

General Values and Clothing Behavior of College-going Students

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ABSTRACT Clothing is considered to be one's second skin and interest in clothing is highest during late teens and early twenties. The expression of self through clothing behavior is clearly visible during these years. Behind this expression, one's culture, background and general values play a dominant role. The paper explores the relationship of general values and clothing behavior. The study was carried out on 160 college and university students from two different streams: Home Science and Commerce. Results indicate that students in general place economic value on top and do not show any difference as regards to economic and aesthetic values irrespective of the field they belong. But educational background does make an impact on clothing behavior and this is reflected through their difference in clothing behavior related to economic value and social value. Another interesting finding is that students who give very high importance to general social values exhibit socially influenced behavior through their clothing at a lower level.

INTRODUCTION

Today in this consumer-based society, clothing has become an indispensable part of us. Everyday we spend some amount of time to decide about clothes we wear. And a lot of time goes in decision-making while selecting and purchasing clothes. In all of the activities related to clothing, values act as directive and motivating force in behavior and decision-making. Since values give a direction, one tends to be influenced by the values to which one gives importance and the influential values in ones' personality affects his choice, selection and purchase behavior. Young people are very careful in their appearance management, as during these years they notice and are noticed by their counterparts and exhibit characteristic clothing behavior. Hence, clothing behavior becomes an area of research.

Clothing behavior research, has its roots primarily from the disciplines of psychology, sociology and social psychology. Research has mainly concentrated around two areas of prime focus: one major area of work is where appearance serves as a form of non-verbal communication, which "stimulates" judgmental and behavioral response from others. Se-

cond area is that clothing behavior of a person himself is a function of social milieu, personality and life style (Davis 1984). Specific clothing behavior has been related to specific value orientations and specific needs by Creekmore (1963). According to her, clothing behaviors like management of clothing is related to economic value, experimentation in clothing to exploratory value, status symbol to political value, appearance to aesthetic value, conformity to social values, fashion to political and modesty to religious values.

The importance of various clothing values was investigated and it was found that aesthetic and economic clothing values have more dominant positions in the value configuration of women than any of the other clothing values (Lapitsky 1961). Morganosky (1984) investigated consumer's valuation of clothing and accessory items on the basis of aesthetic and utilitarian qualities.

Research these days has also examined how consumer values in different countries markets influence the shaping of consumer needs to be met via particular products/ brands and how the consumer needs affect subsequent purchase behavior. Roth (1995) supported the presence of a strong linkage between social values and consumer's needs to be fulfilled in country markets that represented different socio-economic status and culture. Thus, it is anticipated that values considered to be important in each country market will be related to the consumer needs to be met through apparel products. Hence, values remain to be the supreme force, though the importance placed

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on different values may differ from person to person in a country depending on his background and so from country to country. Shin and Eastlick's (1998) study found a direct and positive relationship between consumers' values and favorable attitudes towards patronizing shopping malls. They also found social affliction values influenced favorable shopping mall attitude more strongly than self-actualization values.

Few researchers in this decade have tried to make comparisons of clothing purchase behavior of people residing in different countries and cities (Kawabhata and Rabolt 1999). Consumer values play a key role in affecting product attitude and purchase behavior, these values eventually prioritize one's needs which are ultimately fulfilled through purchase of particular consumer products. Consumer preferences for certain products also change over time as their consumption, situation and environment change (Yau 1994).

One of the studies examined the relationship of consumer values, needs and purchase in two Asian consumer markets, China and South Korea. Values have been widely viewed as the outcome of culture and ethnicity of a society and have multi dimensions. Thus, certain types of values may be regarded as more important to consumers in one country market than to those in another country market because of differences in culture and socio-economic conditions (Kin et al. 2002).

Study conducted by Allen (2001) on the impact of human values on product (brand) preference also suggested that values influence product preference directly and indirectly, via prioritizing the importance of tangible attitudes.

In a study titled "Structural equation modeling of value-psychographic trait-clothing purchase behavior: A study on the urban college-goers of India", researchers found that outer-directed values influenced the psychographic traits – fashion-consciousness and innovativeness positively, psychographic traits of fashion-consciousness and innovativeness act as intervening variables between values and clothing purchase behavior (Roy and Goswami 2007).

