

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF OLDER WOMEN'S
PREFERENCES IN CLOTHING AND THE SELECTION
PROVIDED IN THE RETAIL MARKET

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
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IN THE RETAIL MARKET

By
Suzanne Shipley

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

Submitted to
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Department of Textiles, Clothing, and Related Arts

1961

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ABSTRACT

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF OLDER WOMEN'S PREFERENCES IN CLOTHING AND THE SELECTION PROVIDED IN THE RETAIL MARKET

By Suzanne Shipley

The number of older women in the United States is increasing rapidly and there has been much research concerning their economic and health problems. However, few studies have been conducted regarding their clothing practices.

A questionnaire was developed and administered to one hundred and forty-eight women fifty-five years and over in the Metropolitan Area of Cincinnati in order to determine the clothing practices and preferences of older women. Another questionnaire was administered to twenty-four buyers in stores located in Greater Cincinnati in order to determine what various stores believe older women's preferences to be and how they interpret them in terms of merchandise offered for sale. The women's sample was analyzed on the bases of older and younger age groups and high-income and low-income groups. The buyers' sample was analyzed on the bases of types of stores and socio-economic classes. A comparison was made of women's and buyers' responses to clothing preferences. Older women's interest was measured by the use of an interest scale. The Chi Square test was used to measure significant differences in the above comparisons.

Suzanne Shipley

Older women were found to have an interest in clothing. When asked to rank reasons for selecting a dress, style and fit were considered to be the most important factors. Age appeared to be an important factor, affecting both interest and specific preferences. Income was also an important factor, but not so influential as age. In general, the younger age group (fifty-five to sixty-nine years) and the high-income group (\$4000 and over) tended to be more interested in clothing. Organizational membership and the person with whom the respondent lived were also factors found to be statistically significant. (It was noted that the buyers not only placed little emphasis on clothing for the older age group, but also differed with them concerning specific clothing preferences.)

The interest of the women and the willingness of both women and buyers to cooperate indicated that further investigation in this area could be undertaken. There is much to be learned concerning the clothing orientations of this age group.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Due in large part to the technological, economic, and social changes resulting from the Industrial Revolution, the death rates of most countries sharing Western Civilization have decreased. One important result of this decrease has been the trend for an increasingly large proportion of the population to reach the older age levels. Max Lerner, commenting on America as a civilization, says:

A culture is made up of people living by different clocks, each age group with bundles of habituations formed in a different period, each with different sets of conditionings and different outlooks on the future. The American population trends make it increasingly a nation of aging people, with corresponding attitudes.¹

From 1900 to 1950 the total population of the United States expanded by ninety-eight per cent. During this period the number of persons sixty-five years and over grew by two hundred and ninety-seven per cent.² In 1955 there were twenty-nine million people over fifty-five years of age, an increase of forty-five per cent over 1950. In 1900, the

¹Max Lerner, America as a Civilization (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), p. 614.

²Lynn T. Smith, Ph.D., "The Changing Number and Distribution of the Aged Population," American Geriatrics Society Journal, III, No. 1 (January, 1955), p. 4.

number of persons sixty-five years and over was three million, representing four per cent of the total population. By 1955, this number had grown to fourteen million, representing eight and one-half per cent of the population. The estimate for 1975 is twenty-one million persons sixty-five years and over, ten per cent of the entire society.¹ Thus, the older segment is a rapidly growing portion of our society. This large increase is due to three factors:

. . . the increase in the population aged 65-74, and probably the entire aged population, between 1940 and 1950 is due to three factors to the following degrees: the increased size of the generation caused by the larger number of births in the decade 1875-1884 than in the decade 1865-1874--57 per cent; immigration--23 per cent; and lower mortality rates since 1940 among those aged 55 and over--20 per cent.²

There has been a shift in place of residence for older people. Prior to World War I, the majority of older persons lived in the rural sections of this country. After World War I, however, the importance of old people in the nation's cities began to change radically. This is shown in the chart below.³

¹Lerner, op. cit., pp. 614-15.

²Smith, op. cit., p. 3.

³Ibid., p. 10.

1920 - cities 51.2% national population	
cities 47.4% old population	index 92.6%
1930 - cities 56.2% national population	
cities 53.1% old population	index 94.5%
1940 - cities 56.5% national population	
cities 56.2% old population	index 99.5%
1950 - cities 59.0% national population	
cities 60.5% old population	index 102.5%

As this group has increased in size, and shifted in place of residence, its problems have become more important to our culture and society--a fact reflected in the studies that have been conducted concerning the needs and changes peculiar to the older age group. Interest was first centered on financial and health problems; there is a wealth of material available on old age pensions, social security, relief, and older persons in the labor force. Much information can also be found relating to the physiological changes, to medical and to nutritional problems of this portion of the population. In recent years some attention has also been directed to the psychological, developmental, and group needs of these persons.

The first White House Conference on Aging, held in Washington, D. C., January 9 to 12, 1961, concerned itself mainly with the problems of health, income, and housing. Other topics included education, family life, free-time activities, religion, research, training of professional personnel, and the role of various organizations and levels of government.¹

¹Mary Hawkins, "White House Conference on Aging," Journal of Home Economics, LIII, No. 3 (March, 1961), p. 218.

None of these topics included clothing.

Until the present time, the clothing problems and needs of older persons have received little or no consideration. Those studies which have been done have been isolated attempts. Besides this lack, designers and retailers have practically ignored this age group.

Take the department store. Today it has a department for almost every age bracket from infants through "matrons." But how many have departments for old women? How many designers design clothes for the elderly? The old man can find suitable clothing without much trouble, but the old woman finds little that has taken her figure problems into account, and most of what she does find is dark and dismal. She still has her pride and she wants to wear something cheerful and appropriate.¹

Lane Bryant, a store in New York which specializes in clothes for the larger figure, found older women to be a ready market. "About five years ago, it (Lane Bryant) opened a Junior Plenty shop for chubby and out-sized young people. First thing the store knew, the older women had invaded the youngsters' precincts."²

Perhaps one reason why there has been little attention paid to this older group is because of the low average income.

¹Michael M. Dasco, M.D., "Practical Ways To Be Old and Happy," Life, XLVII, No. 4 (July 27, 1959), p. 89.

²"14-Million Americans Over 65: A Neglected Market?" Business Week (February 4, 1956), p. 86.

The aging, along with the very young, are those who contribute least to the nation's productivity. In an economy as production-rich as this, it may well be that the great contribution of the 65-plus group is to soak up some of that production. How well they can do this depends a good deal on how much income they have.¹

The average income for older families, however, is increasing. This is due largely to developments in the old age and survivors' insurance programs. "Relatively fewer families will receive less than \$1,000, and relatively more will receive \$1,000 to \$2,000 and \$2,000 to \$3,000."² In one study concerning budgets for elderly couples, it was found that out of eight items, clothing accounted for the fourth largest expenditure.³ Although the amount spent for clothing may be smaller than in some other age groups, the item is still a very important one.

Clothing is one of the essentials of life. Not only does it provide protection, but it also influences social relationships of people. "Emerson quotes a lady as saying, even in his day, that a 'sense of being perfectly well dressed gives a feeling of inward tranquillity which Religion is powerless to bestow.'"⁴ Through careful grooming, elderly

¹"The Maybe Market: The Aging," Business Week (November 5, 1955), p. 128.

²Miriam Civic, Income and Resources of Older People (The Conference Board Studies in Business Economics Number Fifty-two. Copyright 1956 by National Conference Board, Inc. Printed in the United States), pp. 28-29.

³Ibid., p. 23.

⁴Lerner, op. cit., p. 649.

people can help to maintain their self-esteem. With the ever increasing number of older women in our society, one can anticipate that their clothing needs and demands will have more and more influence on the type of clothing produced and that more attention will be given to their clothing preferences and desires, both by businessmen and research scientists.

Statement of the Problem

The general purpose of this study is to determine older women's interest and preferences in clothing and to compare their preferences with the selection provided in the retail market. Specific objectives are: (1) to determine what women fifty-five years of age and over desire in their clothing, (2) to determine what a selected group of retail stores believe these desires to be and how they interpret them in terms of merchandise offered for sale, and (3) to determine the influence of age and income upon the preferences and practices of older women. In undertaking this study, the writer made two general assumptions: (1) that due to physical body changes and altered social life, the clothing problems of older women are different from those of younger women, and (2) that older women have an interest in clothing.¹

¹That older women have an interest in clothing was shown in an unpublished Master's thesis by Harriet M. Ebeling, "Some Aspects of the Personal and Social Function of Clothing for the Older Woman," Michigan State University, 1960.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Clothing and fashion have long been important to man. During the Middle Ages and later, sumptuary laws were often necessary to limit the excesses of clothing. Religious reformers have often concerned themselves with what they felt to be unseemly dress. However, only in comparatively recent times has any kind of systematic clothing research been conducted. In 1898, G. Stanley Hall developed a questionnaire to examine the relationship between clothes and the development of the sense of self.¹ During the first three decades of this century, clothing was studied from the psychological viewpoint by Flugel, Dearborn, Allport, Hurlock, and others.² Since then, many studies have been conducted in various fields of clothing: selection, design, maintenance, economics, management, home sewing, market policies, service, durability, health, and comfort. In recent years there has been a shift of emphasis into the social-psychological or socio-economic areas. Articles in the Journal of Home Economics³ which review clothing research

¹Margaret Warning, "Future Explorations in Home Economics - Clothing," Journal of Home Economics, LII, No. 8 (October, 1960), p. 649.

²Ibid., p. 649.

³Karlyne Anspach, "Clothing Research in Home Economics, 1925-58," Journal of Home Economics, LI, No. 9 (November, 1959), pp. 767-70.

of the past thirty-five years, emphasize the importance of the social-psychological and socio-economic areas and state that these fields are becoming increasingly important.

Studies which ignore "fashion" in clothing have ignored the very essence of its being. It is the spiritual core of the clothing world.

This summary picture reveals that clothing-choice provides a means for enactment of woman's role as transmitter of the culture. As choice-maker, her primary problem in clothing is one of taste, and taste in this instance cannot be divorced from fashion. It would seem therefore, that clothing research, if it is to have a worth-while concept in the present social situation, would concern itself with taste and fashion--two very nebulous qualities in a changing world.¹

Although researchers are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of clothing research, and have studied many age and economic groups, very few studies have been done which relate specifically to women fifty-five years of age and over. However, there is information to be gleaned from other sources which contribute to a broader understanding of this age group.

The theories of personality set forth by Adler and Fromm may help to illuminate some of the problems of older people. "For certain theorists the most important single human attribute is the view or perception the individual has of himself . . ."²

¹Ibid., p. 770.

²Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey, Theories of Personality (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.), p. 27.

Adler assumed that man is motivated by social urges. One of Adler's major contributions to personality theory was the concept of the "creative self."

Adler's self is a highly personalized, subjective system which interprets and makes meaningful the experiences of the organism. Moreover, it searches for experiences which will aid in fulfilling the person's unique style of life; if these experiences are not to be found in the world the self tries to create them.¹

Another aspect of Adler's psychology was its emphasis upon the uniqueness of personality. "Adler considered each person to be a unique configuration of motives, traits, interests, and values; every act performed by the person bears the stamp of his own distinctive style of life."² Adler felt that although every man has the same goal, that of superiority, not every man will utilize the same means in seeking to attain this goal. This is partly because of the "creative self." Heredity and environment each give man certain abilities and certain impressions and it is out of these "bricks" that he builds his attitudes toward life.

George Hartmann, in the Journal of Home Economics, discussed the relationship of "self" and clothing:

. . . the use of an article of clothing is simultaneously a source of stimulation to the wearer and the beholders, as well as a reaction on their part to certain physiological needs, social expectancies, and esthetic tensions

¹Ibid., p. 117.

²Ibid., p. 118.

focused in the organism.¹

Clothes are, therefore, valuable (in the larger psychological sense which embraces more than the narrowly economic) only to the degree that they enhance the value and experiences of the persons who wear them or who are otherwise affected by them. In other words, the subjective worth of any article of attire is proportionate to its contribution to some sort of extension or differentiation or enrichment of the self. The self with that piece of clothing must become a better self than it is without; otherwise, the item either makes no vital difference or fails to fulfill its function.²

Fromm speaks of five needs that rise from the condition of man's existence: the need for relatedness, the need for transcendence, the need for rootedness, the need for identity, and the need for a frame of orientation. "The urge for transcendence refers to man's need to rise above his animal nature, to become a creative person instead of remaining a creature."³

In an article published in the Journal of Gerontology, Robert I. Watson stated that: "Psychologic studies of aged psychiatric patients are in the main confined to clinical observations, and research investigation of the personality of nonpsychotic aged individuals is almost non-existent."⁴ Watson adds that: "A person is as old as his self-concept."⁵

¹George W. Hartmann, "Clothing: Personal Problem and Social Issue," Journal of Home Economics, XLI, No. 6 (June, 1949), p. 295.

²Ibid., p. 296.

³Hall and Lindzey, op. cit., p. 128.

⁴Robert I. Watson, "The Personality of the Aged. A Review," Journal of Gerontology, IX, No. 3 (July, 1954), p. 310.

⁵Ibid., p. 312.

In 1958, an experiment was tried at the Napa State Hospital in California:

The initial project covered four sessions at Napa with forty women patients participating. On three successive Fridays in November designers, artists, couturiers, beauty experts, professional models and poise experts instructed two groups of twenty women each. In December a fashion show was held with twenty-seven of the forty present with dresses they had made themselves.

According to an evaluation made by the hospital staff after the first month 80 per cent of the patients participating in the project showed improvement in their actions and 84 per cent looked better. Every participating patient said she felt better and 97 per cent of the participants thought they looked better.¹

Wolff, in speaking of the psychological aspects of aging, says that:

Practice has already demonstrated that a thorough program (for treating geriatric patients) brings about substantial results and should contain most or all of these items:

Emphasis on personal appearance:

- a. Personal hygiene routines.
- b. Availability of colorful and fashionable clothing.
- c. Beauty parlor or barber shop.²

Not long ago a series of articles by persons over sixty-five on the subject of "Faiths for a Complex World" appeared in The American Scholar. Faith was frequently given

¹"Dress Show Aids Mental Patients," New York Times (January 9, 1958).

