

# EFFECT OF CLOTHING INTEREST ON CLOTHING DEPRIVATION/DISSATISFACTION

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the appropriateness of Oliver's (1989) framework for the analysis of clothing satisfaction. It was hypothesized that clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction would vary according to arousal level, an aspect of consumer product orientation. 336 high school students completed questionnaires measuring clothing interest (arousal level) and clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction. Clothing interest had a significant effect on dissatisfaction. Generally, as clothing interest increased, feelings of clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction decreased.

## INTRODUCTION

Clothing dissatisfaction or the relative absence of satisfaction has been used by previous researchers as the definition of clothing deprivation (Brawley, 1971; Brewton, 1971; Edwards, 1971; Francis, 1990; Kness, 1973, 1983; Stuart, 1983; Turner, 1968). Kness (1983) conceptualized clothing deprivation as the negative end of a continuum with clothing satisfaction as the positive end. Using previous work, clothing deprivation was defined as "an individual's discontent with his/her clothing in relation to his/her peers" (Kness, 1973, p. 35) and clothing satisfaction was defined as "an individual's contentment with his/her clothing in relation to his/her peers" (Turner, 1968, p. 21).

Most clothing satisfaction research has focused on consumer characteristics that relate to satisfaction. For example, a number of studies have shown that clothing satisfaction increases with age (Anderson & Jolson, 1973); Bathke & Burson, 1964; Francis & Dickey, 1981; Lowe & Dunsing, 1981; Wall, Dickey, & Talarzyk, 1978) and income (Francis & Dickey, 1981). Educational level has been found to both positively (Bathke & Burson, 1964; Conklyn, 1971) and negatively (Francis & Dickey, 1981) relate to clothing satisfaction. Lowe and Dunsing (1981)

found that satisfaction with material well-being was the most important determinant of clothing satisfaction among the 22 independent variables studied, but found only weak support for the importance of socioeconomic variables. In other studies, lifestyle activities, interests, and opinions (Wall, Dickey, & Talarzyk, 1978) and social-psychological variables (Lowe and Dunsing, 1981) were found to be important determinants of clothing satisfaction.

In the past, satisfaction theorists maintained that dissatisfaction is the result of a negative comparison between what is expected and what is received (Day, 1977; Hunt, 1977; Oliver 1981). Recently, Oliver (1989) developed a new framework for analyzing satisfaction. Oliver argued that consumer product orientation affects the subsequent satisfaction response. Consumer product orientation varies according to arousal level, the nature of cognitive processing that occurs, the operant emotion involved, and the degree of attribution processing that occurs. Oliver proposed five satisfaction modes differing in consumer product orientation: contentment, pleasure, relief, novelty, and surprise.

According to Francis and Davis (1992, in press), Oliver's pleasure mode is appropriate for the analysis of clothing because of the moderate to high arousal state and moderate to high consumer interest that is characteristic of this satisfaction mode. The pleasure satisfaction mode was associated with products that have the "intended outcome of adding to a benefit set" (Oliver, 1989). This mode was characterized as involving active processing of expectations, active performance processing, active disconfirmation processing, and moderately active attribution processing. Thus, the primary affect associated with the pleasure mode would be happiness.

Arousal level in relationship to clothing attitudes and practices has been studied in terms of clothing interest, clothing mode awareness, and fashion awareness. Although numerous studies of clothing interest, clothing mode awareness, and

fashion awareness have been conducted, few studies (Drake & Ford, 1979; Kelley & Turner, 1970; Kness, 1983; and Vener & Hoffer, 1959) have examined the relationship between these variables and subsequent clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction.

Vener and Hoffer (1959) investigated the relationship between clothing awareness and clothing deprivation and several social, personal, and demographic characteristics among 8th, 10th, and 12th grade boys and girls. Findings indicated that clothing awareness was negatively related to clothing deprivation. That is, adolescents who were more aware of clothing reported less clothing deprivation than did those who were less aware of clothing.

Kelley and Turner (1970) studied clothing awareness and feelings of clothing deprivation/satisfaction among young children from households qualified to receive poverty funds. Based on descriptive statistics, it was concluded that the children were "quite aware of clothing" and were also "very satisfied with their clothing."

Drake and Ford (1979) studied clothing attitudes and personal and social variables among black and white 9th and 10th grade boys and girls. Although clothing deprivation was analyzed in relationship to the personal and social variables, unfortunately, the relationship between clothing deprivation and clothing attitudes was not analyzed.

