

CLOTHING BUYING PRACTICES OF EMPLOYED SINGLE BLACK WOMEN  
FROM THREE SOCIAL CLASSES

by

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

Black consumers have become increasingly important to retailers in recent years as their incomes have improved, and merchants have realized that sales to their black market customers have grown (Cox, Stafford, & Higginbotham, 1972). In the 1970's advertisements were directed toward black women (Vogue, 1975). Black models were used in fashion shows; and popular magazines such as Glamour (1975) used a black model on its cover page. Manufacturers, such as Charles of the Ritz (Glamour, p. 147) and Mary Quant (Vogue, p. 182) created cosmetics especially for the black skin.

Oladipupo (1970) has stated that the role of income has been ignored in examining Blacks' buying behavior because their median yearly income is much lower than that of whites, including Blacks with the same level of education. According to Bauer, Cunningham, & Wortzel (1965), black women are just as fashion conscious as white women and, as their incomes increase, they become even more aware of it.

The majority of black women are not employed in the labor force just for pleasure; it is a necessity for them. In the District of Columbia, 28,967 black females were employed in business in 1973 (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1975).



Status is defined as the place of an individual on a scale of prestige (Webster, 1949, p. 2463). Non-verbal communicators, such as clothing, are often interpreted as indicators of the standing of individuals on this scale (Horn, 1968, p. 112; Ryan, 1966, p. 54). As early as 1912, Veblen (1912) presented his theory of conspicuous consumption, based on the idea that people choose their clothing to suggest their status to others:

But expenditure on dress has this advantage over most other methods, that our apparel is always in evidence and affords an indication of our pecuniary standing to all observers at the first glance. It is also true that admitted expenditure for display is more obviously present and is perhaps, more universally practiced in the matter of dress than in any other line of consumption. . . . probably at no other point is the sense of shabbiness so keenly felt as it is if we fall short of the standard set by social usage in this matter of dress (p. 119).

Clothing has a symbolic function in which it indicates the wearer's status (Barber & Lobel, 1952). Some people feel they have to dress to "keep up with the Joneses" (Levy, Feldman, & Sasserath, 1970, p. 40); therefore, the clothes they buy must communicate a certain social status, even though sometimes it is difficult for the purchasers to pay for them.

Blacks often have been refused admission to various status symbols typical of American culture, which may be why they sometimes use compensatory devices to raise self-esteem, aid status and conceal the traumatic effects of a subordinate position (Frazier, 1957). Clothing along with housing, furniture, and cars, may be one of the preferred compensatory products because it is relatively inexpensive

and easily shown. As Horn (1968) said:

Man's natural acquisitive tendencies can be seen in his penchant for the accumulation of personal property, and because of the portable nature of clothing, it is highly probable that such items became one of the earliest indices of a man's wealth (p. 15).

Evans (1968) agreed that Blacks used clothing as a status symbol and stated that they want "the same brands, the same labels as they imagine the best white Americans have."

Numerous studies have indicated that clothing-buying practices of white women are related to socio-economic class (Burns, 1964; Cotrone, 1967; Hicks, 1970; Kuehne & Creekmore, 1971), but similar information about black women is lacking. Some researchers (Braguglia & Rosencranz, 1968; Hunter, 1967; Kittles, 1961) have compared shopping practices of black women consumers with white women and reported that, as status of the Blacks increased, the value they attached to clothing as a prestige symbol tended to decrease.

Black women belong to two subcultures which makes them a unique market segment. They are part of the women's subcultural group and, at the same time, they are of the black race which is another subculture. An exploration of the clothing buying practices of employed single black women from different socio-economic levels is needed to understand the factors influencing their wardrobe planning, methods of payment for clothing, types of stores patronized and factors influencing personal clothing selection.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this research is to compare the clothing buying

practices of employed single black women belonging to different socio-economic levels. It will provide information for apparel retailers, especially those who are located in metropolitan areas with large black populations. Educators will find this research helpful to increase their understanding of those whom they teach.

#### Objective of Study

1. To compare employed single black women from different socio-economic levels in their personal clothing buying practices.
  - A. Planning of purchases
  - B. Stores patronized
    1. type of store
    2. factors influencing store selection
  - C. Methods of payment
  - D. Factors influencing personal clothing selection
    1. shopping companions
    2. selection of name brands
    3. store image and salespeople
    4. garment characteristics

#### Hypothesis

There will be no significant differences in selected clothing buying practices of employed single black women from different socio-economic levels in relation to:

1. Planning of purchases
2. Stores patronized

3. Methods of payment
4. Factors influencing personal clothing selection

## Chapter II

### Review of Literature

There has been very little research about the clothing buying practices of unmarried black women. Some sources have reported the authors' opinions based on their limited observations obtained while engaged in other investigations. A few studies have compared the purchasing behavior of white and black women but they appear to be primarily concerned with low-income people only (Braguglia & Rosen-cranz, 1968; Hunter, 1967; Kittles, 1961). The review of literature discussed in this chapter will include empirical data related to (a) planning of purchases, (b) types of stores patronized, (c) methods of payment for clothing, and (d) factors influencing personal clothing selection of women.

#### Planning of Purchases

Unplanned buying versus planned buying has been an important subject to researchers (D'Antoni & Shenson, 1973; Pollay, 1968). Stern (1962) believed that unplanned buying is just another term for impulse buying. He stated that when a consumer did not plan purchases, he or she really performed three different levels of impulse buying which he explained as:

1. "pure impulse buying" which occurs when an "escape purchase" is made by the consumer in an effort to improve personal morale

2. "reminder impulse buying" which happens when the consumer remembers previous information that brings on a purchase

3. "planned impulse purchasing" which happens when the consumer goes to a store only because of special sales and low prices.

Little research has been done concerning the planning by employed single black women, in the labor force, before purchasing clothing. Some reports, however, have investigated the planning of purchases of non-clothing merchandise.

The degree to which a shopper buys food on impulse was studied by Kollat & Willett (1967). They had an experimental group which did not have a shopping list; and a control group which did have. Women with prepared shopping lists of more than fifteen products had a lower percentage of unplanned purchases than women with shorter lists or no lists at all. No information was given about their marital status or racial background. It is still questionable as to whether women base their planning of purchases for food items on the same factors as they do when buying clothing.

Unplanned buying of clothing by 780 women in two types of retail establishments, a discount store and a department store, was studied by Prasad (1975). Data showed that the percentage of unplanned buying was higher for discount store consumers than among department store shoppers. Unfortunately, specific items most often purchased or details about the women's personal characteristics were not indicated.

Lockeman (1973) studied the qualities that 131 white women

respondents pre-planned before buying shoes. Data indicated that they planned to select items based on comfort, fit, size, style, and appearance. Later, Newman and Lockeman (1975) equated survey methods, both personal interview and mailed questionnaires, with the observation method of studying women's buying of shoes. Their findings suggested that the consumer knows from the beginning what she plans to purchase and the qualities the items must possess.

An investigation was done by Stone, Form, & Strahan (1954) on decisions made while shopping for clothes. Their sample consisted of more than 100 married couples residing in a south-central Michigan city. The largest proportion of the sample combined clothing buying with the purchasing of groceries, paying of bills, and buying of other household items, which suggests that these items of apparel may have been bought with very little pre-planning.

A study of 380 women in four cities in the northeastern part of the United States (Whitlock, Ayres, & Ryan, 1959) found that one-third of the respondents had browsed in other stores before buying a blouse. This implied that these purchasers tended to do comparative shopping before making their selections.

Stone and Form (1957), in their study of Vansburg women from all socio-economic classes, found that the middle class group knew precisely what it planned to purchase when shopping for clothing. The upper class and the lower class groups were unsure of the clothing items they wanted to purchase.

Some research has investigated particular factors planned prior

to buying children's and adolescents' clothing. It generally indicates that fit, style, color, and price of garments is often pre-planned (Mayer, 1957; Mead, 1957; Ryan, 1965; Shaffer, 1965). Jacobi and Walters (1958) studied consumer dress-buying behavior and suggested that at the time when a woman makes a purchase she has already limited her choices by reducing the number of acceptable items in terms of price and style.

The behavior of 306 women who were shopping in a blouse department was studied by Horning (1961). Data revealed that the 137 non-purchasers inquired about fabric, style, color and fiber more frequently than the 169 who actually bought a blouse. This may indicate that the women who did not purchase a blouse pre-planned the factors they looked for and were not satisfied with the choices available.

Research was done by Smith (1974) with a sample of 144 black professional women in South Louisiana. All respondents held either a Bachelor of Science degree, Master of Science degree or education beyond a Master's degree. Evidence showed that approximately three-fourths of the sample pre-planned their purchases.