²Kurt Wolff, The Biological, Sociological and Psychological Aspects of Aging (Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1959), pp. 40-41.

as one of the values for aging. One of the definitions of faith was "belief in one's self."¹

The idea of belief in one's self becomes even more important when one reads Max Lerner's views on aging in the United States:

These are the most conservative years of the life cycle. Instead of bringing political revolution and opening the mind to new influences, the years of disillusion make even more tenacious the hold on what seems so precarious. Property, possessions, status and superiority, prejudices and stereotypes never seem so important as when all else seems to be slipping away.²

How any particular individual will respond is likely to depend more on his whole psychic history than on any category in which he may be placed in a typology. If Americans do not grow old gracefully, it is not because of any failure of awareness of the problem. They try earnestly and self-consciously to meet it, yet it is also a harder task for them. For old age is the time when, as Martin Gumpert put it, "fewer and fewer things are done for the first time, and more and more things are done for the last time"--and American culture is the kind that places its premium on firsts rather than on finalities, and on challenge rather than acceptance.³

Many federal, state, and municipal agencies, as well as other groups, are now concerning themselves with the problems of aging. The first White House Conference on Aging was held

¹Muriel W. Brown, "The Growth of Values in Childhood and Old Age," Journal of Home Economics, LII, No. 6 (June, 1960), p. 411.

²Lerner, op. cit., p. 614.

³Ibid., p. 618.

in Washington, D. C., January 9 to 12, 1961. Public Law 85-908, which provided for this conference, stated:

The Congress hereby finds and declares that the public interest requires the enactment of legislation to formulate recommendations for immediate action in improving and developing programs to permit the country to take advantage of the experience and skills of the older persons in our population, to create conditions which will better enable them to meet their needs, and to further research on aging . . .¹

Senior Citizens of America is an example of a "non-profit, educational, philanthropic, scientific organization" concerned with older persons. Its purpose and activities are stated by one of the executives of the organization:

Senior Citizens of America is a national clearing house for all that concerns the mature citizen It conducts research into problems which concern people in the 2nd half of life We work with Congress, the State Governors, Mayors, and Industry to help improve the community climate for the senior citizen.²

Affiliates with SCA and non-affiliated "Senior Citizen Centers" and "Golden Age Clubs" are becoming more numerous in cities throughout the United States. They help fulfill many of the needs of older people, including that of purposeful activity.

¹"White House Conference on Aging To Be Held in Washington Next Year," Journal of Home Economics, LII, No. 2 (February, 1960), p. 90.

²Personal letter from Ruth E. Russell, In Charge of Affiliates, Senior Citizens of America, March 23, 1961.

In resisting the useless expenditure of energy man's fight with time is his greatest battle. In that battle his emotional life is highly important, the surplus of hope over despair, of love over indifference, of motive over resignation. As Helton points out, it is not a fight for the duration of the body so much as it is a fight for the duration of the capacity for happiness. One can be too busy and too active in the process of maturing to be annoyed by the deteriorations of aging. Purposeful activity up to the limits of physiologic and mental optimum represents the most potent factor in the fight against premature human deterioration.¹

Robert Havighurst also mentioned the need for activity in his discussion of two ways of approaching the problems of aging. He said that there are two general modes of approach to the problems of aging. One is the "Stay Young--Keep Active;" the other is the "Grow Old Gracefully--Rocking Chair" approach. Havighurst added that the middle class tends to belong to the "Stay Young" group; the lower class tends to belong to the "Grow Old Gracefully" group. Men usually follow the "Stay Young" approach to aging; women usually follow the "Grow Old Gracefully" approach to aging.²

Governmental agencies have been concerned with the financial problems of older persons and their place in the labor force.

¹Edward L. Bortz, "Stress and Aging," Geriatrics, X, No. 3 (March, 1955), p. 99.

²Robert J. Havighurst, "Old Age--An American Problem," Journal of Gerontology, IV, No. 4 (October, 1949), p. 304.

In 1950 the Bureau of Employment Security of the U. S. Department of Labor carried on an important study to define the nature and severity of the problems bearing on the employment of older workers There was impressive evidence uncovered which emphasized the value of experience, knowledge, and know-how which only the older workers possess. In machine tool manufacturing, in which a high degree of accuracy is essential, the older employees are the dependable ones. Less restlessness was found among the older than among the younger groups of employees. There was less absenteeism among senior workers.¹

Older persons are turning to government rather than to their families for help. In 1956, there were 2,514,000 aged persons on the relief rolls. The payments that year totaled \$1,677,000,000.² In 1957, more than nine million old-age and survivors' insurance checks were mailed out each month.³ By 1965, officials predict that seven and one-half million retired workers will be drawing monthly pension checks, as well as seven million wives, widows, and others--a total of fourteen and one-half million persons.⁴

¹Edward L. Bortz, "New Goals for Maturity," Journal of Gerontology, IX, No. 1 (January, 1954), p. 72.

²"Why 5,500,000 Americans Get Relief Money," U.S. News and World Report, XLII, No. 16 (April 19, 1957), p. 51.

³Charles I. Schottland, "'Peace of Mind and Self-Respect Into Millions of Homes'--That's Official View of 'Relief,'" U. S. News and World Report, XLII, No. 16 (April 19, 1957), p. 145.

⁴"23 Billions for Pensions--and More To Come," U. S. News and World Report, XLIII, No. 4 (July 26, 1957), p. 123.

The Federal Housing Administration is another federal agency that is aiding older people in terms of public housing. By the end of 1959, there were negotiations for over eighteen thousand dwelling units. Over thirteen thousand public housing units for older people were under development in 114 communities throughout the country.¹

Research and Theory Specifically Related to Clothing

In October, 1959, an article on the clothing needs of physically handicapped homemakers appeared in the Journal of Home Economics.² Seventy physically handicapped women living in the metropolitan area of Washington, D. C., were interviewed. The ages of the women ranged from twenty-one to eighty-two years. Various likes and dislikes, in style and design, were reported. Almost all the women favored moderately full skirts. Stout women preferred either flared skirts or four-gore skirts; women in wheel chairs or those who must slide from one chair to another preferred gathered or pleated skirts. Kimono sleeves were well liked by those who had worn them. Sleeveless dresses and blouses were well liked for hot weather.

¹Flora Y. Hatcher, "Housing Older People," Journal of Home Economics, LII, No. 5 (May, 1960), p. 337.

²Clarice L. Scott, "Clothing Needs of Physically Handicapped Homemakers," Journal of Home Economics, LI, No. 8 (October, 1959), pp. 709-713.

Short sleeves were favored by practically all the homemakers because they were "up and out of the way." Many of the women expressed a preference for an open V style neckline with a collar. Many of the women also favored collarless dresses in hot weather. Front dress openings were definitely the preference of all the women. Slacks and shorts were worn by many of the women, usually for practicality. Knitted cardigans were also frequently worn by the women interviewed.

The results of a study concerning housedresses for the mature figure were reported in the Journal of Home Economics in 1951.¹ The preferences of the women interviewed were low open neckline, tailored or simple collar, side zipper, twenty-seven per cent; neck to hemline opening, twenty-six per cent; neck to waistline opening with side zipper, twenty-six per cent; neck to eight inches below waistline opening, twenty per cent; short elbow length sleeves, sixty per cent; cap sleeves, thirty-six per cent; sleeveless, two per cent; and gored skirts, eighty-seven per cent. " . . . the older women included in the study indicated that they preferred to cover the upper arm for the sake of appearance."²

¹Clara Edaburn, "Functional House Dresses," Journal of Home Economics, XLIII, No. 6 (June, 1951), pp. 423-425.

²Ibid., p. 424.

In the June, 1953, issue of the Journal of Home Economics, the University of Georgia reported the results of a study conducted on the "Changes in Appearance of Women 45 to 65 Years of Age Which Affect Use of Ready-to-Wear Garments and Commercial Patterns."¹ The sample included women from twenty-nine states and Canada. Letters received from women in various parts of the country indicated that:

. . . there seemed to be a real need for an investigation (1) to discover what the problems really are which confront the older woman who is trying to maintain an attractive appearance, (2) to discover whether these problems are the same, with possible accentuation, as those experienced by younger women or whether they really are peculiar to older women, (3) to determine whether the difficulty lies with design and sizing of ready-to-wear garments or commercial patterns, and (4) to discover wherein lie the solutions to various related problems.²

The findings of this study included the following changes in appearance: added weight, thickened waist, heavier upper arm, sagging bust, rounding shoulders, and dowager's hump. This study was to be part of a continuing study, but further results have not been published.³

The added weight mentioned in the previous article

¹Margaret Harris Blair, "Changes in Appearance of Women 45 to 65 Years of Age Which Affect Use of Ready-to-Wear Garments and Commercial Patterns," Journal of Home Economics, XLV, No. 4 (April, 1953), pp. 148-150.

²Ibid., p. 148.

³The author of the article has since retired and the writer was unable to trace her address.

seems to be reflected in the following excerpt from an article in Time:

Last week Dr. Arthur M. Master presented the A.M.A. with revealing data on oldsters aged 65 to 94. The tables were compiled at Manhattan's Mount Sinai Hospital from information on 2,925 men and 2,694 women all over the U.S. . . . Women aged 65-69 average 5 feet 3 inches tall and weigh 141 lbs; those in the upper 80's are an inch shorter and weigh 120 lbs.¹

In 1960, Harriet Ebeling conducted a study concerning "Some Aspects of the Personal and Social Function of Clothing for the Older Woman."² Her sample included both rural and urban women in the state of Michigan. She found that women sixty to seventy-four years were more interested in clothing than women seventy-five years and over, that rural women were more interested in clothing than urban women, and that income and organizational membership also affected interest in clothing. She also discovered that older women desired more money to spend on clothes and would like a wider style selection from which to choose.

Business Week magazine published an article, "14-Million Americans Over 65: A Neglected Market?" in 1956.³ They reported

¹"The Fat and the Lean," Time, LXXIII, No. 25 (June, 22, 1959), p. 54.

²Harriet Ebeling, op. cit.

³"14-Million Americans Over 65: A Neglected Market?" op. cit., pp. 86-87.

that there had been some action in housing and drug lines, but not in others. The retailers reported the following concerning the old age market in clothing:

The elderly woman is less predictable. She dresses conservatively, puts comfort ahead of style, many retailers think . . . "It's the kiss of death to mention age," they say Here and there customers show signs of accepting their own maturity. Walker-Scott Co., in San Diego, successfully promotes its Shelton-Stroller line of dresses styled for older women. One ad saying that these are in stock brings a sell-out in one or two days, the store reports Experts in geriatrics say there's a crying need for clothes specially designed for the old person who has trouble dressing but still wants to look nice. Above all, old people fear being put on the shelf, the experts say. Any merchandiser who can bring them off the shelf should find a welcome.¹

In 1960, Business Week published a similar article.² In it, they quoted Lane Bryant, New York specialty store, as saying that you can't merchandise to this group. Selling must be done on an individual basis. Many stores feel that older women want whatever is the mode. The article mentioned a few stores that feature events that draw older customers, without making a big point of it, such as Rich's in Atlanta and the Emporium in San Francisco.

Lieb, in Outwitting Your Years, spoke of old age and beauty:

¹Ibid., pp. 86-87.

²"How the Old Age Market Looks," Business Week, (February 13, 1960), pp. 72, 77-78.

Everything possible should be done to make old age a thing of beauty. This should include beauty of face and person. It is not only the right, it is the duty of every old person to look the best he or she can. This does not mean that the clothing, hair style, or cosmetic technique of the young must be copied. Old people can be well groomed without being gaudy, stylish without being freakish. Neatness is a morale stimulus to the old, slovenliness is a mental depressent. But hiding age by artificial means is as absurd as it is impossible. Posture, gait, voice, manner, and even opinions register all too clearly. However, no sensible person would deny older women a reasonable amount of nature-tampering if it is done not so much with the idea of hiding age as to bring out certain high lights of feature or character. The art of make-up has had just as much influence in producing a sense of well-being and mental uplift as do color, fine fabrics and good tailoring in a dress.¹

Elizabeth Bowen, in a recent article in Harper's Bazaar, also spoke of beauty and age, but she was referring more to an inner beauty. She said that the mistake is in thinking of Age, rather than ages--each one of which is to be welcomed as bringing its own kind of identity and beauty.

For beauty, once its early dazzle is past, is very very much a matter of identity: ease, poise, the gentle brilliance of individuality in expression, gesture and tone of voice. Youth, real youth, is an ability to be charmed by the world around, to respond to things as they come. That we need not lose.²

An article in Vogue combined the viewpoints of both of the above articles. The author reflected upon the changes

¹Clarence William Lieb, M.A., M.D., Outwitting Your Years (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1949), p. 52.

²Elizabeth Bowen, "The Beauty of Being Your Age," Harper's Bazaar, No. 2993 (April, 1961), p. 89.

that the years had wrought and said that she will not struggle to stay young and "horn" in on her children's activities.

"Just let me stay youthful enough to reach, not backward toward immaturity, but forward toward adaptability to changing mores."¹ The author of the article spoke of a fashion show in which she was asked to model clothes. She did not expect that the gowns she modeled would be of the same design as those worn by the younger women and girls. She did find that the clothes modeled by the older women were of costly, rich fabrics. The design lines were simple; interest was achieved by manipulation of the materials. She related the change in clothing to the change the years bring:

Shouldn't we consciously model our lives on simpler lines, stripping them of nonessentials? Of the fabric of our present circumstances--enriched, perhaps, by costly experience--can't we create a design for living in keeping with our years? The years present added areas of interest. However, to a certain extent, I can choose the things on which I spend my time. I can search more deeply for unsearchable riches, approaching every day a surer realization that intangibles are the only things that can be grasped and held. But I must remember that I can not force my riches on anyone else; that it is the searching and the personal discovery that transmute the find into treasure.²

¹"I'm Glad I'm Sixty," Vogue (February 15, 1959), p. 154.

²Ibid., p. 155.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Instruments

Data for this study were obtained from two sources, women fifty-five years of age and over and buyers in selected retail stores. In each case, a questionnaire was the means of obtaining the desired information.

Questions in the schedule for the women were formulated to ascertain specific preferences in clothing, the degree of clothing interest, and the influence of age and income upon the preferences and practices of these women.¹ The questions were limited in number, since it has been found that elderly women become tired and will not complete a lengthy questionnaire. Questions were so stated that they could be answered by checking a descriptive phrase. Whenever possible, the questions were designed so that not only a positive or negative response, but also the degree of interest could be determined.²

¹See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire.

