



The Influence of Teachers' Professional Dressing on Students' Learning Outcomes in Public Secondary Schools in Busega District, Simiyu- Tanzania

Ogada Paskali Daimon^{1*}, Felista Tangi², Georgina Mugisha³

¹ Busega District

^{2,3} Department of Education Foundations, St. Augustine University of Tanzania

Correspondence e-mail * : ogadapd@gmail.com

Abstract : This paper evaluated the influence of teachers' professional dressing on students' learning outcomes in public secondary schools in Busega District, Simiyu- Tanzania. The study was guided by Ajzen's (1985) Theory of Planned Behavior, used a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design. The target population was 1,675 individuals, including students, teachers, school leaders, WEOs, a DSEO, and a TSC district leader. A sample of 182 respondents was selected 92 students and 80 teachers via stratified and simple random sampling, and 10 administrators purposively. Data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, with validity ensured by expert review and reliability confirmed via test-retest, yielding coefficients between 0.7 and 0.95. The study found that teachers' professional dressing positively influences students' learning outcomes by enhancing classroom focus, discipline, motivation, and respect, with both teachers and students acknowledging its impact. Teachers' neat and appropriate appearance also sets a strong example, reinforcing authority and promoting a positive learning environment. The study concluded that teachers' adherence to professional dress significantly contributes to student engagement, behavior, and academic performance in public secondary schools in Busega District. The study recommended that schools should enforce clear professional dress codes and provide guidance and training to ensure teachers' appearance consistently supports effective teaching and learning.

Keyword : Teachers, Professional Dressing, Students' Learning Outcomes, Public Secondary Schools

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers' professional appearance is an important component of their overall professional code of conduct, which establishes standards for behavior, ethics, and responsibilities in schools (Forster & Maxwell, 2023; Boniface & Ngalawa, 2020). Dressing professionally communicates authority, sets clear expectations for students, and models respect and discipline. When teachers consistently adhere to professional attire, it contributes to a positive learning environment where students understand the importance of education and classroom norms. In this way, teacher appearance is part of the hidden curriculum that indirectly shapes students' attitudes, behaviors, and engagement in learning (Kandavel & Joseph, 2024).

Teacher professionalism, including attire, is closely linked to students' academic outcomes. Research shows that when teachers dress professionally, they enhance classroom discipline, motivate students, and reinforce the significance of education (Zhao, 2022; Gunawardena, 2024). Professional dressing is not only symbolic but also functional; it sets a tone for seriousness and focus, which encourages students to engage actively in lessons. In secondary schools, where students are adolescent and more sensitive to social cues, teachers' attire serves as a visual guide for expected behavior and learning priorities (Ladica & Osias, 2024).

Historical and international perspectives emphasize the role of teacher appearance in professional conduct. Philosophers and educational theorists, from Socrates and John Dewey to modern constructivist approaches, highlight the importance of discipline, role modeling, and classroom management (Nouh, 2023; Vaghela & Parsana, 2024). In Indonesia, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Kenya, teacher codes of conduct explicitly include professional attire as part of broader ethical and pedagogical expectations, reinforcing its role in promoting respect, discipline, and effective learning (Olive & Andala, 2022; Zafer et al., 2024). These frameworks support the idea that appearance is not superficial but integral to establishing authority and fostering a positive school culture.

In Tanzania, the Teachers' Service Commission Act No. 25 of 2015 mandates that teachers uphold professional ethics, including proper appearance, punctuality, and behavior (Arnold & Mwila, 2022; Komba & Mukadi, 2021). Studies indicate that breaches in professional conduct, including poor dressing, contribute to classroom indiscipline, reduced student motivation, and lower academic performance (Boniface & Ngalawa, 2020). Inconsistent professional behavior among teachers in Busega District disrupts classroom order and weakens the learning environment, emphasizing the need for adherence to professional dress codes

as a mechanism to reinforce discipline and effective teaching.

Overall, teachers' professional dressing is closely connected to students' learning outcomes. Proper attire signals professionalism, fosters respect, and encourages students to adopt similar attitudes toward learning. In Busega District, ensuring that teachers consistently adhere to professional dress codes can improve classroom management, student motivation, and academic achievement. As part of a broader professional code of conduct, dressing appropriately strengthens the learning environment, providing students with clear behavioral models and contributing to higher educational quality in public secondary schools (Arnold & Mwila, 2022).

