

## Relationship of Parenting Style and Perceived Value of Characterized Children's Fashion Products

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### Abstract

In the children's market, characters are applied to products to stimulate children to buy a product directly or to implore their parents to buy it for them. To sell characterized products, marketers consider both parents and children. This research was designed to identify which parenting style factors affect the evaluation of characterized children's fashion products and to test how parenting style affects the evaluation of value importance of characterized children's fashion products. The parenting style factors studied were first categorized as communication, children's social acceptance, educational involvement, and media exposure. Responses from 259 parents residing in Woodbury, MN, and Ellicott City, MD, were used for data analysis. A factor analysis and canonical correlation analysis were conducted. Parents with high "Susceptibility to child peer pressure" attached importance to "Social Value" when buying characterized products. On the other hand, parents who were highly involved in their child's life and frequently intervened in their "Child's TV-viewing" attached importance to educational value. Educational value was a unique contributor to the evaluation of characterized products as compared to other fashion products. Marketers can therefore leverage both the social and educational value of characterized products.

**Key words** : Character, Parents, Parenting Style, Value, Children's Product

### I. Introduction

Many adults have experienced buying a characterized product for a child. The children's fashion product market covers a meaningful because

portion of the characterized product market, because characterization is typically applied to the children's market.<sup>1)</sup> Most researchers who study characterized products have an interest in characterization as it applies to apparel, and have

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focused their attention on issues related to design development and the expression of animation.<sup>2)</sup> However, there is a lack of research on consumer buying behavior as it relates to characterized products, as well as on the variables that shape buying behavior of both parents and children. Research related to characterized products, in particular, usually focuses on the children's point of view. When children want to buy characterized fashion products, they often focus on the character itself but not on the quality, the price, or the design of the product.<sup>3)</sup>

This research studied parents' responses to children's requests and have questioned which value of characterized children's fashion products was important. Parents' response to, and their perceived value of, a product may differ according to parental characteristics or attitude.<sup>4)</sup> Parenting style is a pattern of attitudes toward a child while raising their children. This research studied parents as important influencers or buyers of characterized children's fashion products. It was designed to identify which parenting style-related factors affect the evaluation of characterized children's fashion products and to test how the domains of parenting style affect the evaluation of value importance of characterized children's fashion products. The domains of parenting style studied were categorized as communication, children's social acceptance, educational involvement, and media exposure.

## II. Review of literature

### 1. Characterized Children's Fashion Products

Character merchandising was defined by the

WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization) as "the adaptation or secondary exploitation, by the creator of a fictional character or by a real person or by one or several authorized third parties, of the essential personality features (such as the name, image or appearance) of a character in relation to various goods and/or services with a view to creating in prospective customers a desire to acquire those goods and/or to use those services because of the customers' affinity with that character."<sup>5)</sup> Similarly, Mintel<sup>6)</sup> defined character merchandising as the use of popular characters from the entertainment world to promote the sale of consumer goods, including those lines of merchandise which have been especially created to bear the name and image of the character. Lee and Chun<sup>7)</sup> noted that characterized fashion items provide a stimulus to imagination and an aesthetic sense that evoked both possessive feelings and personality. Indeed, adding a character to a product is an effective marketing tool used by manufacturers either to entice children to buy their product directly or to implore their parents to buy it.<sup>8)</sup>

The characterized product market continually expanded until the 2008 recession, after which it declined in overall market size; it reported that sales of licensed merchandise in the U.S. were around \$88.8 billion in 2010.<sup>9)</sup> According to a survey conducted by Mintel with adults (N=2000), the majority (57%) surveyed said that they bought characterized merchandise in 2010. Fashion items including apparel, accessories, and footwear comprise about 18% of the characterized product market.<sup>10)</sup> Among apparel items, T-shirts and sweatshirts most often feature characters. According to Mintel's "Character merchandising -US " report<sup>11)</sup>, the main users of characterized products are

