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TRANSGENDER IDENITITY AND DRESS BEHAVIOR

Transgender Identity and Dress Behavior

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Choosing a topic for my honors project was a very difficult choice. I wanted to take this opportunity to combine both of my majors, Textile Merchandising Design and Psychology, because I have not been able to combine the two until this point. Many professors, advisors, and people of other careers have questioned if whether or not these two majors went together. This project was an important opportunity for me to show people that these two majors do in fact go together and how much can be done with both.

The first step of this study was reading and researching about the topics at hand. There was very limited research on transgender dress, which is why I felt that this project and topic was a very important one for me to explore. The second step was to compile a survey. The survey was given out to friends, family, and fellow students. Participants were also recruited from three different universities across the United States. Qualtrics Solutions was also sent the survey. They were able to find participants nationwide to complete the survey. Qualtrics then sent the results of the survey back. The data was analyzed and coded. ANOVA was used to analyze the data and compare the transgender participants to the cisgender ones. Qualitative data was coded and compiled into three phases. The coding key was developed using an inductive process and a graduate student, an independent scholar, and myself then coded the data. To create the coding key, I went through the responses and looked for similar patterns. There were six hundred and ninety three participants who responded to six open ended questions. There was also other information that was coded that were not questions. In total about six thousand nine hundred and thirty responses to questions had to be coded. The reliability of the coding was calculated using Cohen's Kappa. After the data was coded, we were able to easily look at responses and find similarities among gender groups and all participants in general.

Throughout the year, I learned more than I expected while completing this project. I learned how to write an advanced academic research paper. I learned about the research process in general, and all the work that goes into the final draft. There was an extensive amount of research compared to other papers that I have written throughout my college career. I also learned how to code and analyze data. There was more statistics used than expected, which I was able to learn more in depth than my previous basic knowledge. Learning how to compose an academic poster was different was much different than I expected. I also learned about deductive analysis once all my research was and coding was completed. Beyond those things, I was able to get a better understanding of the transgender community how they felt about their bodies, the transition process, and some of their daily struggles. It was interesting to compare answers of cisgender and transgender individuals and find common similarities. At times reading the responses was disheartening, as many of the participants discussed their negative opinions and feelings of their bodies and gender.

Reading all of the responses to the surveys influenced my outlook of the fashion industry. I recognize that there are many flaws and many segments that are being ignored. After completing this project, I hope I am able to make a difference whether it is through more research, through body esteem, or being involved in providing clothes to an underserved and marginalized demographic. This project has also helped to prepare me for my future work in graduate school and beyond in my career.

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