

**Importance of Dress and Sleepwear Attributes to Female  
Secretaries and Custodians.**

by

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(ABSTRACT)

This research investigated the importance female consumers place on fit, style, price, color, fabric, and construction when purchasing a dress and sleepwear for themselves. Age, education, employment status, and income also were studied to assess their relationship to attribute importance.

The data indicated that fit was the major consideration for both a dress and sleepwear. Dress style and price were of secondary concern; color, construction, and fabric were least important. For sleepwear, price, fabric, and style were of secondary importance; color and construction were of least concern.

The sample of 133 respondents was divided into two groups: secretaries and custodians. When dress and sleepwear attribute importance scores were compared significant differences were found. Secretaries considered style more important for a dress; fabric was of greater concern in

sleepwear selection. Fabric was more important when custodians purchased sleepwear.

A comparison of garment attribute importance between the two groups indicated dress fit and style and sleepwear fabric were of greater concern to secretaries than to custodians. The price of the garments was of higher priority to the custodians.

Age was significantly related to the secretaries' sleepwear color ratings and to the custodians' ratings on dress color. For secretaries, educational attainment was related to dress construction, employment status to dress style, and income to dress fit. No significant correlations were found between education, employment, or income of custodians and the importance of garment attributes in purchase decision.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Fashion goods comprise a unique category in which retailers need to be sensitive to style changes and cognizant of patterns of fashion adoption. They must understand the composition of their market segment if they are to maximize their profits. Money can be lost on a merchandising mix which is inappropriate for specified target markets (Golden and Zimmerman, 1980). Knowledge of the needs and wants of the consumer can be used to plan the most effective merchandise mix (Berman and Evans, 1983; Golden and Zimmerman, 1980).

The success of a retailer depends on satisfied customers. It is the consumer who dictates what products will be sold, and whether the store will be profitable or face bankruptcy (Berman and Evans, 1983; Golden and Zimmerman, 1980; Packard and Raine, 1979). A significant factor in determining a store's financial status is a correct evaluation of its consumers and their buying habits.

The study of consumer motivations and practices is becoming more important as the variety of goods and available resources increase. A better understanding of the factors which influence purchase selection is needed both by the consumer and by the seller. The consumer, who faces an

increasing variety of goods from which to choose, needs to be more analytical of his personal resources and the available goods in the market if he is to satisfy his needs and wants. The seller, whose task is to satisfy the customer, needs to fully understand consumers' wants in order to maximize profits in the long range program. As Seegal (1965) explained, "the merchant should develop an attitude and strategy for interpreting what people want and how big that want is. He should know customers' preferences as to price, quality, materials, styles, and colors of goods, a task which is growing in importance as customers achieve higher standards of living and become discriminating in their purchases" (p. 56).

Retailers and marketers who accept and practice the philosophy that the "consumer is king" (Duncan and Phillips, 1967) are using the marketing concept. They accept "customer needs and wants...(as)...the starting points for all their efforts" (Fram, 1965). They plan their merchandise assortments, the services they render, their physical facilities, and their personal policies to meet those needs and wants (Duncan and Phillips, 1967).

Despite the key role of the consumer, one retailer admitted that "some department store retailers have had little understanding of their shoppers" (Rothenberg, 1965). Other retailers have suggested that too many managements place complete reliance on instinct and follow the advice of

vendors without considering their customers' preferences (Berman and Evans, 1979; Ginsberg, 1985).

Watkins and Vandemark (1971) also observed that "when information systems for marketing firms are examined, there is little evidence that retailers regularly or systematically attempt to obtain an evaluation of how consumers regard products, services, and performances..." (p. 50). They concluded that little information was available concerning the importance of product attributes to customers when making purchasing decisions.

It is so important for the retailer to understand customer wants and purchasing motives that if he could read the consumers' thoughts and discover their preferences, their price limits, and the importance they place on the various garment attributes, he might have better information regarding the appropriate merchandise assortment he should purchase. Consumers often reveal what they are thinking, and the retailer must learn to read and interpret these outward signs. Sellers must watch the facial expressions of their customers and notice their eyes and hands as they handle the merchandise (Wingate and Samson, 1975).

Several studies (Jolson and Spath, 1973; Sewell, 1981; White, 1976) have indicated that these informal methods of determining customer attitudes concerning wants, needs and expectations are more beneficial to the seller than the typical reliance on past sales records and buying office

reports, but they are seldom used. Retail stores gather and maintain voluminous records on what is sold daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly but have few, if any, records on sales that are lost because attempts were not made to find out customer wants or the attributes they considered important in selecting merchandise (White, 1976).

Suggestions have been made that store managements must shift their focus from inward, merchandise-oriented factors to those reflective of the marketplace and its customers (Berman and Evans, 1983; Feinberg, 1974; Ginsberg, 1985; Greenwood and Murphy, 1978; Sewall, 1981; Sheth, 1983). Merchandising groups should develop specific merchandise programs and supportive assortments to embody product characteristics inherent in established objectives. Instead of market plans being developed by the buyer and merchandise manager and worked up to the general merchandise manager, the store should start with the customer and the market place and then work back to the buyer (Feinberg, 1974).

By studying consumers, apparel retailers and manufacturers are in a position to strengthen new product development efforts. Research findings may be used to inform retailers who may not be in a financial position to conduct studies on the consumer (Seidel, 1981).

The need for recognition of attitudes of consumers toward clothing products has been stressed by home economists. According to the National Goals and Guidelines

for Research in Home Economics, a goal of home economics research is to maximize the satisfaction and well-being of individuals and families through increased understanding of man and his environment (Schlater, 1970). Through the study of consumer behavior, the needs of the consumer will be better met and, thereby, contribute to the attainment of this goal. Jenkins and Dickey (1976) described the consumer as a choice maker who selects clothing products according to different characteristics or attributes. Other researchers (Bymers, 1968; Harries, 1971) stressed that the role of the home economist is to provide a link between the consumer and industry.

Specialists in marketing and home economics can work together on qualitative and motivational research studies, with the purpose of providing a better market for consumer goods (Volker and Deacon, 1982). Both business people and home economists center their interests on the consumer, the home, and the family, but from different points of view. For example, retailers want to understand consumers' behavior in order to achieve a more profitable operation while home economists want to know what actually motivates consumers in their actions and choices in order to effectively communicate and help them (Canoyer, 1958).

Efforts to provide a better market for consumers might be more successful if research were conducted to determine the influence which attributes have on the purchase decision

(Harries, 1971). Some studies (Conklyn, 1971; Gilman, 1985; Gilmore et al., 1961; Harabin, 1968; Jacobi and Walters, 1958; Smith, 1974; White, 1976) have indicated that product characteristics are important in clothing selection and are ranked differently for different types of garments by each customer.

Despite this importance, Martin (1972) observed that a sparseness of information existed concerning the relative importance of certain product attributes in the purchase decision. This was particularly evident in the area of fashion goods, especially in women's ready-to-wear clothing.

As the female segment of the market has become significantly diversified in recent years, it is not realistic to undertake a study about apparel purchase behavior and label it "women's apparel purchasing behavior". Therefore, in order to understand the apparel purchasing behavior of women, it is necessary to analyse a specific market segment. While 48.5 percent of the women in the United States are in the labor force (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1985), many work in semi-skilled or unskilled positions with low income levels and educational requirements.

Therefore, the intention of this study was to investigate the importance secretaries and custodians place on garment attributes when purchasing a daytime dress and sleepwear for themselves. The most frequently mentioned

factors in previous studies were style, color, fabric, fit, and price which were given particular consideration by customers when purchasing clothing. Thus, they were used in this study.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature has been divided into four sections to provide an insight into the importance of clothing attributes to consumers and retailers. The four sections are: 1) conceptualization of consumer purchase motivation, 2) clothing attributes, 3) attribute ranking, and 4) clothing consumer characteristics.

#### Conceptualization of Consumer Purchase Motivation

A widely accepted explanation of consumer motivation in product selection is based on multiattribute theories. Researchers in social psychology (Fishbein, 1967; Rosenberg, 1956; Wilkie and Pessemier, 1973) have considered various aspects of multiattribute choice making. They also have proposed attitudinal theories relating general affect of a multidimensional object to various characteristics of the object. These theories have utilized various types of linear models that incorporate evaluative beliefs regarding the object's attributes as independent variables in predicting general liking toward the attitudinal object. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) extended this work by suggesting that behavior

also is determined by normative beliefs and motivation to comply with perceived social norms.

Myers and Alpert (1968) contended that while a consumer holds many attitudes toward a product only a few are determinant features or attitudes toward factors which are most related to preference or to the actual purchase decision. This concept assumed that: 1.) consumers' beliefs about the attributes of a product are the most highly predictive aspect of the Fishbein type multiattribute model; 2.) demographic variables may reveal groups of consumers who maintain their beliefs and behaviors; and 3.) various demographic categories may place different weights on attributes regarding the purchase of a market item.

Their proposition was that an attribute may be relatively important to a consumer when selecting a product to purchase (Myers and Alpert, 1968). However, if the consumer rated all products as being equal with regard to that attribute, then the attribute was not a "determinant" factor in deciding what to purchase. Hence, to establish the "determinant" factor in deciding what to purchase, two questions had to be asked: 1.) How important was the attribute?, and 2.) How did alternative products under consideration differ on that attribute? If the various products under consideration were perceived as differing with respect to an attribute and that attribute was rated high in importance, than it was likely to be a determinant: 1.) if

the consumer perceived that it was equally present in all products, or 2.) if not equally present among products, the attribute was of little importance to the consumer.

