PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRELATES OF CLOTHING INTEREST AMONG ADOLESCENTS

*Usha Kulshrestha** and *Radha Kashyap ***

ABSTRACT

In the present study an attempt was made to study some psychological correlates of clothing interest among adolescent girls. Clothing interest scale (Gurel & Gurel, 1979), self-concept rating scale (Pratibha Deo, 1997) and social reaction inventory (Rotter, 1966) were administered on 200 girls ranging in age 13 to 20 years. Results show significant correlation of age, self-concept and locus of interest with clothing interest. The study revealed that girls of 13 to 16 years have greater clothing interest in comparison to girls of 17 to 20 years. It was also revealed that girls with negative self-concept and external locus of control express greater clothing interest.

INTRODUCTION

Clothes are not contiguous to the body in physical sense, but they are close to self in psychological sense (Sontag & Schlater, 1982). Clothing communicates complex set of information through the use of non-verbal symbols (Flynn, 1985, Marshall et al., 2000). During adolescence, clothing is of greatest importance than during any other period. Clothing becomes magnified in importance because the adolescent has not yet fully outgrown the orientation to concentration on peripheral, concrete qualities in a person. The teens still retain some of the egocentrism of childhood but becomes increasingly aware of the self in relation to others concern about appropriate appearance and behavior. Adolescents feel that everyone else notices his or her appearance and behavior to the same degree (Kaiser, 1997).

Adolescent learn from experience that clothes do much to make or mar appearance (Silverman, 1945). They also discover that adolescents could express their identities through clothes. Clothing wins the recognition which adolescents earnestly desires. They adopt it and are willing to go to any extreme, which may be necessary to experience the gratification to the maximum (Hurlock, 1984).

Psychologists, refer age of adolescents as the period of varied and peculiar interest. During this phase adolescents spend a great deal of time, money and energy on activities related to appearances and are greatly interested in altering appearance of body through diet, exercise and clothing choice. They exhibit high degree of interest in clothes, as clothes are closely associated with appearances.

During adolescent years people make their first attempt to leave the dependent secure role of a child and establish themselves as unique individuals independent of their parents. This period is marked by rapid physical growth and maturation. The focus of adolescent self-concept is on their physical self and their evaluation on physical acceptability.

Elkind (1981) reported that adolescents believe that in any social situation, everyone attention is focused squarely on them, as they believe themselves to be the center of attention. They are pre-occupied with their physical appearance and are very critical of themselves, assuming that others are equally observant and critical. People tend to see themselves in much the same way that other perceives them. The adolescent self-concept is not merely a reflection of other people opinion and environmental feed back; it is also affected by cognitive concepts such as locus of control.

The interest in clothing varies in different adolescents because of their attitudes towards clothing and the values they assign to it. These differences are related to the individual general values and self-concept that are expressed in other areas of living. Interest in clothing varies with body image (Horn and Gurel, 1981), appearance

* *Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur-04*
** *Assistant Professor, Department of Clothing and Textiles, International College for Girls, Jaipur-20*
   e-mail: rmanrai@datainfosys.net

(Mac Gillivary & Wilson, 1997), clothing deprivation (Francis & Liu, 1990; Frances, 1992) peer acceptance (Smucker & Creekmore, 1972) and personality (Hoelter, 1985). It was felt apart of these there are other psychological variable too, that influences the clothing interest such as age, self-concept and locus of control.

This study was conducted to fulfill the following aims.

1. To access the relationship of age with clothing interest.

2. To recognize the relationship of self-concept with clothing interest.

3. To recognize the relationship of locus of control with clothing interest.

HYPOTHESIS

To test the above aims following hypotheses were formulated.

1. Age will significantly correlate with clothing interest.

2. Subjects belonging to different age groups will significantly differ in clothing interest.

3. Self-concept will significantly correlate to clothing interest.

4. Subjects who have positive self-concept and negative self-concept will significantly differ in clothing interest.

5. Locus of control will significantly correlate to clothing interest.

6. Subjects who have external and internal locus of control will significantly differ in clothing interest.

METHOD

Sample

A total of 200 adolescent girls, 100 adolescent girls belonging to 13 to 16 years and 100 adolescent girls aged between 17-20 years were randomly selected from, various educational institute of Jaipur.

Tools

Following tools were used for data collection:

Clothing Interest Scale (CIS) streamlined version of Creekmore developed by Gurel and Gurel, 1979.

Self-concept Rating Scale (CSRS) devised by Pratibha Deo (1997).

Rotter's (1966) Social Reaction Inventory (SRI) was used to assess the internality-externality dimensions of locus of control.

