

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRESS
CONFORMITY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF TENTH
GRADE STUDENTS IN A METROPOLITAN HIGH SCHOOL

By

RUTH E. WARREN

Bachelor of Science

Wheaton College

Wheaton, Illinois

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Thesis Approved:

Orville H. Kelly

Thesis Adviser

James Jackson

Broualyne Sides

D. Durbin

Dean of the Graduate College

803780

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Current national discussion is focused on the actions and goals of American youth. One question that is relevant is whether or not a transformation of attitudes and values is developing. Indications of such a transformation, particularly toward education, have been noted. Some of the factors which have received the greatest attention have been the shifts in music preference, clothing styles, and life styles. The new student activism which is epitomized by student revolt such as occurred at the University of California, Berkeley and Kent State has encouraged further studies of modern youth.

The importance of clothing as a means of expressing socio-psychological change has been documented.¹ Roach and Eicher contribute this observation about the use of clothing:

. . . through dress one may express group affiliation or the values and standards of the group. In an expressive sense, therefore, clothing divulges something about each human being—his beliefs, his sentiments, his status and rank, his place within the power structure. Hence where he fits into his society and how he relates to others composing it.²

¹Mary Shaw Ryan, Clothing: A Study in Human Behavior (New York, 1966), p. 2.

Mildred Thurow Tate and Oris Glisson, Family Clothing (New York, 1961), p. 20.

²Mary Ellen Roach and Joanne Bubolz Eicher, eds., Dress Adornment and the Social Order (New York, 1965), p. 6.

Charles A. Reich, in his recent explosive social commentary, The Greening of America, states:

The [new youth] culture is so expansive and varied that we must be selective; we shall deal with several major elements in some detail: clothes, career, music, community and consciousness. There are other elements, and it is all in a process of rapid change and development but these will suggest the nature of what is being sought.

A good place to begin is clothes, for the dress of the new generation expresses a number of the major themes of Consciousness III in a very vivid and immediate way.³

In stressing the social importance of changes in dress, Eicher and Roach have hypothesized:

Changes in fundamental or enduring modes of dress in a society are indicative of changes in the social roles and self-concepts of members of that society.⁴

In recent years there has been a drastic change in the clothing worn by urban high school students. Many schools have relaxed their dress codes and have only one or two minimal requirements for dress. In discussing this issue Dr. Jesse B. Lindley, an assistant superintendent in the Oklahoma City public school system asserted that Oklahoma City's schools have, ". . . changed their dress code to reflect the times in which we live."⁵

The superintendent of the Enid school system, O.T. Autry, remarked concerning the change in their policy toward dress standards: "Every school system has tried to take a look at itself (in light of

³Charles A. Reich, The Greening of America (New York, 1970), p. 234.

⁴Roach and Eicher, p. 67

⁵The Sunday Oklahoman, December 13, 1970, p. 28.

continuing campus unrest) and we find ourselves loosening up on some things."⁶

The clothing behavior of the young has always been a source of conflict between generations. Many feel that the adoption of unusual new cultural forms by youth is a reflection of their efforts to achieve independence and their search for autonomy and identity. James Jupp speaks of today's youth culture as "Relatively harmless and even beneficial."⁷

Some adults feel that the trends in dress exhibited by today's high school generation imitate the dress pattern of the more radical youth or "hippie" movements and symbolize the rejection of "establishment values" by these high school age youths. Adults often condemn a student who is dressed in the new style. To achieve some understanding of today's youth, adults must study students' dress patterns as they relate to the important cultural goal of educational achievement.

The Problem

A common measure of a student's academic potential is the Intelligence Quotient (IQ). The Grade Point Average (GPA) of a student is the indicator of his actual achievement. When these two factors correlate, the student can be defined as an "achiever" by accepted socio-psychological measures. If these factors do not correlate, the question arises as to what extent this "underachievement" is related

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ James Jupp, "The Discontents of Youth," Political Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec. 1969), p. 416.

to peer identification, rejection of "establishment values" and "teen-age rebellion." The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between dress conformity and academic achievement of tenth grade students in a metropolitan high school.

Limitations

The sample was limited to tenth grade boys and girls in one metropolitan high school. Findings should not be generalized to other high schools or to other age groups.

The study was limited in the number of times the dress of students was observed. Because of the subjective nature of the instrument used to collect and record data its reliability needs to be tested further.

Some students enrolled in the high school were not represented in this study. These included perennially absent students, those students who had recently transferred into the school system and whose records were incomplete, and students who were temporarily expelled or absent due to sickness.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were basic to this study:

1. A major goal of education and the socialization process is the development of intellectual values.
2. Academic achievers are committed to academic involvement as measured by Grade Point Average.
3. The subgroups studied were representative of tenth grade students.

Definition of Terms

Achiever. A student with a positive correlation between his Intelligence Quotient and Grade Point Average.

Correlation. The degree of relationship between two variables.

Culture. A system of shared meanings including habits, norms, attitudes, values, and symbols.

Establishment. Permanently organized systems such as the economic institutions, government, education, religion and family.

Grade Point Average. The total accumulated grade points divided by the total credits attempted. Highest possible was 4.0 and the lowest possible was zero. The abbreviation GPA is used throughout this report.

Intelligence Quotient. A number held to express the relative intelligence of a person determined by dividing his mental age by his chronological age and multiplying by 100. The abbreviation IQ is used throughout this report.

Social System. The action and interaction of individuals with differentiated roles within definable environmental limits.

Subculture. The normative system of a group smaller than a society which differs from that society in values, behavior, and "life style."

Youth. Boys and girls of high school and college age.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

In recent years the western world has been experiencing the creation of a revolutionary youth subculture that rejects the values of the adult world. Traditionally there has always been a small Bohemian element but this element has grown rapidly during the last few years.

Arnold Toynbee, a noted historian, has observed this change in the youth of the United States:

I have been visiting the United States since 1925. Before my latest visit I had been absent for two years, and I came away with the impression that in these two years there has been more change in American life than in all previous years.

