

An Attempt to Measure Social Norms concerning Clothing Behavior

ABSTRACT

A questionnaire survey was administered to 175 female students from 3 samples (co-ed university, women's college, and dress-making professional school) to measure their values and norms of clothing behavior. Five out of 35 styles (dresses) and 10 out of 20 occasions were selected in pretests on the basis of ratings by the judges according to their 'formalness'. Respondents in the survey were asked to estimate their friends' approval/disapproval for each case of wearing each dress on each occasion (a norm among female students), together with an anticipated approval/disapproval from their parents (parents' expectation) and their own approval/disapproval (private position). An expanded version by the author of Jackson's Return Potential Model was utilized to analyze the data. Norms of clothing behavior of the 3 samples proved quite similar. Further analysis of one sample (co-ed university) revealed that their private positions generally coincided with the norms, and parents were seen to discriminate more severely between formal and informal occasions.

The values measured by means of a Japanese version of Creekmore's Inventory showed little difference among the 3 samples. Some minor differences were found which suggest coincidence between types of values and private positions concerning clothing behavior.

Methodologically, the Jackson's Return Potential Model expanded by the author proved applicable to the measurement of social norms.

Key words: clothing behavior, social norm, return potential model