Procedure

All the adolescent girls who constituted the sample of the present study were given the test in a group of 4 to 5. The data was collected and scoring done strictly following the procedure given in the respective manuals. To test the proposed hypothesis mean, standard deviation, coefficient of correlation and t-ratio were applied.

RESULTS

The results are presented in tables 1,2,3 & 4.

TABLE - 1
Relationship of age, self-concept and locus of control with clothing interest.

Variable	Correlation
Age	.290**
Self-Concept	.233**
Locus of control	.240**

** $p<.01$

Above table depict significant correlation of age, self-concept and locus of control with clothing interest.

Results of table2 shows that the group vary in age significantly differ in clothing interest (t-scores =6.08, $p>.01$). Adolescent girls with lower age group have greater clothing interest (m=46.52) in comparison to girls with higher age group.

Findings of table3 reveal that negative self-concept scorers have greater clothing interest (m=57.44) and subjects with positive self-concept

TABLE - 2

Mean, SD, t-ratio of clothing interest in the group of lower age group and higher age group.

Age	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio
Lower age group 13 - 16 years	100	46.52	15.26	6.08**
Higher age group 17 - 20 years	100	34.29	13.17	

** p<.01

TABLE - 3

Mean, SD, t-ratio of clothing interest in the group of positive and negative self-concept.

Level of self-concept	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio
Positive self-concept	97	40.00	15.84	8.56**
Negative self-concept	103	57.44	12.90	

** p<.01

TABLE - 4

Mean, SD, t-ratio of clothing interest in the group of internal and external locus of control.

Locus of control	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio
Internal	101	44.06	15.92	4.57**
External	99	54.42	16.12	

** p<.01

have less clothing interest (m=40.00).

Results shown in table4 reveals that girls with different locus of control have different clothing interest. Girls with external locus of control have greater clothing interest (m = 54.42) than internals (m = 44.06).

DISCUSSION

Present results show significant correlation of age, self-concept and locus of control with clothing interest. The results of earlier studies also found the relationship of age with clothing interest (Silverman, 1945; Boswell, 1958; Ryan, 1966), self-concept and clothing interest (Creekmore, 1974; Solomon & Schoper, 1982) and locus of control and clothing interest (Patrician and Workman, 1996).

The groups vary in age significantly differ in clothing interest. The interest in clothing rises sharply from thirteen to approximately eighteen years, when it reaches its peak. The findings are in agreement with Ryan (1966) and Kaiser (1997). During adolescence, clothing interest as a whole assumes greater importance. To them, clothing becomes a very important symbol of belonging to certain peer groups. The clothes are often a source of positive feeling towards the self than negative feelings. It becomes a source of embarrassment and social discomfort when not used properly.

During middle to late adolescence period a sense of self is developed. Such self allows one to integrate personal traits and appearances that seemingly conflict with one another in line with contextual considerations (Leahy & Shirk, 1985). This makes older adolescents less interested in clothing than young adolescents.

On the line of available information the study reveal that negative self-concept scorers have greater clothing interest and subjects with positive self-concept have less clothing interest. The difference between two groups is significant at 0.01 level (t=8.56, p<.01). People with positive self-concept are satisfied with the self and have the respect for self-worth. They are more independent of others and think of themselves as rebellious and resist doing things because everyone else is doing.

Individuals with negative self-concept have less ability to resist peer pressure. They feel more need to be loved and to belong, so they are easily influenced and to greater lengths to be accommodating and pleasing to others. Such people use clothing as a means of reducing social anxiety, creating a public image that corresponds to socially desirable image (Miller, Davis & Rowold, 1982). Adolescents with negative self-concept are concerned with physical self, to

beautify the appearance. They use clothing as a powerful medium through which self is presented to others in social world. Clothing makes them feel good about them and make favorable impression on others. Hence individuals with low self-concept are greatly interested in clothing so as to conform to social group. Horn (1968) and Sweeny and Zionts (1989) also believe that clothing is a significant force in enhancement of self when used positively. It contributes to ones feelings of self-acceptance, self-respect and self-esteem.

Individuals vary in locus of control the extent to which they are interested in clothing is revealed in table 4. The externals have significantly greater clothing interest (m=54.42) than internals (m=44.06) (t=4.57, p<.01). Externals are readily influenced by opinions of others and are indicated to be reckless (Sherman, 1973). They are interested in clothes, which are acceptable and like that of others around them. They look to other people for validation of their own opinions. These people display feelings of personal inferiority coupled with an intense concern of other people's suggestion and opinions. To overcome this feeling, they use clothing to reflect self-worth and to cope with environmental situation, which makes them highly interested in clothes. These individuals use clothes to enhance their sense of security through appearance as it makes them feel more self-confident.