#### Types of Stores Patronized

There are a variety of retail outlets which serve the clothing demands of many types of consumers. Department stores, specialty stores, discount stores, mail order and magazines or direct mail approaches are sources established to meet customers' wants and needs. Stanton (1975) and Troxell & Judelle (1971) agreed that to be



considered a department store, the store must have a minimum of twenty-five employees; clothing and soft goods must represent 20 per cent of the total sales volume; and furniture, appliances, household linens, home furnishings, and dry goods must be included in the store's merchandise. A specialty store carries a limited variety of products such as womens' sportswear, millinery, or maternity apparel. A discount store (The Discount Merchandiser, 1967) is a "departmentalized retail establishment utilizing many self-service techniques to sell hard goods, health and beauty aids, apparel and other soft goods, and other general merchandise." Rachman and Kemp (1963) reported that the discount store fascinates purchasers because of its "lower-than-average markup, which makes it compete against other types of stores when it comes to price."

Wellan (1966) investigated the shopping practices of thirty-five male executives and found that they patronized men's specialty stores and department stores, exclusively. Unmarried executives shopped in specialty shops more than married executives. Married men and single men were compared in Stivers (1974) study of 400 males against the types of stores they patronized. Data indicated that the single men patronized specialty stores more than the married men. The question remains whether females, particularly employed single black females from different socio-economic levels would have a similar purchasing behavior pattern.

The clothing buying practices of low-income women have been investigated by some researchers. Stender (1969) studied the stores

patronized by seventy-five white, low-income women. The retail sources they used were in the following descending order: department stores, discount stores, and variety stores.

The shopping behavior of 652 adult consumers who lived in a college town in New York was investigated by Dardis and Sandler (1967). Data indicated that price was the major factor which caused these adults to shop in discount stores. They also did a lot of comparative shopping before making a purchase.

Rogers (1970) compared the wardrobes of 210 females, from three ethnic groups, attending Texas Women's University. The groups involved were the Afro-Americans, Anglo-Americans and Latin-Americans. The department store was the most frequented retail outlet of all three ethnic groups.

It was reported in Clothes Magazine (1970) that stores patronized by blacks are unlike the retail establishments shopped by whites. In urban areas, blacks shopped in chain and discount stores which are self-service resources rather than department and specialty stores. No specific details about the occupation and socio-economic level of these women were given.

A study by Braguglia and Rosencranz (1968) of forty white women and forty black women from Columbia, Missouri, indicated that both groups patronized department stores more than any other type of retailer. All eighty women respondents were from a low socio-economic level.

More than half of Smith's (1974) black sample shopped in

department and specialty stores. Most of the professional women under the age of thirty bought ready-to-wear apparel in chain stores, while those over thirty went to department and specialty stores for their clothes.

Two researchers (Feldman & Star, 1968) studied mail order shopping of 760 white and 240 non-white participants. Data revealed that the whites shopped by mail or phone twice as much as the non-whites. For each race, as income increased catalog purchasing and ordering by telephone appeared to increase.

#### Methods of Payment

Cash and credit are two methods used to pay for clothing. Credit "in the form of a debt is involved whenever cash, goods or services are provided on a promise to pay at a future date" (Warmke, Willie, Wilson & Eyster, 1971). In 1968, the most frequently used credit in order of volume of sales was: (a) independent plans of individual retailers, (b) credit plans of dominant department stores, (c) credit card plans of gasoline companies, (d) bank credit card plans, and (e) travel and entertainment credit card plans (Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve, 1968). It appears that the growth of the credit purchasing power of consumers has compelled most retailers to make some kind of credit available to their customers.

Bank credit cards have been noted as an important factor in America's credit. In 1970 the two major bank credit cards were Master Charge and Bank Americard (O'Neil, 1970). More than 6,000

banks in the United States have issued these and claimed over twenty million card holders.

White (1975) investigated some of the reasons that consumers in a large city decide to use bank credit cards. In his sample of 649 white and non-white adults, all family units had either a checking account or bank credit cards or both. Results indicated that race was an important factor as to whether they had bank credit cards or not. The non-whites used bank credit cards more than whites. Non-whites tended to feel that using credit was much cheaper than paying with cash because they were not expected to pay the full cost of items at time of purchase; they paid small amounts at a time on their charge balances and did not perceive the high cost of interest rates. Data also suggested that non-whites have trouble cashing checks and, therefore, were more likely to use credit cards.

An examination of how a consumer's social class influences his use of bank credit cards was done by Matthews and Slocum (1969). One thousand ninety-six participants from the lower, middle and upper classes were sent mailed questionnaires. Major findings showed that the lower class participants used their cards for installment payments and the upper class group used their cards for convenience purposes. Installment card holders looked for stores that accepted their cards. No personal information concerning race or sex was given about the sample.

The use of commercial bank credit cards in relation to the consumer's life style was studied by Plummer (1971). His sample

consisted of 858 women and 987 men but their racial background was not given. The most frequent credit card users were those who were middle-aged, had a higher income, a better education and held a professional job.

One study reported that credit cards were owned by more blacks than whites (Cox, Stafford & Higginbotham, 1972). Thus, the researchers felt that the market for gasoline credit cards was divided according to the race factor and not on the basis of income. Department store credit was also investigated in this study, and data indicated that the stores' management reviewed the applicants as to their capability of paying in relation to income rather than race.

Rogers' (1970) comparison of wardrobes of college girls from three ethnic groups found cash was the most often used method of payment for all of them. The second choice of payment which they selected varied: the Afro-Americans used layaway; Anglo-Americans chose checking accounts; Latin-Americans preferred using charge accounts.

In Orr's (1973) research of twenty-five, low-income families, findings indicated that all of them used cash 100 per cent of the time when clothing was purchased. Two families in the study sometimes used a layaway plan also.

About fifty per cent of the black professional women in Smith's (1974) research used both cash and store charge accounts as methods of payment for their personal clothing. Half of the total sample also used layaway plans to obtain their clothing.

## Factors Influencing Personal Clothing Selection

Winakor (1969) has suggested specific factors which influence the rate of clothing consumption. She stated that age of the consumer, values, goals, equipment used for clothing upkeep, and quantity and quality of clothing tend to be important determinants.

### Social Influence

Burnkrant & Cousineau (1975) studied the importance of social influence on buying behavior of instant coffee. The sample consisted of 143 undergraduate male students who attended the University of Illinois and Illinois State University. Data showed that the individual's choice of products was influenced by what others thought. After others voiced a favorable judgment about the product, the consumer's own opinion was reinforced more favorably.

### Brand Names and Garment Characteristics

The thirty-five male executives in Wellan's (1966) study indicated that fashion, comfort and economy were of descending importance in selecting their apparel which suggests that these men will keep up with fashion no matter what else they have to give up. Males in the Time/Hystron (1969) study stated the following factors influenced their clothing selections: magazines, family or friends, store displays, and salespeople; eighty-three per cent said that brand names also were important in their selection of clothing.

Engen (1957) investigated the buying habits of fifty college males. Their reasons for selecting their clothing were in the

following descending order: general appearance of garment, becomingness, suitability, serviceability, comfort, approval of friends and cost.

The use of brand named garments by 178 college sorority women was examined by Phillips (1966). Data indicated that brand names were ranked high in regard to their personal clothing choices because this identification gave a garment a specific image in relation to fashion and status.

Research of the buying practices of college girls by Lee (1960) showed that factors such as style, color, workmanship and fabric were their main determinants in choosing a garment. Over half of these respondents also looked at garment labels when making their selections.

The clothing expenditures of 75 college freshmen women was investigated by Hoffman (1960). Respondents indicated that need was the main factor that influenced their selection of clothing.

It was found in Orr's (1973) study of low-income families that the main reason for purchasing new clothing was to replace old, worn garments for both adults and children. It appears that the major factor concerning these families was need.

In a comparison of Black and white low-income women, more whites than Blacks knew the fiber contents of garments (Braguglia & Rosenzanz, 1968). This suggests that fiber content was one of the lesser concerns of the black women or that they were less aware of its importance.

Smith's (1974) study reported that more than half of the black

professional women said that comfort and appearance of a garment was more significant to them than brand name and prestige.

### Shopping Companions

In the Northeast regional study (1959), data showed that about one-fourth of the 380 women respondents shopped with a companion. Half of the individuals stated that they frequently took the advice of others when purchasing a blouse. A majority of all of the women said they particularly liked the advice of a salesclerk.

Two-fifths of the 100 married couples in Stone, Form and Strahan's (1954) study shopped for clothing with other people most of the time. Of these two-fifths, about one-third shopped with members of their family.

The clothing buying habits of 100 women attending Oklahoma State University were studied by Perry and Norton (1970). Price, color and salespeople were the most influential factors in their selection of clothing.

Horning's comparison of purchasers and non-purchasers (1961) showed that the 169 women who did buy a blouse were more inclined to shop with companions. The 137 respondents who made no purchase looked at more merchandise displays than the buyers did.



## Chapter III

### Procedure

Similarities and differences among employed single black women from different socio-economic levels in relation to their planning of purchases, types of stores patronized, methods of payment, and factors influencing personal clothing selection were explored in this study. The procedure will be categorized into four areas: selection of sample, the instrument, collection of data, and method of analysis of data.

