

<優秀卒業論文>

# Understanding First Impressions of Female University Students

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## **Abstract**

My thesis is about the first impression. I wanted to research this topic, because other researchers said that appearance, like clothes and makeup, are important when we meet new people for the first time. So, I wanted to know if this theory is true or not.

I hoped that I could find out what is the most important factor in the first impression, and what Atomi students think about the first impression. I used Google Forms to make a 12-question questionnaire about the first impression and gave it to 29 students at Atomi University. They were 1<sup>st</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year students between 18 and 22 years old.

My main result was that the smile is the most important factor for the first impression. I did not expect this result ; I thought that clothes and make-up would be more important for this group. This result showed me that we should focus on facial expressions more than appearance like clothes and make-up.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to show my greatest appreciation to Mr. Macleod, whose comments and suggestions were of inestimable value for my study. Special thanks also go to Atomi students who gave me invaluable questionnaire answers and comments.

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## **Introduction**

Takeuchi (2013) suggested that in terms of first impression, the face accounts for 55% of how a person feels, the voice 38%, and the content of what is said by a person represents only 7%. People usually assume that the main component of communication is what they say, because we learn at school that language is the main communication tool. However, a person who is always neat can give a good impression at their office ; people might think, when they meet the person for the first time, that the person is a hard worker. If the person is does not take care of their appearance, they might they might be worried about working with that person. The first impression is important and can build a trusting relationship that is stronger than language (Takeuchi, 2013). If a first impression is bad, people cannot change that easily.

Interestingly, Takeuchi (2013) said that we can imagine a person's character by the shape of their face. For example, a round face gives a feeling of kindness, warmth, and positivity. A square face suggests a strong will, decisiveness, and energy. He said that people might also imagine a person's characters by face shape when people meet someone for the first time. Based on this idea, TV directors select actors. Directors assign actors who have a round face when they want to give a warm impression, and assign actors who have a square face when they want to give a smart impression. It is believed that viewers can imagine the character's nature easily when they watch movies.

## Literature review

Shigeta (2013) suggested that females use makeup to express themselves. They wear makeup to make a better first impression, because they do not always meet the same people every day ; for example, they might see different shop staff when they go out, and see new people at school or work. Therefore, they always care about the first impression. Also, females wear makeup to have confidence and they want to cover any imperfections in their complexion. A survey about how much the first impression was changed by using makeup found that it can give a positive first impression, such as being fashionable, light, sophisticated and soft (Shigeta, 2013).

Kaneko (2010) said that clothes are also important in creating a first impression. For example, a man who is wearing glasses and a tie gives the impression of being thoughtful, smart, and sociable. However, if he were to ignore a traffic light on the street, he may cause other pedestrians to do the same because they would trust his behavior ; they would think a person like that would not ignore the lights and would follow the rules. On the other hand, if the same man was wearing dirty clothes, and ignored the traffic lights, other pedestrian would be less likely to follow him. The writer said that the right clothes can project trust, and the appearance can also help us to understand the person's character. The first impression is a type of non-verbal communication and, like Takeuchi (2013), Shigeta believes that appearance can be more important than the contents of what someone is saying.

According to Mehrabian (1971), the content what you are talking about accounts for only 7% of the first impression that you give. By comparison, how you speak (voice tone, volume, speed, accent, etc.) is 38%. By far the largest component is how you look ; this gives 55% of your first impression. Facial expression, body language and tone of voice is important when we communicate with people. However, Mehrabian said that you cannot convey your feelings unless you say them with the correct voice tone, facial expression, and so on. If you feel happy when your friends give you a present, you should also express appreciation through facial expression and voice tone, and not just by saying "thank you". If you can do that, your friends will think that you are really satisfied and happy. This also explains how we can understand the content of a movie when we watch it without subtitles ; 55% of the information we receive is from our sight.

Based on these theories, I want to research more about first impressions. So, my research questions are : "Which factors do you think are the fastest to make a positive impression?" and "What do you think is the most important factor to make a good first impression?"

## **Methodology**

I wanted to know what other people think of the first impression. So, I made a questionnaire about the first impression using Google Forms. I then made a QR code so that I could share the questionnaire easily. The respondents were 29 students from Atomi University. All the questions in this questionnaire were multiple choice. For each question, only one choice could be made. The full questionnaire can be seen in Appendix A.

Secondly, questions 3 to 6 were used because Shoyama (2009) said that females can express themselves using makeup. She conducted a survey about how much using makeup changed the first impression. I wanted to know how important makeup is in their first impression.

