The Relationship of Clothing Behavior to Body Image and Self-Esteem of Older Men and Women

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Abstract

본 연구는 노년층 남성과 여성의 의복행동에 대한 신체이미지와 자아존중의 관계를 알아보는 것으로 구체적인 목적은 첫째, 노년층 남성과 여성의 신체이미지와 의복행동과의 관계를 알아보고, 둘째, 자아존중과 의복행동과의 관계를 알아보고, 둘째, 자아존중과 의복행동과의 관계를 알아보고, 넷째로 의복행동에 대한 신체이미지와 자아존중과의 관계에 있어서 남녀간의 차이점과 유사점을 규명하는 것이다. 조사대상은 나이 55세 이상의 미국 남부에 거주하는 남성과 여성으로 302부의 설문지를 배부하여 108부를 자료분석에 이용하였다. 신체이미지는 신체 18부분에 대한 만족도를 측정하였고, 자아존중은 Rosenberg의 자아존중 척도를 사용하였으며, 의복행동은 의복투자, 유형의건선도적, 소핑에 대한 만족, 상관등등을 포함하였다. 결과로 남녀 노년층에게 있어 신체만족도는 대부분의 의복행동과 상관 관계가 있었고, 유형의건선도적 상표등등에 대한 상관 관계에 있어서도 남녀간 유의한 차이가 있었다. 또한 자아존중은 남녀 모두에게 있어 대부분의 의복행동과 상관관계가 있었으며 유형의건선도적의 관계에서만 남녀간 유의한 차이가 있는 것으로 나타났다.

Key words: clothing behavior, body image, self-esteem, elderly:
의복행동, 신체이미지, 자아존중, 노년층

I. INTRODUCTION

The United States population as a whole is aging as life expectancy increases and the baby-boom generation matures. Various authors (e.g., Shim & Bickle, 1993; Goldsberry, 1993) describe the age redistribution of Americans: the population segment aged 55 years and older has been increasing more rapidly than others, now totals approximately 50 million, and is expected to keep rising in number and percentage beyond the current 20%. Americans of this age bracket are on average more wealthy, better educated, and more healthy and active than in the past. They control three-fourths of U.S. assets and half of the disposable income (Moschis, Mathur, & Smith, 1993; Schewe, 1989). The growth in the size of this population and in the buying power should prompt the attention of apparel manufacturers and
retailers.

However, compared to younger counterparts, mature consumers have been a neglected segment of the population in clothing behavior research and have received limited attention from most marketers. The present research sought to augment knowledge about elderly consumers by examining the relationship of clothing behavior to body image and self-esteem. Body image and self-esteem have been identified as the most important components of self-concept (Kalish, 1975). Clothing may be viewed as an extension of one's bodily self (Shim, Kotiopulos, & Knoll, 1991), and one's self-feelings toward the body affects clothing preferences and attitudes (Kaiser, 1990).

In regard to the relationship of clothing behavior to body image and self-esteem, several studies have shown a positive relationship between body image and clothing behavior (LaBat, 1988; LaBat & DeLong, 1990; Sontag & Schlater, 1982; 이영옥・강혜원, 1982; 이수지・이인자, 1996; 황건숙, 1998a), as well as a positive relationship between self-esteem and clothing behavior (Holloman, 1989). However, there are very few studies regarding the relationship of clothing behavior to body image and self-esteem of older people. Since several studies discussed older people's sustained interest in fashion and clothing (Chowdary, 1988), it is important to investigate the relationship of clothing behavior to body image and self-esteem of older people. Research regarding the relationships between body image, self-esteem, and clothing behavior of elderly people is important because many elderly people care about their appearance and clothing, but may suffer culturally undesirable body changes. The few studies concerning body image and clothing of elderly people have focused primarily on women (Aldrich, 1974; Hoffman, 1970; Hogge & Baer, 1986). Research on elderly men and on similarities and differences between sexes is needed as well. The results of the study can generate useful information to apparel marketers and family educators in market segmentation, target marketing, marketing strategy implementation, and educational programs for older people.

The specific objectives of this research were to examine, for the sample of men and women aged 55 years and older, 1) the relationships between body image and clothing behavior (clothing attitude, fashion opinion leadership, satisfaction with shopping, store patronage, and clothing expenditure), 2) the relationships between self-esteem and clothing behavior, and 3) the similarities and differences between men and women for those relationships.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Body image, self-esteem, and clothing behavior