#### Selection of Sample

The sample for this study was 141 single, black women between 18 and 40 years of age. All of them were employed in various types of positions in Washington, D.C., including government offices and businesses. Although a convenience sample, this group was considered likely to indicate the apparel purchase behavior of single black women in general.

#### The Instrument

A self-administered questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed to collect the data because it permitted a larger sample than would have been feasible by the interview method. Part I was concerned with the women's clothing shopping companions, the types of stores they

patronized, and the type and amount of pre-planning they did before making their selections. Questions in Part II requested personal information about the individuals. Part III of the instrument related to questions on clothing purchases. Part IV dealt with the methods of payment the women used for their personal clothing. Part V was developed to investigate some of the socio-psychological factors influencing the respondents' behavior under certain shopping situations. Tozier's (1968) and Burns' (1964) questionnaires were used as guides in developing the instrument.

#### Pre-testing

The instrument was pre-tested with six black females. Three of them were college students at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, while the others were working women in Blacksburg, Virginia. They were encouraged to make any suggestions they thought would better prepare the instrument for other black women to respond to it. As a result of their responses and comments, slight changes were made in the wording and organization of the questionnaire.

#### Collection of Data

Friends and working acquaintances of the researcher in Washington, D.C., were personally contacted and their help, or that of their friends, was requested in providing information for the study. Efforts were made to include women from various socio-economic levels. Respondents

were given a copy of the questionnaire and asked to complete it at their earliest convenience. If the women indicated they were unable to respond immediately, a second visit was made to collect their completed questionnaire.

#### Method of Analysis Data

The original data for each respondent were coded, and then punched and verified on IBM cards for computer analysis according to the chi square test. Data were considered statistically significant at the .05 level in this research.

The McGuire-White Short Form Index of Social Status (1955) was adapted to establish the socio-economic level of each individual. This was based on each woman's occupation, major source of income and education.

## Chapter IV

### Results and Discussion

Results and discussion of this research were based on data collected, by means of a questionnaire, during the winter of 1975. Participants in the study were 141 unmarried, black women, who were employed in Washington, D.C. Their clothing buying practices were investigated in relation to their socio-economic level. In this chapter, the characteristics of the respondents will be briefly described, followed by an analysis of the variables in relation to social class. These variables were: planning of purchases, stores patronized, methods of payments and factors influencing personal clothing selection. A chi square test of independence was used to test these relationships. When the chi square test could not be used, frequency tables showing the number and percentage of respondents in each category were used as a method of evaluation.

#### Characteristics of the Respondents

All of the 141 single black women who participated in this research were between 18 and 40 years of age (Table 1). The biggest proportion of the respondents (61.0 per cent) did not have any dependents. Although a very few of the women indicated that their annual incomes were \$16,000 or more, the largest proportion, or 41.1

TABLE 1  
AGE, NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS, AND INCOME RANGE

Variable	Respondents	
	No.	%
<u>Age</u>		
18-20	13	9.2
21-25	42	29.8
26-30	37	26.2
31-35	28	19.9
36-40	21	14.9
Total	141	100.0
<u>Number of Dependents</u>		
0	86	61.0
1	23	16.3
2	16	11.3
3	14	9.9
4 or more	2	1.4
Total	141	99.9 <sup>+</sup>
<u>Income Range</u>		
\$ 4,000 - 8,000	58	41.1
8,000 - 12,000	42	29.8
12,000 - 16,000	23	16.3
16,000 - 20,000	15	10.6
20,000 - 25,000	1	0.7
25,000 and above	2	1.4
Total	141	99.9 <sup>+</sup>

<sup>+</sup>Percentages may not total 100.0 per cent due to rounding.

per cent, said they had incomes in the \$4,000-\$8,000 range per year.

The largest share of the women (41.1 per cent) reported that the highest grade of school they had completed was graduation from high school (Table 2). In addition, nearly 20 per cent indicated they had gone to college for one or two years and almost 25 per cent said they had graduated from a four year college.

When asked the major source of their income, 49.6 per cent of these working women responded that it came from salary and/or commissions and/or monthly checks (Table 2). Almost as many (48.9 per cent) said they received most of their money from weekly checks or hourly wages.

Computations of a raw score for the social class index (McGuire & White, 1955) of the respondents indicated that only one woman was in the upper-class and six were in the lower-lower; since their raw scores varied only slightly from the minimums or maximums established by McGuire & White for adjacent social levels, these women were considered to be similar to those in the nearest group. As a result, the 141 women were classified about evenly among three socio-economic levels: upper-middle, lower-middle and upper-lower (Table 2). Throughout this chapter these will be referred to as "UM," "LM," and "UL."

### Planning of Purchases

The single black women were asked questions concerning the planning that they did before actually buying their clothing. Factors such as the amount of money to be spent, number and type of garments

TABLE 2  
EDUCATION, INCOME, AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS

Variable	Respondents	
	No.	%
<u>Highest Grade Completed</u>		
Advanced college degree	13	9.2
4-year college graduate	35	24.8
Less than 2 years of college	28	19.9
High school graduate	58	41.1
Non-graduate of high school	4	2.8
Less than 9th Grade	3	2.1
Total	141	99.9 <sup>+</sup>
<u>Major Source of Income</u>		
Profits, fees from business	1	0.7
Savings and investments	1	0.7
Salary and/or commissions or monthly checks	70	49.6
Weekly checks and hourly wages	69	48.9
Total	141	99.9 <sup>+</sup>
<u>Socio-Economic Level</u>		
Upper-Middle	48	34.0
Lower-Middle	47	33.3
Upper-Lower	46	32.6
Total	141	99.9 <sup>+</sup>

<sup>+</sup>Percentages may not total 100.0 per cent due to rounding

to be purchased, and the comparison shopping done were investigated. Results are reported in relation to the respondents' socio-economic level.

### Financial Expenditures

According to the chi square test, planning a certain amount of money for clothes compared to social class was not statistically significant (Table 3). However, slightly over six per cent of the UM reported that they often planned in advance the amount they would spend for their clothing, as compared to a little over 23 per cent of the LM and about 17 per cent of the UL. Chi square analyses of differences in social class level were significant with pre-planning the price to be paid for a garment. Both the LM group (70.2 per cent) and UL (71.7 per cent) appeared more likely to pre-plan the price of a garment to be bought than the UM group (47.9 per cent).

### Store and Number of Garments

Differences in respondents' socio-economic class in relation to pre-planning the store to be shopped were not statistically significant (Table 4). The majority of all the respondents from each class "sometimes" decided in advance the store which they would patronize.

Chi square analysis of differences in socio-economic level with regard to pre-planning the number of garments to be purchased was statistically significant (Table 4). Nearly 23 per cent of the women in the UM socio-economic level did plan in advance the number of garments they would purchase as compared to about 36 per cent of the



TABLE 3

## PRE-PLANNING CLOTHING EXPENDITURES IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Amount to be spent</u>							
Often	3	6.3	11	23.4	8	17.4	
Sometimes	20	41.7	19	40.4	16	34.8	
Almost Never	25	52.1	17	36.2	22	47.8	
Total	48	100.1 <sup>+</sup>	47	100.0	46	100.0	6.3545 d.f.=4
<u>Price of a garment</u>							
Yes	23	47.9	33	70.2	33	71.7	
No	25	52.1	14	29.8	13	28.3	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	7.2498* d.f.=2

\* Significant at .05 level.

<sup>+</sup> Percentages may not total 100.0 per cent due to rounding

TABLE 4

PRE-PLANNING STORE AND NUMBER OF GARMENTS TO BUY IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Store</u>							
Often	13	27.1	15	31.9	10	21.7	
Sometimes	30	62.5	24	51.1	29	63.0	
Almost Never	5	10.4	8	17.0	7	15.2	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0 <sub>q</sub>	46	99.9 <sup>+</sup>	2.4054 d.f.=4
<u>Number of Garments</u>							
Yes	11	22.9	17	36.2	23	50.0	
No	37	77.1	30	63.8	23	50.0	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	7.4627* d.f.=2

\* Significant at .05 level

<sup>+</sup> Percentages may not total 100.0 per cent due to rounding

LM and 50 per cent of the UL.

### Garment Design and Color

The largest portion of all socio-economic classes reported that they pre-planned the type and color of clothes to be purchased for their personal wardrobes (Table 5). No statistically significant differences among the three groups were found.

No statistically significant differences were revealed in the pre-planning of color versus style of clothing in relation to socio-economic class (Table 6). However, the largest proportion of women from all socio-economic classes indicated they were much more likely to decide in advance the style rather than the color of garments they would buy. Although differences among socio-economic groups were not significant, more than half of the women in all classifications "sometimes" pre-planned the fabric of garments.

There were no statistically significant differences in a comparison of socio-economic class with the respondents' advance planning of price and brand of clothing purchases (Table 7). However, the largest proportions of the UM (39.6 per cent) and the UL (39.1 per cent) appeared to pre-plan only the price of the garments to be bought; the greatest share of LM (38.3 per cent) said they decided both the price and brand of their purchases before going shopping.

