

Appearance Management Behavior Among Teacher Education Interns

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Publication Date: 2025/06/23

Abstract: Appearance management involves the deliberate efforts individuals make to regulate and present their physical appearance, often shaped by cultural, institutional, and professional expectations. For pre-service teachers, cultivating a professional image is vital as they transition into classroom roles. This study explores the factors influencing appearance management behavior among teacher education interns at Davao del Norte State College (DNSC), focusing on the roles of institutional policies, workplace culture, and individual attitudes. Specifically, the research aims to determine the demographic profile of the interns, assess their level of appearance management behavior, and identify significant differences based on gender and program major. Additionally, the study intends to propose an action plan to promote professional appearance standards. Utilizing a quantitative research design, data were collected through a structured survey from 140 fourth-year teacher education students. The instrument collected demographic data and responses on appearance management behavior. Frequency, median, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed to analyze the data. Findings revealed that teacher-interns exhibited high levels of appearance management behavior, reflecting strong self-perception, cultural sensitivity, and authenticity. Statistical analysis showed no significant differences in behavior based on gender or program/major. In response to these findings, the study recommends implementing a comprehensive action plan comprising discussion forums, professional appearance workshops, and a standardized dress code handbook. These interventions aim to foster culturally sensitive, inclusive, and professional environments for future educators.

Keywords: *Appearance Management, Teacher Interns, Program Specialization, Professionalism.*

How to Cite: Kaye Arbiol; Mariel Delerio; Jovy Morales; Rhea Del Sending; Nolie, Jr. C. Guadalquiver; (2025) Appearance Management Behavior Among Teacher Education Interns *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 10(6), 1589-1600. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25jun830>

I. INTRODUCTION

In teacher education, instructional strategies, curriculum instruction, and classroom management are generally the major concerns. But a fundamental but often neglected aspect of teacher development is the contribution of appearance management behavior, particularly among teacher education interns in their practicum. Appearance management pertains to the conscious or unconscious management of bodily appearance in order to meet social or professional requirements. For teacher interns on the process of becoming professional teachers from being students, their dress code is a factor in how they are judged by students, peers, and mentors—impacting not just classroom interactions but their self-worth, professional identity, and overall teaching experience (Lee & Rudd, 2019).

The issue is that this particular group of people—teacher education interns—is given scant scholarly attention and research emphasis. While appearance and grooming have been widely explored within the frameworks of fashion, business culture, and overall youth identity, there remains a discernible lack of research exploring how these

behaviors emerge and affect the professional preparedness of pre-service teachers. Previous research tends to generalize appearance management to larger youth populations or organizational workers, without taking into account the specific role of interns who inhabit both academic and professional settings (Kim & Lee, 2020; Chae, 2021).

Globally, the importance of physical appearance continues to escalate. With regard to ISAPS (2023), the over 33 million cosmetic operations taken across the world in the year 2022 mirror expanding focus in society upon physical presentation. Such concern exists within workspaces as well. In the workplace, workers say they feel more confident, competent, and credible when they are properly attired for their occupation, and violations of grooming standards—like nonconventional haircuts or inappropriately relaxed dress—can have a negative impact on professional and credibility judgments (Karl et al., 2021).

Locally, in the Philippine setting, the fixation with physical form is reflected in the increasing number of skin-lightening treatments and cosmetics among young adults. Regencia et al. (2023) pointed out that such practices tend to be fueled by cultural beauty standards and psychological unease, reflecting even more fundamental issues of self-esteem and cultural expectation. In a different study, Banerjee (2023) noted that appearance and presentation significantly influence how Filipino professionals, especially those working directly with clients or high-profile positions, perceive themselves in competence and value. There has also been an increased demand for soft skills like self-confidence, communication, and professional comportment, but the educational institutions might lack in addressing them through curriculum and experiential learning explicitly (Majid et al., 2019).

This academic inquiry gap is particularly alarming for teacher education interns, who are required to demonstrate both pedagogical knowledge and professional demeanor. Interns not only are assessed on their performance as teachers but also on whether they can demand respect, build rapport, and speak on behalf of their institutions. All these are shaped by the way they present themselves physically. Little is known about how these interns negotiate appearance expectations, or how such practices affect their sense of professional identity or competence (Chae, 2021; Madeline & Colette, 2023).

The research is also informed by theoretical frameworks like Self-Presentation Theory (Goffman, as cited in Lee & Rudd, 2019), which investigates how people regulate impressions during social interaction; Impression Management Theory (Kim & Lee, 2020), which focuses on strategic actions to impact others' views; and Social Identity

Theory (Tajfel & Turner, as cited in Chae, 2021), which accounts for how group membership and roles define one's self-concept. In addition, Social Learning Theory (Bandura, as quoted in Wang, 2021) emphasizes that behaviors—e.g., grooming, dress, and self-presentation—are learned through observation, modeling, and reinforcement in social contexts, including schools and teacher education mentors.

