

## Clothing Session

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Japan – Speaker

: Tomoko Omura (Shizuoka University)

RECEIVING INFORMATION ABOUT CLOTHING HABITS AND CLOTHING PRACTICE AMONG FAMILIES WITH THREE GENERATIONS LIVING IN THE SAME HOUSE. Tomoko OMURA. Faculty of Education, Shizuoka University, Oya, Shizuoka, 422, JAPAN.

### INTRODUCTION

We have get on abundant supply of ready made clothes these days. As the availabilty of ready made clothes is very high. People now look desire for comfortable clothes. Nowadays, people are also very much concerned about the significance, feeling and style of clohes rather than simply wearing them. The way of wearing clothes has also changed a lot.

### THE CLOTHING PRACTICE OF FAMILIES IN JAPAN TODAY

Today's clothing habits, with their central focus on the way we wear our clothes, consist of various clothing practices which are all interrelated. Furthermore, the family is the basic unit of society. In family life, the people who make up that family, as a community, share common objects, lifestyle and culture concerning their clothing habits. Then clothing habits having as thier subject the people who wear clothes, (the wearing basis) form a bond between people and clothes. Clothing practice refers to the practice of acquiring, wearing and taking care of our clothes. Fig. 1 shows clothing practice in the family. Wearing clothes is something we all do but clothing practice is not only something we do by ourselves for our own sake but something our family does for us or we do for our family. It is a case by case matter, which depends on our stage in life and our lifestyle.

Incidentally, in the latter half of the twentieth century, our

clothing style has undergone a drastic change. In our daily lives, we have come to wear three-dimensionally styled western clothing. The flat (two-dimensional) style Japanese clothing (Kimono) has gone of fashion. Our way of acquiring clothes have also undergone a great change. When today's young people were born, ready-made clothes were already available in abundance. This was a social environment where clothes could be easily obtained at any time and in any place. How different was this from the childhood of our today's senior citizens. In those days, most of the clothes were made at home. These peoples' youth and early adulthood fell during the Second World War or in the post-war period. Goods were in short supply and were reused and recycled. Until that period, making clothes was part of a woman's housework. However, since the end of the 1970s, we have been wearing mass-produced ready made goods. In every age group, consumer habits have greatly changed from "I'll make something to wear" to "I'll buy something to wear." In a span of fifty or sixty years, Japanese clothing habits have undergone a drastic change. Even if the members of a family live under the same roof, they are likely to have different experiences depending on their stage in life. The system of clothing habits passed down from the previous generation has changed, as well as the clothing's cultural and material heritage. There are many things which no longer play any role in our modern clothing habits. It is also an changed period where, faced with an aging society, we have to develop a new clothing style.

I think we have now reached a turning point where we have to ask ourselves, irrespective of the difference between the generations or between men and women what kind of clothes to wear and how to manage them and what kind of clothing culture we need.

#### INFORMATION ABOUT THE FAMILY'S CLOTHING HABITS AND THE SOURCE OF THAT INFORMATION

In the moves of G. and M. Beale to obtain information and determine

the attitudes towards it, the information obtained from close associates was of particularly great importance(1957). I think this shows that information gained from the family has a great influence. We are now living in an age of the informations. The media of information concerning our clothing habits consists of printed words or pictures, electric waves, sound waves, people, clothing and dress. To name each individual source, there are newspapers, magazines, books, catalogues, direct mail, flyers, fax, TV., radio, telephone, e-mail, family, relatives, friends, acquaintances, shop clerks, shop fronts, and shops'produce(colthes) all showing peoples'clothes. On the other hand, the content of our information about peoples' clothing can be divided into the following categories.

1. Information which shapes our awareness of the basic concept of clothing habits in general.
2. Information on how to improve our ability and skill in managing them.
3. Information on clothing practices and which directly encourages our awareness of such practices and induces or motivates us to form new habits.