During those forty years I had been watching the so-called "American way of life" (i.e. the urban middle-class business-men's way of life) going from strength to strength. Since the Second World War the affluence that is the product and pride of this way of life had spread downward till it had come to be shared by perhaps four-fifths of the American people

Today this hitherto triumphant way of life is being repudiated in the United States itself—and this in an unexpected quarter: not among the "underprivileged" (who are now also in revolt), but among the children of parents whose personal and family histories have been "success stories." This is the revolt of the affluent-born against their parents' ideal—the ideal of affluence won by working hard with the object of making money rather than for the sake of the works' intrinsic value. It is also a revolt against the power that wealth brings, and against the ruthless use of this power, in economic

competition, and in war, to preserve the privileges of the privileged.⁸

This group of young people cannot be dismissed. They are increasingly visible because of their new and unique dress style and because they have reacted so violently to the organized system.

Charles A. Reich is lucid on the change in philosophy of these youth:

In terms of their own lives, Consciousness III. people simply do not imagine a career along the old vertical escalator lines. It is not especially important to get into a particular university, or to make a good record when there, or to get a good job afterwards. They are not planning to get anything "settled." They conceive of life as a whole series of goals and choices, and a career as something that will be constantly changing. Whether a young man goes to one college or another, or into one occupation or another, is not the all-important decision his parents think it is; all choices are the "right" choice (for all lead outward) and a career comprises the many different experiences, some planned, some fortuitous, that one might have. Instead of intense, ambitious concentration, one can relax and see what happens. The world is the way Arlo Guthrie described it in "Alice's Restaurant": illogical and improbable.⁹

In a comprehensive study of the Berkeley non-student population, William A. Watts and David Whittaker state that while the nonconforming youth are diverse in many respects, they do have one theme in common, the rejection of some of the dominant cultural values, in particular achievement orientation.¹⁰

These nonconforming individuals have adopted a different pattern

⁸ Arnold J. Toynbee, "As It Was in Rome . . .," Horizon, Spring 1968, Vol. X, No. 2, p. 26.

⁹ Reich, p. 240.

¹⁰ William A. Watts and David Whittaker, "Profile of a Nonconformist Youth Culture: A Study of the Berkeley Non-Students," Sociology of Education, Spring 1968, Vol. 41, p. 178.

of dress in response to their values and the means they have chosen to achieve these values:

The most obvious characteristic that tends to differentiate the non-students from members of the student body or conventional working youth is their general appearance. Using objective criteria, with independent judges in almost complete agreement, 82 percent of the non-student males and 88 percent of the females were classified as unconventional in personal appearance. Naturally, this is not to imply that an exotic or unconventional effect is unique to the non-students since the most casual observation of the Berkeley student body would dispel any such notion. However, the incidence of such nonconventionality among the students is much less by comparison, reaching only 19 percent in the male sample and 24 percent among the females. These differences in proportions for the students and non-students are, of course, highly significant.¹¹

There has been little attention given to the study of this new subculture's effect on the high school student. Adolescence is a time of great change. It is a period of great vulnerability for the society for during this period the values of the culture must be assimilated.

As its members go through this phase in their lives, the survival of the society requires that most of them should gain a certain basis of knowledge and social values, as well as certain intellectual and social skills.¹²

X A number of sociologists have described this process of socialization. In a small, slowly changing society the process of socialization can be accomplished through the home, church, and community. In our modern, complex society which is rapidly changing, the educational

¹¹Watts and Whittaker, p. 182.

¹²Barry Sugarman, "Involvement in Youth Culture, Academic Achievement and Conformity in School," British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 18, No. 2 (June 1967), p. 151.

system becomes increasingly important.

Academic Achievement

Career success depends to an ever-increasing extent on educational attainment. To acquire employment, children, regardless of their background, must receive an education. Parsons asserts:

What then of the connection between education and future occupational role? Again there would seem to be no doubt about one major trend: That entrance to the higher occupational role-levels has been becoming increasingly dependent on educational qualifications. The myth about the superior virtues of the "school of hard knocks" attended by the man without "book learning" still lingers and will doubtless be with us for a long time, but the facts of the realistic structure of opportunity do not bear the myth out.¹³

One of the best means of predicting a person's potential for future occupational success is his academic achievement. The importance of academic achievement cannot be overemphasized. Parsons cites two kinds of evidence:

First, a study of four thousand high-school boys in the Metropolitan Boston, area, by Samuel Stouffer, Florence R. Kluckhohn, and Talcott Parsons, has shown unmistakably that the overwhelmingly predominant criterion of selection between those who do and do not go to college is the academic record of the pupil in school performance. It is interesting that that decision focuses primarily on entrance into the college preparatory course in senior high school (under New England conditions), and that it is made on the basis of achievement in primary school and the first year

The second type of evidence we have in mind concerns the process of selection operating between the college and the various graduate and professional schools. Here it seems to be abundantly clear that academic

¹³Talcott Parsons, Social Structure and Personality (Glencoe, Ill., 1964), p. 210.

achievement counts very heavily indeed.¹⁴

Studies of the High School

In the United States the high school youth has had his own subculture for many years. As early as 1941 Parsons noted in a study that a youth culture existed that was in conflict with those by adults.¹⁵

Gordon studied the social system of a midwestern high school. He based his findings on case studies of 576 students. He focused on three subsystems of school organization: (1) the formal organization with its emphasis on academic achievement, (2) the student's organizations with their emphasis on extracurricular activities, and (3) interpersonal relations and its emphasis on friendship choices. His findings revealed that the dominant motivation developed from the informal organizations rather than the formal high school organization.¹⁶

Coleman made a comprehensive study of ten high schools. He found in these schools a separate and distinct adolescent subculture with distinct values, norms, and attitudes. Good grades were not a qualification for being a member of the leading crowd in any of the schools studied. The most important requirement for popularity was to be an important member of the informal system.¹⁷

¹⁴Ibid., p. 211.

¹⁵Talcott Parsons, The Social System. (Glencoe, Illinois, 1951), p. 5.

¹⁶G. Wayne Gordon, The Social System of a High School: A Study in the Sociology of Adolescence (Glencoe, Illinois, 1957).

¹⁷James S. Coleman, The Adolescent Society (Glencoe, Illinois, 1961).

Adolescent researchers generally agree that this distinct youth subculture has been established to assert independence from adults, and to establish identity. Some social researchers feel that they do not reject adult values. Offer in a study of adolescents says:

Our findings in this respect agree with some of the reports in the recent social-psychological literature (Keriston, 1962; Douban and Adelson, 1966) which state that adolescents of this generation do not rebel against the entrenched important values of the parents' generation.

