

High School Girls' Clothing Behavior according to Self-Criticism and Self-Satisfaction

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Abstract

The Purpose of the study was to analyse high school girl's clothing behavior according to self-criticism and self-satisfaction for a synthetic understanding of the relationship between self-concept and clothing behavior. The study also intended to provide useful data and information for effective counseling activities in high schools.

Normative-descriptive survey method was employed to implement the present study. Won-Shik Jung's standardized self-concept test was used for the measurement of Self Criticism and Self Satisfaction. A questionnaire was used to measure clothing behavior. The subjects were 436 2nd year high school girls at three girl's high schools located in Pocheon, Kyunggi-do and at three girl's high schools located in Dobong-ku and Gangnam-ku, Seoul.

The results of the study are as follows:

- (1) The present high school girls have the sound ability to criticize themselves positively, and they are generally satisfied with themselves.*
- (2) Self criticism affects clothing behavior except practicability and has a bigger influence on the group having the lower score of individuality, fashionability, aesthetics, satisfaction and psychological clothing-dependence than on the group having the higher score of them. The group having the high self criticism score has high individuality, fashionability, aesthetics, and satisfaction in clothing behavior. Compared with the group having low self-criticism, the group having high self-criticism has the lower psychological clothing-dependence.*
- (3) Self satisfaction affects clothing behavior except fashionability, and has a bigger influence on the group having the low score of individuality, fashionability, aesthetics, clothing satisfaction, and psychological clothing-dependence than on the group having the higher score. Those more satisfied with themselves are more satisfied with their clothing, and more interested in practicability and aesthetics of clothing. Compared with the group having low self satisfaction, the group having high self satisfaction has the lower psychological clothing-dependence.*
- (4) Those who are responsible for student guidance program need to keep in mind that one's self-criticism and self-satisfaction level, which are quite difficult to grasp, can be assumed by the observation of characteristics of clothing behavior.*

Key words : self-criticism, self-satisfaction, clothing behavior.

I. Introduction

Clothing has an influence on human behavior, but its influence is especially great on teenagers. Teenagers have a strong need for clothing since they are concerned about their appearance and attire. They consider clothing as a means to acquire favorable impression from their peers¹⁾. Furthermore, their psychological clothing-dependence is very high because emotional and psychological status change easily according to their clothing. Clothing becomes especially very important to them as their interest in the other sex is growing.

Self-concept, which is at the core of the personality structure, means how a person perceives, criticizes and feels about herself. Perception of oneself covers perception of one's features, ability and thinking. Perception of one's features implies perception of clothing. Therefore clothing can not be separated from oneself since clothing is a very important factor in maintaining oneself²⁾. This means that clothing is an expression of self-concept. From this point of view, it could be easily assumed that the understanding of the relationship between clothing behavior and self-concept of teenagers will be very helpful in understanding teenagers' self-concept, attitude and emotional status.

On the other hand, human behavior changes as a

person's value system changes, and the value system changes according to the person's social background. Therefore, with the change in value system, clothing behavior, as a part of human behavior, should be studied continuously in order that the results of the study are useful for real application. That is, in order to let the results of the study have reliability and validity for vivid utilization, a continuous and cumulative study of this field should be done so that these results can be compared with the previous ones and new findings can be applied to society in a timely manner.

Moreover, most of the previous studies³⁾⁻⁴⁾, related to self-concept and clothing behavior focused on the relationship between clothing behavior and physical, moral-ethical, personal, family and social self, which belong to the external self system. This might cause biased evaluation about the relationship between clothing behavior and self-concept.

In the present study, the researcher analyzed high school girl's clothing behavior according to self-criticism and self-satisfaction, which are the internal self system for a synthetic understanding of the relationship between self-concept and clothing behavior. The researcher also intended to provide useful data and information for effective counseling activities in high school.

The specific research problems of the study are to clarify ① the general trend in high school

¹ K. C. Garrison, *Psychology of Adolescence*, Prentice Hall, 1971, p.215.

² G. P. Stone and L. M. Gure, "Depression: Relation to Clothing and Appearance Self-concept," *Home Economics Research Journal*, 13(1):20.