Body image is the mental view one has of one's own body and is a component of one's self (Gergen, 1971). Because body image plays an important role in one's self, some researchers identified body-cathexis, the indication of individuals' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their different body parts, to evaluate body image (LaBat & DeLong, 1990; Secord & Jourard, 1963). The current ideal body image in American culture can be expressed as narrow as an arrow or pencil thin (Franzoi, 1995; Freedman, 1986; Rudd & Lennon, 1995; Seid, 1994). As a result of this phenomenon, there are a lot of side effects such as dieting illness and flourishing diet industries (Stephens et al., 1994). Although as many males as females are not satisfied with some parts of their bodies (Cash, 1990), women are more worried about body weight and consider it
as a more important component of body satisfaction than are men (Brumberg, 1968; Fallon & Rozin, 1985). Relatedly, several researchers discussed the sex differences and attitudes toward gender roles in the evaluation of body satisfaction (Dionne, Davis, Fox, & Gurevich, 1995; Franzoi, 1995; Greenwood, 1984; Lennon, Rudd, Sloan, & Kim, 1999).

Self-esteem refers to the way one evaluates one’s self (Laurer & Handel, 1977). Self-esteem can be assessed as high or low, positive or negative (Breytspraak & George, 1982). According to Ross (1992): “Self-esteem has to do with one’s sense of worth. It is based on a personal evaluative judgment that one makes about oneself, and is thus a private and very subjective matter” (p.107). Ross (1992) examined four categories of self-esteem: competence, worth, power, and acceptance. Competence deals with the self-evaluation of people’s skills and achievements, what they do well and what they have accomplished. Worth deals with a person’s moral and ethical standards, physical appearance, and personality traits. Power deals with a person’s ability to control and influence others. Acceptance is related to how others react to a person, whether they like or respect the person.

Clothing is an extended dimension of one’s bodily self (Shim, Kotsiopoulos, & Knoll, 1991), and one’s self-feeling toward the body plays an important role in clothing preferences and attitudes (Kaiser, 1990). Thus clothing can enhance one’s bodily self and increase one’s social gains in the interaction with others (Burns, 1979). An individual may use clothing to compensate for dissatisfaction with body image and to enhance self-esteem. According to several researchers (e.g., LaBate, 1988; LaBate & DeLong, 1990; Sontag & Schlater, 1982; 이영호, 강혜원, 1982; 이수지, 이인 자, 1996; 황진숙, 1998a), there is a relationship between body—cathexis and dimensions of clothing behavior of general population. In addition, there is a positive relationship between self-esteem and clothing behavior (Holloman, 1989). Holloman (1989) found that both black men and black women had a positive correlation between self-esteem and clothing attitudes regarding esthetics and practicality.

2. Clothing of Older People

Several researchers have shown the importance of clothing to elderly people. Newton (1984) found that clothing was particularly important in social situations outside the home. According to Hoffman (1970), clothing plays an important role for older women because clothing is useful in developing new social relationships and in maintaining a positive self-image. Horn and Gurel (1981) emphasized that elderly people are not only interested in comfortable aspects of clothing but are also concerned about their overall appearance and fashion. Chowdhary (1988) found that the elderly subjects preferred fashionable styles to classic styles. In their study of fashion opinion leadership of older people, Huddleston, Ford, and Bickle (1993) showed that fashion opinion leaders exist among older people. Huddleston et al. also reported that the role of shopper as a lifestyle characteristic is a significant predictor of fashion opinion leadership.

Although older consumers are interested in fashion, the elderly have been a neglected segment of the population in shopping research. According to Lumpkin and Greenberg (1982), many older people enjoy shopping as pleasure and recreation. Concerning patronage behavior of older people, Lumpkin and Greenberg (1982) reported that older people preferred traditional department stores and specialty stores to discount stores. However, Chowdhary (1988) showed that older people did not
distinguish between discount and specialty stores although the older people most preferred department stores as their shopping place.

As aging is accompanied by physical changes, many researchers have examined the problems with ready-to-wear clothing of older people (Hogge, Baer, & Kang-Park, 1988; Kernaleguen, 1978; Richards, 1981; Shim & Bickle, 1993). Shim and Bickle (1993) showed that older people’s satisfaction with apparel fit was notably low, especially in relation to garment length. Older people had problems with blouse/sweater length, leg length of pants, skirt/dress length, and jacket length.

In regard to apparel expenditures of older people, several researchers investigated the variables affecting apparel expenditures of older people (Jackson, 1992; Norum, 1989; Reinecke, 1976; Winakor, 1993; Kim, 1993; 이성림·이기순, 1991; 황진숙, 1996b). The studies showed that the important variables related to apparel expenditures of older people were age, sex, income, and health status.

III. METHOD

1. Sample and Data Collection

The researcher obtained 302 mailing addresses of older people who were residents in a large southeastern U.S. city. The questionnaire with a stamped envelope was mailed to each address; 108 usable questionnaires were returned and used for data analysis. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 1.