### Time Length Planned for Purchases

The relationship of socio-economic class to the time spent in planning a \$3.00 earring purchase was examined and found to be

TABLE 5

## PRE-PLANNING GARMENT DESIGN AND COLOR IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class				Chi Square
	Upper-Middle No.	Lower-Middle No.	Upper-Lower No.	%	
<u>Design of Garments</u>					
Yes	39	34	28	60.9	
No	9	13	18	39.1	
Total	48	47	46	100.0	4.8187 d.f.=2
<u>Color of Garments</u>					
Yes	28	32	27	58.7	
No	20	15	19	41.3	
Total	48	47	46	100.0	1.2168 d.f.=2

<sup>+</sup>Percentages may not total 100.0 per cent due to rounding

TABLE 6

## PRE-PLANNING GARMENT COLOR VS. STYLE AND FABRIC IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Color	11	22.9	8	17.0	9	19.6	
Style	29	60.4	29	61.7	33	71.7	
Neither	8	16.7	10	21.3	4	8.7	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	3.3841 d.f.=4
<u>Fabric</u>							
Often	12	25.0	15	31.9	14	30.4	
Sometimes	29	60.4	26	55.3	29	63.0	
Almost Never	7	14.6	6	12.8	3	6.5	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	99.9 <sup>+</sup>	2.1454 d.f.=4

<sup>+</sup>Percentage may not total 100.0 per cent due to rounding

TABLE 7  
 PRE-PLANNING GARMENT PRICE VS. BRAND IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Price	19	39.6	14	29.8	18	39.1	
Brand	5	10.4	6	12.8	9	19.6	
Neither	16	33.3	9	19.6	6	13.0	
Both	8	16.7	18	38.3	13	28.3	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	10.9640 d.f.=6

statistically significant, according to the chi square test (Table 8). About eight per cent of the UM women took longer than a few minutes to make this purchase as compared to 14.9 per cent of the LM and 32.6 per cent of the UL classes.

Differences in the socio-economic level and the time length in buying a \$12.00 blouse or a \$50.00 coat were not significant (Table 8). It seemed that all of the respondents from each group took longer than a few minutes to consider either purchase. Data also suggested that as the item increased in price, the LM were inclined to spend less time thinking about buying than the UM but more time than the UL.

#### Pay More than Planned for Clothing Purchases

According to the chi square test, no statistically significant differences were found in a comparison of socio-economic class to paying more than planned for garments (Table 9). However, the LM group seemed more likely to spend the anticipated amount than either of the other classes.

There were no statistically significant differences in the comparison of planned and paid price of last pantsuit or dress purchased in relation to socio-economic class (Table 10). It was interesting to observe, however, that a larger proportion of the UM made no plans about the price they would pay than was reported by either of the other two lower social class groups.

#### When to Shop for Personal Clothing

The time for purchasing fall or winter clothing with regard to

TABLE 8

## PLANNING TIME FOR PERSONAL CLOTHING EXPENDITURES RELATED TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>\$3.00 Earrings</u>							
Few minutes	44	91.7	40	85.1	31	67.4	
Longer than a few minutes	4	8.3	7	14.9	15	32.6	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	9.7933* d.f.=2
<u>\$12.00 Blouse</u>							
Few minutes	12	25.0	11	23.4	8	17.4	
Less than one week	25	52.1	21	44.7	20	43.5	
One week or longer	11	22.9	15	31.9	18	39.1	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	3.1129 d.f.=4
<u>\$50.00 or more Coat</u>							
One week or less	13	27.1	15	31.9	14	30.4	
One month	18	37.5	15	31.9	18	39.1	
Two-three months	13	27.1	10	21.3	8	17.4	
One year	4	8.3	7	14.9	6	13.0	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	2.4884 d.f.=6

\* Significant at .05 level



TABLE 9  
PAID MORE THAN PLANNED FOR GARMENT IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Middle		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Paid More Than Planned</u>							
Often	21	43.8	22	46.8	15	32.6	
Sometimes	20	41.7	21	44.7	24	52.2	
Almost Never	7	14.6	4	8.5	7	15.2	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	2.8612 d.f.=4

TABLE 10

COMPARISON OF PRICE PLANNED AND PAID FOR LAST PANT SUIT OR DRESS  
IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Less than planned	3	6.3	8	17.0	5	10.9	
More than planned	16	33.3	20	42.6	21	45.7	
Same price planned originally	13	27.1	8	17.0	10	21.7	
Didn't have plans originally in relation to price	16	33.3	11	23.4	10	21.7	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	5.9174 d.f.=6

socio-economic level was not statistically significant (Table 11). A majority of the women in all classes started buying early in the fall and continued to buy all year.

Chi square value of differences in the time when new clothes were purchased with regard to socio-economic class was not significant (Table 11). The data appeared to support the findings of Orr (1973) which indicated that low-income families tend to buy clothing only if it is needed.

#### Comparative Shopping

There were significant differences in socio-economic class in relation to the use of mail-order catalogs for comparison of garments before going shopping (Table 12). Use of these sources of information appeared to increase as socio-economic classification decreased.

Information was requested regarding the amount of comparison shopping the women did before coming to a decision about their purchases. Hypothetical situations involving items of three different price levels were presented and responses indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in the number of stores visited by the three socio-economic groups when purchasing a \$3.00 pair of earrings or a \$50.00 or more coat. A majority of all the women purchased the earrings in the first store they shopped (Table 13). The largest proportion of respondents in all social classes indicated they did comparison shopping in three stores before buying a \$50.00 or more expensive coat.

There were statistically significant differences found in a

TABLE 11

TIME TO PURCHASE FALL AND WINTER CLOTHING  
IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Purchase Clothing for Fall or Winter</u>							
Within one month	4	8.3	10	21.3	9	19.6	
Started buying early in the Fall and still buying	31	64.6	33	70.2	30	65.2	
Other	13	27.1	4	8.5	7	15.2	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	7.9592 d.f.=4
<u>When to Shop</u>							
Beginning of season	7	15.2	5	10.9	7	15.9	
As you need	14	30.4	15	32.6	22	50.0	
Have extra money and see something you like	25	54.3	26	56.5	15	34.1	
Total	46	99.9 <sup>+</sup>	46	100.0	44	100.0	6.0418 d.f.=4

<sup>+</sup> Percentages may not total 100.0 per cent due to rounding

TABLE 12

USE OF CATALOGS IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio- Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Often or sometimes	9	18.8	14	29.8	23	50.0	
Almost Never	39	81.3	33	70.2	23	50.0	38
Total	48	100.1 <sup>+</sup>	47	100.0	46	100.0	10.6939* d.f.=2

\* Significant at .05 level

<sup>+</sup> Percentages may not total 100.0 per cent due to rounding

TABLE 13

## COMPARISON SHOPPING IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>\$3.00 Earrings</u>							
One store	41	85.4	29	61.7	33	71.7	
Two stores	5	10.4	11	23.4	10	21.7	
Three stores	2	4.2	7	14.9	3	6.5	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	99.9 <sup>†</sup>	7.9476 d.f. = 4
<u>\$12.00 Blouse</u>							
One store	16	33.3	4	8.5	5	10.9	
Two stores	21	43.8	28	59.6	26	56.5	
Three stores or more	11	22.9	15	31.9	15	32.6	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	12.2794* d.f. = 4
<u>\$50.00 or more coat</u>							
One or two stores	11	22.9	8	17.0	11	23.9	
Three stores	18	37.5	20	42.6	11	23.9	
Four stores or more	19	39.6	19	40.4	24	52.2	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	4.7418 d.f. = 4

\* Significant at .05 level

† Percentages may not total 100.0 per cent due to rounding

comparison of socio-economic level with retail establishments visited before purchasing a \$12.00 blouse (Table 13). Thirty-three and three tenths per cent of the women in the UM class shopped in just one store, but only 8.5 per cent and 10.9 per cent of the LM and UL classes, respectively, purchased this item in the first store they entered.

### Stores Patronized

Information for this research was concerned with the type of stores patronized by the single black women respondents. Factors that influenced store selection were also investigated.

#### Type

Chi square analysis of differences in social class with type of stores patronized was not statistically significant (Table 14). A majority of all the women preferred to shop at a department or discount store rather than a specialty store.

Women in the study were asked if they knew of a store where they would like to buy their clothes although they usually did not shop there (Table 14). Their responses were analyzed in relation to socio-economic class and results were not statistically significant. However, nearly one-third of all of them stated they would like to shop at different stores than they were currently patronizing; Saks and Garfinckels' were two which they frequently mentioned as desirable clothing retailers. Both of these are generally considered to carry some of the highest prices and newest apparel fashions in the city

TABLE 14

TYPE OF STORES PATRONIZED AND PREFERRED IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square	
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower			Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		No.
<u>Type Store</u>								
Department or Discount	31	64.6	26	55.3	29	63.0	86	61.0
Specialty Store	17	35.4	21	44.7	17	37.0	55	39.0
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	141	100.0
								0.9773 D.F.=2
<u>Prefer to Shop Certain Store</u>								
Yes	14	29.2	13	27.7	15	32.6	42	29.8
No	34	70.8	34	72.3	31	67.4	99	70.2
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	141	100.0
								0.2856 d.f.=2



where the data were collected.