³ S. K. Kim and H. J. Yoon, "The Influence of Self-esteem on Clothing Behavior," *Journal of Korean Society of Clothing and Textiles*, 10(1):1-8.

⁴ S. J. Lee, "A Study on the Relationship between Women's Clothing Behavior and Self-concept," Sook Myung University Thesis Collection 23, 1984.

⁵ H. S. Sim, "Relationship between Self-Concept and Clothing Behavior of High School Girls," Kwang Won University, Master's Thesis, 1991.

⁶ M. J. Kwon, "Clothing Behavior and Self-Concept of Adolescent," Young Nam University, Master's Thesis, 1984.

⁷ N. B. Lee, "Consciousness to Clothing Behavior and Self-concept of High School Girl Who Needs Special Care," Ehwa Women's University, Master's Thesis, 1985.

⁸ S. E. Hong and P. G. Cho, "Self-Concept of High School Girls in Relation to Their Clothing Selection Behavior," *The International Journal of Costume Culture*, 2(1): 1-9.

girl's self-criticism and self-satisfaction, ② the difference in clothing behavior between the groups which were classified according to the level of self-criticism, and ③ the difference in clothing behavior according to self-satisfaction.

Clothing behavior was analyzed only in the aspects of conformity and individuality, fashionability, practicality, aesthetics, psychological clothing-dependence, and clothing satisfaction. The subjects were confined to high school girls living in Seoul and Pocheon, which may prevent the findings from being generalized nationwide. In the present study, the term self-criticism was considered as the ability to criticize oneself in positive way, and the meaning of self-satisfaction was how satisfied one is with oneself.

II. Review of Literature

1. Self-Concept

According to many researchers and writers on the subjects of human behavior, an important key to understanding an individual's conduct is derived from a study of the concept he has of himself. William James⁹ explains his Empirical Me under three sub-headings: (1) the constituents of self, (2) self feelings, and (3) the acts of self preservation and self seeking. George Herbert Mead¹⁰ developed the idea that the self is an object of awareness instead of simply a system of processes. According to Won Shik Jung¹¹, self-concept is consist of four general categories(self-Identity, self-satisfaction, self-behavior,

self-criticism) and five specific categories (physical self, moral-ethical self, personal self, family self, social self). In essence, Mead theorizes that one really responds and reacts toward himself in a similar way that other people respond and react toward him. Mead's conception, therefore, is one of a socially formed self. The many facets of the self may emerge separately as distinct products of different social group interactions. In this manner, one's family self may differ markedly from one's worker self. According to Rogers¹², a good indicator of a person's mental health is manifest by how he perceives himself. As he moves toward better mental health, his self concept becomes more positive, and vice versa. Truax¹³ noted that a person's behavior is strongly affected by the self system and thus has a great influence, although indirect, on his interrelationships with others. Marston¹⁴ drew the conclusion that an individual's behavior is definitely tied to his self image and the self perception of a person is a good determinant of his behavior.

2. Self-Concept and Clothing Behavior

Stone and Gure¹⁵, and Ryan¹⁶ noted the close relation between clothing behavior and self-concept of a human being. According to Lee,¹⁷ a woman having the high self-esteem show more interest in clothing than a woman having the low self-esteem does. According to Humphrey, Klassen, and Greakmore¹⁸, high school students having the high level of self-esteem show a

⁹ William James, *Principles of Psychology*, Henry Holt, 1980. p.176.

¹⁰ George H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, University of Chicago Press, 1934.

¹¹ W. S. Jung, *Manuals of Self-concept Measuring*, Korean Testing Center, 1967. p.2.

¹² Carl R. Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications, and Theory*, Houghton-Mifflin, 1951.

¹³ D. C. Truax, "Some Implications for Behavior Therapy for Psychotherapy," *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 13, 160-170.

¹⁴ A. R. Marston, "Self-Reinforcement Research: Analogue to Psychotherapy," Unpublished manuscript, University of Wisconsin, 1965.

¹⁵ G. P. Stone and L. M. Gure, "Depression: Relation to Clothing and Appearance Self-concept," *Home Economics Research Journal*, 13(1):20.

