

EFFECT OF CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION ON CLOTHING SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze the effects of consumer socialization and selected clothing attitudes on clothing satisfaction. Subjects were 70 mother/daughter pairs. Results indicated that high fashion involvement and high wardrobe management contributed to overall clothing satisfaction; comparative shopping did not affect satisfaction. No differences were found in clothing satisfaction between mothers and daughters, indicating that an outcome of consumer socialization may be clothing satisfaction.

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The purpose of the present study was to analyze the effects of consumer socialization and selected clothing attitudes on overall clothing satisfaction. According to satisfaction theory, dissatisfaction results from a negative comparison between what is expected/desired and what is received (Day, 1977; Hunt, 1977; Oliver, 1977; Oliver, 1981; Swan & Trawick, 1981). More recently, Swan (1988) presented findings which indicate that product performance is also a predictor of satisfaction. Clothing researchers generally agree that clothing satisfaction is a comparative process in which evaluative criteria are used to judge clothing product performance and to assess disconfirmation. Clothing satisfaction has been investigated in relation to consumer characteristics such as age, income, education, and lifestyle, and to product characteristics and performance.

Age of consumer has been the most frequently analyzed variable, and has produced the most consistent results. Studies have shown that clothing satisfaction increases with age (Anderson & Jolson, 1973; Bathke & Burson, 1964; Francis & Dickey, 1981; Lowe & Dunsing, 1981; Wall, Dickey, & Talarzyk, 1978). Ayres, et al (1963), reported that the relationship between clothing satisfaction and specific components of satisfaction varied with age of male and female consumers, but that for most satisfaction components studied, older consumers gave higher satisfaction ratings than did younger consumers.

Although Francis & Dickey (1981) reported that women's satisfaction with dress purchases increased as income increased, Lowe & Dunsing (1981) found only weak support for the importance of socioeconomic variables such as family income before taxes and income per person in determining homemakers' satisfaction with their clothing. However, satisfaction with material well-being, a social-psychological variable, was found to be the most important determinant of clothing satisfaction from the 22 independent variables studied. Lowe & Dunsing concluded that, "the wife's perception of income adequacy for buying family clothing was far more important to her overall clothing satisfaction than her own income, the family's income before taxes, or even the income per person in the family."

Bathke & Burson (1964) and Conklyn (1971) found

that education was positively related to satisfaction. However, Bessom (1964) found that college training in home economics made little difference in homemakers' clothing satisfaction. Also, Francis & Dickey (1981) found a negative relationship between education and satisfaction, but reported a positive relationship between previous shopping experience and several aspects of satisfaction.

Although Sproles & Geistfeld (1978) reported little difference in clothing satisfaction according to lifestyle activities, interests, and opinions, Wall, Dickey, & Talarzyk (1978) reported that such lifestyle variables were significant predictors of clothing performance satisfaction. Similarly, Lowe & Dunsing (1981) concluded that social-psychological variables were more important determinants of clothing satisfaction than were socioeconomic variables. Homemakers satisfied with their clothing ranked themselves higher in the proportion of the family's annual clothing budget spent for themselves, perceived that their clothing incomes would allow them to buy more of the clothing they wanted, never felt restricted in what they wore, spent fewer hours per week doing volunteer work, bought new fashions sooner compared to their associates, and had someone help them decide what styles of clothing to buy.

In addition to consumer characteristics, characteristics of clothing products have been studied in relation to clothing satisfaction. Generally, researchers have found that clothing satisfaction is dependent not only on consumer characteristics, but also on product performance and that at least minimum satisfaction with clothing performance must be attained in order for overall clothing satisfaction to occur (Ayers, et al, 1963; Swan & Combs, 1976; Wall, Dickey, & Talarzyk, 1978).

That satisfaction with clothing performance is critical to overall clothing satisfaction suggests that one's shopping attitudes and practices could contribute to ultimate satisfaction. "The process by which young people acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the marketplace" has been referred to as "consumer socialization" by Ward (1974). Although several researchers have reported limited support for the effect of consumer practices such as purchase planning on clothing satisfaction (Francis & Dickey, 1981; Wall, 1974), consumer socialization has not been analyzed in relationship to clothing satisfaction. Therefore the objectives of this study were to investigate the effects of consumer socialization and selected attitudes toward clothing and shopping on overall clothing satisfaction. It has been argued that consumer characteristics and product performance are related to clothing satisfaction. However, past research indicates that attitudes toward clothing characteristics and shopping practices may be better predictors of clothing satisfaction than education or socioeconomic variables. It has also been argued that consumers acquire these attitudes through consumer socialization processes. Because young people shop more often with their mothers than with anyone else (Bessom, 1964; May & Koester, 1985), it was predicted

that clothing satisfaction reported by mothers and daughters would be similar due to daughters having been socialized as consumers by their mothers.

