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Publication in IJHE provides wide exposure to journal articles and adds to the professional literature base of the field. Theoretical papers, literature reviews, and a wide range of genres along with research papers are invited for publication in the journal. As editor, I strongly encourage submissions to the journal. The papers included in this issue of the journal represent a diverse range of genres but share a common thread—a strong link to enhancing wellbeing. All refereed articles have undergone rigorous, double-blind review, and are adding to the professional literature base of the field.

2014 marks the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF), offering an opportunity to: refocus on the role of families in development; take stock of recent trends in family policy development; share good practices in family policy making; review challenges faced by families worldwide and recommend solutions. The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) will support the anniversary with a campaign focusing on “Empowering Families, Individuals and Communities through Home Economics.” The International Journal of Home Economics (IJHE) will publish a special issue with a focus on family to align with this significant anniversary in December 2014. The intent of the special issue is to provide a platform for the examination of various aspects of family research and thus to foster progress in its theoretical development. Papers are currently under review for this special issue.

Professor Donna Pendergast, PhD
Editor, IJHE
Attitudes and buying behaviours of cross-cultural college students toward apparel products

Amy Harden & Yuanyuan Zhang

Ball State University, US

Abstract

The purpose of this research study was to compare and contrast the fashion attitudes and buying behaviours of college students at a Midwestern university in the United States and at a metropolitan university in China toward apparel products, and to clarify the factors that contribute to differences and similarities among the two markets. Data were obtained from 317 American and Chinese college students with an age range of 18 to 24 years. The consumer decision-making characteristics related to fashion attitudes were supported by the buying behavioural results in this study. Although similarities outweighed differences overall, several subtle differences were identified in buying characteristics by country. The study confirmed that globalization and cultural background factors including demographics and psychographics have an impact on characterizing fashion attitudes and buying behaviours between American and Chinese college student consumers. Implications of the findings suggest to marketers of US apparel firms that several appropriate globalization and management strategies can be implemented for gaining successful market presence in China.

Key words: cross-culture, attitudes, shopping, apparel, college students

Introduction

Meeting multicultural consumer needs by providing the right products and services in today’s global market is a great challenge for marketers, retailers, and suppliers (Kim, Forsythe, Gu & Moon, 2002). Currently, fashion apparel industries, under the influence of globalization, have been eager to gain a larger market, not only in their country of origin, but in other markets with high potential (Kim, Forsythe, Gu & Moon, 2002). In the past two decades, global marketers have attempted to explore various market opportunities in China. China, with one fourth of the world’s population, has the world’s fastest rate of economic growth and ranks second in the world in gross domestic product (GDP: The World Bank, 2010). China offers enormous market opportunities for textile and apparel firms (Jin & Kang, 2010). On the other hand, the United States, with the largest purchasing power, saw imports of apparel products double between 1992 and 2002 to $63.8 billion (Kunz & Garner, 2007). In the apparel and textile sector, US companies claim only six percent of the imported apparel market in China compared to 46 percent for France and 38 percent for Italy (Zhang, Dickson, & Lennon, 2002). Most US apparel firms historically haven’t effectively exploited the opportunity to sell their brand in foreign markets (Kunz & Garner, 2007), although numerous US apparel companies
have actively sought overseas opportunities for business expansion. These facts clearly denote that the United States should pursue more market opportunities in China (Wu & Delong, 2006).

Consumers may choose particular products and brands, not only because they provide the functional reasons such as basic physical and survival needs, but also because products can be used to express consumers’ personality, social status or to fulfil their internal psychological needs (Kim, Forsythe, Gu & Moon, 2002). According to Yau (1994), consumers’ product choice and preference for a particular product or brand are generally affected by complex social influences and environment. Consumers’ preferences also change over time as their consumption situation and environment change (Yau, 1994). The development of global markets has resulted in an increase in product choices, retail channels (e.g., catalogues, Internet, and stores) and promotional activities that provide an abundance of information. These developments make consumers’ decisions more complex and perhaps even more important today than in the past (Walsh, Mitchell & Hennig-Thurau, 2001). Therefore, identifying and understanding cross-cultural consumers’ attitudes and buying behaviours toward apparel products is the primary task for successful global apparel firms. To be successful, US apparel firms should examine differences and similarities between American and Chinese buying behaviours and decision making styles, and clarify factors affected by these differences and similarities. A comparison of these two markets will help US apparel firms make appropriate globalization strategies to appeal to their target market and widen profit as a successful firm in the future.

The purpose of this study was to compare and contrast the fashion attitudes and consumer buying behaviours of US college students at a Midwestern university and Chinese college students at a metropolitan university toward apparel products. Specifically, the research questions included: 1) what fashion attitudes do American and Chinese college student consumers have based on consumer decision-making style toward apparel products? What are the similarities and differences? What factors influence their fashion attitudes? 2) what buying behaviours do American and Chinese college student consumers have toward apparel products? What are the similarities and differences? What factors influence their buying behaviours? and 3) is there any relationship between cross-national consumers’ fashion attitudes and buying behaviours toward apparel products?

Results of this empirical study can provide a better understanding of the cross-cultural fashion attitudes and buying behaviours between US and Chinese college students. Although several cross-cultural consumer decision-making styles toward apparel products research can be found (Hafstrom, Chae & Chung, 1992; Durvasula, Lyonski & Andrews, 1993; Lyonski, Durvasula & Zotos, 1996; Mitchell & Bates, 1998; Fan & Xiao, 1998; Hiu, Siu, Wang & Chang, 2001; Walsh, Mitchell & Hennig-Thurau, 2001; and Leo, Bennett & Hartel, 2005), updating a comparison study of cross-cultural consumer behaviour is needed as consumers’ purchase behaviour changes over time following their consumption situation and environment change (Yau, 1994). This is especially important among Chinese consumers due to the rapid economic growth that has occurred in recent years. Identifying the differences and similarities of consumer behaviour styles by using an established survey from previous studies would provide
the factors affecting these results. This information will help US apparel firms make appropriate globalization strategies for gaining successful global market presence.

**Literature Review**

In an increasingly globalized business environment, it is essential that marketing management learn about differences in cross-cultural consumer decision-making. The success of an organization in a culturally different market place may be largely affected by how well the decision-makers grasp the consumers’ buying behaviours, and how well they are able to incorporate such understanding into their marketing plan and strategies (Leo, Bennett, and Hartel, 2005). Shopping orientation research has covered various industries, products, and groups of consumers. Examples include: catalogue (Gehrt & Carter, 1992; Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980), grocery (Williams, Painter & Nicholas, 1978), non-store retail (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980), supermarket (Darden & Ashton, 1974), cosmetics (Moschis, 1976), and recreational shopping (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980).

**Studies of consumers’ behaviour**

Many researchers have attempted to explain consumers’ decision-making behaviours when choosing new products. According to Sproles and Kendall (1986), consumer decision-making style refers to the mental orientation that characterizes a consumer’s approach toward making choices. Consumer decision-making has both cognitive and affective characteristics. Although many factors influence consumer decision-making, consumers are thought to approach the market with certain basic decision-making styles (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). In the existing consumer behaviour literature, most studies assume that all consumers approach shopping with certain decision-making traits that combine to form a consumer’s decision-making style, such as brand/store loyalty (Moschis, 1976), quality consciousness (Darden & Ashton, 1974) or value consciousness (McDonald, 1993).

Previous literature suggests three ways to characterize consumer decision-making style: the consumer typology approach, the psychographics/lifestyle approach, and the consumer characteristics approach (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). The consumer typology approach seeks to categorize consumers into groups or types that are related to retail patronage (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980). These studies have typically focused on specific products, product groups or on the general retail market place (Westbrook & Black, 1985). The psychographics/lifestyle approach identifies over a hundred characteristics related to consumer behaviour based on general activities interests or lifestyles (Lastovicka, 1982). Lastly, the consumer characteristic approach emphasizes the cognitive and affective orientations towards purchasing in consumer decision-making (Sproles, 1985; Westbrook & Black, 1985). This approach holds the assumption that consumers process cognitive and affective orientations to determine their consumer decision-making styles (Fan & Xiao, 1998; Sproles & Kendall, 1986).

Although the three approaches provide for a unified theme that consumers approach the market with basic decision-making styles (Sproles & Kendall, 1986), the consumer characteristics approach has been perceived to be more powerful and explanatory than the consumer typology or psychographics approaches in an attempt to measure the decision-
making styles of consumers in shopping orientations, as it focuses on consumers’ mental orientation (Lysonski, Durvasula & Zotos, 1996).

Measuring consumers’ decision-making style

Sproles (1985) and Sproles and Kendall (1986) developed a Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) to measure the decision-making styles of consumers in shopping orientations. This inventory has been widely validated and applied in different countries. Based on the literature related to consumer decision making in the field of marketing and consumer studies, Sproles (1985) developed an instrument to measure ‘general orientations toward shopping and buying’ in a sample of 111 undergraduate female students in two home economics classes at the University of Arizona. Consumers decision-making styles were measured by 50 five-point Likert-scale items with strongly disagree and strongly agree as the end points. In a conceptual framework for analysing consumer decision-making styles, nine hypothetical decision-making styles were derived. Using the principal factors methods with varimax rotation, six of nine hypothetical traits were confirmed. The other three trait orientations not confirmed were considered similar to several of the other traits (Sproles, 1985). That model presented the first time a quantitative instrument was developed to measure this range of six consumer decision-making style traits (Sproles & Kendall, 1986).

Development of consumer styles inventory (CSI)

In 1986, Sproles and Kendall (1986) used survey data from 482 high school students in 29 home economics classes to refine their original instrument (Sproles, 1985). The authors utilized a Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI), measured “Characteristics of consumer decision making”, and a Profile of Consumer Style (PCS), which consisted of a format for reporting an individual’s characteristics. They identified eight basic mental characteristics of consumer decision-making styles and confirmed the six style characteristics that had been identified in the original study (Sproles, 1985).

In addition, Sproles and Kendall (1986) added “Impulsive, Careless”, and “Habitual, Brand loyal” characteristics to their survey. The completed eight dimensions included in the CSI included: (1) Perfectionism or High-quality conscious - consumers seek the very best quality products, have high standards and expectations for consumer goods, and are concerned with the function and quality of products; (2) Brand consciousness - consumers are oriented toward the more expensive and well-known national brands and feel price is an indicator of quality; (3) Novelty-fashion consciousness - consumers gain excitement and pleasure from seeking out new things, and are conscious of the new things; (4) Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping consciousness - consumers find shopping pleasant, shop just for fun of it; (5) Price Conscious, or “Value for money” - consumers are low-price conscious, look for the best value for the money, and are likely to be comparison shoppers; (6) Impulsiveness, Careless - an orientation of consumers not planning to shop or aren't concerned about the amount of money they spend; (7) Confused by Over-choice - consumers who perceive many brands and stores from which to choose and have difficulty making choices; and (8) Habitual, Brand-Loyal toward consumption - consumers who are apt to have favourite brands and stores.
To develop a model for the Profile of Consumer Style (PCS), Sproles and Kendall (1986) established scale reliabilities using Cronbach’s alpha for items that loaded above 0.4 on each factor and for subscales of the three top loading items on each factor. Although only the “Impulsive” characteristic recorded low reliability, the remainder had satisfactory reliabilities (> 0.48).

Studies of cross-cultural consumers’ decision-making comparison

From an international marketing point of view, a single instrument to measure decision-making styles that’s applicable to many different countries would be desirable because such an instrument could be used to identify similarities and differences in consumer decision making between countries and it could enhance comparability (Walsh, Mitchell & Hennig-Thaurau, 2001). Because the reliability and validity of the CSI were established using a sample of US high school students, Sproles and Kendall (1986) recommended validating the instrument across other populations, and further research has been required to demonstrate their applicability.

Although some concerns about the generalizability of the inventory have been expressed, the CSI represents the most-tested instrument currently available to assist marketers in examining cross-cultural decision-making styles (Walsh, Mitchell & Hennig-Thurau, 2001). At present, the CSI instrument has been applied to nine countries, including the US (Sproles and Kendall, 1986), Korea (Hafstrom, Chae and Chung, 1992), New Zealand (Durvasula, Lyonski & Andrews, 1993), Greece, India (Lyonski, Durvasula & Zotos, 1996), the United Kingdom (Mitchell & Bates, 1998), China (Fan & Xiao, 1998; Hiu, Siu, Wang & Chang, 2001), Germany (Walsh, Mitchell & Hennig-Thurau, 2001) and Singapore (Leo, Bennett & Hartel, 2005). Regardless of the past track record with CSI research, updating a comparison study of cross-cultural consumer behaviour is still needed as consumers’ purchase behaviour changes over time following their consumption situation and environment change (Yau, 1994). This is especially important among Chinese consumers due to the rapid economic growth that has occurred in recent years. The current quantitative study builds on this previous research to expand the knowledge of cultural similarities and differences related to attitudes and buying behaviours of apparel products.

Methods

Participants

Participants included college students from China and the United States. College students were chosen for three reasons: 1) the college students’ large purchasing power; 2) the ability to generalize the results from this study to previous studies; and 3) the convenience of data collection. The Chinese samples were obtained from a university in Shanghai, a major city in China. Shanghai was chosen as global apparel firms in Shanghai are cognizant of the fast growth increasing their competition, and it represents one of the largest consumer market and major commercial centres for fashion. Although findings from Shanghai participants couldn’t be generalized to the whole Chinese population, the city can be perceived as a good economic indicator in predicting the fashion consumption pattern of the Chinese consumers (Wu & Delong, 2006). The US sample was collected from a Midwestern university in the US.
Although findings from US Midwest participants may not be generalized to the entire United States population, the college population does represent a standard consumption market toward fashion products in the US.

Data were collected from 347 college students from the United States and China. All respondents who reported ages not between 18 through 24 years and those with incomplete responses were deleted, resulting in altogether 317 usable questionnaires, 219 from a Midwestern University in USA, and 98 from a Chinese University in Shanghai, China.

Table 1  
Demographic Characteristics of the sample (n= 317)

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<th>Sample Characteristics</th>
<th>Sample Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>31.1% (68)</td>
<td>7.1% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>24.2% (53)</td>
<td>27.6% (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.4% (25)</td>
<td>22.4% (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>16.0% (35)</td>
<td>15.3% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>5.5% (12)</td>
<td>16.3% (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>7.8% (17)</td>
<td>11.2% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.1% (9)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15.1% (33)</td>
<td>38.8% (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>84.9% (186)</td>
<td>61.2% (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>44.3% (97)</td>
<td>5.1% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>14.6% (32)</td>
<td>40.8% (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>12.3% (27)</td>
<td>19.4% (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>13.7% (30)</td>
<td>14.3% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth year or higher in UG degree</td>
<td>4.6% (10)</td>
<td>6.1% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate student</td>
<td>10.5% (23)</td>
<td>14.3% (14.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology/Engineering</td>
<td>11.6% (25)</td>
<td>4.1% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>25.7% (55)</td>
<td>21.5% (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion/ Fine Arts</td>
<td>15.9% (34)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>31.3% (67)</td>
<td>34.7% (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science/Medicine</td>
<td>15.4% (33)</td>
<td>39.7% (39)</td>
</tr>
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Survey instrument

An online survey was constructed using the software Qualtrics. All data collected was anonymous. No identifying information (e.g., name, student identification number) was collected. The survey questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part one included the items adapted from the instrument developed and used by Sproles and Kendall (1986) to measure consumer decision-making mental characteristics. This Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) is composed of 40 Likert-scaled items scored from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. Part two included demographic questions (e.g., the participants’ age, gender, year in school and major) and shopping behavioural questions (e.g., frequency of visiting retailers and
purchasing apparel products, actual money amount and percentage of monthly spending on apparel products, and frequency of reading fashion magazines and advertisements.) The shopping behavioural questions profiled the underlying cross-national consumers’ buying behaviours toward apparel products in reality and to compare these buying behaviours between Chinese and American college students.

In this study, the original (English) version of questionnaire was translated from English into Chinese by two translators. The questionnaire was then back translated into English to enhance translation equivalence. The terminology was adapted to achieve an equivalence of meaning rather than a direct translation.

Data collection
An e-mail advertisement was sent to all students in both Universities. The email included the appropriate URL address (English version for participants from the US and Chinese version for participants from China) to an online survey. It took approximately ten minutes to complete the questionnaires. The URL links to the online survey were available to students until at least 200 complete surveys from each University were obtained or the survey had been available for a total of four weeks.

Data entry and analysis
The data analysis of consumer decision-making mental characteristics (Survey: Part 1) was completed by country in two steps following the method used by Sproles and Kendall (1986). The analysis examined the psychometric properties of the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI). First, the dimensionality of the CSI was assessed by examining the factor solution to identify participants’ decision-making characteristics. To obtain the factor solution, a principal components factor analysis was used with a varimax rotation. For comparability with Sproles and Kendall’s work (1986), an eight-factor solution was used for the factor analysis. Specifically, the amount of variance explained by the extracted factors (i.e., their eigenvalues) was noted to judge model adequacy. In addition, item-factor correlations (i.e., factor loadings) and other indices of model adequacy were examined. The purpose of factor analysing the 40-item inventory was to determine if the factors identified by Sproles and Kendall (1986) are common for current Chinese and US sample in this study. In the second step, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for subscale of items loading above 0.4, the same level used by Sproles and Kendall (1986) for consistency, was computed to assess the scale reliabilities for each factor identified by country. In cross-cultural research, such an approach is common as a first step in determining the generalizability of a model or scale to another culture.

Next, once the consumer decision-making characteristics had been identified, descriptive analysis of profiling consumer style characteristics was developed using the same approach as Sproles and Kendall (1986). First, the three top-loading items for each factor (characteristic) were determined. Next, participants' raw scores on the three top-loading items were added for each factor by country sample groups. This addition yielded scores of 3 to 15 for each subject on each characteristic. Because participants scored “5” points for strongly agree, and “1” point for strongly disagree in their answer, the more positive attitudes a subject had, the
more points they were given. The means score of each three-item scale for each factor, the percentages of participants scoring high (12-15), medium (7-11) and low (3-6) on each scale, and quartile score ranges were calculated by country. To clearly demonstrate the data scoring for similarities and differences between groups; means, frequencies, quartile score ranges, and percentages were reported.

The demographics and behaviour questionnaires data (Survey: Part 2) were analysed by country. Descriptive statistics and frequencies counts were calculated for age, gender, year in school, major, number of times visiting retailers and purchasing apparel products, actual money amount and percentage of monthly spending on apparel products, and number of times reading fashion magazines and advertisements.

Finally, the consumer style characteristics and the buying behaviours of US and Chinese college students toward apparel products were compared and contrasted. The comparisons were made in three areas to identify and understand the differences and similarities between US and Chinese college students: the validity and reliability of the consumer decision-making styles, the profile of consumer style characteristics, and the actual reported shopping behaviour. The results would identify the factors affecting the fashion attitudes and buying behaviour styles, which will help apparel firms make appropriate globalization strategies for gaining successful global market share.

## Results

### Consumer decision-making characteristics

A factor analysis was conducted to identify consumer decision-making mental characteristics. The factor analysis results of the 40-item inventory (the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986)) revealed an eight-factor solution for the 317 participants. The eight factor model appears adequate as it explained 62% of the variation (Sproles & Kendall, 1986); all eight factors have eigenvalues greater than 1.0 (the highest was 7.5 and lowest was 1.1), which is a rule often used to judge model adequacy. Each factor loading was higher than .500 (absolute value) (see Table 2).

### Table 2: Consumer Style Characteristics: Eight Factor Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style Characteristics and Items</th>
<th>Factor Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1 - Perfectionistic, High-Quality Conscious Consumer</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality.</td>
<td>.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting very good quality is very important to me.</td>
<td>.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make special effort to choose the very best quality products.</td>
<td>.812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When it comes to purchasing apparel products, I try to get the very best or perfect choice.</td>
<td>.760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My standard and expectations for apparel products I buy are very high.</td>
<td>.595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2 - Brand Conscious, “Price Equals Quality” Consumer</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most advertised brands are usually very good choices.</td>
<td>.724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice department and specialty stores offer me the best products.</td>
<td>.703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer buying the best-selling brands of products.</td>
<td>.677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style Characteristics and Items</td>
<td>Factor Loadings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The well-known national brands are best for me</td>
<td>.673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The higher the price of an apparel product, the better its quality.</td>
<td>.661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The more expensive brands are usually my choice</td>
<td>.593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 3 – Novelty-Fashion Conscious Consumer</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I keep my wardrobe up-to-date with the changing fashions.</td>
<td>.756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually have one or more outfits of the very newest style.</td>
<td>.747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashionable, attractive styling is very important to me.</td>
<td>.708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get variety, I shop different fashion retail stores and choose different brands.</td>
<td>.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 4 - Recreational, Hedonistic Consumer</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life.</td>
<td>.768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping the stores wastes my time.</td>
<td>-.766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping is not a pleasant activity to me.</td>
<td>-.762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it.</td>
<td>.703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I shop quickly, buying the first products I find that seems good enough.</td>
<td>-.626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make my shopping trips fast.</td>
<td>-.625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really don’t give my apparel products purchases much thought or care.</td>
<td>-.581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s fun to buy something new and exciting.</td>
<td>.548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 5 - Price Conscious, “Value for Money” Consumer</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I look carefully to find the best value for the money.</td>
<td>.682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lower price products are usually my choice.</td>
<td>.661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take the time to shop carefully for best buys.</td>
<td>.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I buy as much as possible at sale prices.</td>
<td>.581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I carefully watch how much I spend.</td>
<td>.552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An apparel product doesn’t have to be perfect, or the best, to satisfy me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 6 - Impulsive, Careless Consumer</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am impulsive when purchasing apparel products.</td>
<td>.836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often I make careless purchases I later wish I had not.</td>
<td>.649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should plan my shopping more carefully than I do.</td>
<td>.635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I carefully watch how much I spend.</td>
<td>-.510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 7 - Confused by Over-choice Consumer</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The more I learn about apparel products, the harder it seems to choose the best.</td>
<td>.809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes it’s hard to choose which stores to shop.</td>
<td>.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the information I get on different products confuses me.</td>
<td>.760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are so many brands to choose from that often I feel confused.</td>
<td>.755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 8 - Habitual, Brand-Loyal Consumer</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once I find an apparel product or brand I like, I stick with it.</td>
<td>.721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have favourite brands I buy over and over.</td>
<td>.625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I change brands I buy regularly.</td>
<td>.624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go to the same stores each time I shop.</td>
<td>.573</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
For determining the generalizability of the model, reliability coefficients or Cronbach’s alpha for subscale of top three highest loading items on each factor was computed to assess the scale reliabilities for each factor identified. The alpha estimates were generally similar for both samples, and the reliabilities are satisfactory in all cases with the possible exception of the “Habitual, Brand-Loyal consumer” characteristic in the Chinese sample, where alpha was below .40. Given that an alpha of .70 or better is desired for any measurement scale (Durvasula, Lysonski & Andrews, 1993), the factors “Perfectionistic,” “Brand Conscious,” “Novelty-Fashion Conscious,” “Recreational Shopping” and “Confused by Over-choice” consumer characteristics were stable and internally consistent in the two samples. The factor “Habitual, Brand-Loyal consumer” identified in the factor analysis had values of .735 for the US sample, however, the Chinese sample had a lower reliability with alpha of .350, therefore it may not be considered to be a reliable factor in identifying decision-making styles for the Chinese sample (see Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumer Style Characteristics</th>
<th>Chronbach Alpha for subscale of top three loading items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Combined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfectionistic (Factor 1)</td>
<td>.866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Conscious (Factor 2)</td>
<td>.770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novelty-Fashion Conscious (Factor 3)</td>
<td>.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Shopping (Factor 4)</td>
<td>.827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price-Value Conscious (Factor 5)</td>
<td>.639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulsive (Factor 6)</td>
<td>.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused by Over-choice (Factor 7)</td>
<td>.808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitual, Brand-Loyal (Factor 8)</td>
<td>.655</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Profiles of Consumer Decision-making Characteristics

Following the same approach used by Sproles and Kendall (1986), a profile of consumer decision-making styles for both the US and Chinese samples were established, employing the subscale of the top three highest loading items. Overall there were several similarities and differences between the US and the Chinese college students as demonstrated by their fashion attitudes. For example, more than 85% of both samples scored high or medium for the ‘perfectionism or high-quality conscious’ consumer characteristics, indicating both US and Chinese consumers in the sample are positively ‘perfectionistic or high-quality conscious’ consumers for apparel products; the large proportion of the Chinese sample scored in the medium range, while the large proportion of US sample scored in low and medium range for the ‘brand consciousness’ consumer characteristic; both samples had similar tendencies for their percentage scoring and quartile score range, and both sets of means scored in the medium range for ‘novelty-fashion consciousness’ consumer characteristic; more than two-thirds of US participants (67.1%) scored in the high range while only 25.5% of Chinese participants scored in that range indicating the US sample had a more positive attitude toward the ‘recreational, hedonistic shopping consciousness’; 90% or more of the sample had ‘price conscious’, or ‘value for money’ consumer characteristic, especially more than half (54.3%) of US sample scored in the high range; the percentage scoring in low range showed a
difference: 31.1% for US sample versus only 10.2% for Chinese sample in ‘impulsiveness or careless’ consumer characteristic; and almost one-quarter of the Chinese sample (23.5%) scored in the high range while only 5% of US sample scored high for the ‘confused by over-choice consumer’ characteristic; 90% of samples had average or advanced ‘habitual, brand-loyal toward consumption consumer’ characteristic while US samples scored slightly higher.

Table 4 Consumer Style Inventory: Statistical Analysis of Three-Item Subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style Characteristics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Percentage Scoring:</th>
<th>Quartile Score Ranges:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High (12-15)</td>
<td>Medium (7-11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Upper 2nd 3rd Lower</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfectionistic</td>
<td>US 10.47</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China 11.10</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Conscious</td>
<td>US 7.37</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China 9.16</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novelty-Fashion</td>
<td>US 8.63</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscious</td>
<td>China 8.51</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>US 11.84</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>China 9.79</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price-Value Conscious</td>
<td>US 11.67</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China 10.64</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulsive</td>
<td>US 8.18</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China 9.07</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused by Over-choice</td>
<td>US 7.05</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China 9.44</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitual, Brand-</td>
<td>US 10.41</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal</td>
<td>China 9.83</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Consumer Buying Behavioural Characteristics.**

US college student consumers showed slightly more positive attitudes of buying behavioural characteristics on apparel products than Chinese college student consumers, although both samples had similar tendencies overall. The results demonstrated that US college students visit fashion retailers more frequently than Chinese college students although there was no significant difference in the “Actual purchasing apparel products frequency” between them; Chinese college student consumers were likely to spend a larger proportion of their disposable income on apparel products while both groups of consumers spent almost the same amount of money; and US college students read fashion magazine and advertisements slightly more often than Chinese students, but many from both countries reported never reading fashion magazines (see Table 5).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Characteristics</th>
<th>Sample group</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visiting fashion retailers frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once every 2 or more months</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>(48)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>(49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>(72)</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>(21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 times a month</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>(76)</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>(17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2-3 times a week</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual purchasing apparel products frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once every 2 or more months</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>(78)</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>(47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>(73)</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>(33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 times a month</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>(52)</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>(16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>(12)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2-3 times a week</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly spending on apparel products on average</td>
<td></td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$00.00 to $25.00</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>(59)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>(24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25.01 to $50.00</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>(64)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>(39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50.01 to $100.00</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>(56)</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>(21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100.01 to $150.00</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $150.01</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>(16)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of monthly spending on apparel products</td>
<td></td>
<td>Less than 5%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>(62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>(71)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>(29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-30%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>(45)</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>(35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-50%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>(25)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 51%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading fashion magazine frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>(84)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>(49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once every 2 or more months</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>(54)</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>(25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 times a week</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>(48)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>(49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>(72)</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>(21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2-3 times a month</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>(76)</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>(17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading fashion advertisement frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once every 2 or more months</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<td>More than 2-3 times a week</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>(52)</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>(16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

The primary objectives of this study were to identify and understand characteristics of fashion attitudes and buying behaviours toward apparel products between US and Chinese college students. In addition, clarification of the factors that impact the differences and similarities among these two markets was investigated.

This study provided an examination of consumer decision-making styles by utilizing the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) to identify the characteristics of buying attitudes of college student consumers in the US and China. The decision-making styles of college student consumers for both samples were established, and several similarities and differences in decision-making styles were identified between US and Chinese college student consumers.

The factor analysis results of the CSI revealed an eight consumer decision-making mental characteristics for 317 participants: “Perfectionistic”, “Brand consciousness”, “Novelty-Fashion conscious”, “Recreational”, “Price conscious”, “Impulsive”, “Confused by Over-choice” and “Habitual, Brand-Loyal” characteristics. Seven of the eight characteristics confirmed their validity as the scales measuring consumer decision-making styles for both US and Chinese college student consumers with approved reliability in this study, except the “Habitual, Brand-Loyal” consumer characteristic for Chinese consumers. Interestingly, the five factors excluding “Price conscious” and “Impulsive” traits were identified in previous studies investigating this behaviour internationally: the US (Sproles and Kendall, 1986), Korea (Hafstrom, Chae and Chung, 1992), New Zealand (Durvasula, Lyonski & Andrews, 1993), Greece, India (Lyonski, Durvasula & Zotos, 1996), and Germany (Walsh, Mitchell & Hennig-Thurau, 2001), indicating the cross-cultural generalizability of these factors. The “Habitual, Brand-Loyal” trait couldn’t be confirmed for Chinese college student consumers due to its low reliability with alpha of .350 in this study and was also relatively unreliable in most of the countries in previous studies.

This study integrated the concept of consumer decision-making style with responses about actual buying behaviours. Although the results of the profiles of consumer decision-making styles and buying behavioural characteristics between US and Chinese college students aren’t entirely equivalent because of their culture background, overall the similarities outweighed the differences. For example, most college consumers in both countries sought to find the best quality products as much as possible and were conscious of lower prices in general. They had medium to high standard expectations for products, and average or advanced habitual, brand-loyal consumer characteristics. In addition, more than half of consumers in both groups weren’t very brand conscious consumers with moderate level of fashion consciousness, and didn’t plan their shopping and how much they spent when buying. Moreover, most reported spending less than $100 for apparel products once a month, or once every two or more months, and rarely read fashion magazines.

The concept of “Globalization” with the availability of worldwide media and telecommunication tools might have created greater similarity on purchasing styles between young consumers in different nations than older age groups (Tully, 1994). The Chinese economic growth with great rising revenues has affected Chinese youth to be westernizing in recent years as they have become enabled to have a similar level of lifestyle with the people.
in western countries, and these westernizing influences are causing a shift in values such as
independence, self-expression, openness to new ideas and cultures, flexibility, mobility, and
enjoyment of life among Chinese young consumers (Anderson & He, 1998; Moses, 2000).
Especially since the US culture and their fashion have influenced young generations in China
by the prevalence of US media, it homogenizes their preferences and fashion attitudes of
their buying behaviours between US and Chinese youth consumers.

Overall, fashion attitudes and buying behaviour showed similar tendencies between Chinese
and US college students as well as several subtle differences distinguished each group’s
consumer buying styles. The demographic and psychographic factors including lifestyle
values, interests, cultural values, and economic situations have had an impact on
characterizing their own fashion attitudes and consumer behaviour of both US and Chinese
college student consumers. For instance, more Chinese college student consumers may
consider a price is an indicator of quality, or have “Brand conscious” consumer characteristics
than American samples, according to the profiles of consumer decision-making characteristics
in this study. It may be due to the “face-saving” value, which encourages the consumption of
well-known foreign brands for their reputation, and the prevalence of counterfeit and
unqualified poor quality products in market, which makes avoiding buying these products as
one of the consumer issues for Chinese consumers.

