

CLOTHING: FITTING PROBLEMS AND PREFERENCES
OF WOMEN 65 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Certain problems related to dress seem to be causing women 65 years of age and older a high degree of annoyance and distress. The women are searching for solutions to these problems in an effort to meet today's standards for dress and grooming. The primary problems the majority of these women encounter are proper fit and availability of suitable clothing (38). Previously the women in this age group have had little attention directed to their problems by either the dress designers or manufacturers.

The eye of the fashion world has been focused on the young women and the teenager. Now, however, as the population percentages change, there will be more consumers in the age group of 65 years and older, and their needs must be met. The fact is the needs of the various groups are quite different. Women experience a number of physical changes as they grow older. The physical changes are in the body size and proportion of body parts. Many women experience a thickening of the waist or hips (7). Other changes that develop are a sagging bust line, heavier upper arms, an increase in the length of the front waistline, and rounded shoulders.

The American ready-to-wear market is "youth oriented," and a majority of the apparel is designed for youthful figures. Not only

does the mature woman have difficulty in selecting an appropriate style, but more important, she has problems with fit. The sizing is also for the younger figure, and most ready-to-wear clothing does not fit or conform to the changes in the figure of the older woman.

An increasing proportion of women are in this age group, and they desire to have as attractive appearance as is possible (2). Unfortunately, there is a lack of age-appropriate styles on the market specifically designed or sized to accommodate the changed figure and the different tastes of the elderly women. They must either purchase from the available supply and alter the clothing or have clothing made for them. Securing a proper fit and a style suitable to their age remains a serious problem.

A survey of literature revealed that considerable research has been conducted on health and nutritional problems of the elderly, but little has been focused on specific clothing needs. Results of this study will be beneficial to clothing manufacturers, to retailers, to educators, and to the elderly consumer.

Purpose

The general purpose of this study was to investigate problem areas of garment fit and dress style preferences of women 65 years of age and older.

The specific objectives were:

1. To determine the most common problems of fit

experienced by women 65 years of age and older.

2. To determine the specific styles and clothing features that the selected group of women prefer.

Review of Literature

The increase in the number and proportion of older people in the population of the United States has created much interest in the aging process and the problems of the aged. More attention has been given to aging since the 1940's. In 1945 the Gerontological Society was formed, and the first national conference on aging was called in 1950. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare established the Special Staff on Aging in 1956. The President's Council on Aging was organized in 1962 (3).

The census report of 1976 showed 22.3 million Americans, men and women, 65 years of age or older, representing a total of one out of ten of the total population in this age group. This was an increase from the 1970 figure which showed 20.1 million of age 65 or older and an even greater increase from the turn of the century figures of 3.1 million or one out of twenty-four persons (17).

The most recent census report of 1979 revealed figures of 24.7 million 65 years of age or older, representing 11.2 percent of the total population. The women outnumbered the men in each census by approximately three to two in all reports. The projected increase of this age group by 1990 will be 12.2 percent or 29.8 million (37).

Reasons for the increases are varied, the first being the expected total increase in population. However, other factors contribute to the increase in this age group. There has been a definite advance in improved medical care for the elderly. Today's sanitation, antibiotics, and vaccines have reduced the afflictions of the young and, thereby, increased the number of the population who reach older ages. Care for the aged represents one-third of the total health costs in the United States (8). Another contributing factor has been improved nutrition. Advice on weight control and consumption of essential vitamins and nutrients is easily available, as well as necessary, for maintaining a healthy body (36). Emphasis on physical fitness prior to age 65 and continuing on through the years has been another factor.

The increase in the total population of elderly citizens, with the greatest proportion being women, will subsequently force a change in many facets of life. Among the many areas where change will occur will be the fashion scene, as the 65 year old women comprise a larger segment of the consumer market (21). Their approach to spending money is different from that of those under 65 years of age. As the size of this group has increased, so has their total income. Many in the older age group have retired on company pensions or personal investments plus Social Security benefits. They no longer have dependents nor are they interested in long-range financial plans. The older people are usually not encumbered by mortgages or long-term payments.

In 1979 the average income of this age group was between seven to ten thousand dollars a year, well above the poverty level of \$3,479 for the year. Although about thirty percent of these people lived in poverty, as compared with the national average of 13.3 percent, another thirty percent had incomes above \$6,000 a year, usually tax exempt. Another ten percent had incomes above \$10,000 a year, also largely tax exempt (34).

Although the retired or elderly citizens receive less income because they are no longer salaried nor in the working force, there is a tendency for them to spend more of their income on items that give them pleasure and that are for immediate usage (23). Terry (32) investigated the clothing profiles of a group of women in 7500 households to determine if elderly women differed from women of three other groups regarding a number of demographic variables. Multivariate analysis of variance was computed for the profiles and variables. Age revealed major differences. Among the differences was that as age increased, purchases of dresses, housedresses and pantsuits increased, while it decreased with age for shirts, slacks, jeans and shorts. For the majority of garments purchased, the elderly women tended to pay higher prices. Different sections of the country had a significant effect on the clothing profiles of the women.

To classify the over 65 year old as elderly is difficult today. They are more active and involved in life than previously because of the pattern of their lives before they reached the age of 65. As

stated in an article by Chan (9) people envision their life style at 70 or 80 by looking at themselves at 30. This statement was based on the results of a study conducted over a period of forty years by Mass and Kuyper at the University of California. A group of 142 men and women from the San Francisco area were interviewed as young parents in 1928 and 1929 to determine the degree of their happiness and the scope of their activities. The same sample was again interviewed at 70 years of age. Those who had been happy and involved in many social activities previously had the same outlook while those that had indicated an unhappy outlook and limited involvement in social activities had retained the same feelings. Most people do not change life styles after 30 years of age.

The esteem placed on staying young by society has encouraged this age group to participate actively in life. According to Alex Comfort (29), "Old people are simply young people who have been around a long time." Comfort (11) also maintains that self-defense is the main skill people need as they grow older. The older generation is becoming a more vocal group after being virtually invisible in society for a long time. The status of the aged is in a transitional period. Within the last few decades society has changed from a time when a few people retired to a time when a majority of older people are freed from the working market. Today, many of the aged enjoy relatively good health, whereas previously old age was accompanied by many illnesses (26). An excerpt from a recently published book, Vogue/Stay Young

printed in the March 14th, 1982, issue of the New Orleans' Times-Picayune newspaper (35) revealed that an ad in a 1911 issue of Vogue magazine showed a sweet-faced "old" lady with no makeup. Contrary to the fashion of the day, she is wearing a plain dark bonnet tied under her chin. The ad reads, "Holland Hats - Elderly Ladies Hatters." No advertiser of today would dare depict the woman over 65 in such terms or even elude to the fact that clothing for the elderly was one of their specialties. Yet the fashion industry has neglected the clothing needs of the same group of women (30). Few Seventh Avenue manufacturers would think of designing a line of clothes especially for the older woman although these women are no less vain about their appearance and have a desire to remain attractive. The fashion industry has yet to realize the volume of potential sales in this age group.

The elderly also want to buy the best quality that they can afford as they expect the purchase to last longer (34). Due to the lack of energy of many, shopping is a chore; and, therefore, an activity that they do only when necessary.

Clothing has always fulfilled a psychological need for the older women. Clothing provides an ego support and great assurance of social acceptance, especially at a time of life when women feel their beauty declining and their youthfulness disappearing (20). Clothes help camouflage the aging features as well as give a psychological lift. According to Eberling and Rosencranz (15), clothing is a defense against aging, as stated in their report regarding the writing of other psycho-

logists who emphasized the importance of clothing. Operators of nursing homes realize the therapeutic value of choosing a garment to be worn each day. Dress becomes a link to the outside world and conveys a sense of the future. Dressing up also adds to the uneventfulness in the lives of many of the elderly (19).

