

Impact of Dress Code Policy on Job Performance of Female Teachers in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Clothing plays a crucial role in any society as an indicator to reflect the personality, culture, subcultures, religions, occupations, and moral values of individuals. The debate between formal and informal dress codes in the labor market is being seriously deliberated by many scholars. Especially, teachers are subjected to such discussions, because a teacher is considered to be a role model to students. In addition, the dress of teachers may have different implications than other professions. Since the dress code replicates the set of principles in an organization comprised of professionalism, such policies should be more important and proactive. Recently, different parties in Sri Lanka confronted with controversial ideas regarding female teacher's dress codes. However, the existing policies were not reformed and did not considerably measure the relationship between job performance and employee attire by relevant authorities in Sri Lanka. Thus, to examine the soundness of the prevailing dress code policy, the study surveyed the positive and negative impacts on job performance that female teachers encounter due to the dress code policy in Sri Lanka. Further, the study identified certain best practices that could imply modernizing the existing traditional dress code policies. The study was carried out as a qualitative study using in-depth interviews with individuals and group discussions. Fifteen participants were selected as the sample based on the judgmental sampling method while thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected data. Based on the results of interviews, three themes were discussed as the outcomes of the study including the effect of attire on professionalism, school culture and professional attire, and the challenges of wearing professional attire. The study emphasized the importance of adjusting the existing dress code policy for female teachers in Sri Lanka by adhering to the challenges of job performance by the attire.

Keywords: Dress code policy, Female teachers, Job performance, Professional attire