Next, I wanted to know what kind of people students want to become friends with. Look at question 7 and question 8. Mehrabian (1971) said that the meaning of what you are talking about is only 7% of the first impression, hearing (voice tone, volume, speed, accent) is 38%, and sight is 55%. I wanted to check those results by asking Atomi University students.

Finally, questions 9 to 11. In question 9 participants were asked about boyfriends and in question 10 they were asked about male friends. I wanted to know about the difference in what they care about in terms of giving a first impression. Question 11 looks at the difference in behavior with female friends.



## Results

In this section, I will describe the results of my questionnaire. A total of 29 students in Atomi University completed the questionnaire and the results were recorded using Google Forms. All of them gave me the answers, so I will now describe what I found.

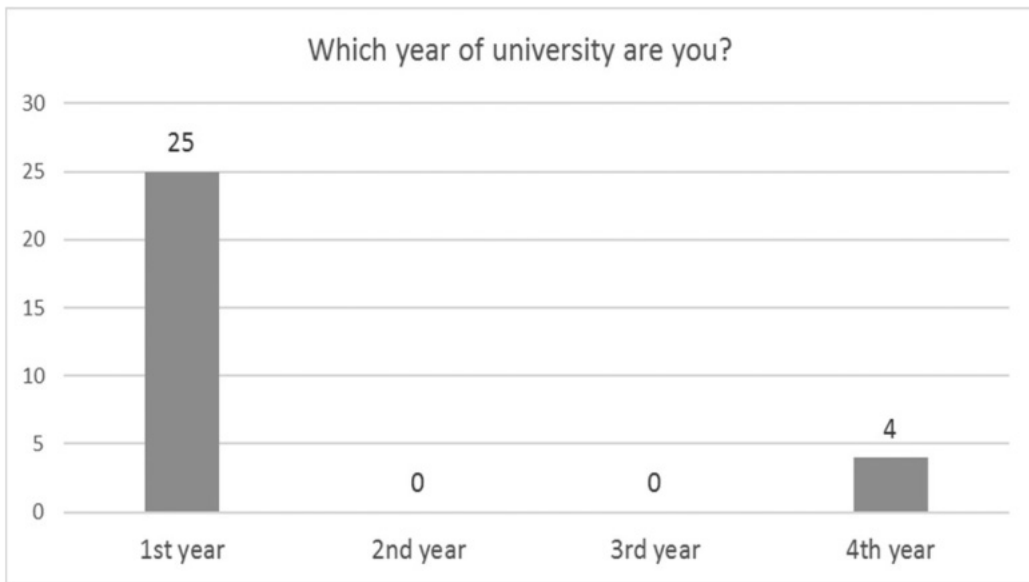


Figure 1. University year of participants

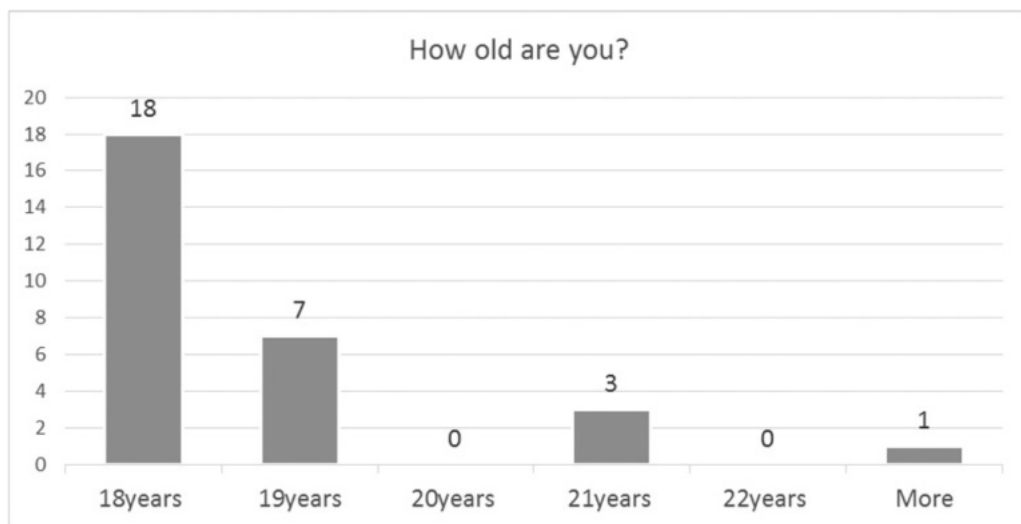
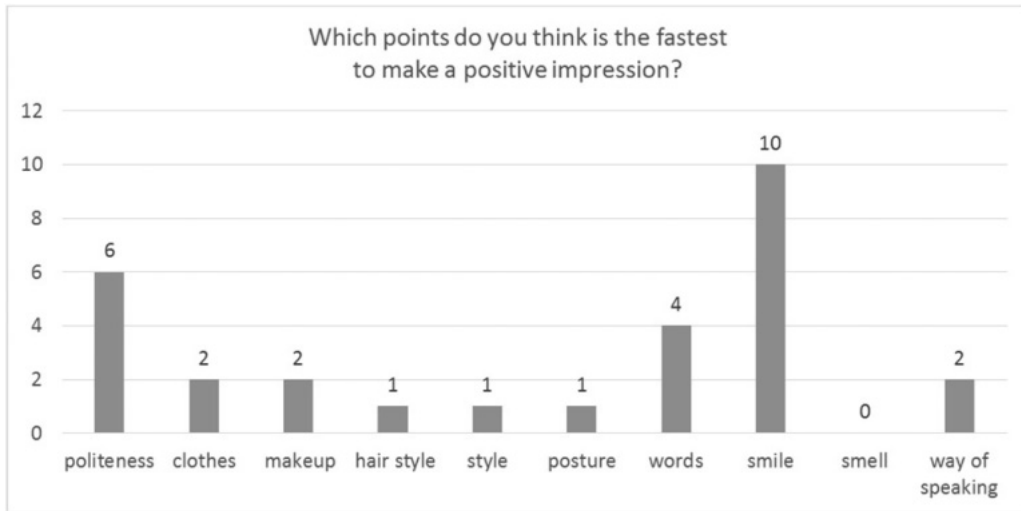
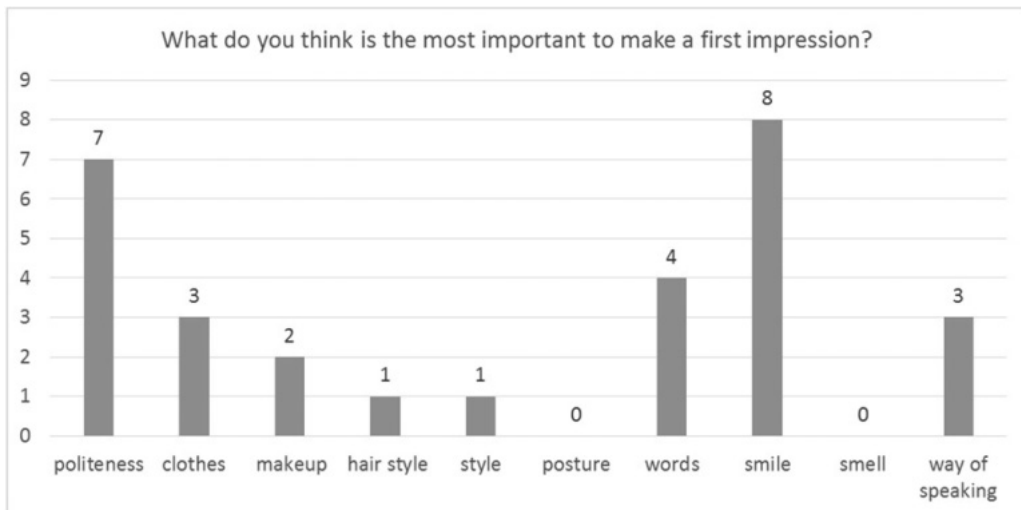