Specific Objective

This study is intended to evaluate how teachers' adherence to appropriate dressing contributes to students' learning outcomes in public secondary schools

Theoretical Review

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) posits that human behavior is guided by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, which together shape intentions and subsequent actions (Ajzen, 1985; Madden et al., 1992). While attitudes reflect an individual's positive or negative evaluation of a behavior, subjective norms capture perceived social expectations, and perceived

behavioral control represents confidence in one's ability to perform the behavior despite obstacles. In the context of education, TPB helps explain how teachers' adherence to professional dress codes is influenced by their personal beliefs about the importance of dressing professionally, the social and institutional expectations placed on them, and their confidence in maintaining these standards. By modeling appropriate attire, teachers set behavioral norms that influence student perceptions, classroom discipline, and engagement, ultimately contributing to improved learning outcomes. Despite its focus on rational, planned behavior, the theory underscores the importance of intentional professional conduct, such as proper dressing, in fostering a positive and effective learning environment.

Empirical Review

Globally, research shows that teachers' appearance, behavior, and competence play a crucial role in shaping students' learning outcomes. In Hungary, Hajdú and Molnár (2024) found that formal and elegant teacher attire creates positive student impressions, suggesting traits like professionalism and consideration, whereas casual attire signals adaptability and informality. Similarly, Jayasooriya et al. (2020) in Sri Lanka demonstrated that workplace dress codes influence performance, efficiency, and employee satisfaction,

indicating that professional presentation can boost engagement and productivity. In Kenya, Ngumuta et al. (2024) highlighted that positive school culture, including shared teacher norms and high academic standards, improves students' performance, showing that teachers' professional conduct and presentation help shape classroom norms and student attitudes. These studies collectively emphasize that teacher professionalism and appearance serve as visible models that influence student behavior and learning globally.

Teacher behavior and interactions are equally critical. Meta-analyses and empirical studies from Turkey, Australia, Nigeria, Uganda, and Tanzania (Dai, 2024; Rabo, 2022; Milly & Moses, 2024; Paschal & Mkulu, 2020) show that positive teacher-student relationships enhance student motivation, engagement, socio-emotional development, and academic performance. Conversely, negative teacher-student interactions lead to classroom instability and hinder learning. These findings indicate that teacher respect, communication, and professionalism create a supportive learning environment, where students are more likely to adopt positive behaviors and perform well academically.

In the Tanzanian context, studies have highlighted the impact of teacher conduct and professionalism on student learning. Mohamed (2022) reported that teacher misconduct,

including absenteeism, tardiness, and unprofessional behaviors, adversely affects students' academic performance in Urambo District. Arnold and Mwila (2022) specifically examined Busega District, finding that unethical behaviors such as inappropriate attire, indiscipline, and poor work ethics significantly undermine teaching quality and classroom order. These findings suggest that teacher professionalism, including adherence to appropriate dressing, is closely linked to student engagement, motivation, and overall academic outcomes in Tanzanian public secondary schools.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed research approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to collect, analyze, and integrate data, allowing for cross-validation of findings and a comprehensive understanding of how teachers' professional code of conduct influences students' learning outcomes (Cheung et al., 2022; Creswell, 2014). An explanatory sequential design was used, where quantitative data were first collected to identify patterns in the relationship between teachers' professionalism and student performance, followed by qualitative interviews to explore the underlying reasons and contextual factors (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The target population comprised 1,675 individuals: 1,230 students, 403

teachers, 25 school heads, 1 District Secondary Education Officer (DSEO), 15 Ward Education Officers (WEOs), and representatives from the district Teachers Service Commission (TSC). Using Yamane's formula and 20% sampling, the final sample size included 92 students, 80 teachers, 5 heads of schools, 3 WEOs, 1 DSEO, and 1 TSC district leader, totaling 182 respondents. Purposive sampling was applied for administrators, while stratified and simple random sampling were used for teachers and students, ensuring gender representation. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews for administrators and questionnaires for teachers and students, with validity confirmed by expert review and reliability coefficients ranging from 0.7 to 0.8. Ethical considerations included informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and academic integrity, ensuring the credibility and ethical conduct of the research (Akaranga & Makau, 2016; Pacho, 2015).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Adherence to Appropriate Dressing Contributes to Students' Learning Outcomes

The study aimed to evaluate whether teachers' adherence to appropriate dressing contributes to students' learning outcomes in public secondary schools in Busega district. The data for this study objective were collected by using a 5-point Likert scale.