To explain the difference between importance, determinance and salience (Olson, Kanwar, and Muderrisoglu, 1979), Hoyer and Alpert (1983) developed a conceptual model which related the three to the decision process. They suggested that during the problem-recognition stage the consumers' perception of the importance of various attributes guided the problem-solving strategy. During internal memory search those attributes which were most salient would be evaluated. However, even if salient attributes were recalled, they may not have been determinant in the decision. Hoyer and Alpert (1983) inferred that consumers evaluating the alternatives would conclude that certain important attributes discriminated well among alternatives while others did not, and it was the discriminating or determinant attributes which played the major role in producing a choice.

An earlier theory on dress-buying behavior of consumers was introduced by Jacobi and Walters (1958) in which they hypothesized that the purchasing process was a "narrowing-process". One of the many variables considered in the process was the critical attribute phase. They contended that after the dress choice had been narrowed to a relatively small number, the customer would give a priority to some special feature of a dress. Thus, the final decision

rested on the fact that there was one dominant attribute which shifted the scale in favor of a particular dress.

### Clothing Attributes

A review of marketing and clothing studies has revealed that little recent research has been conducted on the importance of clothing attributes to consumers at the purchase stage. Earlier studies, however, had indicated that attributes such as style, color, fabric, fit, and price were important in clothing selection and that they were weighted differently by different people.

#### Style

Style often has been thought by retailers and manufacturers to be one of the most important factors influencing consumer clothing selection. A study of 1782 women (United States Department of Agriculture, 1947) investigated women's preferences among selected textile products. Respondents chose from a list of eight characteristics the three they considered most important for each of four kinds of garments. For three of the categories, summer street dresses, one-piece winter street dresses, and short-sleeved blouses, the style of the garment was considered the most significant factor.

Three hundred and eighty consumers were interviewed soon after purchasing a blouse and asked to rank it on features that influenced the selection (Whitlock, Ayres, and Ryan, 1959). Style was ranked fourth in importance by 27 percent of the respondents.

During the 1960's, two studies were conducted on mothers' purchasing practices for boys' shirts, jeans, and slacks (Gilmore et al., 1961; Harabin, 1968). Interviews with mothers of nine and ten year old boys in four north central states revealed that style was the major criteria for selecting a particular pair of slacks or rejecting certain jeans (Gilmore et al., 1961). Style of neck or collar was the most frequent reason given for selecting or rejecting a knit shirt. Harabin (1968) studied mothers' satisfaction with third grade boys' slacks and shirts in relation to selected purchase, performance, and care factors. The sample of 51 mothers rated appearance as third in importance when they purchased these garments for their sons.

Several earlier studies (Decker, 1964; Hargett, 1963; Massey, 1964) had investigated the importance of various garment attributes to women 60 years of age and older. Hargett (1963), studying 101 women, reported style was the second consideration when they purchased ready-to-wear dresses. Decker (1964), with 24 women, concluded that they attached great appeal to the style of garments. Dissatisfaction with the merchandise included style features

such as inappropriate neckline or sleeves, and diagonal stripes. Massey (1964), with 58 women, reported that style was the second most important factor when purchasing clothing.

In a 1968 poll by the Mernhard-Commercial Corporation (Palamare, 1969), fashion was identified by 49 percent of the clothing manufacturers as the single most important factor in selling apparel.

Similar conclusions were made by Smith (1974) in her study of professional black women's fashion buying practices. One hundred forty-four respondents checked the importance of nine clothing features (price, color, fit, becomingness, fabric, construction, style, prestige, and brand name) when purchasing work clothes. Style was considered to be a very important factor by 62 percent of the women but was less important than price, fit, or fabric.

Eight hundred twenty-five customers of a midwest department store were studied by Conklyn (1971) concerning their satisfaction with dress purchases. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of style, fit, price, color, and fabric on their purchase decision. Again, style was given by the largest majority (59 percent) of the customers as their reason for selecting a dress.

Clothing practices and preferences of 186 blue-collar workers and their families were studied by Kundel (1976).

Fashionability or conformity with the styles worn by peers was of least concern to the wives when purchasing a dress.

White (1976) compared the level of importance which 391 customers and 42 retail buyers placed on selected clothing attributes. Results indicated that the consumers attached more weight to simple styles in pants suits and winter coats than the buyers did. The latest styles in pants suits and daytime dresses were not as important to consumers as the buyers thought.

A study of 3,036 employed members of the American Home Economics Association (Richards and Horridge, 1984) said style was a major consideration when they selected their clothing. The importance of this factor was suggested by the fact that 43 percent of the respondents indicated that they usually owned one or more outfits of the latest style. In addition, 47 percent stated that they usually kept their wardrobe up to date with current fashion items.

### Color

Color may influence the selection of a specific garment at the retail level. Previous research has indicated that differences exist between consumers and apparel makers on the importance of color in the purchasing process of different merchandise categories.

Consumers' preferences for fabric characteristics were studied to investigate consumer motivation and satisfaction

(Nolan and Levine, 1959). Women were asked to name the characteristics which influenced the choice of their last dress purchased. The most frequent answer was color.

Whitlock and others (1959) also found color to be a very important factor influencing the selection of blouses for purchase by 380 women. Once a suitable blouse choice was made, however, color was not considered as important as fit.

Even mothers of nine and ten year old boys (Gilmore et al., 1961) stated color as a significant characteristic considered when they purchased jeans, pants, and knit shirts. They also indicated it was a reason for rejecting certain jeans.

Three studies (Decker, 1964; Hargett, 1963; Massey, 1964) examined the importance of color to older women when purchasing a dress. Hargett (1963) found it was of less concern than fit, price, and style. Color was ranked third in importance in Decker's (1964) study. She reported that women who said they preferred blue dresses were wearing yellow-brown garments, and concluded that the difference probably was due to the availability of the yellow-browns for that particular season. Twenty-three of the 58 women interviewed by Massey (1964) said color was their first consideration when selecting a dress.

Shannon (1961) studied consumer satisfaction with cotton fabrics in relation to selected physical characteristics.

Color was noted by the consumers as the most important factor when they purchased yard goods for clothing.

Despite the importance consumers have placed on color when selecting garments, research findings have indicated that apparel firms do not consider it an important selling factor. Only 9 percent of apparel manufacturers listed color as the most important selling concept (Palamare, 1969). Interest in color as a selling factor in women's clothing was divided evenly between makers of unit priced dresses and coats and suits. Women's sportswear producers considered it to be very minor in importance.

Similar observations were made by Conklyn (1971) whose respondents indicated that color had little influence on the final dress purchasing decision. Color was considered important by only 28 percent of the respondents. Style, fit, and price were considered as more important features.

Smith (1974) found that a majority (62 percent) of her respondents considered color a very important attribute when purchasing work clothes. It was however, of less concern than price, fit, and fabric.

### Fabric

Few recent studies have investigated the importance of fabric to customers when they were purchasing clothing. Some projects, however, have indicated that it is a

consideration which varies in importance by merchandise category and customer type.

Two early studies (Gilmore et al., 1961; Harabin, 1968) examined the importance of fabric to mothers when they purchased slacks, jeans, and shirts for their sons. Gilmore and others (1961) found it was a major consideration when purchasing slacks but was not as important as style and color when selecting shirts and jeans.

In contrast, Harabin (1968) found fabric was least or sixth in importance to mothers when purchasing pants for their sons. For shirts, it was ranked fourth in importance. Thus, she concluded that the importance of fabric when selecting clothing was dependent on the merchandise category.

Studies (Burnett, 1964; Decker, 1964; Ebeling, 1960; Shipley, 1961) on older women's clothing preferences have indicated the significance of fabric when they purchased clothing. Findings indicate, however, that fit, price, and style were of greater importance than fabric.

Snyder (1966) found fabric to be important to women who wore half-size dresses. Cotton was the preferred fiber but most ready-to-wear dresses offered in stores contained synthetic rather than natural fibers.

Smiths' (1974) study reported fabric as third in importance by professional women when purchasing work clothes. Sixty-two percent of them considered fabric to be

very important while a larger majority indicated fit (78 percent) and price (73 percent) were major concerns.

Three studies (Conklyn, 1971; Palamare, 1969; White, 1976) had indicated that apparel firms and consumers did not consider fabric to be an important selling factor. Palamare (1969) reported that only 11 percent of women's apparel manufacturers said it was important. Only 21 percent of Conklyn's (1971) respondents listed fabric as a reason for selecting a dress. White (1976) reported that its importance in daytime dresses, pant suits, and winter coats differed between customers and retail buyers. Customers considered fabric characteristics more important when purchasing these garments than the buyers thought.

### Fit

Garment fit and its importance to customers has been of considerable interest to researchers and marketers. Previous studies have indicated that it is a major consideration when selecting clothing and often is the cause of dissatisfaction with ready-to-wear merchandise.

Whitlock et al. (1959) reported that fit was mentioned as a factor when purchasing a blouse by only 12 percent of the 380 women interviewed. Fit was mentioned more often if the blouse had been tried on in the store. Knit and wool blouses were checked more frequently for fit than woven or cotton blouses. Thus, fabric type and fiber were major

considerations in determining the importance customers placed on fit.

Fit also was ranked as the most important factor considered by mothers of nine and ten year old boys when purchasing shirts and pants (Harabin, 1968). It was more influential than appearance, durability, ease of care, price, and fabric comfort.

Several studies (Burnett, 1964; Decker, 1964; Massey, 1964; Shipley, 1961) have indicated that fit was an important factor to older women. It was, however, compromised for color and style due to dissatisfaction with the fit of available merchandise.