Figure 2. Age of participants



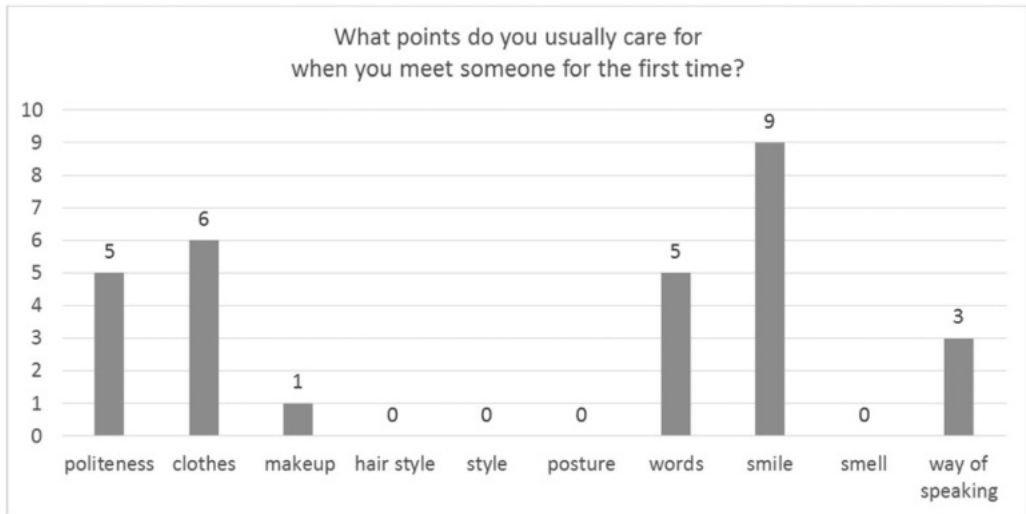
**Figure 3. The fastest way to make a positive impression**

According to this answer, “smile” is the most popular (10 people chose). The second most is “politeness”(6 people chose). I thought that “clothes”, “makeup”, and “hair style” would be the most because people can realize how they are like at the first contact. However, “smile” and “politeness” are more important than them.



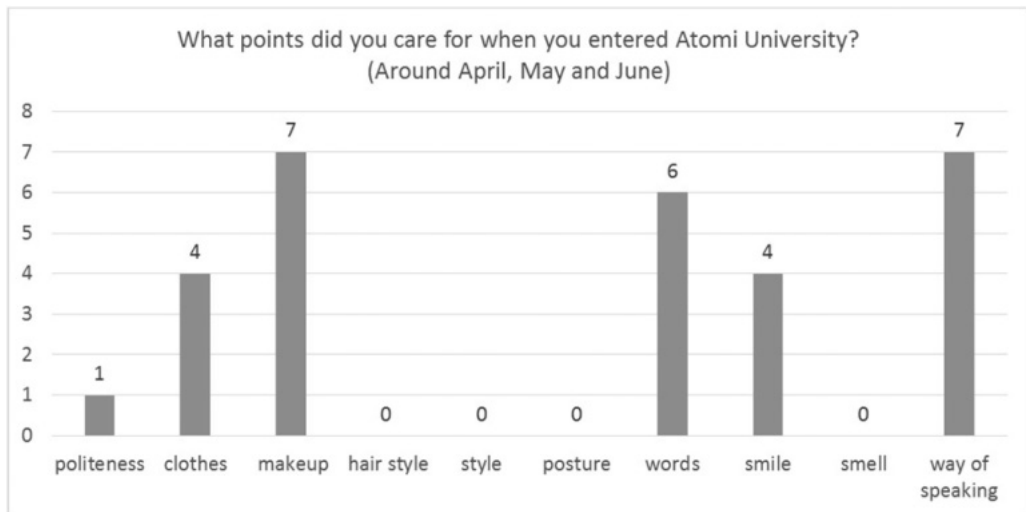
**Figure 4. The most important to make a first impression**

“Smile”(8 people chose) is the most important in this question, too. “Politeness” is the second most important (7 people chose). According to the previous question and this question, “smile” and “politeness” are more important than appearance like “fashion” and “makeup” on the first impression. When they make new friends, they see their personality (smile and politeness).



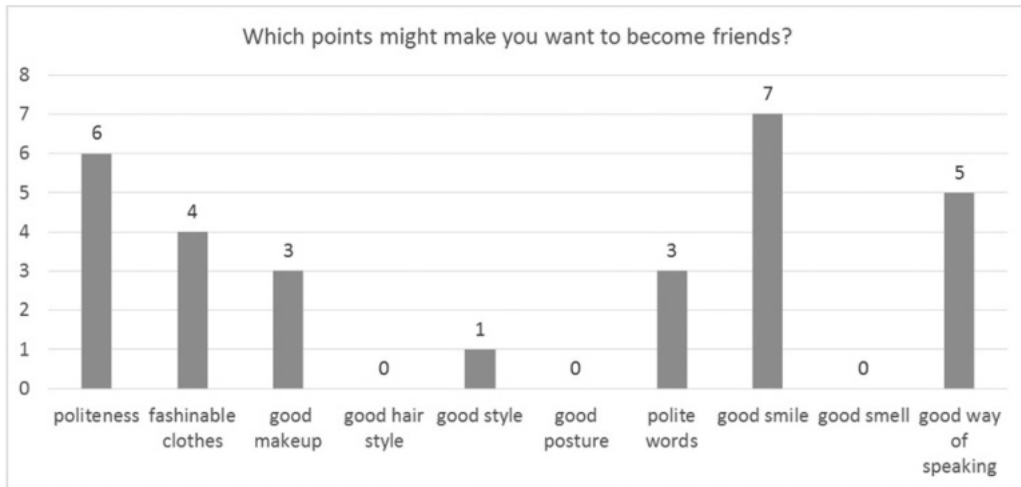
**Figure 5. What do you care about when meeting someone for the first time**