Second, most of US college student consumers showed higher recreational shopping
characteristics than Chinese consumers in this study. This may be related to the leisure time
usage difference between US and Chinese young people. According to Baker and Hayatko
(2000), American teens are heavy users of shopping malls or department stores, more than
twice as many as compared to their Chinese counterpart. This logic would be supported by
the results of visiting fashion retailers’ frequency in this study: American college student
consumers visit retailers slightly more often than Chinese consumers in general, indicating
they are likely to prefer going shopping to fashion retailers, not only for actual purchasing but
also for window-shopping.

In addition to the “Recreational shopping” characteristic, the factor also supports the reason
why less US college students were “Confused by Over-choice” as well. The slightly higher
frequency of reading fashion magazines and advertisements and visiting fashion retailers in
this study supports the greater maturity of young American consumers, which direct them to
be familiar with the market. A culture value difference is a crucial factor to explain the
“Confused by Over-choice” characteristics as well: western individualistic culture value, in
which people tend to be quite aware of their preference and what they want, vs.
Confucianism collectivism culture value, in which people are more concerned with other’s
evaluation than their own preference (Hofstede, 2001).

Lastly, US college student consumers seemed to be slightly more concerned with getting the
best value for their money and plan their shopping trips more carefully than Chinese
students. This may be explained by the differences in the ease of earning their disposable
money. While most Chinese students earn their allowance easily from “six-pockets” (parents
and grandparents) in the “little emperors” family structure, the majority of US students have
part-time jobs to earn their disposal income themselves. The explanation could be strongly
supported by the result of monthly spending reported in this study. The reported proportion of money spent showed that Chinese consumers were likely to spend a larger proportion of their disposable income on apparel products while both consumer groups spent almost the same amount of money regardless of the median income level of Chinese households which was less than the US consumers.

As discussed, there is a strong relationship between consumer decision-making characteristics and actual buying behavioural characteristics in this study. Each buying behavioural result gave strong support to clarifying consumer decision-making characteristics. Since the relationship between consumer decision-making characteristics and actual buying behavioural characteristics was supported in this study, the buying behavioural characteristics will give not only strong support for the consumer decision-making mental characteristics but also better in-depth understanding for their consumer styles identified in previous studies.

**Implications**

The theoretical analysis in this study provides useful insight on how globalization and cultural background affects consumer buying characteristics among cross-national young consumers for corporations expanding to global markets. Meeting multicultural consumer needs by providing the right products and services in today’s global market is a great challenge for marketers, retailers, and suppliers (Kim, Forsythe, Gu & Moon, 2002). The study of cultural values is still essential to effective globalization and management strategy as it enables the improvement of the quality of products and services.

The findings from this study provide an indication that marketers of US apparel firms could make appropriate globalization strategies for gaining successful global markets. For example, as “Confused by Over-choice” characteristic was strongly confirmed in Chinese samples, marketers could propose the development of special package/products to aid consumers to make faster and more effective buying decisions, and less complicated tags to reduce the stress from over-information (Walsh, Mitchell & Hennig-Thurau, 2001). In addition, according to the results of buying behavioural characteristics in this study, it is suggested that posting an advertisement on worldwide media such as Internet and satellite television would be effective for college student consumers, and it would be appropriate to set prices less than 50 dollars per item for the apparel firm aiming to reach the mass youth consumer market as the highest monthly spending amount on apparel products for both consumers was $25.01 to $50.00 in this study. Furthermore, because of the stronger “Brand Conscious” consumer tendency in Chinese college student consumers, US apparel firms could suggest advertising featuring their brand name as a well-known foreign brand. However, the “Brand-Loyal” characteristics were unconfirmed in the Chinese sample. The major goal of marketers operating in China should be to develop brand loyalty by communicating the benefits, such as lowered risk of buying an unsatisfactory product, time saving and savings in decision-making efforts.

Lastly, the profile of consumer-making style has a broad application in consumer education. Marketing or consumer researchers could add these decision-oriented traits to their inventories of psychographic and lifestyle studies to have better understanding of consumers.
from the consumer mental and behaviour aspects (Hiu, Siu, Wang & Chang, 2001; Yu & Zhou, 2010).

By using an established survey from previous studies, and integrating the concept of consumer decision-making style with responses about actual buying behaviours, the differences and similarities of consumer behaviour characteristics, and factors of globalization and culture background affecting the results between US college students and Chinese college students were revealed in this study. These factors can be hints for marketers and educators to help US apparel firms make appropriate globalization strategies for gaining successful global market share in China.

**Recommendations**

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations for future research are made. First, the comparability of samples from both countries could be controlled to make more direct comparisons. Although both US and Chinese samples were college students with approximately same average age in this study, there were variations in the number of participants in each country completing the survey, as well as in the demographics such as the proportion of gender, income level and geographic location between US sample and Chinese sample. To gain a better overview to college students for this study, future studies may increase the population size and improve the equivalence of the number of college students in the US and China to gain more valuable information.

Second, although the original eight-factor consumer styles, developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986), were supported in this study, reliability scores of some factors were relatively low and some factors were unstable such as “Brand-Loyal/Habitual” trait. This suggests that further study would be needed to develop new items for these factors so as to improve psychometric properties, or to apply lower scale decision-making model so as to be more applicable to cross-nationals as confirmed in previous studies (Fan & Xiao, 1998; Hiu, Siu & Chang, 2001).

Third, as the development of communication media today, the new field of buying behaviour such as electronic commerce has been occurring. Questionnaires to examine these alternative buying behaviours suited to today’s market should be developed for future studies. Moreover, future research could examine specific demographic variables on each consumer buying style such as gender, age, major and income. Integrating different variables could provide a more in-depth analysis of the different demographic segments of future cross cultural studies.

Lastly, since the samples collected for this study only examined college students, it isn’t representative of all young consumers in China and the United States, and the results aren’t intended to be generalized. Testing young and non-college groups in future studies would help to establish generalizability of young consumers in both countries.
Biography

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References


Revolt against the ‘fusspot’ — Positioning oneself as Home Economics teacher

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Abstract
Teaching about home and family life has been the task of Home Economics teachers in Sweden for more than hundred years. The school subjects were introduced as part of a societal struggle to better the living conditions for individuals and families. The Home Economics teacher was instructed to transform natural science language understandable to the girls and teach about healthy living. Since 1962 the school subject ‘Home Economics’, now named ‘Home and consumer studies’ (HCS), is mandatory for both boys and girls. The teachers teaching the subject, are positioned and positioning themselves in a play of different ways of being HCS teacher. The aim of the study is to examine how HCS teachers position and thus construct themselves. Eight teachers were interviewed. The analysis was undertaken in two steps, first, a HSC-teacher stereotype was established - the typical HCS teacher - as described by the interviewees. Second, a shift was made beyond these dominant beliefs/truths about the profession to locate other stories about of HCS-teacher. The typical HCS teacher was described as a fusspot, proper, whining, lecturing, and as one who knows ‘the right way’. The results reveal how this description has impact on the possibilities for the HCS teacher in school today to be professional and to work according to present steering documents. Furthermore, the results also show how the teachers resist and question the stereotypical picture of the HCS teacher, which thus becomes seriously challenged. Today there are not one but several ways of positioning oneself as HCS teacher.

Keywords: Home Economics, Home and Consumer Studies, Teacher, Construction, Positioning

Introduction
When Home Economics was introduced within the Swedish school system over hundred years ago a new category of teachers was created. For a long time that category were called ‘School kitchen teachers’. The aim in this article is to examine the construction of this specific category of teachers. When doing this I also ask questions about if and how the historical formation of the “School kitchen teacher” has impact on teachers in school today. First I will present some fragments of research that indicates the specific task given to the “School kitchen teacher” during 20th century and a glance back on the history of the school subject in Sweden.
The School kitchen teacher in history

The task of the School kitchen teacher was to educate women, who in turn should influence the rest of the family and the home. The school subject was introduced in the late 19th century, during a time that in Sweden can be characterized by worries for a degenerated society. The described complex of problems included falling birth-rate, increasing consumption of alcohol, increasing crime, declining marriage-rate, increased prostitution, increased number of children born outside marriage etc. (Ambjörnsson 1976; Johansson 1987; Ohlander 1995; Vammen 1995). Educating girls in Home Economics was one out of several social efforts to turn this negative development around. This effort was built on the idea that poverty and other insufficient conditions were, at least partly, due to an ignorant housewife, her carelessness and incapability (Johansson 1987; Hjälmeskog 2000).

From this perspective the introduction of Home economics in school can be seen as part of politics, authority action, and social achievements, aiming to promote public health. A main argument for the introduction of the subject was the need for translation of research results from Chemistry and Nutrition into a language that the common person could understand (Johansson, 1987). Palmblad & Eriksson (1995) shows how the School kitchen teachers during the first half of the 20th century were assigned a key role in that work, for example concerning food, housing and hygiene.

Health education in the 20th century was a moral education (Palmblad & Eriksson, 1995). The forms of knowledge and the authorities has changed over time, but the normative elements in the mediation of rules for how to live ones life has been remarkable alike. A gradual change in public health policy from civil duty and collectivism to self-responsibility, where private choice is regarded central for change, can be noticed. But, at the same time as free choice is stressed, it is regarded of great importance that the choices are made in accordance with certain ideas on public health (ibid. p. 150).

School kitchen teachers also had a main role in learning the young generation resource management. Aléx (2003) analyses the Swedish discussion on right and wrong consumption during the 20th century. The terms ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ indicates the normative dimension in the conception of consumption. Among other things, Aléx studied official reports and national syllabuses in Home economics, and in the latter he finds that consumer education is a central theme over time. Strict economy was emphasised, which point at restricted consumption as norm. Saving was regarded something good, so was order and tidiness in general. The capacity of the family to manage resources was regarded of great importance, and that capacity should be intensified by Home economics education. An education guided by moral decrees such as objectivity, order, rationality and long-term planning. During the 20th century knowledge in household budget and household bookkeeping was included in Home economics education (ibid.).

Out of these fragments from research on public health, consumption and Home Economics education comes the School kitchen teacher, pictured as doing the work assigned to them by the politicians and authorities. The struggle against poverty and social destitution, and for public health, bettered hygiene, housing and a more sound household finance (and in the end
also a more sound economic situation for the nation) included moral education executed by the School kitchen teacher teaching how to do things the right way.

In the study presented in this article the followers of the School kitchen teachers, i.e. the teacher in Home and consumer studies (HCS), are at stake. The aim is to analyse the construction of the teacher in HCS. This makes it possible to deepen the understanding of the situation of this specific category of teachers today. The picture appearing in the introduction can be understood as a discourse on the HCS-teacher, articulated in a public arena, i.e. the HCS-teacher as presented in official reports and national school documents. This empirical study focuses on how HCS-teachers construct themselves.

Home and consumers studies in school today and during the last hundred years

Today HCS-teachers mainly work in compulsory school (grundskolan) teaching the school subject Home and consumer studies. Counted by hours taught this is the smallest school subject in the timetable. For teachers this means teaching a great amount of pupils every semester. The aims and method of the subject requires the subject to be taught in a specially equipped classroom.

The situation of different categories of teachers in school today can be illuminated by the project *School without a timetable*, though it is impossible to specifically look at the HCS-teacher as the concept practical aesthetical subjects (PA-subjects) is used. Historically the subjects included in this group are: Art, Music, Physical education, Home and consumer studies and Craft (i.e. textiles, and wood and metal work). The official report (SOU 2005:101) states that the teacher in the so-called PA-subjects seldom are part of the working teams in school, and they seldom take part in pedagogical discussions. Further, the PA-teachers are not part of thematically projects in school to any degree worth mentioning, and if they participate it is as a “funny happening”. The report indicates that PA-teachers are marginalised and subordinated as the specific categories of teachers cannot be distinguished and due to the special status reported.

The three first national curriculum and syllabuses of compulsory school (grundskolan) (Lgr 62, Lgr 69, and Lgr 80) contains the school subject Home Economics. The number of lessons, compulsory for boys and girls, has varied over time. The biggest differences are the possibilities for students to choose optional Home Economics and the length of the lessons. In Lgr62 the subject was mandatory in grade 7 and it was possible for students to choose additional Home Economics in grade 8 and 9. The amount of time for one Home Economics lessons is an important factor when it comes to what kind of teaching is possible. Time limits influence choice of method, possibilities for exercising democracy in the classroom, time for reflection and how assessment is done. The time taught once a week varies from 240 minutes in Lgr62 to 120 minutes in Lgr80. Today when these kinds of decisions are made at the local school it usually varies between 60-120 minutes per week.

An even more accentuated change can be seen in Upper secondary school (gymnasieskolan). Up until 1990 the students were able to choose a program specialising in the area of Home Economics. There were also rural domestic schools, and so-called Home technology courses of different length (one or two semesters). In these programmes, schools and courses Home
Economics teachers worked, teaching food and nutrition, housing, instruction in family matters, economy, resource management etc. Still a few Home Economics teachers work in upper secondary schools, but not teaching for home and family life, but mainly in vocational education such as hotel management, catering etc. (see Hjälmeskog, 2006).

During the first 70 or 80 years in the history of Home Economics in Sweden the female gender coding was explicit. It was a school subject created by women for women, where only female teachers taught and where the focus was on female tasks in the private sphere, a sphere in turn female coded. The aim of the education was ambiguous. I have shown elsewhere (Hjälmeskog, 2000) different “Home Economics discourses” each representing a different aim for women’s Home Economics education The first three discourses came from analysing official reports, debates and other official documents. In the first discourse, Home Economics as a vocational education, the subject is counted as one among other vocational educations that women could choose from. Secondly, Home Economics as an education for women to be able to full fill their calling as mothers, wives and housewives. The third discourse is in itself ambiguous. It is about teaching women effective house keeping, but the reason for doing that was twofold. Either was the house keeping seen as work, as all work it should be done effectively (the efficient housewife or “the modern housewife”), or should the house keeping be done effectively to free time for the woman to enter the labour market (the working housewife). Finally a fourth discourse was constructed out of “forgotten pearls” from history, i.e. discussions on Home Economics, men and women and education: Home Economics as citizenship education. Here the aim is to include education for home and family life also in boys’ education and thus educate both men and women for all aspects of life, private, public and working life.

When compulsory school (grundskolan) was introduced in the early 1960ies Home Economics became a compulsory subject for both girls and boys. It is stated in the syllabi at the time that Home Economics education should enable boys and girls to do the household chores as well as consumer education (Lgr 62, p. 335). This can be understood as an attempt to question the dualism between femininity and masculinity, as the aim was to educate consumers, not housewives or housemaids (Hjälmeskog, 2004).

Also the content of the school subject have varied over time, since Home economics was introduced in the late 19th century up until today. Questions on what we eat, how to prepare food and meals, choice of foodstuffs etc. has been and still is a central content. In the syllabus from 2000 the area is named “food and meals”. Some areas was included earlier, but are now excluded, such as child-care and family studies. Some are still included, such as cleaning, laundry etc. even though they are not focused as before. The latest revision of the school syllabus was made in 2011, and the main reason for the revision was to make the text more easily understood and, in the case of Home and consumer studies (HCS), more adapted to the amount of time in the timetable. Adjustments were also made due to changes in the grading system. Food and meals are still in focus, and issues concerning private finance is emphasised. One noticeable difference, studying the over a hundred year long history of the subject, is the demarcation of the subject in terms of spatiality. Said simply, a change from regarding the walls of the home or the fence of the farm as the outer limits of the subject, to no spatial limits at all. The whole world is regarded as central also for household work as the
relations between, the households, the society and the natural environment are at stake. Issues of household management are highlighted in the official report on sustainable consumption (SOU 2005:51). In the report HCS was suggested to play a key role in education for sustainable development. It is possible to understand the revision of the syllabi in 2011 to be in line with this suggestion, as sustainable development was included as the key perspective of HCS.

The study

Theoretical and methodological comments

The empirical study presented in this article is part of the wider project *The teacher in the transformation of the Swedish society: The good teacher as a construction on different arenas 1945-2003*. The complexity of what it means, and historically has meant to be a good teacher, is a point of departure for the project. Among participating researches some have focused on gender discourses together with other discourses on school, society and education that in complex ways produce understandings related to the good teacher. All of these studies are, in a broad sense, inspired by feminist post structural theories. Gender is seen as produced in and through use of language and other symbolic representations of human beings, society and the world as a whole. Gender is also produced in social practices, by human beings interacting (Butler, 2005; Scott, 1989).

Language and the meaning we assign words today are formed by myriads of earlier discursive practices. A word carries traces of the lives lived by women and men who have spoken them (Nye 1994, p. 162). From this perspective it can be argued that a historical perspective is essential to understand the present. At the same time it is important to stress that such a perspective doesn’t mean to look for similarities between now and the past, rather the contrary. It is the differences that are interesting. For example we can understand the situation of HCS-teachers as subordinated due to the historical roots of the profession, without necessarily finding the historical predecessor, “the School kitchen teacher”, in a subordinated position. Reverse, we can find an equal situation today with historical roots, even though subordination characterised the position in the past.

Also at one moment in time several different discourses are fighting over the power to dictate the right, the true and the good, and thus presenting different possible subject positions. As several discourses are active at the same time it is possible, at least to some degree, to make a choice by activating one specific gender discourse (Butler, 2005; Davies, 1997; Lenz Taguchi, 2004). Further, an analysis drawing from poststructuralist theory shows that the HCS-teacher can be understood as complex, contradictory and always in change. This means that one and the same teacher can both be subordinated and exercise power.

The empirical study consists of interviews with eight HSC-teachers. They were selected to represent a wide spectrum of positioning; this means that they took their teacher exam during different periods of time. Accordingly their teacher education was based on different National curriculum and syllabuses including National curriculum from 1969 (Lgr69), 1980 (Lgr80) and 1994 (Lpo94). They also differ in work experience for example they work in different schools concerning the student’s age and ability. All interviewees were women.
The interviews took place either in the interviewees working place or in their home, due to the choice of the interviewees. Duration time of the interviews was between one and two hours. I transcribed the recordings and in the analysis I used mainly the transcripts, but I did also re-listen at the tapes at several occasions. The interviews were based on three themes that I presented to the interviewees when starting up. The themes were: (1) expectations from others (the kind of HCS-teacher others want me to be), (2) own expectations (what kind of HCS-teacher do I want to be), and (3) how do I handle the different expectations (this is how I am and why). If needed, I had a set of follow-up question to keep their story to the themes. At the end of the interview I presented some words to describe a HCS-teacher, and the interviewee discussed the relevance of and own thoughts about each of the words (Cf. Pendergast, 2001; 2004). The analysis, with inspiration from Pendergast (2001; 2004), is divided into two steps. First, a HSC-teacher stereotype is characterised from the descriptions produced by the interviewees. Second, a shift beyond dominant beliefs/truths about the profession is pursued by seeking contradictions, deviations, and lack of continuity, instead of avoiding them. Instead of just confirming the already known story the researcher presents other stories about of HCS-teachers.

Results

In this part of the article I will present the results of my interview study, followed by a discussion.

The “typical” teacher in Home and Consumer Studies

In this first part of my analysis I will, as mentioned above, focus on the homogeneity, stability and coherence. What I see is a discourse about a ‘Typical HCS-teacher’. She, because she is a ‘she’, is often described in negative terms, something also mentioned by the interviewees themselves. Examples on words used are: fusspot, proper, whining, lecturing, knows “the right way”, isolated, moaner, conventional. Other words, not only negative, are also used. To be ambitious can be positive if it is means to do a good job and have ambitions both for oneself and for the students. But it can be apprehended as negative if it is a manifestation of fanaticism and lack of sensitivity for the students’ needs and wants. Another example of these ambiguous notions is to be accurate. It can be regarded positive when meaning to take care of things and see that things works, but negative if it means that there is one right way to do things, to be small-minded and to poke ones nose into every detail.

In the descriptions of the “typical” HCS-teacher also the physical appearance of the teacher is addressed. The HCS-teacher is “an elderly lady with some flour on her cheek and a check apron” (teacher C), as “a little chubby” (teacher F) or as a “person who looks to be healthy” (teacher B). Also the teachers interviewed by de Ron (2006) comments the body of the HCS-teacher. For example one of the interviewees says the HCS-teacher is “someone who is overweight and still talks about nutrients”. Also in de Ron’s study a discourse on the “typical HCS-teacher” is articulated, though de Ron names it pattern or form. In her study this pattern is most clearly seen when the interviewees’ talk about how other people, i.e. those who are not HCS-teachers, describes the HCS-teacher.
The HCS-teacher lives with these ideas of the “typical” HCS-teacher. She/he has to relate to this discourse all the time. When the interviewees in a related study (de Ron, 2006) describe a colleague one of them talks about “walk a tightrope with the pedantry”. Another describes herself with the expression “I am made after a pattern” (ibid.). Often a kind of resistance is expressed as several of the interviewees in my study denote that they do not see themselves as typical HCS-teachers. For example teacher C, when she states: “… I think I don’t fit in this model, I think I am a kind of rebel sometimes”. Several teachers in both studies mention that others tell them that they don’t look like HCS-teachers: “… she said you don’t look like a typical HCS-teacher at all, and I took it as a compliment” (teacher A).

The teachers who at the time of the interviews worked as HCS-teacher also lived with some common nicknames, for example they reported the following: pancake-witch; bun-making-miss; carrot-miss; and meatball-princess. These notions are created outside the academia, outside research and the professional context. Rather, they are created in the everyday school context (cf. Trondman, 1999). An examination of these nicknames shows that the first part of the names, pancake-, bun-, carrot-, and meatball- are all related to food. It could be argued that the food-related part of the names are positive connoted. The second part of the names, on the other hand, is clearly related to women: -witch, -miss, and -princess. Here the implied value of the connotation is less positive. One suggestion is that witch is something negative, princess something positive and, finally, miss is more neutral, or both negative and positive. To sum up, the nicknames used for HCS-teachers reveals the association to food and to women, it is more difficult to state the value of the nicknames, but the food-association draws towards a positive side.

A well known discourse

The ‘typical HCS-teacher’ is well known and tends to remain what she always has been, i.e. unchangeable. She tends to be described in negative terms, even if the nicknames association to food infiltrates some positivity into the picture. The ‘typical HCS-teacher’ exists. It is argued that we can find a well-known discourse on Home and consumer studies and the teacher teaching the subject, which is reflected in official reports, national school documents as well as in interviews. HCS is a subject in the margin, even though the school kitchen teachers in late 19th century were given an important task to teach young women about household management, hygiene and to cook nutritious food, all in line with the latest natural science findings. The HCS-teacher was to teach the rules for how to live our lives, a task clearly a part of the discourse of the “typical HCS-teacher”.

“The familiar tale of home economics” seems to be internationally spread and a more or less common discourse (Brown, 1993; Peterat & De Zwart, 1995; Pendergast, 2001). Pendergast (2001) states:

Home economists: know the field of study is marginalised; know the field is devalued; know the positioning is the result of the history and the origins of the field; know that it is recognised as ‘women’s work’; know that home economics will always struggle for legitimation in a world of narratives which favour certain structures. Home economics teachers know that they will be
seen as ‘cookers and sewers’; and know that they will continually struggle for it to be otherwise (p. 203, emphasis in original).

Through historical lenses it is possible to understand why the subject is marginalised, it is related to the historical fact that HCS is about what still seems to be regarded women’s work, about the unpaid work in the household, and thus excluded from the economical thinking ruling today. Further, HCS-teachers have been struggling for legitimacy, as economic structures and the public sphere have been, and still are favoured over care and the private sphere.

Less known discourses

In the second step of my analysis I leave the discourse on the typical HCS-teacher, with its stable, rational and coherent subject behind. Then I see totally different HCS-teachers. I see teachers who question and resist being positioned as typical HCS-teachers and thereby open up for variation, change and challenge. They are like rebels as expressed by teacher C: “... I think I don’t fit in this model, I think I am a kind of rebel sometimes”. The teachers themselves talk about the influence structural changes have had on, what I call, their ongoing process of inventing themselves. For example the teacher education reforms are mentioned. New teachers teach more than one subject (teacher A, teacher C, teacher G) and the organising of working-teams in schools (teacher A, teacher B, teacher F). New discourses implicate new ways of positioning as HCS-teachers. The positions are sometimes incompatible and contradictory to the well-known and “typical”, but still possible.

In this study there was not a single position as HCS-teacher. Rather, a spectrum of positions as HCS-teachers is revealed in the interviews. Teachers talked about themselves as good and neat, as someone who likes to tidy up in the HCS-classroom as well as in other places in school, such as the staff room. And those who leave all of this kind of work to the students as well as those who place themselves in the middle between these two extremes. Teacher H tells about the expectations on her to arrange nice meetings, breaking-up day etc., something she says is due to the association between her as HCS-teacher and food. At the same time she means that this is not what she is educated for, arrange for example the breaking-up day is something any teacher should be able to do:

“... and at the same time as one want to stand up for ones colleagues and be positive, one has to be careful about saying yes too often. It is not this kind of role one should have at school” (Teacher H).

Some teachers mean that the ‘practical’ skills are absolutely necessary to teach HCS. Others say that they are all fingers and thumbs and make this to a pedagogical asset, yet other place themselves in between these positions. There are teachers that are proud up-holders for the school-subject they teach and for their profession, also when entering leadership positions. Others prefer not to tell about their occupation. Also other contradictions are expressed in the interviews: some interviewees, on the one hand, say that HCS doesn’t count (Teacher G), and they don’t brag of their profession as HCS-teachers (teacher B) or become happy if they are not taken as HCS-teachers (teacher A). On the other hand some teachers argue the importance of being proud of one’s work and the subject one teaches (teacher F, teacher H).
When they on different occasions tell that they are HCS-teachers they are always told memories people have from their own time in school:

“... so people always remember that they had Home economics. No one remembers that they learned about nouns during the Swedish lessons, what the Swedish teacher said. But all of them remember that it is not proper to do the dishes under pouring water” (teacher E).

Some of the interviewees’ notes that the memories they are told sometimes are more like jokes, something shown in the use of “pancake witch” and other expressions mentioned above. One way of handling these discourses that places the HCS-teacher as subordinated or marginalised is not to tell that you are a teacher in Home and consumer studies at all.

HCS teachers look very different. As people in general there are bodies of HCS-teachers in all kind of dimensions. Some don’t worry about being a little chubby (teacher F), while others fight to meet up to the expectations of “live as you teach” (teacher B). To sum up, there is no consistent category of HCS-teacher. My results show that it is possible to talk about less well-known discourses of HCS-teachers where they are not at all poky, proper or practical, nor are they marginalised or lack of legitimacy.

**Discussion and conclusion**

Different discursive practices shape complex systems of meaning, which are apprehended as, and become truths. “The truth” of the teacher in Home and consumer studies is created in everything from official reports, to staff rooms and classrooms. The aim of the empirical study was to examine how HCS-teachers create themselves. In this on-going the HCS teacher positions her-self in ways she sees as possible. The result indicates that several positions are possible. The teachers interviewed in this study say that they are not “typical HCS-teachers”. They are also told so by people around them, mostly referring to physical attributes: they don’t look like HCS-teachers.

By referring to specific discourses in relation to themselves, the teachers show how they take part in the social play of different ways of being a HCS-teacher. In more or less conscious ways they challenge the traditional, stereotype notion of the HCS-teacher. The moralising and the gender coding of both the teacher and thus the subject and its content are questioned.

The interviewees in this study were all female, in that respect they are in line with the stereotype of the HCS-teacher. Even though still most student teachers studying Home and consumer studies in Sweden are female there is a tendency: at least some male student teachers choose HCS as one of their subjects.

As a “daemon” the discourse on the “typical HCS-teacher” seems to keep influencing what positions are possible for HCS-teachers today. One example mentioned above is from the project *School without a timetable* showing that HCS-teachers seldom are part of teacher teams or thematic work in school, if not as a funny feature. HCS-teachers seems to be expected to keep to cooking and baking, not to work according to the National Curriculum and Syllabus, which makes visible a much more comprehensive and complex far beyond a
limitation to practical skills, though these are important as well. As one of the teachers in de Ron’s study says:

Sometimes I wonder why not, it is not... how can I put it... no outspoken expectation that I keep to the national steering documents at school, I feel that way. If I do work according to the national steering documents, it becomes rather controversial. I have to keep a low profile to do that.

In what way?

No, the expectations of the subject is very stereotype, nothing have happened and I don’t think they mean to be mean. It’s not impossible. I think they just don’t know (de Ron, 2006, p. 31)

For a school subject to appear as a funny feature may be in line with dominating discourses about the subject and the “typical HCS-teacher”, but to work according the national steering documents aren’t. The quote above shows how such a discourse limit the teacher’s possibilities to act professional, even if the teacher her/him self does not want to be positioned within the discourse of the “typical HCS-teacher”. The teacher in the quote above explains the situation as she continues:

A problem with this [HCS] is that it is easy to comment as it is close to people’s lives. I don’t give opinions on other teachers or the subjects that they teach, if I don’t have knowledge about it, but somehow I feel - but maybe it is because I know what it is like to teach [HCS] - it is so easy to comment on it [HCS] (ibid.).

The teacher in HCS teaches a subject close to all of us as it concerns home and family life. It was and still is a female gendered area. The teacher in the quote above is given limited possibilities to position herself due to the stereotype views on the subject and the HCS-teacher. To be accepted as a member of the school staff when she challenges these stereotypes she needs to “keep a low profile”.

The expectations of the subject, as said by the HCS-teacher’s colleagues above, as “cooking and baking” and its focus on private life seems to be a hindrance for the possibilities to play a key role in education for sustainable development, as proposed in 2005. The subject, in Sweden studied by girls and boys since 1962, is still gender coded. The gender coding is visible at least in two ways. First, HSC is one of the school subjects in which the largest differences in marks between boys and girls, in girls favour, are found (SOU 2009:64). Second, even though equal responsibility for household chores is part of the gender equality policy in Sweden, the focus on private life and household chores seems to make the HSC-classroom mined ground for boys (Petersson, 2007). In line with the ideal of gender equality, household work is the responsibility of women and men alike; but statistics show that the situation in real life still looks different. Women in general take more responsibility and use more time for unpaid household work than men in general (Pipping Ekström & Hjälmeskog, 2006; Molén, 2012). Further, the female coding of home and family life and the separation between private
and public makes it difficult to address questions of education for sustainable development in a way that include HCS (Wihlborg & Skill, 2004).

This study gives at hand many changing and contradictory ways of being a HCS-teacher. To put it in other words: different ways to position oneself as HCS-teacher is available. However, a dominant discourse still seems to be one about the typical HCS-teacher. This is a discourse characterised by dualistic thinking leading to a marginalising of both the school subject and the teacher in Home and consumer studies. The HCS-teachers in school today handle the presence of this discourse in several ways, both by adopting to it and, as the teacher above, by keeping a low profile, or above all, and this may point towards a brighter future, by stepping out of the isolation in the shadow by revolting against the stereotype of the fusspot.

Biography

Karin Hjälmeskog, PhD is a senior lecturer at Department for Education at Uppsala University. Karin researches and writes about Home Economics Education from several perspectives, for example philosophical, historical, sustainable development, gender and care perspectives. Karin has served as chair in the Swedish Committee for Home Economics and continues Nordic as well as International networking through IFHE.

References


Rebranding Home Economics

IFHE Think Tank Committee

Context
The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) provided funding support to the IFHE Think Tank Committee to investigate consideration of a rebranding process for the profession. The Think Tank Committee membership varied across the term of this project and all members are thanked for their contributions to this process. The funding support has enabled the continuation of the rebranding process first initiated and being undertaken voluntarily by members and associates of the Think Tank Committee. The goal to rebrand the profession emerged out of the IFHE Position Statement for the 21st Century. Analysis of several hundred surveys, employment of a rebranding consultant, and finally the endorsement of a strategy for rebranding are the key outcomes of this project.

This paper presents the findings of the responses to a Brand Pyramid survey. More than 200 individual and 74 collated responses representing a reported range of from 4 to more than 97 members were received. The survey was translated into several languages, and data translated back to English for inclusion in the development of the Brand Pyramid ensuring a global contribution to the process.