If the adolescent rebellion that we have observed is essentially independent of acceptance or rejection of parental values, than what is its main function? We see the main function of adolescent rebellion for our subjects as serving to initiate or reinforce a process that leads to emancipation from the parental objects.¹⁸

Symbolic Nature of Clothing



Current popular literature has stressed the symbolic and ideologic nature of the new "mod" clothes. Reich feels that these new clothes are an expression of a whole new emerging pattern, "a change of consciousness."¹⁹ It is of interest to note what Reich believes is expressed in the new clothes:

The first impression the clothes give is of uniformity and conformity—as if everyone felt obliged to adopt the same style. We shall try to show that this is an erroneous impression—that there is agreement on certain principles, but great individuality with those principles. Another first impression is of drabness—browns, greens, blue jeans. This is an accurate observation and for a reason. They are a deliberate rejection of the neon colors and plastic, artificial look of the affluent society. They are inexpensive to buy, inexpensive to

¹⁸Daniel Offer, The Psychological World of the Teen Ager (New York, 1969), p. 186-187.

¹⁹Reich, p. 5.

maintain. They suggest that neither individuality nor distinction can be bought in a clothing store; clothes are primarily functional. The clothes are earthy and sensual. They express an affinity with nature . . . And the clothes have a functional affinity with nature too; they don't show dirt, they are good for lying on the ground.

These clothes express freedom . . . The new clothes give the wearer freedom to do anything he wants.

The freedom of new clothes expresses a second principle as well; a wholeness of self, as against the schizophrenia of Consciousness II. There is not one set of clothes for the office, another for social life, a third for play. The same clothes can be used for every imaginable activity and so they say, it is the same person doing each of these things, not a set of different masks or dolls, but one many-sided, whole individual.

The new clothes express profoundly democratic values. There are no distinctions of wealth or status, no elitism; people confront one another shorn of these distinctions.

In places where status or money is important, clothes tell the story. On Wall Street, one can tell the banker or lawyer from the mere employee by the expensive, tasteful suit . . . The new clothes deny the importance of hierarchy, status, authority, position, and they reject competition.²⁰

Clothing as a Means of Differentiation

Clothing because of ease in changing, portability, and visibility serves as a primary medium for group and individual differentiation. (It is one of the most significant non-verbal elements of social expression. This means of expression becomes increasingly important in a large, urban population where close, personal, verbal interaction is difficult.)

²⁰Reich, pp. 234-238.

Clothing was used to set apart the royalty and aristocracy until the French Revolution. Vance Packard noted that, "Historically clothing has been one of the most convenient and visible vehicles known for drawing class distinction."²¹

Veblen in his book, The Theory of the Leisure Class, observed that clothing has always been used by the elite to express their unique role in the community.²²

Rosencranz developed a Clothing Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) as a technique to analyze clothing symbols, clothing awareness, and the shades of meaning associated with clothing behavior. She studied the degree that clothing was used in identifying the role and status of an unknown person. She found that one-fourth of the remarks made in reference to the social situation referred to clothing.²³

The importance of clothing as a means of rating unknown men was validated in an experiment by Hoult. He found that these ratings changed according to the clothing worn by the individuals who were rated.²⁴

Clothing as an Index of Cultural Change

²¹Vance Packard, The Status Seekers (New York, 1959), p. 131.

²²Thorstein Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class (New York, 1899).

²³Mary Lou Rosencranz, "The Application of a Projection Technique for Analyzing Clothing Behavior," (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1960).

²⁴T. F. Hoult, "Experimental Measurement of Clothing as a Factor in Some Social Ratings of Selected American Men," American Sociological Review, Vol. 19 (June 1954), pp. 324-248.

Clothing as an index of cultural change is evident although research in this area is limited. Bush and London state:

Changes over a period of time, in the clothing of any subgroup of a society, may reflect changes both in the role attached to that group by society, and its corollary, the self-concepts of the individuals composing the groups.²⁵

Roach and Eicher comment:

Since the social order proceeds through time, clothing, a material facility, may reflect change or stability in the society's nonmaterial aspects.²⁶

Blumer in his analysis of fashion shows how fashion responds to change:

Fashion is always modern, it always seeks to keep abreast of the time. It is sensitive to the movement of current developments as they take place in its own field, in adjacent fields, and in the larger social world . . . fashion is responsive . . . to political happenings, and to major social shifts such as the emancipation of women or the rise of the cult of youth.²⁷

Clothing has been an important means of analyzing the changes in a particular social system. Changes in values and goals are reflected and expressed through clothing. Youth have always expressed their distinct and separate subculture by their unique dress. Although youth have a distinct subculture, research has found that in basic values they follow the pattern of their parents. In recent years, though, there has been growing fear that youth are changing and are

²⁵George Bush and Perry London, "On the Disappearance of Knickers," Journal of Social Psychology, Vol. 51 (May 1960), p. 361.

²⁶Roach and Eicher, p. 2.

²⁷Hubert Blumer, "Fashion: From Class Differentiation to Collective Selection," Sociological Quarterly, Vol. X (Summer 1969), p. 283.

rejecting the values of adults. Research has confirmed this trend among college age youth who dress in a distinctive "mod" or "hippie" fashion but little research of this nature has been done on the high school level.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

Development of Checklist

The data collection instrument developed by the researcher to determine degree of conformity to the prevailing mode of dress in the high school studied was an eleven point check list. Items included were hair, clothes, jewelry, accessories, and other significant articles. (See Appendix A).

The peer dress pattern was identified by consulting with two student leaders chosen by the journalism teacher. The researcher and the two student leaders worked together to establish a consistency in check list ratings by scoring students in a journalism class. As each student was scored comparisons were made and scoring discrepancies discussed. This process continued until agreement on ratings was obtained.

Permanent Pupil Records

The permanent pupil records maintained by the school were used to obtain the IQ and GPA of the students sampled. These scores were used to identify academic achievers and non-achievers.

Selection of Sample

The sample studied was 202 (95 girls and 107 boys) tenth grade

students in a metropolitan high school located in Oklahoma City. The assistant principal selected the three social studies classes and three English classes in which the observations were made.