Conklyn (1971) found fit was ranked second in importance when selecting a dress by 59 percent of the respondents. Seventy-eight percent of Smith's (1974) sample said fit was the most important characteristic they considered when purchasing work clothing. It was also one of the most important criteria to wives of blue-collar workers when purchasing a dress (Kundel, 1976).

A difference between the weight which customers and retail buyers placed on fit or size of daytime dresses, pants suits, and winter coats was found by White (1976). Data showed that customers attached more importance to comfortable fitting and well proportioned clothing than the buyers.

In a poll reported in Apparel Industry (Schaffna, 1984), fit was reported to be almost as important as price to

consumers. Other results indicated that when customers did not purchase an item, 80 percent of the time it was because they could not find the correct size.

In May 1984, Good Housekeeping (Powers, 1984) sent interviewers into 200 homes to talk with women about their attitudes, shopping problems, care features, and thoughts on future purchases of clothing. When asked about shopping problems, 60 percent of the interviewees complained about fit. They said that clothes did not run true to size; there was no standardization of sizes; and every brand was sized differently. Of the eight categories of clothing discussed, men's shirts got the best marks for fit, with women's dresses ranking a distant second.

### Price

Price may influence a customer's selection of merchandise at the retail level. Whitlock et al. (1959) reported that 16 percent of the 380 women who had purchased a blouse mentioned price as an important selection factor. However, color, fabric, and style had greater influence than price on the selection process.

Harabin (1968) reported that price was ranked fifth in importance by mothers when purchasing slacks for their sons. It was ranked sixth or least important for shirt selection.

Research findings by the Mernhard-Commercial Corporation (Palamare, 1969) indicated that price was not

considered an important selling factor by apparel manufacturers. Fashion and style were stated by most of them as the most important factors influencing sales.

Two studies (Conklyn, 1971; Kundel, 1976) investigated the importance of fit to women when selecting a dress for purchase. Only 31 percent of the 825 customers surveyed by Conklyn (1971) listed it as a major factor. Style and fit were considered more significant than price. Kundel (1976) found price to be an important characteristic to wives of blue-collar workers. A major reason cited for not purchasing a specific dress was that the price was too high.

Fifty-one percent of Smiths' (1974) respondents listed price as a major factor when purchasing work clothing. It was, however, considered slightly less important than fit.

Harps' (1976) study of 141 single black women from three different socio-economic levels (upper-middle, lower-middle and upper-lower) investigated factors which influenced their personal clothing selection. Obtaining apparel to suit their personality was reported as more important than price by a majority of the women in all three classes.

A difference existed in the weight which customers and retail buyers attached to price in White's (1976) study. The customers attached greater importance to reasonably priced daytime dresses, pants suits, and winter coats within their budgets than the buyers did. The respondents also attached

greater importance to purchasing sale priced merchandise than the buyers.

Results of a poll reported in Apparel Industry (Schaffna, 1984) showed price was the most important characteristic to consumers when purchasing clothing. They stated that 80 percent of the time they did not make a purchase because the price was too high. Powers (1984) also reported that women in her study considered it a major factor. Many complained of high prices and noted that it was often a factor influencing the decision not to buy a garment.

In contrast, employed members of the American Home Economics Association (Richards and Horridge, 1984) stated that price was not one of the most important factors in their clothing selection process. Garment quality, comfort, and style were more influential criteria.

#### Ranking of Attributes

Clothing studies have revealed that attributes such as style, color, fabric, fit, and price are important in clothing selection but are ranked differently by different people. This suggests that the order of importance attached to the attributes during the purchase stage also may vary by merchandise category and customer characteristic.

Harabin's (1968) study of mothers' purchases of pants and shirts for their nine and ten year old sons indicated a

difference in the importance of garment characteristics for each merchandise group. The rank order for pants was: 1.) fit, 2.) durability, 3.) appearance, 4.) ease of care, 5.) price, and 6.) fabric comfort. For shirts it was: 1.) fit, 2.) appearance, 3.) ease of care, 4.) fabric comfort, 5.) durability, and 6.) price. When the scores on the importance of these factors were correlated, the relationships which were significant for both slacks and shirts were durability with appearance, fabric comfort with price, and fit with ease of care. Harabin concluded that consumers may find they must make compromises in their buying if they demand well-fitted garments and if they have pre-planned style, color, fabrics, and decorative details.

In a study on blouse satisfaction (Whitlock et al., 1959) women consumers indicated the factors which influenced their selection. The rank order was: 1.) size, 2.) color, 3.) fiber, 4.) style, 5.) fabric, 6.) price, and 7.) fit.

Several early studies (Decker, 1964; Hargett, 1963; Massey, 1964) investigated the importance of attributes to women, 60 years of age and older, when purchasing dresses. Hargett (1963) reported that fit ranked first, price and style second, and fabric and color were items of less importance. Decker (1964) found that rank order of six factors was: 1.) style, 2.) material, 3.) color, 4.) fit, 5.) versatility, and 6.) comfort. Massey (1964) concluded that older women attached the greatest concern to color when

selecting a dress; style was second, and fit was third in importance.

A more recent study on dress purchases by younger women was conducted by Conklyn (1971) with midwestern customers age 16 and over. Their order of importance was: 1.) style, 2.) fit, 3.) price, 4.) color, and 5.) fabric.

Similar conclusions were made by wives of blue-collar workers when purchasing dresses (Kundel, 1976). Fit, style, comfort, and price were identified as being the most important characteristics considered, while fashionability or conformity with the styles worn by peers was the least important.

Smith's (1974) study of professional black women investigated the importance of attributes on work clothes selection. The rank was: 1.) fit, 2.) price, 3.) fabric, 4.) care, and 5.) style.

Two recent studies (Powers, 1984; Richards and Horridge, 1984) have investigated the importance of garment attributes to employed home economists when purchasing clothing. Garment quality and comfort were perceived as being more important than style in the clothing selection process (Richards and Horridge, 1984). Other findings indicated garment style as being more influential in the selection than garment price. Thus, a rank order for this sample was: 1.) quality, 2.) comfort, 3.) style, and 4.) price. When women respondents indicated the importance of nine characteristics

they would consider in future clothing purchases, permanent press fabrics were ranked number one (Powers, 1984). Price was second followed by finishing details and seaming, previous experience with the brand, and fiber content. Care label information, resistant finishes, and the origin of production were least important. These results are consistent with previous findings (Nolan and Levine, 1959) where respondents considered these factors to be standardized and adequately provided by the manufacturer. Apparently, consumers did not feel the need to consider them at the time of purchase.

Fashion was identified as the single most important factor in selling apparel by 49 percent of the clothing manufacturers with 32 percent stating style to be most important (Palamare, 1969). Price was listed most important by 13 percent followed by fabric (11 percent) and color (9 percent).

In a recent nationwide telephone poll conducted by The Wall Street The Wall Street Journal (Gilman, 1985), 1,573 people were asked to name the two most important factors considered when shopping for clothing. Fit was mentioned by 64 percent of the respondents, followed by price (32 percent), and style (25 percent).

In brief, empirical studies have shown that customers and marketers do rank clothing attributes in importance by merchandise group but they do not agree on which ones should

have priority (Table 1). While these studies have attempted to determine the order of importance of each attribute they have primarily used a straight ranking measure. As greater emphasis is being placed on the consumer decision making process, it becomes extremely important to determine the relative importance of the attributes in relation to each other.

### Clothing Consumer Characteristics

Controversy has evolved over the years concerning the most effective means of segmenting markets. To date, most segmentation practices have centered around demographic variables such as age, income, education, sex, and occupation (Harps, 1976; Smith, 1974).

Information based on demographic characteristics can be useful, relatively easy to obtain, and easily understood. It also can be helpful to retailers in communicating with and pinpointing the characteristics of their market segment. Furthermore, it helps to establish the basis for segmenting customers by personality types or buyer attitudes.

Marketing and clothing studies have revealed that clothing attribute importance may be affected by the customers' characteristics. Therefore, this section will review relevant clothing research by demographic characteristics.

Table 1  
Summary of Attribute Rating by Product Category as Reported by Researchers  
(Lower scores denote higher importance)

Product Category	Attributes													
	Price	Color	Fit	Appearance	Size	Style	Fashion	Fabric	Fiber	Quality	Care	Durability	Comfort	Versatility
<u>Boys' Pants</u> Harabin (1968)	5	*	1	3	*	*	*	6	*	*	4	2	*	*
<u>Boys' Shirts</u> Harabin (1968)	6	*	1	3	*	*	*	4	*	*	2	*	*	*
<u>Women's Blouses</u> Whitlock et al (1959)	6	2	7	*	1	4	*	5	3	*	*	*	*	*
<u>Women's Dresses</u> Hargett (1963)	2	4	1	*	*	2	*	3	*	*	*	*	*	*
Decker (1964)	*	3	4	*	*	1	*	2	*	*	*	*	6	5
Massey (1964)	*	1	3	*	*	2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Conklyn (1971)	3	4	2	*	*	1	*	5	*	*	*	*	*	*
<u>Women's Work Clothes</u> Smith (1974)	2	*	1	*	*	4	*	3	*	*	4	*	*	*
<u>General Clothing Purchase</u> Richards & Horridge (1984)	4	*	*	*	*	3	*	*	*	1	*	*	2	*
<u>Clothing Manufacturers</u> Palamare (1969)	3	5	*	*	*	2	1	4	*	*	*	*	*	*
Average	3.9	3.2	2.5	3.0	1.0	2.4	1.0	4.0	3.0	1.0	3.3	2.0	4.0	5.0

\* Attribute not investigated by researcher

## Age

While age has been a major variable in many clothing studies, its importance during the selection process has received little current study. A review of early literature has shown that a relationship may exist between the age of consumers and the importance placed on garment attributes by merchandise category.

