

First impressions do count: Research shows made-to-measure suit makes you appear more confident, successful

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(PhysOrg.com) -- It's often said that we make judgments about people in the first three seconds of seeing them. Now new research from the University of Hertfordshire, in collaboration with Mathieson & Brooke Tailors (M&BT), shows how much clothing influences these opinions. The study shows that wearing a made-to-measure suit, rather than an off-the-peg equivalent, positively affects the judgments people make in those first three seconds.

In the research, conducted by the University of Hertfordshire and led by Professors Karen Pine and Ben Fletcher of the School of Psychology, over 300 participants (males and females aged from 14 to 67) viewed a series of separate images of a man and a woman for just 3 seconds. They were then asked to make 'snap judgements' about the person in the picture.

When the man in the picture wore a made-to-measure [suit](#) he made a more favourable impression than when he wore a very similar off-the-peg suit of the same colour. People judged him to be more confident, successful, flexible and a higher earner than the same man wearing a similar high street equivalent. The man's face in the picture was blanked out so these different judgments arose purely from observing his attire.

Commenting on the importance of first impressions David Brooke of M&BT, who started his visiting tailoring business in 2004, says, "This

research shows that twice as many people will view you as confident, flexible and successful in the first three seconds of seeing you if you are wearing a made-to-measure suit. We have believed for years that first impressions are important and now we can prove it. A made-to-measure, as opposed to an off-the-peg suit, gives you more confidence and ultimately success.”

Speaking of her team’s findings, Professor Karen Pine says; “This research is very important in our ongoing work to better understand the psychology of fashion. This study endorses, with real evidence, the popular view that we make up our minds about people within the first three seconds of seeing them although this view comes mainly from research using human faces. In our study [people](#) formed very different views of the same faceless man or woman, in the same position, when an apparently minor change was made to what they were wearing. The two suits worn by the man looked very similar at first glance, yet the subtle differences clearly made an impact. This is big news for the fashion industry and certainly highlights the importance of good tailoring.”

The findings of the research do raise obvious questions about the affordability of made-to-measure versus off-the-peg, particularly in the current economic climate. David Brooke is keen to answer them; “A made-to-measure suit is undoubtedly more expensive than some high street suits, but does not need to break the bank. In fact, an M&BT made-to-measure suit is always better quality and lasts far longer than off-the-peg suits.” He continues, “A bespoke, or made-to-measure suit, in light of this research, must be seen as an investment in your career and an essential ingredient to your personal success.”

The University of Hertfordshire will be publishing the research in a peer-reviewed journal. The executive summary and key findings can be found here: blogs.herts.ac.uk/research/ .

Provided by University of Hertfordshire

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