Collection of Data

The researcher observed the selected classes on three different days during the months of March and April 1971. Students observed only once were eliminated from the study. Identification of students was made from a seating chart supplied by the teacher. The dress of each student was indicated by the check list on each day of observation. Average scores for each student were computed. The total number of scores was divided by the number of days observed.

$$\text{Average score} = \frac{\text{Total student score}}{\text{Number of observations}}$$

The possible range of scores was zero to twelve. Students considered "conformists" in dress had average scores of zero through three while the "nonconformists" had average scores of four or more.

The Intelligence Quotient and Grade Point Average of each student were obtained from school records. A school psychologist was consulted concerning use of IQ and GPA. The following guidelines were established and used in analyzing the data. A person of superior intelligence (IQ 120 and above) was considered in this study to be capable of obtaining a GPA between 3.5 and 4.0; bright normal person (IQ 110-120) was considered to be capable of obtaining a GPA between 2.5 and 3.5; a normal person (IQ 90-110) was considered to be capable of obtaining a GPA between 1.5 and 2.5; a low normal person (IQ 80-90) was considered to be capable of obtaining a GPA between .2 - 1.2; a low

person (IQ 80 and below) was expected to have a GPA between 0 -.5. Those whose GPA and IQ correlated positively, for example, those whose GPA and IQ were in the expected ranges or higher were categorized as "achievers" and all others were categorized as "non-achievers."

Treatment of Data

Simple numerical computations based on percentages and the chi-square test were used to analyze the data. From these computations the students were placed in one of four groups and these groups were further subdivided by sex. The following groups were made: conformist/achievers; conformist/non-achievers; nonconformist/achievers; nonconformist/non-achievers.

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS, AND ANALYSIS

Findings

All tenth grade students were first placed into one of two groups depending on their conformity or nonconformity to prevailing dress patterns of their peers. This initial distribution was found to include 170 conformists (84.2 percent) and 32 nonconformists (15.8 percent). (Figure 1.)

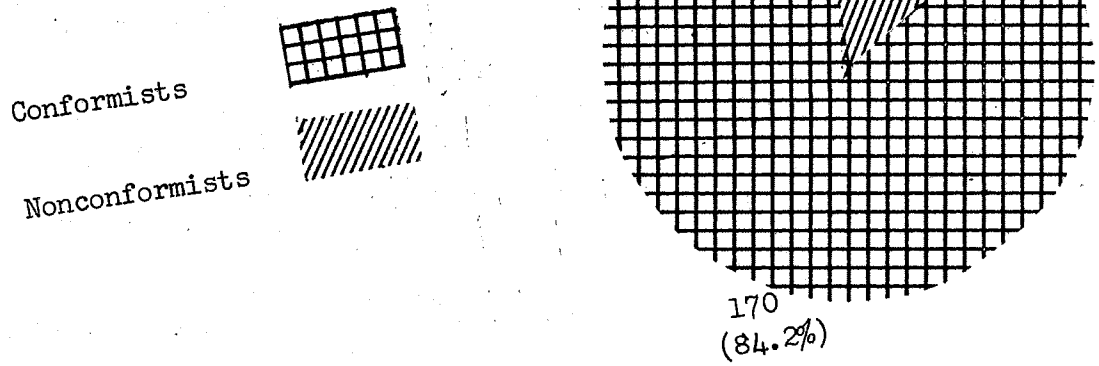


Figure 1. Dress Conformity Distribution of Total Sample.

The conformist/nonconformist groups were subdivided by sex. Findings revealed that 82 (48 percent) of conformist group were boys; eighty-eight (52 percent) of conformist group were girls. Twenty-five (78 percent) of the nonconformist group were boys; seven (22 percent) of nonconformist group were girls. (Figure 2.)

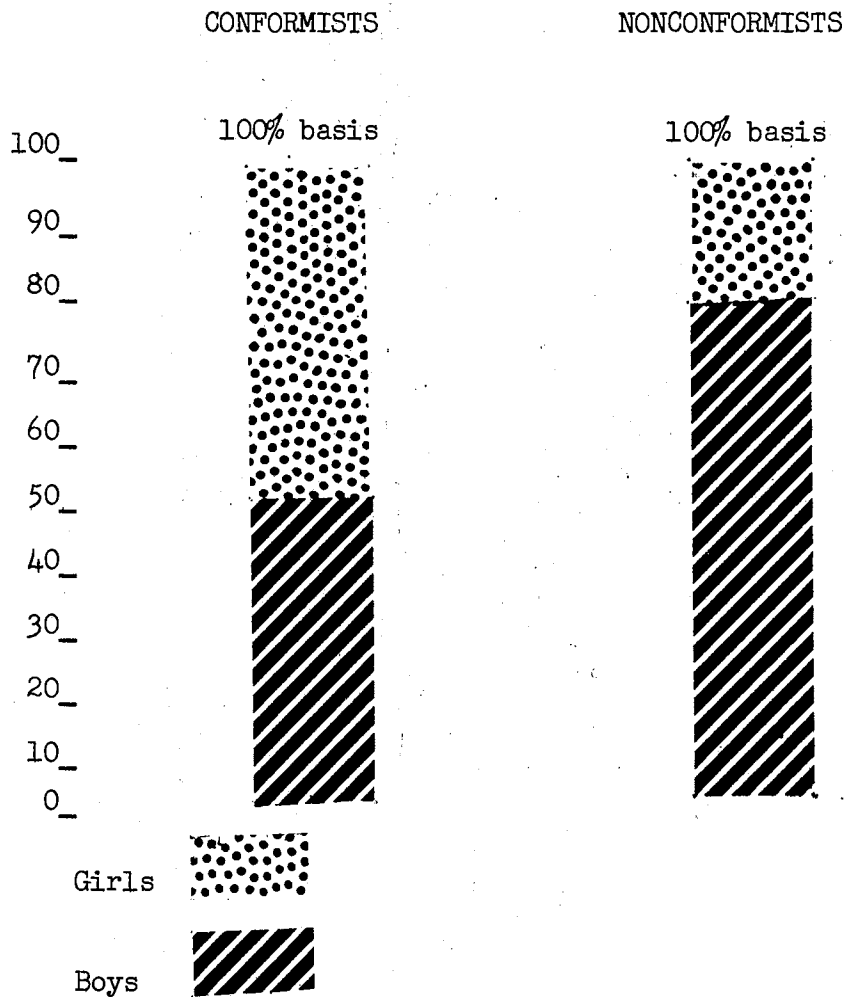
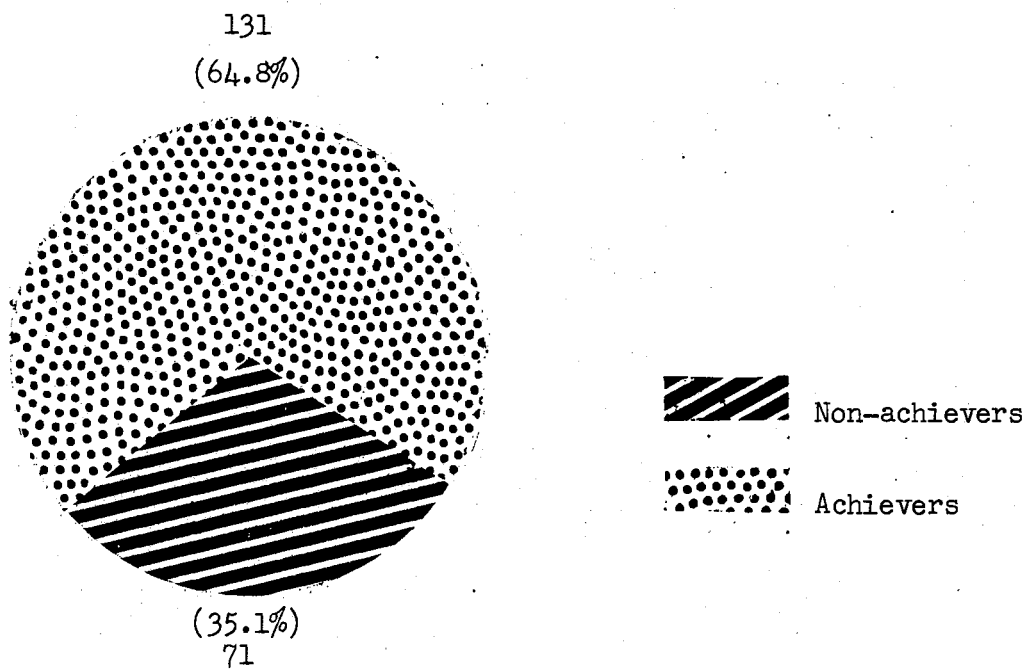