Snyder (1966) compared three groups of women ages 26-35 years, 46-55 years, and 66-75 years. Although more of the older women wore larger and half-sizes, no significant differences were found in the proportion of women of various ages who felt they were able to obtain suitable, well-fitted, attractive garments. Younger women reported significantly more problems in selecting new clothes and were more concerned with fit than the older women. The older respondents had the greatest interest in the kinds of clothing choices available for their age and size. Younger women also expressed more interest in greater quantity and variety in garments, while the older women preferred better quality.

A relationship between the age of mothers and the importance of fit for boys' slacks and shirts was found by Harabin (1968). Younger mothers ranked fit of slacks as more important than the older women, but there was no significant relationship between age and the fit of shirts.

Age was related to the importance of fabric, care required, style, type of dress, and fashion in Conklyn's research (1971). Women under 35 years of age were more likely to say that type of dress and fashion were reasons for selecting a garment. Conversely, the older women more frequently chose a dress because of fabric and care required.

Smith (1974) reported that age was related to the importance of price, color, and fabric. Professional women over 30 years of age indicated greater interest in price when purchasing work clothes than women 20-29 years old. The importance of color varied by age group with more consideration given to it by women ages 20-29 and 40-49. Younger women, ages 20-49, considered fabric more important than women over 50 years of age. All age categories expressed great interest in the fit of the garment.

Consumers of three age groups (under 25, 25-40, and 40 years and over) attached different levels of importance to particular clothing attributes depending on the type of garment considered (White, 1976). Therefore, White concluded, age as a variable in the clothing selection process might not be as important as the merchandise under consideration.

### Education

The educational background of a customer may influence her purchase behavior. Harabin (1968) found that mothers

with higher levels of education considered fit less important than durability and ease of care when choosing slacks for their sons.

Three levels of education, grades 9-11, high school, and college, were investigated in relation to customer selection decisions (Conklyn, 1971). None of the reasons given by customers for selecting a dress were significantly different when analyzed by level of education.

Smith (1974) examined the educational level of professional black women in relation to the importance they placed on garment attributes. Women with master's degrees reported price as more influential than those with bachelor's degrees or education beyond a master's. Color seemed to be of greater importance to women with a bachelor's degree while women with additional education expressed greater concern with the fabric. No relationship between fit and education was found as all of the respondents indicated fit to be very important when selecting clothes.

The influence of education on the level of importance that buyers and consumers attached to clothing attributes was investigated by White (1976). College educated consumers were not found to agree or disagree with the buyers any more than consumers in other educational levels.

## Employment

Three early studies (Conklyn, 1971; McCall, 1977; Smith, 1974) examined employment in relation to the importance customers place on garment attributes when purchasing clothing for themselves. Conklyn (1971) reported that the importance placed on fit, style, price, color, and fabric when selecting a dress was not significantly different when analyzed by occupation and employment status.

Two employment categories, minor and major professions, were used by Smith (1974). Although she did not test for differences between the two groups, the data suggested that women in minor professions were more concerned with fabric, price, and color when purchasing work clothes; and that women in major professions placed more importance on price.

McCall (1977) investigated the effects of employment on the consumer behavior of 390 women. Data indicated that working wives purchased less expensive dresses than housewives but showed greater concern for how flattering or how suitable they were for work. Once a suitable choice was made however, price was of less importance to the working wife than to the housewife.

## Income

While income has commonly been thought by retailers and marketers to effect the quantity of merchandise purchased, its effect on clothing attribute importance has received

little attention. Findings from White's (1976) study indicated no set pattern of agreement between buyers and consumers as to the importance consumers attach to clothing attributes by income level. Thus, he concluded that the important variable seemed to be the merchandise item under consideration and not the income level of the purchaser. In contrast, however, women earning \$15,000 and over were significantly less price sensitive when purchasing clothing than non-working women (Palamare, 1969).

Factors influencing personal clothing purchases of 141 single-black women were investigated by Harps (1976). No statistically significant differences were found when comparing socio-economic class with factors considered important by the subjects.

### Summary

This review of the literature has indicated that consumers and marketers do rank clothing attributes in importance by merchandise group. Investigations into the selection process show that style, color, fabric, fit, and price are important factors and are affected by the merchandise under consideration and consumer characteristics.

Previous research has shown the importance of style, fit, and price to customers when purchasing clothing,

however, few current studies were found which investigated the importance of color and fabric. While many of these studies were concerned with the purchasing of children's and older women's clothing, none focused on semi-skilled working women. A further shortcoming of the research review revealed that many clothing studies have investigated clothing purchase patterns in terms of consumer behavior, but none explored their influence on attribute importance.

It also is important to note that many of the clothing purchasing studies are old and may not reflect changes in the apparel industry or underlying consumer selection motives. As a result, available data may be outdated and of little use in guiding marketers to meet the changing wants and needs of consumers.

## CHAPTER III

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to investigate the importance female secretaries and custodians place on selected garment attributes when purchasing a daytime dress and sleepwear for their own use. The garment attributes which were tested were: fit, style, price, color, fabric, and construction. Consumer characteristics, including age, employment status, education, and income also were studied to investigate their influence on the importance placed on the garment attributes.

#### Theoretical Framework

The review of literature presented different approaches to the conceptualization of determining product attribute importance. Many marketing studies have used multiattribute theories to determine brand and product importance. These theories, however, have received little attention in clothing studies due to the personal association of a garment to the purchaser. Clothing selection beliefs based on Jacobi and Walters (1958) theory are old and conflict with more recent research findings (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Hoyer and Alpert, 1983; Myers and Alpert, 1968). Therefore, a need was

seen for providing a theoretical perspective about the importance of clothing attributes to the consumer purchase process.

The theoretical framework underlying this research involves consumer evaluative responses to selected clothing attributes. This encompasses two basic aspects: 1) the importance which the consumer attaches to each of the attributes, and 2) the relationship(s) between the demographic characteristics of the consumers and the importance they place on the garment attributes.

The consumer faced with multiple products in the marketplace must evaluate each of the products in terms of the attributes it possesses (Myers and Alpert, 1968). Different levels of importance are placed on the characteristics by the customer and are used to narrow the selection process. While many may be considered important when selecting clothing, only a few determinant features are used to motivate the final purchase decision.

Thus, the importance of the clothing attributes to the customer will influence the garment selection process. Likewise, the customers' personal characteristics, including age, education, employment status, and income are directly related to the importance attached to each garment characteristic.

## Objectives

1. To investigate the importance female secretaries and custodians place on selected garment attributes when purchasing a daytime dress and sleepwear for their own use.
  - a.) price
  - b.) fit
  - c.) color
  - d.) style
  - e.) fabric
  - f.) construction
  
2. To investigate the effect demographic characteristics have on the importance placed on selected garment attributes at the time of purchase.
  - a.) income
  - b.) age
  - d.) occupation
  - e.) education

## Assumptions

1. Garment attributes are important to female secretaries and custodians when purchasing clothing for their own use.
2. Female secretaries and custodians attach different degrees of importance to clothing attributes and these levels are measureable.
3. Female secretaries and custodians attach different degrees of importance to clothing attributes by garment type.
4. Female secretaries and custodians will attempt to maximize the satisfaction derived from a garment choice by choosing attributes which are most important to them.
5. Female secretaries and custodians shop for and purchase their own clothing.
6. The respondents will answer the questions objectively.

## Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant difference between dresses and sleepwear on the importance placed on style, color, fabric, fit, price and construction by secretaries and custodians when purchasing clothing for their own use.
  
2. There will be no significant difference between secretaries and custodians on the importance they place on style, color, fabric, fit, price, and construction when purchasing a daytime dress and sleepwear for their own use.
  
3. The age of secretaries and custodians will have no significant relationship with the importance they place on the following garment attributes when purchasing a daytime dress or sleepwear for their own use:
  - a.) style
  - b.) color
  - c.) fabric
  - d.) fit
  - e.) price
  - f.) construction

4. The education of secretaries and custodians will have no significant relationship with the importance they place on the following garment attributes when purchasing a daytime dress or sleepwear for their own use:

- a.) style
- b.) color
- c.) fabric
- d.) fit
- e.) price
- f.) construction

5. The employment status of secretaries and custodians will have no significant relationship with the importance they place on the following garment attributes when purchasing a daytime dress or sleepwear for their own use:

- a.) style
- b.) color
- c.) fabric
- d.) fit
- e.) price
- f.) construction

6. The income of secretaries and custodians will have no significant relationship with the importance they place on the following garment attributes when purchasing a daytime dress or sleepwear for their own use:

- a.) style
- b.) color
- c.) fabric
- d.) fit
- e.) price
- f.) construction

#### Operational Definitions

Custodian - a female maintenance worker employed to keep the buildings of a public university clean.

Secretary - a professional person employed to keep records, take care of correspondence, and other support tasks in a public university.

Clothing Attributes- characteristics of a garment such as price, fit, color, style, fabric, and construction.

Price - the dollar amount a consumer pays for a garment.

Fit - the size of the garment in relation to the customer's body measurements.

Color - the hue of the garment.

Fabric - the material from which the garment is made.

Style - the specific design features of a garment that makes it different from other garments.

Construction - the quality of workmanship in a garment.

Consumer Characteristics - age, income, education, and employment status.

