

Tie – an Accessory Fashion Detail or a Symbol?

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Aim The first aim of this study was to establish the frequency of wearing a tie or business neckerchief on different occasions and in relation to age and educational level. The second aim was to establish whether men who frequently wear a tie were attributed certain characteristics more often than men who rarely wear a tie and to establish whether there were differences in the attribution of these characteristics according to sex, age, educational level, and the frequency of wearing a tie.

Method Data were collected in 2005 by a method of face to face interview on a national representative sample (n = 1007). Participants estimated how often they wore a tie or business neckerchief on 9 different occasions. They also estimated whether each of 14 characteristics was more pronounced in men who frequently wear a tie.

Results Tie was most frequently worn on festive and formal occasions, such as weddings and festive gatherings, and least frequently on family gatherings and when traveling. On all occasions, tie was more often worn by men of higher educational level and of older and middle age. A relatively small proportion of Croatian citizens based their conclusions on men's characteristics on the frequency of wearing a tie. Men who frequently wear a tie were relatively most often attributed the characteristics of ambition, politeness, and respectability, with significant differences found between persons who attributed these characteristics according to sex, age, educational level, and the frequency of wearing a tie by the participants themselves.

Conclusion Wearing a tie or neckerchief is an exception rather than a rule for most of the Croatian population, and is associated only with specific, primarily festive and formal occasions. Such use of the tie suggests that people adapt their style of clothing to the expectations of others and use it as a specific symbol of the occasion.

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Clothing is a form of non-verbal communication and represents a systematic way of conscious or unconscious information transmission (1). What distinguishes clothing from other forms of non-verbal communication is that it is the first thing we notice when we meet a person for the first time. Clothing can influence our first impression of a person, create stereotypes, and influence our behavior toward that person (2,3). Therefore, we use clothing as a channel of non-verbal communication for self-presentation and impression management (4). Clothing is also important for our self-concept, since it allows us to feel safer, more assertive, more powerful, and more comfortable in a given situation (4,5). Besides that, the clothes we wear are an example of normative social influence (6), ie the influence we conform to in order to be accepted by a desired social group.

More systematic investigation on the influence of clothes on interpersonal relations began in the 1970s and by now a large number of studies have confirmed that people form the impressions on other people on the basis of their physical appearance, especially clothes (7). For example, Damhorst (8), in his review, concluded that 94% of the analyzed experimental studies showed an influence of clothes on the impression formation. Research showed that the way a person is dressed influences the conclusions other people make on their traits and characteristics, such as reliability, competence, power/status, or their workplace (9-13). People not only base their conclusions on clothes itself but also on the appropriateness of clothes to the occasion (7). Different roles or social positions and different occupations or work places are often related to different social norms, including the clothing norm (4,14-16). Even when we do not place much importance on social roles, we still use clothing to adapt to the situation because we care about the reactions of others. Also, appropriate clothing facilitates social interaction and helps us feel more comfortable (4,5). People use clothes

to demonstrate similarities in values and beliefs with members of their own group, as well as differences from the groups they do not belong to (17-19). The choice of clothes can show our disagreement with certain norms or terminate unwanted social interactions.

The greatest part of the research on the influence of clothes on impression formation and management was conducted in business situations and is related to conventional or classic clothing style (14-16,20). These studies have shown that the applicant's clothing at interview has an influence on whether he or she will get a job, and that classically or conventionally dressed people are more positively evaluated. Classic or conventional clothing includes a suit for both men and women and a tie for men. It has been proven that this style of clothing is associated with competence and authority in both men and women, not only in business situations (15,21-25).

According to the available data, 600-700 million people across the world wear a tie every day, and more than two billion Euro is spent on ties every year, which is more than a yearly budget of some smaller states (26). According to Johnson (27), the earliest known version of the tie was found in the mausoleum of the first emperor of China, Shih Huang Ti, who was buried in 210 BC. Tie's modern history began in the 17th century, when Croatian soldiers fighting in the Thirty Years' War spread its forerunner, known as the *cravat*, all over Europe. In his monograph *Le grande histoire de la cravate*, Francois Chaille confirms and discusses the Croatian origin of the cravat (Figure 1), while the Encyclopædia Britannica states that the noun "cravat" originated from the words *Crabata*, *Cravata*, and *Croatian*, mentioning the year 1656 as the year of its appearance (26). The French readily accepted the special way of tying a piece of cloth around the neck "*a la Croate*" and citizens of Paris soon took it to be a symbol of progress (26). During the French revolution, black cravats were worn as a sign of protest against reactionary ideas, and the