6–11-year-old kids, and older children have the greatest affinity for characterized merchandise, as they were more willing to use products with a character on it, collect character toys, and wanted character toys and clothing that their friends had. Parents of children aged 6–8 were also more likely than parents of children aged 9–11 to say their children like clothing with cartoon characters or images.<sup>12)</sup>

Children make their purchasing decisions based on familiarity, rather than on product information. If they see a character on the package as a sign of familiarity, children are reassured that the item is right for them.<sup>13)</sup>

In America, children's influence in the shopping arena has continued to grow over the past 20 years.<sup>14)</sup> Some parents have loosened their control and let their children make decisions about many household products.<sup>15)</sup> Much research that studies the children's fashion market or characterized product market, focused on children's buying behavior. Because a character is an important stimulus in children's decision making, marketers are pushed to adapt characters from movies, TV shows, and games for use on their products.

Even though children like characterized fashion products, they cannot buy the products without parents' permission most of the time because parents still maintain control of financial resources and decide what to buy for children. In a study on the process of buying children's clothing, only 3% of participating parents do not interfere when their child buys clothing, while 80% of parents choose their child's clothing.<sup>16)</sup> In other words, the users of children's characterized fashion products are children, but the buyers are parents. Therefore, the parents, who are empowered to buy characterized fashion products, should be considered as

research subjects. Because the main users of characterized fashion products are children aged 6–11, the subjects of this research were determined to be parents who are raising at least one more elementary student.

## 2. Parenting Style in Parents' Buying Decision Making

Most researchers cited Diana Baumrind's concept of parenting style to describe broad parental situation.<sup>17)</sup> She identified that the construct of parenting style is used to capture normal variations in parents' efforts to control and socialize their children. A parenting style is an activity construct that includes many specific behaviors to influence child outcomes.<sup>18)</sup> Darling and Steinberg defined a parenting style as a pattern of attitudes toward a child that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, created an emotional climate in parents' behaviors.<sup>19)</sup> Parenting style captures two important elements of parenting: parental responsiveness and parental demandingness.<sup>20)</sup> Based on a high or low score on parental demandingness and responsiveness, a typology of four parenting styles was created: indulgent, authoritarian, authoritative, and uninvolved. Each of these parenting styles reflects different patterns of parental values, practices, and behaviors.<sup>21)</sup>

Parenting style has been considered an important influence factor on child development. Carlson and Grossbart<sup>22)</sup> suggested that parenting styles are very important forces in shaping a child's perceptions, values, and lifestyle, and are therefore important in the socialization of children's purchasing. They suggested that authoritative parents might restrict the economic and consumer knowledge of their

children, while permissive parents encourage early consumerism, believing an informed choice comes from experience. Carlson and Grossbart<sup>23)</sup> found that media exposure, communication, and socialization are varied by parenting style. Steinberg and Lamborn suggested that parent's educational involvement varied according to parenting style.<sup>24)</sup> In summary, parenting style could be differently revealed by communication, socialization, media exposure, and education. In light of the research mentioned above, the related domains of parenting style in buying characterized children's fashion products were tested in relation to four aspects: communication, children's social acceptance, educational involvement, and media exposure.

#### 1) Communication with parents in buying situation

Before baby boomer generation, most parents were authoritarian in communication, making purchase decisions for their children and buying products they thought best, while baby boomers and subsequent parents tend to be permissive and give their children purchase choices intended to educate their consumer decision-making abilities.<sup>25)</sup> For example, Darian<sup>26)</sup> found that parents wanted their child to actively communicate in the clothing buying process for several reasons, including a desire to make their child happy, a belief that their child would know peer reactions better, a desire to reduce the chance of having to return items, and a desire to develop their child's consumer skills. In terms of parent-child communication, children's purchase influence attempts increased until early elementary school and started to decline in late elementary school. However, with increasing age, children were more practically involved in the purchase decision-making