Even at Davao del Norte State College (DNSC), where there are institution dress codes and college of education expectations, there is no standard model or instructional intervention specifically addressing appearance management behaviors among teacher education interns. This lack can prevent them from critically examining how appearance affects their developing teaching identity and performance.

It is due to the researchers' personal experience of working in pre-service teacher settings where appearance-related concerns and worries are raised on a regular basis but hardly ever discussed in official training that they were motivated to do this study. They were compelled by anecdotal experience through practicum visits and feedback from mentors suggesting a mismatch between appearance expectations and what is taught to interns. A specific and

evident need also existed to examine how appearance-related behaviors come together with psychological, cultural, and institutional forces in teacher education—a theme underrepresented in local and global literature. Through examining appearance management behaviors among teacher education interns, this study seeks to create a significant gap-filler for the literature and provide actionable contributions for teacher education programs. The end aim is to assist interns in achieving external requirements but also in developing a positive self-image, professional presence, and sense of identity in making the transition to full-time teachers. In an increasingly changing educational environment that focuses not just on cognitive abilities but also on professional presence, examination of appearance management behavior is not one of trivial importance—rather, it is part of a comprehensive model of teacher development. In bridging this research need, the current study hopes to inform teacher education curriculum development and mentoring approaches so that pre-service teachers are professionally, socially, as well as academically prepared.

II. METHODOLOGY

➤ *Research Design*

This study utilized a quantitative research method, which involved the collection and analysis of numerical data to understand trends, patterns, and relationships among variables. Quantitative research allowed the researchers to statistically analyze the appearance management behaviors of teacher education interns and assess whether significant differences or relationships existed among demographic groups. As Bloomfield and Fisher (2019) explained, this method is used to objectively measure variables and analyze data using mathematical, statistical, and computational techniques. Given the nature of the study, a descriptive-correlational research design was employed. The descriptive component of the study aimed to provide a systematic and factual account of the demographic profile of respondents and the extent to which appearance management behaviors—such as grooming and clothing—were practiced by teacher education interns. This design enabled the researchers to quantify the behaviors and describe prevailing trends and patterns. As McCombes (2019) noted, descriptive research seeks to provide accurate and methodical depictions of populations, situations, or phenomena. The correlational component of the research was used to examine whether a significant relationship or difference existed in appearance management behavior when respondents were grouped according to their gender and academic program. Since the variables could not be manipulated, the correlational design helped the researchers explore associations and determine whether groupings based on demographic characteristics influenced how students engaged in appearance management. According to Seeram (2019), correlational research allows researchers to identify patterns and examine the degree and direction of relationships between variables when experimental manipulation is not feasible.

➤ *Research Locale*

The study will be conducted at Davao del Norte State College (DNSC), situated in the province of Davao del Norte, Region XI. It is in New Visayas, Panabo City, Philippines. Davao del Norte State College is a public higher education institution in Panabo City, it has a total area of 9 hectares with more or less 7,000 students, and All-Fourth Year Students with Institute of Teacher Education (ITEd), Bachelor of Technology Livelihood Education (BTLED), Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Mathematics (BSED), Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English (BSED), Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Science (BSED), Bachelor of Arts in Communication (BACOMM).

The findings of this study are specific to the context of the Institute of Teacher Education intern students of Davao del Norte State College. The possibility for the general applicability of the findings was limited by the scope, and the sample.

➤ *Population and Sample*

The participants of this study were selected from the Institute of Teacher Education of Davao del Norte State College. The study specifically involved students enrolled in various teacher education programs, including Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education (BTLEd), Bachelor of Secondary Education majors in Mathematics, Science, and English, and Bachelor of Arts in Communication (BAComm), considering that these programs all include practice teaching or internship components where appearance management is relevant.

To ensure representativeness, the study employed stratified random sampling. This technique involved dividing the total population into subgroups or "strata" based on their academic programs. Each stratum was composed of students who shared similar characteristics and experiences within their respective programs. Proportional sampling was then conducted within each stratum to ensure that all groups were fairly represented in the study (Simkus, 2023).

➤ *The following table Presents the Population and Sample Distribution per Academic Program:*

Table 1 The following table Presents the Population and Sample Distribution per Academic Program

Academic Program (Institute of Teacher Education) Population	Sample BTLEd	93 Students 45 Students
BSED Math	41 students	20 students
BSED Science	35 students	15 students
BSED English	71 students	30 students
BA Communication	62 students	30 students
Total	302 students	140 students

To determine the minimum sample size required for the study, Slovin’s formula was applied using a margin of error of 0.05. The computation yielded a sample size of approximately 140 respondents, which was then proportionally allocated across the different programs. This ensured that the findings would be both statistically valid and reflective of the overall population of teacher education interns in the college. The study included both regular and irregular students, as long as they were officially enrolled in their respective programs during the academic year covered by the study.