The aim of the research into ways information is received by three generation families living together, was to determine how they got their information and at what level and to shed light on its influence on our awareness of clothes and behaviour.

Fig. 2 shows the results of research carried out by the author in 1987 as to how we obtain information about clothing habits from each source. The subjects of the investigation were 145 households (the members being at least 12 years old) with a total of 754 people. The content of the informations illustrated in the categories of "Information about clothing habits in general" "Information about recent trends" and "Information about bargain sales". We obtained replies in four categories 'Always' 'Sometimes' 'Seldom' 'Never'. Only in the

case of the bargain sale, was 'flyers' considered to be the most important source. For all others, all sources of information were considered to be equal importance. The young third generation obtained a lot of their information from many sources and there was a tendency for them to prefer to get information from the same generation rather than different generations. The second and third generation members did not see the first generation members of their families as a source of information. In the case of the first generation, the percentage of those seeing their family as a main source of information was relatively high but in the third generation, there was a general tendency to see friends, shop windows and the mass media as main sources of information

As we have seen in the above examples, there is a considerable generation gap. Particularly between the first and third generations, in all the sources of information as well as statistically there was a significant difference in the sources of information used by men and women. However, whilst most women did not see their husbands as a source of information, men saw their wives as an important source. In all generations most husbands' clothing habits depended on information obtained from their wives. The men of the first and second generation had only a little interest in their own clothes and still had a negative attitude towards clothing in general. Consequently they have little interest in their families' clothes. It seems that in the first generation, the feeling of a division of labour based on gender still remains. Among the men there was not such a clear generation gap.

As for the generation gap among the women, there was a significant difference between the first and second generations concerning the sources of information. However, the gap between the second and third generations has decreased by half. Because the balance of obtaining information in the third generation men has changed, the difference

between man and women in the family is likely to get smaller in future. Incidentally the Japanese 'kimono' peculiar to Japan, worn according to the season, is now the firsthand experience of only the first generation. The present first generation is a valuable source of information for passing down Japan's past clothing culture and techniques, such as the habit of changing clothes according to the season and occasion. Particularly now that our clothing habits are undergoing such drastic change, the three generations should positively exchange information within the family.

In the 21st century, we shall encounter an aging society which we have never experienced before. Faced with solving the task of how to manage our clothing habits, it is becoming all the more important and necessary to exchange information between the different generations. In order for the sources of information to be effective, we should choose and adopt appropriate information from the wide range available. The family members should clearly preserve their individual sources of information. Furthermore, the individual family members should positively exchange information from the sources of information which they have.

#### CLOTHING PRACTICE AND OBTAINING INFORMATION AMONG MEMBERS OF THREE GENERATION FAMILIES LIVING UNDER THE SAME ROOF

Clothing practice refers to our behaviour concerning the clothing we wear. It is something that absolutely everyone does throughout their whole life. Babies "are dressed" in the passive form and as they grow up, this develops gradually to the active subjective form "wear" in accordance with their own desires and values. We often make judgments about clothes with the words "It looks good on you" or "It suits you." That judgment of behaviour is often used for investigations on questionnaires. For example, A. M. Creekmore classified it into 8

categories : *Aesthetic, Modesty, Interest, Comfort, Approval, Management, Dependence, Attention* and put forward a questionnaire about our behaviour based on 89 items.

With the exception of very brief periods such as when we are babies, whether we are aware of it or not, we are standing on various axes which determine our choice of clothes. We wear clothes in accordance with that scale. For example; when we carry out our wearing practice, we are thinking about clothes as a means of expression, in other words, dress as a symbol and how to keep the balance between us and the environment. However, because we all have different values, even such questions as how to dress and what we should wear are often mutually incompatible or there is rivalry. Clothing is not simply determined by the individual's taste, ideals and lifestyle but is also influenced by the advance of industrial techniques and the social environment (things like high information society and internationalization).