process, which often resulted in a product purchase.<sup>27)</sup>

#### 2) Interest in child's social acceptance

Parents' perception regarding children's use of clothing evaluative criteria is associated with parent socialization variables; for example, parents' emphasis on brand name and parents' emphasis on peer influence.<sup>28)</sup> Because peer pressure has been one of the significant influences on adolescence social acceptance<sup>29)</sup>, parents have an interest in peer influence. Peer pressure starts as early as 6 years old<sup>30)</sup>, and plays an increasingly important and sophisticated role for ages 8-12 because children in this age group develop a strong commitment to their peer group.<sup>31)</sup> For instance, Peer-to-peer (P2P) marketing using children has been adopted by children's product marketers as one of the most effective marketing strategies.<sup>32)</sup> The subjects of this research are the parents of elementary students. Therefore, the parental attitude toward children's social acceptance was assumed to be one of the most important influence factors of parenting style.

#### 3) Educational involvement

Many researchers studied the relationship between parenting style and educational involvement. Among adolescents' parents, more authoritative parents were found to demonstrate more intrinsic motivation in their children's academic pursuits<sup>33)</sup>, and are more expected to be involved in their children's education.<sup>34)</sup> Parental educational involvement is much more likely to promote adolescent school success. Authoritative parenting which parents show high acceptance, supervision, and psychological autonomy granting leads to better adolescent

school performance and stronger school engagement.<sup>35)</sup>

The Mintel report suggested that parents are positive toward characters used for educational purposes; for example, they approve of characterized T-shirts for good messages, characterized pajamas for good sleep habits, and characterized backpacks for good school image.<sup>36)</sup> Based on the report "The Worldwide Market for Edutainment Toys"<sup>37)</sup>, parents show a preference for children's products that have some educational value, and the edutainment market is one a fast-growing market. The report mentioned that the worldwide market for edutainment toys reached \$2.1 billion in 2006 and was predicted to reach \$7 billion by 2011. In other words, the educational value of characterized products has been increased. If parents are more involved in child education, they may look for more educational utility or message when they buy characterized products. However, the research related to parental educational involvement on children's product buying is seldom found.

#### 4) Media exposure

Children's television product requests and parents' restriction on television viewing were significantly related to parents' perception regarding children's use of evaluative criteria.<sup>38)</sup> For instance, the more frequently children asked for products that they saw on television, the more conscious children were reported to be of brand, color, peers, and style. However, those who frequently requested television products were reported as being less conscious of price; this finding may be because prices are hardly mentioned in advertising to children<sup>39)</sup>, or they may not realize the price of the product as a limiting factor for consumption. Parents tended

to undervalue TV advertising's influence on their children, but parents' conformity was a significant predictor of children's attitude toward TV advertising.<sup>40)</sup> Advertising is positively and directly related to children's purchase requests and materialism.<sup>41)</sup> Parents' active advertising mediation and concept-oriented consumer communication were very effective in reducing the purchase request or materialism.<sup>42)</sup> The study indicated that a high level of parental conformity was linked to the number of brands children claimed to possess. Parents who restricted television viewing more yielded less to their child's purchase request.<sup>43)</sup>

### 3. Value of Characterized Children's Fashion Products

Based on a previous research, parents' evaluation of children's clothing can be different by parenting attitudes.<sup>44)</sup> When parents buy a cloth for their kids, they put different importance on functional value and conformity by different parenting attitudes.<sup>45)</sup> At the beginning of studies of product value, the most common definition of value is the relationship between quality and price.<sup>46)</sup> For example, Zeithmal defined perceived value as the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given.<sup>47)</sup> However, Bolton and Drew suggested that other dimensions for evaluation were required because the trade-off between quality and price would be too narrow.<sup>48)</sup> Several researchers, who agreed their suggestion, studied more sophisticated measures for understanding how consumers value products and services and identified new dimensions of value. Holbrook and Hirschman<sup>49)</sup> and Barbin et al.<sup>50)</sup> suggested that the symbolic, hedonic, and aesthetic aspects of the consumption process should be