²Questions 1, 4, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 23 were patterned after similar items in the schedule used by Harriet Ebeling in her study of "Some Aspects of the Personal and Social Function of Clothing for the Older Woman," Michigan State University, 1960. This was done for possible comparative purposes.

The questionnaire was pretested in June, 1960. It was given to a group of sorority alumnae in Delaware, Ohio. They were asked to comment on the clarity of the questions. On the basis of their responses, only one change was made. One of the magazines was eliminated from the list in question two.

Questions in the questionnaire for the buyers were formulated to obtain information concerning type of department and store, size and price range of merchandise, and amount of emphasis placed on clothing for the older woman.¹ The section relating to specific clothing preferences in the women's questionnaire (questions 15A - 15J) was duplicated in the buyers' questionnaire (questions 11A - 11J) so that a comparison might be made between the two groups.

Statistical Techniques

The Chi Square test was used to determine significant differences between the expected frequencies in the samples and the corresponding observed frequencies in the samples. Chi Square was computed by "summing the square of the deviations of the observed from expected frequencies for each cell, divided by the expected frequency for that cell."²

¹See Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire.

²Margaret Jarman Hagood, Statistics for Sociologists (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, Inc., 1941), p. 505.

The formula is:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e}$$

The number of degrees of freedom was computed by multiplying the columns minus one by the rows minus one. This is equal to the number of independent observations on which the test is based.¹ The Chi Square values were then read from a table,² according to the number of degrees of freedom, to determine the probability of the number of times in a hundred that the distribution would be due to chance. Probabilities of 0.01 or less were considered highly significant, probabilities of 0.05 were considered significant, and probabilities of 0.10 were considered as tending toward significance.

Description of the Cincinnati Area

Both of the samples, the women and the buyers, were selected from the Metropolitan Area of Cincinnati which includes Hamilton County, Ohio, and Campbell and Kenton Counties, Kentucky.

On November 18, 1788, Benjamin Stites, with twenty-six men, women, and children, founded a settlement near the mouth of the Little Miami River. The community was called

¹Ibid., p. 400.

²Ibid., p. 904.

Columbia. Shortly after, Losantiville (later renamed Cincinnati) was founded a short distance away, and on January 29, 1789, John Cleves Symmes established the community of North Bend. Despite many hardships, these three communities grew and eventually formed what is today known as Cincinnati. In 1792, General Anthony Wayne and his soldiers routed the area of the Indians and thus ushered in a flood of immigration. During the nineteenth century Cincinnati changed from a backwoods village to a prosperous manufacturing and commercial center of the Midwest. By 1860, it was the sixth largest city in the country. A large portion of the population was composed of German and Irish immigrants who came during the latter part of the nineteenth century. " . . . they brought a devotion to the arts, a willingness to be gracefully tolerant and a progressive spirit that made the city grow and prosper at an unbelievable rate."¹

In 1950, the Metropolitan Area of Cincinnati had a population of 904,402. The 1960 total was 1,071,624, an increase of eighteen and one half per cent over 1950.² The

¹Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, Welcome to Cincinnati.

²U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Advance Reports - General Population Characteristics, Ohio, 1960 Census of Population PC(A2)-37 (Washington, D. C.: Bureau of the Census, 1961), p. 5.

number of persons sixty-five years and over was 102,876. The City of Cincinnati covers 76.80 square miles; the Metropolitan Area covers 730 square miles. The indexes calculated by Lynn T. Smith¹ show that Ohio, and particularly Cincinnati, has more than its share of older persons.

Indexes computed from data assembled from the various reports of the United States Bureau of the Census. If a geographic division or state had exactly the same proportion of the population aged sixty-five and over as it had of the total population of the United States, its index would be exactly 100. A figure of less than 100 indicates the extent to which the aged population is under-represented, and one of more than 100 indicates the extent to which it is over-represented in a given state or division.²

For Ohio, the index in 1930 was 117, the index in 1940 was 115, and in 1950 was 110.³ In 1950, the index for Cincinnati was 123, seventeenth highest in the nation.⁴

Cincinnati has many cultural and educational organizations and institutions, including a symphony orchestra and ten colleges and universities. Located on the Ohio River, it is the "hub" of much of the transportation and communication of the Midwest. The city leads the world in the production of machine tools, playing cards, and soap. It is also a leader

¹Smith, op. cit., pp. 1-14.

²Ibid., p. 8.

³Ibid., p. 7.

⁴Ibid., p. 11.

in a number of other items. In 1959, there were an estimated 1,775 plants with 156,700 employees, and an annual payroll of \$784,000,000. In 1954, there were 1,884 wholesale business establishments with total sales of \$3,118,301,000. In 1958, there were 7,731 retail business establishments with total sales of \$1,138,595,000.¹

Most of the retail stores are located in the downtown area within a short distance of each other. The majority of them are locally owned.

The City Planning Commission made a Space Use Study (of the downtown shopping area) some years ago . . . (they) divided the basin area into a "core" bounded by 4th, Elm, Race and Main and a "frame" extending from the Ohio River, Central Ave., 12th St. and Broadway.

For the total combined area the use changes were startling, indicating a sizeable loss of various kinds of business and a corresponding increase in parking space availability.

The core area itself showed a slight reduction in number of retail establishments but a substantial increase in square footage devoted to retailing.

In other words, the area around the core was business and has changed to a servicing area for the core - mostly in the field of parking.²

Many of these stores now have branches in the six main suburban shopping centers. "The shopping center development

¹Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, Metropolitan Cincinnati.

²Personal letter from William D. Roth, Executive Secretary, Cincinnati Retail Merchants' Association, April 3, 1961.

here (Cincinnati) was slow in starting, probably due to our peculiar topography, and it still has not reached the comparative proportions to downtown as in most large cities."¹ These branches, however, tend to cater to a younger group of customers.

The Sample

During the months of July, August, and early September, 1960, the women and buyers comprising the two samples were contacted and asked to fill out the questionnaires. An effort was made to contact women from as many areas of the city and from as many socio-economic groups as possible. The women's sample included women attending Sunday School classes, churches, two Senior Citizen Centers, and the Methodist Home for the Aged. Personal individual contacts were also made. The questionnaires were all administered by the writer, except for the Methodist Home. In this case the minister and secretary distributed them and the women returned them to a box at the reception desk. There were 148 women in the sample.

The buyers were all contacted individually. When possible, the buyer was asked to complete the questionnaire while the interviewer was present. If this was impossible to do because of business, the buyer was provided with a stamped, addressed envelope and asked to mail the completed schedule to the writer. There were twenty-four buyers in the sample.

¹Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Description of the Women's Sample

The number of women interviewed was 148.¹ These women were divided into two groups: fifty-five to sixty-nine years being considered the younger group, and seventy years and over being considered the older group. Each of these groups was further divided into income groupings of high (\$4000 and over), medium (\$2000 to \$3999), and low (\$1999 and under). Comparisons were made on the basis of age and income. (See Table I for the age distribution of the sample.)

TABLE I
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN BY AGE

AGE	PERCENTAGE
55 - 59	11.7
60 - 64	13.0
65 - 69	21.9
70 - 74	21.2
75 - 79	13.0
80 - 84	16.4
85 and over	2.8

¹Questionnaires were distributed to over 225 women, but because of the age of the respondent or incompleteness of the answers, a number of them had to be discarded. In most of the discarded ones, the women had answered the questions on two of the pages, but failed to complete the third sheet. It was interesting to note that the lower the socio-economic group, the more questionnaires that were not usable.

In the younger age group the largest number (27) was in the low-income grouping. The second largest group (25) fell in the high-income grouping. In the older age group, the largest number was again in the low-income grouping, but here the second largest number was in the medium-income grouping, with very few of the older women in the high-income grouping. (See TABLE II).

TABLE II

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN BY AGE AND INCOME

	Percentage	
Younger Age Group (55 - 69 years)		
High Income	36.8	
Medium Income	16.2	
Low Income	39.7	
No response on income	7.3	
		100.0
Older Age Group (70 years and over)		
High Income	5.1	
Medium Income	14.1	
Low Income	71.8	
No response on income	9.0	
		100.0

Many of the questions were so devised that a degree of frequency and interest could be obtained. These questions

(numbers 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, and 21) had the following possible answers: "often," "sometimes," "seldom," and "never." Each response was weighted arbitrarily as follows: "often," three points; "sometimes," two points; "seldom," one point; "never," zero points; "yes," two points; and "no," one point.

Over half of the women "sometimes" looked at fashion magazines. About one-fourth of the sample looked at magazines "often." The most popular ones were McCall's and Ladies' Home Journal, followed by Vogue and Glamour. Over three-fourths of the women were interested in style changes, but very few attended fashion shows very often. (Some of the women commented that none of the fashions shown were suitable for their age group). About forty per cent of the sample "sometimes" went; one-fourth "never" went to fashion shows.

Over sixty per cent of the women "sometimes" went shopping for clothes. Most of the women went shopping alone and patronized department stores. Very few went to specialty stores or chain stores.

In question eight the women were asked to rank the following reasons for choosing a dress: "how easy it will be to care for," "the price," and "the design and fit." Design and fit were considered to be most important, price was considered the second most important factor, while ease of care

was considered the least important reason.

Sixty-five per cent of the women said they wore half-sizes, twenty-six per cent wore regular sizes, and eight per cent said they could wear junior sizes. Almost forty per cent could "often" find a dress they liked in their size; however, the same number (40%) could find a dress they liked only "sometimes." Most of the women indicated the desire for a wider style selection. A majority of the group seemed to feel that the clothes "sometimes" or "often" suited their age; only nine reported that they "often" made them feel older. Thirty per cent, however, said the clothes they found "sometimes" made them feel older. Approximately this same number "sometimes" refused to go out because they felt they did not have the right clothes to wear. Sixty-five per cent of the women would like to have more money to spend on clothes.

Specific Preferences in Clothing

Very few of these women wore sports clothes. Most of them usually wore a foundation garment, but were evenly divided as to the type they preferred. Hats and sweaters were frequently worn.

Side openings in dresses were preferred by over half of the sample. Dresses with three-quarter length sleeves, and mid-calf length gored skirts were ranked first in preference.

Necklines with and without collars were equally well liked, but in the collarless type, sixty per cent preferred a V-shaped neckline. Both one piece dresses and dresses with matching jackets were popular. Almost seventy per cent of the women liked best a solid color for a dress, but small prints were also very popular. Subdued colors were preferred with navy and light blue heading the list.¹ About one-half of the women liked a pump shoe (closed toe and heel) with a medium heel. (See TABLE III for a percentage distribution of responses).

Comparison of Young - Old Age Groups

The 148 women in the sample were divided into two groups on the basis of age. Those women fifty-five to sixty-nine years of age were considered the younger group; those women seventy years and over were considered the older group. These two groups were then compared to ascertain the effects of relative age on older women's clothing selections and preferences. There were sixty-eight women in the younger age group and seventy-eight women in the older age group.

The majority of women in both groups looked at magazines "sometimes." Quite a variety of fashion magazines were listed. McCall's and Ladies' Home Journal were the most popular in both groups. Vogue was also popular. McCall's and Ladies Home Journal were slightly more popular with the younger women,

¹Other popular colors were: gray, black, pink, beige, and green.

TABLE III

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Question	Response	Percentage*
Frequency of looking at fashion magazines	Often	25.3
	Sometimes	55.5
	Seldom	11.6
	Never	6.8
Magazines frequently looked at	Vogue	28.1
	Harper's Bazaar	3.4
	Glamour	16.4
	McCall's	60.3
	Ladies' Home Journal	52.7
	Sears-Roebuck	13.7
Frequency of attending fashion shows	Often	4.8
	Sometimes	39.0
	Seldom	29.5
	Never	23.3
Degree of interest in style changes	Very much	21.2
	Somewhat	57.5
	Very little	16.4
	Not at all	3.4
Frequency of shopping for clothes	Often	20.5
	Sometimes	60.3
	Seldom	15.8
	Never	1.4
Person with whom shopping is done	Husband	4.1
	Daughter	13.0
	Sister or close relative	8.2
	Friend	14.4
	Alone	60.3
	Son	0.7

TABLE III (Continued)

Question	Response	Percentage*
Type of store at which shopping is done	Department store	92.5
	Women's specialty shop	10.3
	Chain store	4.1
Reasons for buying a dress		
How easy it will be to care for	First	11.6
	Second	16.4
	Third	36.3
The price	First	30.1
	Second	27.4
	Third	14.4
The design and fit	First	49.3
	Second	16.4
	Third	7.5
Number of washable dresses in wardrobe	Many	47.9
	Some	41.1
	Few	7.5
Ease of finding dress in correct size	Often	36.3
	Sometimes	36.3
	Seldom	21.2
	Never	4.1
Size of dress worn	Regular	26.0
	Half-size	65.8
	Junior	8.2
Wider style selection desired	Yes	71.2
	No	23.3

TABLE III (Continued)

Question	Response	Percentage*
Number of organizations to which respondent belongs	None	11.0
	One	17.1
	Two	21.9
	Three	21.2
	Four	11.6
	More than four	14.4
Frequency of refusal to go out because of lack of proper clothes	Often	0.0
	Sometimes	26.7
	Seldom	21.9
	Never	48.6
Frequency of wearing sport clothes	Often	4.1
	Sometimes	7.5
	Seldom	6.8
	Never	76.7
Foundation garment worn	Yes	82.2
	No	15.1
Type of foundation garment worn	All-in-one	43.3
	Other	48.3
Frequency of wearing hats	Often	45.9
	Sometimes	44.5
	Seldom	9.6
	Never	0.0
Frequency of wearing sweaters	Often	24.0
	Sometimes	48.6
	Seldom	14.4
	Never	11.0
Frequency of finding clothes suitable for age	Often	41.1
	Sometimes	45.2
	Seldom	10.3
	Never	1.4

TABLE III (Continued)

Question	Response	Percentage*
Frequency of finding clothes that make respondent feel older	Often	6.2
	Sometimes	30.1
	Seldom	28.8
	Never	25.3
Sewing done for self	Yes	35.6
	No	58.9
Desire more money to spend on clothes	Yes	65.1
	No	31.5
Person with whom respondent is living	Alone	32.9
	Sister	4.1
	Friend	0.7
	Parents	1.4
	Children	10.3
	Husband	26.7
	Brother	2.1
	Old age home	16.4
Does respondent work outside home	Yes	15.1
	No	84.9
<u>Specific Clothing Preferences</u>		
Dress opening	Open to hemline in front	37.7
	Open at side	58.2
	Open at back	8.9
	Open to waist in front	0.7
Sleeve type	Long	2.7
	Three-quarter	57.5
	Short	43.2
	Sleeveless	5.5