The desire to appear attractive remains fundamentally the same throughout all the years in which women are responsible for themselves. Results of surveys made on the age of consumers buying cosmetics revealed that the largest amount bought was by the older customer (34). The urge to preserve good looks and the pride this age group takes in their appearance has been ignored by the manufacturers who have no special products for this group. These manufacturers are reluctant to be classified as connected with the market of the older woman. No products were developed for the older market, and, consequently, none were sold, leading manufacturers to doubt that a market existed. An exception was Clairol's Silk and Silver hair coloring, a successful product that has been copied by other companies (14).

Marie Chay (10) in an article written about her grandmother battles American advertising. Ms. Chay's grandmother was only too glad to shed youth - "What monotony" - and liked age for the privileges that went with it. Shopping to this grandmother was frustrating, as most dress sizes 18 and 20 were for youthful figures in cut, color, pattern and material. Available underwear was found only because of the ski wear. Faith Baldwin (4), authoress of more than 100 books,

deplores the frustration and attitudes of the public on aging. Baldwin is tired of handicaps, destruction of mobility, lessening of sight, and prohibition of those who are elderly and believes that those advancing in years should be recognized as having the wisdom, serenity and mellowness they deserve. Old World cultures have long venerated the elders and regarded the wrinkles and white hairs as an achievement (8).

Among civilized people, from the earliest age up to the present, the time of sexual maturity or the early twenties was the period of time in which fashion ruled the firmest hand (22). Fashion for the older people was not recognized. America exhibits an attitude toward the younger generation that has reached a height unheard of before in history. The respect and homage paid to youth, according to Elizabeth Hurlock (22), is due to a departure from military ideals and the great degree of freedom granted to youths. The labels of many ready-to-wear garments stress the fact that they are made for youth and cater to their desires. The previous picture of the older woman showed her dressed in a conventional dress, perhaps a somber black silk, shawl covering the shoulders and a cap perched on her white curls with a cane leaning against her chair to assist her in walking. Today's picture of the older woman is very different. The older woman of today is active, well-groomed, healthy, and very interested in her appearance. She is only as old as she feels and is allowed to do as she pleases without sanction. The change in the attitude toward the older woman has had an influence on fashion. All American women are

seen as young by the manufacturers regardless of their actual age, and they refuse to surrender the aspect of youth in designing clothes for this older age group. Because there is little available that is designed specifically for older women, many women of this age group must wear ill-fitting clothing or wear clothing made by designs which are inappropriate for their individual figures and age. Clothing is one of the most important items to this age group, and the size of this group is increasing rapidly. Therefore, there is a vast sale potential available to the fashion market.

Ames (1) performed a study in order to develop a profile of the older consumer and to evaluate the effectiveness and acceptability of two forms of clothing and textile consumer information by this segment of society. Interviews with 65 men and women of age 60 and over were held to obtain data. Chi-square distribution tests were utilized to determine significant differences between the three groups. The results revealed that the respondents generally had a positive interest in clothing, frequently engaged in social activities and heavy television viewing. Lack of pleasing styles and excessive cost were expressed by those interviewed as their two greatest clothing consumer problems.

Blair (7) reported that the measurements in ready-to-wear garments and commercial patterns are based on the body contours and proportion of younger women. Many older women are observed wearing ill-fitting garments designed along uninteresting or monotonous lines for

the stout woman or designed for the young figure and personality. Thus, these garments are unsuited to the short, slight, mature woman as well as to the fuller figured woman. The problem seems to be in the cut of the garment and in the change of the contour of the body of the older women.

That there are changes in the body as one ages has long been a recognized fact. According to Walker (38), as noted in his book on growing old, the tissue changes are responsible. As the cartilages between the vertebrae grow thinner, they show a tendency to become partially calcified causing greater difficulty in stooping. This same calcification occurs elsewhere in the body. The shrinking of the total body height is accompanied by a total reduction of weight. However, the tendency for women is the reverse; they tend to add weight. When this happens to a woman her bust line enlarges and her abdominal fat is much increased. If there is a weight loss, the subcutaneous fat is reduced and the weight of the body falls due to degeneration of muscular efficiency.

The most common and earliest change in the contour of the body of the older woman is the thickening of the waistline. Bader (2) at the University of Iowa, explored the clothing problems of 60 women ranging in age from 65 to 93 years and the most reported alteration was change in the waistline. This change is followed by the sagging bust line or change in position of the scye-line. When this occurs, there is normally a decrease in the length from front shoulder line

to front waistline. A woman with a great increase in weight will experience rounded shoulders due to a layer of fat across the back.

Although a thickened waist is the major figure change, larger hips are another frequent figure problem listed by women in this age group. Bartley (5) investigated the clothing preferences of women 65 and older. One of the purposes was to identify problems encountered when selecting certain outer garments. The 47 women who were interviewed stated that a thickened waist was a major figure change and figure problem. However, these women considered large hips as the most frequent figure problem encountered when selecting clothing.

Regardless of sex, the older person shows a weight loss at about age 70. This reduction in weight results in sagging skin and a decrease in lean body tissue (24). The upper arm is the most obvious area where this occurs, and the accumulation of loose skin causes an increase in the overall girth of the upper arms. The joints of the entire body become stiffer, and even movements of the hands are sometimes difficult (16).

Elderly persons are also more sensitive to expansion or loss of fluid volume, causing dehydration (24). As a result, the skin becomes sensitive to harsh, rough textures and surfaces (33).

The body also becomes unable to adjust quickly to temperature changes. This may be due in part to lessened muscular vigor and to the fact that the elderly tend to move less and more slowly and, therefore, do not generate warmth (28). In dressing, if there is a layering

of garments it helps the body of the older person to adjust to the various changes in the temperature (12).

In addition to the physical changes there are changes in the physical characteristics as the individual grows older. Physical attractiveness may either improve or lessen with these changes (28). The most obvious change is in the color of the hair as it turns gray. This can be a positive factor as gray hair is becoming to many people (38). Baldness as well as color change occurs, usually in the males. The color tone of the skin also lightens as the hair changes from its original color, then to gray.

As the tissues of the entire body decrease and the skin sags, the face also becomes more lined and wrinkled. Many lines are shaped by habitual facial expressions and depending on the nature of the expression, anxiety, fear, mirth or humor, can be delightful as well as disagreeable (38). The skin of the neck also shares in the sagging process, and a double chin may appear. The knees and elbows become rough and the legs are less shapely. A bluish cast caused by dilation of the blood vessels covering some areas of the skin, coupled with the yellowing of the sclera of the eye and the skin, makes previously becoming colors now less attractive (31). Other changes that occur are those related to general health, such as loss of energy and vigor, stiffening of muscles, and often loss of eyesight and hearing (16).

In spite of the recognized changes in the body contour, the body proportion and the coloring of skin and hair, the needs of the

elderly woman are seldom considered in the production of current styles. Women wearing half-sizes reported fitting problems with front waist length. The proportion of the measurements used for ready-to-wear garments and commercial patterns are based on the body contours and proportions of younger women (7). A comparison of available pattern sizes revealed an allowance for the increase in body size in the areas of bust, waist and hips for the half-sizes. In the larger sizes or Women's sizes, an overall increase in all areas was noted or simply an increase in the Misses size pattern. However, the back waist length in Half-sizes was shorter than that in Misses sizes. There was no indication of changes or allowances made for the repositioning of the scye-line or an increase in the length of the front waist to accommodate the larger bust line. No allowance was made in either Half-sizes or Women's sizes for the shift in the shoulder line or the dowager's hump. With the change needed to accommodate the added girth across the back shoulder, there must be a repositioning of the back armscye. Additional skirt length is another consideration. The majority of women cling to the modes of modesty in which they were raised, and hem length is certainly one of the foremost features mentioned by this age group that requires alteration (40).

