

PERCEPTIONS OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION STUDENT TEACHERS REGARDING FORMAL DRESS CODE DURING TEACHING PRACTICE IN ESWATINI

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ABSTRACT

The debate on teachers' dress code has subsisted for decades among educators and is critical to the survival and enhancement of the education profession. While the debate on teacher professional dress continues, little research has been conducted regarding teacher dress code in Eswatini. The purpose of the study was to find out the perceptions held by Agricultural Education student teachers regarding the formal dress code. The study was a descriptive survey of all Agricultural Education student teachers who did teaching practice in 2016. A self-administered questionnaire validated by three lecturers from the Department of Agricultural Education and Extension, University of Eswatini was used for data collection. The inter-item reliability coefficient established using Cronbach's Alpha was 0.81. Findings revealed that formal dress code positively impacts on the professional identity of teachers. However, the findings revealed that formal dress code may not be suitable in hot weather conditions and during agriculture practicals. In conclusion, formal dress code instills professionalism on the teachers. The study recommended that head teachers should explain the dress code policy to teachers so they understand what is expected.

KEYWORDS: *Dress Code, Perceptions, Professional Attire, Student Teachers, Teaching Practice*

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