TABLE III (Continued)

Question	Response	Percentage*
Skirt type	Pleated	15.8
	Gathered	8.9
	Flared	19.9
	Gored	45.2
	Straight	29.5
Skirt length	To the knee	0.0
	Just below the knee	15.8
	Mid-calf	78.1
	Longer than mid-calf	4.8
Neckline type	With collar	57.5
	Collarless	47.3
Collarless neckline type	High round	7.1
	Medium round	23.2
	V shaped	60.6
	U shaped	6.1
	Square	16.2
	Draped	2.0
Type of garment	Suit	11.6
	One piece dress	58.2
	Dress with matching jacket	42.5
	Skirt and blouse	2.7
Design in fabric (for a dress)	Solid	68.5
	Print	32.9
Fabric design (for a dress)	Small print	83.7
	Large print	4.3
	Plaid	6.5
	Stripe	9.8
	Polka dots	19.6

TABLE III (Continued)

Question	Response	Percentage*
Color (for a dress)	Bright	21.2
	Subdued	76.7
Specific color (for a dress)	Red	4.1
	Pink	13.7
	Yellow	2.7
	White	5.5
	Light blue	28.1
	Violet	4.8
	Beige	11.6
	Brown	8.9
	Green	10.3
	Navy	44.5
	Gray	13.7
	Black	13.7
Shoes - heel height	High heel	5.5
	Medium heel	57.5
	Low heel	8.2
	Flat heel	2.9
	Cuban heel	24.7
	Wedgie	14.4
Shoe style	Pump	47.3
	Laced shoe	26.0
	Sandal	0.7
	Open toe	13.7
	Open toe and heel	19.9

*All percentages, with the exception of those relating to collarless neckline type, fabric design, and type of foundation garment worn, were calculated on the basis of the total number of women in the sample, not the number answering the particular question. The three exceptions noted were calculated on the basis of the number of respondents to the particular question.

while Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, and Glamour found a few more readers in the older group. The largest percentage of women in both groupings "sometimes" attended fashion shows; however, there were more older than younger women who "never" attended these shows. In both groups, most of the women were "somewhat" interested in style changes, although the younger women tended to be a little more interested than the older women.

As a whole, more of the women went shopping "sometimes" for clothes. More younger than older women went shopping "often." In the older group, quite a few "seldom" or "never" shopped. Over half the women in both groups shopped alone, but this tendency was more strongly evidenced in the younger group. A sizeable portion of the older women shopped with a friend, sister, or close relative. The type of store most frequented was in most cases a department store. The women's specialty shop was favored more by the older than by the younger women.

In choosing a dress, style and fit were most important to both groups. For the second most important reason, both groups checked price. Ease of care was considered least important.

Age seemed to have little influence on the number of washable dresses the women had in their wardrobes or how easy it was to find a dress they liked in their size. In both

groups half-sizes were most popular, but a number of the younger women also wore regular and junior sizes. The great majority of all these women wished that the stores carried a wider style selection from which to choose. There were more older women among those who were satisfied with the present selection; however, refusals to go out because of lack of proper clothes seemed to occur more often among the older women than among the younger women. More younger than older women felt that clothing found in the stores did not suit their age and made them feel older. Many more of the younger women wished that they had more money to spend on clothes.

Specific Preferences in Clothing

More younger than older women wore sports clothes. Sweaters, however, were more prevalent among the older group. Hats were also more popular with this group.

In the younger age group, the majority of women very definitely favored dress openings at the side. In the older age group, the preference was evenly divided between openings at the side and to the hemline in front. The younger women seemed to prefer short sleeves while the older women very definitely preferred three-quarter length sleeves, with short sleeves a poor second choice. Gored skirts were preferred by both groups, with a number of younger women indicating an interest in straight skirts. The length of skirt very definitely

preferred by all was mid-calf. Some of the older women liked their skirts longer than mid-calf.

Preference as to whether a dress did or did not have a collar was evenly divided. In fact, many women stated that they had no preference. Among collarless styles of dress, those with V necklines were most popular with all groups of women.

The younger women preferred a dress with matching jacket, while the older women preferred a one-piece dress. The majority of women in both groups preferred solid colors to prints, but if they were to choose among various prints, they would choose a small one. The majority of women preferred subdued colors, although quite a few, particularly in the younger group, liked bright colors. Color choices were fairly widespread, with perhaps more concentration in navy and light blue. The older group particularly liked navy.

Both groups of women favored a medium heel height, but the younger women preferred a pump (closed toe and heel), whereas the older group indicated laced shoes as their preference. (TABLE IV shows a comparison of responses by the two age groups).

TABLE IV
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN'S RESPONSES BY
YOUNGER AND OLDER AGE GROUPS

Question	Response	Younger (Percent)*	Older (Percent)*
Frequency of looking at fashion magazines	Often	25.0	25.6
	Sometimes	55.9	55.1
	Seldom	11.8	11.5
	Never	7.4	6.4
Magazines frequently looked at	Vogue	25.0	30.8
	Harper's Bazaar	2.9	3.8
	Glamour	13.2	19.2
	McCall's	63.2	57.7
	Ladies Home Journal	54.4	51.3
	Sears-Roebuck	17.6	10.3
Frequency of attending fashion shows	Often	2.9	6.4
	Sometimes	41.2	37.2
	Seldom	36.8	23.1
	Never	16.2	29.5
Degree of interest in style changes	Very much	22.1	20.5
	Somewhat	61.8	53.8
	Very little	14.7	17.9
	Not at all	0.0	6.4
Frequency of shopping for clothes	Often	29.4	12.8
	Sometimes	60.3	60.3
	Seldom	10.3	21.8
	Never	0.0	1.3

TABLE IV (Continued)

Question	Response	Younger (Percent) *	Older (Percent) *
Person with whom shopping is done	Husband	2.9	5.1
	Daughter	16.2	10.3
	Sister or close relative	2.9	12.8
	Friend	11.8	16.7
	Alone	66.2	55.1
	Son	0.0	1.3
Type of store at which shopping is done	Department store	95.6	89.7
	Women's specialty shop	8.8	11.5
	Chain store	5.9	2.6
Reasons for buying a dress			
How easy it will be to care for	First	11.8	11.5
	Second	20.6	12.8
	Third	36.8	35.9
The price	First	20.6	38.5
	Second	27.9	26.9
	Third	22.1	7.7
The design and fit	First	51.5	42.3
	Second	16.2	16.7
	Third	4.4	10.3
Number of washable dresses in wardrobe	Many	51.5	44.9
	Some	35.3	46.2
	Few	10.3	5.1
Ease of finding dress in correct size	Often	36.8	35.9
	Sometimes	35.3	37.2
	Seldom	23.5	19.2
	Never	4.4	3.8

TABLE IV (Continued)

Question	Response	Younger (Percent)*	Older (Percent)*
Size of dress worn	Regular	30.9	21.8
	Half-size	58.8	71.8
	Junior	13.2	3.8
Wider style selection desired	Yes	83.8	60.3
	No	13.2	32.1
Number of organizations to which respondent belongs	None	4.4	16.7
	One	14.7	19.2
	Two	19.1	24.4
	Three	25.0	17.9
	Four	11.8	11.5
	More than four	23.5	7.7
Frequency of refusal to go out because of lack of proper clothes	Often	0.0	0.0
	Sometimes	20.6	32.1
	Seldom	23.5	20.5
	Never	51.5	46.2
Frequency of wearing sports clothes	Often	7.4	1.3
	Sometimes	11.8	3.8
	Seldom	13.2	1.3
	Never	61.8	89.7
Foundation garment worn	Yes	82.4	82.1
	No	13.2	16.7
Type of foundation garment worn	All-in-one	41.1	45.3
	Other	53.6	43.8
Frequency of wearing hats	Often	39.7	51.3
	Sometimes	50.0	39.7
	Seldom	10.3	9.0
	Never	0.0	0.0

TABLE IV (Continued)

Question	Response	Younger (Percent) *	Older (Percent) *
Frequency of wearing sweaters	Often	19.1	28.2
	Sometimes	42.6	53.8
	Seldom	20.6	9.0
	Never	16.2	6.4
Frequency of finding clothes suitable for age	Often	47.1	35.9
	Sometimes	42.6	47.4
	Seldom	8.8	11.5
	Never	1.5	1.3
Frequency of finding clothes that make respondent feel older	Often	5.9	6.4
	Sometimes	38.2	23.1
	Seldom	17.6	38.5
	Never	27.9	23.1
Sewing done for self	Yes	35.3	35.9
	No	58.8	59.0
Desire more money to spend on clothes	Yes	72.1	59.0
	No	25.0	37.2
Person with whom respondent is living	Alone	29.4	35.9
	Sister	2.9	5.1
	Friend	1.5	0.0
	Parents	1.5	1.3
	Children	13.2	7.7
	Husband	45.6	10.3
	Brother	2.9	1.3
	Old age home	0.0	30.8
Does respondent work outside home	Yes	25.0	6.4
	No	75.0	93.6

TABLE IV (Continued)

Question	Response	Younger (Percent)*	Older (Percent)*
<u>Specific Clothing Preferences</u>			
Dress Opening	Open to hem- line in front	26.5	47.4
	Open at side	70.6	34.6
	Open in back	13.2	5.1
Sleeve type	Long	1.5	3.8
	Three-quarter	42.6	70.5
	Short	60.3	28.2
	Sleeveless	4.4	6.4
Skirt type	Pleated	10.3	20.5
	Gathered	8.8	9.0
	Flared	20.6	19.2
	Gored	41.2	48.7
	Straight	38.2	21.8
Skirt length	To the knee	0.0	0.0
	Just below the knee	14.7	16.7
	Mid-calf	83.8	73.1
	Longer than mid-calf	0.0	9.0
Neckline type	With collar	55.9	59.0
	Collarless	50.0	44.9
Collarless neckline type	High round	6.0	8.2
	Medium round	30.0	16.3
	V shaped	50.0	71.4
	U shaped	6.0	6.1
	Square	14.7	7.7
	Draped	1.5	1.3
Type of garment	Suit	10.3	12.8
	One piece dress	50.0	65.4
	Dress with matching jacket	55.9	30.8
	Skirt and blouse	2.9	2.6

TABLE IV (Continued)

Question	Response	Younger (Percent) *	Older (Percent) *
Design in fabric (for a dress)	Solid	70.6	66.7
	Print	32.4	33.3
Fabric design (for a dress)	Small print	77.7	89.4
	Large print	4.4	4.3
	Plaid	4.4	8.5
	Stripe	11.1	8.5
	Polka dots	22.2	17.0
Color (for a dress)	Bright	25.0	17.9
	Subdued	73.5	79.5
Specific color (for a dress)	Red	5.9	2.6
	Pink	17.6	9.0
	Yellow	2.9	2.6
	White	2.9	7.7
	Light blue	32.4	24.4
	Violet	5.9	3.8
	Beige	16.2	7.7
	Brown	10.3	7.7
	Green	14.7	6.4
	Navy	30.9	56.4
	Gray	14.7	12.8
	Black	17.6	10.3
Shoes - heel height	High heel	8.8	2.6
	Medium heel	64.7	51.3
	Low heel	4.4	12.8
	Flat heel	0.0	5.1
	Cuban heel	22.1	26.9
	Wedgie	13.2	15.4
Shoe style	Pump	57.4	38.5
	Laced shoe	8.8	41.0
	Sandal	0.0	1.3
	Open toe	17.6	10.3
	Open toe and heel	27.9	12.8

*All percentages, with the exception of those relating to collarless neckline type, fabric design, and type of foundation garment worn, were calculated on the basis of the total number of women in the sample, not the number answering the particular question. The three exceptions noted were calculated on the basis of the number of respondents to the particular question.

Comparison of High-Income - Low-Income Groups

The women who were interviewed were divided into three income groupings of high (\$4000 and over), medium (\$2000 to \$3999), and low (\$1999 and under). The high-income and low-income groups were then compared to determine the effects of relative income on older women's clothing preferences and selections. There were twenty-nine women in the high-income group and eighty-three women in the low-income group.

Over seventy per cent of the women in the high-income group were living with their husbands. Most of the low-income group were living either alone or in an old age home. A greater portion of the low-income group were working outside the home.

The high-income group tended to be more interested in fashion magazines. Those magazines which were read by more women in the high-income than in the low-income group were Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, McCall's and Ladies' Home Journal. Those magazines which were read by more women in the low-income than in the high-income group were Glamour and Sears-Roebuck. Although both groups seemed to be equally interested in style changes, more of the high-income group attended fashion shows. Thirty per cent of the low-income group "never" went to fashion shows.

The high-income group went shopping more often for clothes. Over half the women in both groups shopped alone. Although a department store was most frequented, a number of the high-income bracket also shopped at a women's specialty shop. A number of the low-income bracket (and none of the high-income bracket) shopped in a chain store.

In choosing a dress, both groups regarded style and fit as the most important factor. As the second most important factor, both groups chose price, with ease of care the least important factor.

Women in the high-income group tended to have more washable dresses in their wardrobe. Women in the low-income group seemed to find it easier than those in the high-income group to find a dress they liked in their size. Almost seventy per cent of the women in the low-income group wore half-sizes; only forty-five per cent of the women in the high-income group wore half-sizes. An almost equal number in the high-income group wore regular sizes. A far greater per cent of the high-income than low-income wore junior sizes.¹

¹This would tend to agree with the results of a study reported by Whyte in The Organization Man (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956), p. 350. " . . . as incomes rise, waistlines go down. In their Levittown survey, Allied Stores found that in the area settled long enough for income to have risen to between \$5,000 and \$7,000, 59 per cent of the women wore the small "misses" sizes; by contrast, in the newer, \$3,000 to \$4,000 area the sizes were larger--only 42 per cent wore the small sizes and 7 per cent wore the large 38-44 sizes (versus only 3 per cent of the wives of the \$5,000 to \$7,000 area)."

Most of the women in the high-income bracket wished that stores carried a wider style selection, but more of the women in the low-income bracket refused to go out because of lack of proper clothes. More of the low-income group wished they had more money to spend on clothes.