Fig. 3 shows the results of an investigation of clothing practices of families with three generations living together. In this investigation by questionnaire, they decided to focus on eight aspects of clothes ; interest, approval, comfort, modesty, aesthetics, attention, management, and dependence. They made questions with 4~6 items in each area and evaluated them with 'always' 'sometimes' 'seldom' 'never'. As a result of the analysis of variance, in the case of seven of these aspects, except for comfort, there was a significance level of 5 percent in the factors of gender and generation. As for 'comfort' a significance level was found in the factor of generation. There was no interaction found between the generations. There were differences in the wearing practice in the family, dependent on gender and generations. When we compare the wearing practice of men and women in different generations, women ranked higher than men in all three generations. Except for the 'comfort' of the first and third generations, there was

overall statistically a significant difference between men and women. In the first generation, both men and women had little interest in fashion, in the third generation men showed moderate interest while women showed a considerable interest. The second generation had the most considerable between men and women.

Furthermore as a result of an investigation into the correlation between information and the wearing practice, the males of the third generation who made effective use of the few information sources they were exposed to, were said to have a positive wearing practice. The relationship between mens' clothing practice and this information shows a special quality which differs between the generations. Although women have access to many sources and vast quantities of information, this bears little relation to their actual clothing practice. It has become clear that they are not making full use of the sources. The phenomenon of the rejuvenation of clothing practice appeared earlier in women than in men. Within the family women are the first to try out new wearing practices but there is a tendency for men to be catching up. Among younger men, changes can be seen in personal recognition and the way of self expression. Gradually we are moving away from the gloomy customs of the past. In the younger generation, both men and women have a high interest in brand name clothing and express individuality through clothes and a diversification of values can be seen. In future, the differences between men and women as regards their clothing, are expected to get fewer and fewer and the generation gap is also expected to decrease rapidly.

#### CONCLUSION

In Japan, from olden times, each family had its own family crest. Family members wore it on their clothes as a common symbol. This was the most direct sign of the symbolism of clothes and their rela-

tionship to the family. Those who replied "I wear clothes which my family likes" were 70 percent of the first and second generation and 50 percent of the third generation which shows that when we choose our clothes, family members are influenced by each other.

Our present study with teenagers' regarding the care of clothes, (September 1988) showed the fact that 95% of mothers organized their family's clothes. This indicates that the awareness of gender role concerning organization of clothes does still exist. On the other hand, it also became clear that the self-reliance of the father has a positive influence on the clothing habits of the children. This in itself seems to hold a suggestion for future clothing habits about the relationship of the family and their mutual dependence and assistance.

Recently the socialization of the clothing practice has advanced more and more but the thought that "It is a woman's role to take care of her family's clothing habits." still prevails in Japan. In today's world women have a prominent role at different levels of the society as more and more of them are working outside the home, even then it seems that families do not have separate clothing practices. I hope that any member of the family, regardless of age or sex will be able to have a clothing practice which preserves both the family's individuality and that of its individual members.



