

Clothing Products Evaluation according to Self-Image and Clothing Attitudes

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자기이미지와 의복태도에 따른 의류제품평가

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Abstract

본 연구는 소비자의 의류제품평가에 있어 개인적·심리적 요인인 자기이미지 및 의복태도의 관련성을 살펴보고자 하였다. 연구결과, 소비자의 의류제품평가는 다차원적인 구조를 가지며, 외관적, 성능적, 외재적, 표현적 요소로 세분화되어 사용되고 있음을 알 수 있었다. 또한 소비자의 자기이미지와 의복태도에 따라 의류제품 평가기준과 의복선호스타일에 유의한 차이가 나타남으로써 이들이 소비자의 의류제품평가에 영향을 미치는 중요한 변인이라는 것을 확인할 수 있었다. 따라서 이러한 소비자의 자기이미지 및 의복태도는 감성이나 이미지와 같은 요소들의 중요성이 증가하고 있는 최근의 의류시장의 경향에 부합하여 시장세분화의 효과적인 변수로 사용될 수 있을 것이다. 이와 함께 자기이미지 및 의복태도를 통해 세분화된 표적시장 소비자들이 보다 중요시하는 의류제품평가의 차원들을 파악하고 이를 강화함으로써 보다 효율적인 마케팅 전략을 수립할 수 있을 것이다.

Key words: Self-Image, Clothing Attitudes, Clothing Products Evaluation; 자기이미지, 의복태도, 의류제품평가

I. Introduction

As the environment of fashion industry is changing rapidly these days, a new group of consumers with various needs has emerged. And the information that influences the decision making process of purchasing both directly and indirectly is expanding in its amount and the factors of fashion environment are being diversified. Consequently, understanding of consumers is becoming more difficult. Therefore, from the perspective of business, there are urgent needs to understand consumers' behaviors not only from the aspect of diversified consumers' needs but also from more fundamental dimension of the decision making process of purchasing.

Since the clothing is typical multi-attribute and high

involvement product, they go through a complex evaluation process when being purchased and the perceptions of them can differ distinctively according to the traits of consumers. The way consumers perceive a certain clothing is based on their clothing products evaluation and therefore their evaluations are very important factors that influence the behaviors of consumers.

Clothing products are influenced not only by cultural and social factors, but also by personal factors, such as personality and self-image, and psychological factors, such as conviction and attitude throughout the whole decision making process of purchasing(Ahn et al., 1999). But the studies on clothing products evaluation until now have been concentrating only on the fragmental aspect of evaluation process of clothing products itself. In evaluating

clothing products, it is necessary to look into the relationship between the consumers' evaluation and their personal and psychological factors that are fundamental motives of purchasing.

As a personally influencing factor of consumers, self-image, an aggregate of personal ideas and feelings, organizes purchasing motives or makes the purchasing standard to have a decisive influence on the consumer's purchasing behavior (Yoo, 2001). While studies on self-image, however, have focused on fashion leadership, brand image, evaluation of product properties and purchasing types so far, studies on influences on the purchasing process of clothing, such as clothing products evaluation, has been insufficient. In the context, understanding of clothing products evaluation according to self-image of consumers is expected to reflect not only functional aspects but also consumers' subjective desire or sociopsychological aspects of products in the process of new products development and sales promotion strategies to satisfy consumers' desire. Therefore, this study suggests that examining consumers' clothing products evaluation in relation to their personal and psychological factors like self-image and clothing attitudes will contribute to the understanding of perceptual structures of consumers' clothing products evaluation. In this time when the patterns of market flow are being diversified, it can help establishing differentiated marketing strategy based on market segmentation and understanding of consumers.

II. Literature review

1. Self-image

The attitudes of consumers are changing with rapid economical growth in modern society and clothing has become a way to express one's individuality and desires and has played an important role of showing one's symbolic role as a member of society and one's emotional state as an individual person.