## CHAPTER IV

### PROCEDURE

The importance which secretaries and custodians place on selected clothing attributes when purchasing a daytime dress and sleepwear was investigated in this study. The literature has suggested that the following factors influenced the selection process: color, style, price, fabric, and fit. Information about the construction of the garment also was thought to be an important factor and was included. Past studies have indicated that income, age, education, and occupation may influence the consumer's purchase decision. Therefore, these characteristics were examined in relation to the importance placed on selected clothing attributes.

#### Instrument

The instrument (Appendix A) used was a self-administered questionnaire consisting of five parts. This type of measure was selected to allow respondents to complete the survey at their discretion, and to maintain a larger sample.

The first part of the questionnaire was concerned with general clothing purchasing information. It provided

information about the clothing acquisition process of the respondents.

Parts II and III included a measure of the relative importance of selected factors which individuals consider when purchasing clothing worn and viewed by the general public and garments which are not. A daytime dress was used for Part II and sleepwear for Part III. Both sections were the same except the categories were rearranged and separated to prevent a carry-over of answers. The development of these parts was based on Harabin's (1968) instrument which was revised to fit the purpose of this study.

The six clothing attributes investigated (color, price, fit, style, fabric, and construction) were arranged into 15 groups, each of which contained four factors. Harabin (1968) found that a group of four factors was an adequate number to be ranked and that 15 groups, the amount necessary to have all attributes appear an equal number of times, could be completed by the respondents. The factors in each group were rated from 1, the most important, to 4, the least important. Harabin reported that if a factor was considered most important, it would consistently be ranked the same when combined in various orders with the other factors.

The fourth section was included to check the consistency of responses for Parts II and III. The respondents were asked to rank the original six clothing attributes in importance from 1, the most important, to 6, the least

important factor. This was done for both the daytime dress and sleepwear.

The final section included questions regarding demographic characteristics of the respondents. It was included to investigate their influence on the importance placed on the clothing attributes.

The instrument was pretested for clarity and understanding of the directions, vocabulary, and question structure during the spring of 1985. Five women with low education levels living in the Blacksburg, Virginia, area filled out the questionnaire and indicated the need for additional directions. The maximum length of time used to complete the questionnaire was 20 minutes.

The revised instrument was pretested with five more women with low educational levels in the Blacksburg, Virginia, area. Results indicated that the respondents were familiar with the terminology used and understood the directions. Therefore, it was assumed that the selected sample would be able to complete the questionnaire without difficulty.

### Sample

The sample of 250 women was drawn from female secretaries and custodians employed by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. These two populations were

chosen to represent semi-skilled and unskilled working women with a variety of income, education, and occupational levels.

A mailing list was compiled of 125 women identified as secretaries in the 1984-85 faculty/staff directory. These names were acquired by counting the number of employees with this title and yielded 530 people. A random selection of every fourth secretary was used to obtain the desired number of respondents.

The custodians were reached by delivering the questionnaires to the Assistant Director of the Physical Plant who had agreed to distribute them to 125 women in various work groups.

#### Collection of the Data

Data were collected in May, 1985. One hundred twenty-five questionnaires were sent to Virginia Tech secretaries through university mail and 125 questionnaires were delivered by the researcher to the Assistant Director of the Physical Plant for distribution to the female custodians. A cover letter preceeded the questions which briefly requested the respondents' help in completing the questionnaire, assured them of anonymity, described the return procedure, and thanked them for their participation (Appendix A). To increase the number and ease of return, a label addressed to the researcher was enclosed.

Eighty-eight secretaries (70.4 percent) completed and returned the questionnaire through university mail. The Assistant Director of the Physical Plant collected 45 completed questionnaires from the custodians (36 percent) one week after distribution and delivered them to the researcher. Thus, a total of 133 useable questionnaires were returned for data analysis.

### Analysis of the Data

The original data for each respondent were coded and submitted to the computer center for analysis. Frequency distributions were tabulated and the responses were combined in a logical manner to describe the sample. Chi-square tests of independence were used to determine relationships between the variables.

To measure the relative importance of selected factors considered in purchasing (Part II and III), the attributes in each group were ranked from 1, the most important, to four, the least important. A score for each characteristic was obtained by adding the ratings. The total score for each attribute could range from 10, the most important, to 40, the least important. T-tests were employed to determine differences between the mean scores of the clothing characteristics for each garment and for each group of respondents.

The characteristics in Part IV were ranked from 1, the most important, to 6, the least important by the respondents. Pearson correlations were run using the mean scores from Parts II and III and the ranks from Part IV to determine the consistency of answers for the two scales.

Gamma correlations were used to determine relationships between the importance of the dress and sleepwear attributes for each group and the demographic characteristics. These tests utilize more information than Pearson or Spearman rho correlations and represent the association between two ordered factors. Values used to determine whether the relationships were significant were calculated by dividing the Gamma value by the Asymptotic Standard Error (ASE). Differences and relationships established at the .05 level were considered significant.

## CHAPTER V

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to investigate the importance female secretaries and custodians place on selected garment attributes when purchasing a daytime dress and sleepwear. Two hundred fifty questionnaires were distributed to female secretaries and custodians employed by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

A total of 153 respondents filled out and returned the questionnaire. Due to improper completion, 20 surveys were eliminated. To increase the number of useable questionnaires, however, seven incomplete forms were included; therefore, the number of respondents per item varied. The final sample consisted of 88 secretaries and 45 custodians.

The results and findings will be discussed in the following order: 1.) sample characteristics, 2.) findings associated with the hypotheses, and 3.) discussion of the findings.

#### Sample Characteristics

To obtain a profile of the respondents, demographic and purchasing behavior questions were included in the

questionnaire. Table 2 shows the distribution of the sample by demographic characteristics.

### Age

The ages of the respondents ranged from 20 to 51 years and over (Table 2). The largest proportion of secretaries belonged to the 31 to 40 age group (37.9 percent) while the greatest share of the custodians (37.8 percent) was 51 to 60 years of age. Only 13.3 percent of the latter group were in the 20 to 30 age bracket. The chi-square test of independence indicated significant differences between the two groups' ages at the .01 level.

### Education

All of the secretarial respondents had high school or trade school diplomas, and nearly 15 percent also had a bachelor's degree (Table 2). Approximately 42 percent of the custodians completed high school or trade school, but none had met the requirements for a college degree.

### Employment

Due to the small sample size of the part-time secretaries and custodians statistical analysis was not attempted in regard to their employment status. Of the 122 respondents who completed this question, all but one member from each group were full-time employees (Table 2).

Table 2

## Age, Education, Employment, and Household Income of Respondents

Characteristic	Secretaries		Custodians		Chi-Square
	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Age</u>					
20-30	26	29.9	6	13.3	
31-40	33	37.9	11	24.4	
41-50	19	21.8	11	24.4	16.39***
51 and over	9	10.3	17	37.8	df=3
Total	87	100.0	45	99.9	
<u>Education</u>					
8th grade or less	0	0.0	8	17.8	
Some h.s. but didn't graduate	0	0.0	16	35.6	
H. S. /trade school graduate	36	41.4	19	42.2	
Less than 2 years of college	32	36.8	2	4.4	
Graduate of 4 year college	13	14.9	0	0.0	
Education beyond 4 year degree	6	6.9	0	0.0	
Total	87	100.0	45	100.0	
<u>Employment Status</u>					
Full-time	76	98.7	44	97.8	
Part-time	1	1.3	1	2.2	
Total	77	100.0	45	100.0	
<u>Annual Household Income</u>					
Less than 19,999	28	39.4	29	65.9	
20,000-29,999	17	23.9	14	31.8	30.76***
30,000 and over	26	36.6	1	2.3	df=2
Total	71	99.9	44	100.0	

\*\* Significant at .01 level

## Income

A statistical difference between the annual household income for the two groups was significant at the .01 level according to the chi-square test of independence (Table 2). As might have been expected, the annual household income of the secretaries tended to be greater than that of the custodians. Approximately 39 percent of the secretaries reported a household income of less than \$19,999 compared to almost 66 percent of the custodians.

## Garment Purchasing Patterns

Table 3 shows the shopping patterns of the respondents related to the purchase of a dress and sleepwear in the past two years for their own use, and type of retailer patronized. Statistically significant differences were found between the secretaries and custodians when they were asked if they had purchased a dress for themselves in the past two years. While the majority of the respondents indicated they had (92.0 percent of the secretaries and 77.8 percent of the custodians), a little over one-fifth of the custodians said they had not purchased a dress during that time period. Approximately equal proportions of the two samples indicated having made a sleepwear purchase for themselves during the last two years.

Chi-square indicated statistical differences at the .01 level of significance when the two groups were compared in

Table 3  
Dress and Sleepwear Purchasing Behavior

	Secretaries		Custodians		Chi-Square
	No.	%	No.	%	
<u>Purchased Dress for Self</u>					
Yes	81	92.0	35	77.8	5.44*
No	7	8.0	10	22.2	df=1
Total	88	100.0	45	100.0	
<u>Purchased Sleepwear for Self</u>					
Yes	61	70.1	30	66.7	0.17
No	26	29.9	15	33.3	df=1
Total	87	100.0	45	100.0	
<u>Source of Clothing Purchase</u>					
Department store	37	42.0	8	17.8	
Discount/factory outlet	21	23.9	31	68.9	
Other (speciality, catalog, comb. of dept./speciality, dept./disc./factory)	30	34.1	6	13.3	25.36** df=2
Total	88	100.0	45	100.0	

\* Significant at .05 level

\*\* Significant at .01 level

terms of where they usually purchased most of their clothing. Approximately 42 percent of the secretaries said they bought it at a major department store, but only 17.8 percent of the custodians indicated this source (Table 3). The largest percentage of the latter group (68.9 percent) reported that they bought their garments from discount stores or factory outlets.