Understanding brands
In the twenty first century all business communication—and much of our social communication—is about brands. It is about building them, protecting them, buying and selling them, and about experiencing them. A ‘brand’ is something that is intrinsic and belongs to the individual in the sense that it is how they think, feel and react to a product, service, business or profession.

According to Davies (2009), a brand includes the perception of something along with its reputation, as well as its tangible look and feel. It epitomizes the character and values. In this way, the products, services and people of an organisation, profession or business are all part of the brand, and affect the way audiences perceive and interact with a given brand. Brands that are recognisable, easy to define, and successful, obtain a brand personality. This gives it a personality. Personality traits can be assigned to a brand, all from the recognition of its name. They remain the point of differentiation separating understanding with recognition.

A brand is regarded as being comprised of a range of components. Commonly, the categories are identified to be:

- Attributes
- Functional benefits
- Rewards
- Values
- Personality
- Brand simplicity
Attributes can be rational or emotional, but they will always be distinctive, always competitive and, most importantly, relevant to the customer. Safety is a good example of a brand attribute. Functional benefits are the second perspective of brands. Essentially benefits are the interpretation of each attribute into a benefit for the consumer. Functional benefits connect with the rewards that come from being associated with the brand. The fourth perspective of the brand is the values of the brand. Values are used to reinforce how the brand makes you feel about yourself. If a brand presents itself as having good old fashioned morals, then chances are your conscience will be clear in purchasing that brand. When a brand is prepared to back itself with a lifetime guarantee, chances are you’ll respond positively to that benefit because it reinforces the value of trust. Values can be viewed from 3 angles: values related to the organisation; values that summarise the brand; and values as they are perceived by customers. The fifth perspective of a brand is personality. Researchers typical invite focus group participants to describe the product they are researching as if it were a person, or a car, or some other ‘personality’ friendly descriptor. The final brand perspective is the essence or simplicity, a complicated fusion of the functional and the emotional components of a brand. This is often represented by a simple logo or slogan that captures the essence of the brand simply. What is branding?

Healey (2008) claims there are five main components to branding: positioning; storytelling; design; price; and customer relationship. The notion of branding is complex and time consuming, and relies on much more than the development of a logo and a slogan. Brands are built over time, and rely on the generation of emotional and social responses that can be consistently expected to be associated with a product, profession or business. With respect to the branding process, these five components are briefly outlined as follows:

Positioning
This is to create an intangible idea of what a brand represents, particularly in relation to competitors. It requires interaction with the consumer in a dialogue. Brands (Healy, 2009) make use of “conventional symbols to communicate their essential qualities”.

Storytelling
This involves the development of a good emotional story to draw the consumer in.

Design
This includes all aspects of the craft of the product, and its packaging.

Price
Price is about value, and status. A cheap brand may lose market share because it is perceived as being of a lower quality.

Customer relationship
It is important that the customer feels valued by the organisation.
The platform for the Home Economics brand: The IFHE Position Statement

The first issue of the International Journal of Home Economics in 2008 featured the IFHE Position Statement, he21C, formally adopted at the 2008 World Congress and Council meeting. This document came about as result of the initiative of the Think Tank committee, originally convened in Bonn, Germany, in 2005. The following questions were addressed to home economists around the world:

- What is home economics?
- What is unique about home economics as a field of study and how can this uniqueness be employed to further the profession?
- What contribution does home economics make?
- What are the key elements of home economics?
- What name should ‘home economics’ be?
- What evidence is there of the impact of the subject/field in a range of contexts including: education, health, business etc.?

While the thrust of the process was to “utiliz[e] globalization in beneficial ways to further the interests of the profession”, he21c serves also to “locate the profession in a contemporary context”. Firstly, that:

[Home Economics is a field of study and a profession, situated in the human sciences that draws from a range of disciplines to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities

and that the multiple disciplines that Home Economics draws on include:

- food
- nutrition and health
- textiles and clothing
- shelter and housing
- consumerism and consumer science
- household management
- design and technology
- food science and hospitality
- human development and family studies
- education and community services

and finally, that the essential component that all home economics courses of study must exhibit the following three dimensions:

1. a focus on fundamental needs and practical concerns of individuals and family in everyday life and their importance both at the individual and near community levels, and also at societal and global levels so that wellbeing can be enhanced in an ever changing and ever challenging environment;
2. the integration of knowledge, processes and practical skills from multiple disciplines synthesised through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary inquiry and pertinent paradigms; and

3. demonstrated capacity to take critical/transformative/emancipatory action to enhance wellbeing and to advocate for individuals, families and communities at all levels and sectors of society.

Importantly, the position statement provides the context for the work presented in this paper associated with future proofing the profession utilising a branding strategy. It is important to note that the rebranding strategy is directed at home economics as a profession, not at the International federation for Home Economics (IFHE) which has a clear brand of its own. The relevant context from the Position statement is cited below under the section subtitled Directions for the decade:

"[T]he focus on the decade ahead is on future proofing, which describes the elusive process of trying to anticipate future developments, so that action can be taken to minimise possible negative consequences, and to seize opportunities. Future proofing the Home Economics profession and the Federation is a challenging task but one which is necessary to ensure a sustainable vision both for the profession, and for individual members. The International Federation of Home Economics has commenced its future-proofing strategy by focussing on questions of sustainability, advocacy and the active creation of preferred futures for Home Economics, relevant disciplinary fields, and the profession itself, while critically reflecting upon and being informed by its historical roots. The 2008 IFHE World Congress Home Economics: Reflecting on the past; Creating the future, is a future oriented first step towards this strategy, as is the development of this Position Statement, Home Economics in the 21st Century.

Home Economics as a profession and field of study is challenged by questions of its own sustainability. This mirrors the UN Millennial Goals of Education for Sustainable Development, which aims at developing the pillars of sustainability within the education sector and within individual’s daily lives. Home Economics as a profession similarly is challenged to engage with questions of sustainability. Given the important role home economics has in education for sustainability, it is paramount that the profession future proof itself to ensure its own sustainability.

This project

Support of this project by IFHE enabled the continuation of the re-branding process conceived by the Think Tank Committee and supported by the members of IFHE through the executive endorsement of the work of the committee, which was developed as an outcome of the development of the IFHE Position Statement for the 21st Century. Analysis of several hundred surveys administered around the globe, employment of a rebranding consultant, and development of a rebranding strategy are the key outcomes of this project. In early phases of the project, the goal was to launch the concept of a home economics ‘brand’ at the IFHE
World Congress in July 2012 in Melbourne, Australia. However, it became apparent that the processes of support and approval required greater deliberation and commitment prior to such a launch. This paper serves as a critical document to assist in this informing process.

Historical records of the Federation document the challenges various names, titles and terminology have posed for the profession, including the complexity of translation across the many languages around the globe. The name of the profession has been researched and theorised by a wide number of scholars, and this question was investigated by the Think Tank Committee as part of the development of the *Position Statement, Home Economics in the 21st Century*, where it was stated with great clarity and commitment that IFHE would retain the name Home Economics. Internationally, the field of study has consistently retained the name Home Economics and is recognised both within and beyond the boundaries of the profession. Hence, the name of the profession is not in question in this process of rebranding, and serves as a given underpinning all that follows.

**Background and data collection**

A number of strategies were utilised to inform home economists around the world of the project to develop a strategic approach to rebrand the profession. Key project briefing and data collection opportunities occurred in the following ways:

1. All IFHE 2008 Congress registrants received a copy of the IFHE Position Statement in their Congress satchel. Additional copies were also made available for those seeking extra copies. Attention was drawn to the *Directions for the next decade* section of the position statement which outlined the need for future proofing and rebranding the profession.

2. The inaugural issue of the *International Journal of Home Economics* (IJHE) featured the *Position Statement*, an outline of the collaborative process of producing the statement, and responses to the statement from prominent international home economists. Also featured in this issue was a peer reviewed journal article with the title *he21C: A cross cultural comparative study*, authored by Yvonne Dewhurst and Donna Pendergast, which provided a cross cultural study of perceptions of excerpts taken from the *Position Statement*. Recommendations to IFHE were made in this paper including the development of a re-branding strategy in order to future proof the profession.

3. At the 2008 World Congress the Special Organizational Member Event featured the unpacking of the *Position Paper* as an introduction, then outlined the process of data collection for the re-branding strategy. The methodology of developing a Brand Pyramid was outlined. This included the development of a research instrument in the form of a survey. Approximately 70 people attended this specially devised session on behalf of their professional organizations. A list of more than 20 people keen to apply the strategy in their context was solicited. The materials were distributed to these representatives and responses to the survey (see Table 1) have been received from around the world.
4. At the 2009 Leadership meeting a group session was conducted and data collected from participants at the meeting. As a follow-up to this session, the Vice-Presidents and regional representatives subsequently conducted their own data collection around the globe using the materials produced by the Think Tank committee.

5. Data were sent to the Think Tank convenor and collated for the purposes of creating a Home Economics Brand Pyramid, from which the underpinning formulation of a brand and a slogan could be achieved, as a starting point for the rebranding process.

The Brand Pyramid research process was used to obtain information used as a basis for informing the rebranding process. The brand pyramid approach is widely used by marketing experts to redefine and provide a pathway for rebranding.

Stakeholders from a range of sources around the globe were asked to follow a standardised process to engage with the brand pyramid exercise. Some of the responses came from workshops, and some from individual surveys. The following questions, presented in Table 1, guided the data collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear ‘Home Economics’?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What do you believe are the fundamental principles of ‘Home Economics’?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Beliefs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What is a key feature of the role of teachers/practitioners in ‘Home Economics’?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How does the name ‘Home Economics’ play a part in the perception of the field</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What are the benefits of learning about ‘Home Economics’?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What do you and your students/clients find most enjoyable?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What outcomes are you hoping students/clients will take from ‘Home Economics’?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How does ‘Home Economics’ benefit in the long term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. If the field were a person, what kind of person would it be?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How would you describe the person?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is this person ‘fun’, ‘outgoing’ ... (list the words to describe the person)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Essence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the term ‘Home Economics rely on a prior knowledge by potential clients/students? If so, how?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Would this limit the capacity to gain a new client base?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As an example of the diversity of representation, the sources included:

- Finnish Home Economics Professionals
- Canadian Home Economics Academics
- Australian high school Home Economics students
- Irish Preservice Teachers
- The International Federation of Home Economics Think Tank Committee
- A cohort of IFHE Leadership delegates

Data analysis

Word Frequency Analysis was applied using the latest version of Nvivo, qualitative analysis software.

The following steps were followed:

1. All data were entered verbatim from the response sheets into an excel spreadsheet, which can be used as a casebook of data and attributes for future NVivo analyses. When specific questions had been left unanswered, a nil response (0) was entered.
2. Any parts of responses that could not be deciphered were marked and a second opinion was sought. Any parts of responses, or responses, were could still not be deciphered were removed from the final casebook.
3. Responses that included extended descriptors, phrases and sentences were reduced to one or more words. For example, the phrase ‘life skills development’ was reduced to the category title of ‘life skills’.
4. Once descriptors had been allocated, the content of each response was analysed and the ideas were collected under a category title according to shared themes. For example, responses such as ‘honest’ and ‘sincere’ were included in a single category (from the personality section) in order to limit the number of categories for analysis. New categories were inductively created when the themes and descriptors did not fit in to an existing category, or share ideas with the preceding responses.
5. The majority of surveys include multiple responses for each question or multiple ideas within an answer. Where these types of multiple responses have been given, each of the answers, or ideas contained therein, has been individually categorised and included in the analysis of responses. The phrase ‘a discipline that examines how families work together to manage their resources’, for example, has been amended to reflect the categories discipline, family and resource management. The category titles are used in place of the responses in the Excel file.
6. As a result of the inclusion of individual responses, rather than using only a single response to each question from each survey, the analyses may indicate, for example, that a particular question has received over 200 responses.
7. Specific categories were inductively identified through the initial analysis of responses to particular questions. Some categories, such as the ‘dynamic/ multifaceted’ category in the rewards section, group together more than one related idea.
8. Where possible, the same category titles have been used for responses to related questions. The responses to the two questions about ‘values’, for example, have been coded according to the same categories which can then be used to collectively analyse all responses to the questions in this section.

9. The only exceptions to this approach have been in the ‘functional beliefs’ and ‘brand essence’ sections of the survey. The questions in both of these sections have very different areas of focus. The initial question in the ‘functional beliefs’ section, for example, is focused on ‘the role of teachers/ practitioners in home economics’, whereas the second question is focused on the name of the discipline. As a result of these divergent foci, the responses to these questions have not been collectively analysed.

10. The content analysis and creation of categories had been achieved prior to the analysis of the second set of data, which are included in the second worksheet of the two excel workbooks. These data were transcribed and described using the methods described.

11. Unlike the initial analysis, however, the content analysis used both inductive and deductive approaches to categorising responses. The thematic categories derived from the responses were used to guide the analysis of responses to each question, and in each section, from the 13 July data and collection of these responses under category titles. When the responses from the 13 July data did not fit within the existing response categories, the inductive approach used in the initial phase of data analysis was used to create new categories.

12. Once all of the responses had been categorised, the number of responses in each category were examined. Each worksheet contains the responses to the questions within individual sections of the survey and, where appropriate (see point 9), the total responses within each section have been provided.

13. The data have been presented predominantly in the form of tag clouds, which show proportional frequency of terms. This is a valid means of visual graphical presentation rather than the presentation of a series of tables of numerical data.

Findings

Following are the findings of each of the brand pyramid categories in the following order:

- Attributes
- Functional benefits
- Rewards
- Values
- Personality
- Brand simplicity
Attributes

There were two questions associated with attributes, each will be presented separately.

1. **What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear ‘Home Economics’?**

There is no surprise that the words *home* and *economics* stand out. *Food*, *cooking* and *sewing* are also very clearly linked. Importantly *family* and *life* are quite prominent.

2. **What do you believe are the fundamental principles of ‘Home Economics’?**

*Food*, *cooking* and *sewing* are again significant. However, other key words here include: *family*, *learning*, *life*, *skills* and *wellbeing*.
Functional beliefs

There were two questions associated with functional benefits, each will be presented separately.

1. **What is the key feature of the role of teachers/practitioners in 'Home Economics'?**

   Here the most prominent word is **teaching**, understandable given that the question asks the key role of teachers/practitioners.

2. **How does the name 'Home Economics' play a part in the perception of the field?**

   **Home Economics** and **cooking** are the most obvious words in this tag cloud. It is important to note that while not frequent, the gendered term **woman** appears.
Rewards

There were two questions associated with rewards, with both questions presented in one figure.

1. **What are the benefits of learning about ‘Home Economics’?**

2. **What do you and your students/clients find most enjoyable?**

While cooking and sewing make their usual appearance, it’s clear that practitioners and students of Home Economics value learning life skills.
Values

There were two questions associated with values, with each question presented in separate figures.

1. **What outcomes are you hoping students/clients will take from ‘Home Economics’?**

   The outcomes word frequency tag cloud shows that while cooking (and to a lesser extent sewing) is highly valued, learning skills, for everyday life and a healthy home are very important.

2. **How does ‘Home Economics’ benefit in the long term?**

   The question here is “How does ‘Home Economics’ benefit in the long term?” The interesting results show a high frequency of life, skills and you.
Personality

There were three questions associated with rewards, with all questions presented in one figure.

1. If the field were a person, what kind of person would it be?
2. How would you describe the person?
3. Is this person ‘fun’, ‘outgoing’... (list the words to describe the person)?

The data from this question was collated.

Key words appearing in this section are caring, creative, fun, outgoing, and woman. It is important to note that fun, and outgoing appeared in the question and may have skewed the data.
Brand essence

There were two questions associated with values, with each questions presented in separate figures.

1. **Does the term ‘Home Economics’ rely on a prior knowledge by potential clients/students? If so, how?**

2. **Would this limit the capacity to gain a new client base?**
Word Frequency comparison across areas

Each of the question sections from all respondents were analysed for the 100 most common words and word stems (for example, Answers covers answer, answered, answerers, answers). Within each set, the word/word stem was calculated at a weighted percentage. These weighted percentages were then compared across all areas.

Table 2  Word Frequency comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word stem</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Brand Essence</th>
<th>Functional Beliefs</th>
<th>Personality</th>
<th>Rewards</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>15.99</td>
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<td>Cooks</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>15.53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>13.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.12</td>
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<td>1.37</td>
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<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.15</td>
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<td>0.76</td>
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<td>0.69</td>
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<td>0.74</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>fun</td>
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<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledge</td>
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Figure 11 Top 20 words across all areas
Synthesis of findings

Following the Analysis stage of rebranding, it is crucial to synthesise the findings in order to develop a range of proposed logos and slogans in order to commence the lengthy process of gaining brand equity. The following pyramid serves as a visual synthesis of the tag clouds previously presented. The brand pyramid provides a useful way of synthesising each of the elements involved in the rebranding process.

![Brand Pyramid for Home Economics](image)

**Discussion and Conclusions**

There is much to be said for the existing brand equity presented as a result of the Brand Pyramid exercise. The brand pyramid provides insight into the existing equity in the home economics brand, which strongly reflects the IFHE Position Paper. In light of this position of strong equity, the IFHE is committed to re-branding and repositioning, not renaming the profession, which has historically led to a reversion to the original name, ‘home economics’. The existence of this pattern means that the title ‘home economics’ already has brand equity.

Brand equity is the added value that a brand is given beyond the functionality benefits it provides, and this is developed over a long period of time. ‘Home Economics’ would lose recognition if its name was to change, and as a result would lose the brand equity it has accrued over more than 100 years. Re-establishing brand equity requires returning to the
fundamentals of marketing and brand identity must be re-established, its meaning needs to be re-developed. That is why it is important to re-brand the home economics profession.

Bibliography


Corporate social responsibility: Comparison of outward and inward-oriented manufacturers

Prabhjot Kaur & Navjot Kaur

Government Home Science College, Continental Group of Institute

Abstract

The knitwear manufacturing units of Ludhiana in Northern India are facing an unusual situation as some of US based buyers cancelled their orders due to the allegations of child labour practices. This had a negative impact on the performance and growth of the sector. This study was undertaken to throw light on the adoption of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with special focus on commitment - towards labour and workplace practices among inward- oriented and outward-oriented knitwear units of Ludhiana. Eighty industrial knitwear units belonging to the Knitwear Apparel cluster of Ludhiana (Punjab) were surveyed. Using a random sampling method (Lottery method) and an interview questionnaire, data regarding CSR practices were collected from 80 units in four major blocks. The results revealed that the majority of knitwear units provided conducive environments for employees to operate, with differences based on company orientation. Proper workforce practices were followed by most of outward-oriented units, like a system and procedure for complaints; no discrimination; technical and management training; safety; and medical facilities. But, none of the units gave freedom of association or permitted workers to form the trade unions, though some special benefits and facilities were provided to the female employees, such as, maternity leave patterns, part time work for mothers and facility of crèches/ child care facilities. Very few inward oriented units were engaged in such activities.

Keywords- Corporate Social Responsibility, Working environment, Workplace/Labour betterment practices, Medical, Safety facilities and Special facilities for women.

Introduction

“Action springs not from thought, but from a readiness for responsibility”.  
Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)  
Pastor, Theologian, German Resistance Fighter In World War II

The Indian knitwear industry has good prospects for being competitive, and, can be one of the key export destinations due to its small size, flexibility, along with controlled and lower overhead costs. But this can only be possible if labour standards and factory conditions are improved considerably and the industry becomes more compliant with the international labour, social and environmental standards. As lot of international pressure is mounting on the industry due to the allegations of labour abuse in its worst form—child labour and bonded labour is becoming increasing source of worry for the western buyers. Even if industry may cry them hoarse that they do not employ child labour, as they must comply fully with the
highest standards in accordance with the requirements of their buyers, they cannot say with confidence that the complete supply chain is clean. The US Department of Labour (DOL) continues to feature the Indian apparel industry on its Executive Order (EO) 13126 List that sets forth a list of products, by country of origin which US authorities believe might have been manufactured by forced or indentured child labour. Industry owners watches with fear that its continued mention in the DOL list would throw challenges to them in the coming year, especially with the indications that going forward brands could be made accountable for their trade with India. Hence it has become very important with regard to labour management to encourage unions and employers to develop better institutional arrangements and look into all the issues related to delayed payments, sudden and unexplained termination of workers, unhealthy working conditions and high-handed attitude of management etc. (Anonymous, 2012a).

Review of Literature

Corporate social responsibility includes taking initiative for improving the working conditions so that the workforce can be both content and assured of a safe environment. According to Lord Holm and Richard Watts, CSR is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to the economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and the society at large. It makes the atmosphere conducive to assuring positive levels of productivity and improving the operators’ performance through training, enhancing standard of living, attending to absenteeism and reducing labour turnover, and listening to employee suggestions. It also increases the competitiveness and market value of businesses because, in the long run, all that is ethical also becomes rational (Sharma, et.al, 2009).

There are many business benefits of healthy workplace practices. They include:

- Increased employee satisfaction, resulting in lower turnover, improved ability to cope with change, increased productivity, significant savings and knowledge retention.
- Better name recognition, improved reputation and larger talent pool, resulting in reduced recruitment costs and more unsolicited applications.
- Reduced absenteeism, injuries, accidents, disability and compensation costs, healthcare and life insurance costs, temporary employee training costs, property damage costs, fines and insurance premiums.
- Increased staff skills and competencies (Anonymous, 2012b).

Modern life depends more and more upon goods produced by industry. Historically, there have always been struggles and clashes between workers and the employers on matters of wages, allowances, and other issues (Verma & Mohan, 2008). Human or labour rights are relevant to the economic, social, and environmental aspects of corporate activities. For example, labour rights requiring companies to pay fair wages affect the economic aspect of manufacturing. Human rights such as the right to non-discrimination are relevant to the social aspects. And the environmental aspects of corporate activity may affect a range of human rights, such as the right to clean drinking water. So, while the primary responsibility for the
enforcement of international human rights standards lies with national governments, there is a growing acceptance that corporations also have an important role to play.

The desire to create positive social change in the corporate world is not a new phenomenon, although current social, political, economic and ideological conditions have affected it in specific ways today (May, Cheney & Robet, 2007). The growing awareness of social responsibility can be traced to the sixties when a National Convention of businessmen was held in New Delhi (Goyal & Goyal, 2009-2010). After 2000, CSR has fast gained momentum as an important aspect of business practice in India. But still the lack of transparency and information sharing between and among the stakeholders were a reason for concern in 2012. To address these concerns, Apparel Export Promotion Council designed a compliance programme ‘Disha’ (Driving Industry Towards Sustainable Human Capital Advancement), which was coordinated and monitored in liaison with the Ministry of Textiles. Global apparel buyers like H&M and Adidas, were a part of the team that went behind consultations while drafting Disha, a faith-building exercise, which had brought in rigorous third party audit programme involving international auditing agencies in the supply chain (Anonymous, 2012a).

Though large sums of money are spent on technology upgrades, but the back bone of the knitwear unit is its people. The thumb rule is that ‘technology makes 10% of a business while business processes, employees and culture makes up to 90%’ has been proved again and again. Hence it is very important to involve each and every worker in the unit’s activities. Sunita describes various workplace responsibility practices towards the workers as giving fair and competitive wages, providing good working conditions, taking proper safety measures to avoid health and life hazards, training and prospects for growth and development, no discrimination between different workers on the basis of sex, caste and colour, welfare facilities, fair promotional rules, job security and provident fund (Sunita,2005).

Greening & Turban (2000) found that job applicant and worker’s perceptions of a firm’s CSR, determines their attractiveness towards the organizations. A survey by Sirota Survey Intelligence (2007) affirmed that workers who were satisfied with their organization’s commitment to social and environmental responsibilities were likely to be more positive, more engaged and more productive than those working for less responsible employers. When the employees were positive about their organizations’ CSR commitment, their engagement rose to 86 per cent. On the other hand, when workers were negative about their employer’s CSR activities, only 37 per cent were highly engaged. Similarly, Murray (2008) on the basis of survey stated that more than one-third of respondents pointed that working for a caring and responsible employer was more important than the salary they earned and nearly half would turn away from an employer that lacked good corporate social responsibility policies. Shubham (2010) assessed the compliance levels of CSR of five selected units in Northern Capital region. Audits were carried out in 5 different garment manufacturing units according to audit programme specifications such as WRAP and SA 8000. Maximum non-compliance was seen in terms of health and safety of the workplace such as: emergency lights not installed, health, safety training, fire safety and personal problem equipment trainings not given to the workers. Other areas of non-compliance were documentation and maintenance of details such as age proof certificates, renewal of factory license etc.
A comparative analysis of inward and outward-oriented woollen units of Ludhiana was conducted to explore the extent of undertaking collective efforts and benefits derived by the knitwear units. The word inward and outward-oriented woollen units meant the woollen units dealing with exports (outward-oriented) and domestic markets (inward-oriented). It was found that most of the units competed with each other and believed in taking individual initiatives instead of group efforts to improve conditions in the units.

Various international standards for the certification like SA8000, OHSAS 18000 and so on encourages the manufacturing industries to develop, maintain and supply socially acceptable workplace practices or occupational health and safety management systems. Important elements included child labour, forced labour, health and safety, freedom of association and right to collective bargaining, discrimination, discipline, working hours, compensation, management systems, hazard prevention and control measures, training investigation of work related injuries, competence, responsibility and accountability, (Leipziger, 2010). Human resource audits are conducted by some international organizations like Fair Labour Association (FLA), Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI), Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production (WRAP), Supplier Ethical Data Exchange (SEDEX) etc. to ascertain whether the existing systems are adequate and whether they function effectively. It not only indicate the deficiencies in the system but also provides the directions for improvement based on well-considered suggestions (Agarwal, Mishra & Agarwal, 2008).

A critical review of the literature revealed that number of studies had been conducted on Corporate Social Responsibility in other manufacturing industries but very little effort had been made to study its adoption and awareness in Ludhiana’s knitwear industry. Hence, this research was an attempt to bridge this research gap.

Definitions

Inward oriented unit: Unit which caters to domestic market.

Outward oriented unit: Unit which caters to international market.

Conducive environment: An environment conducive to the creation and growth or transformation of enterprises on a sustainable basis combines the legitimate quest for profit - one of the key drivers of economic growth - with the need for development that respects human dignity, environmental sustainability and decent work.

Workplace practices: These refer to the procedures and practices affecting the performance of work in the organization. It includes recruitment and promotion, discipline and grievance, termination, compensation, and practices that affect working conditions, such as employee participation, training, health and safety and working time.

Healthy workplace: It focuses on worksite safety and injury prevention for workers and includes programs that help employees choose healthy behaviours such as quitting smoking, healthy eating or getting physically active. It promotes the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of your employees and the protection from risks to health caused by working conditions.

Working hours: Indian Labour Law says that weekly working hours should not be more than 48 hours i.e. 8 hours without break and over time should not exceed 12 hours overtime in a week.
Migrant Workers: Rural illiterate migrants which move to the city to take up work in the industry with no previous experience and had worked only in agriculture.

Performance: It is based on performing one's responsibilities effectively.

Minimum wages: Paying decent wages is a prime social responsibility of any business. By offering wages above the minimum, an organization can better attract employees, reduce turnover and absenteeism, and build the firm’s community reputation.

Trainings: It is important as it helps employees succeed in their current job and position them for future responsibilities within the firm. Investments in employee training and development help to build the firm’s overall capacity enabling it to achieve its business goals and also orient new hires, help employees adapt to new technologies or work processes, address performance challenges, or to support employees in adjusting to new responsibilities within the business.

Variables/Components of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

1. Age of Recruitment (see Figure 1)

2. Working hours (see Figure 2)

3. Conducive environment (see Figure 3)
   - Respecting human dignity, Environmental sustainability, Decent work.

4. Workplace practices (see Figure 4)
   - Education to workers, Flexible working hours, Health, safety and welfare, Special facility to female workers, Providing information, No discrimination at workplace, Trainings provided, Fair play (Minimum wages & Statutory benefits), Complaints procedure, Freedom of association or Trade unions, Refreshment facilities, Transportation, No sexual harassment.

5. Comparable wages with others (see Figure 5)

6. Salary-related benefits (see Figure 6)
   - Gifts on festivals, Special occasions, Bonuses; Weddings, Education, & Medical, Job security, Equal pay to same level employees, Regular payment of salary, Overtime.

7. Supporting Education (see Figure 7)
   - Professional education, Management training, Language courses, Long-term education, Technical training.

8. Training provided (see Figure 8)
9. Information provided (see Figure 9)
   Appointment letters & contracts, Important business matters, Future business prospect, Human resource report, Social community activities, Competitors, Major plan investment.

10. Factors affecting promotion (see Figure 10)
   Length of service, Political connections

11. Health facilities (see Figure 11)
   Ambulance, Medical room, Adequate number of Fire extinguishers, Adequate number of First aid boxes, Provide personal protective equipment, Emergency exit door, Maternity leave & benefits, Adequate lighting, Compliance with the national pension policy.

12. Accident practices (see Figure 12)
   Pay full medical bill, Rehabilitation, Pay full salary while medical treatment, Pay half salary while medical treatment, Medical Help

13. Worker death (see Figure 13)
   Bear full cost of burial, Pay terminal benefit to next kin, Give educational scholarships to children.

14. Special facilities for female employees (see Figure 14)
   Part-time work for mothers, Crèches/ child-care facilities, No arrangements

15. Maternity leave patterns (see Figure 15)
   Six weeks, Twelve weeks, Not applicable

Aims & Objectives-

- To discover the adoption status of CSR components with special reference to labour-oriented practices in knitwear units of Ludhiana.
- To comparatively analyse the commitment towards labour and workplace practices between inward-oriented and outward-oriented knitwear units of Ludhiana.
- To explore the various special benefits and facilities provided to female employees in knitwear units.
- To evaluate the safety arrangements for the benefit of the employees in the knitwear units.
- To explore the information and trainings provided within the knitwear unit to the employees.
- To assess the various salary and health related benefits and promotional rules followed in knitwear industry of Ludhiana.
Methodology

The sampling unit selected for the study was the individual knitwear unit in Ludhiana which was a member of Knitwear Club, a textile and knitwear industry association with membership of 800 Knitwear units which directly or indirectly are part of the value chain. Treating this as a proxy for the population, 80 medium knitwear manufacturing units (10% of the population) were selected using stratified random sampling. The four blocks were divided on the basis of geographical area and twenty units showing interest to participate in this research were randomly selected (Lottery method) from each block as seen in Table 1. After identifying the unit owners or their representatives, information regarding the industrial unit’s social commitment was collected personally by the researcher through personal interview of the unit owners or their representatives after making a telephone appointment. It was accompanied with personal visits to the knitwear units and observations of the workplace practices being followed. Talks with workers also helped in verifying the facts. The data collected was coded, tabulated and analysed.

Table 1 Sample Area Distribution

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The Ludhiana knitwear industry is located in the Northern state of Punjab in India (as seen in Map-1) and is popularly known as “Manchester of India”. It is highly decentralized and mainly small scale contributing to 95% of country’s woollen knitwear and employing 4 Lakh workers directly or indirectly. The annual turnover of the Cluster is approximately Rs.5000 Crores including exports of 1000 crores. The share of exports in total turnover is only 20%, hence Ludhiana mainly caters to the domestic market. It produces a wide range of woollen products for winter wear like sweaters, woollen socks, pullovers, cardigans, thermal wear, gloves, muffler, berets, caps, shawls, jackets, jersey and blankets, and for summer wear, items like T-shirts, cotton and blended socks, under garments, knitted bed sheet, skirts, tops, sportswear, night suits etc. Most of the knitwear units are unorganized and ‘owner managed’. The owner performs all basic functions of marketing, procurement and finance and are not interested in appointing professionals or believe in trainings. External training programs are
rarely subscribed as these are considered expensive and a waste of productive man-hours. These units are mainly involved in knitting, fabric cutting, lot making, embroidery, final stitching, final checking, packing of garments, retailing and marketing. Women workers are more involved in the work of designing, stitching and packing while male workers dominate the industry in the department of knitting, cutting, checking, retailing and marketing (Anonymous, 2009).