Figure 2. Comparison of Nonconformist/Conformist Groups by Sex.

A second major classification was made on the basis of academic achievement as indicated by IQ and GPA. This grouping included 131 achievers (64.8 percent) and 71 (35.1 percent) non-achievers.

(Figure 3.)



N = 202

Figure 3. Academic Achievement Distribution of Total Sample.

The achiever/non-achiever groups were subdivided by sex. Findings revealed that 46 (65 percent) of the non-achievers were boys; twenty-five (35 percent) of the non-achievers were girls. In the achiever group 61 (46 percent) were boys; seventy (54 percent) were girls. (Figure 4.)

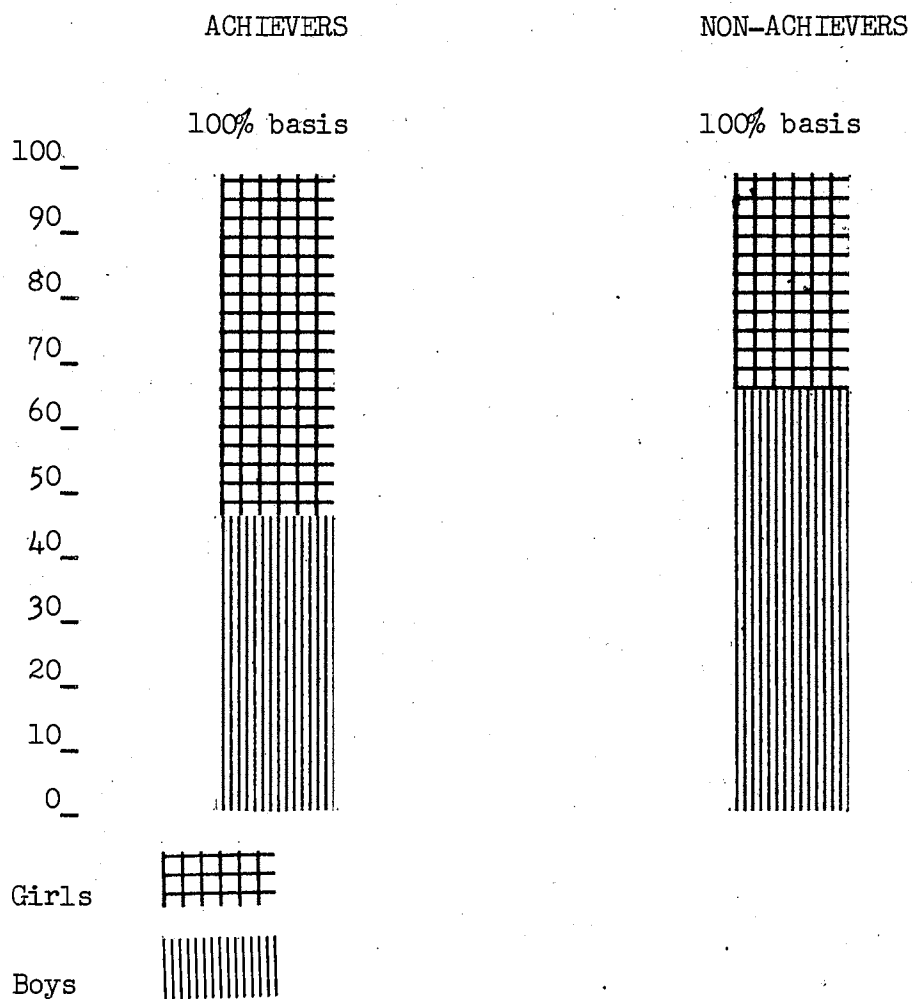


Figure 4. Comparison of Achievers/Non-achievers by Sex.

All students who participated in the study were placed in one of four distinct groups based on dress conformity and academic achievement. These four groups were (1) conformists/achievers, (2) conformists/non-achievers, (3) nonconformists/achievers, and (4) nonconformists/non-achievers.