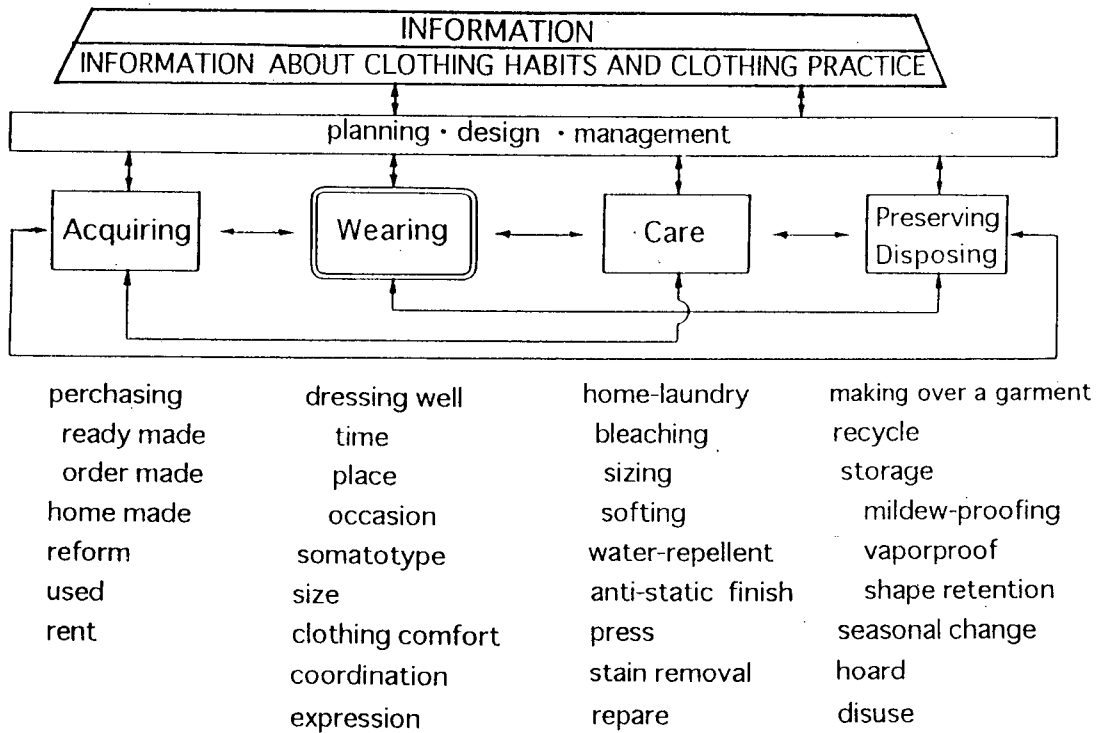


Fig. 1 The composition of clothing habits in the family

This shows the present day wearing practice in the family, focusing on those things which concern every body, acquiring, taking care of, preserving and disposing of clothes. The lower tier shows thier mutual connection and the concrete factors involved in the practice of wearing clothes.