Ludhiana knitwear Industry is mainly labour-intensive and most of the workers are migrants from nearby states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and also from Nepal, which are mainly unskilled though there are skilled and semiskilled labour workforce also. Indirect labour activities include tailoring, embroidery, packing, retailing and marketing. Subcontracting is a major critical attribute of Ludhiana industry with a large number of small and micro knitting and knitwear firms extending production and manufacturing support to the bigger firms and direct exporters. Most of the other allied activities like dyeing, cutting and embellishment etc. are carried out by contract-workers who mostly sit within the factory premises and are hired through sub-contractors. Issues like harmful work environment are very prominent in the subcontracted activities (Sodhi, 2008).

Results and discussions

Eighty knitwear units were surveyed to examine their commitment toward workplace and workforce practices, out of which 35 units were outward-oriented and 45 units were inward-oriented.

All the outward-oriented knitwear units in Ludhiana employed adult workers and had kept the lowest age for recruitment as 18 years, while 78% inward-oriented units follow this rule strictly (see Figure 1). A report ‘Children /child Labour 2010 compiled by Samu described incidents of child worker in Ludhiana, where as many 18 children working as bounded workers
were rescued by the district administration under ‘Bachpan Bachao Aandolan’. All these children, who either belonged to West Bengal or Bihar in the age group of 10 to 12 years were being paid Rs 25 to Rs 100 per week. Industry owners argued that some workers bring along young children to train them.

Figure 1 Distribution of respondents on the basis of age of recruitment

The majority of the outward-oriented units (75%) had ten hour working shift for regular employees, while 71% inward-oriented units worked mostly for 12-hour day (See Figure 2). Outward-oriented units were found more compliant to with work hours to 12 hours. The result goes with the findings of a study by Uchikawa(2012) as it proved that 12 hours work shift is the general trend in Ludhiana as most of the workers are on piece rate and they want to work longer time to earn more money.

Figure 2 Respondents on the basis of the Working Hours

The majority (96%) of the outward-oriented knitwear units in Ludhiana provided a conducive environment for workers to operate in comparison to 75% inward-oriented. Assessment of Conducive environment was done on three criteria -respecting human dignity, environmental sustainability and decent work (see Figure 3).
The majority of the units followed workforce practices, such as procedures and systems for complaints by workers and presented no discrimination at workplace, none of the units gave freedom of association or permitted the formation of trade unions to their workers. The majority of the outward-oriented units practiced proper workforce practices, such as suitable arrangements for health, workers safety and welfare of employees, encouraging the use of safety equipment such as gloves and masks, provided special facilities for female employees such as employment, training and financial help, refreshment facilities including lunch/tea, canteen, bus transportation, skills-related training in comparison to very few inward-oriented units. Workers were provided clean drinking filtered water and, in some units an aqua guard water filters were installed as a welfare measure (See Figure 4).
The majority of the outward-oriented units (91%) were paying comparable wages as the competing knitwear units as compared to 52% of inward-oriented knitwear units (See Figure 5). They demonstrated their social responsibility, by paying a wage that matches the cost of living, in other words, a “living wage” which further led to the improvement of employee relations.

![Figure 5](image.png)

**Figure 5** Distribution of respondents on the basis of comparable wages with others

The majority (81%) of the units paid regular salary while only few units (9%) provided job security to their employees. The majority of the outward-oriented units were more regular in giving salary, providing gifts on festivals and special occasions, bonus, monetary help for wedding, education, medical help, and overtime payment to their employees in comparison to inward-oriented units (see Figure 6).

![Figure 6](image.png)

**Figure 6** Distribution of respondents on the basis of salary related benefits
The majority of units had displayed Instruction boards in their premises. Example of one such boards are shown in Plate 1 above. The majority of the units provided training in technical issues and management techniques to their employees, while only few were involved in long term education and language courses. All the outward-oriented units were involved in providing at least one other education facility to the employees while the inward-oriented units focused mainly on technical issues and management techniques (See Figure 7).
The majority of the units provided training to employees such as skill development and upgradation, fire fighting, disciplinary and complaints procedures while only very few units provided training on the performance review program for the staff. The majority of outward-oriented units were more frequent in providing training on smoking/drugs abuse, family planning, HIV and AIDS, and technical issues in comparison to inward-oriented units (see Figure 8). By providing training on CSR issues, the company emphasized the extent of company’s commitment towards it and also trains workers to take CSR issues into account in their daily work. Skill development and upgradation training was generally in-house and on the job type.

![Figure 8](distribution_of RESPONDENTS ON THE BASIS OF TRAININGS PROVIDED)

The majority of the units provided basic information to their employees, such as transparency in the appointment letters and contracts, future business prospects and operating climate and information about their competitors, while only few units provided information regarding their activities in local communities and unit’s human resources report. Outward-oriented units were more transparent in providing information to their employees in comparison to inward-oriented units (see Figure 9). Suggestions regarding various workplace problems were taken from the workers and practical suggestions were implemented to make small improvements in the work environment.
The majority (81%) of the total units in Ludhiana promoted employees on the basis of their length of service followed by their performance while none of the units used political connections to employ the workers or promote them. A study on workplace practices of selected Jordanian private sector companies also revealed that promotions were directly tied to the defined criteria based on performance (See Figure 10).

Figure 9  Distribution of respondents on the basis of information provided

Figure 10  Distribution of respondents on the basis of factors effecting employment
The outward-oriented units provided extended more health facilities like adequate number of fire extinguishers, personal protective equipment, pension, adequate lighting, maternity leave and benefits for female employees in comparison to inward-oriented units (See Plate 2 and Figure 11).
The majority of the units paid full medical bills when staff had accidents and full salary while undergoing medical treatment. Only a few units surveyed rehabilitated the staff in case of disability and paid half salary while undergoing medical treatment. Outward-oriented units were more sincerely involved in such practices in comparison to inward-oriented units (See Figure 12).

Figure 12  Distribution of respondents on the basis of practices followed when worker has accident
The majority (81%) of the total bore full cost of burials/cremations and paid terminal benefit to the next kin in the case of worker’s death. Very few gave scholarships to surviving children. Outward-oriented units were seen practicing more of such arrangements in comparison to inward-oriented units (See Figure 13).

![Figure 13](Image)

Figure 13 Distribution of respondents on the basis of practices followed on worker’s death

The majority of the units in Ludhiana (52%) provided special facilities to female workers like part time work for mothers and crèches/child-care facilities for small children. All the outward-oriented units provided one or the other facilities to the female workers in comparison to only 15% of inward-oriented units (See Figure 14). Child-care facilities gave a chance to the women workers to work without any tension of engaging outside day-care services and ultimately led to increase in the employment of women.

![Figure 14](Image)

Figure 14 Distribution of respondents on the basis of special facilities provided to female workers
The majority (93%) inward-oriented units did not provide maternity leave to their employees in comparison to 17% outward-oriented units. The majority of the outward-oriented units had a maternity related policy under which they mainly provided six weeks maternity leave and sometimes twelve weeks of maternity before and after the delivery (See Figure 15).

![Figure 15 Distribution of respondents on the basis of maternity leave provided](image)

**Conclusion**

It was found that Ludhiana knitwear industry is indulged in one or the other workplace CSR practice but there is lack of structured and concrete commitment. Health and safety practices are mainly followed but the workers are not very particular in their use of protective equipment like gloves, masks and glasses. Audits were not conducted in most of the units to keep a check on the compliance level. Very few units were providing special facilities to the women employees, job related benefits and business information to the employees. Most of the outward oriented units of Ludhiana are more committed towards workforce practices as compared to inward oriented units. Main reason found behind their commitment is that they strictly follow rules, laws, social, labour, environmental and ethical code of conduct as expected by the western buyers, while doing business with them. As Ludhiana industry is mainly small scale hence Low workplace commitment of the industry has become a big obstacle in their way to being competitive and successful.

In this present challenging environment, it has become very important that knitwear unit owners should not only consider the people employed by them but also those people living in their vicinity as a part of their own family which would further improve the socio-economic conditions of the people around and also help the industry itself in numerous ways. To help ensure a safe, productive workplace, the industry must adopt a safety, health and wellness policy, conduct inspections to ensure that hazards are eliminated and controlled, train employees on workplace hazards and apply health and safety regulations, hold regular meetings to identify unsafe conditions and implement solutions. It is recommended that in order to make the knitwear industry stand out clearly by virtue of their continuous crusade in the workplace industrial practices and beyond, owners should be made aware of CSR’s direct economic benefits by showing successful examples of CSR implementation as the management
being the main force behind serious commitment. As CSR initiatives are self motivated and self driven and more practical than spoken, hence every business schools which train the future managers should place emphasis on CSR and it should be integrated in their industry's business strategy. Collective efforts by the entire industry will help to clear its present tarnished image resulting from allegations of Child labour so that they emerge as a sincere responsible compliant manufacturer. Further researches can be done on the assessment of compliance level of the knitwear industry of Ludhiana by conducting workplace audits using the 'international standards and compliance grid.'

Biography

Prabhjot Kaur holds a Masters in Clothing and Textiles, UGC NET, BEd, Diploma in Computer Aided Design and Certified Lean Professional. She is also pursuing a PhD in Garment Production Exports Management. She has been teaching in Girls Colleges for the past 13 years in Jallandhar and Chandigarh. At present, she is working as Assistant Professor in the department of Clothing and Textiles in Government Home Science College, Chandigarh. Her twenty-two Research papers and articles have been published in various national and international refereed journals. She has presented papers, posters and has attended many conferences and training programs.

Navjot Kaur holds a Masters in Clothing and Textiles and is working as a lecturer in Continental Group of Institute, Jalvehra, Fatehgarh Sahib, Punjab.

Bibliography


The purpose of this study was to examine Japanese and American high school students’ awareness and perceptions of poverty. The participants included 148 Japanese and 114 American high school students in the eleventh grade. The participants responded to a survey instrument consisting of 14 statements dealing with poverty and stereotypes of poverty. These 14 statements were grouped into four main themes: definition of poverty, causes of poverty, lifestyles associated with poverty, and societal attitude towards poverty. The first stage of analysis focused on the frequency of each response to each of the 14 statements. The second stage involved the generation of correlation and descriptive statistics. Japanese and American high school students’ views on poverty and stereotypes of poverty were compared and contrasted. This study provides insight into how Japanese high school students’ stereotypical views of poverty differ from those of their American counterparts.

Introduction

In recent years, poverty and related issues have received increasing attention in part due to the dramatic widening of income disparity in experienced in Japan between 2005 and 2008. During this period, the plight of the poor has surface in the public awareness as the middle class continues to shrink. With increasing numbers of parents being laid off from regular employment and having to rely on public welfare services, child poverty, in particular, has come to be perceived as a widespread social problem. Similar trends around the globe have led the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to compare poverty rates among member nations (OECD, 2008). A recent survey conducted by the Japanese Government (Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, 2010; Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, 2011) revealed that 14.2% of Japanese children live in relative poverty, defined as households with incomes 50% or less than the national median income. The Japanese public is just beginning to understand the critical implications of increasing income disparity and poverty.

The growing awareness of such issues, however, does not mean there is a unified perception of poverty in Japan. A survey by Aoki (2009) revealed that 70% of Japanese college students associated homelessness with poverty. Similarly, 52% of Japanese college students equated individuals on welfare with those living in poverty. The survey data also indicated that Japanese citizens’ perceptions of poverty vary by social status. In Japan, there is no
commonly accepted income threshold in Japan by which poverty is defined (Sekine 2007). As a result, those in poverty are so designated based on other criteria such as work ethic and motivation (Yuasa, 2008).

There exists little research on poverty in Japan for the period between the mid-1950s and the 1960s (Iwata, 2008). Current research rarely focuses on the unequal impacts of poverty on children (Abe, 2008; Asai et al., 2008; Yuzawa et al., 2009; Aoto, 2009). Moreover, little research has attempted to capture Japanese children’s perceptions and stereotypes related to poverty.

Given the key role played by education in dispelling such stereotypes, there is an urgent need for educators to promote correct understanding of poverty within the Japanese education system. The 2008 and 2009 revisions of the national curriculum, however, did not address poverty as a domestic issue, despite its potential serious implications to Japanese society. Kubota (2010) and Morimitsu (2011) speculated that the omission of poverty-related curricula by the Japanese Educational Administration may reflect the paucity of public discussion of such issues. Despite the absence of poverty in the national curriculum, Japanese teachers are increasingly feeling the impacts of poverty in their classrooms. As a result, there is a growing grass-roots effort by teachers to incorporate poverty and related issues into social studies, home economics, and integrated studies curricula and homeroom activities (Inuma, 2008; Nishinari high school, 2009; Sagayama, 2009, Otake 2012).

In the United States, increasing unemployment and the recent global recession has led to renewed interest in the impacts of poverty on school age children. The United States has the highest child poverty rate among the world’s 24 wealthiest countries (Advance Humanity, 2007). Current economic conditions foster low incomes and increased reliance on social welfare programs and charitable aide. Meanwhile, there is increasing interest in the potential detrimental impacts of the negative perceptions of poverty held by diverse groups of youths in the US (Bennett, 2008; Kozol, 2006; Payne, 2005; and Tatum, 2003). Negative perceptions of the working poor or long-term non-working poor among the nation’s youth may lead to negative and damaging perceptions of poverty.

Interest in poverty and students’ perceptions thereof in the US is not new. Such poverty research dates back to the 1960s, a period in which educational researchers and academics were primarily concerned with the sociological impacts of poverty on students’ learning. During this period, new curricula such as the Sociological Resources for the Social Studies (SRSS) were developed to provide students with experiences related to the social world. Students were asked to identify and analyse sociological diversity in order to confront and dispel commonly held social stereotypes. Two educational units designed to promote social understanding through such confrontation were Images of People and The Incidence and Effects of Poverty in the United States. These units explored the causes, stereotypes and various solutions to poverty. Lacking federal funding, the SRSS and other problem-based curricula were abandoned by the mid-1970s, with no subsequent large-scale effort to confront the stereotypes of poverty for almost twenty years.
A study conducted by the US Census Bureau in 2009 revealed that, of the four largest ethnic groups in the United States, African Americans and Hispanics experienced the highest rates of poverty at 25.8 and 25.3%, respectively (US Census Bureau, 2010). While much of the US educational curriculum is geared toward white middle-class standards, minorities make up the highest percentage of low-income children (Hodgkinson, 2002). Poor households often have one working individual, experience substandard housing, and spend more than half of their income on rent and food (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2007). As a result, poor students either end up dropping out of the educational system or experiencing difficulties integrating into an educational system designed around the ideals of middle-class education.

In American society, images and stereotypes of poverty propagated by various media and personal experiences influence how students perceive poverty based on their own social, economic and political circumstances. Lawrence Mead (1994) identified various common perceptions or associations with poverty in American society: (1) matriarchy, 2) minorities (African American or Hispanic), 3) lack of self-sufficiency or opportunity, 4) absence of father figure, 5) lack of education, 6) low income, 7) illegal immigrants, 8) unreliability in terms of employment, and 9) cultural stereotypes regarding lack of willingness to maintain employment.

Study Objectives
As is evident from efforts by the OECD (OECD, 2008) and other organizations, poverty is widely recognized as a topic of global importance. Meanwhile, in recent years, there is a growing awareness of and interest in the potential detrimental impacts related to poverty. Yet, few studies have focused on perceptions of poverty among the next generation of global citizens (i.e. children), particularly in terms of cross-country comparison. In this context, the objective of this study was to identify differences and commonalities of Japanese and American high school students’ awareness and perceptions of poverty.

Methods
Participants
The study sample comprised purposively selected high school students in the United States and Japan. Purposeful sampling is used when researchers hope to discover, understand, and gain insight into a specific topic (Merriam 1998). Students in eleventh grade were selected based on an assumed stage of cognitive development in the selection of students. According to Sylwester (2000), students’ cognitive development occurs in stepwise fashion with measurable peaks in the third, sixth and ninth grades. We chose to investigate older (eleventh-grade) students whose cognitive development has presumably stabilized following the earlier period of progressive development. Both the US and Japanese sample of eleventh grade students represented average students who were subject to typical course requirements for graduation.
The Japanese sample comprised 148 students from various economic backgrounds and levels of academic performance selected from two high schools in suburban Tokyo. As noted by Mimizuka (2007), students’ academic achievement is affected by monthly expenditure on education, educational expectation, and income.

The US sample comprised 114 students from two suburban high schools in a south-western state.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument titled “Images of Poverty” replicated the Sociological Resources for the Social Studies Project created by the American Sociological Association and funded by the National Science Foundation. Researchers in Japan and the United States used the original survey with slight modification limited to language and terminology. The survey instrument contained 16 items consisting of 2 questions related to the respondents themselves and 14 statements dealing with poverty and stereotypes of poverty. The 14 questions arbitrarily categorized into four themes: definition, causes, lifestyles, and societal relevance of poverty based on the nature of the questions. The four themes were reasonable to examine Japanese and American students’ awareness and perceptions of poverty. Authors of several comparison studies have pointed out that definitions of poverty based on income and material living standards can be difficult to measure in cross-country surveys. They also note that socioeconomic structural and cultural contexts shape the experiences and understandings of poverty (Lister, 2004; Øyen, 1996). Students indicated their degree of agreement to the 14 statements on a five-point Likert scale, with responses being strongly agree (1), agree (2), neutral (3), disagree (4), and strongly disagree (5). The Likert scale responses were categorical. The numerical labels of the responses (1 through 5) were simply used to identify responses but did not constitute a quantitative measurement. (Howell, 2004, p. 17). The survey questions were translated into Japanese by a professional Japanese-English translator, and the first and third authors who were bilingual researchers reviewed the survey questions and reached consensus on translations (Taylor et al, 2000). The accuracy of the translation was confirmed by back translation.

Data collection

The Japanese survey was distributed to high school students and collected by two Japanese researchers, who are professors of education at a large Japanese suburban university. The US survey was distributed to high school and collected by one American researcher, who is a professor of education a large urban university. Surveys were conducted in both countries between January and February, 2011. The response rate was 100%. The definitions of specific terminology were explained to students from both countries before the students responded to the questionnaire. Students were told that their participation in the study was voluntary and that their refusal to participate would have no negative effect on evaluation of their school performance.

Data Analysis

The fourteen statements included in the questionnaire were grouped into four main themes related to the (i) definition, (ii) causes, (iii) lifestyles associated with, and (iv) societal
attitudes towards poverty. The first stage of analysis focused on the frequency of each response to each statement. The second stage of analysis involved the generation of correlative and descriptive statistics.

Results

Sample Characteristics

The study sample consisted of 148 Japanese and 114 American high school students, with the gender distribution of both groups being approximately equal. Respondents were asked to identify their gender and their interest in attending college. As can be seen in Table 1, nearly all participants in both the Japanese and US sample expressed a similar desire to attend either a state college or university, i.e. to advance to post-secondary education.

Table 1 Sample Characteristics (N=262)

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Japanese high school students’ awareness of poverty

Definition and cause

As can be seen in Table 2, 26.4% of Japanese respondents strongly agreed and 43.2% agreed with the statement that “the best definition of poverty is the lack of money,” while 8.1% strongly disagreed and 6.1% disagreed. 24.3% strongly agreed and 50.0% agreed with the statement that “low income individuals tend to stay in poverty.” More than half of students agreed or strongly agreed (20.3 and 33.1%, respectively) that “low income individuals in Japan are minorities” and that they are “taken advantage of by society” (13.5 and 37.8%, respectively).
When asked about the causes of poverty, 8.8% of Japanese respondents strongly agreed and 15.5% agreed that “if a low income person does not have a job, he or she is probably lazy,” while 22.3% strongly disagreed and 24.3% disagreed with the statement. 12.2% strongly agreed and 25.0% agreed with the same statement that “most low income people have as many opportunities as everyone else.” 20.9% strongly agreed and 18.2% agreed with the statement that “children of low income families have the same opportunities of achieving upward mobility as children of middle and upper income families,” while 7.4% strongly disagreed and 26.4% disagreed with the same statement.

Lifestyle and relevance

As can be seen in Table 3, 17.6% of Japanese respondents strongly disagreed and 39.2% disagreed with the statement that “most low income families live in large cities,” while only 0.7% of students strongly agreed and 10.1% agreed with the statement. 41.2% of students strongly disagreed and 29.1% disagreed with the statement that “low income families really don’t mind inadequate housing, unemployment, and having to rely on governmental aid.” 22.3% of students strongly disagreed and 24.3% disagreed with the statement that “low income individuals spend more on alcohol and tobacco” than their middle-class counterparts. 20.3% of students strongly disagreed and 35.1% disagreed with the statement that “low-income families don’t care for their children as much as middle income families proper child care.” 14.2% of students strongly disagreed and 31.8% disagreed with statement that “low income families value education.”

In terms of social support, 29.7% of students strongly disagreed and 42.6% disagreed with the statement that “the government is spending enough money to fight poverty.” Furthermore, 18.2% of Japanese student strongly disagreed and 33.8% disagreed with the statement that “the idea of poverty is exaggerated” by the media.

American high school students’ awareness of poverty

Definition and cause

As can be seen in Table 2, 5.3% of American students strongly agreed and 50.0% agreed that “the best definition of poverty is lack of money,” while 3.5% strongly disagreed and 26.3% disagreed with the same statement. 4.4% of students strongly disagreed and 30.7% disagreed with the statement that “low income people tend to stay in poverty.” A similar mixed response was observed to the statement that “most low income persons in the US are minorities.” Regarding the relationship between low income individuals and society, 8.8% of American students strongly agreed and 33.3% agreed with the statement that the poor are “often taken advantage of by society.”
Table 2: Awareness of poverty: definition and cause

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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>148</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Most low income people have as many opportunities as everyone else; they don’t take advantage of them</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
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<td>Undecided</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
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<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>The children of low income families have practically the same opportunities to make good as the children of middle and upper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
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<td>Undecided</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
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With regard the causes of poverty, the majority of American students believed that a) laziness is not directly associated with joblessness, b) children of low income families have the same opportunities as those in other income groups, and c) impoverished individuals do not have the same opportunities for advancement as their middle class counterparts.
Lifestyle and relevance

In terms of the geographical distribution of the poor, 3.5% of American students strongly agreed and 36.0% agreed with the statement that “most low income families live in big cities.” 31.6% of American students strongly disagreed and 37.7% disagreed with the statement that “low income families really don’t mind inadequate housing, unemployment, and having to rely on governmental aid.” 20.2% of students strongly disagreed and 33.3% disagreed with the statement “that most low income people spent more on alcohol and tobacco” than their middle-class counterparts. 47.4% of students strongly disagreed and 36.0% disagreed with the statement that “most low income families don’t care as much about their children as middle-income families do.” Only 0.9 % of students strongly disagreed and 14.9% disagreed with statement that “low income families value education.”
In terms of social support, 13.2% of students strongly believed and 39.5% of students believed that their government is “now spending enough money to fight poverty.” Furthermore, 5.3% of American student strongly disagreed and 36.8% disagreed with the statement that “the idea of poverty is exaggerated” by the media.

**Differences between Japanese and American high school students’ awareness of poverty**

As shown in the Table 2, t-tests revealed several significant differences between Japanese and American high school students’ awareness of poverty. A higher proportion of Japanese students regarded the best definition of poverty to be lack of money than their American counterparts. A higher proportion of Japanese students significantly agreed low income people tend to stay in poverty. As for the cause of poverty, a greater proportion of American students strongly disagreed with the statement that most low income people have as many opportunities as everyone else.

In addition, a lower proportion of Japanese students identified low income families as living in big cities and valuing education than their American counterparts.

A higher proportion of American students disagreed with the statement that most low income families don’t care as much about their children as middle-class families do. Meanwhile, a higher proportion of Japanese students disagreed with the statement that their government was currently spending enough money to fight poverty, and American students had a greater tendency to view the idea of poverty as being exaggerated by the media.

**Correlative and Descriptive Statistics**

Examining correlations among student responses to individual statements reveals certain “clusters” of perceptions that provide insight into overall trends in American and Japanese students’ perceptions of poverty and the causes of poverty. Among Japanese students, responses to the statement that the poor are lazy (statement 5) were positively correlated with responses to statements that the poor have the same opportunities as others but do not avail themselves of these opportunities (statement 6), spend money on liquor and tobacco (statement 10), do not mind bad housing, unemployment, or being wards of the state (statement 9) and that the issue of poverty is exaggerated by the television and other media (statement 14). Furthermore, responses to the statement that the poor spend money on liquor and tobacco (statement 10) were correlated with responses to statements that the poor primarily live in big cities (statement 8) and that they do not care for their children. Among American students, responses to the statement that low income individuals tend to stay in poverty (statement 2) were correlated with the responses to statements that the poor are primarily minorities (statement 3), lazy (statement 2), spend money on liquor and tobaccos (statement 10), and do not take care of their children (statement 11). Response to statements that the poor are lazy (statement 5) and that they do not take care of their children (statement 11) were correlated responses to various other statements.
One of the main differences between Japanese and American students’ perceptions of poverty is that a smaller proportion of Japanese students believed that the majority of the poor live in big cities (statement 8). Given the significant negative correlation between the belief that poverty is best defined by lack of money (statement 1) and the belief that the poor live in cities (statement 8) (Table 4), it can be assumed that Japanese students believed that the poor live primarily in rural areas. This view, of course, does not reflect reality but rather indicates the trend in perceptions held by Japanese students.

Another difference between the two groups of students lies in the fact that a higher proportion of American students believed that low-income families value education (statement 12) than their Japanese counterparts. Students who believed that low-income families value education (statement 12) tended to disagree that poverty is best defined by lack of money (statement 1) (Table 5). Furthermore, the belief that low-income families value education (statement 12) was negatively correlated with the belief that poor families do not take advantage of opportunities (statement 6), that the poor spent their money on

Table 4 Japanese students’ awareness of poverty: Correlation and Descriptive Statistics (N=148)

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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Probably is lack of money</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Low income people stay in poverty</td>
<td>.210*</td>
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<td>3. Most are minorities</td>
<td>.088 .225*</td>
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<td>4. They are taken advantage of</td>
<td>.003 .152 .121</td>
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<td>5. He or she is probably lazy</td>
<td>.048 .075 .081 .067</td>
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<td>6. Most have many opportunities</td>
<td>.049 .081 .159 .086 .206*</td>
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<td>7. Their children have opportunities</td>
<td>.120 .137 .104 .055 .155 .159</td>
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<td>8. Most families live in big cities</td>
<td>.055 .202 .015 .007 .022 .112 .087</td>
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<td>9. They don’t mind bad housing, etc</td>
<td>.024 .198* .094 .095 .244* .048 .197 .214*</td>
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<td>10. Most spend money on liquor and tobacco</td>
<td>.112 .165* .042 .173 .254*.243*.333*</td>
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<td>11. They don’t care about children</td>
<td>.138 .151 .044 .042 .109 .136 .072 .033 .154 .301*</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Low income families value education</td>
<td>.044 .149 .162* .089 .169* .143 .018 .099 .022 -.207*.221**</td>
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<td>14. Poverty has been exaggerated by TV, etc</td>
<td>.125 .104 .144 .013 .341** .129 .121 .053 .089 .127 .019 .130 .104</td>
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Table 5 American students’ awareness of poverty: Correlation and Descriptive Statistics (N=114)

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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
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<td>1. Probably is lack of money</td>
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<td>2. Low income people stay in poverty</td>
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<td>3. Most are minorities</td>
<td>.161 .259*</td>
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<td>4. They are taken advantage of</td>
<td>.072 .128 .081</td>
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<td>5. He or she is probably lazy</td>
<td>.040 .234* .068 .125</td>
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<td>6. Most have many opportunities</td>
<td>.035 .023 .035 .093 .272*</td>
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<td>7. Their children have opportunities</td>
<td>.107 .086 .131 .038 .144 .308*</td>
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<td>8. Most families live in big cities</td>
<td>.048 .070 .147 .124 .171 .019 .056</td>
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<td>9. They don’t mind bad housing, etc</td>
<td>.107 .090 .037 .246 .256* .157 .040 .124</td>
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<td>10. Most spend money on liquor and tobacco</td>
<td>.086 .271* .106 .106 .266* .125 .065 .074 .071</td>
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<td>11. They don’t care about children</td>
<td>.082 .200* .130 .113 .309* .135 .100 .109 .240 .391*</td>
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<td>12. Low income families value education</td>
<td>.040 .200* .057 .155 .184 .189* .006 .089 .144 .223 .256*</td>
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<td>13. Government is spending enough money</td>
<td>.053 .008 .055 .194* .018 .149 .182 .059 .176 .101 .026 .261*</td>
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<td>14. Poverty has been exaggerated by TV, etc</td>
<td>.001 .172 .013 .092 .017 .012 .044 .004 .162 .173 .031 .064 .272*</td>
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alcohol and tobacco (statement 10), and that they did not take care of their children (statement 11). Meanwhile, Japanese students who had negative awareness of poverty—believed that the poor were minorities (statement 3), that the poor are lazy and their poverty was their own fault (statement 5), that the poor spent their money on alcohol and tobacco (statement 10) and did not care for their children (statement 11)—tended to disagree with the statement that low-income families value education (statement 12).

On the questions of whether or not the poor comprised primarily minorities (statement 3) or whether low-income children had (or did not have) the same opportunities as children from other economic classes (statement 7), the opinions of students from both countries were divided. Among American students, there was a positive correlation between those who believed that poverty is best defined by lack of money (statement 1) and those who believed that the poor largely comprises minorities (statement 3). Although similar correlations were observed among Japanese students, there was an additional association with the belief that low income families do not value education (statement 12). In addition, among American students, the belief that low-income children have the same opportunities as their middle- and upper-income counterparts (statement 5) was positively correlated with the beliefs that the families themselves have the same opportunities as other economic groups but do not take advantage of them (statement 6) and that the families do not value education (statement 12). From this, we surmise that the students believe that education provides opportunities for low-income children to escape poverty and that low-income children should take advantage of this opportunity. Meanwhile, given the positive correlation observed among Japanese students between the belief that low-income families do not take advantage of the opportunities available to them (statement 6) and the belief that low income people are lazy (statement 5) and that they spend their money on alcohol and tobacco (statement 10)—i.e. waste their money, it is appears that Japanese students strongly tend to attribute poverty to the lack of self-responsibility.

Discussion

The main purpose of this paper was to deepen our understanding of how Japanese and American eleventh grade students perceive poverty. Japanese high school students held more stereotypical views of poverty than their American counterparts. The limited understanding and awareness of poverty among Japanese students may, in part, be due to the fact that the Japanese government has no official stance on poverty and has only recently begun to maintain poverty statistics. This, in turn, may reflect the government’s desire to deny the existence of poverty or to minimize its significance in Japanese society (Sekine, 2007). The minimum standard of living guaranteed by the Public Assistance Law serves as the virtual poverty line in Japan (Yuasa, 2008). Recently, the Japanese government, concerned with the alienation of specific minority groups and inequality among low income Japanese students, proposed a plan to identify poverty in the context of schools (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2011). This increased emphasis on poverty may directly impact the approach typically taken in Japanese schools of not preferential treating or differentiating students based on family income—an approach which often ends up obscuring poverty-related issues in the context of schools (Morimitsu, 2011).
The study also provides insight into the nature of stereotypical views on poverty held by Japanese high school students, which differed from those of American students. For example, Japanese students commonly believed that poverty is most prevalent in rural areas—a perception that may, in part, be the result of the students’ upper-income urban environment. As noted by Aoto (2009), in Japan, the issues of poverty and dropping out of school as a result of economic hardship are associated with so-called “lowest-achieving” schools rather than schools in a particular geographical (urban or rural) context.

Japanese students also seemed to believe that education is not necessary for breaking the cycle of poverty. Such a belief may be explained by Japanese culture. In Japan, an individual’s background is considered important and may determine an individual’s social class or status to a greater degree than in the US.