The literature reviewed does not establish enough insight in the Indian context with regards to the general values influencing clothing behaviour. In the last decade, the consumer

culture has made its inroads in the country and per capita income has also increased. This has led to increase in the purchasing power. Moreover, India represents maximum youth population. Hence, it is justified to explore the general values which this group holds and to know if these bear any relationship with the clothing behavior.

Objectives

The objectives of the research study were to explore the interrelationships between one's general values and clothing behavior during the most versatile stage of human life that is in college years. Since clothes are an outward expression of self, while selecting them one's general values must be playing an important guiding role.

Besides general values affecting clothing behavior, the educational background of college going students also must be affecting their values further influencing their clothing behavior. Hence, the present study was conducted to find out that how the clothing behavior is affected by the values held with students of two entirely different streams. With these considerations, students from two streams that are Commerce and Home Science were taken as respondents to explore the impact of the subject that they study on their value system and finally how their clothing behavior is affected. Commerce students study the subjects like accounting, finance and auditing whereas Home Science students study textiles and clothing and other related subjects. These help in developing skills and knowledge related to that particular field, hence affecting their purchase behavior. Clothing behavior encompasses the entire spectrum related to clothing, that is clothing choice criteria's, clothing interests, selection of clothes, views about clothing, clues collected and imparted from clothing worn, practices followed during purchase and purchase decision, appearance and management.

METHODOLOGY

The study involved 160 respondents, 80 students from Home Science and 80 from Commerce group. The students were from different colleges in Jaipur city doing their graduate and post-graduate courses in respec-

tive fields. Only female students were selected, as they are the potential consumers in the purchase of clothing items. Willingness to fill the questionnaire was taken prior to administering it. Two scales: Value scale and Clothing behavior scale were used for drawing the information. Ojha's Value scale was used, which is designed specially for college students. Its main aim is to measure the six basic interests or motives in personality: Theoretical, Economic, Aesthetic, Social, Political and Religious. This type of classification is based on Spranger's Types of Man. The split half reliability is between 0.76-0.84 for all values.

Most of the research relating values to clothing has used the Lindzey-Allport-Vernon test based on Spranger's six types of man. The purpose of this test is to rank various values in order of their importance to the individual. The six values are theoretical, economical, aesthetic, social, political and religious (Ryan 1965). The detail of the Spranger's six values, their description and relationship with clothing is briefed by Kefgen and Touchie-Specht (1981).

The investigator on the basis of Spranger's six suggested general values and their association with clothing behavior has designed clothing behavior scale. This was based on five point likert type of scale. Initially for each value ten questions were made, five were asked in favorable manner and the rest five in unfavorable manner. Thus, a total of 60 questions was made and were jumbled. To check the validity and reliability a pilot study was done on a sample of 30 students with similar characteristics and respondents were suppose to tick a response from the five options viz., Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely and Never. After this the questions for each value for each respondent were written in a sequence along with their responses, the responses were added and arranged in an ascending order. The top seven and bottom seven questionnaires depicting the respondents scoring highest and the lowest were scrutinized for the scores received on that particular value. The questions receiving the similar scores by those who are highest and lowest on that value were deleted. Same procedure was followed for each value. Finally, the scale consisted of 30 questions and the respondents were asked to indicate the importance of each value item on a five point likert type scale. (Where 1 = never; 5 = always).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results are presented in two parts. First part deals with the classification of Home Science and Commerce students on the basis of General Values and further both the groups are analyzed on the basis of mean, SD and t-test. Second part deals with values related to Clothing Behavior along with the comparative study on the basis of mean, SD and t – test.

General Values

There are six values which all of us hold, they are theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political and religious, though each one of us gives varying importance to these values. Solomon and Rabolt (2004) have also placed values as a base for consumer involvement. According to them, consumer involvement is defined as the consumer's perceived relevance of an object (for example product or brand, advertisement or purchase situation) based on the inherent needs, values and interests of the person.