2. Measurements

Body—cathexis was measured by subjects’ scores after rating their satisfaction with five areas of body parts on a 4-point Likert scale from satisfied (4) to dissatisfied (1). The five areas encompassing 18 body parts are lower body (legs, calves, knees, feet), head/upper body (face, hair, eyes, nose, teeth, voice), height (overall height, leg length), weight (overall weight, waist, hips), and torso (bust, neck, muscular strength). The five areas of 18 body parts used in this research were adapted from body—cathexis scale of Mahoney and Finch (1976). In a reliability test of the 18 items of this study, a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.91 was obtained.

Self—esteem was measured by subjects’ total scores after rating their degree of agreement with 10 items based on Rosenberg’s (1965) self—esteem measure on a 4-point Likert scale. A Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of ten items was 0.93.

Clothing behavior include clothing attitude, fashion opinion leadership, satisfaction with shopping, store patronage, and clothing expenditure. Table 2 shows the statements grouped by the behavior variables measured, along with Cronbach alpha coefficients. Each clothing behavior variable was measured by a 4-point Likert scale ranging from agree (4) to disagree (1).

Clothing attitude was measured by subjects’ total scores across five items which reflect the tri-component view of clothing attitude (cognitive, affective and behavioral). The five items of Shim,
Table 2. Clothing behavior variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clothing attitude (Cronbach alpha: 0.68)</td>
<td>Clothing is valuable to me, Wearing proper clothing helps me gain respect,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dressing well is important for advancement of one’s career, A person’s reputation at work is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>affected by how he/she dresses, Clothing is of concern to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion opinion leadership (Cronbach alpha: 0.84)</td>
<td>My friends or neighbors regard me as a good source of advice on clothing fashions,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others often turn to me for advice on fashion and clothing, I often influence the types of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>clothing fashions my friends buy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with shopping (Cronbach alpha: 0.72)</td>
<td>Salesclerks in clothing stores are usually too aggressive, too pushy,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have a difficult time with transportation to and from clothing stores, Clothing stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>should provide more places to rest, I have more difficulty in shopping for clothing than I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>used to, The layouts of clothing stores are often confusing, it is difficult to find what I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>want, The lighting in clothing stores is usually not adequate, Salesclerks in clothing stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>should provide more assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store patronage (Cronbach alpha: 0.86)</td>
<td>I buy my clothes at a particular store as a matter of preference, I like to buy most of my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>clothes in a particular store.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kotsiopoulos, and Knoll (1991) were used in this study.

Satisfaction with shopping was measured by respondents’ feelings about shopping factors such as sales personnel and store facilities through their degree of agreement with the seven items in Table 2. These statements were modifications of those used by Perry (1985). All were negative; reverse coding was used.

Fashion opinion leadership measure was adapted from the study of Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1991), and Store patronage measure was from Shim et al. (1991)’s study.

Clothing expenditure was measured by the total dollar value of annual personal expenditures for clothing, accessories (such as shoes), and clothing services, in one of six ranges from 1 = “under $199” to 6 = “$1,000 and above”.

3. Statistical Analysis

The Pearson correlation coefficient and Fisher’s Zr transformation were used in this study. The Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to investigate the relationships of clothing behavior to body-cathexis and self-esteem. Fisher’s Zr transformation was performed on the correlation coefficients and used to investigate differences between men and women for the correlation coefficients. All rejection levels were set at the 0.05 significance level. Significance levels at 0.001, 0.01, and 0.05 were reported.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Body-cathexis/clothing behavior. In order to determine the relationship between body-cathexis and each dimension of clothing behavior, the
Table 3. Relationships between body—cathexis and clothing behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation variables</th>
<th>Pearson coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing attitude/body—cathexis</td>
<td>0.34***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion opinion leadership/body—cathexis</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with shopping/body—cathexis</td>
<td>0.46****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store patronage/body—cathexis</td>
<td>0.25***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing expenditure/body—cathexis</td>
<td>0.40***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ***p<.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05

Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the entire sample and for the men and women separately (Table 3).

The Pearson correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive relationship between body—cathexis and clothing behavior for the entire sample, except the relationship between body—cathexis and fashion opinion leadership. For elderly women subjects, there is a positive relationship between body—cathexis and each dimension of clothing behavior. In the meanwhile, in case of elderly men subjects, body—cathexis is positively correlated with clothing attitude, satisfaction with shopping, and clothing expenditure; the relationship of body—cathexis to fashion opinion leadership and store patronage is not significant. It means body—cathexis plays a more important role in overall clothing behavior of elderly women than of elderly men. According to Greenwood (1984), women are more humiliated by body changes than men. Also, several researchers discussed the sex differences and attitudes toward gender roles in the evaluation of body satisfaction (Dionne, Davis, Fox, & Gurevich, 1995; Franzoi, 1995; Lennon, Rudd, Sloan, & Kim; 1999). In this context, elderly women may be more concerned about their body image and clothing, so they have more correlations between body satisfaction and clothing behavior than elderly men.

