

Asian Resonance

A Study on Psychosocial Correlates of Clothing Preferences Among Youngsters with Respect to Gender

Abstract

Gender differences in Clothing Preferences have been reflected time and again. Researches prove that there has been a difference in preference of clothing and styling as far as gender is concerned. This study was conducted with regard to gender preference and it was found there was a difference between preferences of boys and girls and relation to psycho-social correlates of clothing preferences.

For this study questionnaire was formed and filled by the college going students from technical and nontechnical colleges of Bhopal. Decorative, expensive, fitted, branded, attractive, fashion and changes in clothing was preferred more by girls as compared to boys. Maintenance of clothes and parents choice in choosing clothes was preferred moderately by boys as compared to girls.

Keywords: Clothing, Psychosocial correlates, Gender

Introduction

There is probably no sphere of human activity in which our values and lifestyles are reflected more vividly than they are in the clothes that we choose to wear. The dress of an individual is a kind of "sign language" that communicates a complex set of information and is usually the basis on which immediate impressions are formed. Clothing is a symbol of crucial social status, occupation, role, self confidence and other personality characteristics. Clothing is tangible and observable phenomena that is important to the concept of self and development of personality. It is often found as a symptom of suppressed needs and desires and the analysis of dress can lead to insight to a number of hidden psychic processes.

It is interesting to know that, much clothing behavior is psychological in nature. Psychology is a field of science that is concerned with how the animals respond to specific stimuli it is centered on basic concepts of motivation, learning, and perceptual ways clothing is in psychological terms.

At every stage of development, clothing helps to establish the identity of the individual to himself and to those with whom he interacts. Clothing is a general reflection of how the individual thinks of himself. Although the accuracy of such judgment may be altered by faulty perception, lack of knowledge or the operation of defense mechanism. Clothing is a part of "Silent Language" that is communicated through the use of visual but non verbal symbols. An effective clothing symbol would make it possible for a stranger to determine the social category to which the wearer belongs, and thus avoid actions that would be considered social errors.

Children are expected at certain times to look clean, to be "good boys" or "good girls," and to try to do things in a "nice" way as much as possible in the manner of Father or Mother. This, then, is their first introduction to the laws governing:

- A — Appearance
- B — Behavior
- C — Culture

Clothing is probably one of the most tangible expression of individual's unique value system. A philosophy of clothing then is a part of one's philosophy of life. It determines our choices, it guides our actions, and it conditions our satisfaction. The clothes we wear help us become the kind of person we wish to be.

Many theories have attempted to explain why do we wear clothes? The motivation for human beings to cover and decorate all or

Ranjana Upadhyay

Assistant Professor,
Home Science HOD,
Department of Fashion Designing,
Institute for Excellence in Higher
Education (IEHE),
Bhopal (MP).

parts of their body. The basic reasons behind this motivation appear to be physical, the psychological and the socio cultural needs of all mankind.

Evans stated in "Man the Designer" that of all the arts, designing his costume is one of the man's most personal expressions. She listed the following motivation for dress:

1. Comfort and protection from the elements of heat, sun etc.,
2. Rituals and ceremonies like wedding etc.,
3. Decorations and embellishments,
4. Display of wealth and status,
5. Identification and recognition like royal crowns, uniforms etc.,
6. Differentiation of the young from the older like skirt length etc.,
7. Extension of one's self,
8. Transformation or change of personality,
9. Satisfaction of urge to create,
10. Revealing ones body structure for enhancement,
11. Self expression,
12. Attraction of the opposite sex,
13. Uncovering,
14. Social protest,
15. Competition with one's own sex,
16. Fun and recreation,
17. Escape from boredom,
18. Securing attention,
19. Convention,
20. Satisfying a desire for change, and
21. Displaying technological changes.

Psychology and Clothing

Much clothing behavior is psychological in nature. It is the field of science that is concerned with how the organism responds to specific stimuli. It is centered on basic concepts of motivation, learning, and perception, ways clothing is, in psychological terms, both a stimuli response.

People perceive a clothing stimulus in different way and they interpret its meaning according to the assumptions they have learnt to make with it over a long period of time. Clothing is a tangible and observable phenomena that is important to the concept of self and the development of personality. It is often a symptom of suppressed need, desire and the analysis of dress can lend insight to a hidden psychic processes. Clothes express peoples' attitudes towards themselves and their society, both what they wear and how they wear it. It can be classified as that of a Conform or that of a rebel. Slight rebellion can be judged from how an accepted piece is worn.

