

A Study on the Stereotype of Clothing Implied in the Expression, "-like"

Myung-Sook Han

Department of Clothing and Textiles, Sangmyung University, Korea

There is an expression, "-like", among the expressions frequently used in Korean culture. When this suffix, "-like", is added to the noun, it generally conveys the conventional idea of that particular noun. When it is related to clothing, there are expressions as "-like clothes" and "-like look"; when associated with the occupation, it is expressed such as "a student-like clothes" or "a teacher-like look." Thus, it represents the symbol of the occupational role that requires or recommends the form of garment appropriate for each profession.

Some specific garments are often related to the social background, and the garment plays an important role in the social structure. A social role changes constantly from birth to death. When one's social position or status changes, the appearance of that person, such as one's style of clothes or hair, changes as well. Since the "role" refers to the position that takes place in social relationships, and the social behavior is related to clothing, the "clothing" often functions as the symbol of different roles in society.

This research examines the attributes of the Korean clothing culture inherent in the expression of "-like" by focusing on the professional roles implied in the style of clothes. Among the various occupations, the profession of teaching was selected for the research since it is the vocation mostly affected by the stereotype of society. For the same reason, the social role of the students and their style of clothes were observed as well. Under the assumption that expectations for garment would differ by gender, each inquiry of the survey contained the four categories. They are the following: "female teacher-like", "male teacher-like", "female student-like", and "male student-like."

Based on a random sampling, the sample was comprised of 400 male and female college students who reside in Seoul and Gyeonggi area. Among the collected questionnaires, 315 copies were adopted for analysis after excluding 85 copies that lacked data.

The detail of garment determines its style. For this research, the shape, the length of sleeve, and the type of color were included for the upper garment category, and the shape and the length for both skirts and pants were examined for the lower garment. To eliminate the emotional aspects from the design, the black and white diagrams were illustrated by the CAD programs. And since the effect of color can vary depending on the design, there was no indication of design in the section for the color of garment. The 11 basic colors of the Berlin and Key, such as black, white, red, yellow, green, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange and gray, were adopted for this section. The colors that marked the high level of preference and possession from the research on the preference level of garment colors were added to the list to reflect the popular colors among the consumers. The corresponding colors were grouped together to avoid the conflict from the other color shades.

The 5-point rating scale was used for the survey. The people were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being the "least teacher-like" or the "least student-like" and 5 for the "most student or teacher like."

The statistical analysis of SPSS 10.0T was applied in analyzing the data, and significant variances were reviewed by the basic statistics, multi-variate analysis and T-test. The results are as follows:

1. For the upper garment, the statistics showed the significant difference of .05 between the male and the female students in all the clothes types except for jackets and T-shirts. As for the "female teacher-like" upper garments, the female students selected the blouse and the cardigan, and the male students preferred the blouse. The female students recognized the jackets and the Y-shirts as the "male teacher-like" upper wear while the male students picked the Y-shirts for this category. Both male and female students preferred the blouse as the most "female student-like" upper wear. The female students also recognized the cardigan for this category, but the male students had negative responses about it. As for the "male student-like" category, both male and female students positively selected the Y-shirts.
2. The significant difference of .05 between the group of male students and the group of female students was indicated in all types of sleeve length. The female students recognized the three-quarter length as the most "female teacher-like" whereas the male students responded negatively on this. Both male and female students responded that the sleeveless and the cap sleeves are not "teacher-like" sleeve lengths for male teachers. For the "student-like" sleeve length, the female students selected the cap sleeves and the short sleeves for the female and selected the short sleeves and the long sleeves for the male. The male students preferred the short sleeves and the elbow length as the "male student-like" styles.
3. For the collars, all types, except for the stand collars, indicated the significant difference of .01. Both male and female students selected the round, the shirt, the tailored and the bow collars as the styles for female teachers. Both male and female students agreed that the short collars are appropriate for male teachers. The female students also responded positively for the Henley collars for this category while the male students were negative about it. Both male and female students considered the round, the bow and the ruffled collars to be improper styles for male teachers. Both male and female students preferred the round and the tailored collars for the "female student-like" category and selected the shirt collars as the most "male student-like" style.
4. For the skirts, all types except for the mermaid, the flared and the wrap skirts showed the significant difference of .05. And for the length of skirts, all styles, except for the below-knee length, also indicated the same results. For the type of skirts, both male and female students picked the tight skirts and the A-line skirts for the "female teacher-like" category. Both male and female students perceived the A-line and the flared skirts as the "female student-like" dresses. The flared skirts were highly preferred by the female students. Both male and female students considered the wrap skirts as inappropriate clothes for female students. The female students objected more strongly on this. For the lengths of skirts, both male and female students agreed that the above-knee, the below-knee, the midi and the maxi length were all proper for female teachers. However, the female students objected strongly against the micro and the mini length for female teachers. Both

male and female students considered the above-knee length and the below-knee length as the proper "female student-like" styles.

5. The statistics indicated the significant difference of .01 in all types of pants with the exception of the slim pants. And for the length of pants, all styles except for bermuda and deck showed the difference of .05. Both male and female students responded that string pants and overalls are not appropriate for female teachers. The wide pants and the trumpet style were selected to be inappropriate designs for male teachers. Both male and female students considered the jeans as the positive "female student-like" pants. Both male and female students had negative responses for the wide and trumpet style for the "male student-like" category. For the length of pants, both male and female students selected the gauchos as the most "female teacher-like" style and showed negative responses for the bikini style. The bikini length was also selected as an inappropriate length for male teachers. The female students responded more strongly on this than the male students.

6. As for the color of clothes, the significant difference of .01. was generated for all the colors except for grey, 5YR 4/12 and 5YR 1/4. Both male and female students selected black and 5Y 5/6 as the preferred colors for female teachers. The color, 5PB 1/4, received the positive responses by the female students only, and the colors, 5G 3/8 and 5GY 7/6, were preferred by the male students only. Both male and female students selected 5PB 1/4, 5PB 7/4 and 5B 3/8 as the colors for male teachers. The colors such as 5R 3/14, 5RP 3/8, 5P 3/10 and 5P 6/6 were selected as the most unlikely to be the representing colors for male teachers. Both male and female students chose white and 5Y 7/14 as the most "female student-like" colors. Both male and female students picked the colors, 5PB 1/4, 5PB 7/4 and 5B 3/8, as the "male student-like" colors.