They care for most “smile”(9 people chose). I found that “smile” is very important on the first impression. Also, they care for “clothes”(6 people chose). On the other hand, only one person chose “makeup”. I expected that “clothes” and “makeup” are chosen by the same ratio, but “clothes” is more important than “makeup” on the first impression.

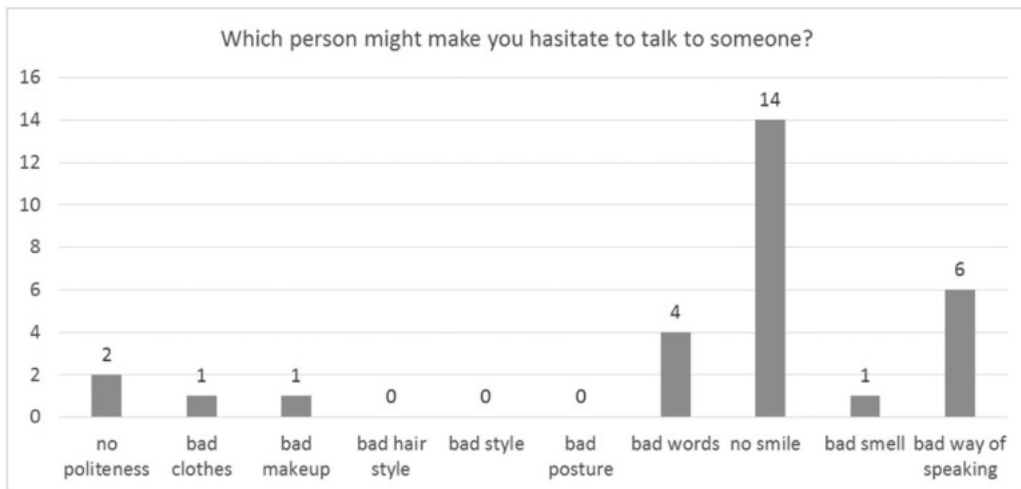


**Figure 6. When you entered Atomi University**

They mostly cared for “makeup” and “way of speaking”(7 people chose) when they entered Atomi University. According to the previous answer, “clothes” is more important than “makeup”, but only 4 people chose “clothes” in this answer. They might care for “makeup” compared to “clothes” while making friends. So, I found that people generally care for “clothes” when they meet general people for the first time.