Figure 1. Tie with a traditional Croatian pattern called *pleter*.

cravat soon became a symbol of culture and elegance (26). While the French saw the cravat as a decoration and a symbol of progress, for the Croatian it was primarily a symbol of fidelity. According to the popular tradition, wives and girlfriends would give cravats to soldiers as a token of their love, to give them courage and comfort in difficulties and danger. On the other hand, by wearing a cravat, the soldier would show the respect for his beloved. This custom symbolized a man's loyalty to a woman, as well as established loyalty as a virtue (28). Therefore, through the history, the tie has symbolized loyalty, culture, refinement, style, and elegance; according to Johnson (27) the tie has symbolized social status, occupation/work place, identity, as well as group belonging.

In order to examine contemporary symbolical connotations of the tie, we analyzed the frequency of wearing a tie on various occasions among the citizens of Croatia of different age and educational level, as well as the characteristics attributed to men who frequently wear a tie. Since tie is a garment worn usually by men, we analyzed the frequency of wearing a business neckerchief among women.

Specific aims of the study were: 1) to establish the frequency of wearing a tie or business neckerchief on different occasions among people of different age and educational levels; 2) to establish whether men who frequently wear a tie were attributed certain characteristics more often

than men who wear a tie rarely and to establish whether there were differences in the attribution of these characteristics according to age and educational levels; and 3) to establish whether there are differences between men in the attribution of characteristics to other men who frequently wear a tie with regard to the number of different situations in which men themselves frequently wear a tie.

Methods

Participants and procedure

Data were gathered in 2005 as part of a public opinion survey, using the method of face to face interviews. The survey was conducted on a national representative sample of adult citizens of the Republic of Croatia ($n = 1007$). The sample consisted of 466 men (46.3%) and 541 women (53.7%). We used a probability sample with multistage stratification of Croatian citizens older than 18 years. The settlements from each county were selected randomly but proportionally to the number of citizens in a given county. According to age, there were 261 participants (25.9%) between 18 and 29 years, 551 participants (54.6%) between 30 and 60 years, and 186 participants (18.5%) older than 60 years. According to the educational level, 404 participants (40%) had only primary school or incomplete primary school, 453 participants (45%) had high-school education, lasting either three or four years, and 145 participants (15%) had college or university education.

Instruments and variables

Frequency of wearing tie/business neckerchief. Participants answered the question how often they wore a tie or a business neckerchief on nine different occasions: weddings, funerals, festive gatherings (eg, christenings), cultural events (eg, theater), business meetings, usual workday, family gatherings (eg, lunch), travel by plane, and trav-

el by other means of transportation. Participants responded on a 5-degree scale, with 1 = never, 2 = occasionally, 3 = frequently, 4 = very frequently, and 5 = always. Survey results were presented in 2 variables: a) frequency of wearing a tie/business neckerchief on different occasions; and b) general measure of frequent use of tie/business neckerchief, regardless of the occasion. The measure of frequency of wearing a tie/business neckerchief on different occasions was formed by transforming the 5 original response categories into the following 3 categories: 0 – never, 1 – occasionally, and 2 – often (original responses always, frequently, and very frequently). The frequency of wearing a tie/business neckerchief on different occasions was presented as a percentage for each of the given three response categories. The frequency of wearing a tie according to age and educational level for each occasion was presented as means \pm standard deviation. On the basis of frequency of wearing a tie/business neckerchief on 9 occasions, we formed a new variable which represented the number of occasions on which participants frequently wear a tie/business neckerchief (possible range from 0 to 9). On the basis of this variable, in the later analyses that were performed only on the sample of men, participants were divided into the following four categories: men who frequently wear a tie in no situation; men who frequently wear a tie in one or two situations; men who frequently wear a tie in three or four situations; and men who frequently wear a tie in five or six different situations.

Attribution of characteristics to men who frequently wear a tie. Participants were offered 14 characteristics and traits (eg, more polite, more educated) which are frequently attributed to people on the basis of appearance and clothes, and which differ according to social desirability and relevance in different life domains. For each characteristic, participants had to assess whether it more applied to men who frequently wear a tie than to those who wear it rarely or never. The

possible answers were “No,” “I don’t know,” and “Yes.” On the basis of the answers for each characteristic, the participants were divided into two groups – those who considered that a certain characteristic is more pronounced in men who frequently wear a tie and those who do not consider so or do not know (categories “No” and “I don’t know”). The frequency of attribution of a certain characteristic was presented as the percentage of participants who considered that a certain characteristic was more pronounced in men who frequently wear a tie than in men who wear a tie rarely or never.