In addition, the Fisher’s Zr transformation score was determined to find whether there are significant sex differences in the correlation of body—cathexis and clothing behavior. The Fisher’s Zr transformation score is presented in Table 3. A positive score means that the women have a higher correlation between body—cathexis and clothing behavior than men, while negative Zr score means the men have a higher correlation between body—cathexis and clothing behavior. According to Table 3, there is a significant difference between the men and women in the correlation of body—cathexis to fashion opinion leadership and store patronage. The elderly women subjects have higher correlations of body—cathexis to fashion opinion leadership and store patronage than the elderly men.

Self—esteem/ clothing behavior. The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the entire sample and for the men and women separately to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and each dimension of clothing behavior (Table 4).

The Pearson correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive relationship between self—esteem and clothing behavior for the entire sample, except the relationship between self—esteem and fashion opinion leadership. While there is a positive relationship between self—esteem and all dimensions of clothing behavior for women subjects, self—esteem is positively correlated with three dimensions of clothing behavior (satisfaction
with shopping, store patronage, and clothing expenditure) for the men. The positive relationship between self-esteem and dimensions of clothing behavior in this study supports several researchers (Holloman, 1989; 이영희, 이은실, 1997; 정희웅, 1987).

When it comes to the similarities and differences between sexes, there is a positive relationship of self-esteem to clothing attitude and fashion opinion leadership for the women while the relationship is not significant for the men. Table 4 presents the Fisher’s Z transformation scores for assessing differences between sexes in regard to the correlation between self-esteem and clothing behavior. According to Table 4, the women and men subjects are similar in their correlations between self-esteem and dimensions of clothing behavior except fashion opinion leadership. Elderly women have a significantly higher correlation than do elderly men in the relationship between fashion opinion leadership and self-esteem.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This study investigated the relationship of clothing behavior to body-cathexis and self-esteem of men and women 55 years and older. The Pearson correlation coefficients were measured to investigate the relationships of clothing behavior to body-cathexis and self-esteem for the entire sample and for the men and women subjects separately. Fisher’s Z transformation score was used to find similarities and differences between men and women in the correlation coefficients.

The results showed that there was a positive relationship of four dimensions of clothing behavior to body-cathexis and self-esteem. It is implying that body-cathexis and self-esteem are important variables in clothing behavior of the elderly, and the fact that the elderly people are not much different from the younger population in the relationships of these variables. Apparel manufacturers and marketers should be noted that older people’s clothing behavior such as satisfaction with shopping, store patronage, and clothing expenditure is closely related to their body satisfaction and self-esteem. The elderly with higher body satisfaction and self-esteem could be an important target in apparel marketing business. The manufacturers and retailers need to incorporate the information in their market segmentation and marketing strategies.

In regard to the similarities and differences between sexes, it appears that clothing behavior of elderly women are more likely to be related to their body satisfactions than are those of elderly men subjects. In the case of the elderly women, the correlations of body-cathexis to fashion opinion leadership and store patronage were significantly higher than those of the elderly men subjects. It means that elderly women’s body satisfactions play a more important role in their
fashion opinion leadership and store patronage. Since the culture focuses on the young, thin body as the ideal body image and women are said to be more humiliated by body changes than men, the close relationship of body—cathexis to dimensions of clothing behavior in elderly women can be explained in this context.

In addition, there was a difference between elderly men and women in the relationship between self-esteem and fashion opinion leadership. Elderly women have a significantly higher correlation than do elderly men in the relationship between fashion opinion leadership and self-esteem. Among the dimensions of clothing behavior, fashion opinion leadership appeared to have higher correlations with body-cathexis and self-esteem of elderly women than elderly men. This finding implies that fashion opinion leadership exist among elderly women, which supports the study of Huddleston et al. (1993) and that body-cathexis and self-esteem are important factors in fashion opinion leadership of elderly women. It has an managerial implication for apparel marketers in high fashion business in that the elderly women who are satisfied with their bodies and have a higher degree of self-esteem could be an important fashion opinion leaders; the marketers may target these consumers and need to provide clothing which can enhance their body satisfaction and self-esteem.

For future research, with a larger sample size, the study on the comparison between younger and older population in regard to the relationships between body-cathexis, self-esteem, and clothing behavior is needed. Although the findings of this study showed that elderly subjects did not differ in the relationships of clothing behavior to body-cathexis and self-esteem compared to younger people in other previous studies, there is a limitation in the comparison because dimensions of clothing behavior in this study are not identical with those of previous studies. A comparison of the elderly and younger people in one study is needed to find their similarities and differences more clearly.

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