METHOD

Questionnaire Development

Two self-administered questionnaires were developed. One was completed by the daughters in the sample and the other was completed by the mothers in the sample. The questionnaires were developed to measure the respondent's clothing satisfaction and attitudes toward clothing and shopping. Both questionnaires were identical in format for the operationalization of these variables. To control for alternative consumer socialization processes, it was decided that only daughters who were raised by their natural mothers would be included in the sample. Therefore, the questionnaire administered to the daughters in the sample included a question to identify these specific daughters. These daughters were also asked to give the names and addresses of their mothers. The questionnaire administered to the mothers in the sample included several additional demographic questions.

Family status (i.e., mother, daughter) was used to operationalize consumer socialization. Overall satisfaction with one's clothing wardrobe was measured by a 4-point scale (1=very satisfied; 4=not at all satisfied). The instrument used to measure attitudes toward clothing and shopping was comprised of 18 items adapted from previous studies on shopping attitudes (Slama & Tashchian, 1985). Items were stated both positively and negatively and were arranged in random order in the questionnaire. A 5-point Likert type scale with end points defined as "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree" was used to measure responses to the attitudes toward clothing and shopping items. The questionnaire items were pretested for clarity and completeness.

Subjects and Procedure

Daughters for the study were university students enrolled in an undergraduate course. 107 female students completed the questionnaire during class. Of these 107 female students, 5 were raised by someone other than their natural mother, 1 student's mother was no longer living, and 15 did not provide their mothers' names and addresses. This resulted in a remainder of 86 female students who were raised by their natural mothers and furnished the names and addresses of their mothers. Questionnaires were sent to these 86 mothers. Seventy questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 81 percent. The final sample consisted of 70 mother/daughter pairs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factor analysis was used as a data reduction technique for the clothing shopping attitudes measure. Varimax rotation was employed; factors with an eigenvalue less than 1.0 were deleted. Variables used to describe each factor were those for which at least 40 percent variance was contributed by the factor and which

Table 1
Factor Analysis of Clothing Shopping Attitudes

F₁ = Fashion Involvement F₂ = Wardrobe Management
F₃ = Comparative Shopping

	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	h ²
My friends regard me as a good source of advice about clothing fashions.	.777			.61
I generally enjoy shopping for clothes.	.724			.54
Dressing well is an important part of my life.	.671			.57
I am usually the first among my friends to try new clothing fashions.	.645			.45
I like to shop for clothing with friends.	.569			.40
When I must choose between the two, I usually dress for fashion, not for comfort.	.556			.34
I have something to wear for every occasion that occurs.	.421			.43
I see to it that my out-of-season clothing is cleaned and stored.	.658			.40
I carefully coordinate the accessories that I wear with each outfit.	.515			.50
I pay a lot of attention to pleasing color combinations.	.514			.45
I am very concerned about the care of my clothing.	.466			.33
Sometimes I wear clothing items which have buttons or snaps missing.	.461			.28
When making an important clothing purchase I usually shop in several stores before buying.	.720			.45
When it comes to clothes shopping, I like to take a lot of time to look around and make sure I get just what I want when I buy.	.648			.47
% variance explained: F ₁ 47.2; F ₂ 17.7; F ₃ 13.0				

weighted highest on that factor. Variables which loaded 40 percent or higher on more than one factor were deleted from subsequent analysis. Using only the 14 variables thus selected, factor scores were computed by multiplying factor loadings times the standardized variables.

Results of the factor analysis performed on the array of 18 clothing and shopping attitude items are displayed in Table 1. Three factors were generated which were used as independent variables in subsequent analyses: Factor₁, Fashion Involvement; Factor₂, Wardrobe Management; and Factor₃, Comparative Shopping.