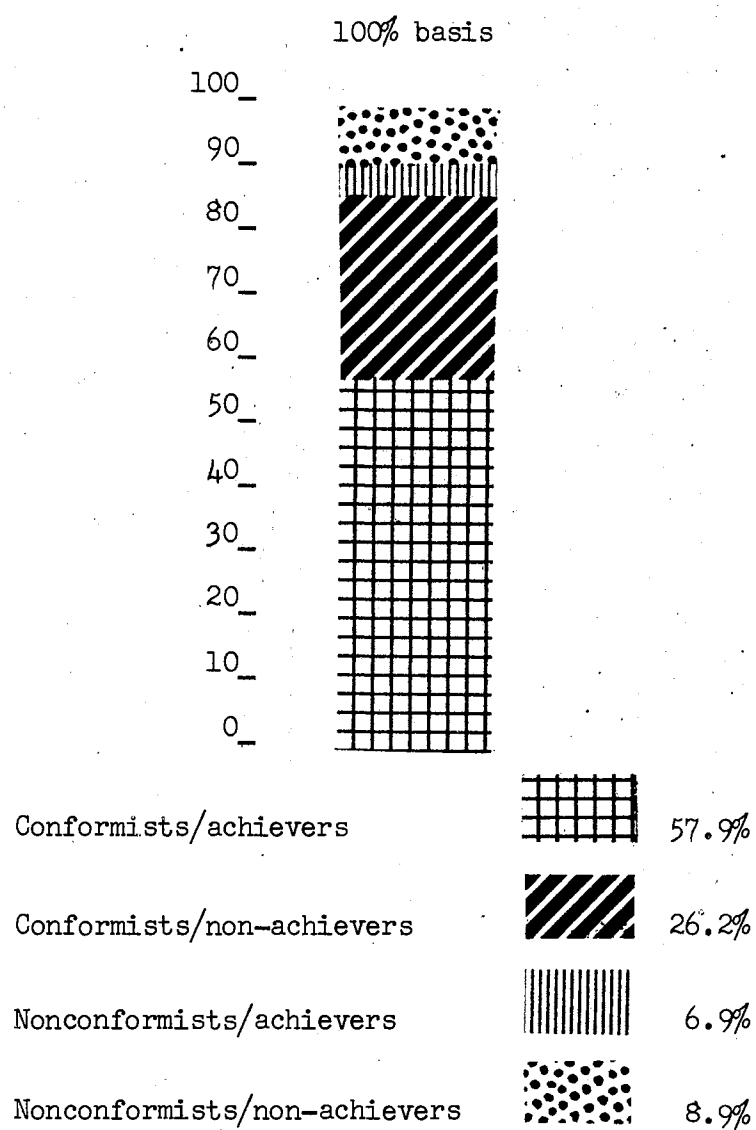


Figure 5. Percentage Distribution of Total Sample by Dress Conformity and Academic Achievement.

A comparison was made of achievement and non-achievement of boy and girl conformists and nonconformists. The 82 boys in the conformist group consisted of thirty non-achievers (36.6 percent) and 52 achievers (63.4 percent). The girls' conformist group was composed of 88 students, twenty-three non-achievers (26.1 percent) and 65 achievers (73.9 percent). The boys' nonconformist group was composed of 25, sixteen non-achievers (64 percent) and 9 achievers (36 percent). The girls' nonconformist group was composed of seven students, two non-achievers (17.8 percent) and five achievers (71.4 percent). (Figure 6.)

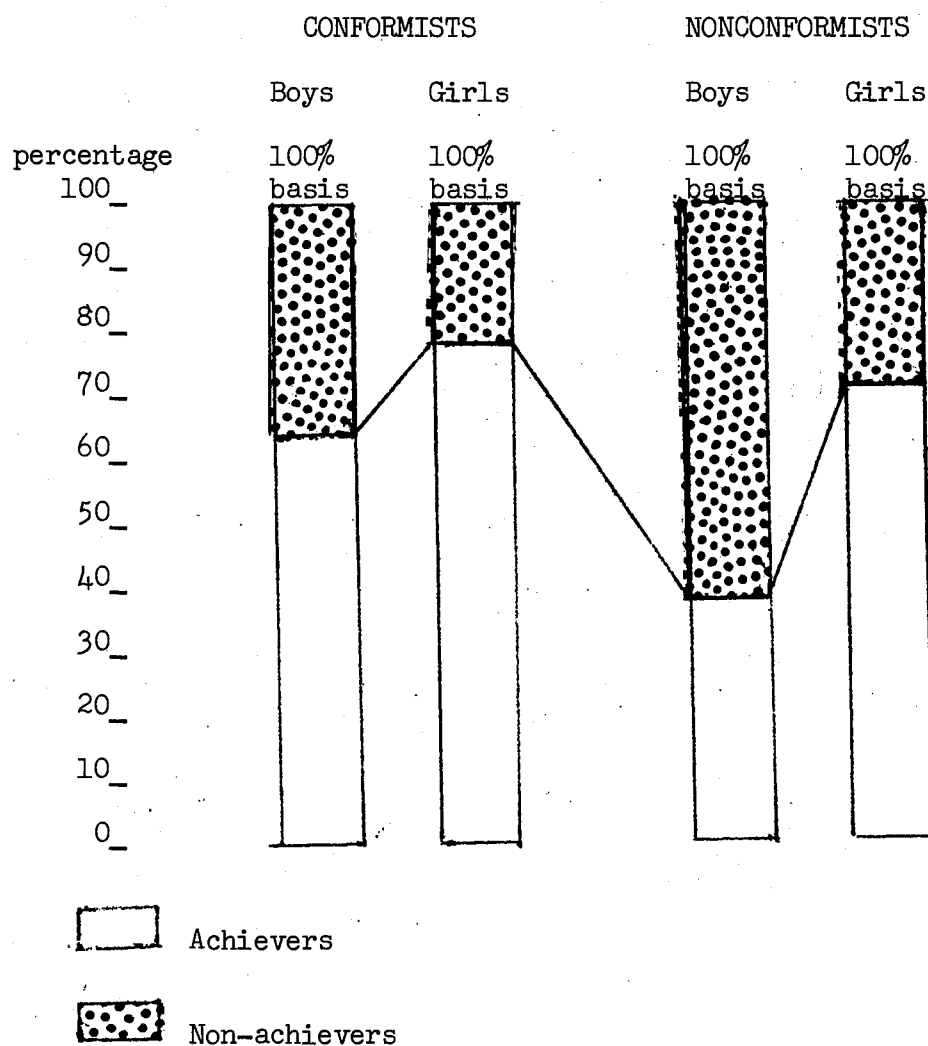


Figure 6. Comparison of Achievement and Non-achievement of Boy and Girl Conformists and Nonconformists.

