

CHAPTER 2

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to gather preferences of female flight attendants for garment characteristics of the ideal flight attendant uniform. A questionnaire was developed and tested as the instrument that would be used to gather the flight attendant preferences. The subsequent design criteria would be the beginning of a recommended uniform that would function for the needs of the wearer.

Objectives

The specific objectives of this research were as follows:

1. To confirm there were existing problems with the current flight attendant uniform.
2. To develop an instrument that could be used to gather flight attendant preferences for uniform clothing and design criteria.
3. To determine flight attendant preferences for uniform clothing and design criteria.
4. To determine if relationships existed between flight attendant age or years of service, and garment characteristics of uniform silhouette, interior design lines, and fabric.

Operational Definitions

The following operational definitions were developed to help the reader understand terminology of the airline and clothing industry.

Duties/Activities

During *preflight duties* the flight attendant follows a check list for the aircraft cabin. The list includes checking all safety equipment for operation and placement, placing pillows and blankets in their proper locations as well as checking catering for the correct number of meals, beverages, etc. There are many activities that must be completed before passenger enplaning. During *passenger enplaning* the flight attendant greets passengers, helps to secure carry-on baggage and locate seat assignments. Before departure, the flight attendant demonstrates the use of safety equipment and explains emergency procedures.

Passenger deplaning involves bidding the passengers farewell. It is also a time for assisting passengers in retrieving their carry-on bags or assisting passengers who have special needs. The cabin is straightened before the next enplaning. Flight attendants may have time to visit the terminal to shop, walk, eat or browse. The flight attendant remains on duty and continues to represent the airline while visiting the terminal.

Food and beverage service is the time spent serving meals, snacks or beverages during the flight. This is a physically demanding duty that requires loading hot meals into serving carts, distributing them to passengers, picking up empty meal trays as the passengers complete their meals and reloading the trays in the carriers to be secured in the galley for landing. These activities take place in an area that measures approximately 3 by 5 by 6 feet from ceiling to floor and involves much bending, kneeling, stretching, pushing and shoving. After the beverage or

meal service (if time allows) the flight attendant may eat, interact with the passengers and/or prepare for the next level of service.

Silhouette of Garments

The silhouette of a garment referred to the outline of the garment. The silhouette included the length and shape of the garment body and sleeve.

Interior Design Lines of Garments

Interior design lines were the structural lines within the silhouette of a garment. They included the neckline, collar, pocket style, pocket placement, closing type, closing location and waist style.

Fabric Characteristics

Fabric characteristics included were care, color, type, stretch, weight, hand, surface and fabric design.

Assumptions

1. Currently the southeastern U.S. based airline has conservative uniform policies which may have influenced the responses of the flight attendants.
2. Flight attendant with more years of service will have more hours of experience with duties and will have learned which garment characteristics best meet their specific uniform needs.

Limitations

1. The sample was limited to flight attendants from one airline and reflects only three percent of that airline's total flight attendant population.
2. Flight attendants requested an illustration board to display garment choices and design criteria. The illustrations of garments may have biased their responses.

Hypotheses

When formulating the hypotheses for the flight attendant study several factors were taken into consideration: the flight attendant duties, uniform currently worn, flight attendant interviews, and observations, and the experience of the researcher as a flight attendant.

Hypothesis 1:

- There is no relationship between flight attendant age and garment characteristics.
- 1A. There is no relationship between age and uniform silhouette.
 - 1B. There is no relationship between age and interior design lines.
 - 1C. There is no relationship between age and fabric.

Justification:

Numerous studies have been conducted using age as a way to segment the participants. In studies by Lumpkin and McConkey, (1984) and Summers, Belleau, and Wozniak (1992) young respondents were referred to as 35 and under. Women in this age group were recognized as being more interested in image and fashion than older women (36 and over). Another distinction in age emerged at age 45. These women were defined as older shoppers in a study of

shopping habits by Rothenberg (1989). Therefore the segments for this research were set up as 35 and below, 36 to 45, and 46 and above.

Hypothesis 2:

There is no relationship between flight attendant years of service and garment characteristics.

2A. There is no relationship between years of service and uniform silhouette.

2B. There is no relationship between years of service and interior design lines.

2C. There is no relationship between years of service and fabric.

Justification:

It has been assumed that the flight attendant with more years of service, will have more hours of experience with duties and will have learned which garment characteristics best meet their specific uniform needs. For this research, the division of the years of service were developed based on flight attendant experience.

Within the first five years of employment the flight attendant will be on call to fly almost every route on the airline system. The type of service offered on a flight depends on the length and destination of the flight, therefore within the first five years, the flight attendant will have experienced most of the services offered and performed all the related duties. It is assumed that the flight attendant will continue to perform those same duties for the next 20 years and then retire. It is an exceptional flight attendant who continues to work after 25 years of service.