Bartley and Warden (5) studied the preferences and problems of a select group of women 65 years of age and above that were associated with the selection of certain outer clothing. The interviews administered revealed that the dress designs preferred most were those with

gored skirts, V-necklines, set-in three-quarter length sleeves and collars. The shirt-waist style was preferred most by the women who were 65 to 75 years of age.

Ebeling and Rosencranz (15) conducted a study to gain an overall view of the factors which influence social and personal aspects of women 60 years of age and above. Questionnaires were administered to 180 women in this age group. The women generally liked one-piece dresses with jackets (layering), V-necklines, three-quarter length sleeves and goared skirts. A preference for fabrics with small designs in subdued colors also was observed.

Decker (13) studied the color choices of 24 women above 60 years of age at the University of Kentucky. An interview schedule was used containing questions on the women's clothing and color preferences. Results showed that the participants selected blue as their first color choice, followed by green, black and brown. Pastels were mentioned by the participants nine times in the responses to the questionnaire. Hair exerted the greatest influence upon these women in their color selections, followed by skin coloring and eye color.

Hempstead (18) stated that the colors an older woman wears are usually instrumental in portraying a youthful appearance and the use of a color should never be more vivid than the skin coloring. Hair and eyes are easily submerged by colors that are too forceful and vivid. A solution to this problem is not to wear definite colors but colors that have been partially softened or grayed.

Hoffman (19) stated that color provides stimulation to all people. An avoidance of dull, middle-value colors was advised as well as an avoidance of nondescript little floral prints. A better selection for a feeling of well being would be a gay color. Again, blue is mentioned as a favorite color for the elderly. Bell (6) advised the elderly women that the more attractive colors are lighter and softer ones. Cosmetic colors also should be picked carefully in order to flatter the elderly women, avoiding the yellowish and sallow tones.

McClellan (25) studied the relationship between body and clothing satisfaction of a group of 242 women from age 20 to 89 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Secord and Jourard's scale for measuring the body cathexis was utilized for the research. The results of this research revealed that the older age group, 70 to 79, indicated the highest satisfaction with their bodies and the 60 to 69 group experienced the highest satisfaction of clothing. The results of a frequency count of priority ratings revealed a majority of the women considered fit and appearance as the two most important aspects of clothing. One of the conclusions supports Havinghurst's belief that the social and psychological aspects of clothing contribute to a general feeling of well-being.

The figures of the elderly are difficult to fit and the range of colors that are becoming are limited. The incorporation of all desirable features in one garment is difficult (27). More awareness of the needs of the elderly woman and the application of research findings to the problems will aid the manufacturers and retailers in

better serving these consumers.

Definition of Terms Used

Elderly - 65 years of age and above

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURES

This study was designed to obtain information relative to the fitting problems and style preferences of elderly women 65 years of age and older. Also, changes in body structure were examined.

Sample

The sample consisted of 100 women who were 65 years of age or older. The participants chosen were women from various socio-economic levels in an attempt to obtain a cross section of the population. All of the participants were ambulatory and resided in the southern and southwestern parts of the United States.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to collect data. Part I of the questionnaire was designed to obtain demographic information which included age, living accommodations and working experience. Part II of the questionnaire elicited information relative to changes in body contour, fitting problems, clothing acquisition and clothing feature preferences.

The questionnaire was personally administered to the participants. A copy of the questionnaire appears in the Appendix.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data were subjected to frequency and percentage distributions for descriptive purposes. A chi-square distribution analysis was used to determine significant differences between groups relative to the factors investigated. Results were interpreted with the 0.05 level of probability as representative of significant results and the 0.01 level of probability as representative of highly significant results.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This study was designed to ascertain problem areas of garment fit and dress style preferences of women 65 years of age and above. Data were obtained through the use of a questionnaire. The results are presented under the headings of: demographics, changes in body contour, common problems of fit, clothing acquisition and style preferences.

Demographics

Part I of the questionnaire elicited demographic information relative to age, living accommodations and work experience of the participants.

Age

The ages were divided into the following groups: 65 to 69 years of age, 70 to 74 years of age, 75 to 79 years of age and 80 years of age and above. The percentage distribution of the participants by age is shown in table 1.

Ages of the largest number of participants, 34.0 percent, ranged between 70 and 75 years. The smallest number, 16.0 percent, were 80 years old or above.

Table 1. - Percentage Distribution of Participants
by Age

Age Groups	Participants	
	Number	Percent
65-69	25	25.0
70-74	34	34.0
75-79	25	25.0
80-Above	16	16.0

Living Accommodations

Living conditions may affect the types of clothing elderly persons must choose and wear. For example, when elderly persons live alone they often have problems dressing without help, especially with closures and when donning garments. Table 2 shows the percentage distribution of the women according to selected living accommodations.

Table 2. - Percentage Distribution of Participants
by Living Accommodations

Living Accommodations	Participants	
	Number	Percent
Alone	57	57.0
Husband	23	23.0
Retirement Type Home	2	2.0
Relatives	18	18.0

A majority of the participants, 57.0 percent, lived alone, while 23.0 percent lived with their husbands and 18.0 percent lived with relatives. Only 2.0 percent resided in a retirement type accommodation.

Working Experience

The participants were asked to state their working experience. A percentage distribution of their responses appears in table 3.

Table 3. - Percentage Distribution of Participants by Working Experience

Working Experience	Participants	
	Number	Percent
Presently Employed	8	8.0
Previously Employed	68	68.0
Never Employed	24	24.0

As may be observed, 68.0 percent of the women had previously worked, but were not employed at the present time. Eight percent were presently employed, and 24.0 percent had never worked outside the home.

Changes in Body Contour

Changes occur in the body contours as women age. A gain in weight is the most obvious and could be the result of a reduction in physical activity without an accompanying change in diet. The shift in the position of fat is more pronounced with added years, and a

greater amount of fat is deposited on the trunk of the body than on the extremities, causing the abdomen and hips to expand and the waist to thicken. The cartilage between the vertebrae flattens, thus reducing the height of the person and causing spinal changes. As the overall tone of the muscles diminish a resultant loss of strength occurs causing the tissues to sag. These changes cause increased fitting problems for the elderly women.

Noticeable Body Changes

The participants were asked to indicate the body changes that had been the most noticeable. The results are shown in table 4.

A majority of the women indicated that an increased waistline was their most noticeable body change with 80.0 percent of the 65 to 69 age group, 79.4 percent of the 70 to 74 age group, 84.0 percent of the 75 to 79 age group and 81.3 percent of those 80 and above responding in this manner. The second most noticeable change in the body contour was an increase in the girth across the hip area and was indicated by 56.0 percent of those 65 to 69 years, 55.9 percent of those 70 to 74 years, 52.0 percent of those 75 to 79 years and 56.3 percent of those 80 years and above. The third change receiving attention was a change in the position of the bust line and was experienced by 50.0 percent of those 80 years and above. Slightly more than 50.0 percent of all groups noted a change in the hip girth and a shortening in the front waist length was noted by 56.3 percent of the participants 80

Table 4. - Percentage Distribution of Most Noticeable Changes in Body Contour by Age

Changes in Body Contour	Age Groups								Chi-square
	65 - 69		70 - 74		75 - 79		80 - above		
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	
Waist	20	80.0	27	79.4	21	84.0	13	81.3	0.2188
Bust Line	12	48.0	15	44.1	9	36.5	8	50.0	1.0456
Shoulder	5	20.0	5	14.7	6	24.0	4	25.0	1.0955
Arms	8	32.0	5	14.7	4	16.0	3	18.8	3.1111
Front Waist Length	4	16.0	6	17.6	7	28.0	9	56.3	10.1939*
Back Waist Length	2	8.0	2	5.9	4	8.0	4	35.0	4.8627
Hip	14	56.0	19	55.9	13	52.0	9	56.3	0.1218
Dowager's Hump	2	8.0	1	2.9	3	12.0	4	25.0	6.1045

* Chi-square significant at the 0.01 level of probability

years and above. Heavier upper arms were noted by 32.0 percent of those women 65 to 69 years of age. A significant relationship between age and change in the front waistline was found at the 0.05 level of probability.