Respondents who were teachers were requested to rate the statements provided in the Likert scale based on teachers' adherence to appropriate dressing and students' learning outcomes. The data based on this objective were analyzed using frequency and percentage. The researcher collected data from teachers and students who were given questionnaires. The interview guide question was conducted with the heads of schools, WEOs, TSC leaders, and DSEO.

Table 1.
Teachers' Responses to Appropriate Dressing Contributes to Students' Learning Outcomes (n=80)

Key: SA-strongly disagree, A-agree, N-neutral, D-disagree, SD-strongly disagree

Items	S		A		N		D		S	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
When I professionally, my students take my lessons more seriously	4	56	2	33	5	6	2	2	1	1
	5	.3	7	.8	3		5		3	
By dressing appropriately, I set a good example for my students.	3	41	3	45	6	7	2	2	3	3
	3	.3	6		5		5		8	
My neat and professional appearance helps me in creating a focused learning environment.	4	53	2	31	1	12	2	2	-	-
	3	.8	5	.3	0	.5	5			
I notice that students show	3	42	3	37	1	17	1	1	1	1
	4	.5	0	.5	4	.5	3		3	

interest in my lesson and more respect during teaching and learning when I dress appropriately for school.	My	3	43	2	35	1	16	1	1.	3	3.
	proper dressing contributes to improving the overall classroom atmosphere and student behavior.	5	.8	8		3	.3		3		8
I find that students perform better when I maintain a professional appearance in class.	I find that	4	61	3	38	-	-	-	-	-	-
	By dressing well, I inspire my students to take their studies more seriously	9	.3	1	.8						
		4	57	3	37	-	-	3	3.	1	1.
		6	.5	0	.5				8		3

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 1 shows how teachers responded to statements about the effect of their dressing on students' learning. Their answers ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Professional Dressing Encourages Students to Pay Attention to the Lesson

A majority of the teachers feel that dressing professionally helps

students pay more attention to their lessons. Specifically, 45 teachers (56.3%) strongly agreed and 27 teachers (33.8%) agreed, making a total of 90.1% positive responses. Only 5 teachers (6.3%) were neutral, 2 teachers (2.5%) disagreed, and 1 teacher (1.3%) strongly disagreed with this idea. The strong agreement indicates that teachers believe their appearance influences how students value their lessons. When teachers dress smartly, it is likely to create an atmosphere of professionalism that encourages students to focus and respect the learning process. Moreover, an interview response from one of the heads of schools showed:

“As a school leader, I have observed that when teachers dress professionally, it sets a positive and respectful tone in the classroom. Students tend to view their teachers as role models and are more likely to take the lessons seriously when they see a high standard of appearance. It helps create a focused and disciplined learning environment, showing that the teacher values the subject matter as well as the students. Professional dressing also enhances the teacher's confidence, which positively affects their teaching delivery”. (Interviewee 1, July 2025).

This implies that when teachers maintain a professional appearance, it positively affects students' attitudes and behavior toward learning. It encourages students to take their lessons more seriously, promotes

respect in the classroom, and enhances the overall learning environment. Professional dressing also reflects the teacher's commitment, which can inspire students to show greater interest and effort in their studies. Supporting this, Hajdú and Molnár (2024) indicate a complex relationship between people's clothing choices and the perceptions they create. Their study suggests that a preference for more formal and elegant clothing is often associated with traits like consideration and caution, while a preference for athletic or casual clothing is linked to adaptability and forthrightness. These findings offer valuable insight into the various factors that shape first impressions in educational settings, highlighting the importance of professors' dress standards as part of classroom professionalism and the broader learning experience.

Dressing Appropriately Sets a Good Example for Students

Regarding whether dressing appropriately sets a positive example, 33 teachers (41.3%) strongly agreed and 36 teachers (45%) agreed, totaling 86.3% agreement. A smaller number of teachers were neutral (6 teachers, 7.5%) or disagreed (2 teachers, 2.5%) or strongly disagreed (3 teachers, 3.8%). This shows that most teachers feel their dressing influences students by providing a role model for professionalism. When students see their teachers dress well, they may be encouraged to adopt similar habits,

promoting a respectful and orderly school culture. In addition, one of the heads of school demonstrates:

"Dressing appropriately demonstrates professionalism and sets a visible standard for both staff and students. It reflects respect for the learning environment and the seriousness of our shared purpose. When students see school leaders presenting themselves well, it subtly reinforces the expectations we have for their own conduct and appearance. It also fosters a sense of pride and belonging within the school community. Ultimately, our attire communicates our values before we even speak". (Interviewee 2, July 2025).