considered in addition to the utilitarian value of a product. Sweeney and Soutar put these various dimensions together and developed a 19-item measure, the PERVAL (performance/valuation), which can be used to assess customer's perception of product value.<sup>51)</sup> They suggested that the PERVAL was very reliable and helpful in assessing attitude and behavior in both a pre-purchase situation and post-purchase situation. They identified four dimensions of consumer perceived value: emotional value, social value, and two functional values. The emotional value was identified as 'the utility derived from the feelings or affective states that a product generates.' Social value was defined as 'the utility derived from the product's ability to enhance social self-concept.' The two functional values were categorized as quality/performance and price/value for money. Price/value for money was explained as 'the utility derived from the product due to the reduction of its perceived short-term and longer-term costs.' The other performance/quality value was described as the utility derived from the perceived quality and expected performance of the product. Even though the PERVAL was a synthesis of previous researches, the PERVAL was developed for general durable products. Therefore, there is a limit to its ability to explain characterized children's fashion products. The characterized children's fashion products have uniqueness on product evaluation by two aspects, children's fashion and character. Related to the value of children's fashion products, Lee and Kim investigated three factors of infant and children's wear buyer's value: mental achievement value, social achievement value, and pleasure value.<sup>52)</sup> Related to the value of character, the educational value was expected to be one of the evaluation

criteria because parents buy a characterized product containing an educational message to develop a good habit (e.g., pajamas) or a good image of school life (e.g., backpack, lunchbox).<sup>53)</sup> The characterized products contain messages and symbols associated with the featured character, and the uniqueness of the characterized product mostly comes from the messages and symbols. After considering the above concepts, the value of characterized children's fashion products was identified as the overall assessment of the utility of the products based on parents' perceptions of what is received and what is given. It was categorized into five dimensions: fashion value, social value, educational value, quality, and economic value.

### III. Methodology

The purpose of this study are (1) To identify which parenting style-related factors affect the evaluation of characterized children's fashion products and (2) To test how parenting style factors affect the evaluation of value importance of characterized children's fashion products.

The parenting style was operationalized according to five related variables: two communication aspects(child-centered decision making and parent-centered decision making), social acceptance, educational involvement, and media exposure. The value of the characterized children's fashion products was specified as five value of fashion value, social value, educational value, quality, and economic value.

#### 1. Measures

Due to the exploratory nature with a few previous studies, the existing scale was adapted

from the previous studies. In order to assess communication influences, the parent-child consumer communication scale tested by Buijzen and Valkenburg<sup>54)</sup> was used. For the scale of socialization acceptance, Mintel's attitudes towards characterized merchandising scale was adopted and refined. To assess educational involvement into valuation of characterized product, the educational involvement scale was adopted from PICES (Parent Involvement in Children Education Scale).<sup>55)</sup> A media exposure scale was adopted from the Television Mediation Scale developed by Valkenburg & et al.<sup>56)</sup>

The communication in general product purchasing was identified with child-centered or parent-centered decision-making. The social acceptance was justified as parent's susceptibility to child peer pressure in characterized product purchasing. The educational involvement was identified with involvement in child's life. The media exposure was specified with TV-viewing intervention.

The value was categorized into five dimensions: fashion value, social value, educational value, quality, and economic value. The fashion value was operationalized with color, design, and fashion. The social value were adopted and simplified from the social value dimension of PERVAL. The measure of social value contains the questions about popularity among my child's friends and helping my child to feel accepted. The questions related to educational value in the Mintel study of parents' attitude toward characterized product were partially adopted and adjusted to this research. The criteria of educational values include age appropriateness, a positive image of the character, improving my child's creativity, and developing good habits. The quality/performance and price/value for money in PERVAL was

modified and divided as quality value and economic value. Overall perceived quality of apparel product was predicted by durability, consistent quality, material quality, and safety regulation. The four criteria of economic value were value for the money, not expensive, easy care, and comfort. In all cases, a 5-point Likert scale was employed.