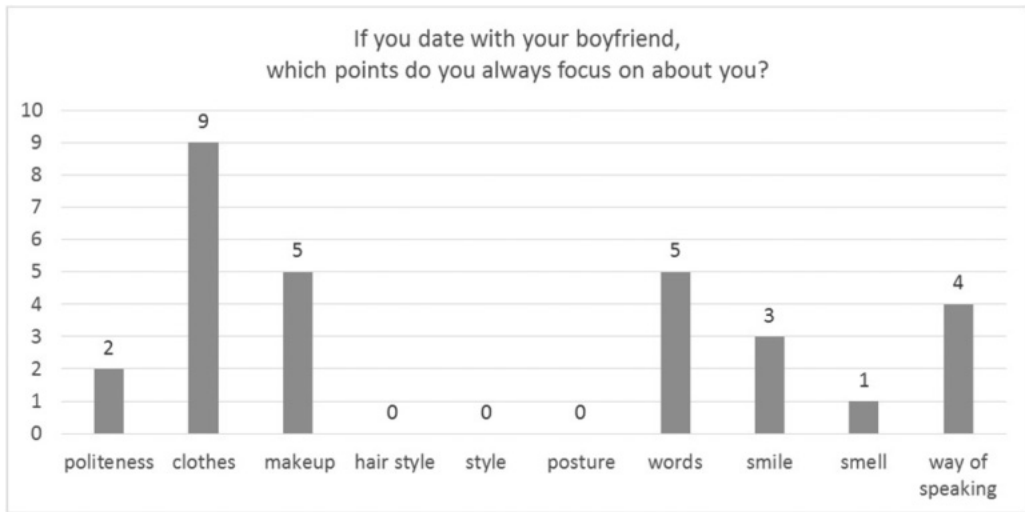


**Figure 7. Important factors when becoming friends**

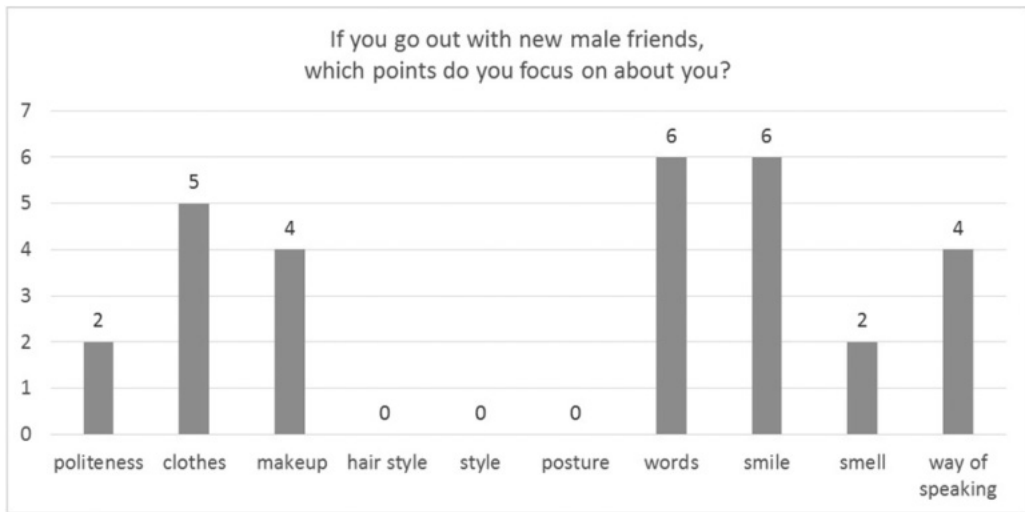


**Figure 8. Not wanting to become friends**

I compared question 7 and question 8. The results were the opposite. As for question 7, most of them thought they want to become friends with people who have “good smile”. However, most of them thought they do not want to become friends with people who do not smile. So, I found that “smile” is much important than “clothes” and “makeup”. Both are also important as manner, but “smile” is essential when people talk to someone.

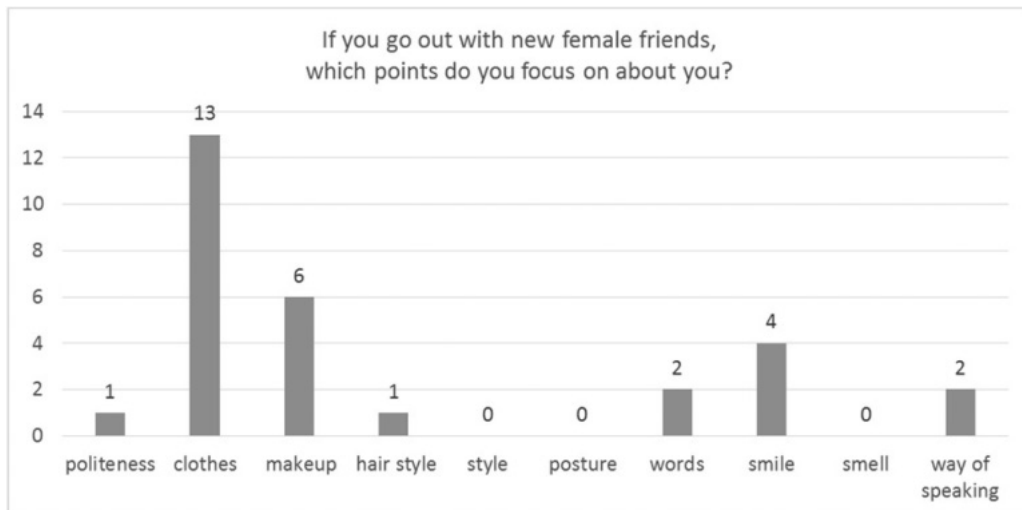


**Figure 9. About boyfriends**



**Figure 10. About new male friends**

I compared questions 9, and question 10. I found that they mostly care for “clothes” when they meet their boyfriend, but they mostly care for “words” and “smile” when they meet just male friends. In just male friends case, all of choices are almost the same ratio, but “clothes” is the most important in their boyfriend cases. This is the big difference between boyfriend and male friends.