Specific Preferences in Clothing

Sports clothes were worn more frequently by women in the high-income group, but sweaters were worn more frequently by the low-income group. This low-income group also wore hats more frequently.

Both groups preferred dresses with side openings and three-quarter length sleeves. Those in the low-income group preferred gored skirts whereas the preference of the high-income group was equally divided between gored and straight skirts. Both groups liked a mid-calf length best. A dress with a collar was favored by the majority of these women. If the dress was collarless, then a V neckline was their first choice. The low-income group liked best a one piece dress; the high-income group preferred a dress with matching jacket. The greater number of women in both groups preferred solid colors, but if the dress was figured, they liked a small print best. Navy was the first choice of the low-income group, with light blue a close second. Pumps (closed toe and heel) with medium

height heels were the preferred shoe choice for both of these income groups. (See TABLE V for a comparison of preferences and practices by income).

Description of the Buyers' Sample

In order to determine what various retail stores believe older women's clothing desires to be and how they interpret them in terms of merchandise offered for sale, the writer interviewed buyers and their assistants in ten retail stores in the downtown shopping area of Cincinnati.

Store executives interviewed numbered twenty-four. Sixteen of these were from department stores, six from women's specialty stores, and one each from a chain store and an apparel store. These people were connected primarily either with dresses or sportswear. Seventy per cent were concerned with dresses, twenty per cent with sportswear and eight per cent were in departments where both dresses and sportswear were sold. By far the greatest number of buyers represented women's and misses' sizes; only a few represented junior sizes and in these instances only because all sizes were in the same department. In all cases, those buyers who bought only junior sizes refused to co-operate, stating that they had only one or two customers per month in the older woman age range.¹

¹When the writer mentioned "older women," most buyers and salespersons said, "Oh, you want the large sizes." Evidently in their eyes, age constitutes bigness--fat women.

TABLE V

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN'S RESPONSES BY
HIGH-INCOME AND LOW-INCOME GROUPS

Question	Response	29 High	83 Low
		(Percent)*	(Percent)*
Frequency of looking at fashion magazines		4,000 * up	1,999 * down
	Often	27.6	25.3
	Sometimes	55.2	56.6
	Seldom	17.2	8.4
	Never	0.0	9.6
Magazines frequently looked at			
	Vogue	31.0	27.7
	Harper's		
	Bazaar	3.4	2.4
	Glamour	6.9	21.7
	McCall's	72.4	56.6
	Ladies Home		
	Journal	62.1	55.4
	Sears-Roebuck	13.8	14.5
Frequency of attending fashion shows			
	Often	3.4	3.6
	Sometimes	44.8	36.1
	Seldom	44.8	24.1
	Never	6.9	30.1
Degree of interest in style changes			
	Very much	13.8	20.5
	Somewhat	62.1	61.4
	Very little	20.7	12.0
	Not at all	3.4	3.6
Frequency of shopping for clothes			
	Often	13.8	22.9
	Sometimes	79.3	56.6
	Seldom	6.9	15.7
	Never	0.0	3.6

TABLE V (Continued)

Question	Response	High (Percent) *	Low (Percent) *
Person with whom shopping is done	Husband	13.8	2.4
	Daughter	10.3	14.5
	Sister or close relative	3.4	9.6
	Friend	20.7	15.7
	Alone	55.2	60.2
	Son	0.0	1.2
Type of store at which shopping is done	Department store	89.7	91.6
	Women's specialty shop	10.3	4.8
	Chain store	0.0	7.2
Reasons for buying a dress			
How easy it will be to care for	First	6.9	10.8
	Second	31.0	16.9
	Third	55.2	28.9
The price	First	17.2	34.9
	Second	44.8	21.7
	Third	31.0	9.6
The design and fit	First	69.0	45.8
	Second	17.2	13.3
	Third	6.9	9.6
Number of washable dresses in wardrobe	Many	51.7	49.4
	Some	48.3	37.3
	Few	0.0	9.6
Ease of finding dress in correct size	Often	27.6	39.8
	Sometimes	37.9	37.3
	Seldom	31.0	16.9
	Never	3.4	3.6

TABLE V (Continued)

Question	Response	High (Percent) *	Low (Percent) *
Size of dress worn	Regular	34.5	24.1
	Half-size	44.8	69.9
	Junior	20.7	4.8
Wider style selection desired	Yes	93.1	63.9
	No	6.9	30.1
Number of organizations to which respondent belongs	None	3.4	14.5
	One	10.3	22.9
	Two	17.2	21.7
	Three	13.8	16.9
	Four	17.2	12.0
	More than four	37.9	8.4
Frequency of refusal to go out because of lack of proper clothes	Often	0.0	0.0
	Sometimes	10.3	34.9
	Seldom	24.1	20.5
	Never	62.1	44.6
Frequency of wearing sports clothes	Often	10.3	2.4
	Sometimes	20.7	3.6
	Seldom	13.8	6.0
	Never	51.7	83.1
Foundation garment worn	Yes	86.2	80.7
	No	13.8	15.7
Type of foundation garment worn	All-in-one	32.0	46.3
	Other	64.0	44.8
Frequency of wearing hats	Often	37.9	51.8
	Sometimes	48.3	39.8
	Seldom	13.8	8.4
	Never	0.0	0.0

TABLE V (Continued)

Question	Response	High (Percent)*	Low (Percent)*
Frequency of wearing sweaters	Often	13.8	28.9
	Sometimes	55.2	50.6
	Seldom	20.7	10.8
	Never	10.3	7.2
Frequency of finding clothes suitable for age	Often	48.3	41.0
	Sometimes	37.9	47.0
	Seldom	10.3	9.6
	Never	0.0	2.4
Frequency of finding clothes that make respondent feel older	Often	0.0	7.2
	Sometimes	37.9	30.1
	Seldom	24.1	27.7
	Never	37.9	20.5
Sewing done for self	Yes	44.8	38.6
	No	55.2	55.4
Desire more money to spend on clothes	Yes	44.8	75.9
	No	55.2	20.5
Person with whom respondent is living	Alone	10.3	28.9
	Sister	0.0	3.6
	Friend	0.0	1.2
	Parents	0.0	2.4
	Children	13.8	12.0
	Husband	72.4	10.8
	Brother	3.4	1.2
	Old age home	0.0	21.7
Does respondent work outside home	Yes	10.3	18.1
	No	89.7	81.9

TABLE V (Continued)

Question	Response	High (Percent)*	Low (Percent)*
<u>Specific Clothing Preferences</u>			
Dress opening	Open to hem- line in front	27.6	44.6
	Open at side	58.6	49.4
	Open in back	24.1	4.8
	Open to waist in front	3.4	4.8
Sleeve type	Long	3.4	2.4
	Three-quarter	51.7	62.7
	Short	48.3	33.7
	Sleeveless	3.4	4.8
Skirt type	Pleated	10.3	18.1
	Gathered	10.3	6.0
	Flared	20.7	19.3
	Gored	37.9	50.6
	Straight	37.9	21.7
Skirt length	To the knee	0.0	0.0
	Just below the knee	17.2	14.5
	Mid-calf	82.8	75.9
	Longer than mid-calf	0.0	7.2
Neckline type	With collar	58.6	60.2
	Collarless	48.3	44.6
Collarless neckline type	High round	13.3	7.3
	Medium round	13.3	23.6
	V shaped	60.0	61.8
	U shaped	0.0	3.6
	Square	20.0	12.7
	Draped	0.0	3.6

TABLE V (Continued)

Question	Response	High (Percent)*	Low (Percent)*
Type of garment	Suit	10.3	6.0
	One piece dress	48.3	63.9
	Dress with matching jacket	55.2	37.3
	Skirt and blouse	3.4	1.2
Design in fabric (for a dress)	Solid	79.3	61.4
	Print	27.6	37.3
Fabric design (for a dress)	Small print	84.6	85.5
	Large print	0.0	5.5
	Plaid	23.1	0.0
	Stripe	15.4	5.5
	Polka dots	7.7	18.2
Color (for a dress)	Bright	31.0	16.9
	Subdued	75.9	77.1
Specific color (for a dress)	Red	0.0	7.2
	Pink	17.2	12.0
	Yellow	6.9	1.2
	White	0.0	4.8
	Light blue	34.5	22.9
	Violet	0.0	6.0
	Beige	3.4	12.0
	Brown	6.9	8.4
	Green	13.8	6.0
	Navy	31.0	47.0
	Gray	17.2	13.3
	Black	17.2	14.5

TABLE V (Continued)

Question	Response	High (Percent)*	Low (Percent)*
Shoes - heel height	High heel	10.3	1.2
	Medium heel	72.4	57.8
	Low heel	3.4	7.2
	Flat heel	0.0	3.6
	Cuban heel	20.7	27.7
	Wedgie	6.9	12.0
Shoe style	Pump	58.6	41.0
	Laced shoe	10.3	30.1
	Sandal	0.0	1.2
	Open toe	6.9	14.5
	Open toe and heel	31.0	19.3

*All percentages, with the exception of those relating to collarless neckline type, fabric design, and type of foundation garment worn, were calculated on the basis of the total number of women in the sample, not the number answering the particular question. The three exceptions noted were calculated on the basis of the number of respondents to the particular question.

Seven, or thirty per cent, of the buyers purchased sizes 8 to 20 only, two, or nine per cent, bought sizes 12 1/2 to 26 1/2 only, and one, or four per cent, purchased sizes 38 to 52 only. Thirteen, or fifty-six per cent, bought more than one of these size ranges.

The price lines ranged from \$2.79 to \$50.00 for the lower limit; \$6.99 to \$120.00 and more for the upper limit. Dresses from \$5.99 to \$10.99 seemed to be the most common for the lower price range and \$17.99 to \$49.99 for the higher price range. Three departments said they had no limit on price. The distribution among "budget," "moderate," and "better," was just about even.

Half of the buyers interviewed said that some of their brands would be suitable for the older woman. The other half said theirs would not be suitable. Those buyers who bought clothes suitable for this age group mentioned from one to eight brands.¹ In no instance was the same brand mentioned by more than one buyer. This might indicate that there is no well defined brand or group of brands for the older woman.

¹Some of the brands named were: Tru-Form, White and Sklar, Evanna, Bretton, Symphonic Modes, Henry Gans, I. Doctor, Herbert Levy, Donwood, Baroness, Lady Fame, White Stag, Sue Amy, Barry Ashley, Lady Century, Shelton, Berkshire, Nelly Don, Boston Madi, Hattie Leeds, Cay Artley, Petite Lady, Forever Young, Formfit, Ed Gerreth, Fashion Wear, Fashion Craft and Norman Norell.

The percentage of stock considered suitable for the older woman ranged from one per cent to one hundred per cent, the mean being 27.3 per cent. The larger number of buyers averaged somewhere between five per cent and fifty per cent. Eighteen buyers said that there was no emphasis placed on clothing for the older age group nor was any of their advertising directed at this group. Only six buyers were concerned with clothing for this age group and directed some of their advertising appeal toward this older market. Of these, the percentage of advertising ranged from one per cent to twenty per cent; the mean was 8.2 per cent.

Only about one fourth of the buyers felt that any of their garments displayed in fashion shows would be for the older woman. Two buyers said one or two shows per year and one buyer said three or four garments per show.

Specific Preferences in Clothing

Almost ninety per cent of the buyers interviewed felt that the older woman preferred dress openings to the hem in front. The remainder selected side openings. Three-quarter length sleeves were designated as the older woman's preference, with long and short sleeves as a second choice. About ninety per cent felt that these women preferred gored skirts; only a few thought that they preferred flared or

straight skirts. The most popular skirt length was felt to be mid-calf, with just below the knee ranked second and longer than mid-calf third. The buyers were equally divided over the type of neckline preferred, collarless or with collar, but they felt that those women who wore collarless dresses liked a V shaped neckline best. About two-thirds said older women liked dresses with a matching jacket; about a third felt that they preferred a one piece dress. More than half felt that a small print rather than a solid color was more popular. A subdued color was also more popular. The buyers were quite varied in their opinion on color preference. About thirty-five to fifty per cent felt light blue was the most popular, while twenty-five to forty per cent each felt that navy or black was the most popular. Other colors chosen were violet, gray, brown, green, and beige.¹

Those buyers concerned with sportswear felt that if older women were going to wear any type of pants, they preferred first pedal pushers and then either slacks or bermudas, but forty-three per cent of the buyers said they have no demand for casual clothing at all; thirty-six per cent have

¹As can be seen, there was a wide divergence of opinion among the various buyers. In one interview, the buyer, assistant buyer, and merchandise counselor collaborated on the answers to the schedule and they failed to agree on a single item.

"little" demand, and only fourteen per cent have "some" demand.¹

Twenty-five per cent of the buyers said they have no demand for high fashion, thirty per cent have "little," thirty per cent have "some," and fifteen per cent have "very much" demand.²

Forty per cent of the buyers said that the women in this age group do some credit buying. Fifty per cent find that they do very much credit buying. The price lines felt to be most popular for the older woman ranged from a low of \$3.99 - \$70.00 to a high of \$6.99 - over \$100.00. (See TABLE VI).

Comparison of Types of Stores

The buyers were divided into four groups on the basis of the type of store: department, women's specialty, chain, and apparel store. Sixteen of the buyers were connected with

¹One of the sportswear buyers interviewed said that there is a definite difference between "active" and "spectator" sports clothes and that this difference should be considered. Those women fifty-five to sixty-five years of age are interested in "active" sports clothes. Women sixty-five years and over are interested in "spectator" sports clothes.

²A buyer in one of the larger half-size departments said that these women want younger styles and during the last five years the manufacturers have been producing younger looking clothing. These sixty year plus women are going more. They are the "never home"--the "club" women. It is only those women seventy-five years and older who don't want the same styles as their daughters.