Therefore, reasons and intentions of choosing certain clothing can be different according to regions, times, sexes and so on. Factors that clothing itself possesses and consumers' individual characters can influence consumers'

choices (Kim, 1996). One of these individual characters is a self-image. Self-image is considered as a strategic outcome that influences the way a person acts in relation with individual's values, beliefs, attitudes and so on.

Self-image is determining factor of human behaviors and a general idea or feeling that one has regarding oneself (Rosenberg, 1979). And it has influence on the decision making process of clothes purchasing, as people try to maintain stable and firm self-image (Lee, 2000). Compton (1962) said that the sense of self is expressed through the process of choosing one's clothing and chosen clothing plays an important role of helping an individual to realize his or her ideal self-image. In other words, when a person fails to possess a symbolic index regarding their ideal self-image, clothing products compensate for them by enabling them to display their identities through clothing (McCracken, 1998). In this point of view, clothing products are not only the reflection of self-images but also tools to supplement self-value and self-promotion and motives of decision and of clothing products evaluation.

2. Clothing attitudes

Attitude, a feeling or idea about an object, is composed of perceptive, emotional Behavioral factors (Kaiser, 1985). Perceptive factor includes part of information about conviction and stimulation, and emotional factor is related with personal feeling. Behavioral factor is an expression of personal intention and preparation to shift attitude into action.

Sproles (1979) explained clothing attitudes as people tending to act in certain ways about certain objects like clothing style and certain situations like wearing clothing. He argued that color, fabric, brand, store, quality, how well it fits, social appropriateness of the style and other factors are all combined together to influence actual purchasing behavior of consumers. Park (1995) described self-images as general and continuous attitudes of an individual towards clothing and Kang (1996) defined them as interests of a person that are presented in the procedural actions of choosing and wearing clothing. As described above, clothing attitudes are about an individual's beliefs regar-

ding clothing and values that one put onto it. Since they reflect what consumers think, feel and act about clothing product and service, they are important psychological factors in understanding consumers' behaviors like clothing products evaluation.

3. Clothing products evaluation

1) Evaluative criteria of clothing products

The buying decision making process can be described as five successive steps of need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. Behaviors before and after the purchase are all connected. After the phase of information search in decision making process of purchasing, consumers face the problem of choosing a product among many others. That is when the clothing products evaluation comes in. The clothing products evaluation is the step of processing information about the products to make a decision.

Evaluative criteria of clothing products is the basis that consumers use to evaluate usefulness of a product and they are usually represented in forms of products' properties(Kim, 1999). The most distinctive feature of these criteria is that they represent intentions and reasons of purchasing. Because consumers evaluate a product according to actual benefits and utilities that they are intending to acquire from purchasing and using the product, the result of their evaluation can differ. Evaluative criteria vary depending on the situation and they can be both objective and subjective. They also vary in their importance and the numbers of them change depending on the number of products(Lee, 1992). Although every researcher has different forms of evaluative criteria, there are some common criteria like style, fabric, suitability, and appropriateness of clothing. From the perspective of evaluation, they are subdivided into two dimensions of aesthetic value and practical value for the research(Cassil & Drake, 1987; Morganosky, 1987).

2) Clothing style preferences

Clothing products are influenced by sociopsychological factor and personal taste, as it is a visual and psychological goods with a form and has a property that induces

overall reaction(Choi, 1993). Preference or non-preference for clothing products is a conviction formed to a consumer by the evaluation of the clothes, the former an affirmative and the latter a negative conviction. As the style of clothes, especially, acts for the most important criterion among the intrinsic properties in the decision making process of purchasing, affirmatively evaluated clothes may be referred to as the preferred clothes style(Yoo, 1995). In the context, this study intends to consider the preferred clothes style as a specific aspect of clothes evaluation.