### Factors Influencing Store Usage

There were no statistically significant differences in the influence of store choice by the neatness or reputation of stores or the attitudes of the salesclerks compared to socio-economic classification (Table 15). One-half or slightly more of each of the groups indicated that a store's reputation was very influential in their selection of it as a place to buy apparel.

Although no statistically significant differences were found, variations in reactions to the display of merchandise were observed among the socio-economic classes (Table 16). More of the LM women were inclined to "often" be influenced by the way in which merchandise was displayed in stores than the other two classes.

There was no statistically significant chi square value for differences in the relationship of social class with special sales influencing purchases. A majority of the respondents in each group were occasionally affected by special sales when buying their personal clothing (Table 16).

### Methods of Payment

Methods which the 141 single black women respondents used to pay for personal clothing were investigated. Cash and credit such as revolving accounts, regular charges and blank credit cards were the payment methods examined. The women were also asked about their use of layaway plans. This was not considered a method of credit purchasing because

TABLE 15  
FACTORS INFLUENCING STORE SELECTION IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Store's Reputation</u>							
Much	26	54.2	24	51.1	23	50.0	
Little or none	22	45.8	23	48.9	23	50.0	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	0.1775 d.f.=2
<u>Neatness of Store</u>							
Often	25	52.1	25	53.2	22	47.8	
Occasionally	23	47.9	22	46.8	24	52.2	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	0.2980 d.f.=2
<u>Sales Clerks</u>							
Often	21	43.8	24	51.1	17	37.0	
Sometimes	21	43.8	16	34.0	23	50.0	
Almost never	6	12.5	7	14.9	6	13.0	
Total	48	100.1 <sup>+</sup>	47	100.0	46	100.0	2.5790 d.f.=4

<sup>+</sup>Percentages may not total 100.0 per cent due to rounding

TABLE 16

## INFLUENCE OF MERCHANDISE DISPLAYS AND SPECIAL SALES IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Display of Merchandise</u>							
Often	15	31.3	23	48.9	18	39.1	
Occasionally	33	68.8	24	51.1	28	60.9	
Total	48	100.1 <sup>+</sup>	47	100.0	46	100.0	3.1123 d.f.=2
<u>Special Sales</u>							
Often	18	37.5	19	40.4	16	34.8	
Occasionally	30	62.5	28	59.6	30	65.2	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	0.3157 d.f.=2

<sup>+</sup>Percentages may not total 100.0 per cent due to rounding

the consumer does not get possession of the merchandise until the total cost of it is paid.

#### Payment Method Categorized

There were no statistically significant differences in comparing socio-economic classification with the method of payment for clothing (Table 17). Data indicated that a vast majority of women in all the groups paid cash at the time of purchase.

#### Credit Card Carriers

The women were asked if they usually carried their credit cards with them (Table 18). Their responses were analyzed in relation to socio-economic class and results were statistically significant. Only 34.1 per cent of the UL group carried credit cards compared to 62.5 per cent of the UM and 63.8 per cent of the LM which may indicate that women in the UL class did not have personal charge accounts. It was interesting to observe that, even though approximately 75 per cent of the UM and 72.3 per cent of the LM used cash as their main method of paying for their personal clothing (Table 17), they also were inclined to carry their credit cards with them (Table 18).

#### Types of Credit

The possession by the single black women of different types of credit was investigated. Differences among the three socio-economic groups were not significant in relation to revolving charge accounts or bank credit cards. However, the UL women appeared least likely to have either of these types of credit (Table 19).

TABLE 17

METHOD OF CLOTHING PAYMENT IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class					
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Cash	36	75.0	34	72.3	37	80.4
Credit	12	25.0	13	27.7	9	19.6
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0
						0.8636
						d.f.=2

TABLE 18

CREDIT CARD CARRIERS IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Carry Credit Cards</u>							
Yes	30	62.5	30	63.8	15	34.1	
No	18	37.5	17	36.2	29	65.9	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	44	100.0	10.2439* d.f. = 2

\* Significant at .05 level

TABLE 19

## TYPE OF PERSONAL CREDIT USED FOR CLOTHING IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Revolving Account</u>							
Yes	29	60.4	32	68.1	22	47.8	4.0127 d.f.=2
No	19	39.6	15	31.9	24	52.2	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	
<u>Bank Credit Cards</u>							
Yes	29	60.4	26	55.3	18	39.1	4.6176 d.f.=2
No	19	39.6	21	44.7	28	60.9	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	
<u>Regular Charge</u>							
Yes	22	45.8	14	29.8	10	21.7	6.4618* d.f.=2
No	26	54.2	33	70.2	36	78.3	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	

\*Significant at .05 level

There were significant differences in a comparison of socio-economic class with possession of a regular charge account for personal clothing purchases (Table 19). As might have been expected, possession of a regular charge account tended to increase as socio-economic level increased (UM, 45.8 per cent; LM, 29.8 per cent; and UL, 21.7 per cent).

#### Use of Layaway Plans

In a comparison of socio-economic level with the use of layaway plans in building a personal wardrobe, statistically significant differences were found (Table 20). Data indicated that almost 65 per cent of the UM women "almost never" used this method of obtaining their personal clothing as compared to only 34 per cent of the LM and nearly 35 per cent of the UL groups.

#### Personal Credit Used

No statistically significant differences were found in comparing socio-economic class with the type of personal credit most used within the last year (Table 21). It appeared that a regular charge account was used less by all respondents than other types of personal credit.

According to the chi square test, statistically significant differences were found in a comparison of socio-economic class with maximum charge limit for clothing purchases (Table 22). As might have been expected, 60.4 per cent of the UM class were permitted charge purchases from "\$400 - no limit," but only 34 per cent of the LM and 17.4 per cent of the UL had similar privileges.



TABLE 20  
 USE OF LAYAWAY IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Level						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Uses Layaway plan</u>							
Often	1	2.1	6	12.8	8	17.4	
Sometimes	16	33.3	25	53.2	22	47.8	
Almost never	31	64.6	16	34.0	16	34.8	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	14.1756* d.f. = 4

\* Significant at .05 level

TABLE 21

TYPE OF PERSONAL CREDIT MOST USED IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Type of personal credit</u>							
Regular charge	2	5.0	6	14.6	5	11.4	
Revolving Account	13	32.5	11	26.8	15	34.1	51
Bank Credit Cards	10	25.0	11	26.8	8	18.2	
None of these	15	37.5	13	31.7	16	36.4	
Total	38	100.0	41	100.1 <sup>+</sup>	44	100.1 <sup>+</sup>	3.2435 d.f.=6

<sup>+</sup>Percentages may not total 100.0 due to rounding

TABLE 22

MAXIMUM CHARGE AND OPINION OF CREDIT COSTS IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Credit Limit</u>							
Up to \$400.00	5	10.4	19	40.4	23	50.0	
\$400 - No Limit	29	60.4	16	34.0	8	17.4	
Don't have charge accounts	14	29.2	12	25.5	15	32.6	
Total	48	100.0	47	99.9 <sup>+</sup>	46	100.0	24.3095* d.f.=4
<u>Opinion about cost of credit</u>							
About the same	12	25.0	9	19.1	18	39.1	
More	28	58.3	26	55.3	19	41.3	
Less, or don't know	8	16.7	12	25.5	9	19.6	
Total	48	100.0	47	99.9 <sup>+</sup>	46	100.0	5.9694 d.f.=4

\* Significant at .05 level

<sup>+</sup>Percentage may not total 100.0 due to rounding

The women were asked how they thought the cost of buying their clothing on credit compared to paying cash (Table 22). According to the chi square value, this response in relation to socio-economic class was not significant. However, only 58.3 per cent of the UM; 55.3 per cent of the LM; and 41.3 per cent in the UL knew that it usually costs more to use credit than to pay cash.

### Factors Influencing Personal Clothing Behavior

The single black women were asked questions regarding the people accompanying them at the time of purchases and whose opinions affected their choice of clothing. The influence of brand names, importance of comfort, individuality, and price versus clothes that fit one's personality were investigated. Their personal beliefs as to what clothing may communicate were also examined.

### Shopping Companions

A comparison of socio-economic class with shopping companions indicated that differences were statistically significant (Table 23). Although the largest proportion of the women from all socio-economic levels reported that they were much more likely to shop alone than with a relative or friend, a larger proportion of the UL (28.3 per cent) said they preferred to shop with a relative or boy friend than was indicated by the UM (12.5 per cent) or LM (19.1 per cent).