Weight Gain

Participants were questioned regarding a permanent weight gain of five pounds or more since they were 50 years of age as evidence of a change in the body that could affect the fit of clothing. Table 5 contains the women's responses.

Table 5. - Percentage Distribution of Weight Gain by Age

Age Group	Weight Gain			
	Yes		No	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
65-69	20	80.0	5	20.0
70-74	25	73.5	9	26.5
75-79	10	40.0	15	60.0
80-above	5	31.3	11	68.8

Chi-Square = 16.4368, significant at the 0.001 level of probability

A weight gain was cited by 80.0 percent of those 65 to 69 years of age and by 73.5 percent of those who were 70 to 74 years old. However, the majority of the women who were 75 to 79 years old and those who were 80 and above replied that they had not experienced a weight gain since they were 50 years of age. The chi-square number of 16.4368

revealed a highly significant difference between age groups relative to noticing or not noticing a weight gain since they were 50 years old.

Pattern Size

A change in the sizes of dresses worn would indicate a change in the figures of women responding to the questionnaire. Table 6 shows the percentage distribution of sizes worn when the participants were in their twenties and the sizes worn at present.

The largest number of those responding, 49.0 percent, stated that the sizes they wore when younger were sizes 12 through 14 and 37.0 percent reported wearing sizes 6 through 11. There were 32.0 percent who reported wearing sizes 12 through 14 at the present time, a decrease. Twenty-eight percent now wear sizes 16 through 20, an increase from the 12.0 percent who previously wore those sizes. There were increases in the percentages of those presently wearing the larger sizes, particularly sizes 14 1/2 through 18 1/2 with 15.0 percent presently as contrasted with 1.0 percent who had worn those sizes during their 20's. The results of a chi-square distribution showed no significant difference between the sizes worn when the participants were in their twenties and the sizes presently worn.

Fitting Problems

As one ages and the body contours change, fitting problems increase. Many factors influence fit, among them are comfort and

Table 6. - Percentage Distribution of Dress Sizes Worn by Age Periods

Age Periods	Sizes											
	6 - 11		12 - 14		16 - 20		38 - 42		14 1/2-18 1/2		20 1/2-24 1/2	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
During 20's Present	37	37.0	49	49.0	12	12.0	1	1.0	1	1.0	0	...
	17	17.0	32	32.0	28	28.0	6	6.0	15	15.0	6	6.0

Chi-square = 16.4362, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

alterations. These factors, as well as finding clothes that fit satisfactorily, become problems for the edlerly.

Comfort

The participants were requested to state their ability to obtain comfortable clothing that they liked. Their responses are shown in table 7.

Table 7. - Percentage Distribution of Responses to Obtaining Comfortable Clothing by Age

Age Group	Participant Responses					
	Yes		Sometimes		No	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
65-69	12	48.0	11	44.0	2	8.0
70-74	20	58.8	12	35.3	2	5.9
75-79	14	56.0	8	32.0	3	12.0
80-above	10	62.5	4	25.0	2	12.5

Chi-Square = 2.4184, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

The largest percentage in all age groups stated that they were able to find comfortable clothing they liked. Forty-four percent of those 65 to 69 years of age and only 25 percent of those 80 years or older indicated that they sometimes were able to find comfortable clothing. Although there were slight differences in the reponses of the four groups none were significantly different as revealed by the chi-square distribution results.

Difficulty in Clothing Selection

The participants were asked to indicate whether or not they had difficulty selecting a dress that fit their figure. Table 8 presents the percentage distribution of the difficulty encountered in selecting dresses that fit by age groups.

Table 8. - Percentage Distribution of Difficulty Encountered in Selecting Clothing that Fits by Age

Age Group	Difficulty Encountered					
	Yes		Sometimes		No	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
65-69	11	44.0	7	28.0	7	28.0
70-74	10	29.4	10	29.4	14	41.2
75-79	8	32.0	4	16.0	13	52.0
80-above	4	25.0	4	25.0	8	50.0

Chi-Square = 4.5431, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

Forty-four percent of those 65 to 69 years of age stated that they encountered difficulty in selecting clothing that fit, whereas the percentage of those who did not experience difficulty in the 70 to 74, 75 to 79, and 80 and above age groups were 41.2 percent, 52.0 percent, and 50.0 percent respectively. The responses regarding the difficulty in selecting clothing that fits parallels the responses relative to ability to find comfortable clothing.

Need for Alterations

Responses to alteration needs were obtained and a percentage

distribution of the results appears in table 9.

The age group 65 to 69 contained the largest number of participants who needed alterations as indicated by 44.0 percent of this group. An equal percentage in this age previously indicated that they had experienced difficulty in selecting clothes that fit. Slightly more than 41.0 percent of the participants 70 to 74 years of age stated they sometimes needed alterations. The chi-square distribution results revealed no significant differences between the groups.

Table 9. - Percentage Distribution of Need for Altering Clothes to Insure Satisfactory Fit by Age

Age Group	Alterations Needed					
	Yes		Sometimes		No	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
65-69	11	44.0	6	24.0	8	32.0
70-74	9	26.5	14	41.2	11	32.4
75-79	7	28.0	9	36.0	9	36.0
80-Above	3	18.8	7	43.8	6	37.5

Chi-Square = 4.164, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

Areas Altered

Those participants who had stated that alterations are needed for a dress to fit satisfactorily were requested to indicate places where the alterations were needed. Table 10 displays the percentage distribution of these areas.

Table 10. - Percentage Distribution of Alterations Needed for Satisfactory Fit by Age

Alterations	Age Group								Chi-square
	65 - 69		70 - 74		75 - 79		80 - above		
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	
Waist	5	20.0	2	5.9	6	24.0	6	37.5	7.7819*
Back Waist Length	1	4.0	2	5.9	1	4.0	3	18.8	4.1497
Shoulder	3	12.0	8	23.5	6	24.0	3	18.8	1.5303
Hem Length	11	44.0	18	52.9	10	40.0	7	43.8	1.0946
Sleeve	3	12.0	8	23.5	5	20.0	1	6.3	2.9401
Front Waist Length	2	8.0	3	8.8	3	12.0	2	12.5	0.3856
Other	0	....	0	....	0	....	2	12.5	10.7142*

* Chi-square significant at the 0.05 level of probability

A majority of the respondents in each group indicated a need for an alteration in the hem length with 52.9 percent of those age 70 to 74, 44.0 percent of those 65 to 69, 43.8 percent of those 80 and above, and 40.0 percent of those 75 to 79 years old responding affirmatively to this need. This may be reflective of the conservative nature of the participants. A need for waistline alterations was reported by 37.5 percent of the women 80 years and above. Alterations to the shoulder area were needed by 23.5 percent of those participants 70 to 74 years of age and by 24.0 percent of those 75 to 79 years of age. Results showed that the areas reported as needing alterations were hem length, shoulders, waistline and sleeves. There was a significant difference between the women in the four age groups relative to a need for alterations at the waistline.

Clothing Acquisition

The retail market is the source of clothing for all ages. Elderly women have special needs in clothing and methods of shopping that are unique due to their age. Information was obtained that determined factors concerning the acquisition of the groups' clothing.

Suitability

The participants were asked if they could obtain dresses in correct sizes suitable for their particular ages. Table 11 presents their responses.