The percentile distribution for conformity and achievement was made by sex. The data were analyzed and discussed by the following subdivisions: conformist/achievers; conformist/non-achievers; non-conformist/achievers; and nonconformist/non-achievers. (Figures 7 and 8, page 27.)

Distribution of Girls According to Dress Conformity
and Academic Achievement

Conformist/Achievers, there were 65 girls (68.4 percent) in this classification. This group was the largest group in the total sample.

Conformist/Non-achievers, there were 23 girls (24.4 percent) in this classification. This group was the next to the largest group of girls.

Nonconformist/Achievers, there were five girls (5.3 percent) in classification. The next to the smallest number of girls belonged to this group.

Nonconformist/Non-achievers, there were only two girls (2.1 percent) in this classification. This group was the smallest group in the total sample.

Distribution of Boys According to Dress Conformity
and Academic Achievement

Conformist/Achievers, there were 52 boys (48.6 percent) in this classification. This was the largest group of boys.

Conformist/Non-achievers, there were 30 boys (28 percent) in this classification. The next to the largest number of boys belonged to

this group.

Nonconformist/Achievers, there were nine boys (8.4 percent) in this classification. The smallest number of boys belonged to this group.

Nonconformist/Non-achievers, there were 16 boys (14.9 percent) in this classification. This was the next to the smallest group of boys.

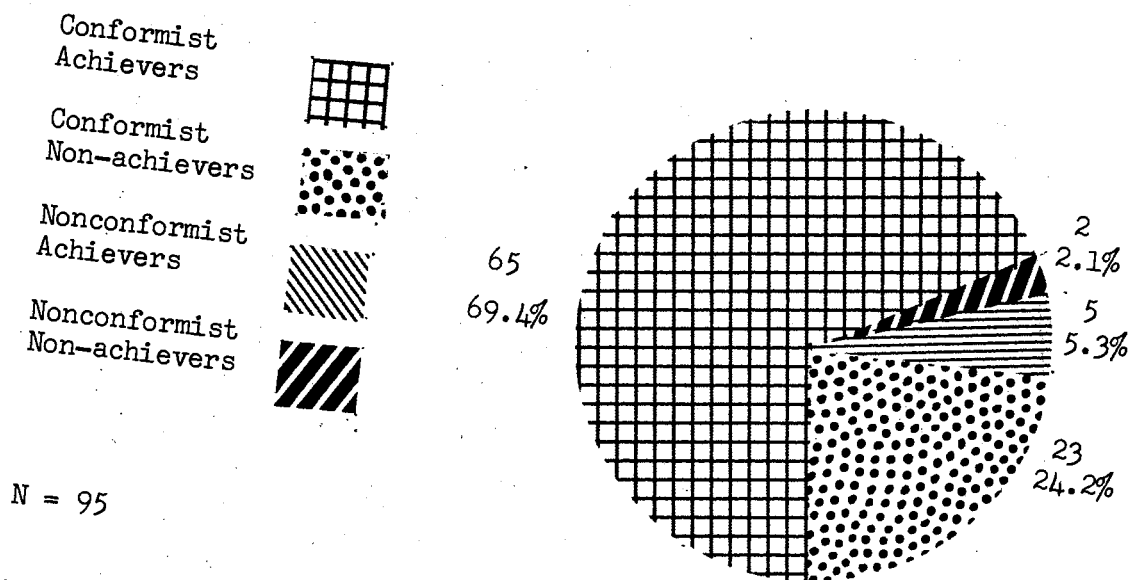


Figure 7. Percentile Distribution of Girls by Dress Conformity and Academic Achievement.

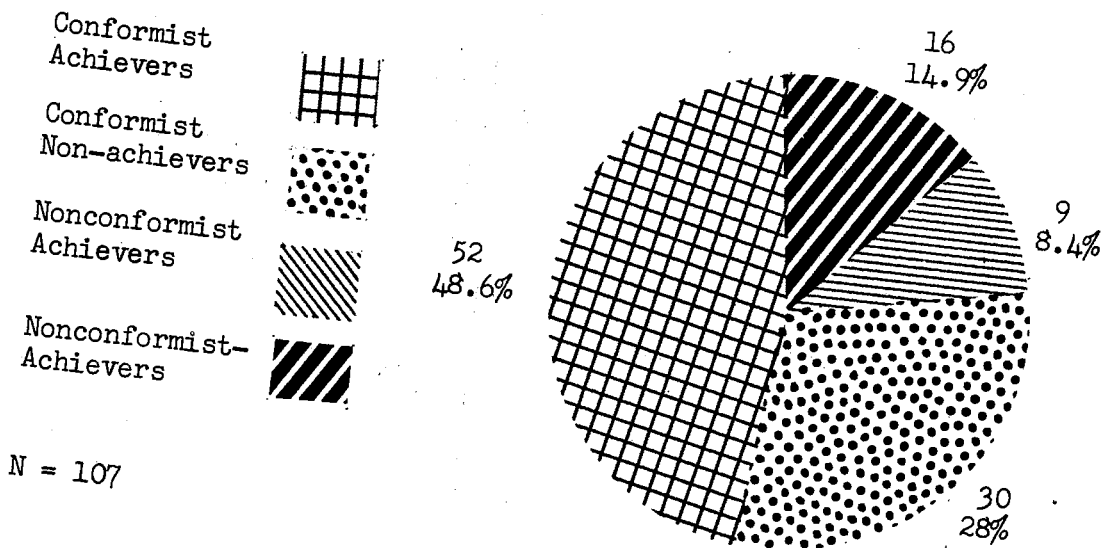


Figure 8. Percentile Distribution of Boys by Dress Conformity and Academic Achievement.

Analysis

The findings of this study indicated that at the time the data were collected 84 percent of the total sample conformed to the prevailing dress pattern of their peers as determined by two student leaders and the researcher. Their clothes and hair were neat and clean and their style of dress was moderate as scored on the check list. (See Appendix A.)