TABLE VI
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF BUYERS' RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Question	Response	Percentage
Brands carried suitable for older women	Yes	50.0
	No	50.0
Number of brands suitable for older women	One	22.2
	Two	22.2
	Three	11.1
	Five	22.2
	Seven	11.1
	Eight	11.1
Percentage of stock suitable for older women	1 %	4.5
	5 %	18.2
	10 %	13.6
	10 - 15 %	4.5
	17 %	4.5
	20 %	9.1
	25 %	4.5
	40 %	9.1
	50 %	18.2
	60 %	4.5
	80 %	4.5
	100 %	4.5
Emphasis placed on clothing for older women	Yes	25.0
	No	75.0
Advertising for the older women	Yes	25.0
	No	75.0
Per cent of advertising for older women	1 %	20.0
	5 %	40.0
	10 %	20.0
	20 %	20.0

TABLE VI (Continued)

Question	Response	Percentage
Fashion shows in which older women are represented	Yes	27.3
	No	72.7
Demand for casual clothing	Very much	7.1
	Some	14.3
	Little	35.8
	None at all	42.9
Demand for high fashion	Very much	15.0
	Some	30.0
	Little	30.0
	None at all	25.0
Extent of credit buying	Very much	50.0
	Some	40.0
	Little	5.0
	None at all	5.0
<u>Specific Clothing Preferences</u>		
Dress opening	To hemline in front	86.4
	Open at side	22.7
	Open in back	4.5
Sleeve type	Long	18.2
	Three-quarter	81.8
	Short	18.2
	Sleeveless	0.0
Skirt type	Pleated	0.0
	Gathered	0.0
	Flared	17.4
	Gored	91.3
	Straight	13.0
Skirt length	To the knee	0.0
	Just below the knee	20.8
	Mid-calf	70.8
	Longer than mid-calf	8.3

TABLE VI (Continued)

Question	Response	Percentage
Neckline type	With collar	60.9
	Collarless	56.5
Collarless neckline type	High round	0.0
	Medium round	15.8
	V shaped	78.9
	U shaped	10.5
	Square	10.5
	Draped	21.1
Type of garment	Suit	8.7
	One piece dress	39.1
	Dress with matching jacket	69.6
	Skirt and blouse	4.3
Design in fabric (for a dress)	Solid	52.4
	Print	66.7
Fabric design (for a dress)	Small print	94.1
	Large print	0.0
	Plaid	0.0
	Stripe	5.9
	Polka dots	17.6
Color (for a dress)	Bright	9.5
	Subdued	90.5
Specific color (for a dress)	Red	0.0
	Pink	0.0
	Yellow	0.0
	White	0.0
	Light blue	52.6
	Violet	21.1
	Beige	5.3
	Brown	10.5
	Green	10.5
	Navy	42.1
	Gray	21.1
	Black	36.8

TABLE VI (Continued)

Question	Response	Percentage
Pants type	Slacks	33.3
	Pedal pushers	66.7
	Bermudas	33.3
	Short shorts	0.0
	Jamaicas	16.7

department stores, six with women's specialty stores, and one each with a chain and an apparel store. Comparisons were then made to see if the type of store had any influence on the attitudes of the buyers regarding older women's clothing.

The price lines for the department stores were lower than those for the specialty stores in both the range and the most popular price lines.

About forty-four per cent of the department store buyers said that they had no brands suitable for the older woman, whereas about fifty-six per cent of this same group said that they did. The women's specialty stores were equally divided. Both the chain store and apparel store buyers felt that they carried brands suitable for this age group. In the department store group, the number of brands named as being suitable ranged from one to eight, one and two being the most frequently named number. The two specialty store buyers each listed five suitable brands. The average percentage of department store stock considered suitable was 33.4 per cent; the average percentage of specialty store stock was eighteen per cent. The chain store buyer felt that half of her stock was suitable, whereas the apparel buyer felt that one-fourth of her stock was suitable.

A larger proportion of specialty stores placed emphasis on clothing for the older market. The percentage was $33 \frac{1}{3}$

per cent as compared with nineteen per cent for the department stores. The chain store buyers also placed emphasis on this group. The buyers who placed emphasis on clothing for the older woman also slanted some of their advertising toward this segment of the market. With the department stores the percentage of advertising ranged from one per cent to twenty per cent, 7.8 per cent being the mean. The mean for the specialty stores was ten per cent.

A third of the department store buyers, as compared with seventeen per cent of the specialty store buyers, had garments for older women modeled in fashion shows during the year.

The department stores found that they have more demand for casual clothing than do the specialty stores. Of the department store buyers, thirty-eight per cent had no demand at all, one fourth had "little," one fourth had "some," and only one eighth had "very much" demand. Of the specialty store buyers, half had none at all and the other half had "little."

Generally, the department stores also found that they had more demand for high fashion. Of the department store buyers, 16.7 per cent had no demand at all, one fourth had "little," (41.7 per cent had "some," and 16.7 per cent had "very much" demand). Of the specialty store buyers, one third had no demand at all for high fashion, one third had "little"

(16.7 per cent had "some," and 16.7 per cent had "very much" demand).

In general, the department stores had more credit buying from the older age group than did the specialty stores. All of the department store buyers had either "some" or "very much" credit buying, whereas only sixty per cent of the specialty store buyers had "some" or "very much." Both the chain and apparel store buyers find that they had "some" credit buying.

Specific Preferences in Clothing

The stores tended to agree that older women preferred dresses that open to the hemline in front, with three-quarter length sleeves, and mid-calf length gored skirts. They also agreed that preference for necklines with or without collars was evenly divided and that the favored collarless neckline was a V shaped one. More of the department stores felt that these older women preferred a skirt and blouse; the specialty stores felt that women preferred a dress with matching jacket. Most of the department stores thought older women liked prints best; specialty stores felt that women liked both prints and solid colors equally well. All stores agreed that small prints were first choice for figured dresses. Some of the specialty store buyers indicated that polka dots were also popular.

Department stores ranked the most popular colors in this order: (1) light blue, (2) black, (3) navy, (4-5-6) violet, brown, and gray. Specialty stores ranked the most popular colors in the following order: (1) navy, (2) light blue, (3) gray, (4-5-6) violet, green, black, (7-8) beige, and brown. Specialty stores found that older women preferred pedal pushers, whereas department stores found that their preference was divided equally between pedal pushers and bermudas.

Comparison of Classes of Stores

The stores and departments whose buyers were interviewed were arbitrarily rated by the writer in terms of socio-economic class. Those in the highest two classes were compared with those in the lowest two classes. There were eight in the lower-class group and ten in the higher-class group.

The price lines for the lower-class group were lower than those for the higher-class group. The highest upper limit for any of the lower-class stores was \$49.99; the lowest upper limit for any of the higher-class stores was \$55.00.

Half of the lower-class stores felt that they carried brands suitable for the older woman; seven of the ten higher-class stores felt that some of their brands were suitable for the older woman. However, the average percentage of stock considered suitable for the lower-class stores was 27%; the

average percentage of suitable stock in the higher-class stores was eighteen per cent.

A larger proportion of higher-class stores placed emphasis on clothing for the older market. This same proportion directed some of their advertising toward the older segment of the population. Here again, however, the actual percentage of advertising by the higher-class group of stores (5 1/2%) was lower than that of the lower-class group of stores (12 1/2%).

Neither group of stores felt that they had much demand for casual clothing. One buyer in the higher-class group said that she had "some" demand. Those buyers in the lower-class group reported slightly more demand for high fashion than those in the higher-class group.

The lower-class group of stores had more credit buying from this age group than do the higher-class group of stores. The most popular price lines for the lower-class stores were lower (\$3.99 to \$17.99) than those for the higher-class stores (\$29.99 to \$100.00 and more).

Specific Preferences in Clothing

The buyers tended to agree that older women liked dresses that open to the hemline in front, with three-quarter length sleeves, and gored skirts. They disagreed, however, on

length of skirt. The lower-class group of buyers were almost evenly divided between mid-calf length and a length just below the knee. Almost all of the higher-class group of buyers selected the mid-calf length as the most popular. More of the lower-class group of buyers felt that the preference was for necklines with a collar; more of the higher-class group of buyers felt that the preference was for necklines without a collar. Both groups agreed that V shaped necklines were the most popular among those women who preferred collarless dresses. The buyers from the lower-class group were evenly divided regarding older women's choice of a one-piece dress or a dress with a matching jacket. More of the higher-class group of buyers felt that older women preferred a dress with a matching jacket.

Most of the lower-class group of buyers thought that older women liked prints best; most of the higher-class group of buyers thought that they liked solid colors best. They were agreed that small prints were most popular among the printed fabrics. The lower-class group of buyers ranked the most popular colors in this order: (1-2) light blue, black, (3) navy, and (4) gray. The higher-class group of buyers ranked the most popular colors in the following order: (1) navy, (2) light blue, (3-4-5) violet, gray, black, and (6) green.

Statistically Significant Variables

Comparison of Younger and Older Age Groups

The Chi Square test was used to test the relationship between the age of the women and their responses to various questions in the questionnaire. For this purpose the sample was divided into two age groupings: women fifty-five to sixty-nine years of age were designated the younger group and women seventy years of age and older were designated the older group. Differences of the two age groupings were considered significant at the .05 level and highly significant at the .01 level. Relationships at the .10 level were considered as approaching significance.

There was a highly significant relationship between age and the person with whom one lived. In the younger group of women, a highly significant number lived with their husbands and worked outside the home. A highly significant number of older women lived in an old age home. The number of clubs or organizations was significantly related to age. More older than younger women belonged to no clubs at all, while more of the younger group belonged to five or more.

A significant number of the younger group went shopping "often" for clothes. Approaching significance was the proportion of the older group who "seldom" or "never" went shopping for clothes. Age did not seem to affect the interest in fashion

magazines with the exception of a highly significant number of younger women looking at McCall's magazine. Age was also found to make little difference in the desire to attend fashion shows and in the interest in style changes.

Age seemed to have little relationship to the person with whom one shopped. The one significant difference was that more older than younger women shopped with a sister or close relative.

In the question involving ranking of reasons for buying a dress, the relative age was related to order of choice.

✓ A significant number of older women (compared to younger women) thought ease of care to be the most important reason; a significant number of younger women (compared to older women) thought design and fit to be the most important reason.

Relative age did not seem to affect the number of washable dresses in the wardrobe, how easy it was for the women in the sample to find a dress they liked in their size, and whether they wore a misses (regular) or women's (half-size) size. However, a significantly larger number of the younger group wore junior size dresses.

Of high significance was the relationship between age and the desire for a wider style selection. Younger women very definitely wanted a larger number of styles from which to choose a dress. Refusal to go out because of a lack of the right clothes was not found to relate to age.

There was no significant difference found between the age groupings as to whether they felt the clothes found in stores suited their age. A significant number of younger women felt the clothes sometimes made them feel older, however, while a highly significant number of older women reported that clothes seldom made them feel older.

The number of younger women who desired more money to spend on clothes tended toward significance.

Specific Preferences in Clothing

Specific clothing preferences in many cases were significantly related to age. Of high significance was the number of younger women who preferred side openings in dresses, short sleeves, and dresses with matching jackets. Other significant preferences were straight skirts and pumps. Back openings in dresses and black as a dress color were found to be tending toward significance for the younger woman.

In the older age group, highly significant preferences were dresses opening to the hemline in front, three-quarter length sleeves, navy as a dress color and a laced shoe. A significant preference for older women was a V shaped neckline; those selections tending toward significance were pleated skirts, one piece dresses, and low-heeled shoes. Age did not seem to affect preferences significantly in skirt length,

collar or collarless necklines, fabric designs, and bright or subdued color.

A level of high significance was found in the number of older women who never wore sports clothes. A greater number of younger women "often" and "sometimes" wore sports clothes. Age did not seem to affect the wearing of foundation garments or frequency of wearing hats. However, more younger women seldom wore sweaters. (See TABLE VII for a summary of Chi Square values).

Comparison of High-Income and Low-Income Groups

The Chi Square test was used to test the relationship between the income of the women and their responses to various questions in the questionnaire. For this purpose the sample was divided into three income groupings: high (\$4000 and over), medium (\$2000 to \$3999), and low (\$1999 and under). The high-income and low-income groups were then compared to determine the effects of relative income on older women's clothing preferences and selections. Differences of the two income groups were considered significant at the .05 level and highly significant at the .01 level. Relationships at the .10 level were considered as approaching significance.

There was a highly significant relationship between income and the person with whom one lived. A highly significant number of women in the high-income group lived with their

TABLE VII

A SUMMARY OF CHI SQUARE VALUES FOUND IN COMPARING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
YOUNGER AND OLDER AGE GROUPS

Rank	Significant Variables	Chi Square	Level of Significance	Interpretation
1	Person with whom living	25.1323	$p < .001$	More older women were living in old age home
2	Person with whom living	23.2485	$p < .001$	More younger women were living with husband
3	Shoe style	19.5709	$p < .001$	More older women liked laced shoes
4	Dress opening	18.9090	$p < .001$	More younger women preferred side openings
5	Sports clothes	17.7739	$p < .001$	More older women "never" wore sports clothes
6	Sleeve type	15.3612	$p < .001$	More younger women preferred short sleeves
7	Sleeve type	11.4923	$p < .001$	More older women preferred three-quarter length sleeves
8	Working outside home	9.9503	$p < .01$	More younger women worked out-side home
9	Working outside home	9.9503	$p < .01$	More older women didn't work outside home
10	Wide style selection	9.9333	$p < .01$	More younger women wanted larger selection
11	Color preference	9.6384	$p < .01$	More older women preferred navy

TABLE VII (Continued)

Rank	Significant Variables	Chi Square	Level of Significance	Interpretation
12	Type of garment	9.3293	$p < .01$	More younger women preferred dresses with jackets
13	Sports clothes	7.9690	$p < .01$	More younger women "seldom" wore sports clothes
14	Do styles make you feel older?	7.7575	$p < .01$	More older women "seldom" felt older
15	Number of organizations	7.2389	$p < .01$	More younger women belonged to more than four organizations
16	Wide style selection	7.1261	$p < .01$	More older women didn't want a wider style selection
17	Dress opening	6.7714	$p < .01$	More older women preferred front openings to hemline
18	Frequency of shopping	6.0686	$p < .05$	More younger women went shopping "often"
19	Reason for buying a dress	6.0426	$p < .05$	More younger women thought design and fit most important
20	Reason for buying a dress	5.5233	$p < .05$	More older women thought ease of care most important
21	Number of organizations	5.4520	$p < .05$	More older women belonged to no organizations
22	Shoe style	5.2577	$p < .05$	More younger women liked pumps

TABLE VII (Continued)

Rank	Significant Variables	Chi Square	Level of Significance	Interpretation
23	Shoe style	5.2313	$p < .05$	More younger women liked open toe and heel shoes
24	Skirt type	4.7697	$p < .05$	More younger women liked straight skirts
25	Collarless neckline	4.7539	$p < .05$	More older women liked V shaped necklines
26	Person with whom you go shopping	4.7278	$p < .05$	More older women shopped with sister or close relative
27	Dress size	4.2170	$p < .05$	More younger women wore junior sizes
28	Do styles make you feel older?	3.9546	$p < .05$	More younger women "sometimes" felt older
29	Sweaters	3.9420	$p < .05$	More younger women "seldom" wore sweaters
<u>Variables Approaching Significance</u>				
30	Frequency of shopping	3.7564	$p < .10$	More older women "seldom" or "never" shopped
31	Type of garment	3.5487	$p < .10$	More older women liked one piece dresses
32	Sweaters	3.4530	$p < .10$	More younger women "never" wore sweaters
33	Sports clothes	3.3247	$p < .10$	More younger women wore sports clothes "sometimes"
34	Heel height	3.2584	$p < .10$	More older women liked a flat heel

TABLE VII (Continued)

Rank	Significant Variables	Chi Square	Level of Significance	Interpretation
35	Color	3.1880	$p < .10$	More younger women liked black
36	Dress opening	2.8512	$p < .10$	More younger women liked back openings
37	Skirt type	2.8396	$p < .10$	More older women liked pleated skirts
38	More money to spend on clothes	2.7897	$p < .10$	More younger women wanted more money to spend on clothes

husbands; a highly significant number of women in the low-income group lived alone.