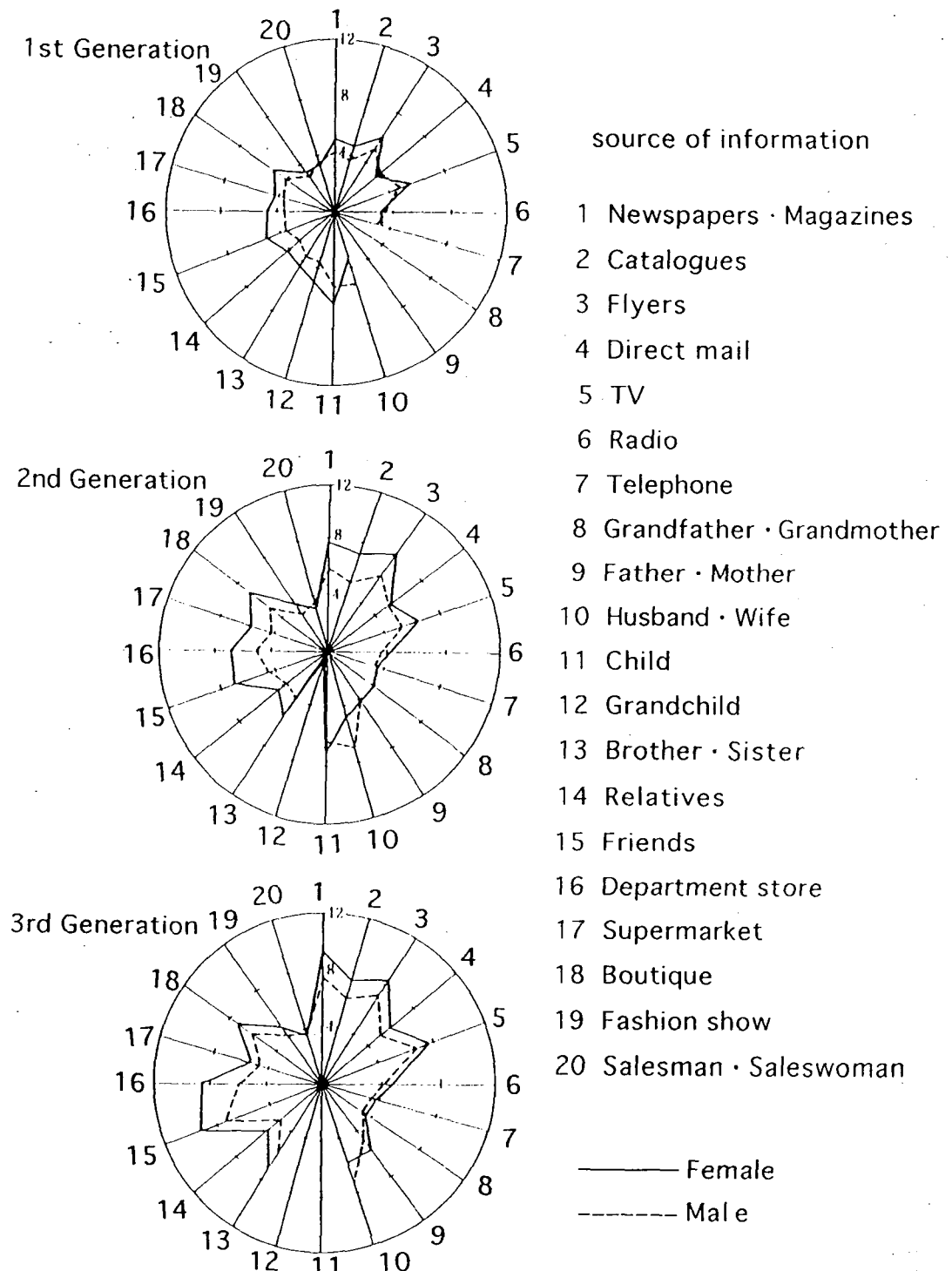


Fig. 2. Information about clothing habits is received among men and women of different generations.