In the only other study of the relationship between clothing interest and clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction, Kness (1983) investigated clothing deprivation/satisfaction among three adolescent ethnic groups. Positive correlations between clothing satisfaction and clothing interest were reported for the Anglo-American and Mexican-American groups. Specifically, as clothing interest increased, so did clothing satisfaction. The relationship was not significant for the Afro-American group.

Based on the limited evidence presented above of a relationship between clothing interest and clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction and on Oliver's argument that consumer product orientation affects satisfaction, the purpose of the present study was to investigate the appropriateness of Oliver's (1989) framework for the analysis of clothing

satisfaction. The research hypothesis was that clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction would vary according to level of clothing interest, an operational definition of arousal level.

## METHOD

The sample was comprised of 336 primarily female high school students. A questionnaire was used to measure clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction, the dependent variable, and clothing interest, the independent variable.

The perceived clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction instrument developed by Francis (1990) to measure clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction was used to measure the dependent variable. This instrument is comprised of two subscales: (1) Inability to Buy; and (2) Clothing Deprivation/Dissatisfaction Relative to Peers. The first subscale, Inability to Buy, primarily reflects the degree to which one is able to purchase and/or own clothing based on an assessment of one's financial situation. This subscale was included in the present study because income and social class have been found to be related to clothing interest/awareness and/or fashion awareness (Horridge, Khan & Huffman, 1981; Rosencranz, 1949; Smucker & Creekmore, 1972; Turner, 1968). The second subscale, Clothing Deprivation/Dissatisfaction Relative to Peers was included in the present study since clothing deprivation and clothing dissatisfaction have been considered by previous researchers to be conceptually similar.

Gurel and Gurel's work in the development of a clothing interest scale (1979) was used as the basis for the clothing interest instrument used to measure the independent variable in the present study. Gurel and Gurel factor analyzed Creekmore's (1971) "Importance of Clothing" instrument to extract meaningful subscales. The first of eight factors generated was named, "Interest in Clothing As Concern with Personal Appearance." This factor contained 16 items that indicated persons who would "invest time, energy, and money in their clothes and how they look in them--almost an operational definition of interest." These 16 items comprised the clothing interest instrument used in the present study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of a factor analysis performed on the array of 16 clothing interest items are presented in Table 1. Three factors were generated with Eigenvalues greater than 1.00. However, only the first factor was selected for further analysis because it contributed 30 percent of the total variance compared to about 10 percent and 7 percent contributed by each of the other two factors.

The factor selected for further analysis was named, "Clothing Interest," and included items that reflected concern with wardrobe planning, purchase planning, interest in texture and line, color coordination, and clothing maintenance. Exact factor scores were calculated using the loadings for all items. Quartiles were calculated in order to divide the students into four approximately equal groups ( $n =$  about 82 students per group) according to level of clothing interest.

In order to get a sense of the general relationship between arousal level and resultant deprivation/dissatisfaction, correlation coefficients were calculated between clothing interest and the two clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction subscales. No significant correlation between clothing interest and the first clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction subscale, Inability to Buy, was found ( $r = -.03$ ,  $p > .30$ ). However, a significant correlation between clothing interest and the second subscale, Clothing Deprivation Relative to Peers, was found ( $r = .11$ ,  $p < .05$ ), indicating that as clothing interest increased, feelings of clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction decreased.

In order to test the hypothesis that clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction would vary according to arousal level, an analysis of variance was conducted. Results revealed that clothing interest had no effect on the first clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction subscale, Inability to Buy ( $F = 1.35$ ,  $p > .25$ ). It was expected that clothing interest would have a significant effect on Inability to Buy because income and/or social class have been found to be related to clothing interest/awareness and fashion interest and because arousal level has been argued to be related to satisfaction. The lack of significant findings may be due to the fact that in the present study, Inability to Buy primarily measured the extent to which one is able

to purchase and/or own desired clothing, rather than measuring income or even socioeconomic level which would be more comparable to income as measured in previous studies. That is, the first clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction subscale,