Income was found to affect social participation and desire to buy clothes. A highly significant number of the women in the high-income group belonged to four or more organizations. The number of women in the low-income group who would like more money for clothes was highly significant; the number of women in the high-income group who would not like more money for clothes was also highly significant. A significant number of those in the low-income group refused to go out because of lack of proper clothing.

A significant number of women in the high-income group went shopping "sometimes." A highly significant number of this same group of women would like a wider style selection from which to choose. Conversely, the number of low-income women who did not desire a wider style selection was significant. Income did not seem to affect the interest in fashion magazines, but rather the magazines at which the women looked. The number of low-income women who looked at Glamour tended toward significance. A significant number of the low-income group of women wore half-sizes. The number of high-income women who said that the clothes they find never make them feel older tended toward significance.

In the question involving the rating of reasons for buying a dress, both groups placed them in the same order: (1) style and fit, (2) price, and (3) ease of care. However, a highly significant number of the high-income group (as compared with the low-income group) put price third and a significant number of the high-income group (as compared to the low-income group) put price second. As compared with the low-income group, a significant number of the high-income group ranked design and fit highest and ease of care lowest. The number of the low-income group (compared to the high-income group) who ranked price the most important tended toward significance.

Specific Preferences in Clothing

Income affected the selection of certain clothing styles in only a few instances. A highly significant number of the low-income group of older women never wore sports clothes. A significant number of the low-income group wore laced shoes. The number of women in the high-income group (compared to those in the low-income group) who selected straight skirts, dresses with matching jackets, solid colors and pumps (as shoe style) tended toward significance. (See Table VIII).

TABLE VIII

A SUMMARY OF CHI SQUARE VALUES FOUND IN COMPARING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
HIGH-INCOME AND LOW-INCOME GROUPS

Rank	Significant Variables	Chi Square	Level of Significance	Interpretation
1	Living with whom	41.2715	$p < .001$	More high-income lived with husbands
2	Number of organizations	13.6315	$p < .001$	More high-income belonged to four or more organizations
3	More money to spend on clothes	12.6189	$p < .001$	More high-income didn't want more money to spend on clothes
4	Sports clothes	11.5097	$p < .001$	More low-income "never" wore sports clothes
5	More money to spend on clothes	9.5839	$p < .01$	More low-income wanted more money to spend on clothes
6	Living with whom	9.1559	$p < .01$	More low-income lived alone
7	Wide selection	9.0431	$p < .01$	More high-income wanted wider selection
8	Reason for buying a dress	7.6489	$p < .01$	More high-income put price as third most important reason
9	Refusal to go out	6.4001	$p < .05$	More low-income "sometimes" refused to go out for lack of proper clothes
10	Wide selection	6.3545	$p < .05$	More low-income didn't want wider selection
11	Reason for buying a dress	6.3479	$p < .05$	More high-income put ease of care as third most important reason

TABLE VIII (Continued)

Rank	Significant Variables	Chi Square	Level of Significance	Interpretation
12	Dress size	5.8491	$p < .05$	More low-income wore half-sizes
13	Reason for buying a dress	5.8189	$p < .05$	More high-income put price as second most important reason
14	Frequency of shopping	4.7638	$p < .05$	More high-income went shopping "sometimes"
15	Reason for buying a dress	4.6725	$p < .05$	More high-income put design and fit as most important reason
16	Shoe style	4.5747	$p < .05$	More low-income preferred laced shoe
<u>Variables Approaching Significance</u>				
17	Do styles make you feel older?	3.3828	$p < .10$	More high-income "never" felt older
18	Magazines read	3.2413	$p < .10$	More low-income looked at <u>Glamour</u>
19	Reason for buying a dress	3.1785	$p < .10$	More low-income put price as most important reason
20	Fabric design	3.0009	$p < .10$	More high-income preferred solid color
21	Skirt style	2.9718	$p < .10$	More high-income preferred straight skirts
22	Type of garment	2.7575	$p < .10$	More high-income preferred dresses with matching jackets
23	Shoe style	2.7192	$p < .10$	More high-income preferred pumps

Comparison of Classes of Stores

The Chi Square test was used to determine the relationship of the socio-economic class of the department and the buyer's responses to various questions in the buyers' questionnaire. The twenty-four departments and stores in the sample were arbitrarily rated one to five by the writer and the highest two groups were compared with the lowest two groups. There were eight in the lower-class group and ten in the higher-class group. The size of these two groups was too small for the Chi Square test to be valid, but the results may indicate some tendencies. Differences between the two groups were considered significant at the .05 level and highly significant at the .01 level. Relationships at the .10 level were considered as approaching significance.

Some differences between the groups were seen in what the buyers felt were older women's preferences in clothing styles. A significantly higher number of the higher-class group of buyers said older women preferred a mid-calf length for skirts. Tending toward significance was the number of the higher-class group of buyers who felt older women preferred dresses with matching jackets, three-quarter length sleeves, and violet as a dress color.

It was also found that the lower-class group of departments and stores had a highly significant amount of credit buying by older women. (See TABLE IX).

TABLE IX

A SUMMARY OF CHI SQUARE VALUES FOUND IN COMPARING DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN CLASSES OF STORES

Rank	Significant Variables	Chi Square	Level of Significance	Interpretation
1	Credit Buying	7.9642	$p < .01$	More lower-class stores had "very much" credit buying
2	Skirt length	5.3498	$p < .05$	More higher-class buyers chose mid-calf length
<u>Variables Approaching Significance</u>				
3	Type of garment	3.6384	$p < .10$	More higher-class buyers chose dresses with matching jackets
4	Sleeve type	3.6324	$p < .10$	More higher-class buyers chose three-quarter length sleeves
5	Color	2.7499	$p < .10$	More higher-class buyers chose violet

Comparison of Women's and Buyers' Choice in Clothing Preferences

The Chi Square test was used in determining significant differences between what older women stated as their clothing preferences and what the buyers believed these preferences to be. Differences of the two groups were considered significant at the .05 level and highly significant at the .01 level. Relationships at the .10 level were considered as approaching significance.

There were highly significant differences regarding dress openings and skirts. More buyers than women chose dresses that open to the hemline in front; more women than buyers chose dresses that open in the back. Gored skirts were rated as older women's preference by more buyers than women.

Women's and buyers' preferences were found to differ significantly concerning type of sleeves, type of garment, and design in fabric. More women than buyers said they preferred short sleeves. More buyers felt that older women preferred dresses with matching jackets. Women said they preferred solid colors; buyers thought they preferred prints.

More women than buyers indicated straight skirts, one piece dresses, and small prints (for dresses) as their preferences. The differences in these choices tended toward significance. (See TABLE X).

TABLE X

A SUMMARY OF CHI SQUARE VALUES FOUND IN COMPARING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
WOMEN'S AND BUYERS' CHOICES IN CLOTHING PREFERENCES

Rank	Significant Variables	Chi Square	Level of Significance	Interpretation
1	Skirt type	14.6975	$p < .001$	More buyers selected gored skirts
2	Dress opening	14.6100	$p < .001$	More buyers selected front openings to hemline
3	Dress opening	11.5454	$p < .001$	More women selected side openings
4	Sleeve type	6.1502	$p < .05$	More women selected short sleeves
5	Fabric design	5.6511	$p < .05$	More buyers selected a print
6	Type of garment	4.8852	$p < .05$	More buyers selected dresses with matching jackets
7	Fabric design	4.7358	$p < .05$	More women selected solid colors
<u>Variables Approaching Significance</u>				
8	Type of Garment	3.6304	$p < .10$	More women selected one piece dresses
9	Fabric design (for a print)	3.3679	$p < .10$	More women selected a small print
10	Skirt type	3.0097	$p < .10$	More women selected straight skirts

Women's Interest in Clothing

In order to obtain a measure of clothing awareness and interest, an interest score was calculated for each woman on the basis of responses given to certain questions. The questions included in this score were numbers one, three, four, five, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, twenty, twenty-one, and twenty-three. Each response was weighted arbitrarily as follows: "often," three points; "sometimes," two points; seldom," one point; "never," zero points; "yes," two points; and "no," one point. In the question referring to organizational membership (number 13), the score given was the actual number of groups to which the woman belonged, except for all responses over "four." These were given a weight of five. The highest possible score, if the person answered every question, would be thirty points and the lowest possible score would be two points.

For purposes of simplification and comparison only those scores were used in which the respondent had answered every question. This group was then divided into three categories: high interest, twenty to thirty points; medium interest, sixteen to nineteen points; and low interest, two to fifteen points. The total number of scores falling into each group was thirty, or 24.4 per cent, in the high interest group; fifty-seven, or 46.3 per cent, in the medium interest group; and thirty-six, or 29.3 per cent in the low interest

group. The range of scores for the entire group was eight to twenty-four. (See TABLE XI).

TABLE XI
RANGE OF WOMEN'S INTEREST SCORES

Group	N	Percentage	Range
High score	30	24.4	20 - 24
Medium score	57	46.3	16 - 19
Low score	36	29.3	8 - 15
$\bar{x} = 17.10$			

The arithmetic mean of the total one hundred twenty-three scores was selected as the average score. This was calculated by dividing the sum of the scores by the number of the scores. The mean was 17.10.

The arithmetic means were calculated for the following groups: younger and older age groups; high, medium, and low income; younger and older within each income group; high and low organizational membership; type of store frequented; degree of ease with which one found a dress; person with whom the respondent shopped; person with whom respondent lived; and whether or not respondent worked. (See TABLE XII).

TABLE XII

RANGES AND AVERAGES FOR CLOTHING INTEREST SCORES

Group	N	Mean	Range
Younger	59	18.27	10 - 24
Older	64	16.02	8 - 23
High income	30	18.13	9 - 23
Medium income	21	16.81	10 - 20
Low income	65	16.65	8 - 23
High income			
Younger	27	18.48	14 - 23
Older	3	15.00	9 - 20
Medium income			
Younger	10	16.80	10 - 20
Older	11	16.82	13 - 20
Low income			
Younger	19	18.47	11 - 22
Older	46	15.85	8 - 23
High organizational membership	60	18.53	11 - 24
Low organizational membership	63	15.73	8 - 21
Type of store patronized			
Department store	115	17.23	8 - 24
Women's specialty shop	12	17.25	13 - 24
Chain store	5	14.60	11 - 18
Ease of finding a dress			
Often	45	17.11	9 - 24
Sometimes	44	17.18	8 - 23
Seldom	28	17.50	8 - 22
Never	5	14.80	11 - 20
Person with whom respondent shops			
Alone	78	17.32	10 - 24
Friend	15	17.73	13 - 22
Sister or relative	9	15.78	8 - 20
Daughter	16	16.56	8 - 23
Husband	6	15.50	9 - 19
Son	1	12.00	12

TABLE XII (Continued)

Group	N	Mean	Range
Person with whom respondent lives			
Alone	38	17.71	11 - 23
Sister	6	15.00	8 - 22
Parents	2	19.00	17 - 21
Children	12	16.42	8 - 23
Husband	37	17.16	9 - 21
Brother	2	20.50	20 - 21
Old age home	22	16.36	11 - 23
Working	19	17.79	12 - 23
Not working	102	16.95	8 - 24

The arithmetic mean for the younger group of women was 2.25 points higher than that of the older women. The range for the two groups was about the same. That of the younger group was ten to twenty-four and that of the older group was eight to twenty-three. Within each income grouping, older persons had lower scores, except in the medium income group where the scores were approximately the same.

In the income groups the average clothing interest score tended to rise with the income. The difference between the low and medium groups was small, .16, but the difference between the medium and high groups was larger, 1.32. When income groupings were sub-divided into younger and older groups, however, the tendency changed. In the medium income category, the score for the younger group was lower than at the income extremes; the score for the older group was the highest at the medium income level.

There was a difference of 2.8 points between the interest scores in the high and low organizational groups. Those women belonging to three or more organizations scored an average of 18.53, while those belonging to two or less organizations scored an average of 15.73.

Whether a woman shopped at a department store or specialty store seemed to affect her score little. Those, however, who frequently shopped at chain stores, scored more than two points lower than the other women.

The ease with which one found a dress affected the scores very little, except for those who answered "never." Their scores were considerably lower.

The person with whom one shopped showed fluctuation. Those groups with the highest average scores were those who shopped alone or with a friend. Those who scored lowest shopped with their husbands or sisters.

A great deal of variation was also found among the groups divided according to the person with whom one lived. Those who lived with brothers or parents scored high; those who lived with sisters, children, or in old age homes scored lower. It was interesting to note that in both these and the previous groupings that those women answering "sister" scored quite low.

Whether or not a woman worked did not seem to make too much difference. However, those women who worked did score slightly higher. (See TABLE XII).

Significant Variables

The Chi Square test was used to determine significant differences between groups with regard to the proportionate numbers of high, medium, and low interest scores. Factors found to be significant were membership in organizations, relative age (younger or older), and the person with whom one lived.

Those women who belonged to three or more organizations had more high and medium scores than did those women who belonged to two or fewer organizations. The latter group of women had a larger number of the low scores. The difference between these two groups was highly significant.

The younger group of women received more high and medium scores than did the older women. Within the low income group, this trend was also apparent. In both cases, the older group received more low scores. There was a highly significant difference in both cases.