¹⁶ M. S. Ryan, *Clothing; A Study in Human Behavior*, Holt Rineheart and Winston, Inc., 1966.

¹⁷ E. Y. Lee, "Consumer's Preference for the Production of Junior's Clothing," Seoul National University, Master's Thesis, 1983.

tendency of considering aesthetics of clothing very important. They also regard their clothing as a mean of attracting other's attention. Sim¹⁹, Kwon²⁰, and Lee²¹ noted high school girls having high level of self-concept shows higher scores in comfort, management, and modesty, but lower scores in conformity of clothing. Ryan²² said that clothing satisfaction during a young age has a great influence on forming a sense of social stability and self-confidence. Jang,²³ and Kim²⁴ reported in their studies that teenagers have self-confidence and a sense of stability when they are satisfied with their clothing. On the other hand, when they think their attire is humble or unsuitable compared with their friends, they lose their self-confidence and sense of stability. They also dislike meeting and getting together with others and even feel worthless. Because positive feelings acquired during the teenage years are very closely related to self-concept, clothing plays a great role especially during this stage of life²⁵.

III. Research Method

1. Instrument

Won-Shik Jung's standardized self-concept test was used for the measurement of Self Criticism and Self Satisfaction.

A questionnaire was used to measure clothing behavior. The questionnaire included 60 questions regarding conformity and individuality, fashionability,

practicality, clothing satisfaction, aesthetics, and psychological clothing-dependence which were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Those questions were chosen from the items which had been used in previous studies,^{26)~28)} and selected on the basis of Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient.

2. Sample and Data Collection

The self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 500 2nd year high school girls at three girl's high schools located in Pocheon, Kyunggi-do and at three girl's high schools located in Dobong-ku and Gangnam-ku, Seoul. The data were collected and analyzed in July 1998. 68.8% of the respondents considered income level of their households to be average, low 16.6%, and high 14.6%.

3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by the SAS package. Descriptive statistics, t-test, quantification method, chi-square analysis and Duncan's multiple range test were employed for the statistical analysis of the data gathered from 438 respondents. In order to investigate if there is any difference in clothing behavior according to self-criticism and self-satisfaction scores, the respondents were classified into two groups, low and high. Those falling below the mean score were categorized as low; those falling above the mean score were categorized as high.

¹⁸ C. Humphrey, M. Klassen, and A. M. Creekmore, "Clothing and Self-concept of Adolescent," *Journal of Home Economics*, 63(4):54-60.

¹⁹ Hyun Sup Sim, *op. cit.* p.40.

²⁰ M. J. Kwon, *op. cit.* p.47.

²¹ N. B. Lee, *op. cit.* p.41.

²² M. S. Ryan, pp.291-301.

²³ B. L. Jang, *Psychology of Adolescent*, Bupmoonsa, 1968, pp.54-60.

²⁴ S. H. Kim, "The Influence of Uniform on Student's Self-Concept and Clothing Behavior," Korea Teacher's College, Master's Thesis, 1992.

²⁵ S. B. Kaiser, *Social Psychology of Clothing*(2nd ed), Macmillan Co. 1990.

²⁶ S. K. Kim and J. S. Park, "A Study on the Relationship between Self-Esteem and Clothing Behavior," *Journal of the Korean Society of Clothing and Textiles*, 14(4):305-313.

²⁷ S. H. Kim and M. H. Lee, "Clothing Behavior Related to Selected Personality Traits of the Normal and Disabled Females," *Journal of the Korean Society of Clothing and Textiles*, 13(4): 347-356.

²⁸ A. R. Koh and H. W. Kahng, "The Relationship between Locus of control, Body Cathexis and Clothing Behavior of Korean Men," *Journal of the Korean Society of Clothing and Textiles*, 7(2): 45-52.

IV. Results

1. The General Trend in Self-Criticism and Self Satisfaction

A high self-criticism score measured by Jung's self-concept scale means a sound ability to criticize oneself and low score means that the person is defensive or has a tendency to try to show only a good side of herself. A high self-satisfaction score means a high satisfaction with oneself, and a low score means the opposite.