This shows that school leaders play a crucial role in shaping the school's culture through their actions and appearance. When they dress appropriately, it reinforces the importance of professionalism, self-respect, and attention to detail, which in turn sets a standard for both teachers and students. Appropriate dress by leaders communicates clear expectations regarding behavior, discipline, and presentation, contributing to a positive and focused learning environment. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) supports this, suggesting that individuals' behaviors are guided by their attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived control over actions. In this context, when school leaders model professional dress and conduct, they help establish and reinforce social

norms within the school. Their behavior not only shapes the expectations of teachers and students but also creates a culture where professionalism, accountability, and academic focus are valued. Studies in educational leadership emphasize that visible modeling by leaders is a powerful tool for influencing organizational behavior, improving teacher conduct, and fostering an environment conducive to learning (Hajdú & Molnár, 2024; Mohamed, 2022).

Neat Appearance Helps Create a Focused Learning Environment

For the statement about neat and professional appearance creating focus, 43 teachers (53.8%) strongly agreed and 25 teachers (31.3%) agreed, summing up to 85.1% positive responses. Ten teachers (12.5%) were neutral, and only two teachers (2.5%) disagreed. No one strongly disagreed. This suggests that when teachers maintain a tidy and professional look, it helps students concentrate better in class. The teacher's appearance seems to set a tone of seriousness, reducing distractions and improving classroom focus. These findings align with Ivery (2019), who noted that professional attire in educational settings is associated with perceived competence, discipline, and authority factors that help establish an environment conducive to focused learning. This interpretation is further supported by the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen,

1991), which posits that individuals' behaviors are influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In this context, teachers' professional appearance reflects a positive attitude toward teaching, aligns with normative expectations of professionalism, and signals a high level of control and responsibility. These behavioral cues influence students' perceptions and responses, encouraging them to adopt more focused and respectful behaviors within the classroom.

Teachers Appropriately Dressing Makes Them Gain Respect from Students

Regarding respect, 34 teachers (42.5%) strongly agreed and 30 teachers (37.5%) agreed that students are more respectful toward teachers who dress appropriately. Fourteen teachers (17.5%) were neutral, while only one teacher (1.3%) disagreed and one (1.3%) strongly disagreed. The majority view indicates that proper dressing by teachers can lead to better respect from students. Respect is key to maintaining order and good behavior, so teachers' appearance may influence how students behave and engage in class. Besides, one of the interviewees said:

"I have found that students tend to show more respect when teachers dress professionally. It sends a clear message that we take our roles seriously and are here to create a focused learning environment. Personally, I make it a point to

model this standard because I believe appearance influences perception. When teachers look prepared and polished, students are more likely to respond with attentiveness and respect. It is not about fashion; it is about setting the tone for learning and professionalism". (Interviewee 3, July 2025).

This implies that the way teachers dress directly influences students' attitudes, behavior, and overall classroom climate. Professional attire communicates authority, credibility, and sets clear behavioral boundaries, which helps students understand the expectations within the learning environment. When both school leaders and teachers consistently model professional dress, it fosters a respectful, disciplined, and structured environment that supports teaching and learning. This perspective aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that an individual's behavior is guided by their attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In this context, teachers' decision to dress professionally is shaped by their belief that such attire enhances teaching effectiveness (attitude), awareness of school expectations and social norms regarding professionalism (subjective norms), and confidence in maintaining professional standards (perceived control). Consequently, their professional appearance positively shapes students' perceptions, promotes

respectful classroom interactions, and supports effective teaching and learning. Empirical studies corroborate this link: Hajdú and Molnár (2024) found that formal attire positively influenced students' perceptions of teacher credibility, while Mohamed (2022) emphasized that teacher conduct, including professional appearance, affects student engagement and learning outcomes.

Proper Dressing Improves Classroom Atmosphere and Student Behavior

For the effect of dressing on classroom atmosphere and student behavior, 35 teachers (43.8%) strongly agreed and 28 teachers (35%) agreed. Thirteen teachers (16.3%) were neutral, and a small number disagreed (1 teacher, 1.3%) or strongly disagreed (3 teachers, 3.8%). Most teachers believe that dressing well helps create a positive environment and improves student behavior. This means that professional appearance contributes not just to how students feel about their teacher, but also how they act in the classroom. Also, the conducted interview displays:

"I believe proper dressing significantly improves the classroom atmosphere and student behavior. When teachers and staff dress appropriately, it creates a sense of professionalism that students can easily recognize and respond to. This professionalism helps set clear expectations not just for appearance but also for conduct and attitude. I've noticed that in

environments where the dress code is respected, classrooms tend to be more focused and disciplined. It shows students that we value the learning space and expect the same respect from them “. (Interviewee 4, July 2025).

