

Dressing of Sri Lankan Female School Teachers and Their Job Performance

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Scrupulous attention is paid to the details of clothing at the workplace, where many organizations have strict rules and regulations regarding the dress codes of the employees. Previous studies show that the dress codes of the employees have an impact on professionalism, efficiency, productivity at work, communication, social distance, safety, economy and self-satisfaction. Nonetheless, the majority of these studies have been conducted in the western populations, whereas data in Asian countries, which have contrasting cultural norms to the western world, are sparse. Therefore, this study was catered to examine how clothing of Sri Lankan female school teachers affects their job performances. A mixed method integrating qualitative interviews and secondary data analysis along with quantitative data derived from a self-administrated questionnaire were used for the study. Quantitative data were obtained from 100 female school teachers from Kandy and Colombo districts in Sri Lanka while 15 in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain qualitative data. Results revealed that evolution and current practice of the dress of females were more into promote nationalism and culture. Though the current dress of Sri Lankan school teachers is the Saree/Abaya, the majority preferred to wear casual dresses (54%). Wilcoxon Signed Rank test showed that casual dress is significantly comfortable compared to their traditional dress ($p < 0.05$). There was a significant difference between efficiency in performing given four tasks wearing casual attire over traditional attire as per Wilcoxon Signed Rank test statistics ($p < 0.05$). Thirty percent of teachers in the sample have faced accidents due to their current dress. They suggested that they would be more productive in teaching and performing extra-curricular activities if they wear casual dresses. Hence, the findings of this study suggest that a change in the current dress of female school teachers into a more relaxing and a convenient one which is easy to maintain, wear and handle would help the teachers enliven their dynamic role while creating avenues for positive changes in the education sector in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Dress code; Job performances; female school teachers

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