Besides these measures, we also used data on participants’ sex, age, and educational level. According to age, participants were divided into 3 categories – younger participants (18 to 29 years), middle age (30 to 60 years), and older age participants (>60 years). According to the educational level, participants were divided into 3 categories – low (primary school or incomplete high school), medium (high school, lasting three or four years), and high (college or university) educational level.

Results

Tie or neckerchief was most frequently worn at weddings (68.9% of men at least occasionally wore a tie and 39.9% of women at least occasionally wore a business neckerchief, Figures 2 and 3). Weddings were followed by festive gatherings (ie, christenings) and funerals (55.0% and 54.7% for men; 36.2% and 35.0% for women, respectively). Cultural and artistic events (theater, concerts) and business occasions (business meetings or the usual work day) were next according to the frequency of wearing a tie/business neckerchief (between 22.6% and 42.6% for men; between 16.8% and 28.3% for women). A tie/business neckerchief was least frequently worn at family gatherings (eg, lunches, dinners) and while traveling (between 15.6% and 10.3% for men; between 0.5 and 13.3% for women, respectively).

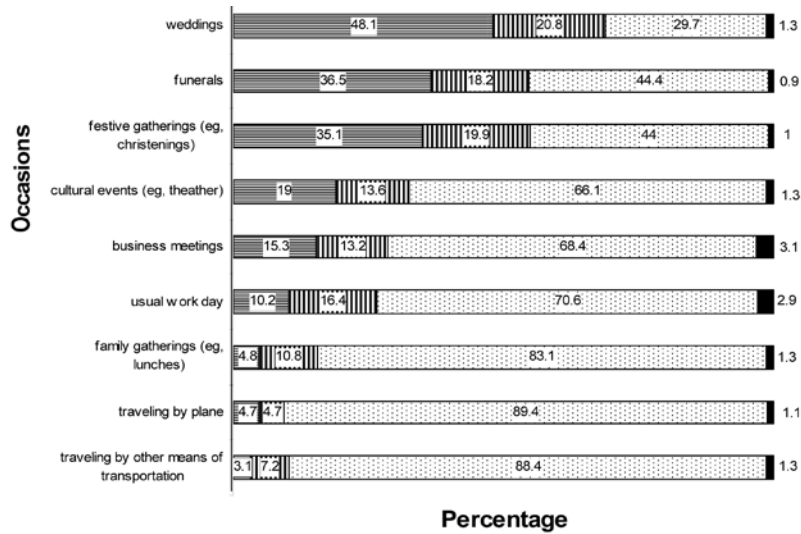


Figure 2. Frequency of wearing a tie on different occasions, shown as percentages (men, n = 466). Horizontal lines – frequent wear; vertical lines – occasional wear; dots – no wear at all; black – no response.

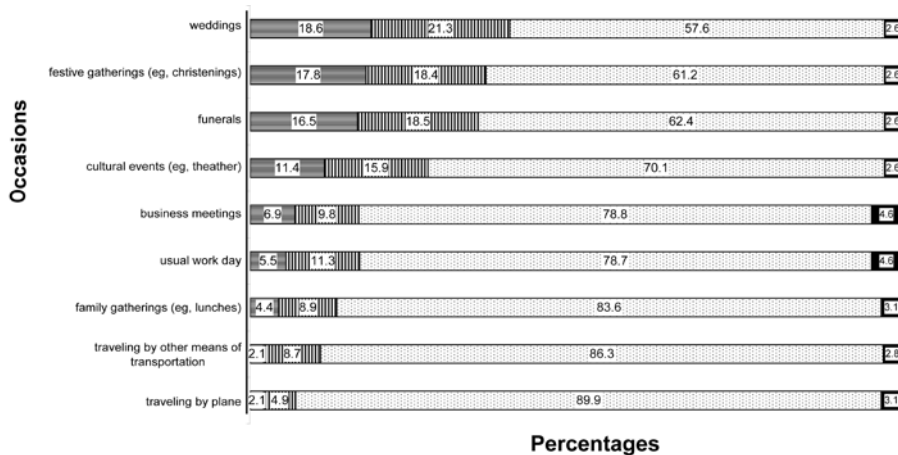


Figure 3. Frequency of wearing a business neckerchief on different occasions, shown as percentages (women; n = 541). Horizontal lines – frequent wear; vertical lines – occasional wear; dots – no wear at all; black – no response.

