

## The Impact of Personal Self on Clothing Choices among Women

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined how clothing choices are influenced by personal self. The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of real-self and public-self on the selection of clothing among different Clothing Style Personalities. A convenience sample of 300 employed women from Govt., semi Govt., and private colleges, schools, offices and hospitals was selected for the study. In the first phase, women of six Clothing Style Personalities were selected by a questionnaire based on six different choices of clothes and accessories. In the second phase, they were investigated for finding the relationship between their clothing choices and personal self: real-self, and public-self. A self constructed questionnaire was used for this purpose. Classic, Dramatic, and Natural Style Personalities scored higher on the scale than Romantic, Ingénue, and Gamin Style Personalities. To test the hypothesis, t-test was used that showed significance between Classic Style, Dramatic Style, and Natural Style Personalities (Group-I) and Romantic Style, Ingénue Style and Gamin Style Personalities (Group-II). It was found by this study that our clothing choices are directly related to personality traits. Selection of clothing and accessories are reflection of one's inner self that may be real-self or public-self. The study will help people to get information about clothing concept and how clothing choices will be related to personality impressions. This study may be helpful in yielding relevant information about fashion to women seeking for knowledge to improve themselves through best selection of clothes and accessories. The findings of this study may also provide valuable implications for fashion marketers and manufacturers to make more attractive fashion styles to appeal the interested consumers.

**KEY WORDS:** Clothing Style Personalities, personal self, clothing choices, real-self, and public-self.

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### INTRODUCTION

Clothing is one of the basic human needs used for protection; as coverings of the human body. "Dress modifies and supplements the body"<sup>[1]</sup>. Besides basic human need, clothing plays an important role in our social life. Human has a strong desire for approval from others which is fulfilled through the clothing choices. "Patterns of everyday life are reflected in dress". Selection of proper dress and as a whole appearance of a person "reflects personal feelings"<sup>[2]</sup>. People hide or unhide their inner feelings through their clothing. The wardrobe decisions tell others about the secret desires that are being tried to be hidden"<sup>[3]</sup>. Individuals who have high public-self-consciousness are interested in how others perceive and appreciate them. Consumers who are publicly self-conscious used to be very much concerned about fashion and their appearance<sup>[4]</sup>. Different individuals perceive their self-awareness differently, "it may have been perceived as self-consciousness which involves dimensions; private and public-self-consciousness"<sup>[5]</sup>. Fenigstein called public-self as social self and the private self as the spiritual self<sup>[6]</sup>. Individuals who are publicly self-conscious are involved in using such clothes and related items which can make impression on others, "they use self-presentation strategies for gaining approval from others"<sup>[7]</sup>. Clothes are not only objects; they are also acts<sup>[8]</sup>. Clothing plays an important role in our social processes. Self-identity building depends upon the construction process of self through one's own self-reflection of clothing choices as well as through external feedback. In a creation process fashion can be seen as an act, 'a fashion act', where the consumers adapts and modifies fashion styles and make rules to help in creating their own individuality in order the garment better expresses their identity, values, and emotions<sup>[8]</sup>.

Every human is in fact unique by nature who desire strongly to be identified in the crowd. Individuals may express their unique personalities through their apparel and fashion<sup>[9]</sup>. Consumers seek for uniqueness to look different from others "through selecting brands that enhance their individual self along with their image at social level"<sup>[10]</sup>. Personality plays an important role in this respect. It is human personality that discriminates and dominates them over other creatures. The use of different clothes, accessories, and cosmetics are used to enhance personality which