And the individuals with internal locus of control make independent judgments. They are not easily influenced by the opinions of other people. They have high self esteem so such persons enjoy expressing their individualism and feel little interest in clothes as they do not need any support to rely on others with the result they have low clothing interest.

CONCLUSION

Adolescent girls belonging to 13 to 16 years are greatly interested in clothing probably they are emotionally insecure about the appearance. To them, clothing serves the purpose of satisfying the desire to be one with the group and to belong to a group. This results in high clothing interest. Individuals with negative self-concept have

greater clothing interest because these people are sensitive to the opinion of others and dress to meet the expectation of others. Hence use clothing as a powerful medium through which self is presented to others in social world. Girls with external locus of control display feeling of inferiority, to overcome this feeling they express more interest in clothes and try to communicate that they are a part of a group and have certain attributes and attitudes in common.

REFERENCES

Boswell, M.M. (1958). *Background variables affecting the clothing interests of high school girls in metropolitan groups.* Published M.S. thesis, Texas State College.

Creekmore, A.M. (1974). Clothing related to body satisfaction and perceived peer self (Research report, 239). *Michigan Technical Bulletin,* Michigan State University, Agricultural Experiment Station.

Deo, P (1997). *Self-concept Rating Scale.* National Psychological Cooperation, India. Agra.

Elkind, D. (1981). Children and Adolescents : *Interpretive essays on Jean Piaget (3rd Ed.).* New York : Oxford.

Flynn, P.K. (1985). *Body language - the language of contemporary fashion.* Yale-New Havel Teachers Institute . *www.cis.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units.*

Frances, S. (1992). *Effect of perceived deprivation on high school students social participation.* Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 10, 29-33.

Francis, S.K. & Liu, Q. (1990). *Perceptual and Motor Skills,* 71(3), 119-128.

Gurel, L.M., & Gurel, L. (1979). Clothing interest : Conceptualization and measurement. *Home Economics Research Journal,* 7(5), 274-282.

Hoelter, J.W. (1985). A structural theory of personal consistency. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 48(2), 118-129.

Horn, M.J. (1968). *The Second Skin*. NY : Houghton - Mifflin.

Horn, M.J., & Gurel, L.M. (1981). *The Second Skin*. (3rd Ed.). Boston : Honghton- Mifflin.

Hurlock, E.B. (1984). *The Psychology of Dress : An analysis of fashion and its motives*. NY : Ronald Press.

Kaiser, S.B. (1997). *The Social Psychology of clothing : Symbolic appearances in context*. New York : Fairchild Publications.

Leahy, R.L., & Shirk, S.R. (1985). *Social cognition and the development of the self*. In R.L. Leahy, ed. The development of the self, pp.123-150. Orlando : Academic Press.

Mac Gillivary, M.S., & Wilson, J.D. (1997). Clothing and appearance among early, middle and late adolescents. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journals*, 15(1), 43-49.

Marshall, S.G., Jackson, H.O., Stanley, M.S., Kefeen, M., & Touchie-Specht P.(2000). *Individuality in clothing selection and personal appearance*. New Jersey : Prentice Hall.

Miller, F.G., Davis, L.L., & Rowold, K.L. (1982). Public self-consciousness, social anxiety and attitudes towards the use of clothing. *Home Economics Research Journal*, 10, 363-368.

Patricia, E.A., & Workman, J.E. (1996). *Family Consumer Science Research Journal*, March, 24(3), 293-314.

Rotter, J.B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal v/s external control of reinformcement. *Psychological Monograph : General and Applied* (Whole no. 609), 80(1).

Ryan, M.S. (1966). *Clothing : A study of human behavior*. NY : Holt Rinheart and Winston Inc.

Sherman, S.J. (1973). Internal-External control and its relationship to attitude change under different social influence techniques. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 26, 23-29.

Silverman, S. (1945). Clothing and Appearance : Their psychological implications for teen girls. *Teachers College*, Columbia Univ. New York : Bureau of publications, p.140.

Smucker, B.V., & Creekmore, A.M., (1972). Adolescents clothing conformity, awareness and peer acceptance. *Home Economics Research Journal*, 1(2), 92-97.

Solomon, M.R., & Schoper, J. (1982). Self-consciousness and clothing. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 8, 508-514.

Sontag, M.S., & Schlater, J.D. (1982). Proximity of clothing to self : Evaluation of a concept. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 1(1), 1-8.

Sweeny, M.M., & Zionts, P. (1989). The second skin : Perceptions of disturbed and non-disturbed early adolescents on clothing self-concept, and body image. *Adolescence*, 26 (94), 41-20.