### Findings Associated with the Hypotheses

In this section the results of the statistical analyses are presented for each hypothesis. From these results conclusions were drawn about the acceptance or rejection of each.

Hypothesis 1 There will be no significant difference between dresses and sleepwear on the importance placed on style, color, fabric, fit, price, and construction by secretaries and custodians when purchasing clothing for their own use.

To determine whether significant differences in the importance secretaries and custodians placed on the six characteristics for the two garments existed, t-tests were employed. The mean scores of the garment attributes were used to identify the order of importance. In interpreting the findings, a lower score denoted more importance, and a higher score less importance.

The relative importance of the dress and sleepwear characteristics differed for secretaries (Table 4). The mean score order for a dress was fit, style, price, color, construction, and fabric. For sleepwear, it was fit, fabric, price, style, construction, and color. When the mean scores were compared, fit appeared to be of primary importance for both garments. Dress style was similar to price while color, construction, and fabric appeared about equal with each other. The sleepwear scores indicated fabric, price, and style were of similar concern while construction and color were about equal in importance.

Significant differences were found between the importance the secretaries placed on style and fabric when purchasing a dress and sleepwear (Table 4). Style was considered more important for a dress purchase, while fabric was of greater concern for sleepwear.

The factors important to the custodians also differed (Table 4). The mean score order for a dress purchase was price, fit, style, color, fabric, and construction. For sleepwear, it was fit, price, style, fabric, color, and construction. Price and fit were of greatest consideration to the sample.

The data indicated a significant difference in the importance the custodians placed on fabric when considering a dress and sleepwear for purchase (Table 4). They appeared

Table 4  
Differences in Attribute Importance Between  
Dresses and Sleepwear

Attribute	Dress		Sleepwear		T-Value
	Mean Score	S. D.	Mean Score	S. D.	
<u>Secretaries (n=83)</u>					
Fit	17.5	6.51	18.7	7.42	1.08
Style	21.2	6.84	24.3	8.10	2.67***
Price	23.9	11.90	24.1	11.44	0.08
Color	28.0	7.91	29.8	9.22	1.37
Construction	29.0	8.86	29.6	8.66	0.39
Fabric	30.4	7.41	23.6	7.98	5.72***
<u>Custodians (n=44)</u>					
Fit	19.7	7.17	18.5	6.81	0.81
Style	24.0	5.17	25.7	5.42	1.53
Price	19.3	9.32	19.3	9.90	0.03
Color	26.7	7.84	29.4	7.92	1.62
Construction	31.1	8.85	31.1	7.93	0.04
Fabric	29.2	5.53	26.1	4.94	2.83***

\*\*\*Significant at .01 level

to be more concerned about the type of fabric when selecting sleepwear than a dress.

In view of the above findings, the hypothesis was rejected for the importance secretaries placed on dress and sleepwear style and fabric. It was also rejected for the custodians' concern for garment fabric. The results, however, supported the hypothesis for dress and sleepwear fit, price, color, and construction for the two groups, and the custodians' scores for garment style.

Hypothesis 2 There will be no significant difference between secretaries and custodians on the importance they place on style, color, fabric, fit, price, and construction when purchasing a daytime dress and sleepwear for their own use.

To test the hypothesis, differences between mean scores for the garment attributes were compared using t-tests. As seen in Table 5, significant differences existed between the values the two groups placed on dress fit, style, and price. Fit and style were more important to the secretaries than to the custodians, but price was of greater concern to the custodians.

The mean scores provided by the two groups for the sleepwear attributes were compared and significant differences were found (Table 5). Price was of greater importance to the custodians; secretaries placed more emphasis on the fabric.

Table 5

Differences in Attribute Importance Between  
Secretaries and Custodians

Attribute	Secretaries		Custodians		T-Value
	Mean Score	S. D.	Mean Score	S. D.	
<u>Dress</u>	(n=88)		(n=44)		
Fit	17.2	6.51	19.7	7.17	2.00*
Style	21.2	6.77	24.0	5.17	2.38*
Price	23.8	11.81	19.3	9.32	2.19*
Color	28.3	7.84	26.7	7.84	1.08
Construction	29.2	8.81	31.1	8.85	1.18
Fabric	30.3	7.29	29.2	5.53	0.98
<u>Sleepwear</u>	(n=83)		(n=44)		
Fit	18.7	7.41	18.5	6.81	0.14
Style	24.3	8.10	25.7	5.42	1.21
Price	24.1	11.44	19.3	9.90	2.37*
Color	29.8	9.21	29.4	7.92	0.25
Construction	29.6	8.66	31.1	7.93	0.96
Fabric	23.6	7.98	26.1	4.94	2.15*

\*Significant at .05 level

Thus, based on the above differences, the hypothesis was rejected for the fit, style, and price of a dress and for the price and fabric of sleepwear. It was, however, supported for the remaining characteristics.

Hypothesis 3 The age of secretaries and custodians will have no significant relationship with the importance they place on style, color, fabric, fit, price, and construction when purchasing a daytime dress or sleepwear for their own use.

To determine whether significant relationships existed between age and the importance of the six clothing attributes, correlation analyses were employed. The data indicated a statistically significant relationship between age and the custodians' rating on dress color and the secretaries' color ratings for sleepwear (Table 6). Younger women seemed to consider the color of the garments more important. The age of the custodians also was related to the rating of price for both garments. It appeared to be of greater concern to the older members.

In view of the above findings, the hypothesis was rejected for price and color. Significant relationships were found to exist between their importance on the garment purchase decision and the age of the respondents. Age, however, was not statistically related to style, fabric, fit, and construction. Thus, the hypothesis was accepted for these four factors.

TABLE 6

## Relation of Age to Garment Attribute Importance

Attribute	Secretaries		Custodians	
	Gamma	ASE	Gamma	ASE
<u>Dress</u>	(n=87)		(n=43)	
Fit	-0.098	0.132	0.005	0.179
Color	0.092	0.116	0.307*	0.146
Style	0.097	0.123	0.011	0.166
Construction	-0.105	0.119	0.158	0.167
Price	0.011	0.103	-0.354*	0.128
Fabric	0.005	0.123	-0.007	0.152
<u>Sleepwear</u>	(n=85)		(n=44)	
Fit	-0.001	0.127	-0.218	0.153
Color	0.250*	0.115	0.164	1.159
Style	0.077	0.115	0.273	0.154
Construction	-0.162	0.115	0.025	0.167
Price	0.058	0.104	-0.270*	0.122
Fabric	-0.190	0.111	0.037	0.159

\*Significant at .05 level

Hypothesis 4 The educational level of secretaries and custodians will have no significant relationship with the importance they place on style, color, fabric, fit, price, and construction when purchasing a daytime dress or sleepwear for their own use.

The educational level of secretaries was correlated with the dress and sleepwear ratings (Table 7). Statistically significant relationships were found only for the educational attainment of secretaries and their rating on dress construction. More highly educated respondents appeared to rate it as more important than those with less education. Significant relationships were not found between any of the other garment factors for either group. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected for dress construction for secretaries and accepted for the other characteristics for both the dress and sleepwear.

Hypothesis 5 The employment status of secretaries and custodians will have no significant relationship with the importance they place on style, color, fabric, fit, price, and construction when purchasing a daytime dress or sleepwear for their own use.

TABLE 7

## Relation of Education to Garment Attribute Importance

Attribute	Secretaries		Custodians	
	Gamma	ASE	Gamma	ASE
<u>Dress</u>	(n=87)		(n=43)	
Fit	-0.035	0.141	0.002	0.182
Color	0.112	0.119	0.152	0.166
Style	0.091	0.124	0.019	0.188
Construction	-0.258*	0.108	0.202	0.190
Price	0.144	0.122	0.160	0.172
Fabric	-0.099	0.124	0.000	0.190
<u>Sleepwear</u>	(n=85)		(n=44)	
Fit	-0.019	0.130	-0.204	0.186
Color	0.016	0.124	0.138	0.175
Style	0.114	0.132	0.109	0.165
Construction	-0.214	0.111	-0.328	0.175
Price	0.136	0.122	0.067	0.168
Fabric	-0.134	0.120	0.172	0.153

\*Significant at .05 level

Statistical relationships could not be determined for the secretaries or custodians since only one respondent was a part-time employee.

Hypothesis 6 The income of secretaries and custodians will have no significant relationship with the importance of style, color, fabric, fit, price, and construction when purchasing a daytime dress or sleepwear for their own use.

Correlation analysis indicated a negative statistical relationship between the secretaries' annual household income and the importance of fit when purchasing a dress (Table 8). As income levels increased, fit became more important. Thus, the hypothesis was rejected only for dress fit for secretaries and was supported by the other dress and sleepwear attributes.