Table 11. - Percentage Distribution of Obtaining Suitable Dresses in Correct Sizes by Age

Age Groups	Ability to Obtain Suitable Dresses					
	Yes		Sometimes		No	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
65-69	12	48.0	5	20.0	8	32.0
70-74	21	61.8	4	11.8	9	26.5
75-79	14	56.0	3	12.0	8	32.0
80-Above	8	50.0	2	12.5	6	37.5

Chi-Square - 1.9034, not significant at 0.05 level of probability

The largest percentage in each age group indicated they could find suitable dresses in the correct sizes for their age. These percentages ranged from 48 percent of the 65 to 69 age group to 61.8 percent of the 70 to 74 age group. Finding a suitable style in the correct size was considered difficult by 37.5 percent who were 75 to 79 years of age, the largest percentage of all the groups reporting difficulty. Those who comprised the smallest percentages of each group indicated that they sometimes could find suitable dresses in the correct sizes. Differences between the age groups relative to finding suitable dresses in the correct sizes were not significant.

Purchases of Clothing

Responses relative to the individual purchasing the clothing of the participants are presented in table 12. The responses are grouped according to the working experience of the women.

Table 12. - Percentage Distribution of Individuals Who Purchase Clothing of the Participants by Working Experience

Working Experience	Individual Who Purchases Clothing					
	Self		Others		Both	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Employed	5	62.5	1	12.5	2	25.0
Previously Employed	58	85.3	3	4.4	7	10.3
Never Employed	14	58.3	5	20.8	5	20.8

Chi-Square = 9.5403, significant at the 0.05 level of probability

The largest number of women in each of the three groups indicated they purchased their own clothing, 62.5 percent of the employed, 85.3 percent of the previously employed, and 58.3 percent of those who had never worked. Other individuals did the purchasing for 20.8 percent of the women who had never worked, for 12.5 percent of those that were employed and for 4.4 percent of the women who had been previously employed. Clothing purchased by both self and others was the source of clothing for 25.0 percent of the employed women, 20.8 percent of those who had never been employed, and for 10.3 percent of those who had previously worked. The difference between these groups relative to the individual who purchased their clothing was significant.

Clothing Origin

The participants cited the origin of their clothing. The percentage distribution of their responses appears in table 13.

Table 13. - Percentage Distribution of the Clothing Origin of the Participants by Age

Age Group	Clothing Origin							
	Ready to Wear		Sewn		Second Hand		Gifts	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
65-69	22	88.0	2	8.0	0	...	1	4.0
70-74	30	88.2	1	2.9	2	5.9	1	2.9
75-79	23	92.0	1	4.0	0	...	1	4.0
80-Above	14	87.5	2	12.5	0	...	0	...

Chi-Square = 6.5539, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

Ready-to-wear was the origin of the clothing of the largest number of participants in each age group. The origin of the clothing of the least number of the women was second-hand with only 5.9 percent of the 70 to 74 age group indicating this type of clothing. Only three listed gifts as the origin of their clothing, and 6 stated sewn by themselves or others as the origin of their clothing.

Factors That Influence Dress Buying

The participants were requested to check the three factors they considered most important when buying a dress. Table 14 presents the percentage distribution of their responses.

Fit was considered the most important factor when buying a dress by 84.0 percent of the 65 to 69 age group and 82.4 percent of the 70 to 74 age group, while color was the most important factor for 80.0 percent of the 75 to 79 group. The second most important factor

Table 14. - Percentage Distribution of Factors Considered When Buying a Dress by Age

Factors Considered	Age Groups								Chi-square
	65 - 69		70 - 74		75 - 79		80 - above		
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	
Color	17	68.0	21	61.8	20	80.0	11	68.8	2.2584
Fit	21	84.0	28	82.4	19	76.0	12	75.0	0.8676
Comfort	18	72.0	20	58.8	12	48.0	12	75.0	4.4342
Ease of Care	8	32.0	8	52.9	12	48.0	6	37.5	3.0008
Style	11	44.0	15	44.0	11	44.0	7	43.8	0.0006

of 72.0 percent of the 65 to 69 age group was comfort. For 76.0 percent of the 75 to 79 group fit was second in importance, while color was second in importance for 61.8 percent of the 70 to 74 group. Fit and comfort were equally as important for the 80 and above age group with 68.8 percent indicating that color was second in importance..

Factors that were third in importance were as follows: color for the 65 to 69 age group and the 70 to 74 age group, both comfort and ease of care for the 75 to 79 age group, and style for the 80 and above group. No significant differences occurred between the groups relative to the factors considered when buying a dress.

The factors that influence dress buying also were analyzed according to working experience categories. The results appear in table 15.

Table 15. - Percentage Distribution of the Most Important Factors Considered When Buying a Dress by Working Experience

Factors	Working Experience						Chi Square
	Presently Employed		Previously Employed		Never Employed		
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	
Color	5	62.5	46	67.6	18	75.0	0.620
Fit	5	62.5	60	88.2	15	62.5	1.007*
Comfort	4	50.0	40	58.8	18	75.0	2.501
Ease of Care	5	62.5	28	41.2	11	45.8	1.363
Style	5	62.5	29	42.6	10	41.7	1.214

* Significant at the 0.05 level of probability

The three factors considered most important by the three working experience groups were similar to those of the age groups. However, a significant difference between the working experience groups relative to fit as the most influential factor was noted.

Clothing Feature Preferences

Most women are aware of the necessity for changes in their selection of colors as they age due to the silvery tones of their hair and the paleness of their skin. Elderly women prefer certain fashion styles that they feel are more attractive and comfortable to their mature figures and their physical capabilities. Specific clothing features are usually needed due to a decrease in physical dexterity. Features such as, front dress openings, necklines, sleeve designs and dress closures often must be modified in order to ensure ease in dressing for elderly women. From the aesthetic standpoint, color and fabric design are important to the elderly woman since she desires to be attractive.

Color

A list of colors was provided from which the participants selected their first and second choices. These choices are recorded in table 16.

Observation of table 16 showed that the first color choice of a majority of each age group was navy or light blue with navy being

Table 16. - Percentage Distribution of First and Second Color Choices by Age

Color Choice																												
Age Group	Navy		Light Blue		Pink		Red		Green		Aqua		Purple		Lavender		Orange		Yellow		Brown		Black		Gray		White	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
First Choice ^a																												
65 - 69	7	28.0	9	36.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	0	...	1	4.0	2	8.0	1	4.0	0	...	0	...	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.4	0	...
70 - 74	10	29.4	9	26.5	1	2.9	3	8.8	6	17.6	3	8.8	0	...	0	...	0	...	1	2.9	0	...	0	...	1	2.9	0	...
75 - 79	10	40.0	5	20.0	1	4.0	2	8.0	2	8.0	0	...	2	8.0	2	8.0	0	...	0	...	1	4.0	0	...	0	...	0	...
80-above	6	37.5	6	37.5	2	12.5	0	...	0	...	0	...	0	...	1	6.3	0	...	0	...	0	...	1	6.3	0	...	0	...
Second Choice ^b																												
65 to 69	5	20.0	1	4.0	3	12.0	2	8.0	2	3.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	2	8.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	3	12.0	2	8.0	0	...	1	4.0
70 to 75	3	8.8	6	17.6	2	5.9	2	5.9	4	11.8	1	2.9	0	...	3	8.8	0	...	4	11.8	3	8.8	3	8.8	1	2.9	2	5.9
75 to 79	3	12.0	7	28.0	2	8.0	2	8.0	1	4.0	2	8.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	0	...	0	...	3	12.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0
80-above	2	12.5	1	6.3	1	6.3	3	18.8	2	12.5	1	6.3	1	6.3	2	12.5	0	...	0	...	0	...	1	6.3	1	6.3	1	6.3

^a. Chi-square = 32.2713, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

^b. Chi-square = 27.1294, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

chosen first by 4.0 percent more than those that chose light blue. However, pink, red and green were the first choice of a few participants.

Navy and light blue were favored as second choices by a majority of the participants, however, light blue was chosen more often than navy as a second choice color. The selection for second choice of colors was more varied than the selection for first choice as revealed by 18.8 percent of the 80 and above age group selecting red as their second choice and 12.0 percent of both the 65 to 69 and 75 to 79 groups selecting brown. There was no significant difference between the groups relative to the choices of colors.