➤ *Research Instrument*

The study utilized a Survey Questionnaire (SQ) adopted from a published research article conducted by Ngunu, Alice Njeri (2021), entitled "Evaluation of Appearance Management Behaviour among Students in Institutions of Higher Learning in Meru County, Kenya," as it was deemed appropriate and relevant to the objectives of this study.

The questionnaire was designed to comprehensively assess the appearance management behavior of teacher education interns and consisted of two major sections. The first section of the instrument gathered demographic data from the respondents, including their age, gender, and academic major or program. The second section measured

various components related to appearance management.

These included appearance management behaviors such as grooming practices and clothing choices; levels of knowledge about appearance management; perceived importance of maintaining professional appearance; and the different factors that guide students in the appearance management process. Moreover, the questionnaire explored the relationship between students’ personality traits, gender, age, peer influence, self-esteem, and body image with their appearance management behaviors. It also included items that assessed the extent of teacher education interns’ engagement in risky appearance management behaviors. Prior to its administration, the instrument underwent pilot testing with a sample of 30 teacher education interns from comparable institutions to ensure reliability and clarity.

The reliability of the tool was supported by a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency among the items. Additionally, a panel of experts in the fields of education, psychology, and behavioral sciences reviewed the questionnaire and provided an average validation score of 4.5 out of 5, affirming the instrument’s content validity and alignment with the study’s objectives. The validated and pilot-tested questionnaire was then used as the primary data-gathering tool for the study.

➤ *Data Collection*

After a long search, the right survey tools to use to ascertain the appearance management behavior among teacher education interns eventually located. This will be submitted to the experts for their opinions and recommendations on improving the survey instrument.

Before distributing the questionnaires, researchers will send them to their adviser for validation, testing of reliability, and credibility. Furthermore, after being validated, the researchers will reach out to the Institute Dean for approval to conduct the study. After the confirmation from the Dean, researchers will ask all the program chairperson of Institute of Education to gather the list of names, and participants will be selected. Next, we will send the class mayor of the participants from the designated set an informed consent to obtain approval about their willingness to participate in this study. If the participants have the time to participate personally, they will be contacted through email or messenger.

After the respondents have consented, the researchers will conduct the study, release the questionnaire, and further explain the study's objectives to the participants to collect the necessary data. The research tools will be retrieved as soon as the respondents have responded. Acquiring all the necessary data will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. The data will be tabulated and encoded by the researchers to test the hypothesis.

➤ *Statistical Tool*

To facilitate the analysis and interpretation of data, computer calculations and data processing were employed using Microsoft Excel. The following statistical tools will be used:

- *Frequency and Percentage Distribution*

This tool was used to analyze and present the demographic profile of the respondents, particularly their gender and major/program. It was also used to determine how frequently specific appearance management behaviors were practiced by teacher education interns. This allowed the researchers to describe the general trends in grooming and clothing habits. This tool addressed Research Objective 1, which aimed to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their frequency of practicing appearance management behaviors.

- *Median*

The median, which refers to the central value in a dataset arranged in ascending or descending order, was used to identify the typical or most representative responses among the participants. The median was chosen over the mean because it is less influenced by outliers or skewed distributions, making it a more reliable measure of central tendency. This statistical tool was used to analyze the self-reported responses on appearance management behaviors to determine the typical level of engagement. It supported Research Objective 2, which sought to determine the level of appearance management behavior of teacher education interns in terms of clothing and grooming.

- *Mean*

This was employed to determine the average level of appearance management behavior of teacher education interns based on a 4-point Likert scale. This helped quantify respondents' self-assessed grooming and clothing habits and further supported Research Objective 2 by describing the degree of engagement in these behaviors.

- *One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)*

To address Research Objective 3, which aimed to determine whether a significant difference existed in the appearance management behavior of teacher education interns when grouped according to gender and major/program, the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was utilized. This statistical test allowed the researchers to compare the mean scores of different groups to determine if the differences were statistically significant. The results of this analysis were essential in identifying whether specific demographic factors influenced appearance management behavior.

III. RESULTS

➤ *Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Gender*

The table 2 shows the distribution of gender among the 140 respondents from the Institute of Teacher Education at Davao del Norte State College. The majority of the participants are female, comprising 65.0% (91 out of 140) of the total. Male respondents account for 30.0% (42 out of 140), making them the second largest group. A minority of participants, 5.0% (7 out of 140), chose not to disclose their gender.

This data indicates a significant gender disparity within the Institute, with females being the predominant group, followed by males, and a small proportion of individuals who prefer not to specify their gender.

