Chart A] There was a significant difference in mean perceived value of compliments between the casual clothing and formal clothing. Independent Sample T-test: $t(1,39) = -2.17, p = 0.018$ with a large effect size of -0.681 .



This chart below [chart B] measures the data that only came from the participants that did not fail the manipulation check of complimenting the confederate. Independent Sample T-test: $t(1,26) = -2.53, p = 0.009$ with a large effect size of -0.998 .



DISCUSSION

Key Findings: The results support our hypothesis: participants would perceive their compliments as being less valuable to an individual wearing casual clothing. There was a difference in the perceived value of compliments based on the apparel of the individual receiving the compliments. Furthermore, participants who complimented the individual wearing casual clothing perceived their compliment as being less valuable.

Limitations:

-there was a limited number of participants.

-Many individuals failed the manipulation check and passed the confederate by completely forcing us to do an extra day of formal clothing test to make our data more even between the conditions.

-The procedure does not ensure that the individual correctly recalled clothing worn by a non-confederate individual.

Future Direction:

-Examining the roll of gender concurrently with that of clothing type. Does the gender of the individual complimented change the perceived value of the participants compliment?

-Examining if the time-of-day factors into it. Would a participant perceive their compliment as being more valuable during certain times of day?

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