#### Relationship Between the Two Measures

Relations between the attribute importance scores and rank responses of each group were correlated for the two garments (Table 9). The data revealed high positive correlations between the responses for the majority of the attributes. Price was the most highly related attribute for both garments and both groups. The least related dress and sleepwear characteristics were style and fabric for the

TABLE 8

## Relation of Income to Garment Attribute Importance

Attribute	Secretaries		Custodians	
	Gamma	ASE	Gamma	ASE
<u>Dress</u>	(n=87)		(n=42)	
Fit	-0.237*	0.120	-0.201	0.203
Color	0.026	0.108	0.133	0.172
Style	0.014	0.111	0.070	0.171
Construction	-0.151	0.112	-0.084	0.182
Price	0.151	0.109	0.121	0.183
Fabric	0.008	0.130	0.019	0.189
<u>Sleepwear</u>	(n=85)		(n=43)	
Fit	0.002	0.121	-0.215	0.162
Color	0.149	0.117	0.008	0.154
Style	0.031	0.109	0.020	0.162
Construction	-0.174	0.105	0.101	0.199
Price	0.025	0.106	0.083	0.208
Fabric	-0.054	0.114	0.211	0.165

\*Significant at .05 level

Table 9

## Correlations Between Group Garment Attribute Importance Scores and Rankings

Attribute	Dress		Sleepwear		T-Value
	Mean Rank	S. D.	Mean Rank	S. D.	
<u>Secretaries</u>	(n=88)		(n=86)		
Fit	2.1	1.11	2.6	1.38	2.89**
Style	2.9	1.46	3.3	1.53	1.79
Price	3.5	2.03	3.2	1.91	0.93
Color	3.9	1.50	4.4	1.62	2.06*
Construction	4.3	1.59	4.2	1.55	0.12
Fabric	4.2	1.30	3.2	1.56	4.95**
<u>Custodians</u>	(n=43)		(n=44)		
Fit	2.4	1.47	2.6	1.42	0.56
Style	3.4	1.30	3.6	1.39	0.52
Price	2.9	1.95	2.8	1.82	0.10
Color	3.7	1.66	4.2	1.62	1.44
Construction	4.3	1.81	4.4	1.70	0.34
Fabric	4.3	1.20	3.5	1.52	2.57*

\* Significant at .05 level

\*\*Significant at .01 level

custodians. All factor correlations between the two measures were significant at the .01 level.

### Discussion of the Findings

The analysis of the data collected from 88 secretaries and 45 custodians revealed differences in the demographic characteristics of the two groups. As might have been expected, the secretaries were younger and better educated than the custodians. The household income of approximately two-thirds of the secretaries was either in the less than \$19,999 or in the \$30,000 and over categories, while the largest proportion of the custodians had a total household income of \$19,999 or less. Although these factors were not investigated further, several implications might be drawn from the findings. The term "secretary" included a variety of positions with different educational and experience requirements and salaries. This factor may not be the only reason for the large gap in reported incomes, for it also might be surmised that some of these respondents were faculty wives while others could have been supporting a husband who was a student or contributing to a non-university affiliated household. In addition, 31.8 percent of the custodians listed their total household income as between \$20,000-\$29,999. While salaries for these positions tend to

be lower, the husband and/or other family members may have been employed in a higher earning position.

Attribute importance for the dress and sleepwear varied when the two groups were compared. The mean scores, however, indicated that the characteristics were of varying importance and could be categorized into three groups. Secretaries considered fit of major importance, style and price as a secondary concern and color, construction, and fabric least important when purchasing a dress. In comparison, the order for custodians was fit, followed by fabric, price and style, and lastly, construction and color. Fit and style were significantly more important to the secretaries while price was of primary concern to the custodians.

These differences between the groups may be related to the type of job and dress requirements. While secretaries purchase and wear their own clothes to work, they may substitute certain features to acquire versatile wardrobes. Those who work in a multiple member office with public visibility also may be more concerned with the fit and style of the garment than the secretaries who work by themselves. The custodians, in contrast, are provided with a uniform for work. Thus they may purchase and wear fewer dresses than the secretaries and their dress selection may be primarily for social activities. Therefore, the importance of the attributes may be influenced more by the function for which

the garment is purchased than by the merchandise under consideration.

Similarities were found between the dress attribute ordering by secretaries in this study and the responses of Conklyn's (1971) sample. These may exist since both groups tended to be younger, working women. They are, however, somewhat different from results reported in dress studies on older women (Decker, 1964; Hargett, 1963; Massey, 1964) who indicated fit was important, but style, color, and price appeared to be considered more often when the purchase decision was being made. This, as Decker (1964) and Massey (1964) found, resulted from problems older women had in obtaining appropriately fitted ready-to-wear clothing. Possible reasons for differences between the studies might concern the populations investigated, and the measurements methods employed. The types of designs fashionable today may require less alterations; and current emphasis on physical fitness may explain the higher importance placed on fit than in past years.

Sleepwear attribute mean scores also indicated a division of importance into three categories. Secretaries noted that fit was of major concern; fabric, price, and style were second in importance; and construction and color were about equal but least important. Sleepwear fit and price were of primary concern to the custodians, followed by style and fabric, and lastly, color and construction. Again, the

custodians appeared more concerned with the price of the garment while the secretaries were more interested in the fabric. These differences might be explained by additional information provided by some of the respondents. Fabric type and comfort, as well as "sexy", lacy garments were indicated by many of the secretaries as features they desired when purchasing sleepwear. They seemed to be aware of and concerned about the care and maintenance requirements of different fabrics. Several members from each group also indicated they wore garments other than purchased sleepwear. Price may have been a contributing factor since other owned clothing might be sufficient to meet sleepwear needs.

The data, in general, suggested that the importance of the attributes for the two garments and the two groups were fairly similar. Although slight variations existed, fit appeared to be of prime importance; style, price, and fabric followed; and color and construction were of least concern. The low importance placed on color for both garments by both groups was surprising due to the increased awareness of and appeal placed on selecting the right colors to complement the individuals. The similarity between the attribute ratings was of great interest for it appeared that the importance of the characteristics when purchasing clothing to be worn in public were about the same as those for a garment worn in private.

These attribute importance findings provide a new perspective to the knowledge on the clothing selection process. They also promote the need to understand that the women's clothing market is not a homogeneous market. Therefore, manufacturers and retailers who utilize this type of information might increase their profits and enhance consumer satisfaction.

Few significant relationships were found between the garment attributes and the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The age of the secretaries and custodians was more likely to be related to the attributes than other demographics such as education, employment, and income. Younger members of both groups tended to place greater importance on color, while older custodians were more concerned with the price of the garments. These findings are similar to those of Smith (1974) where price was more important to older women while the younger age women listed color. The results, however, are inconsistent with studies on older women (Decker, 1964; Massey, 1964) which concluded that color was of high consideration but was often sacrificed since the desired one was not available for the particular season.

Correlations between the two measures indicated high positive relationships between the groups' responses for the majority of the attributes. Price was the most highly related attribute for both garments and groups. The least

related dress and sleepwear characteristics were style and fabric for the custodians. Although they were both significantly related at the .01 level, it appeared that some of the custodians listed style and fabric as more important on one scale than on the other. The overall findings, however, indicated that the respondents were consistent in their responses and that the two measures obtained similar results.

The Harabin instrument was longer and more complex, and the respondents were forced to indicate the importance of the attributes more often. Thus, a slightly more accurate measure of attribute importance may have been obtained by this scale than the simple six factor ranking scale. Its length, however, reduced the number of merchandise items which could be investigated and some of the respondents' willingness to complete the instrument for both garments.

Based on the similarity of results, however, the short instrument could be used by retailers to quickly gather relevant information about customer purchasing patterns. Due to its simplicity, consumers of varied educational levels would be able to comprehend and complete the survey in a relatively short time period. These features would enable retailers to survey an extensive group of customers more frequently, and only briefly interrupt their shopping activities. Through this means, retailers might be better prepared to meet the wants and needs of their customers and

prevent the loss of sales due to not having the right size,  
style, price, fabric, and color.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, AND RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

Fashion goods comprise a unique category in which retailers need to be sensitive to the purchase selection process of their market segment if they are to maximize a profit. A review of related literature revealed that clothing attributes were important influences on the purchase decision and that they might be affected by the merchandise under consideration and by customer characteristics. While earlier studies had investigated the importance of selected attributes to purchasers of children's and older women's clothing, few have focused on attribute importance to other consumers selecting garments for themselves.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the importance which female secretaries and custodians place on selected garment attributes when purchasing a dress and sleepwear for their own use. The clothing attributes which were tested were price, fit, color, style, construction, and fabric. Demographic characteristics, including age, education, employment status, and income also were included to investigate their effect on the attribute importance.

A self-administered questionnaire was developed and pretested with women of lower educational levels in the Blacksburg, Virginia, area. It took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Changes in the wording of the directions of Parts II and III were made to enhance the clarity and understanding of a few items. Questionnaires were distributed in May, 1985, to 125 secretaries and 125 custodians employed by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

The data received from 88 secretaries and 45 custodians were coded and frequency distributions were tabulated for statistical testing. Chi-square tests of independence were used to determine differences in demographic variables between the two groups. The .05 level was used as the criteria for rejecting the null hypotheses.

T-tests were employed to test for differences between the importance which the secretaries and the custodians placed on the six attributes for a dress and sleepwear. Significant differences were found between the importance the secretaries placed on style and fabric for the two garments. Style was considered more important for a dress purchase, while fabric was of greater concern for sleepwear selection. Fabric was considered significantly more important when custodians purchased sleepwear.

The use of t-tests revealed significant differences between the two groups on the importance of garment

attributes. Dress fit and style and sleepwear fabric were of greater concern to the secretaries than to the custodians. The price of the two garments was of higher priority to the custodians.

A comparison of the mean scores for both groups of respondents revealed that the dress and sleepwear attributes could be separated into three categories. Fit was the major concern when selecting both a dress and sleepwear. Dress style and price were of secondary concern, and dress color, construction, and fabric were least important. For sleepwear, the characteristics of secondary importance were price, fabric, and style; color and construction were the attributes of least concern. Although slight variations existed between the two garments in the importance ordering, the characteristics considered when purchasing clothing to be worn in public were about the same as those for a garment worn in private.

Two different instruments measuring garment attribute importance were used to check the consistency of the responses. Correlations between the two scales indicated high positive relationships. Based on these findings, it is possible that the short six factor rank scale may be a more appropriate measure to use in studying clothing attribute importance than the Harabin instrument.