The values that we place on top influence and shape our lives. Table 1 shows the percentage of Home Science and Commerce group students against the score ranges for all the general values. For discussion only the median score ranges excluding the high and low score ranges (as directed in the manual for administration) and the percentage of students falling in these categories, are taken into consideration as shown in the table. The median score ranges are 32-48 for theoretical value, 32-47 for economic value, 30- 45 for aesthetic value, 34- 49 for social value, 33-48 for political value and 31-46 for religious value. The top three score ranges are merged into one category and the bottom four score ranges into one and the percentages of the students falling into them are shown against the score ranges in the table.

Thus, to rank various values in order of importance among students we can say that Home Science student's scores are higher for theoretical, social, political and religious (89%, 85%, 81% and 65% respectively) values for selected median score ranges than Commerce students (65%, 60%, 65% and 55% respectively) and Commerce students scores are higher for economic value being 70% for selected median score ranges than Home Science students who

Table 1: Classification of home science and commerce student on the basis of general values (N=160)

Score range	Theoretical value		Economic value		Aesthetic value		Social value		Political Value		Religious value		
	H.Sc. group (%)	Com. group (%)	H.Sc. group (%)	Com. group (%)	Score range	H.Sc. group (%)	Com. group (%)	Score range	H.Sc. group (%)	Com. group (%)	Score range	H.Sc. group (%)	Com. group (%)
0-31	3	25	8	5	0-29	20	10	0-33	0-32	8	0-30	30	45
32-35	8	5	18	5	30-35	22	35	34-36	33-36	22	31-34	26	35
36-39	21	15	36-39	10	36-41	48	20	37-45	37-40	40	35-42	35	15
45-48	60	45	40-47	25	42-45	-	15	46-49	41-48	19	43-46	4	5
48-64	8	10	48-64	39	46-61	10	20	50-65	44-63	11	47-75	-	-

score 53% and in the case of aesthetic values both the students stand at a same platform scoring 70% for the selected score range.

Further the comparative study of Home Science and Commerce students was done on the basis of General values using 't' test. Table 2 shows the mean and SD along with calculated t- test value for all the values for both the groups. Here also the mean scores for Home Science group are higher than Commerce group for theoretical, social, political and religious values. And the mean scores for Commerce group are higher than Home Science group for economic and aesthetic values

On viewing the table at a glance, the Home Science students mean score for social value is highest (43.51) just next to this stands economic value (43.40) followed by theoretical, political, aesthetic and religious. For Commerce students, the mean score for economic value is highest (45.65) next stands social values (38.60) followed by theoretical, aesthetic, political and religious.

Further, from the table it is evident that the mean of theoretical value is 41.42 and SD is 5.18 for the Home Science group. In Commerce group, the mean is 38.42 and SD is 8.44. In the 't' test the mean of both groups are compared. The calculated t-value is 2.69, which is greater than the table value (1.96) and found to be significant at five percent level. Thus, difference exists between Home Science and Commerce group with respect to the theoretical value.

From the table it is clear that 't' value for the social, political and religious values is 4.08, 4.29 and 4.41 respectively and these are higher than the table value (1.96) at five percent level of significance. Hence, both the groups differ as regards to theoretical as well as for political, social, and religious values.

The table shows the calculated 't' values for economic and aesthetic values are 1.75 and 0.55 respectively and these are lesser than the table value (1.96) at five percent level of significance. Hence, no difference exists in two groups or in other words both the groups hold economic and aesthetic values at the same level.

Statistically difference exists between both groups for theoretical, political, religious and social general values, but both groups are same as regards to aesthetic and economic

Table 2: Comparative study on the basis of general values of home science and commerce group (N=160)

Sample		Theoretical value	Economic value	Aesthetic value	Social value	Political value	Religious value
Home Science group	Mean	41.42	43.40	36.91	43.51	38.21	32.66
	S.D.	5.18	7.85	6.75	5.52	5.11	6.37
Com. group	Mean	38.42	45.65	37.52	38.60	34.85	30.05
	S.D.	8.44	8.44	7.29	9.41	4.78	7.30
	N	158	158	158	158	158	158
t-test value		2.69	1.75	0.55	4.08	4.29	4.41

general values. Reason can be that both these values are very strongly experienced and expressed in this age group and their manifestation through purchase of commodities can be seen. Aesthetically girls in this age group develop the individualistic taste and clothes become very vital tool in displaying their individualistic characteristics. As regards to economic value there was no difference in both the student groups as they were dependent financially on parents in Indian context. Hence, Home Science and Commerce students place aesthetic and economic general values on the same platform.