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make a person unique among others. Clothing says almost all about the wearer. It gives a picture of one's personality. Selection of clothing fashion may be influenced by different type of individuals' personalities which are categorized in different studies in different ways; the six personality styles or Six Clothing Style Personalities are commonly discussed in different studies. "There are some personality types that influence the fashion choices"<sup>[11]</sup>. The six personality styles are explained as<sup>[11]</sup>: Classic styles are worn by emotional nature, balanced, controlled and rational personalities. Romantic style is worn by artistic, enchanting, and magnetic persons. Ingénue style is also liked by artistic and charming personalities. Dramatic styles are used by natural authority, in control, and risk taker. Natural styles are worn by warm and friendly, goal oriented, and responsible people. Gamin style is liked by energetic, dynamic, and fast mover. The present study is going to find the point of views of women of the six style personalities about the impact of real-self and public-self on their clothing choices. Also to investigate how real-self would be more dominant than public-self of some of the Clothing Style Personalities when selecting clothes for themselves. Hethorn argued that what we look like and how we choose to present ourselves is a silent form of communication<sup>[12]</sup>. The researcher was interested to find about the influences behind that silent communication that persuade the individuals to be explored due to their clothing and fashion choices. It may be inferred that there are so many personality traits which may work in this regard, "even intentions or motives may be reflected through the overall appearance and dress of an individual"<sup>[1]</sup>. Clothing choices may allow individuals to strengthen their inner self, and identity at social interaction<sup>[13]</sup>.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There will be great clothing variation among different clothing personalities.
2. Real-self of Classic, Dramatic, and Natural style personalities will be more dominant than their public-self as compared to Romantic, Ingénue, and Gamin style personalities.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

### **Sample**

A sample of 300 working women at the age of 25 to 60 years was selected from different Govt., semi Govt., and private colleges, schools, and offices of Peshawar district. The respondents were selected on the basis of their availability through convenient sampling technique. The researcher made visit to some of the respondents at their residence and the rest were interviewed at their place of work.

### **Instruments**

#### **Demographic information sheet**

A self constructed demographic sheet was composed to get information regarding age, qualification, social status, and occupation.

#### **Clothing personality checklist**

A clothing checklist based on six different choices of dresses and accessories was composed for the scrutiny of six clothing personalities.

#### **Self-constructed questionnaire**

A self devised questionnaire consisting of 15 items answered on two point scale with agree and disagree was constructed to get information about the impact of real-self and public-self on clothing choices of six different Clothing Style Personalities.

### **Procedure**

For the purpose of data collection, different instruments were administered to get information about the impact of real-self and public-self on clothing choices of working women having six different Clothing Style Personalities— Classic Style, Romantic Style, Ingénue Style, Dramatic Style, Natural Style and Gamin Style. In the first phase 300 respondents of six Clothing Style Personalities (50 from each group) were scrutinized by a questionnaire based on six different choices of dresses and accessories. The researcher paid separate visit to all the respondents and every one of them was contacted as planned beforehand. The aim and objective of the research was briefly explained to them. Before administering questionnaire the respondents were also assured about the confidentiality of their responses. In the second phase, the respondents were interviewed through a self devised questionnaire consisted of 15 items to get information about the relationship of clothing with real-self and public-

self of six different Clothing Style Personalities. Classic, Dramatic and Natural Style Personalities got high score as compared to Romantic, Ingénue, and Gamin Style Personalities.

**Statistical Analysis**

For statistical analysis, t-test was applied on the data that showed significance between Classic, Dramatic, and Natural Style Personalities (Group-I) and Romantic, Ingénue, and Gamin Style Personalities (Group-II). The analysis was carried out by using standard statistical package of SPSS.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1: Alpha Reliability Coefficient and Descriptive Statistics of Real-self and Public-self Questionnaire (N= 300)**

Scales	Items	A	Mean	SD
RSPSQ	15	.71	8.34	2.47

Note: RSPSQ is Real-self and public-self Questionnaire

Descriptive statistics of the data is presented in Table 1 for general trends. Mean scores and standard deviation were calculated for RSPSQ. The above Table also represents the degree of reliability of the measure by calculating chronbach alpha (.71). The results confirmed that the measure used in the present study was reliable and their items were internally consistent.

**Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Item-total Correlations for RSPSQ (N=300) (Items=15)**

Items	Mean	SD	$\gamma$
1	.710	.454	.798
2	.680	.467	.805
3	.483	.500	.665
4	.460	.499	.663
5	.770	.421	.797
6	.466	.499	.664
7	.463	.499	.668
8	.496	.500	.665
9	.636	.481	.814
10	.463	.499	.675
11	.463	.499	.671
12	.606	.489	.711
13	.593	.492	.689
14	.623	.485	.711
15	.496	.500	.676

Table 2 illustrates the item-total correlation of RSPSQ. This Table shows item-sum correlations ranging from .663 to .814 and are highly significant at (p<. 01) for all items of the questionnaire. Hence, it can be concluded on the basis of these findings that this questionnaire is a valid measure to evaluate the relationship of Real-self and Public-self with Clothing among Six Clothing Style Personalities.