As shown in <Table 1>, the mean score of self-criticism of the sample used in the present

study is higher than that of the sample used in Jung's²⁹⁾ study, which means that the present high school girls in general have a sound ability to criticize themselves positively.

Although the self-satisfaction score of the present sample is lower than that of Jung's sample, the score is quite high, indicating that most of the respondents are generally satisfied with themselves.

2. Self Criticism and Clothing Behavior

As indicated in <Table 2>, there is no significant difference in practicality between the two groups classified in accordance with the self criticism

<Table 1> Self-criticism and self-satisfaction mean scores of the two samples
(Jung's & the present study's)

| | The present sample (N:436) | | Jung's Sample (N:2,463) | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| | M | SD | M | SD |
| Self-criticism | 34.09 | 4.62 | 31.88 | 5.23 |
| Self-satisfaction | 90.97 | 10.54 | 95.92 | 11.39 |

* M: mean score SD: standard deviation

<Table 2> Clothing behavior of groups classified by self-criticism scores

(N = 436)

| Clothing behavior | High & low self-criticism groups (N) | M | SD | t-value |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------|--------|----------|
| Individuality | Low group (234) | 29.1581 | 3.3105 | 2.5802** |
| | High group (202) | 29.9752 | 3.2863 | |
| Fashionability | Low group (234) | 28.4358 | 5.3654 | 2.2367* |
| | High group (202) | 29.6733 | 6.0800 | |
| Psychological clothing-dependence | Low group (234) | 33.1929 | 6.1539 | 2.9210** |
| | High group (202) | 31.5196 | 5.4784 | |
| Clothing satisfaction | Low group (234) | 30.6855 | 2.9834 | 1.9956* |
| | High group (202) | 31.2677 | 3.1484 | |
| Practicality | Low group (234) | 32.5854 | 3.6562 | 0.3183 |
| | High group (202) | 32.6980 | 3.7032 | |
| Aesthetics | Low group (234) | 31.3004 | 4.6307 | 2.1417* |
| | High group (202) | 32.1262 | 5.1277 | |

* P<0.05, ** P<0.01

²⁹⁾ W. S. Jung, p.8.

score, the low having below average and the high having above average. But conformity and individuality, fashionability, psychological clothing-dependence, aesthetics and clothing satisfaction show significant differences. The group having the high self criticism score shows higher scores in individuality, fashionability, aesthetics, and satisfaction. Therefore, it could be said that the high tendency of individuality, fashionability and aesthetics in clothing behavior could serve as a barometer of a positive and sound ability to criticize oneself. Psychological clothing-dependence was lower in the group having the high self criticism score than in the group having the low self criticism..

<Table 3> shows the relationship between self-criticism and the clothing behavior by groups. The result of the quantification method analysis shows that self-criticism affects clothing behavior. Self-criticism also has a bigger influence on the groups having the lower score of individuality, fashionability, practicability, aesthetics, satisfaction and psychological clothing-dependence.

3. Self Satisfaction and Clothing Behavior

As shown in <Table 4>, no significant difference was found in fashionability according to self satisfaction. But significant differences were observed between the two groups in individuality, practicability, aesthetics, clothing satisfaction, and

<Table 3> The results of the analysis by quantification method on the relationship between clothing behavior and self-criticism/self-satisfaction

| | Individuality | | Fashionability | | Practicality | | Aesthetics | | Psychological dependence | | Satisfaction | | |
|------------|---------------|---------|----------------|---------|--------------|---------|------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|--------------|---------|--------|
| | Estimate | p-value | Estimate | p-value | Estimate | p-value | Estimate | p-value | Estimate | p-value | Estimate | p-value | |
| Self crit. | L | -0.6927 | 0.0416 | -1.2222 | 0.0289 | -0.9893 | 0.0327 | -1.4978 | 0.0171 | -1.9332 | 0.0010 | -0.6531 | 0.0459 |
| | H | 0.0000 | | 0.0000 | | 0.0000 | | 0.0000 | | 0.0000 | | 0.0000 | |
| Self sati. | L | 0.6077 | 0.0463 | -1.8007 | 0.0236 | -0.9166 | 0.0341 | -0.8775 | 0.0373 | -0.8684 | 0.0364 | -0.8307 | 0.0415 |
| | H | 0.0000 | | 0.0000 | | 0.0000 | | 0.0000 | | 0.0000 | | 0.0000 | |

* H : high group, L: low group. crit.: criticism, sati.: self-satisfaction.