Clothing Behavior

In this section the students' clothing behavior is studied. Each one of us has certain general values that we give higher importance and these directly or indirectly affect our behaviors. With the help of questionnaire how the interest for specific values, which shape or influence the clothing behavior in same direction is explored.

Table 3 shows the number of students falling into various categories for all the values related to clothing behavior. On examining the table closely we find that for all the values maximum number of Home Science as well as Commerce students fall in to the scores range

of 16-20 except for social values. Hence, they hold high level of theoretical, economic, aesthetic, political and religious related clothing values. For social value the highest number of (54%) Home Science and (70%) Commerce students fall in the score range of 11-15. Hence, in this age group more students demonstrate median social values related to clothing behavior. One can easily see that in college years where they want to look individualistic rather than to follow people, they exhibit low social value related to clothing behavior. This is a clear indication that the tendency to conform their peer group departs and their concern towards individuality increases.

Thus, students of both the groups do not keep social values related to clothing behavior at a higher place in their personality. Another striking result is in the case of economic value if we add the two higher categories we see that (33+49) 82% of Home Science and (55+20) 75% of Commerce student are economical in their clothing. So students (in the state), by and large, are influenced economically in their clothing behavior. Kawabhata and Rabolt (1999) did a study on comparison of clothing purchase behavior between U.S and Japanese female university students. They found that Japanese students were more economical and U.S students gave high scores to fit, quality, fashion and brand/ designer

Table 3: Classification of home science and commerce student on the basis of values related to specific clothing behavior (N=160)

Status	Score range	Clothing behavior (Theoretical value)%		Clothing behavior (Economic value %)		Clothing behavior (Aesthetic value) %		Clothing behavior (Social value) %		Clothing behavior (Political value) %		Clothing behavior (Religious value) %	
		H.Sc.	Com.	H.Sc.	Com.	H.Sc.	Com.	H.Sc.	Com.	H.Sc.	Com.	H.Sc.	Com.
Lower	5-10	-	20	-	5	4	20	28	10	-	-	15	15
Medium	11-15	42	20	18	20	36	5	54	70	18	15	40	25
High	16-20	54	50	33	55	54	65	18	20	55	65	45	40
Highest	21-25	4	10	49	20	6	10	-	-	27	20	-	20

names. Here in the case of this study the clothing behavior of students is economically governed and earlier the results of general values also show that students keep economic value at a higher platform.

Table 4 shows the mean score received for values related to clothing behavior, in both the groups along with the standard deviation and calculated 't' value. Economic value receives the highest score in the Home Science group (19.47). Political and theoretical value is on the second and third place (17.85 and 16.10). These are followed by aesthetic (15.77), religious (14.65) and social (12.98) values.

In the Commerce group, the scores received for values related to clothing behavior show that political and economical values are more experienced. (Mean being 17.95 and 17.25). Next to these is aesthetic value (16.05). Religious and theoretical value obtained almost (15.75 and 15.85) same marks. Commerce group also obtained least marks (13.40) in the social values like Home Science group.

The calculated "t" value for economic and social related clothing value (4.20 and 1.97) is greater than the table value (1.96 at 0.05 significance level) and so there is significant difference between the economic and social values of Home Science and Commerce group.

When the mean and standard deviation of economic value in Home Science and Commerce group are observed closely they indicate that Home Science group has more concern towards the economics of clothing than Commerce group. The reason of this may be the knowledge of textile and clothing in Home Science course is an integral part of it, which in turn helps the students to understand the utilitarian qualities of textiles and hence helps in building the clothing related economic value more strong. This finding is in contrast to

the findings of Morganosky (1984) who indicated that the female subjects were willing to pay the most for high aesthetic items regardless of utility and least for low aesthetic low utility items. But the findings of Morganosky does not explore the background of his subjects whereas in this study Home Science students scoring higher in economically influenced behavior possess the background and have knowledge and skills of the subject textiles and clothing. Mean and standard deviation for clothing related social values do not show much difference for both the groups. But still Home Science group holds the social values at a lower place than Commerce group, which means they are more conscious of not having similar features in their clothes.