Table 2 Frequencies of Gender

Gender	Counts	% of Total
Male	42	30.0%
Female	91	65.0%
Prefer Not to Say	7	5.0%
TOTAL	140	100.0%

➤ *Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Major/Program*

The distribution of 140 students across various majors in teacher education programs at Davao del Norte State College is presented in Table 3. The analysis reveals that the majority of the respondents, specifically 75 participants (53.6%), are enrolled in the Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education (BTLED) program. This is followed by 18 students (12.9%) in the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) English program, 17 students (12.1%) in the BSED Mathematics program, and 15 students each (10.7%) in both the Bachelor of Arts in Communication

(BA Comm) and BSED Science programs. The data revealed a varied respondent pool with a predominance from the Bachelor of Technological Livelihood Education (BTLED) program. The remaining programs, including Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) English, BSED Mathematics, Bachelor of Arts in Communication (BA Comm), and BSED Science, exhibited relatively similar numbers of participants. This distribution provides a representative sample of the academic disciplines within the Institute of Teacher Education at Davao del Norte State College.

Table 3 Frequencies of Major/Program

Major/Program	Counts	% of Total
BA Communication	15	10.7%
BSED English	18	12.9%
BSED Math	17	12.1%
BTLED	75	53.6%
BSED Science	15	10.7%
TOTAL	140	100.0%

➤ *Level of Appearance Management Behavior in Teacher Education*

The results of the study revealed in Table 4 varying levels of influence and behavior related to appearance management among teacher education interns. Using the 4-point Likert scale and median interpretation, most items indicated either “Very High” or “High” levels of influence or engagement, suggesting that appearance plays a significant role in how interns perceive and manage themselves in both academic and social contexts.

A notable finding is the very high influence of financial constraints on clothing preferences (Median = 4.00), suggesting that budgetary limitations significantly shape interns' choices in attire. This supports the findings of Park and Kim (2021), who emphasized that economic constraints among college students significantly affect fashion consumption behavior, particularly in collectivist cultures where social approval is crucial.

Similarly, peer influence on clothing (Median = 4.00) and grooming (Median = 4.00) emerged as very high, highlighting the importance of social circles in determining how teacher education interns manage their appearance. As noted by Lee and Chae (2020), peer groups often serve as immediate social referents for university students, especially in appearance-related decisions, where conformity can foster group acceptance.

Societal demands also strongly influenced clothing choices (Median = 4.00) and moderately influenced grooming activities (Median = 3.50). This aligns with the work of Daniels and Gill (2022), who discussed how cultural and societal expectations continue to exert pressure on young adults to adhere to prevailing beauty norms, especially in semi-professional spaces like teacher training.

Religious and family restrictions registered a high influence (Medians = 3.00), suggesting these traditional structures still hold sway but to a lesser degree than peers and society at large. This resonates with the study by Alghamdi (2019), which highlighted how modern youth, while respecting familial and religious values, are increasingly asserting personal autonomy in appearance management.

Self-perception measures reflected very high levels of self-esteem and self- efficacy, such as “I feel that I have several good qualities” (Median = 4.00), “I am able to do things as well as most other people” (Median = 4.00), and “I feel I’m a person of equal worth, like others” (Median = 4.00). These findings are supported by research conducted by Neves et al. (2021), indicating that appearance management positively correlates with self-esteem among pre-service educators, as they navigate their dual identities as students and future professionals.

Moreover, respondents demonstrated high to very high engagement in proactive appearance behaviors, such as “I take care of my appearance as a healthy attitude towards life” (Median = 4.00), “I dress in order to look attractive” (Median = 4.00), and “My appearance is important to me” (Median = 4.00). These support the study by Arslantaş and Demirtaş-Madran (2022), which showed that university students view appearance as an integral part of their psychological well- being and interpersonal interactions.

However, more extreme behaviors—like excessive dieting (Median = 3.00), wearing revealing clothes (Median = 3.00), and bleaching or cosmetic procedures (Medians = 3.00 and 2.00, respectively)—showed only a high or moderate level of engagement, suggesting that while interns value appearance, they may draw ethical, cultural, or professional lines in how far they’re willing to go. This nuanced boundary aligns with the findings of Rahman and Masud (2020), who noted that teacher education students

often balance appearance enhancement with professional norms of modesty and respectability.

Interestingly, the statement “I dressed the way I want and I don't care” (Median = 4.00) indicates a perceived sense of autonomy in appearance management. This may reflect a generational shift toward self-expression, even within regulated academic environments.

Yet, the opposing median for “I don't pay attention to the way I look” (Median = 3.00) and “I wish I could have more respect for myself” (Median = 3.00) illustrates a

complex interplay between self-perception and societal feedback.

Overall, the data reveals that teacher education interns exhibit a strong inclination toward maintaining a socially acceptable and attractive appearance, influenced most significantly by financial, peer, and societal factors. These findings affirm appearance management as a dynamic psychosocial process, shaped by both internal self-concept and external societal norms, particularly salient for individuals preparing for professional roles in education.