American students shared many views of poverty with their Japanese counterparts but differed in their attribution, definition, and association of poverty with certain lifestyles and attitudes. Differences in these areas may be the result of various societal influences and differing stereotypes related to poverty in each country.

American students agreed that poverty is best defined by the lack of money and that it is a social problem primarily associated with minority populations. According to Hodgkinson (2002), African Americans and Latinos are the group with the highest proportion of their members living in poverty. While there is a sizeable population of Americans of European descent who are also considered low income, minority low-income children in particular face multiple challenges in the country’s educational system. Gassoma (2012) suggests that education is a low priority for families living in poverty but that there is a belief in the society at large that education is a viable means to escape poverty. This is consistent with the opinion expressed by American students that while low income families do not have access to extensive educational resources, the idea of and opportunities for education are valued among the poor.

The perceived relationship between low income and education in American is influenced by students’ direct experiences in school, and particularly those of low income students who confront “personal biases” on a daily basis. Ching (2012) reports school districts across the country are providing ways to help teachers explore their conscious personal biases that low income students are: 1) poorly motivated; 2) suffer from emotional problems; 3) lack confidence and self-esteem; 4) lack family support; and 5) are unprepared for academic settings.

With increased of awareness of poverty in the nation’s public schools, American students believe that educational opportunities exist for low income families and students. The “American dream” of earning a college degree is perceived as becoming increasingly accessible for students living in poverty. Research (Gassama, 2012; Payne, 2005; and Delpit, 2006) suggests that while education is not the top priority among the poor, students can be successful. For example, the Southern Regional Education Board (2012) reports that a significant number of children from poor families are able to graduate from high school and
attend institutes of higher education as a result of assistance in the form of scholarships, grants, government programs, and service in the US military.

There is an additional benefit to students and teachers who participated in this study. Williamson (2011) points out the importance of opportunities for students to examine poverty-related issues as opportunities to clear up misconceptions and exchange ideas. As Haberman (1991) suggests, all aspects of a curriculum should deepen students’ basic understanding of the persistent facts of life. From this perspective, we posit that the questionnaire used in this study itself is excellent educational material to help students and teachers focus in on poverty issues and to share their ideas through various class activities.

**Implications and limitations of the study**

Several conclusions can be drawn from this study. First, it should be recognized that children’s perceptions of poverty and stereotypes of poverty are influenced by the educational environment. This study demonstrates the importance of re-examining pedagogy related to poverty, which is a controversial issue of global significance. By providing students with increased opportunities to discuss and examine solutions for poverty, educators strive to promote change from within the current educational and social frameworks. To this end, there is a need, particularly in Japan, to develop curricula dealing with poverty and related topics.

As in the case of all studies, the present study suffers from several limitations. Chief among these is the fact that the sample consists of Japanese and American high school students from only suburban areas. It should be noted that the opinions and perceptions of students living in either urban or rural environments may differ from those of students living in suburban settings. As such, further study of diverse populations is needed to develop a more comprehensive view of poverty in both the United States and Japan. In addition, the method for measuring perceptions of poverty could be improved. Although the instrument used in the present study was derived after rigorous discussion by the American and Japanese authors, there is a chance that students in the two countries interpreted the statements differently. To enable rigorous analysis, it is critical to that the measuring instrument is culturally unbiased.

**Biography**

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The use of Meaningful Reception Learning in lesson on classification

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Abstract

This paper begins with a learning theory of instruction. It describes how Meaningful Reception Learning can be used to teach in classification of items. Meaningful Reception Learning is a learning theory of instruction proposed by Ausubel who believed that learners can learn best when the new material being taught can be anchored into existing cognitive information in the learners. He also proposed the use of advance organizers as representations of the facts of the lesson. The principles of Meaningful Reception Learning; derivative subsumption, correlative subsumption, combinatorial subsumption and superordinate learning are used in the classification of items. The items classified in this paper are fabrics. The classification is divided into man-made fabrics and naturally occurring fabrics. The hypothetical learners in this paper are undergraduate students but the principles can be modified to fit a different audience.

Keywords: Meaningful Reception Learning, Learners, Advance Organizers, Subsumption, Ausubel

Introduction

The theory of Meaningful Reception Learning was developed by Ausubel (1960). Ausubel’s experiments (1960) supported the idea that when learners were presented with facts that were of relevance to the lesson being presented, the learners were more likely to understand the lesson. When these facts are presented ahead of the lesson, they are called advance organizers (Ausubel, 1960). He noted that if learners were presented with the facts of the lesson in such a way that the facts subsumed into one another in a relational manner, the learners were more apt to learn (Ausubel, 1962, 1963).

Further, his experiment showed that when learners were provided with concepts that subsumed into one another like nested dolls, the learners were more likely to relate the concepts relationally. The use of concept mapping has been used successfully in improving performance in business and economic statistics (Chiou, 2009), problem solving (Hao, Kwok & Lau, 2010) and it has been used to improve performance in Biology (Udeani & Okafor, 2012).

The nested dolls in figure 1 are a representation of subsumption. The smallest doll can fit into the preceding doll which in turn can fit into the next doll until they all fit into the biggest doll. When the dolls are arranged in order of size, they can be seen relationally to one another. All the dolls can fit into the biggest doll.
The Learners

In this lesson, the learners would have prior knowledge of at least one or two fabrics. They would have seen different types of fabrics but may not necessarily know the classifications of these fabrics. At the end of the lesson, the learners should have been able to classify fabrics in a hierarchical structure. The lesson should not be presented in its final form as is expected in reception learning. Ausubel argued that whether the lesson was presented as reception or discovery learning, as long as the learner was able to relate it to the existing knowledge, the learner would learn the concepts (Ausubel, 1962). This is in contrast to rote learning where the learner just spits out the facts without knowing what it means. Students may recite the pledge of their country without knowing the implications (Driscoll, 2004).

Principles of Meaningful Reception Learning

The learners should be able to anchor specific information that they would just be learning on fabrics to what they already know about fabrics. They should not memorize any detail of the lesson because in their cognitive organization, they would have arranged the different types of fabrics in a hierarchical cognitive structure.

Derivative Subsumption

In derivative subsumption, the new fact is subsumed into the facts that the learners already know. As an example, if they know that corduroy, organdie and calico are cotton but they now just know that crepon is also cotton, then the new knowledge that they have that crepon is also cotton is derivatively subsumed into the existing knowledge of what they already know to be cotton.
Figure 2 shows a graphical representation of what the instructor can present to the learners. Crepon is written in red font or it may be bolded. The graphical representation in Figure 2 is adapted from Neal, M. M. (2005). Needlework for schools. Nelson Thornes Ltd: Cheltenham.

Correlative Subsumption

The learners would also learn through a correlative subsumption. This would involve some high level of thinking because they would add something new to their knowledge. If for example the learners knew that winceyette was a fabric but did not know that winceyette was also a cotton fabric because it is usually sewn as a nightwear, the learners would now add winceyette as a new knowledge that cotton can also be used as nightwear in the form of winceyette (Neal, 2005).

Superordinate Learning

In Meaningful Reception Learning, the learners also learn through superordinate and combinatorial learning. As an example of superordinate learning, if the learners know that fabrics were bought in shops and thought all fabrics were man-made, then if they learn that cotton and wool are naturally occurring; this new information would be superordinate to their existing knowledge that all fabrics were man-made.

Combinatorial Learning

Another principle of Meaningful Reception Learning is combinatorial learning. In combinatorial learning, the new idea is similar to the existing concept but it is not above or below it. As an example, I would expect the learners to know that wool, silk, cotton and linen are all naturally occurring fabrics. Further, I would expect them to know that wool and silk are from animal sources while cotton and linen are from vegetable sources or plant sources.

The learners should be able to assimilate the new information into their existing information and anchor their ideas to prior existing ideas in order to be able to retain the new knowledge. If the learners do forget, it would be because what they learned through subsumption, got dissociated from the anchoring idea (Driscoll, 2004). Even if they do forget, it would be easier
to retrieve or easier to relearn than if they had learnt from rote memorization. In Meaningful Reception Learning, the learner is able to differentiate more of the concepts in the learning process because of the relational associations made.

**Lesson Outline**

Since Meaningful Reception Learning encourages meaningful learning rather than rote learning, the learning material should be presented in a carefully organized way. The advanced organizer can be presented using PowerPoint slides, flip charts, smart board, handouts and the chalk board. The instructor should give an introductory statement that would show the relationship of high-level concepts that is broad enough to encompass all the information that would follow. As an example, the instructor can say, “All fabrics can be divided into two broad categories”. The advanced organizer should present a general overview of what would be taught. It would show the broad concepts of the lesson, highlighting relationships amongst ideas that would be presented.

The advanced organizer should be easy to learn and use. It would be straightforward and show the logical relationships between naturally-occurring fabrics and man-made fabrics. In the advanced organizer, the instructor should make use of highlighting and bolding which is important in cognitive information processing because it is also important that there is clarity in the advanced organizer (Armbruster, & Anderson, 1988; Clark & Mayer, 2011; Glynn, S. M., & di Vesta, 1979 & Lohr, 2007). The learners can be encouraged to write the classification on flash cards.

In addition, a comparative organizer should be presented to compare and contrast the different types of fabrics, highlighting and clarifying those areas that may appear ambiguous. The instructor can make use of cross-referencing as some fabrics are made with a combination of man-made and naturally-occurring fabrics.

The instructor can make use of progressive differentiation, starting at the broadest classification of fabrics then narrow down to naturally-occurring which narrows further into wool and cotton which divides further into a myriad of other forms. In the man-made category, the instructor should progressively explain the differentiation of the man-made fabrics like rayon and chiffon.

The instructor should let the learners know the importance or relevance of the lesson to them. If they know how to differentiate the different types of fabrics, they would be able to choose the right sewing needle. They would be able to choose the appropriate fabrics for a particular dress design.

The learners should be discouraged from memorization because Meaningful Reception Learning would not occur by memorization (Driscoll, 2004). Meaningful Reception Learning can only occur when the learners are able to attach new knowledge (that is potentially useful) to existing knowledge that they already have (Ausubel, 1960 & Sweller, 2010).
The aim of the advanced organizer is to stimulate a recall of the prior knowledge of what the learner already knows about fabrics. The advanced organizer would also let the learners know what is important in the lesson.

After presenting the advanced organizer, the instructor should present the similarities between man-made fabrics and naturally occurring fabrics. I would give examples of the man-made fabrics and give examples of naturally-occurring fabrics. I would also give non-examples. For example, beads can be used to make dresses but they are not fabrics.

Fabrics could be man-made or they could be naturally-occurring. For meaningful learning to occur the instructor should teach the big ideas that are highest in the hierarchy first. Then the instructor moves from the largest division of fabrics (i.e. man-made or naturally-occurring), to the division of naturally-occurring fabrics into animal sources and plant sources. The animal sources are wool and silk. The plant sources are cotton and linen. The man-made sources are divided into two broad categories; natural polymers and synthetic polymers. The graphical representation in Figure 3 depicts the classification of the fabrics into natural and manmade fabrics and is adapted from an article from one of the projects by MIRALab (Meinander & Mäkinen, 2005). The MIRALab is involved in several projects including fabrics (MIRALab, 2013). It further describes the natural fabrics into fabrics derived from animal sources and fabrics derived from plant sources.

As the lesson is being taught, the students should look at the connections, the similarities, the differences, the concepts and encourage anchoring of the new information on to their existing knowledge.

At the end of the lesson, the instructor can create an empty chart with two large headings titled- Naturally occurring fabrics and Man-made fabrics. Each student can be given a card with the name of the fabric and a cut piece of the fabric. Each student can now be called upon to stick the fabrics under the right heading.

Some samples of the fabrics in the major divisions of the fabrics would be brought to class. PowerPoint Slides can be used to show the different types of fabrics. The instructor can actually bring different types of fabrics to class or the students can be encouraged to bring different types of fabrics to class. On a board or on a flip chart, the learners can make a table of the two major divisions of fabrics and place the appropriate fabrics underneath each table.

At the end of the lesson, these strategies would have resulted in meaningful learning because the learners were able to see the similarities and the differences in the divisions of the fabrics. They would have used derivative subsumption, correlative subsumption, combinatorial and superordinate subsumption.

The classification of fabrics is much more extensive than what I have represented but it has been simplified to give an idea of what the chart would look like.
Conclusion

This paper has described the use of Meaningful Reception Learning in a hypothetical lesson of classification of fabrics. It has made use of subsumptions and advance organizers. This paper also described the conclusions of Ausubel on Meaningful Reception Learning. Learners can learn relationally when the concepts of the lesson are presented in a way that the learners can anchor the new knowledge to already existing concepts.

Recommendation

While other learning theories can be used in teaching a lesson on classifications, the use of Meaningful Reception Learning can be used in lessons involving classifications of facts. The use of advance organizers in Meaningful Reception Learning and the use of principles of subsumption make the relationships in the items being classified easy to see at a glance.

Biography

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References


Psychosocial factors influencing marital adjustment among couples in Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the psychosocial factors influencing marital adjustment among couples in Ife Central Local Government Area, Ile-Ife. A total of 200 respondents were randomly selected of which 113 were males and 87 were females. A closed ended structured questionnaire was used to collect information from the respondents and the hypotheses were subjected to Chi-square and correlation analysis. The findings revealed that psychological and social factors influencing marital adjustment among couples in Ife Central Local Government Area, Ile-Ife, Osun State. The results revealed that, significant relationship existed at (p<0.01 and p< 0.05) level of significance between marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. The results of Chi-square showed a significant relationship between psychological and social factors (depression, aggressiveness, illness, sexual satisfaction, communication, spending quality time, maturity) and marital adjustment. And also, the result of correlation analysis showed a significant relationship between marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. The Correlation coefficient value of marital satisfaction (r= 0.619, p < 0.01) and the Correlation coefficient value of marital adjustment (r= 0.619, p< 0.01) it means that there is significant relationship between marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. In conclusion, couples should be cognizance of the psychological and social factors listed in the study, influencing adjustment in marriage. It was recommended that in both premarital and marital counselling, couples should be introduced to the rudiments of infertility as one of the crucial factors towards marital adjustment. Through conjoint marital therapy, couples should be taught effective communication skills (interpersonal relationship). This is to enable them learn and adopt interpersonal communication skills that will lubricate their marital relationship to enhance harmony, understanding and compromise for stability

Keywords: Psychosocial factors, Marital adjustment, Couples, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Introduction

Marriage institution pre-dates reliable recorded history; many cultures have legends concerning the origins of marriage. The way in which a marriage is conducted and its rules and ramifications have changed over time, as has the institution itself, depending on the culture or demographic of the time. Various cultures have had their own theories on the origin of marriage. One example may lie in a man's need for assurance as to paternity of his children. He might therefore be willing to pay a bride price or provide for a woman in
exchange for exclusive sexual access. Legitimacy is the consequence of this transaction rather than its motivation.

Uwe (2002) opines that compromise couples make help to move the family forward. When couples come together in marriage, they are faced initially with series of problems and differences that challenge their stability. This requires that on both sides, compromises, agreement and endurance must be met in dealing with issues such as parent in laws, finance, friends, habits, feeding, response to problems and purchases and use of home items. Other issues include attending to one’s feeling and emotions, attending to ones’ needs and attending to ones’ speech (communication use), procreation, career and academics to enhance marital adjustment or stability. Tawo et al (2006) reported a significant relationship between marital adjustment (stability) and social responsibilities. They concluded therefore that a high social responsibility to one’s marriage leads to a high marital adjustment. The social factors are akin to emotional intelligence. These findings by Dada and Idowu (2006) buttresses further the importance of emotional intelligence in marital adjustment. For instance, it is the contention of Williams (1977) that successful communication is a vital factor in all relationships. It facilitates interpersonal relationship; create intimacy, togetherness and understanding. In marriage, Akpan (2000) report that effective marital communication (verbal or non-verbal) gives partners a deep sense of satisfaction as they openly express their minds. Mullins (1996) buttresses that through communication, couples express socio-emotional behaviours such as solidarity, tension release, joy, anger, anxiety, satisfaction, love, seek, help, show disagreement or approval and discuss to provide solution amicably. Dean, Lucas and Cooper (1976) observed that if couples were fully communicating and sensitive to each other’s wishes they would be able to make accurate guesses concerning their spouses colour preferences for domestic articles. Others include emotional, finance and sexual needs. Burke and Weir (1977) in their study found out that couples with happy marriages were more likely to discuss their problems while those with unhappy marriages were those who refuse to discuss their problems together.

Effective communication is an important characteristic of strong, healthy families. Research identifies communication as an essential building block of strong marital, parent-child, and sibling relationships. Family communication is the way verbal and non-verbal information is exchanged between family members (Epstein et al 1999). Markman, (1981) has observed that the more positively couples rated their communication, the more satisfied they were with their relationship five and a half years later and to compliment this, Noller and Fitzpatrick (1990) noted a strong link between communication patterns and satisfaction with family relationships. Poor communication is also associated with an increased risk of divorce and marital separation and more behavioural problems in children. Wuerffel, DeFrain and Stinnett (1992) and Wilcox (2002) viewed the scientific literature on humour and found that humour can be used in many different positive and negative ways. Humour can reduce daily tension, facilitate conversations, express feelings of warmth and affection lessens anxiety, point out mistakes made by others, and entertain. It can also help put others at ease and help maintain a positive outlook on life. The study found positive correlations between the use of humour and how strong the families were, based on their responses to a family strength inventory. The stronger families in the study reported negative effects, however, when humour was used to put down other family members.
Azar (2002) observed that characteristics of the home environment, such as warmth, emotional availability, stimulation, family cohesion, and day-to-day activities, have also been implicated in the notion of marital stability.

Marital satisfaction is a mental state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person. The more costs a marriage partner inflicts on a person, the less satisfied one generally is with the marriage and with the marriage partner. Similarly, the greater the perceived benefits are, the more satisfied one is with the marriage and with the marriage partner. Nearly 90% of all individuals marry at least once in their lifetime (Cherlin 2004). This can be taken as an indication of the value placed on the marital union. However, the rate at which marriages dissolve was 3.7 per 1,000 in April of 2009 (CDC 2009). The rate of marital dissolution is affected by levels of marital satisfaction and happiness within the marriage. Although we seem to value being married, that value is only retained if the marriage is happy and functional. Marital satisfaction appears to be essential in preserving a marriage (Previti and Amato 2003; South and Trent 2003). Marital satisfaction here is the perceived level of happiness and support experienced by each spouse. Being able to predict marital satisfaction is an important element in being able to maintain functional marriages. If we can predict marital satisfaction then we may be able to help couples attain and sustain high levels of satisfaction. Many studies have reported a significant decrease in marital satisfaction during the first few years of marriage.

Amato et al (2007) attribute this decline to what they refer to as relationship disenchantment. Their argument is that the first few years of a marriage require negotiation of the responsibilities of married life and to learn how to deal with the conflict that inevitably accompanies long-term relationships. Individuals with high or unrealistic views on their partners and the new marriage may become disappointed as they encounter the realities of married life. The association between marital satisfaction and instability and divorce has not been found to differ by age or marital duration or for men and women (Booth, Johnson White, and Edwards 1986). Previous cross-sectional studies have found a U-shaped curve in regards to marital satisfaction (Kurdek 2004). This curve in satisfaction tends to decrease during the first few years of marriage and then tends to increase after all dependent children have left the home. Amato et al. (2007) reported that this U-shaped curve was not supported longitudinally. They attributed the misreporting of this curve to older cohorts of married couples experiencing higher levels of marital satisfaction than younger cohorts. In other words, it is not life transitions that affect trends in marital satisfaction but simply that older married couples are happier overall.

Research Methodology

Most people like to be married and tend to be happier and healthier when they are married. The study of marital adjustment has a long and well-documented history but the consistently high divorce and separation rates illustrate that still too little is known about ways to achieve and maintain a sufficient level of marital adjustment to assure marital success. Historically, marriage researchers have studied either the effects of marital characteristics, marital behaviours, effects of gender, and differences in marital satisfaction by life stage. While research has attempted to account for some of the influences on marital adjustment, it is time to consider more complex models, to account for the interrelationships between a
variety of influences on marital adjustment. Perhaps someday it will be possible to “crack the code” on marital adjustment.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to examine the psychosocial factors influencing marital adjustment among couples in Ile-Ife central local government.

Specifically, the study sought the following:

i. to identify what psychological factors are likely to be responsible for marital adjustment

ii. to identify what social factors are responsible for marital adjustment.

iii. to examine if there is any relationship between marital adjustment and marital satisfaction among couples.

Research hypotheses

Based on the objectives the following hypotheses were formulated.

1. There is no significant relationship between the psychosocial factors and marital adjustment among couples.

2. There is no significant relationship between social factors and marital adjustment.

3. There is no significant relationship between marital adjustment and marital satisfaction among couples.

Research design

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. It is a method often used in studying behaviour whereby the researcher attempt to determine the frequency of occurrence of the distribution and the relationship among a variety of variables. The study is an empirical enquiry in which the researcher does not have direct control over conditions influencing subjects’ behaviour.

Sample size and sampling techniques

The target populations of the study were the married couples in Ife Central Local Government Osun State. Structurally, closed ended questionnaire was used to obtain information from a total number of 200 respondents by simple random selection.

Research instrument

The research instrument used for this study is a structured closed ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to obtain relevant information about the respondents
Data analysis

The data was analysed using Chi - Square and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics that provided the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows that marital adjustment and marital satisfaction is strongly correlated to aggressiveness, effective communication, the nature and pattern of employment, ability to manage crisis or conflicts, maturity of spouses, and, positive adjustment of the couples. The inability of the couples to adjust negatively correlated with negative marital adjustment (p-value < 0.01). Positive marital adjustment is highly correlated to depression due to no child, depression or stress at work, aggressiveness, effective communication, nature and pattern of employment, ability to manage crisis, maturity of spouse, and loss of self-concept which are all marital adjustment (p-values are 0.01). Marriages are bound to face different types of marital adjustment is in positive perfect correlation to aggressiveness, effective communication, ability to manage crisis, positive marital adjustment, and cooperation (p-values are 0.000). Spending quality time with spouses is in correlation with depression due to no child, depression or stress at work, aggressiveness, illness, effective communication, nature and pattern of the employment, ability to manage crisis or conflicts, adjustment, and also marriage type (p-value < 0.05). This shows that there is significant relationship between marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. And also there is relationship between marital
adjustment and marital satisfaction among couples. Marital adjustment occurs when each spouse enacts his/her role effectively to the satisfaction of the other (Obasa, 1990). Noller and Fitzpatrick (1990) noted a strong link between communication patterns and satisfaction with family relationship. Cherlin (2004) the rate of marital adjustment is affected by levels of marital satisfaction and happiness within the marriage.

Tests of Hypotheses

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant relationship between the psychosocial factors and marital adjustment among couples

Table 2 Statistical relationship between the psychosocial factors and marital adjustment among couples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital adjustment</th>
<th>Psychosocial factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi - square a, b</td>
<td>130.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 above shows that there is significant relationship between psychosocial factors and marital adjustment. The Chi-square values were 130.181 and 114.000 and the significant value is 0.000 which is far less the p-value which is 0.05, it means that there is significant relationship between psychosocial factors and marital adjustment. Hence, there is a significant relationship between psychosocial factors and marital adjustment. According to Mullins (1996) buttresses that through communication, couples express socio-emotional behaviours such as solidarity, tension release, joy, anger, anxiety, satisfaction, love, seek, help, show disagreement or approval and discuss to provide solution amicably. These findings by Dada and Idowu (2006) buttresses further the importance of emotional intelligence in marital adjustment. Thus, marital adjustment is attributed to a range of factors including role expectations of spouses, level of work commitment, job satisfaction, spouse values, socio-economic status, emotional instability among others (Denga, 1986).

Marital adjustment brings about peace and harmony in the home, marital satisfaction or success and marital stability. Marital adjustment occurs when each spouse enacts his/her role effectively to the satisfaction of the other (Obasa, 1990). It is the contention of Tawo et al (2006) that marital adjustment requires a lot of understanding and compromise from couples involved in the relationship.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between social factors and marital Adjustment
Table 3: Statistical relationship between social factors and marital adjustment among couples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Marital adjustment</th>
<th>Social factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square</td>
<td>130.181</td>
<td>145.781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp.sig</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P-value ≤ 0.05

Table 3 above shows that there is a significant relationship between social factors and marital adjustment. The Chi-square values were 130.181 and 145.781 and the significant value is 0.000 which is far less the p-value which is 0.05, it means that there is significant relationship between social factors and marital adjustment. Hence, there is significant relationship between social factors and marital adjustment. Tawo et al (2006) reported a significant relationship between marital adjustment and social responsibilities. They concluded therefore that, a high social responsibility to one’s marriage leads to a high marital adjustment. The social factors are akin to emotional intelligence. In marriage, Akpan (2000) report that effective marital communication (verbal or non-verbal) gives partners a deep sense of satisfaction as they openly express their minds.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between marital adjustment and marital satisfaction among couples.

Table 4: Statistical relationship between the marital adjustment and satisfaction among couples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Marital satisfaction</th>
<th>Marital adjustment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital satisfaction Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.619**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig (2-tailed)</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital adjustment Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.619**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) * P-value ≤ 0.05

Table 4 above shows that there is significant relationship between marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. The Correlation coefficient value of marital satisfaction ($r = 0.619$, $p < 0.01$) and the Correlation coefficient value of marital adjustment ($r = 0.619$, $p < 0.01$) it means that there is significant relationship between marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. Hence, the Ho (null hypothesis) is rejected, we therefore accept that there is a significant relationship between marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. Marital adjustment occurs
when each spouse enacts his/her role effectively to the satisfaction of the other (Obasa, 1990). Noller and Fitzpatrick (1990) noted a strong like between communication patterns and satisfaction with family relationship. According to Cherlin (2004) the rate of marital adjustment is affected by levels of marital satisfaction and happiness within the marriage. In terms of marital adjustment, it refers to the ability of individuals to become satisfied, happy and achieve success in a number of specific tasks in marriage. Marital adjustment brings about peace and harmony in the home, marital satisfaction or success and marital stability.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

**Conclusion**

It was established that these factors had a great role in determining how a couple is able to manage their marital life. Couples should be cognizance of the psychological and social factors enlisted earlier in the study because the factors have influence in the adjustment that occurs in marriages. It also shows that when couples adjust positively it brings about marital satisfaction which most couples are willing to enjoy in their marriage. Depression due to inability to bear children, depression or stress at work, infertility of the spouse, sexual satisfaction, addictive behaviour, aggressiveness, inability of the couple to adjust are all psychological factors that influences marital adjustment. While social factors are effective communication, nature and pattern of employment, cooperation, ability to manage crisis and conflicts, spending quality time, maturity of the spouse, all influences adjustment. And also when couples are able to adjust positively leads to marital satisfaction.

**Recommendations**

1. In both premarital and marital counselling, couples should be introduced to the rudiments of infertility as one of the crucial factors towards marital adjustment.

2. Through conjoint marital therapy, couples should be taught effective communication skills (interpersonal relationship). This to enable them learns and adopts interpersonal communication skills that will lubricate their marital relationship to enhance harmony, understanding and compromise for stability.

3. Couples should be helped to read, predict and understand each other’s needs, problems, hopes and aspiration and work towards helping themselves out.

4. Though, marital counselling couples should be helped to positively to manage their emotions in terms of joy, anger, problems, anxiety, depression towards one another. This is because, emotions are very important in marriages.

5. Also, they should ensure that God’s factor is not out of their marriage (prayer, faithfulness).

6. Couples should be cognizance of the psychological and social factors enlisted earlier in the study because the factors have great influence in the adjusting that occurs in marriages.
Biography

David Oladeji is currently a lecturer in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria and a trained counselling psychologist from University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

References


Psychosocial risk factors Influencing the abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents from selected households in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the psychosocial risk factors influencing the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents from selected households in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey, using 281 adolescents randomly selected from selected households in five local government areas of Ibadan Metropolis. The two instruments used were author-constructed questionnaires with 0.78 and 0.74 reliability coefficients respectively. The data obtained were analysed using chi-square ($\chi^2$) analysis. Results obtained from this study showed that there are significant relationships between psychological risk factors ($\chi^2 = 121.5$, $df = 8$, $P < .05$), social risk factors ($\chi^2 = 40.7$, $df = 6$, $P < .05$) and the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents. Based on these findings, it was recommended that: Mental health centres and social agencies are established exclusively for drug abusers, where they may offer short or long term therapy, or offer group sessions for counselling the drug abusers.

Keywords: Drug use and abuse, abused parents, adolescents psychological risk factors, and social risk factors.

Introduction

Drugs abuse is a social and health problem, not only because of it adverse effects on individuals, but also as a result of the negative consequences their use has for society as a whole. Everyone is a victim of drug abuse. Drugs contribute to problems within the family and the cost to crime rates, and the economic costs of drug abuse are enormous. Drug abuse also has serious consequences for health at both the individual and societal level (Mooney, Knox, & Schacht, 2005).

It is pertinent to first examine the working definitions of drug use and drug abuse as they relate to this study. In a social problems approach, a drug is any habit-forming substance that directly affects the brain and nervous system. It is a chemical that affect moods, perceptions, body functions, or consciousness and that has the potential for misuse because it may be harmful to the user. The definition would include food, insecticides, air pollutants, water pollutants, acids, vitamins, toxic chemicals, soap, and soft drinks (Zastrow, 1996) and (Johnson et al., 2003).

Another psychological theory, the theory of planned behaviour describes behaviour as being determined by intentions, attitudes, and normative beliefs (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2004).
Ethnographic research indicated that drinking is useful for manipulating social relationships in many places including the United States and is a social act that is part of virtually every social gathering (Myers & Stolberg, 2003). Moreover, according to this same ethnographic review article the ritual importance of drinking is shown by the fact that declining a drink is seen as disrespectful and unfriendly. Ethnography has documented problem drinking in communities suffering from deprivation, economic and social stagnation and scarce resources (Myers & Stolberg, 2003). This suggests that inner-city adolescents are an important group to study.

Following the above working definitions of drug use and drug abuse, it has been observed that today's adolescents expect fast results, and drugs are part of society's response to that expectation (American Psychiatric Association, 1994; Nancy, 2004).

For instance, adolescents try drugs for many reasons, of course; the prevalence of drugs in society is just one of them. Adolescence itself is a time of experimentation, and many adolescents explore substances as well as roles and ideas. Part of the attraction of legal drugs such as cigarettes and alcohol is that they are used by adults; when adolescents use them, they feel more like adults (Nancy, 2004). Also, advertisements make their use look glamorous. Many adolescents experience peer pressure to use substances, and countless other adolescents use substances to boost low self-esteem, dull pain, feel more confident, or compensate for poor social skills (American Psychiatric Association, 1994; Nancy, 2004).

Millions of people in the United States (and elsewhere) find it impossible to get started in the morning without coffee or cigarette, or to relax in the evening without a drink. Millions more take medication for pain, pills to sleep, laxatives to correct faulty diets, pills to suppress appetites, and vitamins supplements when they fail to eat enough. Adolescents see quick pick-me-ups and instant remedies modelled everywhere around them. It is little wonder that by their senior high school, 80% of late adolescents have tried alcohol, 71% have tried a cigarette, 42% have used marijuana, 7% have used some form of cocaine, and 16% have used some other illegal drug (Nancy, 2004).

Drug use must be conceptualized within the social context in which it occurs. Many youths who are at high risk for drug use have been “failed by society” - they are living in poverty; victims of abuse; dependents of addicted and neglectful parents; alienated from school (Fields, 2001; Siegel, 2002; Mooney, Knox, Schacht, 2005). Despite the social origins of drug use, many treatment alternatives, emanating from a clinical model of drug use, assume that the origin of the problem lies within the individual rather than in structure and culture of society.