Correlations between the clothing attributes and consumer characteristics revealed few statistical

relationships. Age for secretaries was related to the rating on sleepwear and on dress color for custodians. The garment color appeared more important to younger women. The custodians' age also was related to the importance of price for a dress and sleepwear. The older members tended to express greater concern about the price of the garments.

Education and income of secretaries were statistically related to dress attribute importance. As educational attainment increased, dress construction became more important. Fit was of greater value to those in higher income brackets. No significant relationships were found between the education and income of custodians and the garment attributes.

The findings of this study have provided a new perspective to the knowledge on the clothing selection process. Results have indicated that attributes are important to the purchase decision and may vary by merchandise category and consumer characteristics. They also have promoted the need to understand that the women's clothing market is not homogeneous. Therefore, marketers and retailers who utilize these findings and employ the use of the short instrument to survey their customers may be able to develop more effective marketing strategies, enhance consumer satisfaction, and increase profits.

## Limitations

The following were perceived as limitations of the study. Each needs to be considered when interpreting the results.

1. The study investigated only six attributes of a dress and sleepwear. Therefore, the results may not be generalized to all merchandise categories or to all attributes.
2. The selection of female respondents confined the application of results to one sex group.
3. Generalizations can be made only to female university secretaries living in a limited geographic and rural area. Since the questionnaires were not distributed to the custodians by the researcher, the sample may not have been randomly selected. Therefore, the interpretation of the findings cannot be generalized to the female custodian population.
4. The accuracy of the study depended upon the willingness and ability of the individuals to reveal personal shopping and demographic information.

5. Due to the nature of the study, an instrument designed to force the respondents to order the attributes in importance was used. Thus, a multi-attribute model could not be employed.

### Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations for future research can be drawn from the current study.

1. Samples from different employment sectors and geographic locations might reveal differences in the garment attribute importance.
2. A sample of male respondents to investigate the importance they place on attributes when purchasing clothing for themselves.
3. A study utilizing both male and female participants to investigate similarities or differences in attribute importance.
4. Replicate the study comparing the importance of selected garment attributes to customers and retail buyers. Findings could reveal whether purchasing strategies of

retailers are congruent with their target market's purchasing patterns.

5. Attribute importance for different clothing categories could be investigated. If similar results were obtained, the findings could be generalized to wider merchandise assortments.
6. Lifestyles indicators could be investigated in relation to garment attribute importance to better define the characteristics of the market segment.
7. The order of the two instruments could be reversed in some of the questionnaires to determine whether the placement affects the consistency of responses.
8. Since the two attribute rating measures were found to have similar results, both versions could be tested with several different populations. If answer consistency exists, the shorter scale could provide merchandisers with a relatively simple and accurate means of obtaining customer purchase information.
9. The data could be collected in a retail store at the point-of-purchase to investigate whether the importance

of the attributes was similar or dissimilar to their importance outside the retail environment.

10. An in-depth study investigating the influence store image, store attributes, and clothing attributes have on the clothing purchase decision. Such information might provide further insights into consumer shopping patterns.

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APPENDIX A  
COVER LETTER AND INSTRUMENT

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

*Blacksburg, Virginia* 24061 - 8396

DEPARTMENT OF CLOTHING AND TEXTILES

May 22, 1985

Dear Clothing Shopper:

I am working on my master's degree in Clothing and Textiles at Virginia Tech. To complete my required research for my thesis I need a minimum of 200 replies to a clothing selection questionnaire. Please help me by being one of those 200.

There are no right or wrong answers. Just indicate how you feel about each item. It is important that you answer each question. Your responses will be completely anonymous so please do not put your name anywhere on the questionnaire.

I have enclosed a self-addressed sticker to place on the envelope for your convenience in returning the questionnaire. It is urgent that the forms be completed quickly and returned by May 31st.

Thank you for your time and participation. Your kindness in completing the questionnaire is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dana S. Osterndorf, Graduate Student  
Department of Clothing and Textiles

Enid F. Tozier, Professor  
Department of Clothing and Textiles

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

*Blacksburg, Virginia* 24061 - 8396

DEPARTMENT OF CLOTHING AND TEXTILES

May 22, 1985

Dear Clothing Shopper:

I am working on my master's degree in Clothing and Textiles at Virginia Tech. To complete my required research for my thesis I need a minimum of 200 replies to a clothing selection questionnaire. Please help me by being one of those 200.

There are no right or wrong answers. Just indicate how you feel about each item. It is important that you answer each question. Your responses will be completely anonymous so please do not put your name anywhere on the questionnaire.

Please replace the completed questionnaire in the envelope and return it to Mr. Thomas McCoy by May 30th. It is urgent that this research be completed quickly.

Thank you for your time and participation. Your kindness in completing the enclosed questionnaire is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dana S. Osterndorf, Graduate Student  
Department of Clothing and Textiles

Enid F. Tozier, Professor  
Department of Clothing and Textiles

CLOTHING QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I: Please check the answer which best describes your shopping. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not put your name anywhere on the questionnaire. Please answer every question.

1. Have you bought a dress for yourself in the past 2 years?

Yes

No

2. How do you generally get most of your dresses?

I purchase them

someone else purchases them

gifts

I make them

other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Have you bought sleepwear for yourself in the past 2 years?

Yes

No

4. How do you generally get most of your sleepwear?

I purchase it

someone else purchases it

gifts

I make it

other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Where do you buy most of your own clothing?

Major department store ex: Heironimus, Leggett's

Speciality store ex: Dana's, Bonomo's

Discount store ex: K-Mart, Rose's, Hill's

Factory outlet

Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II:** Pretend you are in a store shopping for a dress for yourself. While making your selection, how much importance would each of the words in the following groups generally have on your purchase decision?

Please write a 1 beside the most important word, and so on to 4 which is the least important word in each of the following groups. Each word is repeated a number of times, but each group is different. Please answer all 15 groups.

1.

Color	
Price	
Fit	
Construction	

2.

Fabric	
Color	
Style	
Fit	

3.

Construction	
Color	
Price	
Fabric	

4.

Fabric	
Style	
Color	
Price	

5.

Price	
Construction	
Fabric	
Style	

6.

Style	
Price	
Fit	
Construction	

7.

Fit	
Construction	
Fabric	
Price	

8.

Color	
Fabric	
Fit	
Construction	

9.

Price	
Fit	
Color	
Style	

10.

Color	
Fabric	
Price	
Fit	

11.

Fit	
Color	
Construction	
Style	

12.

Construction	
Style	
Fabric	
Color	

13.

Construction	
Fabric	
Fit	
Style	

14.

Price	
Style	
Fabric	
Fit	

15.

Style	
Color	
Construction	
Price	

Part III: Now that you have ranked the words in importance when selecting a daytime dress for yourself, please do the same for sleedwear. Again, write 1 beside the most important word, and so on to 4 which is the least important word in the group.

1.

Construction	
Color	
Style	
Fabric	

2.

Color	
Fabric	
Price	
Fit	

3.

Fit	
Construction	
Color	
Style	

4.

Style	
Price	
Fit	
Construction	

5.

Fabric	
Color	
Style	
Price	

6.

Price	
Construction	
Fabric	
Style	

7.

Price	
Style	
Fit	
Fabric	

8.

Style	
Construction	
Price	
Color	

9.

Fabric	
Fit	
Construction	
Style	

10.

Color	
Construction	
Fabric	
Fit	

11.

Price	
Fit	
Color	
Style	

12.

Fit	
Fabric	
Price	
Construction	

13.

Fabric	
Color	
Fit	
Style	

14.

Construction	
Price	
Fabric	
Color	

15.

Color	
Fit	
Construction	
Price	

Part IV: Now that you have completed the preceeding sections, please rank the importance the following six features would have if you were buying a dress and sleepwear. Again, write a 1 next to the word which is most important and so on to 6 which is the least important word. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

1. Dress:

- \_\_\_ Fit
- \_\_\_ Color
- \_\_\_ Style
- \_\_\_ Construction
- \_\_\_ Price
- \_\_\_ Fabric

2. Sleepwear:

- \_\_\_ Style
- \_\_\_ Fabric
- \_\_\_ Construction
- \_\_\_ Fit
- \_\_\_ Price
- \_\_\_ Color

3. Are there other things that you consider important when buying a dress for yourself? Please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sleepwear? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Part V: The following information is very important to this research. Please check or write in the response which best describes your situation. Please answer every question. Do not put your name anywhere on the questionnaire.

1. Please check your age group.

- under 20
- 21 - 30
- 31 - 40
- 41 - 50
- 51 - 60
- 61 and over

2. Which best describes your present marital status?

- single
- married
- separated or divorced
- widowed

3. If married, number of years married:

- less than 1 year
- 1 year but less than 5
- 5 years but less than 10
- 10 years and over
- not married at this time

4. How long have you lived in this area?

- 1 year or less
- More than 1 year but less than 2 years
- 2 years but less than 5 years
- 5 years but less than 10 years
- 10 years or more

5. What is the highest grade you completed in school?

- 8th grade or less
- some high school but did not graduate
- high school/trade school graduate
- less than 2 years of college/ jr. college
- graduate of a four (4) year college
- education beyond four (4) year college degree

6. Are you employed:

- Full time (40 hours per week)
- Part time. How many hours per week do you generally work? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many people are supported by the total household income where you live?

- 1 person
- 2 people
- 3-4 people
- 5 or more

8. Please indicate the total annual income of your household.

- less than \$9,999
- 10,000 - 19,999
- 20,000 - 29,999
- 30,000 - 39,999
- 40,000 and over

Thank-you for helping me with my research.

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