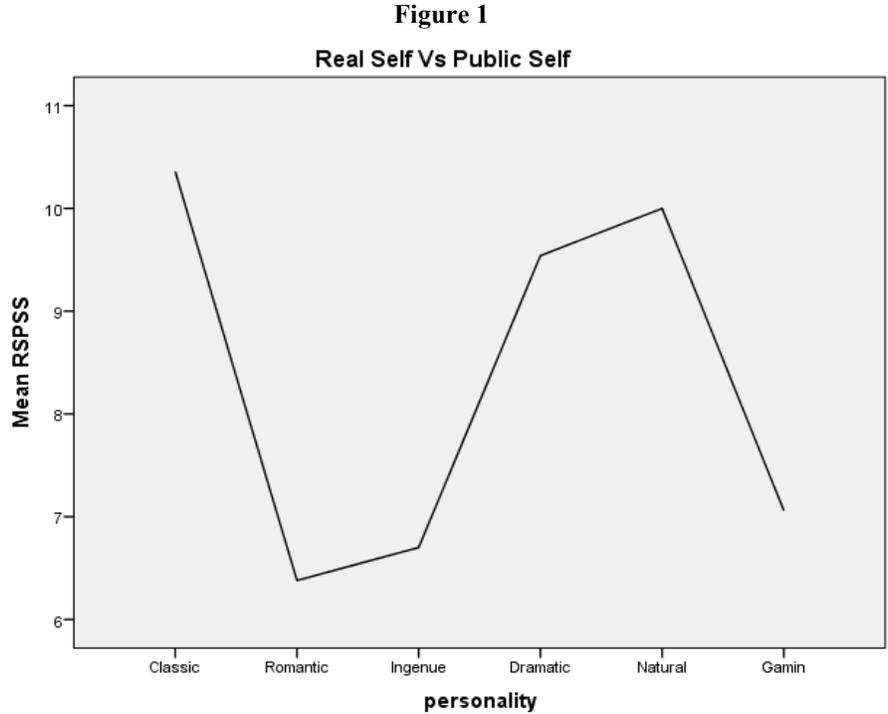


Fig: 1 shows the line chart which denotes mean of scores on RSPSQ of the Six Clothing Personalities. Values 6 to 11 denote mean range of the scores. Value 8 and above shows high impact of real-self on clothing choices. The figure shows that mean of values for RSPSQ is 10.3 for Classic Style Personalities, 6.4 for Romantic, 6.7 for Ingenue, 9.5 for Dramatic, 10.0 for Natural, and 7.0 for Gamin Style Personalities. The result shows that majority of the respondents of Classic, Dramatic, and Natural Style Personalities score high whereas, respondents of Romantic, Ingenue, and Gamin Style Personalities score low on Real-self Vs Public- self questionnaire. The higher the score the more they will select clothes for satisfying their real-self. The lower the score the more they will choose their clothing for public-self.

**Table 3: Frequency and Percentage of the Six Clothing Personalities on Real-self and Public-self Questionnaire (RSPSQ) of the Sample (N=300)**

RSPSQ	<i>f</i>	%
Public-self	144	48.0%
Real-self	156	52.0%
Total	300	100%

Table 3 shows frequency and percentage of the whole data. Generally, the figures reveal that 48% of the respondents selected their clothing for their public-self while 52% of the respondents selected clothing for their own satisfaction (real-self) and according to their personality.

**Table 4: Mean difference and t-value of Classic, Dramatic, and Natural (Group I) and Romantic, Ingenue, and Gamin (Group II) on the Score of RSPSQ(N=300)**

Group	N	X	SD	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
Classic, Dramatic, and Natural (Group I)	150	1.950	.219	5.88	.000	0.68
Romantic, Ingenue, and Gamin (Group II)	150	1.655	.476			

*d f=298* Effect size = 0.32 (medium)

Note. The lower the score on the scale the lesser their real-self will be dominant as compared to public-self in relation with their clothing.