**Figure 11. About new female friends**

As for question 11, they mostly care for “clothes” when they meet new female friends. There is not big difference for “makeup” between question 9, question 10 and question 11. I found that they focus on “clothes” when they meet their boyfriend and female friends.

As I explained, they thought that “smile” is the most important when they meet general people. However, if the person is their friends, the points that they focus on are changed. They chose “clothes” and “makeup” than “smile” in friend’s case even though some people chose “smile”. Also, no one chose “style” and “posture”. These points do not give good and bad first impression. From these answers, I found that “smile” is the most important on the first impression.

## Discussion

In this section, I will discuss the results of my questionnaire. My research question was “what is most important factor when making a first impression?” My hypothesis was that makeup and clothes would be the most important. The main reason for this was that people tend to decide if they are going to speak to a person based on their appearance. For example, people might think their favorite thing matches if other person is wearing girly fashion (if the person likes girly fashion, too.)The person might think that the person wants to become friends and talk more. Because they would think that they get along with each other. I think that the similar atmosphere makes them speak easily. Therefore, I thought that makeup and clothes would be most important in making a good first impression.

The results are important, because I could find “smile” is the most important on the first impression. I didn’t expect that it is the most important. I think that most people chose “smile”, because they don’t think they want to become new friends with people who don’t smile even if their atmosphere is similar (wearing similar fashion) I think that “smile” is very important too, but good appearance is a little more important for the first impression. However, I could discover how they think about the first impression. So, I want to share these results.

Please put a blank line between this line and the previous paragraph. First of all, looking at question 3, I expected that makeup and clothes would be the fastest to make a good impression, because people can change them easily. Shoyama (2009) explained that they can give good impressions, such as fashionable, light, sophisticated and soft. However, most people questioned in my research chose smile (10) followed by politeness (6). About clothes (2) and makeup (2), most people didn’t choose these choices. I thought that people use a person’s appearance to decide if they want to speak them or not; however “smile” is important when people communicate with each other. So, I agreed with this result.

Next, let us consider the question 4 and question 5. Most people again chose smile in these questions too. I also expected people to choose makeup and clothes. Because I think that remembering time, place, and occasion are important when they meet someone for the first time. They can imagine visual things like makeup and clothes. I think that smile and politeness are important too, but I thought that the first contact is more important. They might have chosen smile because they want to become friends with people who can smile with them rather than only having a similar atmosphere and fashion.

As for question 6, I agree with the results. I thought that people would choose makeup because most high schools do not allow students to wear makeup at school. So, the participants wore makeup more to make them look nicer and they enjoyed this.

However, look at question 7 and question 8. Most people chose smile. I think that smile is the most important thing when they become friends. But, fashion (makeup and clothes) is more important when they just meet new people generally. It is not new friends. They might focus on

their looks to enjoy themselves. If people smile, other people would think that they want to get along with them, and talk more. It is a good opportunity to talk with new people. I think that smile is the sign which they want to become friends. On the other hand, if people don't smile we would think that the person doesn't need new friends, or doesn't tank with other people now. They even might think they have a serious character. So, other people would think that they don't speak to the person.

Next, I will discuss the questions 9 and 10. I wanted to know the difference between boyfriends and general male friends. Respondents chose makeup and clothes more than smile in question 9, but most people chose smile more than makeup and clothes in the question 10. I think that they focus on looks when they meet their boyfriend. Smile is important too, but they want to look nicer because they think they want to have a good relationship with their boyfriends. They have to care for their own visual appearance when they meet their boyfriends. On the other hand, they don't much care for their visual appearance when meeting new general male friends because they want to make a good relationship with them just as a friend, so they might focus on smile more than clothes and makeup.

As for question 11, most participants chose clothes as the most important when they go out with new female friends and fewer people chose smile. They might think that they have to be fashionable when they meet female friends if they think that their friends are fashionable. Because they don't want people to think that they aren't fashionable, and they aren't interested in trends. So, they have to care about fashion when they meet with new female friends. Also, they might think that they want to be as nice as their female friends.

Mehrabian (1971) said that the meaning of what you are talking about is only 7% of the first impression, hearing (voice tone, volume, speed, accent) is 38%, and sight is 55%. I will compare his research and my results. In my research, most people chose "smile". I think that this showed his research is correct. Because "smile" is a kind of "sight". It is 55%, and it is the most important part in the first impression. Also, other people chose "clothes" and "makeup" too. It is also correct with his research.