Table 4 Level of Appearance Management Behavior Management Activities

No.	Statement	Median
1.	I am influenced by financial constraints in my clothing preferences	4.00
2.	I am influenced by my family's restrictions on my clothing preferences	3.00
3.	I am significantly influenced by my peers on my clothing preferences	4.00
4.	I am influenced by societal demands on my clothing preferences	4.00
5.	I am influenced by religious restrictions on my clothing preferences	3.00
6.	I am influenced by limited variety of clothing on my preferences	4.00
7.	I am influenced by financial constraints on my grooming activities	4.00
8.	I am influenced by my family's restrictions on my grooming activities	3.00
9.	I am influenced by my peers on my grooming activities	4.00
10.	I am influenced by societal demands on my grooming activities	3.50
11.	I am influenced by religious restrictions on my grooming activities	3.00
12.	I am significantly influenced by my peers in my appearance	4.00
13.	I feel that I have several good qualities	4.00
14.	I am able to do things as well as most other people	4.00
15.	I feel that I'm a person of equal worth, like others	4.00
16.	I take a positive attitude towards myself	5.00
17.	I think I am no good at all times	3.00
18.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of	3.00
19.	I certainly feel useless at times	3.00
20.	I wish I could have more respect for myself	3.00
21.	I take care of my appearance as a healthy attitude towards life	4.00
22.	I dress in order to look attractive	4.00
23.	My appearance is important to me	4.00
24.	I invest time on my appearance	4.00
25.	I invest resources on my appearance	4.00
26.	I dress to be recognized by others	3.00
27.	I dress the way I want and I don't care	4.00
28.	I don't pay attention to the way I look	3.00
29.	At times I diet excessively to enhance my appearance	3.00
30.	At times I wear revealing clothes to enhance my appearance	3.00
31.	At times I indecently expose some parts of my body	3.00
32.	I have utilized products for bleaching my skin color	3.00
33.	I have undergone a cosmetic procedure	2.00

➤ *Disparity in the Level of Appearance Management Behavior when Analyzed According to Gender*

Table 5 presents the analysis of the appearance management behavior on clothing and grooming among teacher education interns in Panabo City based on their gender. The results show a sum of squares for gender of 0.693 with 2 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 0.347 and an F-statistic of 1.27. The associated p-value is 0.285, which is greater than the standard significance level of 0.05.

The statistical analysis indicates that gender does not significantly influence the appearance management behavior of teacher education interns in terms of clothing and grooming ($p > 0.05$). As a result, the null hypothesis, asserting no significant difference in appearance management behavior when grouped by profile variables (specifically gender), is upheld. These results suggest that any apparent differences in how male and female interns manage their appearance are not statistically meaningful and are likely due to random factors.

This result indicates that both male and female interns generally exhibit similar levels of concern and behavior toward clothing and grooming during their internship. This could imply a shared understanding and standard of professional appearance across genders within the teacher

education field in Panabo City. It also reflects the possibility that institutional expectations and training may have created a uniform culture regarding appearance management regardless of gender identity.

Table 5 Significant Difference in the Level of Appearance Management Behavior when Analyzed According to Gender

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Gender	0.693	2	0.347	1.27	0.285
Residuals	37.453	137	0.273		

Disparity in the Level of Appearance Management Behavior when Analyzed According to Program/Major Table 6 summarizes the findings related to differences in appearance management behavior based on the respondents' academic programs or majors. The sum of squares for program/major is 1.47 across 4 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 0.367. The computed F-statistic is 1.35, with a corresponding p-value of 0.255.

affiliation does not significantly influence appearance management behavior in this group.

This finding suggests that regardless of their specialization (such as Math, English, Science, etc.), teacher education interns in Panabo City generally practice similar levels of appearance management behavior. This could be attributed to a common emphasis across all programs on maintaining professionalism during internships. It may also reflect the shared institutional culture or values promoted by the teacher education institutions in the city, where appearance and grooming are equally emphasized among all future educators.

The findings show no statistically significant difference ($p > 0.05$) in appearance management behavior among teacher education interns when considering their profile variables (programs/majors). This leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis, suggesting that program

Table 6 Significant Difference in the Level of Appearance Management Behavior when Analyzed According to Program/ Major

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Major/Program	1.47	4	0.367	1.35	0.255
Residuals	36.68	135	0.272		

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings presented herein serve as the foundation upon which conclusions and recommendations are formulated. It further engaged with existing literature, identifying areas of both agreement and divergence.

➤ Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Gender

The composition of respondents from the Institute of Teacher Education at Davao del Norte State College indicates a notable gender imbalance, with females comprising the majority of respondents at 65%. Conversely, male respondents constitute 30.0% of the total, reflecting a smaller but significant presence. Research indicates that women, more than men, engage in appearance management behaviors due to societal pressures and gender norms that place a higher value on women's physical appearance (Ngunu, 2021). This coheres with the finding that the majority of the respondents are female, potentially explaining the high prevalence of appearance management behaviors observed. Women's heightened focus on appearance management can be attributed to societal expectations and media portrayals that emphasize physical attractiveness as a key aspect of female identity and success (Trekels & Eggermont, 2017).

identities, or simply a reflection of individuals who may not feel comfortable identifying within the traditional male/female binary. This phenomenon manifest the growing recognition of diverse gender identities and the importance of inclusivity in educational research and policy (Mayo, 2022).