Drug abuse in Nigeria before the fifties was largely limited to abuse and misuse of alcohol and tobacco and to a negligible degree isolated instances growing and smoking Indian Hemp. To the common people tobacco and alcohol are the only luxuries to which they have access. By the end of the fifties many young delinquents had began to smoke hemp (Okunola, 2002). Most adolescents in Nigeria are believed to have started smoking while in the secondary schools, and as well as, among adolescents with little or no education who are bus conductors or touts in Ibadan metropolis.
An ethnographic study of the need to smoke cigarettes found that a major reason that adolescents smoke is not because they crave or desire nicotine, but rather because of their perceived need to use cigarettes to manage social situations and maintain their social connections (Johnson et al., 2003). A criminology study found that variations in the behavioural and cognitive variables specified in the social learning process accounted for substantial portions of the variations in adolescent substance use and mediate substantial or in some cases nearly all the effects of gender, SES, age, family structure and community size on these forms of deviance (Lee, Akers, & Borg, 2004).

Johnston O’Malley, and Buchman (1989), Insel & Roth (2000), and Nancy (2004) observed that, over 50% of the adolescents who smoke half a pack or more a day said they tried to quit and had not been able to. Nearly 75% of those who smoke in high school on a daily basis were still doing so year later, although 5% thought they would continue when they began. These figures are not surprising, given the withdrawal symptoms adolescents experience when attempting to stop: irritability, nervousness, anxiousness, impatience, difficult concentrating, increased appetite, and weight gain.

The abuse of alcohol is associated with numerous complications. Alcohol is absorbed into all tissues of the body, affecting everything from the central nervous system, to internal organs to the skeletal muscles. Excessive use of alcohol can damage the liver, produce gastritis, affect kidney functioning, lead to sensory disturbances; it can cause blackout, memory loss, coma - and ultimately even death (Insel & Roth, 2000; Nancy, 2004).

The third drug to be considered in this study is Marijuana. Marijuana comes from the “Cannabis Sativa” plant, which contains the psychoactive substance. This substance produces a high characterized by feeling of relaxation and peacefulness, a sense of heightened awareness of one’s surroundings and of the increased significance of things. Marijuana can distort perception, affect memory, slow reaction time, and impair motor coordination, especially for unfamiliar or complex tasks. Because marijuana affects perception, the reaction action time, and coordination, it impairs one’s ability to drive. Yet adolescents under the influence of marijuana experience heightened confidence in their abilities and are likely to take greater risks while driving, despite their impaired functioning (Insel & Roth, 2000; Nancy, 2004).

In this study, three drugs were reviewed and considered very commonly used and abused among adolescents. It is therefore pertinent to show the relationship between psychosocial risk factors and the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents. Out of the factors that place an adolescent at risk for drug abuse are psychological and social contexts.

One sociological study found that the relationship between older siblings' self reported tobacco and alcohol use remained significant with younger siblings' tobacco and alcohol use controlling for numerous shared family experiences (Fagan & Najman, 2005). While prior research that focused on the aetiology of specific drugs (cigarettes, alcohol or marijuana) in adolescence is informative, such work overlooks the more general process of drug initiation and progression among inner-city adolescents that could take combination of multiple substances and future use into account. Also research does not often focus on intentions to
use in the future, which is another important outcome according to theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2004).

While prior research that focused on the aetiology of specific drugs (cigarettes, alcohol or marijuana) in adolescence is informative, such work overlooks the more general process of drug initiation and progression among inner-city adolescents that could take combination of multiple substances and future use into account. Also research does not often focus on intentions to use in the future, which is another important outcome according to theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2004).

Excessive drugs use, or, more precisely, drug abuse, is a different matter, adolescents who are frequent users of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs score lower on measures of psychological adjustment as teenagers and more likely to have been maladjusted as children (Steinberg, 2002). Indeed, a team of researchers who had followed a sample of individuals from preschool into young adult report that, at age 7, the individuals who would later become frequent drug users as adolescents were described as “not getting along well with other children, not showing concern for moral issues, not painful or likely to think ahead, not trustworthy or dependable, and not self-reliant or confident”. As 11 year-olds, these individuals were described as deviant, emotionally labile, stubborn, and inattentive. In other words, drug and alcohol abuse during adolescence is often a symptom of prior psychological disturbance (Steinberg, 2002).

Brener and Collins (1998), Wu and Anthony (1999), Holmen, Barrett-Connor, Holmen, and Bjermer (2000), and Steinberg (2002) in their studies observed that, substance abuse during adolescence, whatever its antecedents, is associated with a host of other problems at school, experience psychological distress and depression, have physical health problems, engage in unprotected sexual activity, abuse alcohol as young adults, and become involved in dangerous or deviant activities, including crime, delinquency, and truancy.

The set of risk factors is social. Individuals with distant, hostile, or conflicted family relationships are more likely to develop substance-abuse problems than their peer who grow up in close, nurturing families. Drug-abusing youngsters on the other hand, are more likely than their peers to have parents who are excessively permissive, uninvolved, neglectful, or rejecting. They are more likely to come from homes in which one or more other family members (parents or siblings) use drugs or tolerant of drug use (Baumrind, 1991; Griesler, Kandel, and Davies, 1998; Dishion, Capaldi, and Yoerger, 1999; Kilpatrick et al., 2000; Farrel and White, 1998; and Steinberg, 2002).

In this study, however, the parents who are excessively permissive, uninvolved, neglectful, or rejecting are regarded as “abused parents” rather than “wife battering” which they are often involved, and more so, they are more likely to use and abuse drugs. Although, virtually all adolescents experiment alcohol, adolescents with an alcoholic parent move from experimentation to more frequent and heavier drinking and drug use more rapidly.

Nevertheless, individuals with drug abuse problems also are more likely to have friends who use and tolerate the use of drug, both because they are influenced by these friends and
because they are drawn to them. In the same vein, drug-using adolescents seek drug-using peers, and drug-using peers encourage even drug use among their friends (Hazard and Lee, 1999; Rose, Chassin, Presson, and Sherman, 1999; Steinberg, 2002). All other factors being equal, adolescents who have easy access to drugs, who believe that there are ample opportunities to use drugs, and who are exposed to messages that tolerate or even encourage drug use are more likely to use and abuse drugs.

This study therefore, examined psychosocial risk factors influencing the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents from selected households in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine relationship between psychosocial risk factors and the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents from selected households in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria.

Specific objectives are to:

- Examine the relationship between psychological risk factors and the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents.
- Examine the relationship between social risk factors and the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents.
- Suggest strategies in regulating the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents in the society.

Methodology

Research Design

The descriptive survey design was used to examine psychosocial risk factors influencing the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents’ from selected households in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria.

Sample Size

The participants for the study were made up of 281 adolescents from selected households randomly drawn from five local government areas of Ibadan metropolis - Ibadan North, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan North-West, Ibadan South-West, and Ibadan South-East. Oyo State is made up of thirty-three local government areas of which, Ibadan metropolis is cosmopolitan in nature with different ethnic groups. A purposive sampling of 281 respondents (adolescents) of the study population was made. The adolescents’ ages range between 12 years and 17 years old, attending secondary schools, secondary school drop-outs, and those who engaged as bus conductors or touts from selected households in Ibadan metropolis. 121(43.1%) were those who currently in secondary schools, 100(35.5%) were the school drop-outs, and 60(21.4%)
were the bus conductors or touts. Eligibility was based on such criteria as adolescents’ parental background, their parents marital status, among others.

**Instrumentation**

The two instruments used in this study were - Psychological Risk Factors questionnaire (PRFQ), and Social Risk Factors Questionnaire (SRFQ). The two instruments were author-constructed. The psychological risk questionnaire was constructed by adapting psychological well-being inventory (PWI) with 42-items by Ryff (1989), Ryff and Keyes (1995), and Carr (1999). It measures psychological risk factors such as anger, depression, anxiety, impulsivity, academic difficulties, stress, and loss of memory. Thus 25 items were adapted out of original 42 items, and were measured on 3-point rating scale ranging from strongly agree (3) to disagree (1). The respondents were required to indicate their degree of agreement with each item by ticking one of the options for each item. The internal consistency estimate of PRFQ is .87, and revalidation reliability of .78 when administered 100 adolescents after three weeks of administration.

The second instrument - Social Risk Factors Questionnaire contained 20 items adopted 3-point rating scale ranging from strongly agree (3) to disagree (1). The questionnaire measured social risk factors such as truancy, deviance, sexual promiscuity, violence, delinquency, and academic difficulties. The questionnaire has a test-retest reliability of .78 at 2-week interval, and internal consistency of .74. All the two instruments were considered valid, through the favourable comments of Professors Bakare and Uwakwe in Test and Measurement Department on the suitability of the items.

**Method of Data Collection**

The questionnaires were administered on the adolescents, irrespective of their gender composition and their parental socio-economic status. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher and his research assistants employed. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed out of which 281 were returned and well administered. This represents a return of 56.2% which is considered appropriate to analyse the results of the study.

**Data Analysis**

The data were analysed using Chi-Square ($X^2$) statistics to establish the relationship between psychosocial risk factors and the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents.

Table 1 shows the sample. The age bracket of (15-17 years) were mostly represented with 180 representing 67.0%. The male sex numbering 211 were mostly involved in the study representing 75.1% and among the ethnic group represented, the Yorubas numbering 101hard the highest representation with 36%, while the status of the participants revealed that, those attending school hard the highest representation with 171 representing 60.9%

The results in Table 1 indicated a significant relationship between psychological risk factors and the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents. This is so because the $X^2$ calculated value (121.5) is greater than $X^2$ critical (2.73) at .05 level of significance. This
indicates that there is a significant relationship between psychological risk factors and the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>75.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibo</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hausa</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey 2010

Results

Table 2 shows the relationship between social risk factors and the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents. The table reveals that $X^2$ calculated value (40.7) is greater than $X^2$ critical value (1.64) at 0.05 level of significance. The results indicate that there is a significant relationship between social risk factors and the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Risk Factors</th>
<th>Respondents’ responses to the use and abuse of drugs</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>$X^2$Cal.</th>
<th>$X^2$Critical</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>17(6.0)</td>
<td>37(13.2)</td>
<td>33(11.7)</td>
<td>87(31.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>17(6.0)</td>
<td>95(33.8)</td>
<td>9(3.2)</td>
<td>121(43.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>4(1.4)</td>
<td>15(5.3)</td>
<td>16(5.7)</td>
<td>35(12.4)</td>
<td>121.5</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulsivity</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>29(10.3)</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>29(10.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Memory</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>9(3.2)</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>9(3.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>281</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 121.5, \ df = 8, P < .05$
Table 3  Cross-Tabulation and Chi-Square Analysis of Social Risk Factors and the use and abuse of drugs among adolescent of abused parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Risk Factors</th>
<th>Respondents’ Responses to the use and abuse of drugs</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
<th>$X^2$ Critical</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy/Violence</td>
<td>4(1.4)</td>
<td>54(19.2)</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>58(20.6)</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviance/delinquency</td>
<td>8(2.9)</td>
<td>77(27.4)</td>
<td>9(3.2)</td>
<td>94(33.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual promiscuity</td>
<td>4(1.4)</td>
<td>116(41.3)</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>120(42.7)</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic difficulties</td>
<td>4(1.4)</td>
<td>5(1.8)</td>
<td>0(0.0)</td>
<td>9(3.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>281</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 40.7$, df = 6, P<.05

Discussion
The study examined the relationship between psychosocial risk factors and the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents. The result obtained shows that there is no significant relationship between psychological risk factors and the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents. The study therefore, showed the significant relationship between those psychological risk factors such as anger, depression, stress, impulsivity, and loss of memory and the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents in the study population.

The results are in support of the research findings of Brener and Collins (1998), Wu and Anthony (1999), Holmen, Barrett-Connor, Holmen, and Bjørmer (2000), Farrel and Dintcheff (2000), Steinberg (2002), and Nancy (2004), found that individuals with certain personality characteristics, which typically are present before adolescence, are more likely to develop drug and alcohol problems than are their peers. These characteristics include anger, impulsivity, depression, stress, and loss of memory.

In the similar findings, Scheer and Unger (1998), Wills, Windle, and Cleary (1998), Dunn and Goldman (1998), and Steinberg (2002) found that, individuals who have more tolerant attitudes about drug use are at the greater risk for drug abuse, as are those who expect alcohol or other drugs to improve their social relationships. Even as children, for example, individuals who eventually become heavy drinkers as adolescents expect to have positive effects on them. They concluded that drug and alcohol abuse during adolescence, is often a symptom of prior psychological disturbances.

The results obtained from hypothesis 2 revealed that social risk factors are significantly positively related to the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents of abused parents. This finding corroborates the work of Dishion, Capaldi, and Yoerger (1999), Kilpatrick et al (2000), Farrel and Dintcheff (2000), Steinberg (2002), Nancy (2004), and Mooney, Knox, Schacht
(2005) found that, social risk factors such as truancy, deviance, sexual promiscuity, violence, delinquency, and academic difficulties are significantly related to the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents.

Furthermore, they observed that individuals with distant, hostile, or conflicted family relationships are more likely to develop drug-abuse problems than their peer who grow up in close, nurturing families. According to them, drug-abusing adolescents are more likely than their peers to have parents who are excessively permissive, uninvolved, neglectful, or rejecting. They are more likely to come from homes in which one or more other family members use drugs or tolerant of drug use. They concluded that adolescents who have easy access to drugs, who believe that there are ample opportunities to use drugs, and who are exposed to messages that tolerate or even encourage drug use are more likely to use and abuse drugs.

**Implication of the Findings and Recommendations**

A number of implications emerge from the results of this study. When psychosocial risk problems associated with the drug use and abuse among adolescents are difficult to control or prevent, counselling psychologists, family therapists, social workers, health professionals, schools, mass media, government, religious organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should mount intervention strategies for curbing drug use and abuse among adolescents in the society Capaldi, and Yoerger (1999), Kilpatrick et al (2000), Farrel and Dintcheff (2000), Steinberg (2002), Nancy (2004), and Mooney, Knox, Schacht (2005).

The implication, however, is that there is a need for prevention of drug use and abuse among adolescents through government spending and media publicity to control or limit the availability of drugs, and finding ways of changing adolescents’ motivation to use drugs, and environment in which they live, since it has proven virtually impossible to remove drugs totally from society.

**Recommendations**

Following the findings of this study, the following recommendations were specifically made to curb or prevent the drug use and abuse among adolescents in the society.

1. There should be educational programmes showing “scare tactics” - showing pictures of fatal automobile crashes after drug use, suggesting that taking drugs would forever ruin the users’ lives. Although, this method may not be that effective because, the young see their parents, other adults, and peers using drugs without dire consequences. But in a more effective manner, the mass media and schools can launch major campaigns to prevent drunken driving, alcohol abuse, smoking, and illegal drug use. Dishion, Capaldi, and Yoerger (1999), Kilpatrick et al (2000), Farrel and Dintcheff (2000), Steinberg (2002), Nancy (2004), and Mooney, Knox, Schacht (2005).

2. Mental health centres and social agencies should be established exclusively for drug abusers. They may offer short-or long-term therapy, combine other chemical therapy, or offer group sessions for drug abusers. Brener and Collins (1998), Wu and Anthony (1999),

3. Counselling psychologist, Social workers and those in the helping profession should help in a variety of traditional social work settings - juvenile courts, adult probation and parole, mental health clinics, hospitals, family counselling centres, schools, university health and counselling centres, and in private practice. (Baumrind, 1991; Griesler, Kandel, and Davies, 1998; Dishion, Capaldi, and Yoerger, 1999; Kilpatrick et al., 2000; Farrel and White, 1998; and Steinberg, 2002). In addition, many social workers are the administrators as well as the therapists, that can work with the psychiatrist, physician, psychologist, and often ex-addicts who may, or may not, have had professional training as counsellors to support the drug abusers when assistance is needed.

4. There should be government regulations limiting the use and distribution of legal and illegal drugs. Bjermer (2000), and Steinberg (2002). For instance, the government should impose sanctions on those who violate drug regulations. The sanctions should include the prohibitions about importing drugs, and law establishing 21-year-old drinking age.

Biography

David Oladeji is currently a lecturer in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria and a trained counselling psychologist from University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

References


The value of home economics to address the obesity challenge: An evaluation of comments in an online forum

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Abstract

Negative public perceptions of home economics have plagued the profession and created negative stereotypes for decades. Strategies such as a name change and shifting of curriculum components to other subjects in attempts to gain legitimacy have led to a general demise of the field as a unified profession. This paper reports on the text analysis of a self-selected group of members of the public who posted 130 comments to a website forum in response to the published article “Bring back home ec! Parents don’t have time to teach kids basic cooking and housekeeping, so schools must do it instead” (Bosch, 2012). The study provides a unique glimpse of the opinion of members of the public, of the value and contribution of home economics as a school subject, particularly with respect to its potential to address the obesity challenge through a greater awareness of food knowledge, theory and skill - collectively food literacy. Three themes emerged from the thematic analysis of the posts: The role of parents; the role of schools; and life skills. Findings from this investigation are important as they provide something of a litmus test about public perceptions of utilising home economics education as a mechanism to address a major public health challenge confronting humankind in the twenty-first century.

Introduction and literature

In 2010 an article titled Bring back home economics education was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. The authors argued that the best solution to fighting the war against obesity is to “bring back home economics” in order to empower individuals with food knowledge and skills and that “providing a mandatory food preparation curriculum to students throughout the country may be among the best investments society could make” (Lichtenstein & Ludwig, 2010 p.1858). There is no doubt that child and adult obesity is a growing concern in affluent nations around the world with negative physical, psychological and social impacts (UNICEF, 2000; Zaninotto et al., 2006) as well as economic and cultural consequences (Wanless, 2002). The challenge of managing obesity is one that is at the core of public health concerns for humans in developed countries at this time. In the United States for example, obesity presently costs society almost $150 billion annually in increased health care expenditure (Finkelstein, Trogdon, Cohen, & Dietz, 2009). Lichtenstein and Ludwig's message has served to stimulate renewed interest in the potential of home economics education to lead the way in a crusade of potentially massive significance to the health and wellbeing of the public.

It is interesting to note current calls for a reintroduction of home economics were not instigated by professionals from within the field, providing an opportunity for the profession
to sharpen its focus on providing for the needs of a new generation. The field emerged more than one hundred years ago at a time when public health related to sanitation and hygiene was of profound interest, with the importance of cleanliness and hygiene in domains such as food storage and preparation having significant public health benefits through the reduction of food contamination and subsequent illness and even death (Pendergast & McGregor, 2007). Out of this need, the profession of home economics emerged, and over more than one hundred years and in different contexts - dependent upon need - the field has adjusted to fulfil roles associated with optimizing the wellbeing of individuals and families in their near environment (International Federation for Home Economics [IFHE], 2008). In more recent decades, and closely linked to the increased affluence of modern society, the field has struggled to retain a positive identity, particularly as a curriculum area in schools, where it was fundamentally built to contribute to the education of individual’s wellbeing, as it has been challenged in terms of relevance in today’s world, and has been criticized for creating and reinforcing negative stereotypes of women, especially because of the perception that it accepts, without challenge, the confines of patriarchal ideology (Attar, 1990; Reiger, 1990).

In their comprehensive exploration of home economics and patriarchy, Pendergast and McGregor (2007, p.7) note “history confirms that (a) home economics was established within a society that was dominated by a patriarchal ideology and (b) the founders, predominantly women, were required to conform to its power distribution before they could establish a profession”. The acceptance of patriarchal ideology as the dominant philosophy underpinning society at the time of its development as a field has had, and will continue to have, profound effects although the field has struggled to shake off negative perceptions associated with its emergence at a time of patriarchal dominance. This effect is particularly powerful within the home economics profession because it is a field of study that brings together, in almost every sense, the least powerful of the binary pair, considered from the ideology of a patriarchal paradigm. Historically the field has been dominated by females (not males), has had a focus on the home, that is, the private sphere (not public), and is often unpaid (not paid) work (Pendergast, 2001). Hence, negative stereotypes of a disempowered curriculum area, catering for females have dominated public perceptions of the field of study, inevitably limiting its capacity to impact the wider community.

Home economics curriculum differs around the world, whether in a school, university or other educational location (Pendergast, 2012). Students undertake context specific content in a range of domains, yet, there is a shared theoretical and philosophical base and set of core practices that bind home economics curriculum globally. Recently, the IFHE Position Statement - Home Economics in the 21st Century (IFHE, 2008, p.1) captured this shared meaning by formulating the statement that as a curriculum area, home economics...

...facilitates students to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to be used in their personal life, by directing their professional decisions and actions or preparing them for life.

Hence, through the engagement in home economics curriculum, the individual is provided the learning opportunity to develop capabilities to enhance personal empowerment to act in daily contexts. Contexts may include, but are not limited to: Food, nutrition and health; textiles
and clothing; shelter and housing; consumerism and consumer science; household management; design and technology; food science and hospitality; human development and family studies; and, education and community services. In the Position Statement, it is argued that the capacity to draw from such disciplinary diversity is “a strength of the profession, allowing for the development of specific interpretations of the field, as relevant to the context” (IFHE, 2008, p.1).

In the context of the advocacy by Lichtenstein & Ludwig (2010) to mandate home economics education, the value of home economics education in fighting obesity is firmly constructed around the various elements of food literacy which are typically delivered in home economics curriculum. But is home economics the appropriate vehicle for delivery of this message given it has at best mixed status as a curriculum area in schools? A recent study by Pendergast, Garvis & Kanasa (2011) provided a unique insight into the responses of 97 contributors to an online forum responding to a newspaper article speculating about the inclusion of cooking in the Queensland, Australia, school curriculum. The analysis revealed that the wider community did not collectively understand the potential contribution of home economics to develop food literacy and it was recommended that further research be conducted to find positive ways to change perceptions of home economics in schools.

Another recent global investigation about the role of home economics in developing food literacy provides additional insights into the potential of home economics to play a significant role in addressing the food obesity challenge. In that study, Pendergast and Dewhurst (2012) collected data using an online survey with 1188 respondents from 36 different countries in the world sharing their views. Among key findings are the recognition of differences in understandings of food literacy and affirmation that “home economists globally are like-minded in their beliefs about the need for food literacy curriculum” (Pendergast & Dewhurst, 2012, p.13).

The publication in the Journal of the American Medical Association highlights another aspect of the “bring back home economics” plea as the title suggests the implied demise of the field and hence the need for it to be regenerated. Data from around the world confirms that home economics has suffered a demise in terms of the availability of curriculum for formal education in schools and in tertiary institutions, with a trend towards a dispersal of the content across related fields, such as food science, family studies, textiles design, technology and public health (IFHE, 2008). Linked to this demise is the global trend to change the name of the subject and the field to what have been considered to be more contemporary titles that can address negative stereotypes associated with the name ‘home economics’ (Pendergast & McGregor, 2007). Examples of name changes to family and consumer science; and human ecology, are both now widely utilized in the United States in preference to home economics. The use of a range of names for the field has led to fragmentation of curriculum and an apparent demise; hence the need to “bring back” home economics.

The public plea by Lichtenstein and Ludwig to “bring home economics back” heralds another element in what has been identified by Pendergast (2006) as a ‘convergent moment’ where a number of key factors have aligned to provide an opportunity to focus on the future of the field. Unexpected as it was, the 2010 publication points again to the need to privilege
education which focuses on wellbeing and which develops not only knowledge, but the ability to apply this knowledge in theoretical and practical ways.

Since the publication of the original article in the Journal of the American Medical Association, there has been considerable interest in the ideas shared in the paper, especially in the form of viral spin-offs utilising social media technologies. A Google search reveals dozens of articles, online debates, website blog posts, along with a Facebook campaign to bring home economics back to schools, and other opinion and commentary sites, all referring to the Lichtenstein and Ludwig (2010) article as the basis for these conversations and posts. One article appeared in the Slate magazine, which is published by The Washington Post. Slate magazine is a daily online paper described as offering “fresh angles on stories in the news and innovative entertainment coverage, all with its signature wit and irreverence. Pushing the boundaries of convention, Slate publishes provocative commentary on topics such as politics, culture, business and technology. Slate reaches 6.7 million online adults a month according to Nielsen” (The Washington Post, 2013). The Slate Magazine article is titled Bring back home ec! Parents don’t have time to teach kids basic cooking and housekeeping, so schools must do it instead, was written by Torie Bosch and posted on 5 June 2012. This article canvasses the potential of home economics in today’s society and posits the view that it is more valuable than ever, using as a basis the original publication by Lichtenstein and Ludwig (2010). Bosch presents a case that home economics never really disappeared from schools - it still exists but is often named differently and that home economics knowledge often seems to be “like common sense” because the core messages have effectively permeated society (Bosch, 2012).

It is this article that inspired the authors to investigate the accompanying discussion forum that was generated in response to the article. The self-selected, anonymous respondents provide a snapshot of comments in response to the article. Our analysis reveals that their comments could be grouped into three main themes: the role of parents; the role of schools; and life skills.

**The Study**

This study provided a unique opportunity to gauge the opinion of self selected members of the public regarding their ideas about the value and contribution of home economics as a school subject, particularly with respect to its potential to address the obesity challenge through a greater awareness of food knowledge, theory and skills. Soliciting the opinion of the public is valuable because the field has been impacted by negative perceptions over recent decades. The call to “bring back home economics” by authors in the prestigious medical journal points to a legitimising of the field by those beyond the usual advocates within the profession and may serve as a turning point through the contesting of negative public perceptions. This study will provide some insight into the responses to the ideas posed by the follow up article in Slate magazine.
Method

Data and data analysis

Comments were collected from the online article entitled Bring Back Home Ec: Parents don’t have time to teach kids basic cooking and housekeeping, so schools must do it instead in the online Slate Magazine (5 June, 2012). Many articles on the Slate website allow readers to post their comments in response to articles, and to comments from others. This particular forum recorded 264 posts from anonymous readers. Respondents were a self-selecting, convenience sample. As the posts were anonymous within the discussion forum beyond a selected username, identity of individuals within posts is unknown. Since the group were self-selecting (they had enough interest in the topic to respond), it is difficult to generalize beyond the sample presented and this is a limitation of the study.

On average, most participants wrote three to four sentences. All posts were downloaded and screened for use in this study. Comments were scrubbed to remove any extraneous text. Exploratory analysis of the comments revealed unacceptable concept map instability meaning a stable concept map could not be formed after repeated iterations of Leximancer recoding the concepts into themes. To resolve this issue the comments were coded by hand and subsequently 51% (n=134) of the comments were coded as irrelevant. Examples of removed comments included those that simply agreed or disagreed with previous comments, those inviting forum participants to events etc. These comments were removed and the analysis was completed with the 130 comments of relevance to the forum topic. The resultant stable map was achieved after two rounds of reclustering.

An adapted version of Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran’s (2003) 15 stages of content analysis (based within the constant comparative method) was used as a guide to identify key themes and meanings in the data. This process allowed newly identified themes to be compared with previously identified themes to ensure that the new theme added more understanding about the phenomenon under investigation. Themes were located with frequency counts, with some themes entering two categories. Coding for manifest content (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001) was used, which means that what was directly written in the online blog, as opposed to latent content which is implied, was used for the content analysis. The computer program Leximancer was used to assist the researchers build strength of association and visual maps after the themes were generated. The number of themes was set to five with Table 1 showing the resultant themes, their related concepts at the connectivity of the concepts within the themes.

Connectivity is a measure of how related the concepts within a theme are to other concepts in the map relative to the highest ranked theme. The themes of ‘learn’ and ‘day’ and their related concepts were disregarding as significant themes as their connectivities were 11% and 5% respectively. Figure 1, the resultant concept map also reflects this decision to remove those themes from further discussion. Leximancer automatically assigns the theme name as the most numerous concept. A closer examination of the individual concepts as they appear within the context of the quotes revealed the initial themes of ‘kids’, ‘home’ and ‘cook’ were better labelled as ‘role of the parents’, ‘role of the school’ and ‘life skills’ respectively.
Table 1: Leximancer identified themes, their related concepts and connectivities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Connectivity (%)</th>
<th>Related concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role of the parents</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>kids, skills, teach, time, parents, basic, people, life, things, taught, etc., doing, skill, schools, household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the school</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>home, cooking, learned, class, school, take, sewing, work, shop, stuff, family, classes, students, grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life skills</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>cook, food, laundry, course, meal, money, clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>learn, teaching, children, sense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>day, making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 shows the resultant concept map. Circles group related concepts into themes with the three themes with the highest connectivity being shown. Bayesian analysis is used to determine the relatedness of themes, therefore more related concepts are closer spatially in the concept map. For example, within the theme of ‘responsibility of parents’, the concepts of ‘life’ and ‘skills’ have been calculated to be highly related terms as shown by their closeness. The third layer of information within the concept map are connecting lines between concepts which indicate a statistically significant relationship between two or more concepts. For example, the concepts of ‘kids’, ‘parents’, ‘skills’ and ‘life’ are highly likely to be related in a significant manner as indicated by their grouping within the theme of ‘role of the parents’ and their connection with a line.

Findings

Each of the most significant themes (role of parents, role of the school and life skills) will now be discussed in the order of the prominence assigned by Leximancer and is shown heat mapped (i.e., red for the most prominent theme to yellow and green) in the concept map. Prominence is partly determined by how often the concepts in a theme are mentioned in the text and indicates the importance of those concepts and therefore the theme to the participants.

The role of the parents

As the most prominent identified theme (connectivity of 100%), the majority of comments focussed on the importance of the role parents and the home play in imparting important knowledge and skills, including those related to food and cooking skills, to their children. This is signified in the concept map by the close relationship of parents, taught, teach, kids, basic, life and skills. Many comments described how forum members had learnt important skills in their childhood or described how they are teaching their own children these skills, for example:

[B]y the time they were 10 years old, both of my kids (one of each) could scrub a bathroom, change their sheets, load and unload the dishwasher, and
do a load of laundry without breaking the washer or lighting the dryer on fire. (Comment 116)

Other comments were related to how respondents had learnt important skills once they left home. The key theme in these comments was the importance of learning the necessary skills in the home context which would not necessarily be achieved in a classroom. In the main, the comments in this category advocated for ‘family’ to be the place where knowledge and skills that might be regarded as components of a home economics curriculum, would best be delivered.

Other comments in this theme generally tended to be critical of parents and their abrogation of responsibility to schools on this matter, hence still advocating for the family to provide the knowledge and skill development, for example:
Excuse me, but exactly where are the parent’s responsibilities to teach their children. A significant part of the difficulties in public education today is that parents drop their kids off at the school house door and think that is the end of their involvement in the process (not all parents, but a surprisingly large number). (Comment 111)

and

Schools exist to create informed citizens, not to teach your kids how to care for themselves and not be pigs. (Comment 72)

and

... I disagree with this idea that parents don’t have time to teach their kids these simple life skills. We are all busy, but anyone who says they are too busy to give their kids these valuable lessons needs to just admit that it’s not that they can’t it’s that they don’t want to. (Comment 10)

But not all contributors to the forum within this theme advocated for family as being the sole source for developing knowledge and capabilities associated with food literacy and other related aspects of individuals wellbeing. For some, this was based on the lack of capacity in the family, for example:

Yeah, but not everybody has parents they can call to help them. (Comment 70)

and

I guess your answer is that in cases where the parents are low-skill, their kids can just follow in their footsteps? That’s compassion. (Comment 80)

One forum participant presented alternate arguments to the view by other forum members that cooking (and nutrition) is common sense, noting that some parents lack the necessary expert skills; and further highlighting the potential benefits to society of appropriate education, such as that delivered in home economics classrooms. Their lengthy forum post follows:

It’s not common sense. People do not just understand calories, nutrition, and personal/household finances, *especially* when they are young. And learning about nutrition *before* you screw up and get fat is the best way to avoid a lifetime of struggling with your weight. Earlier is so much better. There are entire industries built up around balancing check books and people who make their living telling other people to save 20%. Why is that? It's because these things are not just absorbed. And unfortunately, the people with the means, resources, and awareness to educate themselves in these areas are the same people whose parents were able to equip them at a
younger age. You can't forget about all the kids who never made it past high school or the 9th grade- ...