### Opinion of Friends and Sales Clerks

Statistically significant differences were found when comparing

TABLE 23

## PREFERRED SHOPPING COMPANIONS IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Alone	33	68.8	31	66.0	26	56.5	
Relative or boy friend	6	12.5	9	19.1	13	28.3	
Girl friend	9	18.8	7	14.9	7	15.2	
Total	48	100.1 <sup>+</sup>	47	100.0	46	100.0	10.1249* d.f. = 4

\* Significant at .05 level

<sup>+</sup> Percentages may not total 100.0 due to rounding

socio-economic class with reaction if a girl friend did not like a dress worn by respondents (Table 24). A larger proportion of the UL (43.5 per cent) said they were concerned when a woman did not like their clothing than was reported by either of the other groups (UM, 27.7 per cent; LM, 10.4 per cent). The respondents' reactions if a boy friend was not satisfied with a dress they wore were not statistically significant.

Respondents were asked if they ever questioned the opinions of sales clerks about how clothes looked on them (Table 24). This, too, was not statistically significant but the women in the LM class seemed more inclined to ask the opinions of the sales clerks about their clothing than the other two groups.

#### Influence of Brand Names

In a comparison of socio-economic class with the reason brand name garments were purchased, no statistically significant differences were found (Table 25). However, the largest proportion of the LM and the UL reported that they bought them because they believed these garments were better quality. The highest percentage of the LM said they preferred brand name garments because of their superior fitting qualities.

In an effort to compare the importance of brand names with price, the women were asked their reactions if they were buying a dress to wear to a Christmas party. Responses, in relation to socio-economic level, were not statistically significant (Table 26). The largest

TABLE 24

## REACTION TO FRIEND'S DISLIKE OF DRESS IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Girl friend</u>							
Feel no concern	43	89.6	34	72.3	26	56.5	
Feel concern	5	10.4	13	27.7	20	43.5	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	6.7372* d.f.=2
<u>Boy friend</u>							
Feel no concern	15	31.3	19	40.4	19	41.3	
Discontinue wearing	23	47.9	19	40.4	17	37.0	
Continue wearing	10	20.8	9	19.1	10	21.7	
Total	48	100.0	47	99.9 <sup>+</sup>	36	100.0	2.5631 d.f.=4
<u>Ask sales clerk's opinion</u>							
Yes	21	43.8	29	61.7	23	50.0	
No	27	56.3	18	38.3	23	50.0	
Total	48	100.1 <sup>+</sup>	47	100.0	46	100.0	3.1511 d.f.=2

\* Significant at .05 level

<sup>+</sup> Percentages may not total 100.0 due to rounding

TABLE 25

REASON BRAND-NAME GARMENTS ARE PURCHASED IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Why brand-name garments are purchased</u>							
Fit body measurements	16	34.0	21	46.7	14	33.3	
Better Quality	17	36.2	11	24.4	18	42.9	
Don't buy brand-names	14	29.8	13	28.9	10	23.8	
Total	47	100.0	45	100.0	42	100.0	6.0906 d.f.=4



TABLE 26

PRICE VERSUS BRAND IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>If you bought a dress to wear to a Christmas Party, would you</u>							
Buy a special brand even though you knew you were paying for the name	12	25.0	7	14.9	14	30.4	
Buy another brand which costs less	19	39.6	22	46.8	24	52.2	
Other	17	35.4	18	38.3	8	17.4	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	7.2032 d.f.=4

proportion of all the groups said they would not buy the desired brand of party dress if the price was more than they had planned to pay.

#### Comfort and Individuality

Data indicated that only 19.1 per cent of the LM class women "almost never" felt uncomfortable about their clothing, while 43.8 per cent of the UM and 32.6 per cent of the UL had this reaction. These differences were statistically significant in comparing socio-economic class with feelings about clothing (Table 27).

Even though there were no statistically significant differences in a comparison of socio-economic class with feeling distinguished versus comfortable, the majority of black females in each group preferred comfortable clothes rather than distinguished looking garments (Table 28). A majority of each of the groups also indicated that they favored wearing clothes that would make them stand out in a group rather than garments similar to those of other people.

According to the chi square test, there were no statistically significant differences in socio-economic class when the black respondents were asked what they would do if they went shopping with a friend and both of them wanted to buy the same dress (Table 29). The UL class, however, seemed to be the most concerned that they were duplicating a friend's garment.

#### Importance of Price versus Clothes that Fit Personality

No statistically significant differences were found in comparing socio-economic class with factors that were considered important when

TABLE 27

## FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT APPEARANCE OF CLOTHING IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class					
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Feel uncomfortable</u>						
Often or sometimes	27	56.3	38	80.9	31	67.4
Almost never	21	43.8	9	19.1	15	32.6
Total	48	100.1 <sup>+</sup>	47	100.0	46	100.0
						10.2710* d.f.=2

\* Significant at .05 level

<sup>+</sup> Percentages may not total 100.0 per cent due to rounding

TABLE 28

COMFORT VERSUS DISTINGUISHED APPEARANCE IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Look distinguished but not comfortable	13	27.1	17	36.2	13	28.3	
Comfortable, but not distinguished	35	72.9	30	63.8	33	71.7	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	1.0860 d.f.=2
<u>Would you rather wear clothes that</u>							
Make you stand out	30	62.5	33	70.2	29	63.0	
Similar to those others wear	18	37.5	14	29.8	17	37.0	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	0.7693 d.f.=2

TABLE 29

REACTION TO FRIEND'S PURCHASE OF AN IDENTICAL DRESS IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Would you --							
Buy it even though friend purchased it?	21	46.7	22	46.8	14	31.1	
Choose another style?	21	46.7	21	44.7	22	48.9	
Ask friend to buy a different style?	3	6.7	4	8.5	9	20.0	
Total	45	100.1 <sup>+</sup>	47	100.0	45	100.0	9.3801 d.f.=4

<sup>+</sup>Percentages may not total 100.0 per cent due to rounding

purchasing clothing (Table 30). A majority of the women in all classes reported that obtaining apparel to suit their personalities was more important than price.

#### Personal Beliefs Related to Clothing

There were no statistically significant differences in the relationship of socio-economic class with the feeling that clothing helps one "get ahead in the world" (Table 31). However, approximately 52 per cent of the UM and 54 per cent of the UL said that they did not think clothing had high value for this purpose; slightly over 53 per cent of the LM believed it did help them get ahead in the world.

Statistically significant differences were found in the relationship of socio-economic class compared to self-assurance given an individual by her clothes (Table 31). Almost 63 per cent of UM and about 77 per cent of the LM groups felt that clothing was important in giving the wearer self-assurance; only a little over 41 per cent of the UL women agreed.

There were statistically significant differences in the socio-economic groups' feelings about clothing and social status (Table 32). The LM class (53.2 per cent) seemed most inclined to think clothing indicated social status compared to about 48 per cent of the UM and 35 per cent of the UL.

#### Acceptance and Rejection of Hypothesis

The acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis for this study is based upon an investigation of some of the differences in selected

TABLE 30

IMPORTANCE OF PRICE VERSUS CLOTHES THAT FIT PERSONALITY IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Price	11	22.9	11	23.4	16	34.8	
Clothes that fit personality	36	75.0	32	68.1	30	65.2	
Other	1	2.1	4	8.5	0	0.0	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	1.6687 d.f.=4

TABLE 31

FEEL CLOTHING HELPS ONE GET AHEAD AND GIVES SELF-ASSURANCE IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Helps one get ahead in world</u>							
Yes	17	35.4	25	53.2	16	34.8	4.3185 d.f.=4
No	25	52.1	18	38.3	25	54.3	
Don't Know	6	12.5	4	8.5	5	10.9	
Total	48	100.0	47	99.9 <sup>+</sup>	46	100.0	
<u>Gives self-assurance</u>							
Yes	30	62.5	36	76.6	19	41.3	13.6497* d.f.=2
No or don't know	18	37.5	11	23.4	27	58.7	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	

\* Significant at .05 level

<sup>+</sup> Percentages may not total 100.0 due to rounding



TABLE 32

FEEL CLOTHING INDICATES SOCIAL STATUS IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS

Item	Socio-Economic Class						Chi Square
	Upper-Middle		Lower-Middle		Upper-Lower		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	23	47.9	25	53.2	16	34.8	
No, or don't know	25	52.1	22	46.8	30	65.2	
Total	48	100.0	47	100.0	46	100.0	9.1775* d.f.=2

\* Significant at .05 level

clothing buying practices of single black women employed in Washington, D.C. in relation to their socio-economic level. A chi square test of independence was used to test these relationships. Differences were usually in the proportion of a socio-economic group who followed certain buying practices and were not considered great enough to reject any section unless the chi square value was equal to or larger than the .05 level. Of the 141 women who provided the information for this research, 34.0 per cent were classified as upper-middle level, 33.3 per cent as lower-middle, and 32.6 per cent as upper-lower.