I think that it depends on people and situation, but I agreed with most of the results. Not only smile, makeup and clothes, but also other points are important when we meet someone new. However, I found out what people are careful about when they meet new people. I think that I could do more research, especially about the differences between male friends and boyfriends because they focus on clothes when they meet their boyfriends, but they don't much focus on smile and words. I think the difference between boyfriends and general male friends could be my next research.



## **Conclusion**

I want to say that smile is the most important thing for making a good impression. Clothes, makeup, hairstyle, smell are important too, but my research found that smile is more important than other things. I did not care about the facial impression when I entered Atomi University, I mostly cared about makeup and clothes. However, the results of this research show that people should pay more attention to the communication they give through their facial expression.

When Atomi students meet new people, they focus on mostly makeup (looks). However, we should not forget about the impression that our facial expression makes. Even if we have good makeup and wear nice clothes, it is pointless if we do not smile. However, the results were different between boyfriends and general male friends. Participants said that they focus on smile when they meet male friends, but they focus on clothes when they meet their boyfriends. In future research, I want to think about these questions :

- Why do they care about smile most when they meet male friends?
- Why do they care about clothes most when they meet their boyfriends?

Also, I want to research how much facial impression gives a first impression. I could find that smile is important, but I want to know how other facial expression works. For example, perhaps facial expression is important in business or in sales.

In conclusion, it seems that we tend to forget about our smile and care too much about makeup and clothes. However, this research has shown that the most important thing in relationships with people is smile. We can express our mind and feelings by the facial expressions that we use. Therefore, we should be more thoughtful about how we smile in our everyday life.

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①

**Appendix A**

1. Which year of university are you?

a . ...1 <sup>st</sup> year	b . ...2 <sup>nd</sup> year
c . ...3 <sup>rd</sup> year	d . ...4 <sup>th</sup> year

2. How old are you?

a . ...18 years	b . ...19 years
c . ...20 years	d . ...21 years
e . ...22 years	f . ...more

3. Which points do you think is the fastest to make a positive impression?

a . ...politeness	b . ...clothes
c . ...makeup	d . ...hair style
e . ...style	f . ...posture
g . ...words	h . ...smile
i . ...smell	j . ...way of speaking

4. What do you think is the most important to make a first impression?

a . ...politeness	b . ...clothes
c . ...makeup	d . ...hair style
e . ...style	f . ...posture
g . ...words	h . ...smile
i . ...smell	j . ...way of speaking

5. What points do you usually care for when you meet someone for the first time?

a . ...politeness	b . ...clothes
c . ...makeup	d . ...hair style
e . ...style	f . ...posture
g . ...words	h . ...smile
i . ...smell	j . ...way of speaking

6. What points did you care for when you entered Atomi university? (Around April, May and June)

a . ...politeness	b . ...clothes
c . ...makeup	d . ...hair style
e . ...style	f . ...posture
g . ...words	h . ...smile
i . ...smell	j . ...way of speaking

7 . Which points might make you want to become friends?

a .   ···politeness	b .   ···fashionable clothes
c .   ···good makeup	d .   ···good hair style
e .   ···good style	f .   ···good posture
g .   ···polite words	h .   ···good smile
i .   ···good smell	j .   ···good way of speaking

8 . Which person might to hesitate to talk to someone?

a .   ···no politeness	b .   ···bad clothes
c .   ···bad makeup	d .   ···bad hair style
e .   ···bad style	f .   ···bad posture
g .   ···bad words	h .   ···no smile
i .   ···bad smell	j .   ···bad way of speaking

9 . If you date with your boyfriend, which points do you always focus on about you?

a .   ···politeness	b .   ···clothes
c .   ···makeup	d .   ···hair style
e .   ···style	f .   ···posture
g .   ···words	h .   ···smile
i .   ···smell	j .   ···way of speaking

10 . If you go out with new male friends, which points do you focus on about you?

a .   ···politeness	b .   ···clothes
c .   ···makeup	d .   ···hair style
e .   ···style	f .   ···posture
g .   ···words	h .   ···smile
i .   ···smell	j .   ···way of speaking

11 . If you go out with new female friends, which points do you focus on about you?

a .   ···politeness	b .   ···clothes
c .   ···makeup	d .   ···hair style
e .   ···style	f .   ···posture
g .   ···words	h .   ···smile
i .   ···smell	j .   ···way of speaking