<Table 4> Clothing behavior of groups classified by self-Satisfaction scores (N=436)

| Clothing behavior | High & low self-satisfaction groups | M | SD | t-value |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|--------|---------|
| Individuality | Low group | 29.9017 | 3.1564 | 2.3724* |
| | High group | 29.1509 | 3.4511 | |
| Fashionability | Low group | 28.9196 | 5.8885 | 0.3353 |
| | High group | 29.1037 | 5.5791 | |
| Practicality | Low group | 32.2767 | 3.5954 | 2.1141* |
| | High group | 33.01885 | 3.7263 | |
| Aesthetics | Low group | 31.1855 | 4.9760 | 2.1706* |
| | High group | 32.2000 | 4.7267 | |
| Psychological dependence | Low group | 32.8476 | 6.3127 | 2.0204* |
| | High group | 31.7546 | 5.4109 | |
| Clothing satisfaction | Low group | 30.0698 | 3.1568 | 2.8900* |
| | High group | 31.2293 | 2.9598 | |

* P<0.05

psychological clothing dependence behavior. The individuality score of the group having the high self-satisfaction score is lower than that of the group having the low self satisfaction score, which means the low self satisfaction group is more interested in individuality. The practicability, clothing satisfaction and aesthetics scores of the high self-satisfaction group are higher than those of the low self satisfaction group (see Table 4). This result partially supports Koh and Kahng's³⁰⁾ study which suggests that body cathexis is positively related to clothing satisfaction, that is, people having higher satisfaction with their clothing are more satisfied with their bodies. The psychological clothing dependence score of the high self-satisfaction group is lower than that of the low self satisfaction group.

As shown in <Table 3>, self-satisfaction affects clothing behavior.

Self satisfaction has a bigger influence on the group having a low score of individuality, fashionability, aesthetics, clothing satisfaction, and psychological clothing dependence than on the group having high score in them.

V. Conclusion and Implications

1. The present high school girls have the sound ability to criticize themselves positively, and they are generally satisfied with themselves.
2. Self criticism affects clothing behavior except practicability and has a bigger influence on the group having the lower score of individuality, fashionability, aesthetics, satisfaction and psychological clothing-dependence than on the group having the higher score of them. The group having the high self criticism score has high individuality, fashionability, aesthetics, and satisfaction in clothing behavior. Compared with the group having low self-criticism, the group having high self-criticism has the lower psychological clothing-dependence.
3. Self satisfaction affects clothing behavior except fashionability, and has a bigger influence on the group having the low score of individuality, fashionability, aesthetics, clothing satisfaction, and psychological clothing-dependence than on the group having the higher score. Those more satisfied with themselves are more satisfied with their clothing, and more interested in practicability and aesthetics of clothing. Compared with the group having low self satisfaction, the group having high self satisfaction has the lower psychological clothing-dependence.
4. Those who are responsible for student guidance program need to keep in mind that one's self-criticism and self-satisfaction level, which are quite difficult to grasp, can be assumed by the observation of characteristics of clothing behavior.
5. Extremely high conformity and psychological clothing-dependence in clothing behavior of a high school girl could be considered as a symptom of her unsound self-criticism. Therefore, in this case, the counseling activities need to give more attention to promote the positive sense of self-criticism.
6. Extremely low practicality or aesthetics in clothing behavior high school girl could be considered as a symptom of that she needs to develop positive sense of self-satisfaction. In this case the counselor has to try to provide her with as much motivations for improving the sense of self-satisfaction as possible.
7. Studies on the characteristics of clothing behavior of the students showing extremely high or low self-criticism and self-satisfaction, which was exempted in the scope of this study, should be made for further examines these areas.

³⁰⁾ A. R. Koh and H. W. Kahng. "The Relationship between Locus of Control, Body Cathexis and Clothing Behavior of Korean Men," *Journal of the Korean Society of Clothing and Textiles*, 1983, 7(2): 45-52.

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