Even if you imagine that all parents have the time to teach their kids, you can't ignore the fact that many parents don't have these skills themselves. If they never learned how to work a stove, how will they teach their children? And if their own finances are a mess, how do they teach their kids about household budgeting? ... It's kids whose parents are frankly not equipped to help them.

So why should we do this? Because we all pay the costs. When people don't know how to budget and spend within their means, we end up with bubbles and credit crises and toxic mortgages and a lot of good people who lose a lot of money because other people made bad decisions. Maybe if we can teach them to balance a check book and assess true affordability, we can reduce the chances of ever being in this mess again. 5% reduction you say? 3%? I'll take it! And when they don't know how to feed themselves, they get fat and cost the healthcare system money. They buy bad foods and prop up a food economy based on waste products and processed goods. They ensure that your grocery store is flooded with sugar and salt and pre-made things that provide no nutritional value, and they spend 30 cents on a 2-liter of soda every week instead of drinking tap water for free, then complain that a healthy diet is more expensive. .... Maybe if we educate people, we'll have a sounder economy, a more versatile workforce, lower healthcare costs, fewer unplanned pregnancies, fewer predatory companies, and more qualified elected officials. We should at least try. (Comment 7)

The content in this posting was repeated by many other forum contributors, though generally not as comprehensively as in this posting, and reflects a greater understanding of the potential value and contribution of home economics education. The large scale consequences of a deficit of what home economics education can provide in terms of individual and collective empowerment is captured in the examples provided, such as healthcare costs, consumer knowledge and so on.

The second theme with 71% connectivity to the most prominent theme (the role of parents) focussed on the role of schools to provide an education for all students in matters related to households and families. This high degree of connectivity reflects the similarity in the nature of comments in that those forum participants who made comments about the role of parents were also likely to make comments about the role of schools. A focus on the role of schools now follows.

**The role of schools**

While most forum contributors placed the onus on parents to educate their children on matters of household management, like in the previous theme, others argued that not all parents were equipped to pass on those skills - the notion of capital being used to describe
the capabilities - and that was a role that could and should be fulfilled by schools as a social good, for instance:

The decline of the “domestic sciences” also impacts the very real problem of entrenched poverty. After a few generations of children having children (be that in an urban or rural setting) the family domestic skill capital has diminished considerably. This impacts what food is consumed and how efficiently the money is spent. (Comment 83)

Some forum contributors pointed to the inability of parents to pass on important skills with the consequence being the responsibility fell to schools instead. The reasons for this failure were varied, and included: Lack of skills, lack of time, and lack of interest, as noted in the comment followings:

Parents don’t have time to teach kids basic cooking and housekeeping, so schools must do it instead. (Comment 94)

and

I am 54 and most certainly did not learn the operation of a home from my mother, who was raised with a full-time cook and housekeeper. While we had a full-time housekeeper when I was a child, we did not have a cook. My mother’s cooking was simply awful.

In 7th grade, I was to take metal shop, while the girls took home economics. I rebelled - the trait started young - and I took home economics. I was going to be the only boy in the class until I explained to Mike Young, the captain of the our baseball team one ate the food one cooked in class, so he and several other players also signed up. To this day, that was one of the best classes I ever took. (Comment 41)

Anywhere there is a system of public education, it’s in place to train citizens. It’s not there out of some ‘higher calling’ to impart centuries of priceless knowledge. (Comment 76)

Comment 41 introduces the commonly experienced gendered divide of the curriculum with girls typically being required to study home economics while boys undertook study in one of the manual arts disciplines. Comments within this theme also retold both negative and positive experiences (as signified by the relationship between the concepts of school, take, shop and classes) with home economics and these tended to sway their views on whether home economics should be returned, as in the following comment.

I remember my home-economics class in junior high. I remember the tuna noodle casserole (yuck!!), fried chicken (something I don’t eat as an adult), and worst of all that monstrosity that involved adding browned hamburger, onions, cooked carrots and green beans, and slices of hotdogs to Western
family mac and cheese (cooked with margarine of course!!) adding
government cheese and breadcrumbs and cooking it as a casserole. Also I
knew more about sewing than the teacher. (Comment 130)

Life skills

The third main theme generated from the data is encapsulated by the notion of life skills. With a 22% connectivity to the main theme (the role of parents), forum contributors commented on the breadth of the home economics curriculum in developing a range of skills and capabilities, including financial management, consumer rights and responsibilities, food purchasing, storage and preparation (food literacy) and much more. The concept of money is strongly related to cook and clothes for slightly different reasons. In relation to cook, this word was often used by forum contributors around the idea of being able to manage a food budget and budgeting in general, for example:

...most people starting out need to know how to control their food budget. Budgeting was one of the primary aims of early home economics. Then it became about making a fancy meal and sewing an apron. Imagine a course that talks about proper shopping for a budget, preparing meals within a budget, and controlling food waste. (Comment 108)

Other life skills to be included would be a comprehensive review of personal finance, including costs of debt and credit, banking fees, etc. (Comment 82)

Home economics as I took it in the late 80’s wasn’t particularly useful, but things like household budgeting, healthy cooking, etc. would be very helpful to just about everyone (even if you learned it at home, it couldn’t hurt to brush up). I actually learned far more useful things from a culinary standpoint in Boy Scouts...how to cook, sure, but also how to make a menu, then a food list, then shop, prep, package, and prepare the food. To this day I make a mean beef stew...and it’s a lot easier to do on a stove than it was kneeling in the rain over a campfire! (Comment 125)

In relation to clothes it tended to be around the idea that learning basic sewing skills saved money, while others argued that sewing in today’s society was irrelevant given how cheap (another money concept) clothing is to purchase, as exemplified in the following comment:

[F]ocusing on cooking, basic household budgeting, and basic home repairs ("how to fix a toilet," "how to unclog a drain," "how to set up a secure wireless network," "how to change the oil in a lawn mower," etc., etc.), and you've got a very useful class. Get rid of the sewing, though - waste of time. (Comment 44)

Discussion and Conclusion

This evaluation of an online discussion forum has provided a snapshot of views from members of the public regarding their ideas about the value and contribution of home economics
education as a school subject, particularly with respect to its potential to address the obesity challenge through a greater awareness of food knowledge, theory and skills. The evaluation of forum comments - which were stimulated by an opinion piece exploring the idea of reintroducing home economics into the curriculum as a key strategy to address child and adult obesity in affluent countries - revealed three main themes with a relatively high degree of connectivity between the two leading themes: the role of family and the role of schools. The third theme, life skills, recorded a lower degree of connectivity at 22%. It was typical for forum contributors to include comments about both the role of family and the role of school, with a high degree of connectivity (71%) observed in the data.

The evaluation further revealed a lack of consistency in respondents experiences of, and knowledge about, home economics education. This aligns with the previous study conducted by Pendergast, Garvis and Kanas (2011) that revealed the community did not understand the potential contribution of home economics to the development of food literacy capabilities. It also revealed entrenched views of home economics as a traditional subject, often connected to gendered roles for girls and women and reinforcing the patriarchal views of the subject that have hampered its acceptance as a field for decades. Also debated in the forum with divergent views evident, was the taken-for-granted nature of home economics knowledge on the one hand, and on the other hand, arguments challenging this view.

In sum, there was not a decisive picture emerging from the data reflecting views from the wider public regarding the advocacy of the author to ‘bring back home ec’ (sic) (Bosch, 2012). Nevertheless, soliciting the opinion of the public is valuable because the field has been impacted by negative perceptions over recent decades. The call to “bring back home economics” by Lichtenstein & Ludwig (2010) in the prestigious medical journal may serve as a turning point by placing the question back on the agenda and by providing an opportunity to contest negative public perceptions. However, what is revealed is that there remains a large degree of uncertainty about the value and potential contribution of home economics to this public health agenda. This provides an opportunity for home economics professionals to shape the field and to position the profession appropriately for today’s context. Aligned with findings from Pendergast, Garvis and Kanas (2011), this study also recommends that further research be conducted to find positive ways to change perceptions of home economics in schools. By way of conclusion, it is evident that some forum contributors held very high regard for the profession of home economics, as expressed in the following comment:

[T]raditional home economics subjects could be part of a whole curriculum of life classes. Basically, how to function in society. number one being how to manage not to get fat. (Comment 60)

Biography

Professor Donna Pendergast currently holds the position of Dean, School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University.

Dr Susanne Garvis is a Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Education at Monash University.
Harry Kanasa is a lecturer in Science and Mathematics Education at Griffith University. He is currently completing his PhD on scientific literacy. His current research interests are thinking skills and students' understanding of the nature of science.

References


Developing a new concept of reversible textile furnishing

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Abstract

Textile Furnishing is one of the most vital components of any interior environment. Reversible Textile Furnishing is a product that has no true inside out since either side can be used to give a different appearance or an alternative decorative surface. The current study was carried out to discover the existing reversible textile products and aims at exploring the different ways of reversing a textile furnishing product. Hence, creative and innovative samples have been proposed and realized reflecting the project theme ‘Amalgamation - The Two in One’. In this context, reversible techniques have been introduced to provide several possible looks within one item with a finished appearance. The expected outcome from this current study is to bring an innovative concept through Reversible Textile Furnishing that could be sold on the local market.

Keywords: Reversible Techniques, Innovative, Textile Products, Amalgamation

Introduction

Textile Furnishing is one of the most vital components of any interior environment. They are not only meant for decoration but they also give every corner of a habitation its own individuality. A house furnished with exactly the right home furnishing fabrics at the right place truly gives a blissful experience. In reality, textile Furnishing gives a stylish, traditional as well as contemporary look to any decor. Textile home furnishing comprises of products right from bed linen, bathroom furnishing, kitchen linen, table linen, curtains to carpets. To furnish a home, every type of fabric can be used that is available in vast range of colours, designs, patterns and styles. They have to be strong enough or light, resistant to some materials such as water or fire, and should have many other properties according to the purpose they are intended to be used. Fabric is such a material that is used by most of the interior decorators to cure any flaw in the interior design. Reversible textile furnishing is a product that has no true inside out since either side can be used to give a different appearance or an alternative decorative surface. In this context, reversible techniques have been introduced to provide several possible looks within one item with a finished appearance so that when used there is no unsightly seam appearing on either side of the product. This study aims at researching in the different ways of reversible textile furnishing and fabrics through a literature review and market survey. A variety of creative and innovative samples and designs have been proposed and realized using cut and sew technique reflecting a theme. The idea behind this study was to offer different look to the interior decoration while using the same textile furnishing product. The outcome looks forward to be beneficial for people who need a change in interior decor. In fact, selling a piece of textile that can provide one or two additional styles for the price of one can be a good marketing strategy, as it is more durable and economic. The expected outcome from this current study was to bring an...
innovative concept through reversible textile furnishing that could be sold on the Mauritian market. Despite the various fashionable items being available in the shops, some innovations are still missing regarding the possibility reversing a textile furnishing product.

**Literature Review**

The English word reverse, (adjective. reversible) devolves directly from the Latin reversus, past participle of revertere "turn around" (World Book, 1994). In the context of fashion, reversible means the capability of being reversed or used with either side out that is a garment that can be worn inside out, with either side of the cloth showing (AudioEnglish, 2010).

The Literature Review consists of research into double faced fabrics, reversible techniques for neatening raw edges, reversible garments, revers, reversible curtains, quilt and table cloth.

**Double Faced Fabrics**

A Double Faced Fabric is any fabric with two attractive, useable sides. They can be exactly the same on either side, contrasting colours or contrasting textures as shown in Figure 2.1. They are therefore the perfect choice for reversible garments or mix and match coordinates (Neall, 2010). One most popular double faced fabric is Damask Fabric.

**Damask Fabric**

Damask is a reversible fabric that was created in Damascus, Syria. However, Chinese emperors were wearing damask fabric as early as the fifth century. This beautiful patterned fabric has been created all over the civilized world for nearly two thousand years. Damask rose to prominence in the 12th century for their unmatched beauty and flawless production. Traders coined the term “damask” for any ornamental patterned silk or satin fabric in reference to Damascus (Mireles, 2010).

**Early Damask Clothing**

During the 1700s damask silk was popularly used for ladies and menswear. From the earliest of times damask fabric was woven with lovely bright colours using metallic or gold threads to add to the beauty of the fabric. Damask as shown in (Figure 2 and 3) has been utilized in combination with jacquard and brocade from the earliest history for clothing but only by the wealthy who could afford these fabrics (Mireles Sandra, 2010).
Damask Robes for Judges and Clergy

During the 15th century judges and priests wore elaborate robes made of damask fabric. Judges always wore black silk state robes over their clothing. These robes were ornate and flowing to the ground. During this same time period, pure white layered damask silk was used by the priests for robes used for the liturgy (Mireles Sandra, 2010). Figure 4 shows the damask clergy robe of the pope Benedict.

Modern Damask Clothing

Damask silk has adorned wedding dresses, day dresses and robes during the 19th and 20th centuries. Styles come and go, but as recently as 2007 damask was being used for dresses and skirts. Wallis introduced a cream-colored jacquard damask skirt with a bow at the waist as part of their fall 2007 line (Figure 5). Damask continues to be a favourite fabric which can be extremely expensive at the high end (Mireles, 2010).

Contemporary Uses for Damask Fabric

The most commonly known contemporary use for damask is for tablecloths and napkins. Pure white damask tablecloths add a touch of elegance to any occasion. Damask is also used for draperies, bedding, curtains, cushions and even upholstery. The warp and weft of the fabric reveals the pattern design when light falls on it. The beauty and versatility of damask fabric assures that it will continue to be a part of history now and in the future (Mireles, 2010).
Oversewing Stitch of Double Cloth

Double cloth is two distinctly different fabrics joined together by very fine binder threads. It can be different colours, different patterns or different weights on either side of the fabric and is usually made from wool or wool blends, with a few exceptions. It is therefore doubly warm and an excellent choice for outerwear (Neall, 2010).

The oversewing stitch in double cloth is used to neaten and secure raw edges. It also keeps unfinished fabrics from fraying. The needle works on a diagonal stitch that comes up through the bottom of the fabric and over the side of the fabric (Figure 6).

Bias Binding

Bias tape and ribbon are used to bind and enclose straight or curved fabric edges. When used as a trim, they also provide a decorative colour accent to clothing and crafts (RBR Inc, 2009). This is the easiest and cleanest way to achieve a clean edge on both the inside and outside of the garment (Figure 7). It is ideal for items that have visible seams.

Reversible Garments

A reversible garment is a garment that can be worn two ways. There is no true “inside out” to a reversible garment, since either way, it gives a fashionable appearance (Wikipedia, 2009). Garments that are commonly made reversible are jackets with rever collars, sweaters, waistcoat and skirts (Figure 2.7a, b, c). Reversible garments have some specific features like buttons on both sides, use of thicker fabrics, different types of stitching, and no tags.
Reversible Textile Furnishing

A reversible textile furnishing product can be inverted in either way to expose decorative surface of the fabric, thus providing alternatives in changing the bedroom decor with the single product.

**Reversible Quilts**

Most common Reversible Textile Furnishing is Quilts. Quilted fabrics are layered materials consisting of two cloths that encase a filling and are stitched together to form a puffy unit. The outer layers of quilted fabrics used for apparel are generally of cotton, polyester, nylon, or blends of such fibres (Corbman,1983).

**Reversible Tablecloth**

There are lots of things that can be done to a kitchen to add ambiance, elegance or just a touch of colour. One thing that can really draw someone’s attention, though, is the type of tablecloth. An elegant lace tablecloth can set the mood for holidays or special occasions (Salkill, 2008). A reversible tablecloth enables to easily flip the first one and present the second, side of the tablecloth, at a moment’s notice.

And the great thing is that the tablecloths can be as different as night and day. One side can be elegant and the other side, ordinary (Salkill, 2008).

**Reversible Furnishing Products on International and Local Market**

Some investigations were made on the internet to look for shops selling Reversible Textile Furnishing products. And it was found that there were many online catalogues available for purchasing Reversible Textile Furnishing. Mostly bedroom sets such as cushions covers, pillowcases and bed sheets were available (Figure 11, 12).

![Reversible Cushion Cover](Textiles Direct, 2010)

![Reversible Modern Design Bed sheets](Kapas, 2010)

**Research on Local Markets**

The Local Market research was done in shops selling textile furnishings. Observations were made on the existing styles and details. However, it was noted that reversible textile furnishing items were not popular on the local market and few Mauritians were alert of this concept. Mostly Reversible Curtain Fabrics were available.
Methodology

Prior to the selection a theme for the collection, research was carried out on the current trends of fabrics.

Theme Title

The sourcing was based on ‘Checkered Fabric’ and ‘Striped Fabrics’ which are actually the trend in nowadays lifestyle. The two inspired fabrics were merged together thus forming the theme title: ‘Amalgamation - The Two in One’.

Visual Research

This part consisted mainly of gathering images to mount an inspirational board. Checkered and Striped Clothing images were collected from both primary and secondary sources (Figure 13). Pictures were taken from the local markets and also downloaded from the internet so as to have a global view of the actual clothing trend.

Inspirational Board

Interesting pictures were assembled together to create a moodboard (Figure 14). The latter was used consequently as the main source for the development of the bedroom set collection. Both the primary and secondary materials were manipulated and then mounted on an A3 size format using Computer Aided Design (CAD) Software, and a brief explanation was added to describe the theme.

Some aspects which were mainly pointed out were:

- The mix and match Style
- The two Inspirations in one Feature
- Colour Palette

Colour Palette

The colours chosen for the colour palette were derived from the inspirational board (Figure 15). The Orange ones represented the striped style and the brown ones were representative of the checkered style.

Styling

Home decoration can be an expensive activity. A simple overturn of reversible textile furnishing can create a whole new look to the bedroom. The style and shape for the collection were based according to the brown and orange characteristics and some inspirations were taken from the actual existing textile furnishing.
The key items used were:
- Simple Squared Cut
- Pattern Fabric against plain Fabrics
- Use of mostly warm colours.
- Mix and Match of Contemporary and Modern Style

**Sourcing of Fabrics**

As stated in the introduction, a house furnished with exactly the right home furnishing fabrics at the right place truly gives a heavenly experience. In fact, fabrics can give stylish, traditional as well as contemporary look to any decor.

**Characteristics of fabrics needed in textile furnishings:**
- Curtain fabrics should have light fastness.
- Bedding fabrics should have resistance to pilling and stains.
- Quilting fabrics and fabrics used for pillow covers, cushion covers, mattress cover should have resistance to snagging.

**Proposed Fabrics**

Striped and checkered fabrics can make a room look bright and informal and when different sized stripes and checks are mixed and matched with complimentary colours, they provide a contemporary look. Taking all these points into consideration, designs of fabrics in striped and checkered fabric were selected with plain fabrics as highlighter to create blends and contrasting effects. The fabric utilized was cotton with blend of polyester, gingham and velvet.

**Sample Development**

The simple scheme of turning the textile piece inside-out accomplishes the reversal and allows it to be used on both sides. Therefore, reversible stitches were explored and used to eliminate raw edges or seams that are seen on either side of the textile product. For this research, the idea of double cloth was maintained. Double cloth makes the product more durable and therefore it lasts longer. Most of the experimental works were based upon the double cloth idea.

**Reversible Techniques for Manipulating Fabrics**

*Manipulating fabric* is a very creative way to embellish fabric. Fabric with three dimensional textures always looks interesting and can often look amazing. Gathers, ruffles, tucks, pleats and quilting are variations of fabric manipulation.
**Pleats**

A pleat is a type of fold formed by doubling fabric back upon itself and securing it in place. It is commonly used in clothing and upholstery to gather a wide piece of fabric to a narrower circumference. Pleats are folds of fabric that are made to take in fullness. There are three main types of pleats. They are knife, inverted and box pleats.

Inverted pleat has two fold lines and a single placement line. The two folds butt together in the centre on the right side. Each Inverted pleats have a Box Pleat on the inside. Box pleats consist of folds on evenly spaced, marked lines that are secured at the top edge. Sample manipulation with reversible pleats is shown in Figure 16.

**Pin Tucks**

Tucks are stitched folds of fabric that are formed along the straight grain. The width of a tuck and the spacing between tucks depend on the fabric thickness and on the desired effect. Small tucks, especially multiple parallel tucks, may be used to decorate clothing or household linens. When the tucks are very narrow, they are called pin tucks. On the right side where the pin tucks are visible, one can feel and see the longitudinal textures available, whereas, on the reversed side, it is mostly flat and a slight embossed effect can be sensed.

**Reversible Techniques for Neatening Hem**

Hems are usually the last thing to be stitched on a textile product. Although a simple, turned-up, slipstitched hem is the one most commonly used, there are many other techniques available. For instance, a hem can be faced or it can be finished with a binding. There are also several methods for finishing the raw edge of a turned-up hem and for securing it with hand or machine stitching.

**Topstitched Hem**

Using a twin needle topstitched hem, the edge finished and a decorative effect is achieved on the right side of the fabric. In the sample manipulation shown in Figure 17, on the right side of the fabric, a band of striped orange fabric was stitched with orange matching thread for neatening the hem. On the reverse a topstitched hem were used; thus, giving two useable and reversible surfaces where one side is plain and the other side is faced with a contrasting fabric.
**Topstitched Binding**

Binding is used to enclose a raw edge of a fabric. It is made from a strip of fabric that is cut on the bias. Thus, for neatening double cloth, the use of binding is appropriate. Crème coloured bias binding was used as it matched both the gingham brown fabric and orange striped fabric. The bias binding was stitched using two colours of threads, respectively orange and dark brown thread. Sample manipulation is shown in Figure 18.

![Figure 18 Reversible with Topstitch Binding](image)

**Reversible Techniques for Neatening Seams**

The most widely used type of seam is a plain seam, which is suitable for nearly all fabrics. There are other kinds of seam that can be used when appropriate for the fabric or to add decorative detailing. French seam and other self neatening seams that conceal all raw edges are ideal for reversible textiles. This allows the textile product to be reversed without any seams seen on either side.

**French Seam**

A French seam is often used when the fabric is too delicate to overcast the seam allowance to prevent ravelling. The construction of a French seam provides a clean, finished, professional look to the inside of the textile product, such as concealing raw edges. The raw edge of the seam allowance is enclosed in a secondary seam, thus ideal for items that will have visible seams. Combined with the double cloth technique, the French seam can be slightly bulky due to the weight of the fabric. However from the viewpoint of neatness the outcome is excellent as no raw edge can be seen (Figure 19).

![Figure 19 French Seam](image)

**Flat Felled Seam**

Flat felled seams can be found on almost all jeans. Tough and durable, flat felled seams provide three stitch lines, two of which secure multiple layers of fabric. Flat felled seams also conceal the raw edges of the seam allowance, reducing the likelihood of fraying. There is no visible seam allowance on flat felled seams. It makes a neat, clean finish. Raw edges will not ravel because they are completely encased.

**Application of Reversible Embellishments**

Embellishment does not stop at clothing. Home Decorating with embellishments can make a house a home. Simple pillows can be made into something very special with a bit of embellishment.
**Rosettes**

Fabric rosettes are easy-to-make and it is an inexpensive embellishment that can add value to different craft projects. Firstly, the fabric must be cut in a circular shape. Then, about half a centimetre of the raw edge must be folded all round the circular shape and running stitch is done carefully. Once the running stitch round is completed, the thread is pulled to the maximum and then securely attached with a backstitch. The rosettes were used reversibly on both the inner and outer side of cushion covers on cushion covers (Figure 20).

![Figure 20 Reversible Rosettes](image)

**Application of Reversible Fastenings for Cushion Cover**

**Buttons and Buttonholes**

Buttonholes stitched with close zigzag stitch or close satin are the most common types of machine buttonhole. Reversible buttonholes are possible as two coloured threads can be used. In the sample manipulation in Figure 21, for sewing the machine buttonholes, orange thread was wounded in a bobbin and the dark brown thread was placed on the thread reel of the machine.

![Figure 21 Reversible Buttons](image)

**Buttons and Rouleau Loop**

The length of button loops is based on the button size. The loops were pinned in place on the cushion edge and temporarily secure by placing a strip of adhesive tape or basting across the cut ends. Subsequently, they were sewn using machine stitches. The buttons were placed on both the right and reverse side (Figure 22).

![Figure 22 Reversed Buttons & Rouleau Loop](image)

**Press Studs**

A press stud is a pair of interlocking discs commonly used in place of buttons to fasten clothing. It was noted that reversible press studs could be used for the double cloth technique, as both sides are same (Figure 23).

![Figure 23 Reversible of Press Studs](image)
Application of Reversible Fastenings for Curtains

Draping of a curtain around a window or a door opening is carried out for decorative or for covering particular surface regions. There are different ways to hang curtains, for example, making use of eyelets, straps, hooks and curtain tapes. For this research double sided ideas were created to be able to make the curtains reversible so that both sides of a single curtain could be used.

Reversible Curtain Eyelets

Eyelets allow the curtain to be hung from the rod with curtain hooks or the rod can be threaded through the eyelets. Since many years curtain eyelets exists, but inappropriate stitching was used to make the curtain reversible. For this technique curtain tape was used along the top of the curtain in between the two fabrics as this strengthens the area of the curtains that will contain the eyelets. Eyelets were placed at equal intervals and marked. The circumference inside the eyelet was drawn and cut off. Afterward, the larger half of the eyelet was placed underneath the new hole and snapped the smaller half on top. This action was replicated at regular intervals across the top of the curtain (Figure 24).

Reversible Fabric Loops for Hanging Curtains

Fabric Loops allow the curtain to be hung when threaded through the curtain rod. This was the simplest way of reversing a curtain as no curtain tapes were required. For this experiment, both right side and reversed side of the fabric was utilized as shown in Figure 25.

Attaching of Fabric Loop with buttons

In this technique, instead of sewing the fabric loop to the curtain, it was neaten and then attached with the help of two buttons. One button facing the right side of the curtain and the other button facing the reversed side of the curtain. The black rounded buttons were sewn together using black thread (Figure 26).
Reversible Rouleau Loops for Curtain Hooks

The use of hooks for hanging curtains is very common and curtain tapes are usually placed to hold the hooks. However, curtain tapes are unable to make a curtain reversible; therefore, a new innovative sample was created using the concept of hooks that could make a curtain reversible. The method consisted of using cotton cords attached to the curtain by means of loops (Figure 27).

Figure 27: Reversible of Sample with loops and hooks

Target Market

The concept of target marketing involves the design of complete marketing prospectus to meet the needs of different market segments. The process of finding and studying potential customers for this research was extremely important. The customers who were mostly targeted for this research were family units. This idea of reversibility would be beneficial economically as one can change his interior home decoration without buying new products.

Data Collection

For this study, two questionnaire surveys and interviews were carried out among two specific groups:

- Retailers dealing in textile furnishing
- Customers

The aim of these surveys and interviews was to gather information about the preference and views of people on the reversible samples and products.

Results and Analysis

This part of the research consisted of proposing a final collection as a result of the samples produced and analysing the experimental samples. Some tests were carried out for the double cloth idea to determine their efficacy and evaluate if they could be appropriate for use in reversible textile furnishing.

Final Collection

A set of reversible textile bedroom furnishings was created based on the theme ‘Amalgamation’. The collection denoted that a simple overturn of reversible textile furnishing can create a whole different new look to the bedroom. The reversible textile furnishings comprised of bed sheet, curtain, pillow, and cushion cover and chair linen (Figure 28). The blend of plain, check, and striped created a strong contrast (Figure 29).
Testing of Reversible Samples

Textile testing is a valuable aid for textile production, distribution, and consumption. Due to the complexity of reversible concepts, certain tests were conducted to determining the efficiency of the fabrics and techniques used.

Tests carried out on the samples:
- Colour Fastness to Washing
- Colour Fastness to Rubbing
- Determination of Light Fastness
- Dimensional Stability Test to Laundering

Colour Fastness to Washing

Colour fastness is a measure of how permanent a colour is on fabric. Colour can be adversely affected by a number of factors including exposure to light, to water and to normal wear and tear.

The resistance of a material to change in any of its colour characteristics, when subjected to washing is called colour fastness to washing. In the test, change in colour of the textile and also staining of colour on a multi-fibre fabric were assessed.

Two swatches of 10 x 4 centimetre (cm) fabric (Cotton and Cotton Polyester Fabric) were taken and were stitched to a multi-fibre fabric (Figure 30). The sample and the multi-fibre fabric and a solution of Sodium Carbonate, ECE Detergent and Water were prepared with a liquor material ratio 50:1. Both the sample and the solution were placed in a stainless steel container and placed in a wash wheel with a thermostatically controlled water bath 60°C. After the washing treatment, the sample was removed and rinsed twice in cold water and then in running cold water under a tap. The change in colour of the specimen (Dyed Sample) and the staining of the multi-fibre fabric was assessed using the standard Grey Scales (1-5) on which “1” signifies maximum staining and “5” no staining. Table 1 presents the results of staining on the multi-fibre fabric and Table 2 shows the results of change in colour of the specimen.
Results achieved were satisfactory as the fabrics did not stain on each other. And also it did not stain much onto other fabrics, except on polyamide and bleached cotton.

**Colour Fastness to Rubbing**

Colour fastness to Rubbing is intended for determining the resistance of the colour of textiles of all kinds of rubbing off and staining other materials. This test is undertaken on a crock meter, whereby the fabric specimen is subjected to rubbing with a sample of standard bleached cotton fabric (Crocking White Fabric) in order to check for colour transfer. Specimens of the textile (14 by 5 cm) were secured to the base of a crock meter and were rubbed with dry white crocking cloth and with wet white crocking cloth. Four tests were involved; one using the rubbing cloth dry, the other with the cloth wetted for both warp and weft specimens. The rubbing cloth was placed on the finger of the crock meter and moved back and forth across the fabric sample ten times at a steady speed. The rubbing cloth was then evaluated using standard Grey Scales (1-5) for staining, on which "1" signifies maximum staining and "5" no staining. Table 3 shows the results of the colour fastness to rubbing on dry and wet crocking fabrics. The results achieved were good as there was no staining on the crocking fabrics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 Results Illustrating Colour Fastness to Rubbing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dry Crocking Fabric</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton Fabric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warp Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weft Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton Polyester Fabric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warp Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weft Sample</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Determination of Light Fastness**

This test measures the resistance to fading of textile when exposed to day light. The specimen sample, a velvet fabric for curtain was exposed to light for about 24 hours to 72 hours and compared to the original unexposed sample. The changes were assessed by Blue Scales (Figure 4.4). The samples, both right side and reversed side were cut 5 by 1 cm and were placed lengthwise one above the other and stapled on a 11×5 card board. The prepared specimen of fabric was then partly covered and exposed to artificial ultraviolet light along with a scale of light sensitive blue dyed wool standards designed to fade after different time periods. Only the uncovered part of the test sample was subjected to any fading (Figure 4.5).

![Figure 31 Samples set in machine](image1)

![Figure 32 Results obtained after 72 hours](image2)

After different periods of time, the blue wool faded in several degrees reaching whereas there was no change on both the right and reverse side of the velvet fabrics.

The velvet fabric is suitable to be used on both sides as both the right side and reversed side was not affected by sunlight.

**Dimensional Stability Test to Laundering**

The dimensional stability of fabric is the extent to which it keeps its original dimensions after processing. We may either have an increase in dimension, known as expansion; or a decrease in dimension known as shrinkage.

Fabric shrinkage can cause problem to double cloth. This was the reason why this test had been carried out.