This illustrates that dressing properly is more than just about appearance; it impacts the overall environment and student mindset. When teachers model professionalism, students are more likely to adopt positive behaviors and attitudes. It helps create a respectful, calm, and productive classroom atmosphere. Ultimately, proper dress supports the school's mission to provide a quality educational experience. This aligns with Arnold and Mwila (2022), who emphasized that improving teachers' working conditions, including reinforcing the teacher code of conduct through induction programs, can help reduce indiscipline in schools and foster stronger, more respectful relationships between teachers and head teachers. Their findings underline how professional behavior, including appearance, plays a key role in shaping effective learning environments.

Professional Dressing of Teachers Leads to Better Performance of The Students

This statement had the highest agreement: 49 teachers (61.3%) strongly agreed and 31 teachers (38.8%) agreed, meaning 100% of teachers responded positively. No neutral, disagree, or

strongly disagree answers were recorded. This unanimous agreement strongly suggests that teachers believe their professional appearance positively affects student performance. It might encourage students to work harder or pay more attention, knowing their teacher values professionalism. Likewise, one of the interviewees asserted:

“As a leader at TSC, I have observed that students tend to perform better when their teachers dress professionally. Professional attire helps establish authority and earns students' respect, which translates into better classroom engagement. When teachers present themselves well, it sets a tone of seriousness and commitment to education. This, in turn, motivates students to take their studies more seriously. I always encourage teachers to maintain professional dress because it positively influences both teaching effectiveness and student outcomes”. (TSC Leader, July 2025).

This implies that teacher appearance plays a significant role in shaping student attitudes toward learning. Professional dress helps build respect and authority, which are crucial for classroom management. When students respect their teachers, they are more likely to stay focused and put effort into their work. Ultimately, this creates a conducive environment for academic success and overall student performance. This is supported by

Ivery (2019), who emphasized that professional attire among teachers contributes to a respectful and structured classroom atmosphere, reinforcing the teacher's role as an authority figure and positively influencing student discipline and engagement.

Teachers Who Dress Well Inspire Students to Take Their Subject Seriously

Finally, when asked if teachers' dressing inspires students to value education, 46 teachers (57.5%) strongly agreed and 30 teachers (37.5%) agreed. Only 3 teachers (3.8%) disagreed, and 1 teacher (1.3%) strongly disagreed, with no neutral responses. The vast majority agree that teachers' appearance can motivate students to take their learning seriously. This inspiration may help improve student attitudes, leading to better effort and success in school. Additionally, one of the interviewees said:

"As a school leader, I have observed that teachers who dress well naturally inspire students to take their education seriously. Professional attire signals to students that learning is a priority and that the classroom is a place for focus and respect. When teachers demonstrate this level of commitment through their appearance, it sets a powerful example. Students tend to mirror the seriousness and discipline that teachers project. Dressing well is a simple but effective way to encourage students to value their

education". (Interviewee 8, July 2025).

This shows that a teacher's appearance has a direct impact on shaping student attitudes towards learning. When teachers model professionalism, it helps students understand the importance of education. It encourages respect for both the teacher and the learning process. Ultimately, it contributes to creating a culture of seriousness and dedication in the school. Likewise, Kerimova (2025) emphasizes that visible cues such as professional attire serve as behavioral signals that influence students' perceptions and motivation, encouraging respect for both the teacher and the learning process. Ultimately, such consistent demonstration of professionalism helps cultivate a school culture marked by seriousness, dedication, and academic commitment.

Additionally, students were also given questionnaires to respond on the statements concerning teachers' adherence to dressing code and their contribution to students' learning outcomes. Their responses are presented in table 2.

Table 2.
Students' Responses to Appropriate Dressing Contributes to Students' Learning Outcomes (n=92)

Key: SA-strongly disagree, A-agree, N-neutral, D-disagree, SD-strongly disagree

Items	S		A		N		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
When my teacher dress professionally I take my lesson more seriously.	3	3.3	4	4.3	1	1.1	2	2.2	-	-
When my teacher's dress neat and professionally appearance helps to create a disciplined and focused learning environment.	3	3.3	4	4.3	1	1.1	1	1.1	-	-
When my teacher dress appropriately, I am more motivated to engage in learning.	4	4.3	3	3.3	1	1.1	-	-	1	1.1
I perform better academically when my	3	3.3	3	3.3	4	4.3	1	1.1	2	2.2

teacher adheres to a professional dress code.