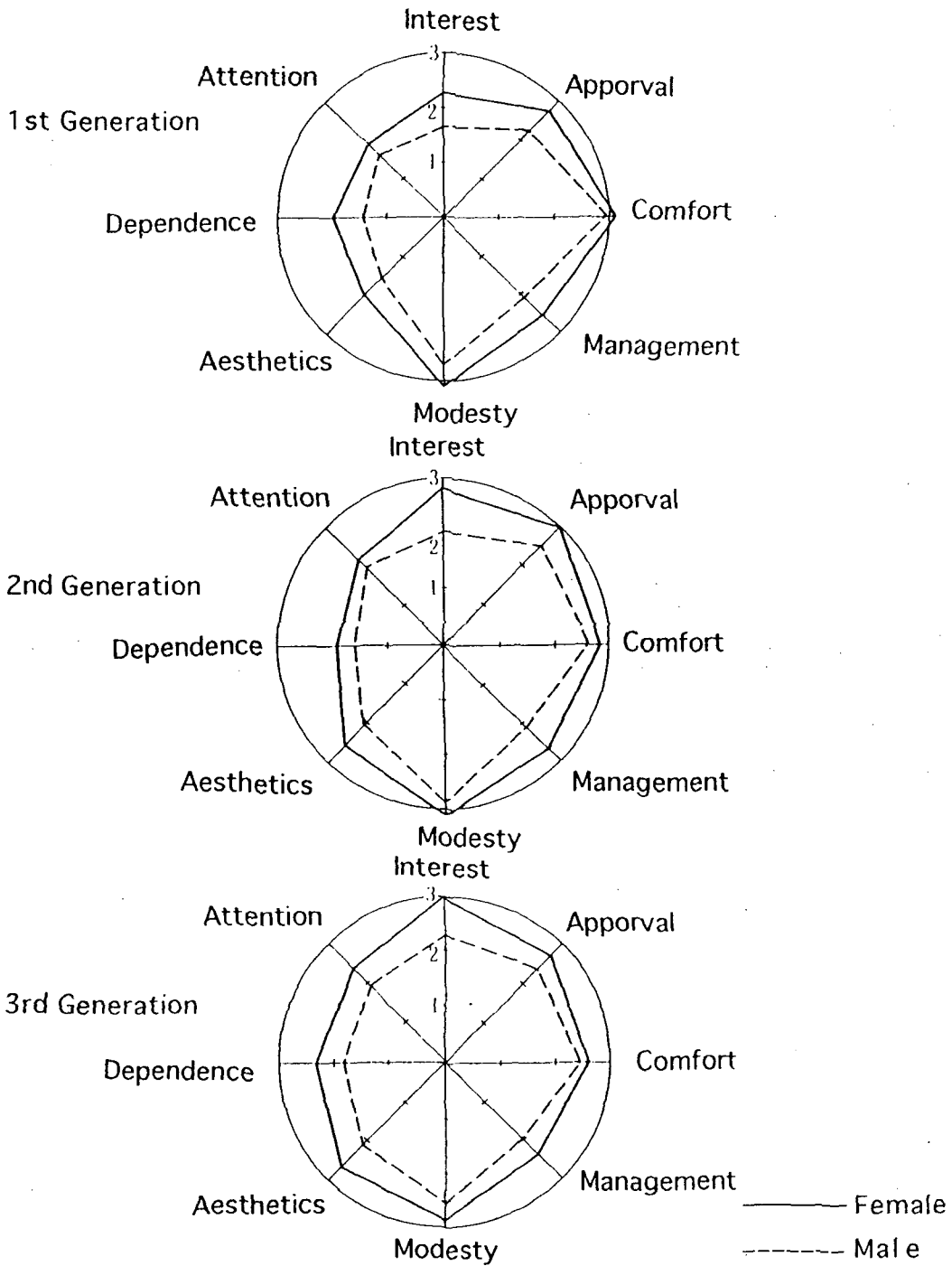


Fig. 3 The difference between men and women's clothing practice in different generations

## **Clothing Session**

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Japan – Reactor Paper by Tomoko Omura.  
: Nobuko Okada. Bunka Women`s University.

A 10-YEAR COMPARISON OF THE CLOTHING PREFERENCES OF  
3 GENERATIONS OF JAPANESE WOMEN : 1984 TO 1994.

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Fig.1 of Dr. Omura's presentation shows the composition of clothing habits in the family. I will borrow those parts concerning acquiring (A), wearing(W) and care(C). The questionnaire about the clothing preferences of 3 generations of Japanese women was given in 1984 and 1994.

The answers of the actual 25-item questionnaire have been given numerical values and factor analysis was carried out. The results of 1984 study are on page 708 of Journal of Home Economics of Japan<sup>1)</sup>. Fig.1 shows the percentage differences among the three generations and only the highlights of this 1994 study are listed. The middle-aged group, is used as the baseline. Item number 9 "fashionable clothes" got a negative response among elderly women and a positive response among young women. Both responses are statistically significant. Items number 20 and 18, concern durability and stylishness. Similar to the results of 1984 study, the 1994 study reveals that younger women are extremely influenced by fashion trends, appearance and personal stylishness. Older women are just the opposite: they are concerned with comfort and loose fit rather than things like fashion and style. In addition, they worry the same amount of time as the middle aged group about how easy it is to take care of their clothes. Fig.2 shows the percentage change from 1984 to 1994. The center baseline represents

all generations from the 1984 study and has been given a value of 0. Although smaller changes occurred with other clothing items as well,  
NOTE 1 : Grandmothers not related by blood were occasionally replaced by subjects of a similar age where the actual blood relative had passed away.