The analysis of differences in the mean frequency of wearing a tie (Figure 4) or business neckerchief (Figure 5) according to age for each of the nine occasions (analysis of variance (ANOVA), data not shown) demonstrated that younger men significantly less frequently than middle aged men wore a tie on all occasions, except when traveling by plane. As opposed to older men, younger men significantly less frequently wore a tie on all occasions, except on business oc-

casions, when both groups wore a tie rarely. This is probably because they do not have an opportunity for wearing a tie since a large proportion of younger men is still not employed, while a large proportion of older men is retired. There were significant differences between middle-aged and older men in the frequency of wearing a tie only in two situations – at funerals and family gatherings; in both cases tie wearing was significantly more frequent in older men. Frequency of wear-

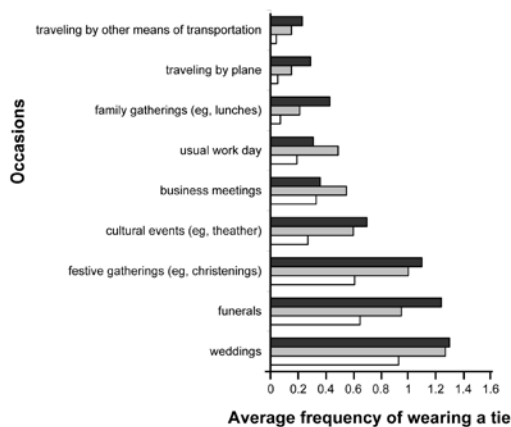


Figure 4. Average frequency of wearing a tie on different occasions according to age (men; n = 466). White – younger than 30; gray – from 30 to 59 years; black – older than 60 years.

ing a neckerchief on different occasions in women of different age (Figure 5) was highest in older women, especially at funerals, when they wore a neckerchief significantly more often than younger and middle-aged women. This finding is probably a consequence of mistaking the business neckerchief for the head scarf by older women. Besides funerals, significant differences according to age between women were established only in business situations and when traveling by plane.

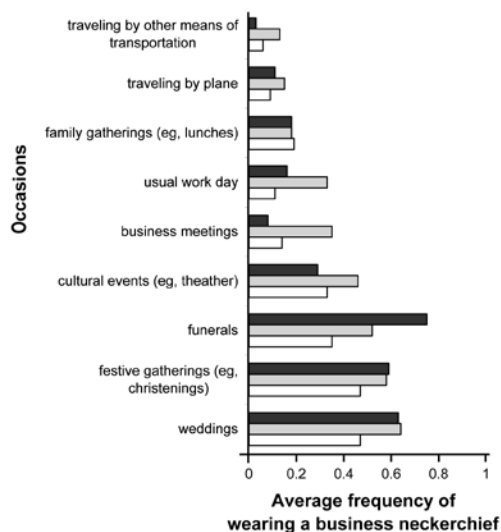


Figure 5. Average frequency of wearing a business neckerchief on different occasions according to age (women; n = 541). White – younger than 30; gray – from 30 to 59 years; black – older than 60 years.

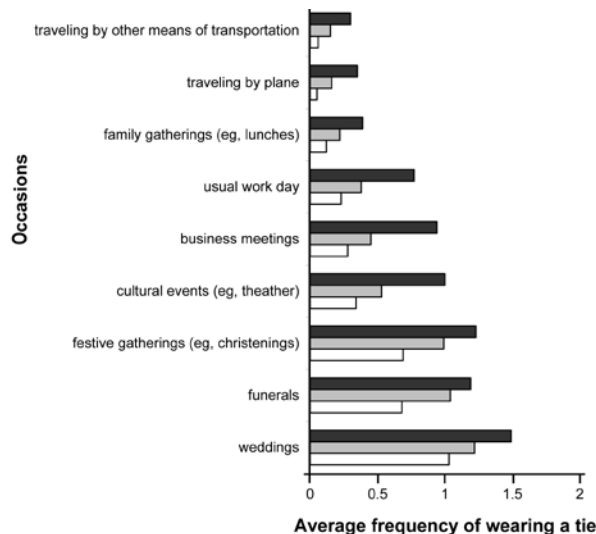


Figure 6. Average frequency of wearing a tie on different occasions according to educational level (men; n = 466). White – low educational level; gray – medium educational level; black – high educational level.