## 2. Samples & Data Collection

This research adopted a judgmental sampling technique in convenient. The 500 questionnaires were distributed to children's parents at elementary schools in Woodbury, MN, and Ellicott City, MD, from Feb. 01, 2012 to Mar. 30, 2012. The population and living environment of the two cities are similar. The populations of two cities are about 63,000.<sup>57)</sup> Both cities have well-established education systems and have been ranked as one of "20 Best Places to Live in the United States" by Money Magazine.<sup>58)</sup> The participants who have an elementary student in their house were judged to be representative. Parents were asked to complete the questionnaire for the youngest elementary student in their house. The finished questionnaires were sealed in an enclosed envelope and returned to researchers. A total of 259 questionnaires, 209 from Woodbury and 50 from Ellicott City, were used for data analysis. The response rate was 51.8%.

A majority of the respondents were female; that is, mothers (93.4%). Slightly more than half of the respondents were between the ages of 21 and 40 (55.4%). With respect to ethnicity, 73.9% were Caucasian. Household income of the respondents was normally distributed, falling within the median of the category at the \$90,000-\$11,9999 range. About 11.2% of the

respondents had one child; about 11.2% of the sample had two children. Additionally, 64% were employed outside the home.

### 3. Data Analysis & Results

Three different item analysis approaches were undertaken to assure unidimensionality within each factor. First, descriptive statistics were analyzed to reveal problems with individual scale items that could complicate or temper further analysis. Items with low variances (i.e., high kurtosis) or skewed distributions were identified at this stage. Second, exploratory factor analysis results for both the 29 item set as a whole and for each of the 10 factors independently were then reviewed. Items cross-loading on two or more factors were called into question, as were those with low item-total correlations. As a final step, the sample was divided into two subsamples, calibration sample ( $n = 130$ ) and validation sample ( $n = 129$ ), via random sample selection. In each sub-sample, the items were factor analyzed. The factor solutions from the validation sample were deemed equivalent to the ones from the calibration sample. Results from each of the three item analysis techniques were considered collectively in reaching a decision regarding the final measurement items shown in <Table 1> and <Table 2>.

With respect to parenting behavior, the items were first factor analyzed to assess their dimensionality and measurement properties. Cronbach's alpha scores were calculated in order to check the internal consistency and reliability for each scale. Given that a Cronbach's alpha of .60 or better is desired for any measurement scale<sup>59</sup>, all scales were stable: (a) TV-Viewing Intervention ( $\alpha = .82$ ): 2 items; (b) Involvement in Child's Life ( $\alpha = .62$ ): 4 items; (c) Child-Centered Decision-Making in General

Product Purchasing ( $\alpha = .62$ ): 2 items; (d) Parent-Centered Decision-Making in General Product Purchasing ( $\alpha = .72$ ): 3 items; and (e) Susceptibility to Child Peer Pressure in Characterized Product Purchasing ( $\alpha = .80$ ): 3 items<see Table 1>.

Similarly, the internal consistency and reliability of parents' perceived importance of valuation criteria used to evaluate characterized children's fashion products was examined for each factor: (a) Quality Value ( $\alpha = .83$ ): 4 items (e.g., consistent quality, durability); (b) Fashion Value ( $\alpha = .80$ ): 3 items (e.g., fashion trend, design); (c) Educational Value ( $\alpha = .68$ ): 4 items (e.g., improving my child's creativity); (d) Social Value ( $\alpha = .85$ ): 2 items (e.g., helping my child feel accepted); and (e) Economic Value ( $\alpha = .62$ ): 4 items (e.g., value for the money, comfort, easy care)<see Table 2>.

A canonical correlation analysis was conducted because it is the appropriate statistical technique for determining the relationship between multiple dependent and multiple independent variables. This research followed a standard procedure recommended for social scientists (Sherry and Hansen, 2005).<sup>60</sup> Canonical correlation analysis results in a number of pairs of linear combinations known as canonical functions. The maximum number of canonical functions derived is the smaller of the number of independent or dependent variables. Input to the canonical correlation procedure consisted of the factor scores data of five social and educational factors (independent variables) and five valuation factors (dependent variables). Hence, the maximum number of canonical functions derived is five.