most of the items that are numerically significant are graphed in Fig.2. Japanese kimono have recently become unpopular across all generations. Further, off-the rack clothes often fit badly because of poorly standardized sizes. There is a genuine need for Japanese clothing sizes to be reviewed. This sizing problem has been a big impetus for the clothing industry to revamp it's sizing system. Japanese women have been paying more and more attention to their appearance of height, leg length, and waist sizes. Middle-aged and young women groups have seen a dramatic increase in the desire to look slimmer<sup>2)3)</sup>. This trend is especially strong among young women. Relatedly, young women have stopped wearing girdles, while middle-aged women have seen an increase. Unlike 10 years ago, when young women believed that wearing girdles would help them look slimmer, nowadays, diet and exercise appear to play the important role in achieving and maintaining the ideal physical appearance. Interestingly, middle-aged women feel they need not only to exercise but to wear appearance-assisting garments, such as girdles, as well. We have seen the main routes that information takes, such as TV, radio, catalogues and friends, and how that information influences our attitudes about clothing. It is widely believed that these various kinds of information have noticeably influenced our clothing preferences. It is important to ask how these trends will continue to shape our attitudes as we enter the 21st century, and, further, what kinds of forces would provide the optimum environment for us to make wiser and more informed decisions.

NOTE 2 : It should be noted that clothing sizes had been re-standardized as of February, 1997. Japanese clothing sizing system for the most problematic clothing items for men and women, and boys and girls had been improved.

NOTE 3 : 10 years ago, roughly 45% of all young women wore girdles<sup>2)</sup>. Today, however, this percentage has fallen significantly.

FOOTNOTE

- 1) N. Okada, J. Home Econ. Jpn, Vol.39, 699-710, (1988)
- 2) N. Okada, J. Home Econ. Jpn, Vol.43, 37-44, (1992)
- 3) N. Okada, J. Home Econ. Jpn, Vol.41, 867-873, (1990)