According to the educational level, men with high educational level were those who most frequently wore a tie on all occasions (Figure 6). Based on the significance of differences tested by ANOVA (data not shown), it was established that men with high educational level significantly more frequently wore a tie than men with medium and lower education at usual work days, business meetings, cultural events, travel by plane, and travel by other means of transportation. Besides that, at weddings, funerals, festive, and family gatherings, men with high educational level significantly more frequently wore a tie than men with lower educational level. Men with medium educational level on average wore a tie significantly more often than men with lower education level at funerals and festive gatherings, while on other occasions no significant differences were found between these two groups.

There were significant differences in wearing a neckerchief according to the educational level for business meetings, usual work days, and travel by plane (Figure 7 and ANOVA, data not shown). In all three situations, women with high educational level wore a neckerchief signif-

icantly more often than women with medium or lower educational.

Besides analyzing specific occasions on which people wear a tie or a neckerchief, we also analyzed the frequency of wearing a tie or a neckerchief. Frequent wearing of a tie or neckerchief in at least one of 9 situations was reported by 51.8% men and only 26.7% women. Among men who wear a tie in at least one situation frequently, there was relatively most of those who wear it frequently in 3 situations (14.8% of the total sample), while there was a relatively small proportion of those who wear it frequently in 5 or more situations (between 3.2% and 0.4% of the total sample). Among women who wear business neckerchief frequently in at least one of the situations, there was an almost equal proportion of those who wear it frequently in 1, 2, 3, or 4 situations (from 4.5% to 5.3% of the total sample).

The frequency of wearing a tie depending on the festivity or solemnity of the situation indirectly confirmed the existence of a symbolic meaning of the tie. To further explore this supposition, we examined whether people in general tended to make conclusions on characteristics or traits of men who wear a tie, and whether there were differences between men and women in making these conclusions, according to their age and educational level (Table 1). Additional analyses were conducted only on the sample of

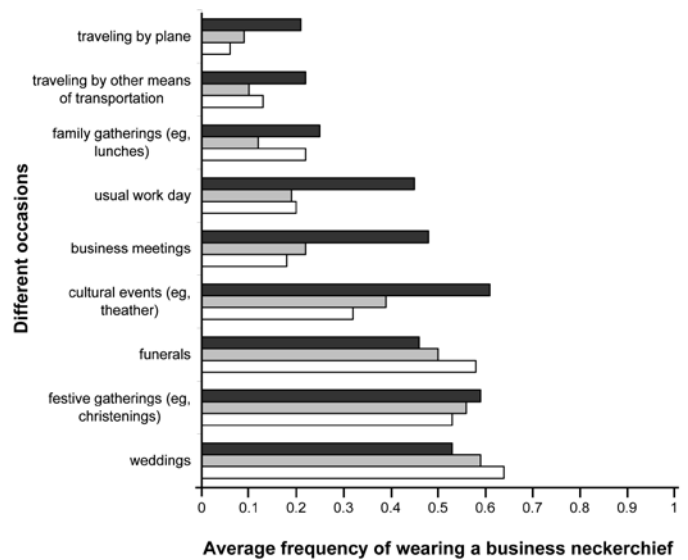


Figure 7. Average frequency of wearing a business neckerchief on different occasions according to educational level (women; n = 541). White – low educational level; gray – medium educational level; black – high educational level.

men, to examine whether their tendency to attribute certain characteristics depended on how often they themselves wear a tie (Table 2). Generally speaking, a relatively small number of participants (from 6.7% to 38.9%) agreed that conclusions on the salience of certain characteristics of men could be made on the basis of frequency of wearing a tie (Table 1). Among 14 analyzed characteristics, there were only 4 for which more than 30% of men and/or women thought that

Table 1. Proportion of men and women who think that certain characteristics or traits are more pronounced in men who frequently wear a tie than in men who wear a tie rarely or never

Characteristics	Percent		P*
	men (n = 466)	women (n = 541)	
Successfulness	21.9	31.6	<0.001
Physical attractiveness	17.6	25.6	0.003
Romantic characteristics	6.7	12.6	0.003
Capability	10.7	16.9	0.005
Respectability	34.4	38.9	0.147
Fashion consciousness	18.1	21.8	0.176
Power	18.8	22.4	0.181
Education	21.7	24.4	0.327
Vanity	26.1	23.8	0.419
Politeness	34.1	31.7	0.456
Ambition	38.9	36.7	0.471
Adaptability	26.2	25.4	0.771
Spruceness	26.2	26.9	0.829
Self-admiration	28.8	28.1	0.832

*χ² test.