<Table 1> Factor analysis: Independent variables

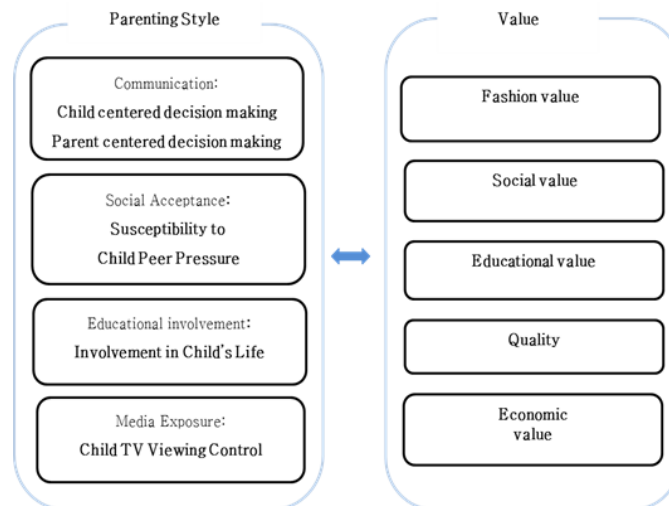
Factor/ Items <sup>a</sup>	Factor Loading	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Eigen value	% of Variance
TV-Viewing Intervention		.82	1.47	10.51
How often do you explain the motives of TV characters?	.90			
How often try to help your child understand what s/he sees on TV?	.89			
Involvement in Child's Life		.62	1.65	11.77
How often do you create opportunities to get to know your child's friends?	.81			
How often do you attend parent meetings at school?	.71			
How often do you know what is popular among your child's friends?	.66			
How often do you try to provide learning opportunities for your child?	.46			
Child-Centered Decision-Making in General Product Purchasing		.62	1.28	9.16
How often do you let your child decide for him/herself how to spend his/her own money?	.86			
How often do you believe that the child will be more satisfied if s/he gets to decide what to buy for him/herself?	.82			
Parent-Centered Decision-Making in General Product Purchasing		.72	2.09	14.94
How often do you tell your child not to argue with you when you say no to their purchase request?	.87			
How often do you tell your child that you expect him/her to accept your decisions about product purchases?	.86			
How often do you tell your child that you know which products are best for him/her?	.64			
Parent's Susceptibility to Child Peer Pressure in Characterized Product Purchasing		.80	2.87	20.52
How often do you think that your child wants a characterized product to show to their friends?	.89			
How often do you think that your child wants a characterized product because his/her friends have it?	.88			
How often do you think that a characterized product is helpful to your child in making friends?	.74			

<sup>a</sup> Anchored with 5-point Likert-type scale descriptors, from 1 = "never" to 5 = "always."

<Table 2> Factor analysis: Dependent variables

Factor/Items <sup>a</sup>	Factor Loading	Cronbach's α	Eigen value	% of Variance
Quality Value		.83	4.19	24.65
Durability	.89			
Consistent quality	.89			
Material quality	.87			
Safety regulations	.55			
Fashion Value		.80	1.46	8.58
Color	.88			
Design	.86			
Fashion	.57			
Educational Value		.68	2.78	16.33
Age appropriateness	.77			
A positive image of the character	.76			
Improving my child's creativity	.61			
Developing good habits	.60			
Social Value		.85	1.77	10.39
Popularity among my child's friends	.88			
Helping my child to feel accepted	.87			
Economic Value		.62	1.24	7.31
Value for the money	.88			
Not expensive	.71			
Easy care	.52			
Comfort	.51			

<sup>a</sup> Anchored with 5-point Likert-type scale descriptors, from 1 = "Least important" to 5 = "Most important."