Sixteen percent of the total sample were classified nonconformists at the time of the study. The nonconformist dress was inclined to be "mod" or "hippie" in appearance. The boys' hair was long and frequently disordered as scored by the check list. (See Appendix A.) The nonconformist girls were neater in their appearance but dressed with "mod" style clothes and wore many unusual accessories. (See Appendix A.)

Twenty-five boys were classified as nonconformists in dress. This was 23 percent of the total number of boys in the sample. The nonconformist boys were more often non-achievers. Sixty-four percent of the nonconformist boys were also non-achievers as compared to 36.6 percent of the conformist boys who were non-achievers. Only seven girls dressed in a nonconforming manner.

There were only two non-achieving girls in the group of nonconformists. This number was too small to be able to draw any conclusions concerning nonconformity of dress of the girls.

The boys and girls who were conformists were not necessarily achievers. Thirty boys (29 percent) of the conformist boys were non-achievers. Twenty-three girls (35 percent) of the conformist girls were non-achievers.

A chi-square analysis was undertaken to examine the hypothesis that there is a statistically significant relationship between achievement and conformity in dress for (a) boys and (b) girls. The evidence obtained supported the hypothesis that there is an association between achievement and conformity in dress for boys and not for girls ($p = .05$). The evidence indicated that those girls who were academic achievers tended to conform to the peer dress patterns. (Appendix B.)

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Adolescent researchers have generally confirmed the existence of a separate and distinct adolescent subculture. Until recently researchers have reported that youth in the adolescent subculture accepted the values of their parents. There has been recent evidence to suggest that a new youth subculture exists that actively rejects the traditional values of American society. One of the most visible and distinctive means of identifying this group continues to be their unusual dress and appearance. There has been little or no research to determine if this trend can be found among the high school youth.

One of the important cultural goals in the United States is academic achievement. It would be of value to parents and educators to know if a relationship does exist between conformity in dress and academic achievement.

The central focus of this research was the relationship between conformity to the peer dress pattern and academic achievement. The sample used in this study was chosen from a metropolitan area high school with an enrollment of 2800. There were 202 tenth grade high school subjects, one hundred and five boys and ninety-seven girls. The data for the study were gathered during March and April 1971.

The data collection instrument developed by the researcher and used to determine degree of conformity to the prevailing dress pattern of the high school was an eleven point check list. Items included were hair, clothes, jewelry, accessories, and other significant articles.

The permanent pupil records were used to obtain the IQ and GPA of the students sampled. These scores were used to identify academic achievers and non-achievers.

Simple numerical computations, percentages and chi-square test were used to analyze the data. The students were placed in one of four groups and these groups were further subdivided by sex. A comparison was made of the groups. The groups were: conformist/achievers; conformist/non-achievers; nonconformist/achievers; and nonconformist/non-achievers.

It was evident from the literature reviewed for the study and from the data collected that the reasons underlying nonconformity in dress were varied and complex. The data reinforced findings from previous studies that students tend to conform in their patterns of dress. Eighty-four percent of the total sample conformed to the prevailing pattern of their peers and only 16 percent did not conform. The present study did reveal that nonconformity in dress among boys and their academic non-achievement are related. There were too few nonconformist girls to make an evaluation.

A chi-square analysis was undertaken to examine the hypothesis that there is a statistically significant relationship between achievement and conformity in dress for (a) boys and (b) girls. The evidence obtained supported the hypothesis that there is an association between achievement and conformity in dress for boys

but not for girls ($p = .05$). The evidence indicated that those girls who were academic achievers tended to conform to the peer dress patterns. (Appendix B.)

Conclusions

Conclusions drawn from the study were:

1. The majority of students conformed to a single pattern of dress.
2. Boys varied more in their dress than did girls.
3. Mode of dress and academic achievement of boys was significantly associated with a similar tendency for girls.

Recommendations

1. There is a need for a comprehensive, in-depth study of the relationship between conformity in dress and academic achievement. Such studies might:
 - a. Use successive grade levels to determine whether similar relationships exist in higher and lower grade levels.
 - b. Use schools varying in size and socio-economic background.
2. Future research should identify the reasons for noticeable differences in the achievement of boys according to their degree of conformity in dress.
3. Future research should attempt to identify the reasons why the dress of girls tended to conform to a greater extent than does the dress of boys.

4. Educators and parents should be made aware that dress may be an indicator of the student's probable academic achievement.

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APPENDIX A

CLOTHING CHECK LIST

Name _____ Sex _____

CHECK LIST

Scale (0 1 2)

Conformity = 0

Hair (0 1 2)

1. Length _____

2. Cleanliness _____

3. Orderliness _____

Clothes (0 1 2)

1. Style (Conventional - Mod) _____

2. Condition (Repaired -
Torn) _____

3. Cleanliness _____

Shoes (0 1 2)

Sandals, Moccasins _____

Boots (other than cowboy) _____

Jewelry and Accessories (0 1 2)

Unusual type and style _____

Significant Articles (0 1 2)

Vests _____

Others _____

TOTAL _____

APPENDIX B

OBSERVED FREQUENCIES

OBSERVED FREQUENCIES

Boys

	Achievers	Non-achievers	
Conformists	52	30	82
Nonconformists	9	16	25
	61	46	107

Girls

	Achievers	Non-achievers	
Conformists	65	23	88
Nonconformists	5	2	7
	70	25	95

VITA

Ruth E. Warren

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRESS CONFORMITY
AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF TENTH GRADE STUDENTS IN A
METROPOLITAN HIGH SCHOOL

Major Field: Clothing, Textiles, and Merchandising

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, February 15, 1926,
the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Meyer. Married
June 10, 1949 to Henry C. Warren.

Education: Graduated from Minnehaha Academy, Minneapolis,
Minnesota, in June 1943; attended the University of
Minnesota from 1943 to 1945; received Bachelor of Science
Degree in Home Economics Education from Wheaton College,
Wheaton, Illinois in June 1948; attended University of
Oklahoma from 1967 to 1968; completed requirements for
the Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University
in July 1971.

Professional Affiliations: American Home Economics Association;
and Phi Upsilon Omicron.

Honorary Affiliation: Omicron Nu