The above Table 4 represents the total number of the sample, standard score range, the means, and standard deviations of the scores RSPSQ; self constructed questionnaire for findings of relationship of real-self and public-self with clothing choices of the respondents. The figure shows that Romantic, Ingenue, and Gamin (Group I) shows lower mean, which specify that their Real-self is less dominant than their public-self as compared to Classic, Dramatic, and Natural (Group II). This mean difference .295 is highly statistically significant. The effect size (0.32) was also analyzed by Cohen's d for the data which indicated the medium difference between two means of the data of the two groups.

## DISCUSSION

Clothing plays an important role in augmenting the personality. A generalized view of the researchers about clothing choices is to enhance consumers' image and to communicate their identity to others [14]. Some people think that clothing hides the real-self and dominates the public-self. There are individuals who use their clothing as symbol of status, they select clothing to satisfy their public-self; "their decisions" for selecting clothes and accessories "are mostly motivated by this need" [15], but there are some who satisfy their self by selecting clothes for their real comfort whether physical or psychological. To investigate the above statements a test was designed for the respondents for finding information about the selection of clothing in relation to satisfying the real-self versus public-self among the six different clothing personalities. Depending upon the clothing choices, the sample was investigated firstly to find out differences in their personality. Secondly, a self devised questionnaire consisting of fifteen questions was administered to study the impact of real-self and public-self on clothing choices of the six Clothing Style Personalities, and how real-self would be more dominant than public-self of some of the Clothing Style Personalities in this regard. A general trend of the whole data was established through statistical analysis which showed that majority of the respondents selected their clothing for their own satisfaction (real-self) and according to their personality (Table 3). The results were further analyzed by using t-test. The result shows that Romantic, Ingenue, and Gamin (Group-II) showed lower mean, which specify that their Real-self was less dominant than their public-self as compared to Classic, Dramatic, and Natural (Group-I) (Table 4). The line chart given in Fig: 1 denotes mean of scores on Real-Self Vs Public-Self Questionnaire (RSPSQ) of the Six Clothing Personalities. This figure also shows that majority of the respondents of Classic, Dramatic, and Natural Style Personalities scored high whereas; respondents of Romantic, Ingenue, and Gamin Style Personalities scored low on RSPSQ. The higher the score the more they select clothing for their real-self (self satisfaction). The lower the score the more they choose their clothing for public-self. It was because of the specific personality type of the respondents that influenced their clothing choices. For example, "classic characters give the impression of old-fashioned and a dramatic character likes a change [11]. The above mentioned results clearly represent the hypothesis of the study, "Real-self of Classic, Dramatic, and Natural Style personalities will be more dominant than their public-self." Classic, Dramatic, and Natural Style personalities choose clothes which represent their real-self; comfortable and easy to maintain that gives them self satisfaction rather than to be highly appreciated by others. In contrast, respondents of Romantic, Ingenue, and Gamin Style Personalities choose trendy and highly luxurious clothes and accessories to gain appreciation from others. Clothing choices fulfill the desire to gain approval from others in a social context [8]. This study will help in providing knowledge about textile and clothing fashion. In the literature review no such study has been detected that explored about the different clothing personalities and about their profiles. One of the objectives of this study was to identify different clothing personalities in Peshawar that will give support to such studies in other regions of Pakistan as well. This research may fill a gap in the literature by finding the relationship of clothing with real-self and public-self among different personalities. It may provide useful information for future studies that can be developed in other countries or in cross-culture context.

## CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to find out the views of the women about the relationship of clothing with personal self. Previous researches have shown significant connection in clothing choices and personality however, the relationship of clothing with real-self and public-self among different Clothing Style Personalities have not been examined (specially in Pakistan) prior to the present study. The conclusion of the current study is as follows:

1. A great clothing variation among different clothing personalities had been observed who belonged to Classic, Romantic, Ingenue, Dramatic, Natural, and Gamin Style Personalities.
2. It may be concluded from the analysis of the assumption that the respondents of Classic, Dramatic, and Natural Style Personalities with high score on the Real-self and Public-self questionnaire selected their clothing and accessories more often to satisfy their real-self as compared to Romantic, Ingénue, and Gamin

Style Personalities who might want to satisfy their clothing need for public-self that would represent their personalities to be trendier where they wanted to gain appreciation from others.

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