Fabric Design

The participants preferences for fabric design were obtained and appear in table 17.

Solid color fabric design was chosen by the largest percent of the women in all age groups. Fabric with a print was favored by 14.7 percent of the 70 to 74 age group while 12.5 percent of those 80 and above indicated a preference for a striped design. The differences between the age groups relative to fabric design choices were not significant.

Front Dress Closures

Closures are often a problem for the elderly due to a decrease

Table 17. - Percentage Distribution Of Fabric Design Preferences by Age

Age Group	Fabric Design											
	Floral		Stripe		Solid		Dotted		Plaid		Print	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
65 - 69	1	4.0	1	4.0	20	80.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0
70 - 74	3	8.8	1	2.9	24	70.6	1	2.9	0	...	5	14.7
75 - 79	2	8.0	0	...	21	84.0	1	4.0	0	...	1	4.0
80 - above	1	6.3	2	12.5	10	62.5	1	6.3	0	...	2	12.5

Chi-square = 11.4261, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

in muscular coordination resulting from the aging process. The participants' preferences for front dress closures are shown in table 18.

A zipper closure was preferred for front dress openings by a majority of three of the age groups, 72.0 percent of the 75 to 79 year olds, 52.9 percent of those 70 to 74 years old, and 50.0 percent of those 80 years of age and above, respectively. An equal number, 40.0 percent, of the 64 to 69 year olds preferred one with either a zipper closure or with medium buttons. Thirty-two percent of the women 70 to 74 years of age preferred small buttons on front dress openings. Chi-square results revealed no significant differences between the age groups in relation to closure preferences for front dress openings.

Belts

Belts are sometimes cumbersome and uncomfortable for elderly women. Therefore, the participants were requested to express their preferences regarding belts. The belt styles preferred are listed in table 19.

The tie belt was specified as the most desirable type by the largest percentages in all age groups. The second most preferred belt style of three of the age groups was the buckle type. This type was preferred by 44.0 percent of the 75 to 79 group, 36.0 percent of the 65 to 69 group, and 35.3 percent of the 70 to 74 group. The types preferred least were the set-in belt and the draw-string. Slightly

Table 18. - Percentage Distribution of Preferred Front Dress Closures

Closures	Age Groups								Chi-square
	65 - 69		70 - 74		75 - 79		80 - above		
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	
Zipper	10	40.0	18	52.9	18	72.0	8	5.0	5.3514
Snaps	1	4.0	2	5.9	1	4.0	1	6.3	0.2135
Small Buttons	9	36.0	11	32.0	6	24.0	1	6.3	5.1312
Medium Buttons	10	40.0	9	26.5	11	44.0	7	43.8	2.5516
Ties	3	12.0	6	17.6	3	12.0	3	18.8	0.7163
Velcro	1	4.0	1	2.9	2	8.0	0	....	1.8976

Table 19. - Percentage Distribution of Preferred Belt Styles by Age

Age	Belt Style Preferences									
	Buckle		Tie		Set-in		Draw-string		None	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
65 - 69	9	36.0	9	36.9	0	...	0	...	7	28.0
70 - 74	12	35.3	15	44.1	1	2.9	1	2.9	5	14.7
75 - 79	11	44.0	12	48.0	0	...	0	...	2	8.0
80 - above	4	25.0	7	43.8	0	...	0	...	5	31.3

Chi-square = 9.6530, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

more than 31.0 percent of the 80 and above age group designated no belt as a preference. The older women evidently preferred less constriction at the waistline. The tie belt, that is adjustable, accommodates an increase or decrease in the size of the waistline. The results indicated that despite the comfort offered by no belt, a majority of the women probably were inclined to conform to styles they had been accustomed to wearing.

Neckline

Sketches of five neckline styles were presented, and the participants were requested to select their first and second preferences. The percentage distribution of their choices are shown in table 20.

The convertible neckline was preferred by a majority of the total participants of all age groups with 81.3 percent of those 80 and above, 67.6 percent of the 70 to 74 group, 64.0 percent of the 75 to 79 age group, and 60.0 percent of the 65 to 69 age group selecting this style as their first choice. The scoop and the cardigan necklines were the least desired.

As a second choice, a majority of three of the groups chose the tie neckline with 44.1 percent of the 70 to 74 year old, 40.0 percent of the 65 to 69 year olds, and 37.5 percent of those 80 years old and above indicating this preference. An equal number, 28.0 percent of the 75 to 79 age group preferred either the tie or convertible neckline. Differences between the age groups regarding their

Table 20. - Percentage Distribution of Preferred Neckline Designs by Age

Age Group	Neckline Designs									
	Convertible		Round		Scoop		Tie		Cardigan	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent

First Preference^a

65 - 69	15	60.0	5	20.0	2	8.0	3	12.0	0	...
70 - 74	23	67.6	4	11.8	2	5.9	3	8.8	2	5.9
75 - 79	16	64.0	2	8.0	0	...	5	20.0	2	8.0
80 - above	13	81.3	0	...	1	6.3	1	6.3	1	6.3

Second Preference^b

65 - 69	4	16.0	8	32.0	1	4.0	10	40.0	2	8.0
70 - 74	3	8.8	4	11.8	7	20.6	15	44.1	5	14.7
75 - 79	7	28.0	5	20.0	2	8.0	7	28.0	4	16.0
80 - above	1	6.3	2	12.5	2	12.5	6	37.5	5	31.3

a. Chi-square = 10.1929, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

b. Chi-square = 16.1852, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

preferences were not significant.

Sleeve

The participants were requested to indicate their first and second preferences for sleeve designs from five sketches. The results appear in table 21.

The first preference of a majority of the respondents of all age groups was the long sleeve. The percentages ranged from 64.0 percent to 40.0 percent. The cap sleeve was the first choice of the least number of the women. The raglan sleeve design was the second preference of 41.2 percent of the age group 70 to 74 and 32.0 percent of the 75 to 79 age group. The 65 to 69 year old group selected both long and roll-up sleeve designs as their second choice with 28.0 percent preferring each style and equal percentages of 31.3 percent of the 80 and above group preferring the raglan and roll-up sleeve styles. Results showed that the cap sleeve design was also a second choice of the least number of the respondents. Chi-square distribution results showed that there was no significant difference between the sleeve design preferences of the age groups.

Silhouette

Participants designated their first and second preference of five silhouette sketches. A percentage distribution of these preferences appears in table 22.

Table 21. - Percentage Distribution of Sleeve Style Preferences by Age

Age Group	Sleeve Style									
	Cap		Short		Long		Raglan		Roll-up	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent

First Preference^a

65 - 69	1	4.0	9	36.0	10	40.0	1	4.0	4	16.0
70 - 74	2	5.9	9	26.5	18	52.9	3	8.8	2	5.9
75 - 79	1	4.0	3	12.0	16	64.0	4	16.0	1	4.0
80 - above	0	...	3	18.8	10	62.5	1	6.3	2	12.5

Second Preference^b

65 - 69	1	4.0	4	16.0	7	28.0	6	24.0	7	28.0
70 - 74	0	...	3	8.8	9	26.5	14	41.2	8	23.5
75 - 79	0	...	1	4.0	5	20.0	8	32.0	11	44.0
80 - above	0	...	3	18.8	3	18.8	5	31.3	5	31.3

a. Chi-square = 10.6346, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

b. Chi-square = 9.6782, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

Table 22. - Percentage Distribution of Silhouette Preferences by Age

Age Group	Silhouette									
	Sheath		A-line		Princess		Shirtwaist		Tent	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
First Preference ^a										
65 to 69	10	40.0	4	16.0	2	8.0	9	36.0	0	...
70 to 74	7	20.0	3	8.8	12	35.8	12	35.3	0	...
75 to 79	6	24.0	3	12.0	5	20.0	10	40.0	1	4.0
80 and above	4	25.0	2	12.5	5	31.3	5	31.3	0	...
Second Preference ^b										
65 to 69	2	8.0	7	28.0	5	20.0	7	28.0	4	16.0
70 to 74	7	20.6	4	11.8	10	29.4	9	26.5	4	11.8
75 to 79	6	24.0	4	16.0	9	36.0	4	16.0	2	8.0
80 and above	1	6.3	7	43.8	6	37.5	2	12.5	0	.....

a. Chi-square = 11.0190, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

b. Chi-square = 15.2022, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

The silhouette selected by the largest percentage, 40.0 percent, of the 65 to 68 age group was the sheath. Of the 70 to 74 year old group 35.8 percent indicated a preference for the princess style as their first choice. The shirtwaist was the first preference of 40.0 percent of the 75 to 79 year old group, and for the 80 years and above group both the shirtwaist and princess silhouette were preferred by 31.3 percent each.