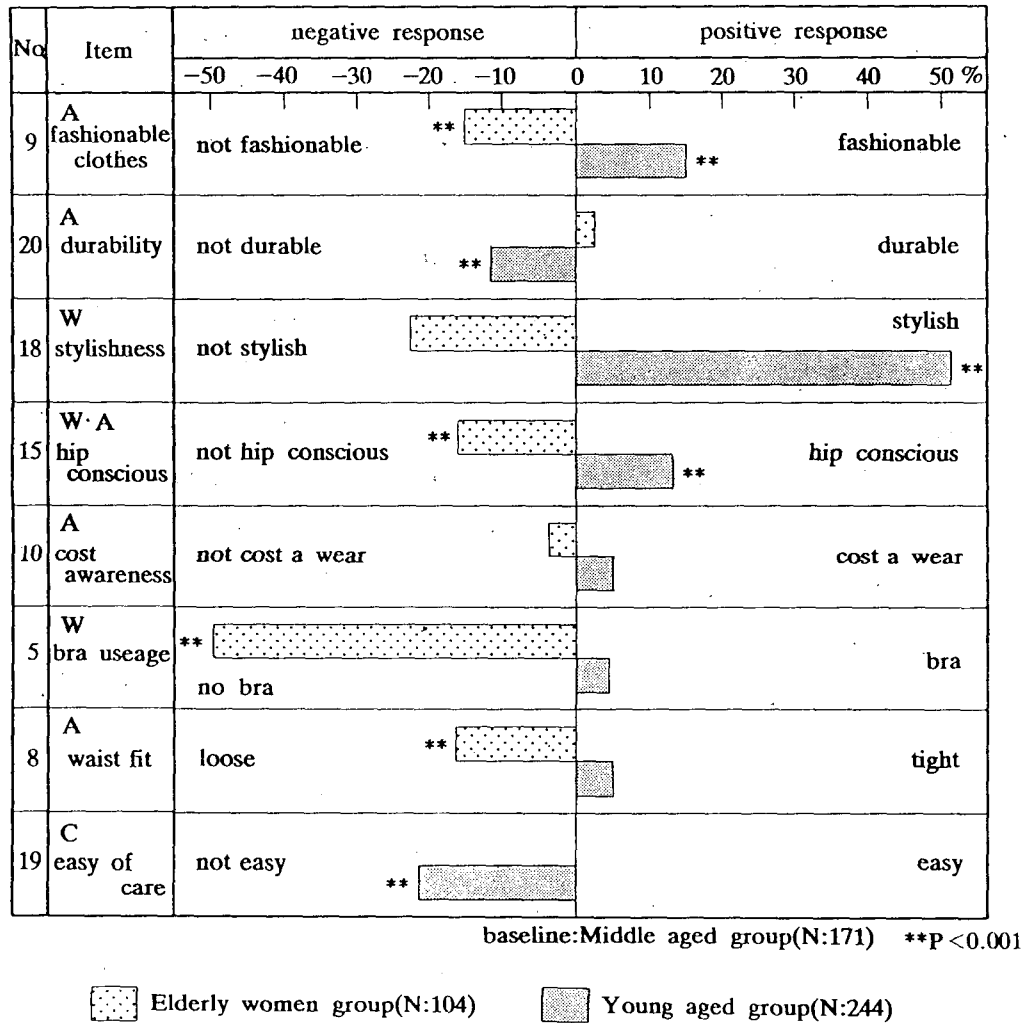
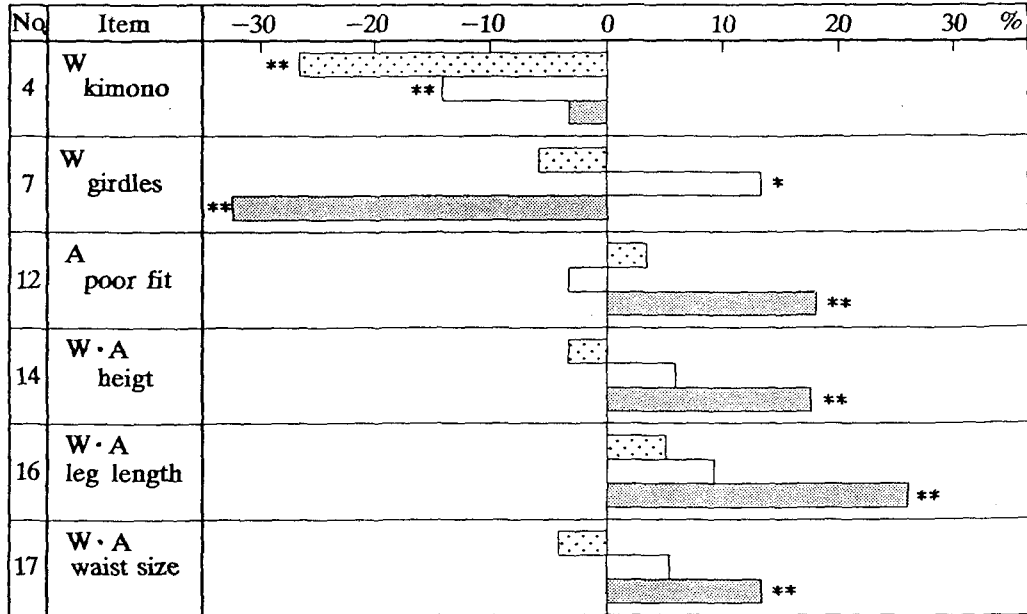


Fig.1 Clothing preference differences among three generations in the 1994 study.

these abbreviations stand for the following A:Acquiring W:Wearing C:Care



The baseline is 1984. \*\*p<0.001

\* p<0.005

Elderly women group 
 Middle aged group 
 Young aged group

Fig.2 The percentage changes from 1984 to 1994.