Clothes can be worn to try and change an existing condition like moving up the social ladder or to alter wearer's mood, to cause a stir (extrovert) or for security, i.e. becoming one of the crowd (Introvert). People often select clothes to fulfill the desire to be attractive to the preferred sex. Items are chosen because they are thought to have sex appeal. What was once considered attractive in a specific historical setting must be considered along with the standards of beauty accepted by a contemporary audience. However both the objective and the subjective factors work together to determine why people clothe themselves as they do in

order to fully develop the possibilities presented by the characters in a given situation.

Clothing and styling is not superficial. It reflects both, inner and outer perception of a person and her/his personality. In order to examine this perspective of dressing and styling, the present study is framed as psychosocial correlates of clothing preferences among youngsters, with respect to gender. Here we have considered several aspects covering psycho-social dimensions of clothing preferences and their differences, genderwise.

Objective of proposed study

To study psychosocial correlates of clothing preferences among youngsters with reference to gender.

Hypothesis

H₁: There will be difference between psychosocial correlates of clothing preferences among youngsters with reference to gender.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design.

Participants of the study

The participants of the study were drawn from Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh. For this study, the participants include population of the college going students, residing in Bhopal city. In the present study stratified random sampling was used to draw a representative sample. For the purpose of randomization, the list of all colleges from each stratum was selected randomly, by lottery method (or by chit system). Strata included male and female students of various technical and non-technical recognised and renowned colleges of Bhopal. In this way the colleges from all the strata were selected.

For the present investigation, the students residing in Bhopal belonging to parents of the middle income group (MIG) were selected as a sample unit. The sample size was N=100, with technical category of college students (N=50) and non-technical category of college students (N=50). Age of the participants ranged from 18 years to 24 years.

Assessment Measure

The assessment measure taken for the study is research tool specially designed for this study. Till today very few researchers have conducted study to measure the mode of clothing of college going students, so no scale was available for this purpose. Hence, the investigator felt the need to develop the scale for measuring the clothing psychology of students. The measuring scale used was developed using a systematic research process. For standardization of the tool, eminent jury of ten members was made. According to the expert suggestions, necessary changes were made, thus the strenuous process of perfecting the items to match the target group was carefully built with content validity of the tool. After checking the validity of the tool, it was pretested. The reliability of the scale for the mode of clothing was established by using test-retest method and split half method.

Procedure

After finalizing the schedule for the study, actual data was collected from the students of different colleges selected as sample respondents. The scales were distributed and administered on various participants, individually. Each respondent was

approached personally and was requested to fill up the questionnaires. Respondents were given the liberty to take their time for completing their questionnaires. Data collection was made possible with the help of concerned faculties in the class settings itself. The visits to the colleges were made in consultation with the faculties of the said departments keeping in view the availability of the respondents. The confidentiality of their responses was assured.

Statistical techniques used

Statistical tool of correlation was applied to assess the relationship between the variables of study.

Results:

Table-1: Showing comparison of responses of girls and boys on Objective (Purpose) of Clothing

Objective (Equal Variance assumed)	Mean		t-value
	Girls	Boys	
	1.35	1.18	-3.53

The t-test table indicates that the t-value for objective ($t = -3.53$, $p < .01$) was obtained significant. The mean value for girls ($G = 1.35$) was higher than that for boys ($B = 1.18$). It indicates that objective of decorative clothing was preferred more by girls as compared to boys.

Table-2: Showing comparison of responses of girls and boys on Cost of Clothing

Cost (Equal Variance assumed)	Mean		t-value
	Girls	Boys	
	1.38	1.22	-3.10

The t-test table indicates that the t-value for cost ($t = -3.10$, $P < .01$) was obtain significant. The mean value for boys ($B = 1.22$) was lower than girls ($G = 1.38$). It indicates that expensive clothing was preferred more by girls as compared to boys.

Table-3: Showing comparison of responses of girls and boys on Fitting of Clothing

Fitting (Equal Variance assumed)	Mean		t-value
	Girls	Boys	
	1.26	1.10	-3.81

The t-test table indicates that the T-value for fitting ($t = -3.81$, $P < .01$) was obtain significant. The mean value for boys ($B = 1.10$) was lower than girls ($G = 1.26$). It indicates that fitting clothes were preferred more by girls as compared to boys.

Table-4: Showing comparison of responses of girls and boys on Stitching of Clothing

Stitching (Equal Variance assumed)	Mean		t-value
	Girls	Boys	
	1.69	1.52	-3.14

The t-test table indicates that the t-value for stitching ($t = -3.14$, $P < .01$) was obtain significant. The mean value for boys ($B = 1.52$) was lower than girls ($G = 1.69$). It indicates that branded clothes were preferred more by girls as compared to boys.