Succinctly, the gender composition of the respondents and their appearance management behaviors reflect broader societal and institutional norms. The professional identity of teachers often involves adhering to specific standards of dress and grooming, which are seen as integral to maintaining professionalism and authority in the classroom (Sampson, 2016).

➤ Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Major/Program

The predominance of Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education (BTLED) students and their potential influence on appearance management behaviors can be discussed in the context of several studies. The high number of BTLED students suggests they may serve as a reference group, shaping collective practices and trends. For instance, research by Altan & Altintas (2017) expressed that individuals in vocational and technical education fields often exhibit a heightened awareness of professional appearance due to the practical and hands-on nature of their training, which directly translates to real-world job environments. This elucidate why BTLED students show distinctive appearance management behaviors—they are preparing for

careers that require a practical and professional image.

An under-representation of students from programs such as Bachelor of Science in Education (BSED) English, Mathematics, Science, and Communication suggests a potential moderation of the emphasis placed on appearance management. While still relevant, this focus might not be as pronounced or uniform as observed among students enrolled in Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education (BTLED) programs. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) justifies this variation. The theory posits that an individual's social group affiliations influence their behaviors, including appearance management. Students enrolled in different programs may have distinct norms and expectations regarding appearance, resulting in a lesser degree of uniformity in their appearance-related behaviors.

The distribution of respondents across different majors ensures a sample that reflects the diverse academic disciplines offered by the Institute of Teacher Education at Davao del Norte State College. The lifestyle demands and professional expectations inherent to each program, exemplified by the practical and hands-on nature of the Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education (BTLED) program, appear to influence the development of distinct appearance behaviors. These observed variations likely reflect the differing levels of importance placed on professional image and preparation for real-world work environments within the curricula of each program.

➤ *Level of Appearance Management Behavior in Teacher Education*

The levels of appearance management behavior among teacher education interns, as revealed in the findings of the data, presents discernment into how teacher interns perceive and manage their appearance. This yields instructive insights into the intersections of personal identity, professional practice, and cultural influences within educational contexts. The results indicate that interns place a high value on self-perception, cultural sensitivity, and authenticity in their appearance choices, which have substantial implications for their development as educators and their interactions within diverse school environments.

One central implication of the study is the insistence on positive self-regard and satisfaction among teacher education interns regarding their appearance. The high ratings on statements reflecting self-affirmation and satisfaction with overall self-image indicate a strong psychological foundation that may contribute positively to their professional demeanor and interactions with students and colleagues. This is consistent with psychological ideas put out by Maslow (1954) and Rosenberg (1965), which contend that resilience, motivation, and interpersonal effectiveness may all be improved by having a high sense of self-worth. According to studies by Grogan (2008) and Tiggemann (2015), people who have a favorable self-perception also tend to behave and think healthier about how they look. In the context of teacher education, where self-efficacy and confidence are essential for successful teaching practices (Bandura, 1997), motivating interns to have a good

self-image may improve their presence in the classroom and interactions with students.

Furthermore, the data findings indicate that interns strongly concur on a conservative approach to appearance enhancement methods, evidenced by their disapproval of revealing apparel and cosmetic procedures. This reinforces the idea put out by Swami & Tovee (2008) that professionalism is about respecting professional standards and making an effort to portray oneself in a way that is consistent with social norms and educational ideals. On the other hand, it contrasts with studies on appearance management in other professions, where pressures to conform to specific beauty ideals or to use extreme measures for enhancement may be more pronounced (Grogan, 2008; Tiggemann, 2015). A subtle balancing act between individual expression and professional requirements is also reflected in the interns' moderate inclination of their tendency toward dressing for appearance. According to studies on impression management in educational settings, teachers set adjustments between authenticity and conformity when it comes to how they dress in order to build rapport with students and preserve their credibility (Jones & Griffiths, 2015). Hence it implies that teacher education interns are mindful of both their individual preferences and the expectations of their professional role.

The results further stress the interns' sophisticated strategy for appearance management in light of their cultural and personal convictions. Their neutral responses towards items concerning religious restrictions on clothing and grooming activities indicate a respectful acknowledgment of diversity within the cohort. In educational situations, where instructors must negotiate various student populations and build inclusive learning environments, cultural sensitivity is becoming more and more acknowledged of greater value (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Sharma & Zhang, 2018). Teachers who are culturally competent in their dress choices have an easier time building relationships with students from different backgrounds, which increases their efficacy and fosters inclusion in the classroom.