The reactions of people when they come in contact with certain clothing are influenced by visual images expressed by the clothing(Kim, 1996). Thus the clothing style is a fundamental factor in choices made by consumers. The clothing style is the image expressed through the clothing(Chung, 1992), and it is what characterizes and distinguishes clothing. Many forms of clothing style exist in one social and cultural environment and they all vary in their appearances such as compositions, details, and fabric and also in their esthetic aspects. Consequently, clothing style that each person prefers can vary depending on their socio-cultural standards and personal traits. Sproles(1979) said that, in the aspect of fashion theory, the clothing style is the critical character that is considered when making a final decision of accepting or rejecting a product. It is perceived subjectively according to the current trend, aesthetic quality, personal preferences and personal values. Preferences for certain style are relatively continuous factors and play a critical role in evaluating and purchasing clothing products.

III. Method

This study samples women from age 20 to 35 living in Seoul and metropolitan cities. The survey was done on 18. Sep to 2. Oct. 2000 and 500 survey sheets were handed out and 411 of them were used as final research data.

SPSS 7.5 package was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics, Factor analysis, ANOVA, LSD-test, correlation analysis, regression analysis were applied.

In this study, self-image was limited to only real self-image and measured by a Likert type scale was constituted

15 questions after revising and modifying survey questions used in the previous research of Chung & Lee(1992), Hong(1988), Kim & Koh(1996). There are 17 questions on clothing attitudes including ones about social position, practicality, aesthetics, trends. They are based on survey questions used by Jung(1995), Koh(1983), Kim(1988). Five points Likert-type scale was used. Survey question items on the clothing products evaluation are consisted of 13 questions based on measures used by Kim(1988), Abraham-Murali(1995), Paik(2000). Five points Likert-type scale was used.

Surveying preferences of clothing style was conducted by making people choose one outdoor style they prefer the most among four picture images presented. Pictures were from clothing products of season, 2000 and dresses that are appropriate for outdoor were chosen. To include as many clothing style as possible, classification of clothing was based on the classification Hwang(1989) presented. They are consisted of four styles of elegance-romantic-dressy, casual-sportive-natural, dramatic-bold and classic-conservative. After doing two times of preliminary survey on the selection of pictures, pictures with the highest average scores for each adjective were chosen.

In the first preliminary investigation, total twenty pictures, five pictures for each of four clothes styles, were presented to 24 respondents who majored in clothing and asked to choose pictures that represent each style. In the second preliminary investigation, two pictures for each style that won the largest supports for the respective four

styles were presented to fifty persons, including persons who did not major in clothes as well as majored in, and asked to evaluate 15 adjectives that modify clothes styles by five points Likert measure. Pictures that earned high points on average for four adjectives that modify each clothes image style at the second preliminary investigation were finally chosen.

IV. Results

1. The factor of self-image, clothing attitudes and clothing products evaluation

Factors of self-image, clothing attitudes, and clothing products evaluation were analyzed to be sub-categorized

Table 1. Factor analysis of self-image

Factors	Question	Factor loading	Eigen value	Accumulative dispersion(%)
Factor 1 Activeness	Active	.88	3.05	20.34
	Sociable	.86		
	Cheerful	.83		
	Positive	.68		
Factor 2 Boldness	Luxurious	.76	2.70	38.35
	Bold	.75		
	Sexy	.75		
	Outstanding	.73		
Factor 3 Chic	Urbane	.83	2.63	55.86
	Chic	.80		
	Modern	.64		
	Intelligent	.57		
Factor 4 Femininity	Feminine	.84	2.09	69.80
	Modest	.79		
	Delicate	.48		