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 2 presents the responses of 92 participants regarding the contribution of teachers' appropriate dressing to learning outcomes. On the first item, "Teachers' adherence to appropriate dressing positively contributes to students' learning outcomes," 31 respondents (33.7%) strongly agreed, 46 (50%) agreed, 13 (14.1%) were neutral, and 2 (2.2%) disagreed, with no respondents strongly disagreeing. For the second item, "Teachers' professional attire helps create a disciplined and focused learning environment," 33 respondents (35.9%) strongly agreed, 46 (50%) agreed, 12 (13%) were neutral, and only 1 respondent (1.1%) disagreed, while none strongly disagreed. These responses indicate a strong overall agreement that teachers' appearance contributes positively to the learning atmosphere and discipline in the school environment.

These findings are supported by Hajdú and Molnár (2024), who emphasize the complex relationship between clothing choices and the perceptions they create. Their research indicates that formal and elegant attire is often associated with traits such as consideration and caution qualities that are desirable in a teacher and likely to foster respect and attentiveness among

learners. In this context, the respondents' agreement reflects recognition that professional attire helps establish authority and creates a structured classroom environment conducive to learning. Furthermore, Ngumuta et al. (2024) support this notion by highlighting how positive cultural elements within schools such as shared professional norms and high-performance expectations contribute to improved academic achievement. Appropriate dressing by teachers can be viewed as part of these positive norms, reinforcing standards of professionalism and discipline that influence student behavior and performance. Together, these studies affirm that the professional image projected by teachers, including how they dress, plays a meaningful role in shaping student engagement, classroom culture, and ultimately, learning outcomes.

Regarding the third item, "When teachers dress appropriately, respondents are more motivated to engage in learning," 46 (50%) strongly agreed, 32 (34.8%) agreed, 13 (14.1%) were neutral, none disagreed, and only 1 respondent (1.1%) strongly disagreed. In the fourth item, "Respondents perform better academically when teachers adhere to a professional dress code," 31 (33.7%) strongly agreed, 39 (42.4%) agreed, 19 (20.7%) were neutral, and 3 (3.3%) disagreed, with no strong disagreement recorded. Across all four items, the data reveals a dominant perception that teachers'

professional dressing positively influences motivation, discipline, and academic outcomes. Neutral and negative responses were minimal, showing a consistent trend of agreement among the respondents.

This finding is reinforced by Arnold and Mwila (2022), who argue that enhancing the professional standards of teachers through improved working conditions, in-service training on the teacher code of conduct, and structured induction programs positively affects school discipline and academic outcomes. Appropriate dressing can be seen as part of this broader professional culture that promotes teacher authority, respect, and effectiveness in the classroom. Moreover, the findings align with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which posits that individuals' actions are shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Teachers who dress professionally model expected behavior, which shapes students' attitudes and perceptions toward learning by establishing a formal and goal-oriented environment. When students perceive that teachers take their professional role seriously including through dress it positively influences their own behavioral intentions toward academic engagement and discipline. Thus, professional dressing not only reflects teacher commitment but also functions as a non-verbal cue that supports

effective teaching and learning processes.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that teachers' adherence to appropriate dressing significantly contributes to students' learning outcomes in public secondary schools in Busega District. Both teachers and students overwhelmingly agreed that professional attire enhances classroom focus, discipline, and student motivation, while also fostering respect and a positive learning environment. Teachers' neat and professional appearance sets a strong example, communicates authority, and reinforces the importance of education, ultimately influencing student engagement, behavior, and academic performance. The results demonstrate that professional dressing is not merely aesthetic but an integral aspect of effective teaching, classroom management, and creating a conducive environment for learning, supported by the Theory of Planned Behavior which links modeled behavior to student perceptions and actions.

It is recommended that public secondary schools in Busega District implement and enforce clear professional dress codes for teachers as part of broader efforts to enhance teacher professionalism. School administrators should provide guidance and periodic workshops on professional appearance and conduct, emphasizing the impact of teacher dressing on student engagement and

learning outcomes. Additionally, teacher induction programs and continuous professional development should incorporate components on professional attire and its role in classroom management, creating a culture where teachers' appearance consistently models discipline, respect, and commitment to quality education.

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