Evidently, the absence of "Strongly Disagree" responses implies that appearance management strategies are generally accepted and not flatly rejected by the cohort. However, this inference contradicts the findings of Jones and Griffiths' (2015) study, which found instances of resistance or ambivalence concerning appearance management norms among many professional groups. This discrepancy signifies the importance of considering the specific cohort being studied, as attitudes towards appearance can vary depending on external and internal different factors.

➤ *Disparity in the Level of Appearance Management Behavior when Analyzed According to Gender*

As detailed in the study there are no statistically significant differences in appearance management behavior between male and female teacher education interns at Davao del Norte State College. The implications are influential

across various dimensions, challenging the presumptions that are often held regarding gender-specific appearance management practices among teacher interns. In social psychology, it's recognized that societal expectations and gender roles often influence how individuals present themselves.

Traditionally, women have been stereotypically associated with greater emphasis on grooming and attire compared to men (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). However, this study asserts that within the specific context of teacher education in Davao del Norte State College, these gender-based factors, if present at all, do not reach statistical significance. Hence, it dispels stereotypical notions and argues that the variability in how individuals manage their appearance are based on personal preferences and professional identity rather than rigid gender conventions.

Certain occupational situations, including teaching, may exhibit less obvious inequalities between these groups, according to recent studies. The results add to the theoretical discourse in educational contexts, where people's judgments of expertise and authority of an individual are influenced by how they portray themselves (Tillman & Brown, 2019). It is essential for teacher interns who are getting ready to start their careers to comprehend these dynamics.

The findings from this study also corroborate the assertions of Frith and Gleeson (2004), who claimed that while men and women might approach appearance management differently, the overall engagement in such behaviors is not significantly divergent when considering professional settings. This means that teacher education interns, irrespective of gender, are likely adhering to similar standards of professional appearance, influenced more by the expectations of their role as educators than by gender-specific norms. Therefore, the study's results refute the notion that a teaching intern's appearance is purely influenced by their gender.

➤ *Disparity in the Level of Appearance Management Behavior when Analyzed According to Program/Major*

The study reveals that there is no statistically significant difference in the appearance management behavior on clothing and grooming among teacher education interns in Panabo City when grouped according to their major or program.

The findings of this study support the null hypothesis, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in the assessment of teacher education interns' appearance management behavior when grouped according to their profile variables. This suggests that regardless of their specific specialization within teacher education, the interns in this study exhibit similar levels of concern and engagement in appearance management practices. This uniformity may stem from a shared understanding of the professional norms within the field of education, where a presentable and professional demeanor is likely perceived as a consistent expectation across all teacher training programs. However, some studies contrast these findings. Even within

programs, expectations around appearance might differ based on subject area. Foucault's concept of "dressage" suggests schools function as disciplinary institutions, and clothing becomes a tool for shaping teacher identity. Drawing on critical discourse analysis (CDA), Rutherford et al. (2015) argue that aspiring teachers (PSTs) internalize the idea of "looking like a teacher" as part of their professional socialization. This reinforces the notion that appearance expectations might vary across programs and subject areas.

Additionally, it implies that while professional standards are implemented, the cultural norms within specific majors can still influence appearance management to some extent. On the contrary, research by Korthagen et al., (2006) points out that teacher education programs are progressively focusing a shared set of professional practices, including appearance management which means that irrespective of major or subject area, teacher interns may be required to follow a standard dress code or comply to specific appearance guidelines. In a nutshell, appearance management practices are not differentiated by major or program; all interns adhere to the standard policies. The tendency toward consistent professional standards means teacher preparation programs are intended to help them develop a unified professional identity that eliminates disparities in appearance management practices.

Further articles reinforce the importance of appearance management as part of forming a professional identity for teachers. Georgia Southern University (2024), argues that teacher follow a shared dress code and grooming standards to project competence and authority, which are crucial for managing a classroom and earning respect. This practice is often mandated by school policies that require a professional appearance, minimizing variances that might otherwise arise from different program cultures. This consistency suggests that interns adopt professional appearance behaviors early in their training and maintain these standards throughout their internships.

➤ *Action Plan Aimed at Enhancing Appearance Management Behavior Among Teacher Education Interns*

Grounded in research findings, this action plan aims to foster consistent, confident, and professional appearance management practices among teacher education interns—while honoring individuality and inclusivity across all gender identities and academic programs.