Another striking observation is that both the groups place political value at a higher platform indicating the leadership qualities.

DISCUSSION

After seeing the general values and their placement in one's value configuration and further clothing behavior influenced by these values, an attempt has been made to relate how these values influence and shape our behavior, specifically clothing behavior and then comparisons between both the groups are made. As regards to the general values, Home Science and Commerce students have similar economic and aesthetic value orientation, but they are different in terms of other general values.

When we compare the general values to values related to clothing behavior we see that the mean of economic general values for Commerce group (45.65) is higher than Home Science (43.40) group though statistically there is no difference in both the groups. But

Table 4: Comparison between home science and commerce student on the basis of value related to clothing behavior (N=160)

Sample		Clothing behavior (Theoretical value)	Clothing behavior (Economic value)	Clothing behavior (Aesthetic value)	Clothing behavior (social value)	Clothing behavior (Political value)	Clothing behavior (Religious value)
Home Science group	Mean	16.10	19.47	15.77	12.98	17.85	14.65
	S.D.	2.46	2.63	3.13	2.93	2.99	3.31
Com. group	Mean	15.85	17.25	16.05	13.40	17.95	15.75
	S.D.	4.06	3.93	4.05	2.92	2.34	4.09
	N	158	158	158	158	158	158
t-test value		0.47	4.20	0.48	1.97	0.24	1.87

in the case of economic values related to clothing behavior, the Home Science group mean (19.47) is higher than the Commerce group (17.25) and here statistically both groups are different. Thus, Home Science girls are more economical as reflected through their clothing behavior, especially when it comes to the practice in respect to purchase of clothing though Commerce group girls have higher mean in general economic values. This may be due to the reason that the courses involved in Commerce field may be helpful in building up the general economic value stronger and the curriculum for Home Science students' help them to understand the economics of clothing in a better way.

Statistically, there is no significant difference in both the groups as regards to economic and aesthetic general values but difference does exist in economic values related to clothing behavior in Home Science and Commerce group, which is significant ($t\text{-value}=4.20$, $p=0.05$).

Other very strong differences exist when we relate social general values to social values related to clothing behavior in Home Science and Commerce girls. In the case of Home Science group, the mean of social general values is highest (43.51) and that of social values related to clothing behavior is lowest (12.98). Similar trend is seen in the case of Commerce group as the social general value score is second highest (38.60) and clothing related behavior score is lowest (13.40). Hence, Home Science and Commerce girls may be social in their general value system but when it comes to clothing behavior values, they are more individualistic. At this age when they are in college the desire to look unique is reflected through their clothing and they don't want to conform to the whole group, as confirmation through clothing is a characteristic trait of those whose clothing behavior is influenced by social values. Statistically, the difference exists in clothing related social value in both the groups, this suggests that Home Science students show more individualistic taste through their clothing.

Both the groups show higher mean scores for political value related to clothing behavior; this reflects their intrinsic desire of leadership traits which is reflected in their fashion consciousness. These findings also support the

research findings of Roy and Goswami (2007) who state that fashion-consciousness and innovativeness positively influenced clothing purchase frequency. In the context of frequent clothing purchases of college-goers, values affect behavior indirectly through psychographic traits of fashion-consciousness and innovativeness.

CONCLUSION

To conclude the study, both Home Science and Commerce group place economic and social general values at a higher place in their value configuration. Both the groups show differences for theoretical, social, political and religious general values but both the group show no difference for economic and aesthetic general values.

When clothing behavior values were investigated, both Home Science and Commerce group students reflected no difference regarding all the values except economic and social values. Home Science students clothing behavior seem to be more influenced by economic and social values. Thus, it can be stated that both groups are not different in economic general values but hold differences as regard to clothing related economic value. Further, they are different in terms of social values. Hence, the educational background is making a difference in their clothing behavior values and general values show certain relationship to ones' clothing behavior values.

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