Table 2. Factor analysis of clothing attitudes

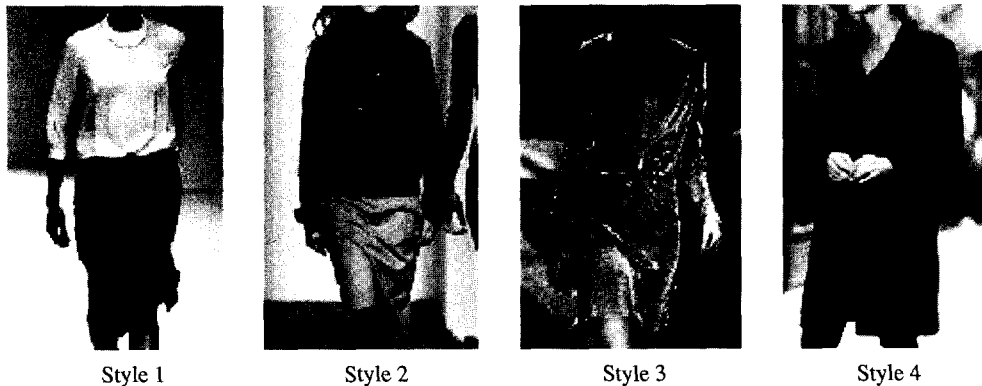
Factors	Question	Factor loading	Eigen value	Accumulation dispersion(%)
Factor 1 Fashion-ability	I like to talk about the latest modes	.82	5.13	17.93
	I read all the articles of fashion modes	.75		
	I pursuit the latest style clothes earlier than others	.68		
	I am interested in the latest modes	.67		
	I don't wear outdated clothes	.55		
Factor 2 Aesthetics	I consider if the clothes fit me well	.80	1.71	33.16
	I consider first of all that the clothes match with my aesthetic sense	.76		
	I am interested in the harmony between clothes and accessory	.67		
	I try to get a good reputation about my fashion sense	.50		
Factor 3 Status symbolism	I think that a fashionable wear helps me to get acquainted with a good person	.72	1.53	46.97
	I estimate other's social status with their clothes	.72		
	I think others estimate me with my clothes	.70		
	I am poor estimated if I wear clothes of low price	.68		
Factor 4 Practicality	When I buy clothes I consider handling of clothing	.64	1.13	55.86
	I buy clothes at the sales	.63		
	I buy clothes with a plan	.53		
	I buy clothes after comparison with the quality and price of other stores	.50		

Table 3. Factor analysis of clothing products evaluation criteria

Factors	Question	Factor loading	Eigen value	Accumulation dispersion(%)
Factor 1 Appearance	Design	.84	3.35	17.59
	Style	.84		
	Color	.77		
Factor 2 Function	Sewing	.82	1.99	32.72
	Ease of the laundry	.76		
	Fabric	.74		
Factor 3 External	Price	.89	1.55	47.71
	Brand	.87		
	Store and Service	.58		
Factor 4 Expression	Impression	.80	1.22	62.37
	Matching with occasion	.70		
	Coordination with other clothes	.64		
	Self-image	.49		

Table 4. Clothing style preferences score**(n=411)**

Styles	Clothing style	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Style 1	Elegant, romantic	125	30.41
Style 2	Casual, sporty, natural	183	44.53
Style 3	Sexy, bold	17	4.14
Style 4	Classical, conservative	86	20.92



Style 1

Style 2

Style 3

Style 4

Picture 1. Stimuli for clothing style preferences.

and the results are shown in <Table 1>, <Table 2>, <Table 3>. The result shows that the self-image can be divided into sub-factors of active, bold, chic and feminine categories and the clothing attitudes are divided into fashionable, status symbolic, practical factors. Sub-factors of the clothing products evaluation are appearance, function, external and expression and they show multi-dimensional characters of evaluative criteria.

To examine the most preferred clothing style of consumers which is an aspect of clothing products evaluation and the result is shown in <Table 4>. The

most preferred clothing style for outdoor is casual followed by elegant, classical and bold style. The result shows that the casual clothing style is the most preferred and the bold clothing style is the least preferred style. The same result was shown in self-image survey and this shows that the score distribution of the preferred clothing style is closely related to that of self-image. And this study was conducted for women of the age between 20 to 35, and the casual, sporty fashion trend is thought to have influenced on the selection of preferred clothing style.

2. Clothing products evaluation according to self-image

1) Clothing products evaluation according to self-image

The <Table 5> shows that the regression analysis result of the self image has on clothing products evaluation. In regression analysis, the mean of the variable applied factor analysis was used numerically.