Table 1  
Factor Analysis of Clothing Interest Items

Clothing interest items	Factors			h <sup>2</sup>
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	
I look over the clothing in my wardrobe before each season so that I know what I have.	.717	.289	.015	.60
I carefully plan every purchase so that I know what I need when I get to a store.	.632	.037	.038	.40
I consider the fabric texture with the line of the garment when choosing my clothes.	.618	.043	.364	.52
I plan for and prepare clothes to wear several days in advance.	.617	.009	.217	.43
I see to it that my out-of-season clothing is cleaned and stored.	.555	.288	.038	.39
I spend more time than others coordinating colors in my clothes.	.531	.383	.270	.50
I am more concerned about the care of my clothing than my friends are about the care of theirs.	.475	.137	.297	.33
I wear a raincoat or carry an umbrella to protect my clothes in rainy weather.	.453	.079	.372	.35
I have something to wear for every occasion that occurs.	.413	.433	-.337	.47
I carefully coordinate the accessories that I wear with each outfit.	.280	.729	.060	.61
I pay a lot of attention to pleasing color combinations.	.273	.728	.155	.63

Table 1 (cont.)

Clothing interest items	Factors			h <sup>2</sup>
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	
I have a long-term idea for purchasing more expensive items of clothing such as coats or suits.	.230	.072	.649	.48
I keep my shoes neat and clean.	.163	.629	.147	.44
I wear clothes with buttons or snaps missing.	.154	-.577	.059	.36
The way I look in my clothing is important to me.	.142	.522	.293	.38
It bothers me when my shirttail keeps coming out.	.108	.159	.698	.52
Percentage variance explained	30.1	9.8	6.5	

Inability to Buy, may be conceptually different from or independent of income or socioeconomic level as measured elsewhere.

Clothing interest did have a significant effect on the second subscale, Clothing Deprivation/Dissatisfaction Relative to Peers ( $F = 3.13$ ,  $df = 3, 322$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Newman-Keuls' multiple range test was used as a post hoc procedure to identify significant contrasts among the four clothing interest groups. Means and standard deviations of the Clothing Deprivation/Dissatisfaction Relative to Peers factor scores for the four clothing interest groups are displayed in Table 2. Group 2, the second lowest clothing interest group, reported significantly higher Clothing Deprivation/Dissatisfaction Relative to Peers ( $p < .05$ ) than did Group 4, the highest clothing interest group. That is, low clothing interest was associated with high clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction. These findings are consistent with those reported by Vener and Hoffer (1959) and Kness (1983) who found that high clothing interest was associated with high clothing satisfaction. There were no other significant differences among the four clothing interest groups. Although the general hypothesis that clothing interest would have an effect on clothing

deprivation/dissatisfaction was supported by the main effect found for the second subscale, Clothing Deprivation Relative to Peers, the specific group differences did not appear to be consistent with Oliver's (1989) satisfaction framework which predicts that disconfirmation should not be present in the case of low arousal products. That is, to the extent that low clothing interest is indicative of a consumer orientation characterized by low product arousal, disconfirmation would not be expected to occur. Consequently, one would not expect consumers who report low clothing interest to report high levels of clothing dissatisfaction as was the case here. Conversely, high product arousal would be expected to result in heightened product awareness and heightened expectations that would subsequently result in increased dissatisfaction. Such was not the case.

Alternatively, these findings could be interpreted as being supportive of Oliver's framework. To the extent that clothing is a moderate to high arousal product category as has been argued by Francis and Davis (in press), then a main effect for clothing interest on subsequent clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction could be viewed as evidence of expectation processing, and possibly performance and disconfirmation processing as well. Such an interpretation would be consistent with findings reported previously (Kness, 1983; Vener & Hoffer, 1959) that high clothing interest was associated with high clothing satisfaction.

Table 2  
Means and Standard Deviations of Clothing Deprivation/Dissatisfaction Relative to Peers by Four Clothing Interest Groups

Group 1 (low)		Group 2*		Group 3		Group 4 (high)	
Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
.0154	1.81	.4344	1.93	-.1041	1.77	-.4345	1.79

\*Denotes groups significantly different at .05 level

Finally, it should be noted that an important caveat in interpreting the present findings is that the clothing interest quartiles calculated for the present analysis indicate relative levels of clothing interest reported by this particular sample rather

than absolute levels of high or low clothing interest. Therefore, the possibility exists that the present sample was not representative of the total range of levels of clothing interest that may exist within the entire population from which the sample was drawn.

### SUMMARY

The hypothesis that clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction would vary according to level of clothing interest was supported by the present results. Clothing interest was found to have an effect on clothing deprivation/dissatisfaction. However, specific group differences indicated by post hoc tests did not appear to clearly support Oliver's (1989) framework and its underlying propositions. Nevertheless, the present study does make a contribution toward refinement of the framework by raising methodological as well as theoretical issues that suggest areas for further work.

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