<Figure 1> The factors of parenting style and the perceived values of characterized children's fashion products

<Table 3> Tests of canonical dimensions

Function	Canonical <i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Multivariate F</i>	<i>df</i> 1	<i>df</i> 2	<i>p</i>
1	.44	.19	3.51	25	904.21	.000
2	.30	.09	2.04	16	746.07	.009
3	.17	.03	.94	9	596.42	.494
4	.06	.00	.26	4	492.00	.905
5	.03	.00	.17	1	247.00	.679

<Table 4> Canonical solution for parenting style predicting perceived value of characterized children's fashion products (N = 259)

	Function	
	1	2
Quality Value	-.50	-.04
Fashion Value	.05	.45
Educational Value	-.05	.88
Social Value	.88	-.27
Economic Value	-.05	-.15
TV Viewing Intervention	-.12	.40
Involvement in Child's Life	-.36	.62
Child-Centered Decision-Making in General Product Purchasing	.06	-.13
Parent Centered Decision-Making in General Product Purchasing	.03	.25
Susceptibility to Child Peer Pressure in Characterized Product Purchasing	.96	.27

Tests of dimensionality for the canonical correlation analysis, as shown in <Table 3>, indicated that two of the five canonical dimensions were statistically significant at the .05 level. Function 1 had a canonical correlation of .44 between the sets of variables, while for Function 2 the canonical correlation was lower at 0.30.

<Table 4> shows the standardized canonical correlations for the dependent set of variables for the first and second functions. Interestingly,

"Social Value", with a standardized canonical weight of .88, was the most important variable in the dependent set of the first canonical function. "Quality Value", with a weight of -.50, was the second most important variable. The other three valuation criteria had relatively small standardized canonical correlation weights. In the second canonical function, "Educational Value" was the most important variable with a weight of .88; "Fashion Value" was the second most important variable with a weight of .45.

<Table 4> presents the standardized canonical coefficients for the first two functions across both sets of variables. The first canonical function was most strongly influenced by Susceptibility to Child Peer Pressure in Characterized Product Purchasing (.96) whereas the second function was most strongly influenced by Involvement in Child's Life (.62) and TV-Viewing Intervention (.40). Parents with high perceived "child peer pressure" attach more importance to "Social Value" in buying characterized children's fashion products. Parents who perceive peer pressure as an influence on their child attach a high importance to the social benefits of belongingness and popularity a characterized product offers. On the other hand, parents who are highly involved in their child's life and frequently intervene in their child's TV-viewing attach more importance to the educational and fashion value of buying characterized fashion products.

#### IV. Conclusion & Discussion

This research identified which parenting style factors affect the evaluation of characterized children's fashion products. In this study, social acceptance, educational involvement, and child media exposure were effective factors on the evaluation of characterized children's fashion products.

The results of this study support the previous finding of Kim et. al. that the parenting style has influence on parent's perception of children product buying.<sup>61)</sup> Also, the result, assisted by the research by Shim & et al.<sup>62)</sup>, suggested that parents' perception regarding children's use of clothing evaluative criteria is associated with parental socialization variables such as parent's

emphasis on media exposure or peer pressure. Parenting style or parent's educational involvement had not been considered an influence factor in the fashion marketing research field in the U.S. before. Because characterized children's products directly or indirectly contain educational messages or usages, marketers need to be sensitive in educational involvement. The educational value was a unique value of characterized children's fashion products compared to other fashion products. Clothing evaluation was mainly considered with respect to fashion value, quality value, social value, and economic value. The educational value was not acknowledged and discussed in general clothing evaluation value research. The fashion value was usually considered the most critical valuable in the women's apparel evaluation process.<sup>63)</sup>

From this research, parents have a different evaluation when they buy characterized children's fashion products compared to when they buy their own products. Marketers need to consider the parenting style, including parents' social acceptance, educational involvement, and child media exposure as important influence factors. They need to realize the importance of the social and educational value of the products, especially when targeting parents who are sensitive to their child's social and educational life. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, there are some limitations in generalizing these findings. First, the purposed sampling limits the generalization. Second, the underlying factors of parenting style need further studies. The majority of respondents were Caucasian, middle- or upper-class families. For future research, demographic diversity or cultural discrepancies should be considered. This research only observed the relationship between

parenting style and value evaluation. Other influence factors can be studied in the future: for example parents' interpersonal characteristic influence or demographic influences.

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