Table 2. Distribution of men who think that certain characteristics or traits are more pronounced in men who frequently wear a tie according to the number of situations in which they themselves wear a tie

Characteristic	Number of situations in which men frequently wear a tie (%)					P*
	none	one or two	three or four	five or more		
Politeness	24.9	24.7	43.0	65.1	<0.001	
Education	15.7	18.8	23.7	48.8	<0.001	
Respectability	30.5	26.2	37.2	53.5	0.011	
Adaptability	20.2	38.6	24.8	23.8	0.014	
Romantic characteristics	2.5	11.8	6.1	9.5	0.014	
Physical attractiveness	13.7	19.0	15.0	33.3	0.018	
Fashion consciousness	14.2	25.3	17.5	27.9	0.054	
Ambition	32.5	44.0	40.4	45.2	0.164	
Capability	9.3	7.2	12.3	16.3	0.363	
Spruceness	29.3	21.4	22.8	28.6	0.425	
Successfulness	19.1	19.0	25.4	25.6	0.482	
Power	20.6	14.5	20.2	20.9	0.662	
Vanity	26.8	28.9	22.8	23.3	0.750	
Self-admiration	27.1	29.8	31.0	23.8	0.789	

*χ² test, n = 466.

they were more salient in men who wear a tie – ambition, politeness, respectability, and greater successfulness (the latter characteristic reported only by women). A relatively small proportion of participants (between 6.7% and 12.6%) considered men who frequently wear a tie more romantic and capable.

We also examined whether the tendency of attributing certain characteristics to men who frequently wear a tie differed according to sex (Table 1). Out of 14 tested differences, it was established that men and women significantly differed in attributing 4 characteristics. Women significantly more frequently than men attributed successfulness, capability, physical attractiveness, and romantic characteristics to men who frequently wear a tie ($P < 0.010$, χ^2 tests).

In order to establish whether there were differences in attributing certain characteristics to men who frequently wear a tie according to age and educational level, additional χ^2 tests were performed, separately for men and women. Out of 14 tested characteristics, significant differences in age were determined for 8 characteristics in the sample of men and 9 in the sample of women. In general, with increasing age, there was an increase in the proportion of men and women who on the basis of frequent wearing a tie attributed greater politeness: $\chi^2_{2,453M(en)} = 22.744$; $P < 0.001$; $\chi^2_{2,528W(omen)} = 25.128$; $P < 0.001$), education ($\chi^2_{2,451M} = 16.824$; $P < 0.001$; $\chi^2_{2,527W} = 13.784$; $P = 0.001$), respectability ($\chi^2_{2,451M} = 11.779$; $P = 0.003$; $\chi^2_{2,530W} = 6.819$; $P = 0.033$), successfulness ($\chi^2_{2,452M} = 8.997$; $P = 0.011$; $\chi^2_{2,527W} = 8.825$; $P = 0.012$), physical attractiveness ($\chi^2_{2,451M} = 10.624$; $P = 0.005$; $\chi^2_{2,527M} = 11.895$; $P = 0.003$), romantic characteristics ($\chi^2_{2,450M} = 8.383$; $P = 0.015$; $\chi^2_{2,529W} = 8.993$; $P = 0.011$), or fashion consciousness ($\chi^2_{2,499M} = 6.139$; $P = 0.046$; $\chi^2_{2,527W} = 10.960$; $P = 0.004$). Besides these findings, which were the same for both sexes, older women more often than younger and middle-aged women attributed to men who frequently wear a tie greater ca-

pability ($\chi^2_{2,528W} = 25.320$; $P < 0.001$) and power ($\chi^2_{2,528W} = 6.619$; $P = 0.037$), while younger men significantly more often than middle-aged and older men attributed greater vanity ($\chi^2_{2,450M} = 6.0$; $P = 0.035$).

Generally speaking, it can be concluded that older more often than younger people, regardless of sex, tended to attribute positive characteristics on the basis of wearing a tie.

Significant differences in the attribution of characteristics according to educational level, both among men and women, were established for 7 out of 14 analyzed characteristics, with 4 overlapping characteristics between men and women. In both samples, people with the lowest educational level significantly more often attributed greater education to men who frequently wore a tie, ($\chi^2_{2,458M} = 10.470$; $P = 0.005$; $\chi^2_{2,530W} = 16.108$; $P < 0.001$), capability ($\chi^2_{2,458M} = 16.226$; $P < 0.001$; $\chi^2_{2,531W} = 15.410$; $P < 0.001$) and successfulness ($\chi^2_{2,460M} = 22.654$; $P = 0.000$; $\chi^2_{2,529W} = 8.100$; $P = 0.017$), while ambition was significantly more often attributed ($\chi^2_{2,459M} = 6.530$; $P = 0.038$; $\chi^2_{2,530W} = 7.571$; $P = 0.023$) by persons of medium and higher level of education.