Table 7 Action Plan Aimed at Enhancing Appearance Management Behavior Among Teacher Education Interns

Time Frame	Objective	Strategy	Activities	Cost	Persons Involved	Risk	Mitigation
September 2025	Encourage reflection and clarify appearance expectations and practices across diverse student identities	Guided Discussion Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate a safe and inclusive discussion forum led by a faculty advisor or counselor - Promote peer sharing of appearance-related challenges and strategies - Reinforce that appearance management is not influenced by gender or program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incentives - Light refreshments or tokens of participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faculty Advisor - Program Coordinator - Interns 	Low engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use inclusive language and relatable prompts - Offer incentives - Use peer facilitators to improve comfort level
October 2025	Reinforce awareness of professional appearance while encouraging authentic self-expression	Awareness Campaign and Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct workshops focused on maintaining a professional image while respecting individuality and cultural context - Include guidelines on conservative yet expressive dressing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Materials (handouts, visuals) - Speaker honoraria (if needed) - Staff time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Program Coordinators - Faculty - Guest Professionals - Peer Leaders 	Budget limitations Scheduling conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborate with existing programs to share resources - Offer multiple time slots or asynchronous options
			and grooming				
Nov–Dec 2025	Institutionalize inclusive, consistent, and adaptable professional appearance guidelines	Policy Revision and Handbook Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-create a Professional Appearance Handbook with intern input - Include visual samples reflecting different styles, body types, and cultural influences - Promote the idea that professionalism and self-care go hand in hand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Optional printing - Design/editing software (if digital) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher Educators - School Administrators - Select Intern Representatives 	Over-standardization may stifle self-expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frame the policy as adaptable - Emphasize flexibility and respect for individual identity while ensuring professional integrity.

V. CONCLUSION

This study assessed the appearance management behavior among teacher education interns at Davao del Norte State College. The study's conceptual foundation was informed by several theories, including Goffman's (1959) theory of impression management, Self-Presentation Theory (Schlenker, 1980), Body Image Theory, and Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977). Among these, Goffman's theory of impression management provides the most salient framework for interpreting the results of the study. Goffman posits that individuals engage in a form of dramaturgy in everyday interactions, managing the impressions they give off to conform to expected social roles. This aligns with the observed behavior of teacher education interns who consciously manage their appearance to project professionalism and competence during their internship—a “front stage” performance that adheres to the expectations of the teaching profession.

The analysis revealed that a strong sense of positive self-image and adherence to professional appearance standards was consistent among interns, regardless of gender or academic program. Their appearance choices—including clothing and grooming—were oriented towards maintaining a conservative and professional image, underscoring their awareness of the expectations tied to their temporary but performative role as educators. This supports Goffman's (1959) idea that individuals tailor their outward presentation to fit the social context, in this case, the educational environment, thereby affirming the relevance of impression management theory in understanding appearance management behaviors. Furthermore, the absence of statistically significant differences in appearance management based on gender or academic specialization suggests that professional identity may exert a more uniform influence on interns' appearance behaviors than personal or academic demographics. This consistency further underscores the internalization of professional norms—consistent with the Social Learning Theory (Bandura,

1977)—as teacher education interns appear to model their behavior on mentors, peers, or institutional expectations within the professional teaching environment.

Consequently, the study tested the alternative hypotheses proposing that appearance management behavior on clothing and grooming significantly differs based on gender and program/major in relation to the duration of internship placement. However, the results showed no statistically significant differences, indicating that the proposed relationships were not supported. This suggests that teacher education interns generally maintain consistent appearance management practices throughout their internship, regardless of gender or academic specialization.

It is important to acknowledge that this study has limitations. To enhance the generalizability of the findings, it is suggested that future research should include a broader range of institutions and geographical locations in order to explore possible variations in appearance management approaches across contexts. Furthermore, the current study relied on quantitative and questionnaires to collect data. While this technique resulted in beneficial findings, further in-depth qualitative research, such as interviews or focus groups, might provide a more complete understanding of teacher interns' actual experiences and motivations for participating in various appearance management approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After a thorough analysis of data, assessment, and considering the foregoing findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are presented:

Within the next academic year, Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) should integrate a mandatory module on appearance management and professional grooming into practicum orientations or values formation programs to reinforce the importance of teacher image and professional identity among teacher interns.

School administrators and policy makers in education should develop and implement culturally sensitive and inclusive dress code policies that consider religious, socioeconomic, and cultural differences in appearance management by the end of the current academic year, ensuring alignment with 21st-century professional standards in education.

Teacher educators should embed appearance management discussions in at least one professional education course each semester, using activities such as reflection essays, peer discussions, or case studies to encourage critical thinking among teacher interns about societal expectations, gender norms, and professional style.

Supervising teachers and cooperating schools should conduct at least one mentoring session per internship cycle focused on appearance management and professional presence, guiding teacher interns on how to align their physical presentation with the school culture and established professional norms.

Teacher interns should be encouraged to consult with at least two mentors or supervising teachers during their internship to help them develop a professional wardrobe and self-image that balance institutional expectations with personal comfort and confidence.

Future researchers should conduct expanded studies across multiple regions and institutions to examine appearance management behavior among teacher interns in diverse socio-cultural settings, incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups to gain deeper insight into lived experiences.

The community and public stakeholders, in partnership with TEIs and local school boards, should promote awareness campaigns at least once per academic year to highlight the role of teacher interns as community role models, linking positive appearance management behaviors with strengthened public trust and respect for educators

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