

## **The Effects of Fashion Images on Korean Women's Self Appearance Image, Self-concept and Clothing Attitudes**

**Kim, Y.J. & Koh, A.**

SangJi Junior College, Wonju, Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea

The purposes of this study were: 1) to find the appearance image that Korean women from teen age to middle age see as ideal. 2) to test the difference over age with the discrepancy between fashion image and overall self-image, self appearance image, self-concept, and clothing attitudes. 3) to identify (a) the effect of fashion image/self-image discrepancy on self appearance image, self-concept and clothing attitudes; then in turn (b) the effect of self appearance image on self-concept and clothing attitudes; and finally (c) the effect of self-concept on clothing attitudes; showing that there is a layered relationship between these 4 variables. 4) to test this theoretical model of fashion-individual relationships in terms of these four main variables in the Korean cultural context.

The subjects were 699 women from teenagers to those in their fifties living in Seoul, Korea. Seven fashion images (minette, active, decorative, sexy, urban, elegant and classical) were selected from the catalogues of the most preferred apparel brands based on the pilot study results. The stimuli representing each of the seven fashion images were 3x5 inch color photographs. Fashion image/self-image discrepancy was assessed by one question with a 10-point scale measuring how differently the subjects felt their self-image was from each of seven fashion images.

The instruments measuring self appearance image consisting of real and ideal image and their discrepancy, self-concept consisting of body cathexis and self-esteem and clothing attitudes consisting of clothing importance, clothing exhibition, and fashion interest were adapted from previous research or were developed for this study.

The data were collected using self-administered questionnaires and analyzed by Factor Analysis, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, Frequency, ANOVA, Student-Newman-Keuls Test and Path Analysis.

The results of this study were as follows:

1) The most preferred appearance images over the sample were appearing elegant, intelligent, exclusive and sophisticate. The younger people preferred a daring, sexy, individualistic appearance image, while the older ones preferred a classical and conservative image. The subjects showed the lowest fashion image/self-image discrepancy score in urban and elegante fashion images, while the highest discrepancy score was in minette, active and sexy fashion images.

2) The relationships between the four main variables showed that fashion image/self-image discrepancy was negatively correlated with real self appearance image and ideal self appearance image, while it was partially positively correlated with the discrepancy between real and ideal self appearance image. Fashion image/self-image discrepancy was negatively correlated with body cathexis, with fashion interest, and with clothing exhibition in minette, active and sexy fashion images.

3) The relationships between self appearance image, self-concept and clothing attitudes showed that real self appearance image was positively correlated with body cathexis, self-esteem, and the three aspects of clothing attitudes. On the other hand, ideal self appearance image was negatively correlated with body cathexis and self-esteem while positively correlated with all three clothing attitudes.

4) The relationships between the two aspects of self-concept and the three of clothing attitudes showed that body cathexis was negatively correlated with fashion interest in teenagers, while positively correlated with clothing exhibition and fashion interest in middle age groups. Self-esteem was not related to clothing attitudes.