#### Acceptance

Data support the acceptance of each section of the null hypothesis as follows:

##### A. Planning of purchases

There were no significant differences with socio-economic level in relation to pre-planning a certain amount of money for clothing; the store where shopping would be done; the design, color, fabric, price, and brand of garments; or the time in the season when clothing purchasing would be carried on.

##### B. Stores patronized

There were no significant differences with socio-economic class in relation to type of store where purchases were usually made; desire to shop in a different store than generally patronized; factors influencing retailer selection such as neatness and reputation of the store, attitude of sales clerks, or special merchandise displays and sales.

### C. Methods of payment

There were no significant differences with socio-economic class and the utilization of cash versus credit; the use of revolving or bank credit accounts; or the respondents' opinions about the comparative cost of credit versus cash in buying clothing.

### D. Factors influencing personal clothing selection

There were no significant differences with socio-economic class and the reactions to a boy friend's disapproval of personal apparel; desire for sales clerks' opinions about potential purchases; reasons for purchasing brand name garments and the comparative importance of price versus brand; desire to wear distinguished looking versus comfortable clothing; and behavior followed in acquiring individualized apparel which suited the wearers' personalities.

## Rejection

Data support the rejection of part of each section of the null hypothesis as follows:

### A. Planning of purchases

There was a significant difference with socio-economic classification and planning price and number of garments to be purchased; the time spent in planning a \$3.00 earring purchase; the use of catalogs for contrasting garments before going shopping; and comparison shopping in stores before purchasing a \$12.00 blouse.

### C. Methods of payment

There was a significant difference with socio-economic level and

the carrying of credit cards; the availability of regular charge accounts; the use of layaway plans; and the amount respondents were permitted to charge.

#### D. Factors influencing personal clothing selection

There was a significant difference with socio-economic group and preferred shopping companion; reaction if a girl friend did not like a dress worn by respondents; feeling uncomfortable about the appearance of personal clothing; the amount of self-assurance given an individual by apparel; and attitude about the ability of clothing to communicate social status.

## Chapter V

### Summary

The purpose of this research was to compare the clothing buying practices of single black women from three different socio-economic levels who were employed in Washington, D.C. Specific objectives of this study were to compare the clothing buying practices of black women from the upper-middle, lower-middle and upper-lower socio-economic levels in relation to: their pre-planning of purchases; the stores they patronized; the methods of payment they used; and the factors influencing their personal clothing selection.

A questionnaire was designed to collect empirical data about their methods of acquiring personal wardrobes. It was pre-tested in Blacksburg, Virginia, with three female college students and three women in the labor force, all of whom were Black.

Subjects for this research were 141 single black women between 18 and 40 years of age. All of them were employed in Washington, D.C. The largest proportion of them said they had annual incomes of \$4,000-\$8,000, had high school or higher educations, and no dependents.

McGuire-White Short Form Index of Social Status (1955) was adapted to establish the socio-economic level of each respondent. This was based on each woman's occupation, major source of income and education. The sample was divided about evenly among the

upper-middle, lower-middle, and upper-lower socio-economic classes.

The chi square test for independence was used to test for significant differences among socio-economic groups.

### Major Findings

1. As the socio-economic level of the women decreased, the pre-planning of the number of garments to be purchased increased.

2. Upper-middle class women were least likely to pre-plan the price they would pay for apparel.

3. As the socio-economic level of the females decreased, the proportion of the respondents who took more than a few minutes for pre-planning the buying of a \$3.00 pair of earrings increased.

4. The use of catalogs for comparison shopping appeared to increase as social class decreased.

5. The upper-middle class was more inclined to shop only one store before buying a \$12.00 blouse than either of the other two classes.

6. The upper-middle and lower-middle groups were more inclined to carry credit cards with them than the upper-lower class women when shopping for personal clothing.

7. Possession of a regular charge account tended to decrease as socio-economic level became lower.

8. Upper-middle class women seemed least inclined to use lay-away plans as a way of obtaining their personal clothing.

9. A larger percentage of the upper-middle class women did not

have a limit to their charge accounts. Also, as the social class became lower the proportion of black women who were permitted to charge from "\$400 - no limit" decreased.

10. Upper-lower women were more inclined to prefer a relative or male friend as shopping companion.

11. A larger proportion of the upper-lower class seemed to value their girl friend's opinion about their personal apparel than was observed in the upper-middle or lower-middle class women.

12. A larger proportion of the lower-middle class felt uncomfortable about the clothing they wore than either of the upper-middle and upper-lower groups.

13. A majority of females in the upper-middle and lower-middle socio-economic levels felt clothing was important in giving the wearer self-assurance. Only a small proportion of the upper-lower group agreed.

14. A smaller proportion of the upper-lower class women indicated a belief that clothing indicates social status than was observed in either of the other groups.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

Some suggestions for further research were observed during the present study. A comparison of the personal clothing buying practices of married and single black women from both rural and urban areas would increase information about the influence of their employment, marital status and environment on wardrobe management. It

could increase understanding about the effect of the number of earners or dependents upon the total clothing consumption pattern of black families. Research about black men's personal purchasing practices could add further knowledge about the interrelationship of personal clothing buying and cultural background.

Investigations about clothing selection and planning practices of other ethnic groups in the United States are needed to improve understanding of human behavior.

If the questionnaire used in the present study was refined and used by other researchers more helpful data would be provided in subsequent investigations. Better methods of establishing rapport between researchers and consumers are needed to improve understanding of shoppers' motivations and satisfactions.

Clothing buying behavior of individuals are important to retailers and educators. Retailers need to know "how and why" their market segments purchase clothes. Educators need this information to help teach others. The purpose of this research was to investigate the personal clothing buying practices of single black women from different socio-economic levels. Further research should be expanded to explore the psychological and sociological implications for a clearer understanding of their clothing needs and desires.



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## APPENDIX A

FASHION PLANNING AND BUYING

Are you satisfied with the selection of clothes in the stores and with the ways they are sold to you? Now is your chance to voice your opinions. In order to improve the fashions of today, retailers can learn from your experiences in buying and shopping for clothing.

Your experiences in buying clothing and managing your clothing money are important not only to retailers, but they can also help others. Please answer every question. Remember, there are no right and wrong answers. This is not a test. Please do not sign your name.

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PART I. Directions: Please place a check (✓) in front of the one answer that best describes your clothes shopping.

1. When you go clothes shopping do you usually?

- a. Go alone
- b. Go with your mother
- c. Go with your father
- d. Go with your relative (describe) \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Go with husband or boyfriend
- f. Go with girlfriend
- g. Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Where do you buy most of your clothes?

- a. Department store (Ex: Woodies, Hechts, Garfinckels, Korvettes)
- b. Discount Store (Ex: Woolco, Zayres, Memco)
- c. Specialty Store (Ex: Casual Corners, L. Franks, Joseph Harris, Phillipsborn)
- d. Other (name and location, please) \_\_\_\_\_

3. What importance do you place on a store's reputation before you shop in it?

- a. Much
- b. Little
- c. None at all

4. Do you consider the neatness of a store before you buy in it?

- a. Often
- b. Sometimes
- c. Almost Never

5. Before you go shopping for your clothing, do you usually plan to buy at a particular store?
- a. Often  
 b. Sometimes  
 c. Almost Never
6. Do you use mail-order catalogs to compare garments before going shopping?
- a. Often  
 b. Sometimes  
 c. Almost Never
7. Does the attitude of the salesclerks influence your going to a store to shop?
- a. Often  
 b. Sometimes  
 c. Almost Never
8. Does the display of merchandise at a store influence your shopping there?
- a. Often  
 b. Sometimes  
 c. Almost Never
9. Does a store's special sale cause you to shop in it?
- a. Often  
 b. Sometimes  
 c. Almost Never
10. Do you plan a specific proportion of your income (by the pay period or the year) which you plan to spend for your clothes?
- a. Often  
 b. Sometimes  
 c. Almost Never
11. Do you know of a store where you would like to buy most of your clothes but you do not usually purchase there?
- a. Yes (name and location, please) \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. No



12-15. Which of the following do you plan before you buy your wardrobe?

	Yes	No
Number of garments		
Kind of garments		
Color of the garments		
Price of the garments		

16. Before you go shopping for clothing, which of the following do you consider? (One answer, please)

- a. Price  
 b. Brand  
 c. Neither  
 d. Both

17. Before you go shopping which of these are you most likely to plan about your clothing purchases?

- a. Color of the garment  
 b. Style of the garment  
 c. Neither

18. Before you go shopping for a garment are you likely to decide on its fabric?

- a. Often  
 b. Sometimes  
 c. Almost Never

19-21 Before you go shopping, how long in advance do you usually plan to buy these items? (Check appropriate columns)

	\$3.00 Earrings	\$12.00 Blouse	\$50.00 or More Coat
A few minutes			
Less than one week			
One week			
One month			
Two or three months			
One year			

PART II. Directions: A little information about you is needed to analyze the data. Remember this is not a test. Because you will not sign your name, your identity will not be known. In questions 22-26 please fill in the blanks. Place a check (✓) in front of the one best answer that fits you for questions 27-29.

22. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

23. What is your present marital status? Single \_\_\_\_\_ Married \_\_\_\_\_
24. Number of dependents? (Do not include yourself) \_\_\_\_\_
25. What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
26. Give a brief description of your job responsibilities. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
27. What was the highest grade you completed in school? (One answer)
- a. Less than 9th grade
  - b. Finished 9th grade
  - c. Attended high school but did not graduate
  - d. High school graduate, and/or post high school training or trade school
  - e. Less than 2 years of college or junior college graduate
  - f. Graduate of a 4-year college
  - g. Advanced college degree (Examples are M.S., M.A., L.L.B., Ph.D., M.D., D.D.S.)
28. What is your major source of income? (Choose one answer)
- a. Inherited savings and investments
  - b. Profits, fee from business or profession
  - c. Savings and investments
  - d. Salary and/or commissions, and/or monthly check
  - e. Weekly checks and hourly wages
  - f. Odd jobs, seasonal work
  - g. Public relief or assistance
29. Check (✓) the range that your income falls in:
- a. \$ 4,000 - 8,000
  - b. 8,000 - 12,000
  - c. 12,000 - 16,000
  - d. 16,000 - 20,000
  - e. 20,000 - 25,000
  - f. 25,000 - and above
-

PART III. Directions: Check (✓) the answer that best describes how you purchase clothing. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. Retailers just need to know your opinions and experiences.

30. How often have you paid more for an outfit than you originally planned?
- a. Often  
 b. Sometimes  
 c. Almost Never
31. When you bought your last pantsuit or dress, was the price that you paid?
- a. Less than you planned originally  
 b. More than you planned originally  
 c. The same price you had planned originally  
 d. You did not have any plans about price
32. When did you buy your new clothes for this Fall or Winter?
- a. Within one month  
 b. Started buying in the Fall and still buying  
 c. Other (describe \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_)
33. Which of the following is usually more important to you when you are buying a garment for yourself?
- a. Price of the garment  
 b. Clothes that fit your personality  
 c. Other (Explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
34. When you go shopping, do you ever ask the salesclerks for their opinions on how clothes look on you?
- a. Yes  
 b. No
35. If you went shopping with a friend and both of you wanted to buy the same dress and it was available in sizes to fit both of you, would you?
- a. Buy it even though your friend also bought it  
 b. Choose another style of dress  
 c. Ask your friend to buy another style different from yours  
 d. Other (describe \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_)

36. When are you most likely to buy new clothes? (One answer)

- a. At the beginning of each season (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer)  
 b. As you need them  
 c. As you have some extra money  
 d. When you see something and like it  
 e. When your friends are buying  
 f. Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

37-39. In how many stores do you usually compare items before buying?  
(Place a check (✓) in each column that fits you)

	One Store	Two Stores	Three Stores	Four or More Stores
\$3.00 Earrings				
\$12.00 Blouse				
\$50.00 or More Coat				

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PART IV. Directions: There are many ways in which a person can spend her income. Select the one best answer that describes your method for paying for your clothing. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

40. How do you purchase most of your clothing?

- a. Cash  
 b. Credit

41. Do you usually carry your credit cards with you?

- a. Yes  
 b. No  
 c. Store does not give one

42. What is the maximum amount stores generally permit you to charge on your charge accounts?

- a. \$50.00  
 b. \$100 - 200  
 c. \$200 - 400  
 d. \$400 - 600  
 e. \$600 - 800  
 f. No Limit  
 g. Do not have store charge accounts

43. Do you think the cost of buying your clothing on credit in comparison to paying cash is?

- a. About the same
- b. More
- c. Less
- d. Do not know

44. Do you use layaway when buying your clothing?

- a. Often
- b. Sometimes
- c. Almost Never

45-46. How do you pay for your clothing when buying garments which cost less than \$25.00?

	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never
Cash			
Credit			

47-48. How do you pay for your clothes which cost more than \$25.00?

	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never
Cash			
Credit			

49. Do you have a regular charge account? (No interest or extra charges, no down payment; are you expected to pay total amount due in one payment)

- a. Yes
- b. No

50. Do you have a revolving charge account? (Store sets maximum limit you can charge and you pay a fixed amount every month; as you pay and reduce the balance, you can make more charges)

- a. Yes
- b. No

51. Do you have bank credit cards? (Master Charge, BankAmericard, Central Charge)

- a. Yes
- b. No

52. If you have any other kind of credit account not mentioned above (questions 49-51) name the type and describe \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

53. Which kind of credit have you used most often in the last year?  
(One answer, please)

- a. Regular charge
- b. Revolving account
- c. Bank credit cards
- d. Used all about the same
- e. None of these
- f. Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

PART V. Directions: Please check (✓) the one choice that best describes what you would do under the following situations.

54. If you were buying a dress to wear to a Christmas party, which would be more important to you?

- a. Buy a special brand even though you knew you were paying for the name
- b. Buy another brand which costs less
- c. Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

55. If you see a very beautiful dress to wear to work that has a well known brand name but costs more than you had planned to spend for it, do you usually?

- a. Disregard the price and buy it anyway
- b. Not buy it because it costs more than you had planned to spend
- c. Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

56. Which one of the situations below seem to make you most aware of the appearance of your clothing? (One answer, please)

- a. At home
- b. At work
- c. At meetings
- d. At a party
- e. Leading a group
- f. Meeting new people
- g. When shopping for clothes
- h. Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

57. What would you do if you knew your best girlfriend did not like one of your dresses?

- a. Feel no concern  
 b. Discontinue wearing the dress at certain times  
 c. Continue wearing the dress, but enjoy it less  
 d. Worry about making good selections in the future

58. What would you do if you knew your best man friend or husband did not like one of your dresses?

- a. Feel no concern  
 b. Discontinue wearing the dress at certain times  
 c. Continue wearing the dress, but enjoy it less  
 d. Worry about making good selections in the future

59. Would you rather buy clothes that?

- a. Are in the same price range as your friends  
 b. Are more expensive than your friends  
 c. You do not have an opinion on this

60. Would you rather wear clothes that? (One answer)

- a. Make you look distinguished in a group even if the garment is not comfortable  
 b. Are very comfortable but you do not look distinguished.

61. If you were buying a dress to wear to work, how do you prefer to care for it?

- a. Handwash  
 b. Machine wash  
 c. Dry Clean  
 d. Other \_\_\_\_\_

62. Would you rather wear clothes that?

- a. Make you stand out in a group. Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Are similar to those others are wearing. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

63. Do you think that keeping up with new fashions is?

- a. Too expensive for your income  
 b. Expensive but you will do it and give up other ways of spending money  
 c. Other \_\_\_\_\_

64. Do you buy brand name garments because you think that they?
- a. Give you a feeling of prestige
  - b. Fit your body measurements better
  - c. All your friends buy them
  - d. Better quality
  - e. Don't buy brand name garments
65. Whose opinion about your clothing do you value most? (One answer)
- a. Mother
  - b. Father
  - c. Other Relative (describe) \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Husband or boyfriend
  - e. Girlfriend
  - f. Co-Worker
  - g. Boss
  - h. Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_
66. Do you feel that clothing is important in helping you "get ahead in the world"?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Don't Know
67. Do you feel that clothing is important in giving you self-assurance?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Don't know
68. As far as clothing is concerned, do you feel that it can be a way of indicating your social status?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Don't know
69. Do you ever feel uncomfortable about the appearance of your clothing?
- a. Often
  - b. Sometimes
  - c. Almost Never

THANK YOU. YOUR EXPERIENCES WILL BE TOLD TO RETAILERS!!!



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CLOTHING BUYING PRACTICES OF EMPLOYED SINGLE BLACK WOMEN  
FROM THREE SOCIAL CLASSES

by

Doris Yvette Harps

(ABSTRACT)

Purpose of this research was to investigate clothing buying practices of single black women from different socio-economic levels. Data were provided in a self-administered questionnaire by 141 single black women, 18-40 years old, employed in Washington, D.C. The sample was classified approximately evenly into upper-middle, lower-middle, and upper-lower socio-economic categories according to McGuire-White Short Form Index of Social Status. Chi square test for independence was used to test for significant differences among groups in relation to: their pre-planning of purchases; stores they patronized; methods of payment they used; and factors influencing their personal clothing selection.

Major findings were: (1) upper-middle class women were least likely to pre-plan price to be paid for garments, have a charge account limit, but more inclined to shop only one store before buying a \$12.00 item and have a regular charge account; (2) the lower-middle class women were most likely to feel uncomfortable about their clothing; and (3) upper-lower women were most likely

to pre-plan number of garments to buy, spending for \$3.00 items, use catalogs for comparison shopping and to prefer a relative or male friend shopping companion and value girl friends' opinion about apparel. They were least inclined to believe clothing indicates social status or gives the wearer self-assurance and to have regular charge accounts or carry credit cards when shopping.