Factor₁, Fashion Involvement, accounted for about 47 percent of the variance and included items such as being considered a good source of fashion information, enjoying shopping for clothing, being the first to try new fashions, and being concerned about dressing well. Factor₂, Wardrobe Management, accounted for about 18 percent of the variance. Items included on Factor₂ reflected attention to clothing care and maintenance and attention to wardrobe coordination. Factor₃, Comparative Shopping, included shopping in several stores and taking a lot of time to shop for clothing. Subjects were divided into quartiles on the basis of their scores on each of the three factors (group 1=low Fashion Involvement/Wardrobe Management/Comparative Shopping; group 4=high Fashion Involvement/Wardrobe Management/Comparative Shopping).

Analysis of variance was used to examine the effects of consumer socialization and clothing shopping attitudes on clothing satisfaction. In order to analyze the interaction between family status and each of the three clothing and shopping attitude factors separately, three 2 x 4 ANOVA's were calculated using family status (2 levels) and each of the three factors (4 levels each) as independent variables and overall satisfaction as the dependent variable.

Analysis of variance statistical procedures revealed a main effect for Fashion Involvement ($F = 2.70$, $df = 3$, 137 , $p < .05$). Post hoc tests showed that subjects in group 1, low Fashion Involvement, were less satisfied ($p < .05$) with their clothing wardrobes than were subjects in each of the other three Fashion Involvement groups. Means and standard deviations associated with the four Fashion Involvement groups are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2
Satisfaction Means and
Standard Deviations for F₁

	Mean	SD	n
Group 1	2.14	.54	35
Group 2	1.76	.64	34
Group 3	1.83	.56	35
Group 4	1.85	.49	34

A main effect was also found for F₂, Wardrobe Management ($F = 10.18$, $df = 3$, 138 , $p < .05$). In addition there was a significant interaction between family status and Wardrobe Management on clothing satisfaction

($F = 3.56$, $df = 3$, 138 , $p < .05$). Post hoc tests revealed that for the mothers, high scores on Wardrobe Management were associated with high satisfaction. Conversely, low scores on Wardrobe Management were associated with low clothing satisfaction. For daughters, this relationship held true for all levels of Wardrobe Management except for group 1, low Wardrobe

Table 3
Satisfaction Means and Standard Deviations for F₂

	Mean	SD	n
Group 1	2.09	.60	35
Group 2	2.14	.49	35
Group 3	1.80	.52	35
Group 4	1.53	.52	34

Table 4
Satisfaction Means and Standard Deviations
for F₂ by Family Status

	Mean	SD	n
Group 1			
mother	2.35	.59	17
daughter	1.83	.50	18
Group 2			
mother	2.21	.56	14
daughter	2.10	.43	21
Group 3			
mother	1.79	.58	24
daughter	1.82	.39	11
Group 4			
mother	1.36	.48	14
daughter	1.65	.48	20

Management, which showed similar satisfaction to group 2, medium Wardrobe Management.

The main effect for F₃, Comparative Shopping, failed to achieve significance ($F = 0.45$, $df = 3$, 139 , $p > .72$).

No significant main effect for the independent variable, family status, was found by any of the three analysis of variance procedures performed. For the most part, there were no differences between the mother and daughter groups for clothing satisfaction.

Thus significant main effects were found for two of the three clothing shopping attitude factors analyzed. High Fashion Involvement and high Wardrobe Management contributed to overall clothing satisfaction. Family status per se did not affect clothing satisfaction. Consistent with past research, it appears that attitudes toward clothing and shopping rather than demographic variables (in this case, family status) affected overall clothing satisfaction. That Comparative Shopping did not affect satisfaction may be due to formation of unrealistic expectations as a result of the influence of increased information.

In addition, t test for correlated data revealed no significant differences for mother/daughter pairs for overall clothing satisfaction ($t = .76$, $df = 69$, $p < .45$). Thus, although overall clothing satisfaction varied due to attitudes toward clothing and shopping, mother and daughter pairs had similar overall clothing satisfaction. This finding indicates that clothing satisfaction is a possible outcome of consumer socialization between mothers and daughters. Past studies on consumer socialization have focused primarily on the ways children and adolescents acquire and learn consumer skills (Atkin, 1978; Moschis, Moore, & Stephens, 1977) and on scales to measure this knowledge (Reece & Kinnear, 1986). By investigating mothers and adult daughters, this study has taken the work on consumer socialization one step further by demonstrating a possible outcome of consumer socialization between mothers and daughters, that is, overall clothing satisfaction.

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