Regarding the external factors in the clothing products evaluation, three influences, active, bold, and chic factors were shown and each score was .06, -.10, .27. This means that a person who regards oneself as a chic person tends to value external factors like style, design and

colors when evaluating clothing products. Regarding functional factors, the feminine has .13 influences. Activity has influences on external factors. This shows that a person who regards oneself as a feminine person tends to value functional factors and an active person tends to attach great importance to external aspects such as price, brand and shop. Every aspects of self-image has influences on expressional factors. Particularly in the case of people who regards themselves as feminine, they tend to put less emphasize on expressional factors. People who regard themselves as bold put their own feelings like expressing one's individualities first over other's judgements. The results show that chic in appearance's factors,

Table 5. Regression analysis of self-image and clothing products evaluation

Dependent variable (Clothing products evaluation)	Independent variable (Self-image)	β	t	R^2	F
Appearance	Activeness	0.06*	1.87	0.35	13.89***
	Boldness	-0.10**	-2.93		
	Chic	0.27***	5.79		
	Femininity	0.04	1.14		
Function	Activeness	0.02	0.64	0.18	3.43**
	Boldness	-0.05	-1.28		
	Chic	0.07	1.15		
	Femininity	0.13**	2.77		
External	Activeness	0.13**	2.59	0.14	2.03*
	Boldness	-0.02	-0.35		
	Chic	-0.12	-1.61		
	Femininity	0.07	1.07		
Expression	Activeness	0.09**	2.04	0.23	5.66**
	Boldness	-0.15**	-2.99		
	Chic	0.12*	1.82		
	Femininity	0.14**	2.63		

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

Table 6. ANOVA of self-image and clothing style preferences

Clothing style preferences Self-image	Elegant style		Casual style		Sexy style		Classical style		F
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Activeness	3.39	.81	3.52	.81	3.82	.73	3.29	.83	2.82*
	B		AB		A		C		
Boldness	2.67	.75	2.63	.78	3.78	.91	2.54	.71	13.03***
	B		B		A		B		
Chic	3.29	.56	3.16	.59	3.56	.91	3.33	.62	3.36*
	AB		B		A		A		
Femininity	3.31	.68	3.20	.71	3.45	.73	3.21	.64	1.20

* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

Note: M=mean, SD=standard deviation, A, B, C=significant mean difference(LSD-test result)

femininity in functional factors, activeness in external factors, and boldness and femininity in expressional factors are most influential.

2) Self-image and clothing style preferences

This study examined if there are differences between each self-image of clothing style preferences and the result is shown in <Table 6>.

Active people tend to prefer sexy style rather than elegant or classical style and people who prefer casual style to classical style regard themselves as active person. This shows that if a person regards oneself active prefer bold style or casual style. Bold people tend to prefer sexy style and chic people prefer sexy style and classical style rather than casual style. This means that people who perceive themselves as bold prefer sexy style and people who perceive themselves as chic prefer classical style or elegant style to casual style. This result shows that self-images such as activeness, boldness, and chic differ according to the clothing style preferences.

3. Clothing products evaluation according to clothing attitudes

1) Clothing products evaluation according to clothing attitudes

The <Table 7> shows that the regression analysis result of the clothing attitudes has on clothing products evaluation. In regression analysis, the mean of the variable applied factor analysis was used numerically.

In sub-factors of the clothing products evaluation, appearance factors are influenced by fashionability and aesthetics and functional factors are influenced by practicality. Functional factors are influenced by practicality which prioritizes comfort, economical efficiency, and ease of managing. Aesthetics and practicality have influences on expressional factors and their influences are .26 and .22. This shows that aesthetics that attach great importance to the beauty and harmony of clothing and practicality which values comfort, economical efficiency, and easiness of managing have influences on expressional factors of clothing product evaluation. Concluding from results above, the clothing products evaluation influenced by clothing attitudes and aesthetics in appearance factors, practicality in functional factors, aesthetics in expressional factors were shown to be the most influential factors.