Table-5: Showing comparison of responses of girls and boys on Attractive 1 of Clothing

Attractive 1 (Equal Variance assumed)	Mean		t-value
	Girls	Boys	
	1.79	1.61	-3.45

Code Attractive 1 stands for attractive clothes. The t-test table indicates that the t-value for attractive 1 ($t = -3.45$, $P < .01$) was obtain significant. The mean value for boys ($B = 1.61$) was lower than girls ($G = 1.79$). It

indicates that attractive clothes were preferred more by girls as compared to boys.

Table-6: Showing comparison of responses of girls and boys on Maintenance of Clothing

Maintenance (Equal Variance assumed)	Mean		t-value
	Girls	Boys	
	1.81	1.94	-3.33

Code maintenance stands for maintenance (washing, dry cleaning, ironing etc.) of the clothes worn by the respondent. The t-test table indicates that the T-value for maintenance ($t = -3.33$, $P < .01$) was obtain significant. The mean value for boys ($B = 1.94$) was higher than girls ($G = 1.81$). It indicates that in maintaining clothes the respondents who were boys were found to be moderately more concerned than girls.

Table-7: Showing comparison of responses of girls and boys on Parent's choice of Clothing

Parent's choice (Equal Variance assumed)	Mean		t-value
	Girls	Boys	
	1.73	1.83	2.73

The t-test table indicates that the T-value for parents choice ($t = 2.73$, $P < .01$) was obtain significant. The mean value for boys ($B = 1.83$) was higher than girls ($G = 1.73$). It indicates that boys prefer to wear clothes of their parent's choice as compared to girls.

Table-8: Showing comparison of responses of girls and boys on Fashionable of Clothing

Fashionable (Equal Variance assumed)	Mean		t-value
	Girls	Boys	
	1.74	1.53	-3.90

The t-test table indicates that the T-value for fashionable ($t = -3.90$, $P < .01$) was obtain significant. The mean value for boys ($B = 1.53$) was lower than girls ($G = 1.74$). It indicates that girls prefer fashionable clothes more as compared to boys.

Table-9: Showing comparison of responses of girls and boys on Change of Clothing

Change (Equal Variance assumed)	Mean		t-value
	Girls	Boys	
	1.68	1.48	-3.76

The t-test table indicates that the T-value for change ($t = -3.76$, $P < .01$) was obtain significant. The mean value for boys ($B = 1.48$) was lower than girls ($G = 1.68$). It indicates that girls prefer accepting changes in clothing pattern more as compared to boys.

Table-10: Showing comparison of responses of girls and boys on Accessories of Clothing

Accessories (Equal Variance assumed)	Mean		t-value
	Girls	Boys	
	1.68	1.54	-2.45

The t-test table indicates that the T-value for accessories ($t = -2.45$, $P < .01$) was obtain significant. The mean value for boys ($B = 1.54$) was lower than girls ($G = 1.68$). It indicates that girls are more concerned with accessories in clothing pattern more as compared to boys.

Findings of the study:

1. Decorative clothing was preferred more by girls as compared to boys.
2. Expensive clothing was preferred more by girls as compared to boys.
3. Fitting clothes were preferred more by girls as compared to boys.

Asian Resonance

4. Branded clothes were preferred more by girls as compared to boys.
5. Attractive clothes were preferred more by girls as compared to boys.
6. In maintaining clothes the respondents who were boys were found to be moderately more concerned than girls.
7. Boys prefer to wear clothes of their parent's choice as compared to girls.
8. Girls prefer fashionable clothes more as compared to boys.
9. Girls prefer accepting changes in clothing pattern more as compared to boys.
10. Girls are more concerned with accessories in clothing pattern more as compared to boys.

Conclusions

The investigator concluded that the preferences regarding clothing and styling are according to established norms of the society and culture. Decoration, styling, expensive clothing, fitted clothes, brand consciousness, attractiveness, fashionableness, changes in clothing pattern and accessories in clothing pattern are all preferred more by girls as compared to boys, which is time tested and obvious. However, two strikingly contrast results were seen that maintaining

clothes and parent's choice in selecting and wearing clothes was more preferred by boys as compared to girls. The results are in accordance with norms of society.

References

1. Erikson, J.H. (1997). *The Life Cycle Completed*. Extended version with New Chapters on the Ninth Stage of Development. New York: W.W. Norton, pp 61.
2. Lauren, R. (2007). *Ralph Lauren Quotes*.
3. Lind, C. (2001). *Psychology of Color: Similarities between Clothing, Color and Preferences*. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, January 1, Volume 19, pp. 64-75.
4. Williams, J., Arbaugh, J. and, Rucker, M. (2009). *Clothing Color Preferences of Adolescent Females*. *American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences*, Volume 9(1). pp. 57-63.