Living alone, with a husband, or in a home for the aged made a significant difference in interest scores. Those living alone had more high scores. Those living alone or with husbands had more medium scores. Those living in a home had more low scores. (See TABLE XIII).

TABLE XIII

A SUMMARY OF CHI SQUARE VALUES FOUND IN COMPARING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
HIGH-INTEREST AND LOW-INTEREST SCORES

Rank	Significant Variables	Chi Square	Level of Significance	Interpretation
1	Number of organizations	17.6724	$P < .001$	Those belonging to three or more groups had more high and medium scores. Those belonging to two or less groups had more low scores.
2	Younger and older within the low-income group	12.6471	$P < .01$	More of the younger group had high and medium scores. More of the older group had low scores.
3	Younger-older groups	11.4540	$P < .01$	More of the younger group had high and medium interest scores. More of the older group had low interest scores.
4	Living with husband, in an old age home, or alone	10.4828	$P < .05$	Those living alone had more high scores. Those living alone or with husband had more medium scores. Those living in a home had more low scores.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

A questionnaire was formulated and administered to one hundred and forty-eight women fifty-five years of age and over in the Metropolitan Area of Cincinnati, in order to ascertain the clothing preferences and interests of older women. A second questionnaire was developed and administered to twenty-four buyers in stores located in Greater Cincinnati, in an attempt to discover what various retail stores believe older women's preferences to be and how they interpret them in terms of merchandise offered for sale. The sample of the women was analyzed on the bases of older and younger age groups and high-income and low-income groups. The sample of the buyers was analyzed on the bases of types of stores and socio-economic classes. A comparison was made of women's and buyers' responses to clothing preferences and an interest scale was designed to measure older women's interest in clothing. The Chi Square test was used to measure significant differences in the above comparisons.

It was found that older women had definite preferences and were interested in clothing. When asked to rank the reasons for buying a dress, style and fit were considered more important

than either price or ease of care. Over three-fourths of the women were interested in style changes and most of the women indicated that they would like a wider selection of styles. About one-third of the sample said that the clothes they find "sometimes" make them feel older. Approximately the same number of women "sometimes" refused to go out because of lack of proper clothes.¹ Specific clothing preferences included side openings in dresses, three-quarter length sleeves, mid-calf length gored skirts, necklines with collars, V shaped necklines, one piece dresses, solid colors, small prints, subdued colors such as navy and light blue,² and pumps (closed toe and heel) with medium height heels.³

Age appeared to be an influential factor in women's interest and preferences. The younger group (fifty-five to sixty-nine years) tended to be more interested in style changes, shopped more often, and desired a wider style selection. Older women (seventy years and over) went shopping with someone else and were more likely to patronize a specialty shop. Both

¹Harriet Ebeling, op. cit., reported these same general tendencies in her study of Michigan women.

²Buyers speak of Cincinnati as a "Blue City."

³Harriet Ebeling, op. cit., found approximately the same preferences among the women in her study, with the exception of the type of garment preferred. The women in her sample preferred one piece dresses with jackets.

groups considered style and fit most important in buying a dress. Specific clothing preferences of the younger group were dresses with matching jackets, side openings, short sleeves, mid-calf length gored skirts, collars or V shaped necklines, solid colors, small prints, subdued colors such as light blue and navy, and pumps with medium height heels. Specific clothing preferences of the older group were one piece dresses with front openings to hemline, three-quarter length sleeves, mid-calf length gored skirts, collars or V shaped necklines, solid colors, small prints, subdued colors such as navy and light blue, and laced shoes with a medium height heel.

Income did not appear to be as important a factor as age; however, it did effect some differences. There were many more women in the low-income group (\$1999 and under), most of them living alone or in an old age home. The high-income group (\$4000 and over) was more interested in fashion magazines and went shopping more often. More of the low-income women wished they had more money to spend on clothing and refused to go out because of lack of proper clothes. Both groups regarded style and fit as the most important factors in choosing a dress. Specific clothing preferences among the high-income group were dresses with matching jackets, side openings, three-quarter length sleeves, mid-calf length gored or straight skirts,

collars or V shaped necklines, solid colors, small prints, subdued colors such as light blue and navy, and pumps with medium height heels. Specific clothing preferences among the low-income group were one piece dresses with side openings, three-quarter sleeves, mid-calf length gored skirts, collars or V shaped necklines, solid colors, small prints, subdued colors such as navy and light blue, and pumps with medium height heels.

It was found that most of the buyers did not place any emphasis on clothing for the older age group or direct any of their advertising toward this group. A relatively low percentage (27.3%) of stock was considered suitable for the older women. The buyers felt the following to be specific clothing preferences among older women: dresses with matching jackets, front openings to hemline, three-quarter length sleeves, mid-calf length gored skirts, collars or V shaped necklines, small prints, and subdued colors such as light blue, navy and black.

In comparing department stores, specialty shops, and chain stores, the writer found the department stores seemed to have more stock suitable for older women; however, the specialty stores seemed to feel that they placed more emphasis on this age group. All the stores tended to agree on older women's clothing preferences.

In comparing the stores by socio-economic class, the writer found that the average percentage of suitable stock in the lower-class stores was higher; however, the higher-class stores said that they placed more emphasis on clothing for the older woman. There were some slight differences among themselves regarding their ideas concerning older women's clothing preferences.

The responses of the women and the buyers regarding clothing preferences were compared. Major differences occurred concerning dress openings, skirt type, type of garment, and design in fabric.

An interest scale was designed to measure the clothing interest of older women. Factors found to be statistically significant in influencing high or low interest were membership in organizations, relative age (younger or older), and the person with whom the respondent lived.

Conclusions

In view of the findings of this study, the following conclusions would seem to be valid:

1. Older women (fifty-five years and over) have an interest in clothing.
2. Age, income, and organizational membership are factors which affect the clothing interest of older women.

3. The clothing preferences of older women differ from the retail stores' interpretation of their preferences.

4. Retail stores exhibit little emphasis upon the needs of this age group of women.

5. The willingness of both women and buyers to participate indicates that further studies of this type would be possible.

CHAPTER VI

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

There has been so little research done concerning clothing for older women that any well-designed study conducted in this area would be of value. After having completed this study, the writer feels that research on the following suggestions would be helpful:

1. Studies done in other geographical locations of the country.
2. Studies focusing on low-income groups to ascertain the relationship between income and clothing.
3. Studies concerning the needs of handicapped persons in the older age group.
4. Studies concerned with the very small older women. Buyers in junior-size dress departments refused to fill out questionnaires saying that they had no customers in this age group, yet eight per cent of the women interviewed said they wore junior sizes.
5. Studies relating to clothing interests and practices of persons living in old age homes.

Some of the persons interviewed suggested the following:

1. Studies concerning men's clothing.
2. Studies concerning spectator versus active sports clothes for older women.
3. Studies relating to women's (half-size and out-size) clothing.

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APPENDIX A

WOMEN'S CLOTHING

This questionnaire has been made in an attempt to find out how you feel about clothing and what some of your clothing problems are. The information gained will be used for a course of study at Michigan State University.

Directions:

1. Do not write your name on this questionnaire.
2. Please answer every question.
3. Please check only one answer for each question. Choose the answer that is best for you. There are no right or wrong answers.
4. When you are through, please fold the questionnaire and seal it in the envelope provided.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Suzanne Shipley

1. Do you look at fashion magazines?
often____, sometimes____, seldom____, never____.
2. Which of these magazines do you look at? (If more than one, please check all that you look at.)
Vogue____, Harper's Bazaar____, Glamour____, McCall's____,
Ladies' Home Journal____, Sears-Roebuck____, other
(specify)_____.
3. Do you attend fashion shows?
often____, sometimes____, seldom____, never____.
4. How interested are you in style changes?
very much____, somewhat____, very little____, not at all____.
5. How often do you go shopping for clothes?
often____, sometimes____, seldom____, never____.
6. With whom do you go shopping?
with husband____, daughter____, sister or close
relative____, friend____, alone____.
7. At what kind of store do you usually shop?
department store____, woman's specialty shop____, chain
store_____.

8. After the following three reasons given for buying a dress, mark 1 for the most important, 2 for the second most important, and 3 for the least important.
how easy it will be to care for____, the price____,
the design and fit_____.
9. How many washable dresses do you have in your wardrobe?
many____, some____, few_____.
10. Is it easy for you to find a dress you like in your size?
often____, sometimes____, seldom____, never_____.
11. Do you wear a regular or half-size or junior size?
regular____, half-size____, junior size_____.
12. Do you wish stores carried a wider style selection from which you could choose a dress?
yes____, no_____.
13. To how many clubs or organizations do you belong?
none____, 1____, 2____, 3____, 4____, more_____.
14. Do you ever refuse to go out because you feel you do not have the right clothes to wear?
often____, sometimes____, seldom____, never_____.
15. Under each type of clothing please check the style you prefer.
 - A. Dress openings:
open to hemline in front____, open at side____,
open in back_____.
 - B. Sleeves:
long____, three-quarter____, short____, sleeveless_____.
 - C. Skirts:
pleated____, gathered____, flared____, gored____,
straight_____.
 - D. Skirt length:
to the knee____, just below the knee____, mid-calf____,
longer than mid-calf_____.
 - E. Necklines:
Do you like necklines with collar____, or collarless_____.

If you like collarless, which type do you prefer:
 high round____, medium round____, V shaped____,
 U shaped____, square____, draped_____.

F. Type of garment:
 suit____, one piece dress____, dress with matching
 jacket____, skirt and blouse_____.

G. Design in fabric (for a dressy dress):
 solid____, print_____.

If you prefer a print, which type do you like best:
 small print____, large print____, plaid____,
 stripe____, polka dots_____.

H. Color (for a dress):
 bright____, subdued_____.

I. Specific color preference (for a dress):
 red____, pink____, yellow____, white____, light
 blue____, violet____, beige____, brown____, green____,
 navy____, gray____, black_____.

J. Shoes - heel height:
 high heel____, medium heel____, low heel____,
 flat heel____, cuban heel____, wedgie_____.

K. Shoe style:
 pump (closed toe and heel)____, laced shoe____,
 sandal____, open toe____, open toe and heel_____.

16. Do you wear sports clothes such as slacks, pedal pushers,
 bermudas?
 often____, sometimes____, seldom____, never_____.
17. Do you usually wear a foundation garment? yes____, no____.
 If yes, is it an "all-in-one?" yes____, no_____.
18. Do you wear hats?
 often____, sometimes____, seldom____, never_____.
19. Do you wear a sweater?
 often____, sometimes____, seldom____, never_____.
20. Do you feel that the clothes you find in the stores suit
 your age?
 often____, sometimes____, seldom____, never_____.

21. Do the styles you find make you feel older?
often____, sometimes____, seldom____, never____.
22. Do you sew for yourself? Yes____, no____.
23. Do you wish you had more money to spend on clothes?
yes____, no____.
24. With whom are you living?
husband____, children____, parents____, friend____,
sister____, alone____.
25. Do you work outside the home? yes____, no____.
If yes, what kind of work do you do? _____

26. In which of these age groupings do you belong?
39 and under____, 40-44____, 45-49____, 50-54____,
55-59____, 60-64____, 65-69____, 70-74____, 75-79____,
80-84____, 85 and over____.
27. In which of these brackets would you say your yearly
income falls? (Include social security).
less than \$999____ \$2000 to \$2999____ \$4000 to \$4999____
\$1000 to \$1999____ \$3000 to \$3999____ \$5000 and over____

APPENDIX B

B. WOMEN'S CLOTHING

This questionnaire has been formulated in an attempt to find out what you, as a retailer, feel women 60 years and older prefer in their clothing, and also what kind of a selection you are able to provide for these women. The information gained will be used for a course of study at Michigan State University.

Directions:

1. Do not write your name or the name of your store on this questionnaire.
2. Please answer every question.
3. When you are through, please fold the questionnaire and seal it in the envelope provided.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Suzanne Shipley

1. Type of store:
department store____, women's specialty store____,
chain store____, other (specify)_____.
2. Department:
A. dresses____, sports clothes____.

B. women's____, misses____, junior____, other
(specify)_____.
3. What price line or lines do you carry?_____.
- Is this considered:
"budget"____, "moderate"____, "better"_____.
4. What is the size range in this department?_____.
5. What houses (brands) do you carry?_____

6. Are any of the houses (brands) you carry designed with the older woman (60 years and older) in mind?
yes____, no____. If yes, specify which ones_____
_____.
7. About what percentage of your stock would you consider suitable for the older woman?_____.
8. In your department, is there any emphasis placed on clothing for this age group? yes____, no____.
9. Is any of your advertising ever concerned with this age group? yes____, no____. If yes, approximately what percentage_____.
10. In the fashion shows in which your department is represented, are fashions suitable for this age group displayed?
yes____, no____. If yes, approximately how many_____
_____.
11. Following are various types of clothing. Please check those features which you feel older women prefer.
Please check only one in each category.
- A. Dress openings:
open to hemline in front____, open at side____,
open in back_____.
- B. Sleeves:
long____, three-quarter____, short____, sleeveless_____.
- C. Skirts:
pleated____, gathered____, flared____, gored____,
straight_____.
- D. Skirt length:
to the knee____, just below the knee____, mid-calf____,
longer than mid-calf_____.
- E. Necklines:
Do they like necklines with collar____,
or collarless_____.
- If they like collarless, which type do they prefer:
high round____, medium round____, V shaped____,
U shaped____, square____, draped_____.

F. Type of garment:

suit____, one piece dress____, dress with
matching jacket____, skirt and blouse_____.

G. Design in fabric (for a dress):

solid____, print_____.

If they prefer a print, which type do they like best:

small print____, large print____, plaid____,
stripe____, polka dots_____.

H. Color (for a dress):

bright____, subdued_____.

I. Specific color preference (for a dress):

red____, pink____, yellow____, white____, light blue____,
violet____, beige____, brown____, green____, navy____,
gray____, black_____.

J. Pants:

slacks____, pedal pushers____, bermudas____,
short shorts_____.

12. Do you have a demand for casual clothing, such as slacks,
pedal pushers, from this age group of 60 years and older?
very much____, some____, little____, none at all_____.
 13. Do you have a demand for high fashion from this age group?
very much____, some____, little____, none at all_____.
 14. Do these women do much credit buying?
very much____, some____, little____, none at all_____.
 15. What price lines are most popular with them?_____
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