Only in the sample of men, significant differences in the attribution of characteristics according to educational level were found for power ($\chi^2_{2,455} = 6.661$; $P = 0.036$), vanity ($\chi^2_{2,457} = 13.335$; $P = 0.001$), and self-admiration ($\chi^2_{2,457} = 7.148$; $P = 0.028$), and in the sample of women for politeness ($\chi^2_{2,531} = 11.247$; $P = 0.004$), romantic characteristics ($\chi^2_{2,531} = 6.832$; $P = 0.033$), and fashion consciousness ($\chi^2_{2,530} = 9.505$; $P = 0.009$).

It can be concluded that both men and women with lower education more often tended to attribute positive characteristics to men who frequently wear a tie than persons with higher education level. As opposed to this, men with medium and higher education significantly more often tended to attribute negative characteristics. Also, men and women with higher or medi-

um education significantly more often attributed ambition to men who frequently wear a tie.

In order to examine whether men who themselves wear a tie in a different number of situations differed in the attribution of certain characteristics to men who frequently wear a tie, χ^2 tests were performed for each of the 14 characteristics (Table 2).

Out of 14 characteristics, significant differences according to the number of situations in which men themselves frequently wear a tie were found for 6 characteristics (Table 2) as follows: politeness, education ($P < 0.010$ for both), and respectability, adaptability, romantic characteristics, and physical attractiveness ($P < 0.05$ for all). Men who themselves frequently wear a tie in a larger number of situations significantly more often attributed politeness, education, respectability, and physical attractiveness to men who frequently wear a tie. Also, men who frequently wear a tie were attributed adaptability relatively most often by men who themselves frequently wear a tie on only one or two occasions, while romantic characteristics were more often attributed by those who frequently wear a tie in at least one situation (Table 2). The presented data suggest that these were the characteristics that this group of men often attributed to themselves or which they wanted to emphasize in self-presentation.

Since earlier analyses showed that the frequency of wearing a tie in different situations depended on age and educational level, the coefficients of correlation were calculated between the measure of frequent wearing of a tie and attributing characteristics to men who frequently wear a tie, with a partialization for age and education level effect. Significant correlation, while controlling for the effect of age and educational level, between the measure of frequent wearing a tie and attributing certain characteristics, regardless of the type of occasion, was established for only 4 characteristics: politeness ($r_p = 0.24$, $P < 0.001$), education ($r_p = 0.17$, $P < 0.001$), respectability

($r_p = 0.13$, $P = 0.002$), and physical attractiveness ($r_p = 0.11$, $P = 0.015$). For all four characteristics, correlations were modest and positive, and confirmed that men who themselves frequently wear a tie significantly more tended to perceive men who frequently wear a tie as more polite, educated, respectable, and physically attractive. Even more importantly in this context, the coefficients of correlation showed that the differences in attribution of characteristics did not rise out of possible differences between the participants in age and educational level.

Discussion

A tie or a business neckerchief can be worn on various occasions, more or less formal, in private or business life. The situations in which people wear these garments indirectly point to their symbolical function, ie to what this item represents. The findings of this study indicate that, although tie is generally more in use than business neckerchief, it is worn on everyday basis by a relatively small number of men, and business neckerchief by even fewer women. Ties and neckerchiefs were most often worn at weddings and festive gatherings (eg, christenings) and funerals, and were least often worn at family gatherings (lunches, dinners) and while traveling. On the basis of these results, it can be concluded that frequency of wearing a tie or a business neckerchief depends on the occasion and increases with festivity or solemnity of the situation, which confirms the expectation that tie or neckerchief bears a symbolical meaning. It seems that the use of tie as an accessory on festive and formal occasions suggests that people adapt their style of clothing to the expectations of others and as a specific symbol of the occasion (5).

