

Factors Affecting Change in the Clothing Patterns of the Adolescent Girls

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ABSTRACT

It is always imperative to determine and explain the factors responsible for the change in clothing patterns of the adolescent girls, that are yet not clearly defined but are unignorable. In order to find out the affect of various factors like social status, education, mass media and peer pressure on the clothing patterns of young girls, a survey was conducted in the University of Agriculture Faisalabad by distributing a comprehensive questionnaire among 102 students of B.Sc. Home Economics classes. Results clearly indicated the significant forces mentioned above are more or less responsible for bringing change in the clothing patterns of the adolescent girls.

Key Words: Adolescent; Fashion; Pattern; Socio-economic status

INTRODUCTION

During the present dynamic age, there is probably no other sphere of human activity being important to such an extent, in which our values and life-styles are reflected more 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 complete set of information and is usually the basis on which immediate impressions are formed. Clothing is also a form of artistic expression that reflects the cognitive, moral and social aspects of human life. Erwin *et al.* (1979) recognized that no single conceptual framework was adequate in interpreting the significance of dress. Rather, conceptual ideas inter-relate to provide a complex network of information that assists the girls in comprehending the importance of clothing.

Kiran (1999) while working on a similar study found that in any age there were some forces of work that tended to restrict or impede change in the clothing patterns. The factors that promoted changes were particularly ascendant in our society and were responsible for the increased tempo of fashion absolescence in the contemporary world. Social norms are social habits, consisting of folkways, customs, mores and laws, which govern clothing behavior of any group of people to some extent.

Widespread education also accelerates fashion change. It opens the door to new areas of experience and it increases the interest in and desire for a more fashionable appearance. Education helps to dissipate fear of new and the unknown, people become more aware of the choices and possibilities that are open to them and more confident of their judgments in making clothing decisions.

Increased contacts, ease of communication with various cultures and mass media antithetically speeds up the rate of change. The language of another country may be difficult to learn, but the outward symbols of clothing are easily transmitted from one culture to another. In modern

era media including T.V., movies, satellite, news papers and magazine, is a very powerful tool of communicating dress fashion and clothing styles.

Clothing patterns may be regulated within the peer group by some unwritten rules. Certain styles and color of clothes may be approved or disapproved by the group. Members of the group are expected to follow the group and even pressured to dress in the same way, this is called the peer pressure. Clothing that does not conform to the group's standard and expectation may be criticized. Sometimes the pressure is gentle and serves just as a source of inspiration for others. But it can be strong and cruel forcing people to either conform or be excluded from the group.

Horn (1975) in this regard observed that because clothing behavior could be interpreted from many points of view, an interdisciplinary approach was required for its study.

The tremendous acceleration of fashion change that occurs in contemporary society has been the subject of much social criticism. The adversaries of planned absolescence treat it as a kind of social disease for which we have not yet discovered an affective cure. In order to weigh the value of such commentaries, we must determine the forces that increase the tempo of change in clothing patterns of the adolescent girls, because much of their time is spent on this aspect, on the risk of some constructive activity like study.

According to Paolucci *et al.* (1977) the clothing choices are influenced by meaningful interaction the individual experiences with various environments. Where as Erwin *et al.* (1979) presented that clothing was influenced by physical environment, resources and the ability to use those resources. Weber (1986) was of the view that clothing styles were associated with either sex evolve out of customs, traditions, religion, work and leisure activities. So, in order to get an insight into the real influencing factors responsible for bringing change in the clothing patterns, the study

seemed to be inevitable. The same was done in the University of Agriculture Faisalabad for the exploration of unquestionable facts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study, aimed at the determination of factors affecting the change in the clothing patterns of adolescent girls, was conducted at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad. All the 102 students of B.Sc. Home Economics during the year 2000-2001 were taken as the respondents. The data were collected with the help of a questionnaire and then analysed to draw conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the most important factors in speeding up the process of change in clothing patterns and styles is a wide diffusion of wealth and an increase in the family income that exceeds the amount required for the bare necessities of life. One strong reason for dressing as we do is attributed to the status factor. Another way, in which the social status of a person affects change in clothing patterns, is that, the middle class always tries to copy the higher class to look

Table I. Distribution of respondents according to the socio-economic status of their families

Category	Number	Percentage
High Income	10	10%
Middle Income	90	88%
Low Income	02	2%
Total	102	100%

Table II. Views of the respondents towards the factors responsible for change in clothing patterns

Category	Number	Percentage
Inspiration by the friends	36	35%
Changing trends and values	22	22%
Influence of the family members	27	26%
Education	14	14%
Any other	03	3%
Total	102	100%

like them and on the other hand the people of higher class try to find something new to look different and modern as well as to display their social status. As a result the clothing styles keeps on changing.

Table I depicts that a large majority of 88%

Table III. Distribution of respondents according to their perception of the impact of mass media on clothing patterns

	T.V.	Magazine	Fashion shows	Movies
Category	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %
Highly impressed	48 47%	32 31%	2 2%	1 1%
Impressed	42 41%	48 47%	8 8%	2 2%
Impressed to some extent	10 10%	16 16%	56 55%	16 16%
Rare impact	1 1%	4 4%	28 27%	37 36%
No impact	1 1%	2 2%	8 8%	46 45%
Total	102 100%	102 100%	102 100%	102 100%

respondents belonged to middle income family. Whereas, 10% respondents came from high income and 2% from low income families respectively.

Table II reveals that 35% of the respondents were inspired by their friends in the process of changing styles. Where as 26, 22 and 14% of the respondents picked family's influence, changing trends and education as the factors affecting the change in the clothing patterns among the adolescent girls.

Table III shows the impact of mass media on clothing patterns. According to this table T.V. has a very high impact while the magazines, fashion shows and movies comes on second, third and fourth positions respectively.

CONCLUSIONS

By concluding the above discussion we have come to know that friends, family's socio-economic status, changing trends and education were the most important responsible factors. It was also revealed that the adolescent girls were more impressed by the T.V., fashion shows and magazines while bringing change in their clothing patterns.

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(Received 13 May 2002; Accepted 14 June 2002)