2) Clothing attitudes and clothing style preferences

To examine if there are any differences between clothing attitudes of each preferred clothing style, ANOVA is applied and the result is shown in <Table 8>. fashionability tends to prefer sexy style to casual or classical style and

Table 7. Regression analysis of clothing attitudes and clothing products evaluation

Dependent variable (Clothing products evaluation)	Independent variable (Clothing Attitudes)	β	t	R^2	F
Appearance	Fashionability	0.08**	2.00	0.45	24.22***
	Aesthetics	0.26***	6.55		
	Status symbolism	-0.03	-0.93		
	Practicality	0.05	1.41		
Function	Fashionability	0.05	-0.96	0.31	10.34***
	Aesthetics	0.04	0.68		
	Status symbolism	0.03	0.73		
	Practicality	0.30***	6.19		
External	Fashionability	0.05	0.74	0.36	14.76***
	Aesthetics	0.10	1.55		
	Status symbolism	-0.09	-1.55		
	Practicality	0.44	6.95		
Expression	Fashionability	0.05	0.94	0.38	16.77***
	Aesthetics	0.26***	4.58		
	Status symbolism	0.01	0.26		
	Practicality	0.22***	4.01		

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

Table 8. ANOVA of clothing attitudes and clothing style preferences

Clothing style preferences Clothing attitudes	Elegant style		Casual style		Sexy style		Classical style		F
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Fashionability	2.99	.71	2.88	.72	3.36	.93	2.79	.75	3.58*
	AB		B		A		B		
Aesthetics	3.75	.61	3.52	.71	3.93	.69	3.50	.74	4.48**
	A		B		A		B		
Status symbolism	3.07	.70	2.89	.70	3.51	.67	3.16	.63	6.62***
	B		C		A		AB		
Practicality	3.26	.63	3.27	.58	3.21	.36	3.23	.59	.17

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note: M=mean, SD=standard deviation, A, B, C=significant mean difference(LSD-test result)

elegant style is more preferred rather than classical style. This result shows that trendier type prefers sexy style more. People with higher scores for aesthetics prefer elegant or sexy style. Status symbolism types are least likely to prefer casual style and people who prefer sexy style have higher scores on Status symbolism than those who prefer elegant styles. This result shows that factors of clothing attitudes, fashionability, aesthetics, and status symbolism differ according to the preferred clothing style.

V. Conclusion

This study is to know what self-images and clothing attitudes female adults have and analyze the clothing products evaluation with its result. The result of the study is as following.

First, the factors are analyzed to self-image, clothing attitude and clothing products evaluation. The result shows that self-image can be divided into four factors: activeness, boldness, chic and femininity. Clothing attitudes are divided into categories of fashionability, aesthetics, status symbolism and practicality. The clothing products evaluation is showing multi-dimensional characters as it is divided into four factors of appearance's, functional, external and expressio-nal factors. According to the distribution of scores in clothing style preferences, the most preferred style is the casual style followed by elegant style, classical style and bold style. This shows that clothing style preferences and self-image share the same order.

Secondly, The clothing products evaluation is influenced

by self-image and particularly chic in appearance's factor, femininity in functional factor, activeness in external factor, and femininity in expressional factor are shown to be the most influential factors.

Thirdly, The clothing products evaluation is influenced by clothing attitudes and aesthetics in appearance's factor, practicality in functional factor, aesthetics in expressional factor are shown to be the most influential factors.

In this results, the fact that evaluative criteria of clothing products and clothing style preferences show similar responses to self-image and clothing attitudes of consumers confirms them as important causes that influence the clothing products evaluation.

As factors like senses and images are becoming more important, self-image and clothing attitudes can work as effective variables in sub-dividing the markets. It will be possible to establish more efficient marketing strategy when target market is subdivided according to consumers' self-image and clothing attitudes and the consumers' clothing products evaluation are understood and reinforced.

Finally, in this study, the sample is taken from women from age 20 to 35, there are limitations in expanding the result of this study. Therefore, succeeding study needs to include groups of consumers with various population characters by expanding the age group of the sample. Although this study limited self-image to real self-image only, studies on the clothing products evaluation depending on ideal self-image and occasional self-image are thought to be necessary.

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