The second choices of the age groups were similar to the first choices with preferences for the princess and shirtwaist silhouette. The A-line silhouette was preferred by 43.8 percent of those 80 years and above. Although the shirtwaist silhouette was indicated most frequently as a first choice, a small number of the women chose the loose fitting styles without belts as their first and second preferences.

Dress Openings

The participants indicated their first and second preferences of dress openings from five illustrations, namely--center front to waist, center front to hip level, center front full length, wrap-around full length, and center back to hip level. A percentage distribution of the choices are shown in table 23.

The full length center front opening was the first preference of 44.0 percent of those participants 65 to 69 years of age. This style also was selected by 43.8 percent of those 80 years of age and above. The style that opened down center front to the hip level was

Table 23. - Percentage Distribtuion of Dress Opening Preferences by Age

Age Group	Dress Opening									
	Waist		Midway		Down Front		Wrap-around		Down Back	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
First Preference ^a										
65 to 69	6	24.0	4	16.0	11	44.0	2	8.0	2	8.0
70 to 74	6	17.6	15	44.1	7	20.6	4	11.8	2	5.9
75 to 79	5	20.0	9	36.0	7	28.0	3	12.0	1	4.0
80 and above	4	25.0	4	25.0	7	43.8	0	....	1	6.3
Second Preference ^b										
65 to 69	2	8.0	4	16.0	5	20.0	6	24.0	8	32.0
70 to 74	5	14.7	8	23.5	15	44.1	1	2.9	5	14.7
75 to 79	2	8.0	8	32.0	9	36.0	2	8.0	4	16.0
80 and above	1	6.3	9	56.3	2	12.5	4	25.0	0	....

a. Chi-square = 10.0194, not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

b. Chi-square = 25.3663, significant at the 0.05 level of probability

the first preference of 44.1 percent percent of the 70 to 74 group and of 36.0 percent of the 75 to 79 age group. The dress that opened down center back to hip level was the first preference of the least number of the women.

The dress style opening down center front full length was the second preference of 44.4 percent of the 70 to 74 age group and by 36.0 percent of the 75 to 79 age group. The style of dress that opened down center front to hip level was the second preference of 56.3 percent of the 80 years and above group. The second preference of 32.0 percent of the 65 to 69 age group was the style that opened down center back to hip level. The wrap-around full length opening was preferred second by 25.0 percent of the 80 and above age group. A highly significant difference occurred between the second preferences for dress openings of the four age groups.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate problem areas of garment fit and dress style preferences of women 65 years of age and older. The sample consisted of 100 women ranging in age from 65 to 80 and above. A questionnaire was utilized to obtain data. Part I elicited demographics and Part II obtained information relative to noticeable body changes, fitting problems, clothing acquisitions and style preferences of the participants.

Frequency and percentage distributions were used for descriptive purposes. Chi-square distribution analyses were utilized to determine significant differences between groups relative to the factors investigated.

Results showed that a highly significant relationship was found between a change in the length of the front waist and age. A highly significant relationship also existed between weight gain and age.

A significant relationship existed between the need for alterations at the waistline and age. The difference between the working experience groups relative to the individual who purchased their clothing was significant at the 0.05 level of probability. A significant difference existed between the working experience groups rela-

tive to fit as an important factor considered when buying a dress.

There was a highly significant difference between age groups and the second preference for types of dress openings.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study the following recommendations are suggested:

1. A study comparing the measurements of current commercial dress sizes with actual body measurements of elderly women.
2. A study similar to this investigation with a sample of men rather than women.
3. A study investigating fabric texture, weight, hand and design relative to individual comfort and aesthetic preferences of the elderly.

APPENDIX

November 14, 1981

Dear Participant:

I am Clara M. Laiche pursuing my Master's Degree at Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. For my research project, which is part of the degree requirement, I have chosen an investigation into the Fitting Problems and Preferences of Clothing of the Woman 65 years of age and above and need your help to obtain the necessary information. The following questionnaire is for you to complete. No signature is required.

Because of the policies of the Human Subjects Review Committee, I am required to add the following statements directed to you:

I UNDERSTAND THAT MY RETURN OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE CONSTITUTES MY INFORMED CONSENT TO ACT AS A SUBJECT IN THIS RESEARCH.

No Medical Service or Compensation is provided to subjects by the University as a result of injury from participation in research.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Dissertation/Theses signature page is here.

To protect individuals we have covered their signatures.

CLOTHING: FITTING PROBLEMS AND PREFERENCES OF WOMEN 65 YEARS OF AGE
AND OLDER

PART I

DEMOGRAPHICS

Check the one blank in each of the following categories that best describes your situation.

1. LIVING ACCOMODATIONS

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| a. Live alone | a. _____ |
| b. Live with husband | b. _____ |
| c. Live in retirement type home | c. _____ |
| d. Live with relatives | d. _____ |

2. WORKING EXPERIENCE

- | | |
|--|----------|
| a. Presently employed | a. _____ |
| b. Previously employed full or part time | b. _____ |
| c. Never employed outside the home | c. _____ |

3. AGE GROUP

- | | |
|---------------|----------|
| a. 65 - 69 | a. _____ |
| b. 70 - 74 | b. _____ |
| c. 75 - 79 | c. _____ |
| d. 80 - above | d. _____ |

1. Are you able to find comfortable clothing you like? Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____
2. Do you have difficulty selecting a dress that fits your figure? Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____
3. Does a dress have to be altered in order for it to fit satisfactorily? Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____
4. If the answer to the above is YES, where are alterations needed?

a. Waist line	a. _____
b. Back waist length	b. _____
c. Shoulder	c. _____
d. Hem length	d. _____
e. Sleeves	e. _____
f. Front waist length	f. _____
g. Other	g. _____
5. Did these same alterations have to be made when you were younger? Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____
6. Are you satisfied with the fit of the altered dress? Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____
7. Check the changes that have been the most noticeable to you in your body structure.

a. Increased waist size	a. _____
b. Change in position of bust line	b. _____
c. Rounded shoulders	c. _____
d. Heavier upper arms	d. _____
e. Shorter front waist length	e. _____
f. Longer back waist length	f. _____
g. Increased girth in hip area	g. _____
h. Dowager's hump	h. _____
i. Other	i. _____
8. Of the above which two have been the most noticeable? 1. _____ 2. _____
9. Have you had a permanent weight gain of 5 pounds or more since you were 45 years of age? Yes _____ No _____
10. In ready-to-wear clothing what dress size fits you most satisfactorily? _____