There were significant differences in wearing a tie or business neckerchief in different situations according to age and education level. For all analyzed occasions, a tie was most often worn by older men and least often by younger

men, except in business situations, when middle-aged men were those who wore a tie most often. The differences in the frequency of wearing a tie in men of different age point to different styles of clothing. Younger men more often have an informal style of clothing and, therefore, wear a tie less often than older men who have a classic clothing style. These results are not unexpected since fashion trends, as well as dress codes for different occasions, have significantly changed and tie is no longer considered to be mandatory even in formal and business situations. The results of this study showed that men with high education level on all analyzed occasions (except family gatherings) wore a tie significantly more often than men with medium and lower education. These results are expected, since people with higher education are more likely to be exposed to a larger number of situations in which they are supposed to wear a tie. Wearing a neckerchief was associated with age and educational level only in a small number of situations. Significant differences were found only for business situations and traveling by plane, with middle aged women and women with higher education being the ones who wore a neckerchief most frequently. These results can be associated with age differences in clothing styles in women, but also with situations to which women of middle age and higher education are more often exposed.

According to impression management theory (29), people are motivated to manage other people's impressions about them, and the basic aim of self-presentation is to achieve a positive image and gain approval from other people. Besides this, since on everyday basis people are exposed to a great amount of information but have only a limited capacity of their processing, they tend to use shortcuts or heuristics in perception of other people. Clothes are one of the first things we notice when we first meet a person and can influence our impressions on that person and our judgments about his or her characteristics (2).

It is interesting that people themselves believe that others make conclusions about them on the basis of their different preferences and activities, including the style of clothing. Johnson et al (7) showed that as much as 62% of interviewed women considered that other people made conclusions about their characteristics on the basis of their appearance and clothes. In the study by Rentfrow and Gosling (30), participants estimated that others could most easily make conclusions about their characteristics on the basis of their hobbies and activities, music, and life space, while clothes appeared fourth on the list. Therefore, it can be assumed that people would attribute certain characteristics to a person on the basis of how often the person wears a tie. However, the results of our study showed that a relatively small percentage of participants (6.7% to 38.9%) made conclusions about certain characteristics of men based on the frequency of wearing a tie. Our results, therefore, suggest that the influence of clothes on making conclusions about personality traits, which was found in some studies, may be overestimated. Studies which used open-ended measures concluded that, on the basis of appearance or clothes, participants make conclusions on all sorts of information about a person, such as behavior, feelings, social status, business position, demographic characteristics, and not only on personality traits. Burns and Lennon (31) showed that the influence of clothes on attributing a certain personality trait was confirmed in only 21% of research which used open-ended measures, and 70% of research which offered to their examinees a list of personality traits to choose from.

However, our study showed that more than 30% of participants found three traits to be more pronounced in men who frequently wear a tie. These were ambition, politeness, and respectability, indicating that the symbolic meaning of tie has not greatly changed in comparison with the past, when it was associated with fine manners,

refinement, style, and elegance (28), ie with social position and status (27).

Our study showed that older rather than younger persons, as well as persons with lower education rather than those with medium or higher education, regardless of their sex, were more likely to attribute positive characteristics to men who frequently wear a tie. It is important to emphasize that only 2 out of 14 characteristics analyzed in this study had negative connotations (vanity and self-admiration). It was established that vanity was more often attributed by younger men and men with medium and higher education, who also more often attributed self-admiration.

Previous research showed that vanity was among the least desirable characteristics in a romantic partner, while capability, physical attractiveness, education, ambition, and success at work were found to be the most desirable characteristics (32,33). In this context, it is interesting that women, significantly more than men, attributed greater success, capability, physical attractiveness, and romantic characteristics to men who frequently wear a tie, which are all usually considered to be important determinants of heterosexual attraction. Also, men who themselves wear a tie in a majority of situations significantly more often perceived men who frequently wear a tie as more polite, educated, respectable, and physically attractive, regardless of differences in age and educational level. Thus, it can be concluded that these are the characteristics that men who frequently wear a tie more often attribute to themselves, ie characteristics that they want to emphasize in self-presentation or for which they believe to facilitate social interactions (4,5).

While interpreting the results of our study, several limitations should be taken into consideration. The main limitations are related to the method of data collection and the instruments used. Since the range of characteristics used in this study was limited, it is possible that some characteristics important for the formation of impressions based on clothes were not includ-

ed. Therefore, in further research it would be more useful to use the already existing theoretical personality models to connect the research on impressions formation based on clothes with contemporary personality theories. Also, the results of this research should be confirmed by means of open-ended measures in which participants are allowed to freely enumerate the characteristics which they associate with certain clothing style.

Tie or business neckerchief are only some of the possible signs which may be used for impression formation or management. The process of impression formation is an integrative process in which the value and meaning of certain signs depends on other signs present. Thus, the results of this study are only descriptive and do not provide basis for conclusions about tie or business neckerchief as determinants of impression formation, and serve only as starting point for future research.

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