11. What has been the smallest dress size you have worn since you were in your twenties? _____

12. Do you find dresses in clothing stores in your size suitable for women your age? Yes _____ No _____

13. How is the majority of your clothing purchased?

- a. Purchased by you
b. Purchased by others
c. A combination of both

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

14. Is the majority of your clothing

- a. Ready-to-wear
b. Sewn by you or others
c. Second hand
d. Gifts

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____

15. What are your two favorite colors in the following list?

Navy
Light Blue
Pink
Red
Green
Aqua
Purple

Lavender
Orange
Yellow
Brown
Black
Gray
White

1st

2nd

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

16. Check the fabric design that you prefer when selecting a dress.

- a. Floral
b. Stripe
c. Solid
d. Dotted
e. Plaid
f. Print

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____
f. _____

17. Excluding the price, check the three items you consider most important when buying a dress.

- a. Color
b. Fit
c. Comfort
d. Ease of care
e. Style of dress

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____

18. Check the closures that you prefer for front dress openings.

- | | |
|-------------------|----------|
| a. Zipper | a. _____ |
| b. Snaps | b. _____ |
| c. Small buttons | c. _____ |
| d. Medium buttons | d. _____ |
| e. Ties | e. _____ |
| f. Velcro | f. _____ |

19. Check the type of belt that you prefer.

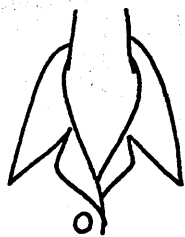
- | | |
|----------------|----------|
| a. Buckle | a. _____ |
| b. Tie | b. _____ |
| c. Set in belt | c. _____ |
| d. Draw string | d. _____ |
| e. None | e. _____ |

20. Using the following illustrations, check the design you like for each

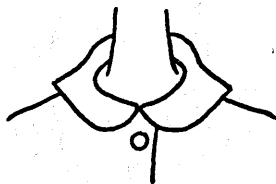
- | | <u>1st choice</u> | <u>2nd choice</u> |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| a. Neckline | _____ | _____ |
| b. Sleeve | _____ | _____ |
| c. Silhouette | _____ | _____ |
| d. Dress Openings | _____ | _____ |

NECKLINES

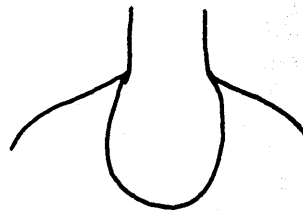
61



a. Convertible



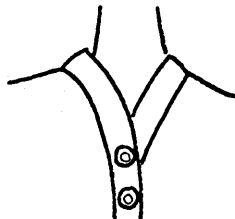
b. Round



c. Scoop

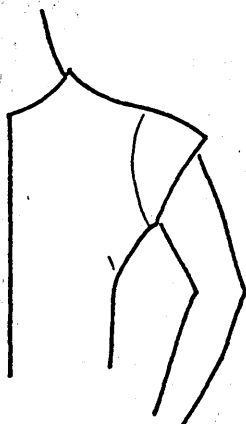


d. Tie

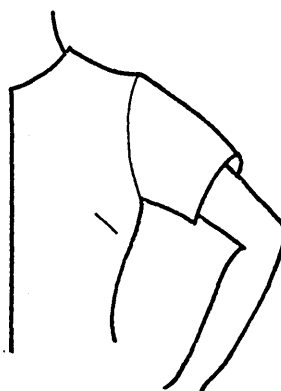


e. Cardigan

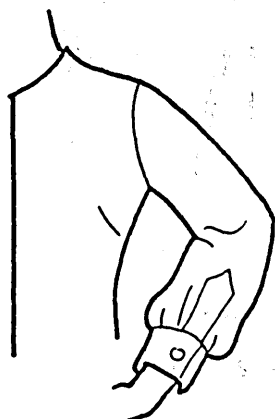
SLEEVES



a. Cap



b. Short



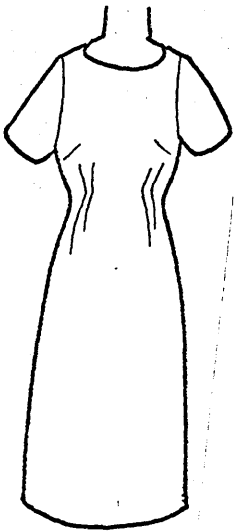
c. Long



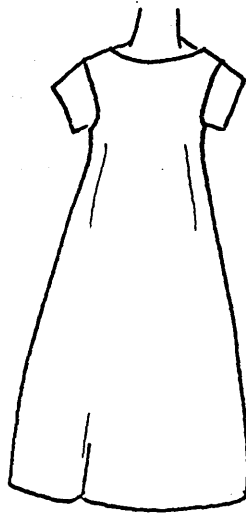
d. Raglan



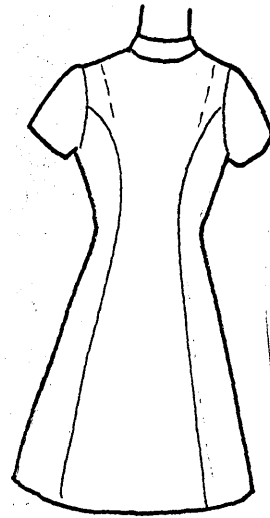
e. Roll-up



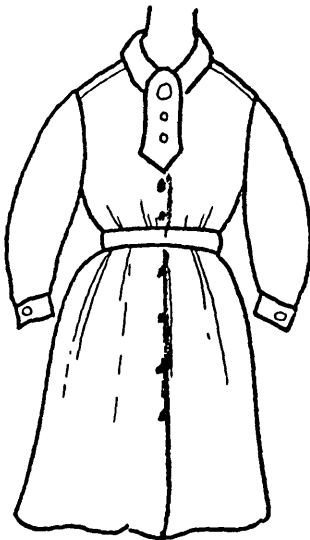
a. Sheath



b. A-line



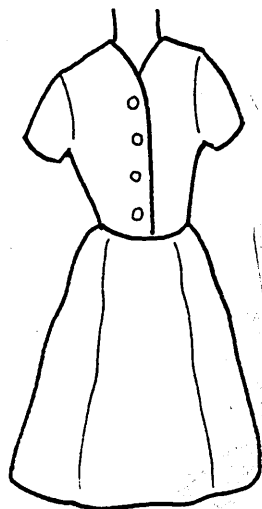
c. Princess



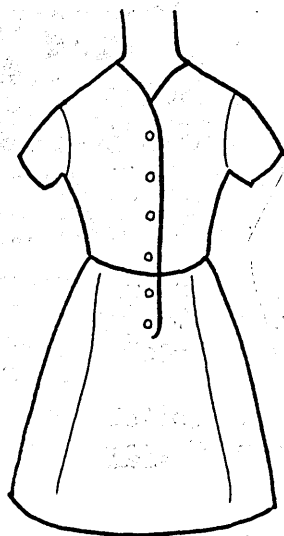
d. Shirtwaist



e. Tent



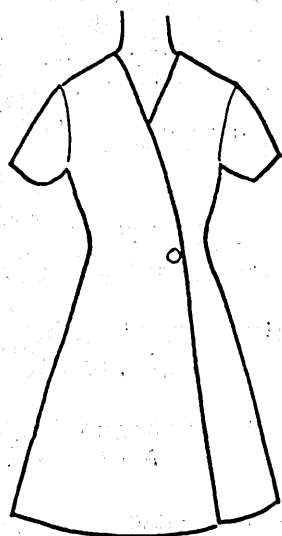
a. To waist



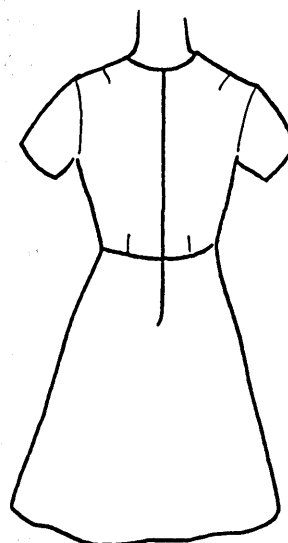
b. Midway



c. Down Front



d. Wrap Around



e. Down Back

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