The Specimen cotton and polyester fabric was cut into a sample size 50 by 50 cm. And a marking area 35 by 35 cm was marked. The warp direction was marked with an arrow. Domestic Detergent was then added to a laundry washcatior. The Sample was then laundered at 40°C for 60 minutes (Procedure 5A) together with some polyester bags in order to achieve a total load of 2 Kilograms. After Laundering the sample was laid flat to dry for 24 hours. Measurement was then taken in the warp and weft directions at three places (at upper line, at lower line and in the middle line) and the measurement of each was noted. The results of the shrinkage are presented in Table 4.
Table 4 Results Achieved after Laundering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cotton Fabric</th>
<th>Cotton Polyester Fabric</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warp Direction</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-3.5</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weft Direction</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1.5</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
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<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1</td>
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</table>

The cotton fabric shrinks and consequently it is not suitable for double cloth with cotton polyester fabric. Therefore, particular attention should be paid when choosing fabrics for the double cloth technique.

Acceptance of Reversible Textile Furnishing Concept

This section refers to the approval and acceptance of reversible textile furnishing concept on the local market. The majority of the responses turned out to be very positive, as such proving a potential opportunity for Reversible Textile Furnishing.

Chart 1 Acceptance of Reversible Textile Furnishing

Via the open-ended question stated in the customers’ survey questionnaire, it can be observed in more details the reasons for the answers provided in Chart 1 above. The points of views had been compiled as follows. Among the 8% population who gave a negative response to buy reversible textile furnishing has defined it as being inconvenient. It was noted that Reversible Textile Furnishing is time consuming as it takes time to reverse the products. And also it was stated that if one side of the product is spoiled, then it becomes unproductive as it turn out to be impractical to utilize its reversibility. On the other hand, 25% the population who were indecisive about reversible textile furnishing stated that they are more likely to
purchase or wholesale good quality products. And also, they asserted that the designs and the cost of the products were more vital for them.

In contrast, majority of the population, 67%, have answered that reversible textile furnishing does benefit since it provides two usable surfaces. It was also stated that Reversible Textile Furnishing tend to be more economic and they create more ease for usability. Reversible textile furnishing allows rapid change in the deco while using the single product made the customers keener to purchase it. And also it was declared that customers could largely benefit from the single product as continuous transformations could be made to change the mood of the environment.

**Acceptance of Collection**

The last part of the survey consisted of grasping an overview about the acceptance of the reversible textile furnishing bedroom set and samples made for this research. Most of the responses turned out to be very affirmative, as such proving that the population is likely to deal and purchase this type of reversible bedroom set.

![Chart 2 Acceptance of Collection](image)

**Chart 2 Acceptance of Collection**

As demonstrated in chart 2, 75% of the retailers and 70% of the customers are willing to wholesale and purchase this kind of Reversible Textile Furnishing. Therefore, it shows potential to be a forthcoming trend on the local market.

**Conclusion**

Generally speaking, the reversible textile furnishing concept led to a satisfying result due to its creativeness and appeal. Moreover, the target market group has described the research as being interesting and rich in charm and has asserted that the overall key features characterizing the present research is trendy.

Regarding the sample manipulations, they have been generally described as being eye-catching and fashionable. The respondents were fascinated by the majority of the samples due to their intricacy, originality and colour wise. The aesthetic look of the manipulations
was also a plus point. Thus, it can be said that the aim of the research, which was to create reversible techniques to obtain innovative and fashionable manipulations, was attained to a certain extent. As proved in the development of samples, reversible stitches and techniques gives a neater finish to a textile product. Therefore it would be more profitable to apply these techniques to reversible textile products. The present study led to an acceptable outcome and has proved to be beneficial, due to its double faced useable sides. It has been noted that on the local market, reversible textile furnishing are not really known and well developed. Further work can be done to educate people about this concept and its benefits.

Biography

Sabrina Ramsamy-Iranah has 18 years of experience in the field of Fashion and Textile, she completed her BA(Hons) Design in Cumbria and Masters Degree in Textile Design at the Heriot Watt University, UK. She has been a Fashion and Textile Design Lecturer at the University of Mauritius for the past ten years. She is also a freelance designer and design consultant for local companies in Mauritius. Her research topics cover tactile fabrics, bio-fashion and recycling materials, design crafts and sustainable fashion products and materials. She is currently undertaking her PhD in the area of Assistive Design at the University of Mauritius. Email:s.s.ramsamy@uom.ac.mu

Nirvana Budhai is a freelance designer in the Fashion and Textile Field. She is currently working for a South African company establishing a brand in Mauritius. Her expertise covers cut and sew techniques, motif printing and appliqué work.

References


The marital relationship and Saudi Arabian women’s private sphere dress

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Colorado State University, USA

Abstract

This study explored the marital dyad as a context for Saudi women’s presentation of self through dress within the private sphere. The work was guided by symbolic interaction theory. Data were collected via in-depth interviews with 15 married Saudi couples and were analysed using constant comparison processes. Analyses revealed three key themes: (a) traditional and Western dress for the private sphere, (b) “his place” and “her place” in shaping private sphere dress decisions, and (c) forging the private sphere self through lived interaction. Findings revealed that there was some variation with regard to the roles assumed by husbands and wives in guiding wives’ private sphere dress decisions and in the value wives accorded their husbands’ appraisals of their appearances. The data provide evidence in support of the interactionist premise that the private sphere selves the wives constructed through dress were shaped, in part, through their interactions with their husbands.

Keywords: dress, marriage, private sphere, Saudi Arabian, women

Introduction

In the Islamic country of Saudi Arabia, family is key to a healthy culture as family ties are strong and Islam reinforces the importance of the familial unit (Long, 2005). Many aspects of life - including dress - are an integral part of the family unit and the marriage bond (Al-Dabbagh, 2006). How women present themselves through dress is often seen as a representation of their family, allowing context and audience considerations to play a critical role in shaping self-presentation (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Long, 2005). In one context, the public sphere - locations outside of the home where women are in the presence of males who are not considered to be next of kin - Saudi women are required by law to practice hijab or veiling (Le Renard, 2008). For Saudi women, observing hijab requires wearing the abaya with a burqah or niqab, a form of traditional dress that covers the entire body, leaving only the eyes and hands exposed (Long, 2005). Dress conventions for Saudi women are different, however, within the private sphere, which encompasses women’s interactions with their next of kin (male or female) and/or with women to whom they are not related. These interactions may occur within private homes or gender-segregated locations, that is, spaces where only women are allowed. The private sphere of Saudi women encompasses a broad range situations and contexts, including their interactions with other women at gender-segregated schools, workplaces, shopping centres, and events e.g., weddings, holiday celebrations (Al Munajjed, 1997; Le Renard, 2008). In contrast to their public sphere dress, Saudi women’s private sphere dress is open to individual choice and may include traditional Saudi styles, for example modest, long dresses with long sleeves, or, in recent years, Western styles (Le Renard, 2008).
Most of the existing research exploring Saudi women’s dress practices has focused upon dress worn in the public sphere, providing detailed descriptions of the abaya and examining varied perspectives on the practice of hijab (e.g., Doumato, 1992; Fertile-Bishop & Gilliam, 1981; Pharaon, 2004; Rabolt & Forney, 1989). In contrast, a modicum of work has examined Saudi women’s private sphere dress practices, especially from the perspectives of the wearers, themselves, perhaps owing to the limited access of outside researchers into the private sphere of Saudi women. Further, although it has been suggested that Saudi Arabian husbands may play a role in their wives’ decisions about public sphere dress (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Bullock, 2003), researchers have not explored the potential role of husbands in shaping Saudi women’s private sphere dress. Thus, the purpose of the present interpretive study was to address existing gaps in the literature by considering the marital dyad as a context for Saudi women’s presentation of self through dress within the private sphere.

Literature review

Marital roles within the Islamic Saudi context

Traditionally, marital roles within Saudi Arabia have been defined by the teachings of Islam, with specific roles and expectations circumscribed for husbands and wives (Al-Jehani, 2005; Syed, 2004). As the head of their households, Saudi husbands have customarily been expected to provide food, clothing, and shelter for their wife; to groom themselves well; to be devoted only to their wife; to guard their wife’s identity; and “to be zealous for their wife’s purity”, that is, to encourage his wife to shield her beauty by wearing the veil; to assist their wife with housework; and to not hinder their wife from work or study. Saudi wives, on the other hand, have traditionally been expected to submit to their husband’s authority, to maintain the home, and to bring up “proper” children (Bullock, 2003; Maki, 2004; Syed, 2004). This entails appropriately using the money they receive from their husband, not leaving the home without their husband’s permission, maintaining the family’s privacy, and creating a healthy and peaceful home. Like husbands, wives have been expected to groom themselves, which includes wearing clothing that appeals to their husband. Both parties have been responsible for living together with respect and for maintaining mutual sexual satisfaction (Al-Jehani, 2005; Bullock, 2003).

In recent years, as Saudi women have begun to access more freedoms, these traditional gender role expectations have begun to be redefined in some ways. For instance, as women have gained independence through education and work, they have questioned whether the husband’s authority within the family should be shared with the wife (Al-Jehani, 2005; Maki, 2004).

Saudi women’s private sphere dress

As noted, Saudi women wear two primary forms of dress within the private sphere: traditional and Western. The traditional private sphere dress of Saudi Arabia pre-dates the country’s founding in 1932 by several centuries (Al-Bassam & Sudqi, 1999; Long, 2005) and takes its form as a long-sleeved, floor-length dress with a high-collar. The silhouette is close fitting yet modest, minimizing bodily exposure. Frequently, the neckline, arms, and sleeves of the dress are richly embellished with colourful embroideries (Kennett, 1995) (see Figure 1).
Although the traditional private sphere dress of Saudi Arabia has a long history, it has waned in popularity since the discovery of oil in the 1930s and the ensuing introduction of Western influences/media (Long, 2005; Yamani, 2004). Iskandarani (2006) has suggested that in contemporary Saudi society, women rarely wear traditional private sphere dress, reserving its use primarily for times of celebration and religious occasions. Al-Dabbagh’s (2006) research provides empirical support for the proposition that traditional dress is declining in its popularity for everyday use; her findings revealed that, between 1981 and 2004, there was a shift among Saudi women in preferences toward more Westernized dress for private sphere use.

The adoption of Westernized dress by Saudi women may be explained by diverse factors. Using an oral survey approach, Rabolt and Forney (1989) examined the dress preferences of Saudi women nationals and found that women who had higher socioeconomic status, had worked outside of the home, were more “cosmopolitan” (i.e., had travelled outside of Saudi Arabia), were more highly educated, and were younger were more likely to wear more Westernized dress in private settings. Overall, findings indicated less movement toward Westernized dress in public sphere dress choices as compared to private sphere dress choices. The researchers proposed that these findings may reflect Islamic laws forbidding the wearing of Westernized dress in public. Thus, from the perspectives of the participants, the private sphere may have been the only place where it was permissible for them to express their own identity through dress.
For some contemporary Saudi women, the expanded possibilities for self-expression offered by the introduction of Western dress into the marketplace pose a dilemma of sorts. Zuhur (2005) has suggested that these women may experience a sense of being torn between adopting fashions promoted within the Westernized media and adopting more conservative fashions that traditionally have been valued within their native culture. For many, the result is a balancing act; for instance, based upon her field study exploring Saudi women’s lifestyles, Le Renard (2008) observed that although women attending university in Saudi Arabia were required to conform to expectations for traditional Saudi dress (e.g., they had to wear long skirts), they also dressed so as to display awareness of Western fashions.

**Theoretical framework**

Symbolic interactionists regard the dressed body as a social object invested with meanings that emerge through social interactions. These meanings allow individuals to use the appearance of their own bodies to establish identity and to draw inferences about others’ appearances (Stone, 1962). In turn, these inferences guide individuals’ interactions with others and form the basis for the feedback that interacting individuals provide to others about the body and self. Social feedback, or “reviews,” of one’s body and self can be positive or negative and thus, may represent a validation of or a challenge to a given presentation of the self through dress (Stone, 1962). Individuals reflect upon reviews about their dressed bodies and may integrate these reflected appraisals into their sense of self, using them to imagine future reactions to their physical selves (i.e., to take the role of a specific or generalized other) and to guide future dress-related behaviours and interactions (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934; Stone, 1962). In this way, people use others as “looking glasses” (Cooley, 1902) to tell them who they are, how they should dress and appear, and how they should behave toward their bodies and those of others (Stone, 1962).

Empirical findings lend support for the interactionist premise that women come to see their bodies through the eyes of their husbands. For example, in prior work with US samples, husbands’ evaluations of their wives’ appearances have been linked to their wives’ appearance self-assessments (Oh & Damhorst, 2009; Pole, Crowther, & Schell, 2004). Taken together, this work suggests that over time, a woman’s self-perceptions of her appearance may come to mirror her “accumulated understanding of [her] spouse’s appraisal of [her] body and appearance” (Oh & Damhorst, 2009, p. 43). Thus, there is both theoretical and empirical support for the proposition that a woman’s sense of the appearance is produced, in part, through her interaction with her husband. To date, however, research has not yet explored how, within the context of Saudi marriage, interactions between wives and husbands may shape Saudi women’s dress within the private sphere. Yet, both the cultural context of Saudi Arabia, in which Saudi husbands have traditionally been viewed as guardians of their wives’ identities (Maki, 2004), as well as prior work suggesting that Saudi husbands may exert an influence upon Saudi women’s public sphere dress choices (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Bullock, 2003), support the likelihood that Saudi women’s private sphere dress decisions may be negotiated within the context of their marriages. The questions that then arise are: What meanings do Saudi Arabian husbands and wives associate with various forms of private sphere dress available within the contemporary Saudi marketplace, including traditional and Western forms of dress? How do these meanings set a context for Saudi women’s dress-related interactions with their husbands? Further, what role do Saudi husbands play in shaping
married Saudi women’s dress for the private sphere? And, how do interactions between Saudi wives and husbands lay a foundation for Saudi women’s self-presentations through private sphere dress?

**Method**

Institutional Review Board approval for this study was obtained from Colorado State University. An interpretive, qualitative approach that drew upon in-depth interviews with 15 married Saudi couples was adopted.

**Participants**

Purposive, nonprobability sampling was used to recruit participants from two metropolitan cities in Saudi Arabia (i.e., Jeddah and Medina). Two female Saudi informants provided initial contacts. Couples had been married for 3 months to 35 years. Wives’ ages ranged from 20 and 60 years (mean = 30 years), and husbands’ ages ranged from 20 to 67 years (mean = 35 years). Most participants share a middle-class or upper middle-class lifestyle. All but two wives had pursued some form of post-secondary education: eleven obtained bachelor’s degrees, and two held graduate degrees. Although a majority of the wives were homemakers, three worked outside the home in white-collar positions (human resources, education), and one was a student. Though several wives had travelled abroad, none had lived abroad. All husbands had received higher education degrees: four held associate’s degrees, four held bachelor’s degrees, and seven held graduate degrees. Four husbands had lived abroad while they were students. Husbands’ occupations varied (e.g., electrician, engineer, HR manager, physician). A summary of the background information on participants is presented in Table 1.

**Procedures**

All participants were interviewed by the first author, a married female Saudi researcher. An in-depth, semi-structured approach was used to explore guided topics of discussion. Questions focused upon (a) how participants viewed the wearing of traditional and Western dress within the private sphere (for the self or for their wives) and (b) how wives and husbands interacted about the wives’ dress worn within the private sphere and to what degree this affected wives’ decisions about dress. Interviews with wives and husbands were conducted separately. Wives’ interviews were conducted face-to-face in Saudi Arabia in a private setting (e.g., in the participants’ homes), lasting between 40 and 90 minutes. To honour Saudi cultural customs that mandate separation of unrelated men and women, husbands’ interviews were conducted over the phone or via Skype. Husband interviews lasted from 20 to 50 minutes. Three husbands chose to speak English in their interviews, but all other interviews were conducted in Arabic. Interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and, when necessary, translated into English by the first author (a native Arabic speaker who also speaks fluent English).
### Table 1  Background Information on participants

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Length of Marriage</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Highest Level of Education Completed</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Travel Abroad</th>
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<th>Highest Level of Education Completed</th>
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<th>Travel Abroad</th>
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Analysis

Data were analysed using constant comparison processes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Data were divided into meaningful fragments. The researchers then took fragments from five wife and five husband interviews, comparing and analysing them to develop key concepts through the process of open coding. These key concepts were developed into a coding guide, which was applied to the whole of the data. Finally, the researchers used axial and selective coding to search for higher-order connections within the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). To establish trustworthiness, the first author used journaling (reflexivity). Additionally, an audit coder checked the application of the coding guide to the data. Interrater reliability was 96% and was calculated by dividing the total number of agreements in coding decisions by the total number of coding decisions made. Disagreements in coding were negotiated.

Findings

Emergent themes

In the spirit of the interactionist tradition, findings revealed that, among the Saudi couples in the sample, the marital relationship set a context for the negotiation of meanings about the private sphere dress worn by the wives. Specifically, three themes related to private sphere dress emerged from analyses: (a) traditional and Western dress for the private sphere, (b) “his place” and “her place” in shaping private sphere dress decisions, and (c) forging the private sphere self through lived interaction.

Traditional and Western dress for the private sphere

To understand how married Saudi couples negotiate meanings about women’s private sphere dress through their interactions, it is important first to understand the meanings that they associated with the various forms of dress worn within this context (i.e., traditional and Western). Although individual preferences for traditional versus Western dress were somewhat varied across the sample, a set of meanings about each of these forms of dress emerged as shared across numerous participants. Perhaps the clearest example of such an association was the linkage of traditional dress with modesty or conservatism and the teachings of Islam: “I’m in love with traditional or Eastern dress…it takes into account the rules of Islam in terms of modesty” (Husband 2). Traditional dress also frequently was viewed as central to the substance of certain traditional celebrations, such as the Ghomrah party, a customary Saudi bridal celebration: “The bride and her family must wear the traditional...they are losing the value of the party if they do not” (Wife 3). Finally, for everyday contexts, traditional dress was regarded as outdated and as the province of more mature women. Conversely, Western dress (e.g., jeans, t-shirts, short dresses) was viewed as fashionable and trendy, as potentially immodest (i.e., not all Western dress was viewed as equally immodest), and as youthful in its design:

Western dress is more chic... (Husband 1)

Not everything in the West is appropriate here. It’s not appropriate for our culture, our society, and our environment. (Wife 12)
...the first time my husband saw me wearing skinny jeans with a revealing top....he told me that I looked younger and he didn’t recognize me....he thought I was our daughter! (Wife 10)

In varied ways, the aforementioned meanings formed the basis for wives’ and husbands’ interactions about private sphere dress (cf., Stone, 1962). As Zuhur (2005) reminds us, for many Saudi women, opposing cultural pulls in contemporary Saudi society may produce a sense of conflict about whether to adopt traditional styles that are consistent with Islamic teachings or to wear trendier (and often less conservative/modest) fashions that are promoted as desirable within the Westernized media. For a number of participants, this sense of conflict was played out within the context of the marital relationship. Here, wives and their husbands held differing views regarding the appropriateness of various forms of private sphere dress, inciting a sense of tension for the wives. For instance, some husbands, such as Husband 6, valued traditional styles and modesty in dress and regarded much Western dress as inappropriate (i.e., too immodest) for their wives, asking their wives not to wear such clothing in front of anyone other than them. This request was met with irritation on the part of Wife 6, who appreciated Western fashions and felt conflicted about trying to simultaneously appease her husband’s bid while satisfying her own tastes: “Sometimes, he wants me to change my clothes and that pisses me off....sometimes I will cancel going out.” In other cases, however, wives whose husbands expressed an affinity for Western dress expressed concern that their husbands would not support their decision to wear traditional dress for selected occasions, such as cultural events or celebrations: “My husband would make fun of me if I wore traditional dress” (Wife 15). Here, then, wives found themselves balancing their wish to heed cultural conventions for wearing traditional dress, which they held dear, and their desire to secure a validating response toward the self from their husbands (cf., Stone, 1962), which resulted in a measure of ambivalence. Interestingly, in one case, a couple (#5) who had initially disagreed about the wife’s private sphere dress - with the husband preferring traditional/modest dress and the wife preferring sparser, Western dress - came, over the years, to align their views on the matter, with the wife eventually mirroring her husband’s partiality for more modest styles. In the spirit of Oh’s and Damhorst’s (2009) work, then, Wife 5 gradually developed an “accumulated understanding” of her husband’s perspective, which in turn, seemingly came to shape her construction of the self through dress (p. 43).

“His place” and “her place” in shaping private sphere dress decisions

As noted, symbolic interaction theory emphasizes the ways in which meanings arise through interactions. In turn, these interactions may contribute to a common or shared perspective that is developed over a period of time within a given cultural context (Charon, 1998; Heilman, 1976). In the present study, a shared understanding was observed across participant accounts with respect to the roles expected of husbands and wives on matters related to wives’ private sphere dress practices. Here, we conceptualize these expectations for behaviour - or these “prescribed roles” (Giddens, Duneier, Appelbaum, & Carr, 2009) - in terms of “his place” and “her place” within the context of Saudi marriage.
Both husbands and wives addressed several components of “his place.” All participants, including wives who worked outside of the home, discussed the importance of the husband in providing funding for his wife’s wardrobe. This expectation was linked to Islamic teachings imploring the husband to provide for all household needs as well as to cultural beliefs about the wife’s appearance as a reflection of her husband’s character (e.g., religious values, social class) (Al-Munajjed, 1997). In some instances, participants also expressed that purchasing of clothing for one’s wife embodied an expression of affection.

Other aspects of “his place” revolved around the husband’s provision of guidance to the wife about her private sphere dress. For instance, in the early days of their marriages, many husbands established parameters of acceptability for their wives’ private sphere dress, particularly relative to the issue of modesty. Violating established norms of acceptability resulted in challenges to the wives’ self-presentations (Stone, 1962) from the husbands:

My rules regarding clothing originated long ago - since we got married...I don’t care about anything except for modesty...if she picks something short and revealing, then I will interfere, because she has broken our agreement.
(Husband 6)

In other cases, husbands provided more “gentle” or flexible advice or opinions on (i.e., reviews of) their wives’ private sphere dress selections. Implicit in much of the dialogue surrounding the provision of advice about dress was a desire on the part of husbands to give their wives “space” to make their own dress decisions. Sometimes, advice offered to this end was solicited by wives, and in other cases, it was offered without invitation:

She has the complete freedom to choose what she wants to wear, and I only give her my opinion if she asks me to. (Husband 12)

From the day [a couple] gets married, her husband is her guardian angel, and he is responsible to take care of her. Her dress is part of her, so it is part of his responsibility to advise her as to what is appropriate. (Wife 5)

Interestingly, a handful of husbands regarded themselves as poor authorities on the topic of women’s dress and opted not to provide guidance to their wives on such matters. In some cases, these impressions of maladroitness seemingly were shaped by the husbands’ literal separation from the female sphere: “I have no idea about the “other side” of these occasions.

I can’t really judge the dress and say what’s appropriate or not. She knows more than me because, you know, in Saudi Arabia we keep the genders segregated. (Husband 10)

Some wives agreed that husbands should have little, if any, “say” with respect to wives’ dress decisions for anything other than intimate situations, noting that it was not a husband’s “right,” nor was it “appropriate” for a husband to think that he could “control” a woman’s dress. When husbands of these women offered reviews of their dress, the wives sometimes
disregarded them, particularly when these reviews did not validate their chosen presentations of self (Stone, 1962):

> For in front of other people, if he thinks [a certain outfit] is nice, then “Thanks!” If he doesn’t, then it is not his business...I say, “Thank you for giving your opinion, but I think I am going to wear it, anyway.” (Wife 2)

The primary component of “her place” - the Islamic obligation of a wife to groom herself for her husband’s enjoyment - was addressed at length within both the wives’ and the husbands’ accounts of the wives’ dress for intimate situations. Central to discussions about “her place” was the assumption that “the wife’s beauty and body are for her husband to enjoy and not for the others” (Husband 5). Husbands emphasized that, for intimate moments shared between husbands and wives, wives should “look their best” (Husband 6) and dress to satiate their husbands’ emotional and sexual desires through the wearing of clothing that husbands found appealing (e.g., lingerie, revealing clothing/Western clothing). Wives also found enjoyment in dressing to please their husbands, noting how the attention gleaned from satisfying their husbands’ eyes filled them with a sense of pride in fulfilling their womanly roles. Some women even described special appearance rituals (e.g., applying make-up, changing their clothes) they performed before their husbands awoke in the morning or returned home from work, ensuring that they stayed the prize of their husbands’ eyes.

Many wives also characterized submission to their husbands’ guidelines for dress as a key component of “her place” in dress: “Submission to your husband is mandatory in the Islamic law,” stated Wife 5, the strongest advocate for unquestioning obedience of one’s husband. In some cases, wives deferred to their husbands’ preferences for dress not only as a means by which to appease their husbands’ aesthetic preferences, but also as a way to express their affection for their husbands and to seek their husbands’ approval: “If he ever rejects something I wouldn’t wear it... I love him and I want him to be happy about what I am wearing even if I am out of the home” (Wife 7). As noted above, however, not all wives routinely acquiesced to their husbands’ preferences for how they presented themselves within the private sphere.

Finally, in articulating the various components of “her place” in dress, several wives spoke about a desire to use their private sphere dress to announce to others certain aspects of their identities (cf., Stone, 1962). For instance, in varying contexts, participants emphasized the value of traditional and/or Western private sphere dress to communicate to others that they were modest, fashionable, unique, authentic, or affluent.

**Forging the private sphere self through lived interaction**

As noted, Oh and Damhorst (2009) found that married, American couples relied on one another to inform their self-images. In a similar vein, for the Saudi wives in our sample, forging the private sphere self through dress was a task accomplished in conjunction with their husbands. As we discuss, both imagined and “real” or “lived” social feedback (i.e., reviews) from husbands was central in how Saudi wives came to construct their private sphere selves through dress.
Central to the interactionist perspective is the assumption that people come to see themselves as others see them as a consequence of role-taking (Mead, 1934), or by imagining how others regard them. In turn, these reflected appraisals come to shape self-feelings and to guide lines of behaviour (Cooley, 1902). For the wives in the sample, reflected appraisals about husbands’ potential responses to various presentations of the self were frequently invoked in the contemplation of clothing choices and shopping decisions: “The only reason I was a little hesitant to buy this outfit is because I wasn’t sure if my husband was going to like it” (Wife 2). The accounts from the couples who had been married for an especially long time revealed that, over the years, the wives in these pairs became increasingly adept at taking the roles of their husbands, such that they developed a rather keen understanding of their husbands’ perspectives on their dress. This notion of gradually building an “accumulated understanding” of one’s significant other over the years (cf., Oh & Damhorst, 2009, p. 43) is aptly reflected in the following quote from Wife 5, who took pleasure in dressing in accord with her husband’s preferences:

We have been together for more than thirty years. We are the same. There is no way I would be able to choose something that he doesn’t like. We are of one mind.” (Wife 5)

Wives also spoke about the essential role of positive and negative reviews from their husbands in shaping their presentation of self in the private sphere: “If he tells me something is nice or looks good on me, I would be extremely happy. My husband is the only person that [sic] could make me like or hate a dress” (Wife 1). Thus, as Wife 1’s remark reflects, reviews from husbands frequently were valued and were used to inform lines of action regarding presentations of the self (Stone, 1962) (e.g., whether or not to wear a certain item of dress). Also reflected in Wife 1’s comment is the close association of positive reviews with increased self-esteem and satisfaction. Even wives who regarded their husbands’ influence upon their dress as limited still valued and appreciated positive reviews. One such woman, Wife 15, remarked, “All the wives would be very happy if they had nice comments from their husbands. It just completes me in my womanhood.” Interestingly, the accounts of several husbands suggested that they were aware of the validating effects of positive reviews upon their wives and sought to praise their wives’ dress, not only for the sake of asserting their opinion on their wives’ appearances, but also to “help [my wife] to be satisfied” (Husband 14).

In contrast to positive reviews, negative reviews challenged wives’ selves, decreasing their self-confidence and sometimes inducing confusion about their future self-presentations. In this vein, Wife 2 spoke about the trickiness in trying to decide how to present her self in a manner that allowed her to balance her own opinion and her husbands’ evaluations of her self-presentations:

I could have had a dress I really liked, but then I changed my mind when my husband told me he didn’t really like it - that caused a lot of problems for me in the first year of my marriage...it really bothered me and broke me...my self-confidence was weak...(Wife 2).
As was the case with positive reviews, husbands were cognizant of the impact of negative reviews upon their wives. In the spirit of Goffman’s (1967) conceptualization of deferential avoidance, selected husbands took “…verbal care…so as to not bring into discussion matters that might be painful, embarrassing, or humiliating” to their wives (p. 65), sometimes using humour to address the topic of appearance and sometimes avoiding the topic of their wives’ appearances altogether. Although well-intended, this “silence” on the part of husbands was not always met with appreciation by the wives, who yearned for feedback from their husbands upon their appearances, which they relied upon as they constructed their private sphere selves:

I don’t like it when men are silent and don’t comment on anything. He must talk about his wife’s dress so the wife knows what he likes and what he doesn’t like, so she can take his tastes into account when shopping. (Wife 7)

Conclusions

Findings extend prior work based upon Western samples suggesting that husbands may exert a shaping influence upon how wives make sense of their appearances (Oh & Damhorst, 2009; Pole, Crowther, & Schell, 2004) by examining if and how this influence may play out within a very different cultural context: the private sphere of Saudi Arabia. In a myriad of ways, findings provided ample support for the interactionist premise that the self is “something of collaborative manufacture” (Goffman, 1959, p. 253). That is, the data were replete with accounts of Saudi wives invoking their husbands as “looking glasses” (Cooley, 1902) to tell them “who to be” and “how to dress” within the context of the private sphere. Thus, as wives contemplated whether to choose traditional or Western dress or how to appear for certain occasions, they frequently reflected upon imagined and “real” appraisals from their husbands as they planned their lines of behaviour.

Some wives spoke to their tendency to privilege their husbands’ preferences for their dress over their own, reflecting the Islamic tradition of wifely submission to one’s husband (Bullock, 2003; Syed, 2004). Such examples within the data provide evidence that within contemporary Saudi culture, conventional notions about the role of the husband in guarding - and in guiding - his wife’s identity (here, as manifested through dress) certainly do persist (see Maki, 2004). At the same time, however, findings revealed that participants varied in how they conceptualized the husband’s place in forging the wives’ private sphere dress decisions. For instance, some wives and husbands agreed that husbands should have relatively little “say” in what wives wore within the private sphere, and some wives occasionally disregarded their husbands’ appraisals of their dress (or felt ambivalent about them), lending support for the notion that symbolic interaction is an active theory of the self (Kaiser, 1997) and for Stone’s (1962) premise that not all reviews are valued equally. Thus, in some contexts, a new era may be dawning in which the wives make dress decisions more independently of their husbands, which mirrors observations by Arabic scholars that in recent years, Saudi women have begun to question their husbands’ authority to make unilateral decisions within the family unit (Al-Jehani, 2005; Maki, 2004).

The instances in which husbands and wives disagreed with respect to the presentation of the wife’s appearance within the private sphere - the only context where it was acceptable for a
Saudi woman to create her own identity through dress (Rabolt & Forney, 1989) - seemed to incite a measure of ambivalence for some wives. At the core of this ambivalence were several struggles that seemed to embody larger conflicts that are being played out within the broader cultural context of Saudi Arabia: (a) choosing between more traditional and more contemporary (i.e., Western)/less modest self-presentations and (b) deciding whether to honour one’s husband or to listen to one’s own voice (see Zuhur, 2005). The challenge for home economics professionals (e.g., clothing designers, marriage and family therapists, family specialists) within Saudi Arabia lies in helping Saudi women to navigate these tensions within the evolving Saudi cultural context.

This study was limited in that the sample contained a fairly homogeneous group with respect to class. Additionally, only three of the wives held jobs outside of the home. Thus, in future work, it would be valuable to explore the experiences of participants from Saudi Arabia’s elite or lower classes to secure differing views on the importance of dressing to meet social standards. Including more women who are employed also may yield new insights regarding how wives and husbands negotiate meanings about wives’ private sphere dress presentations. Of interest in such a study would be if and how the greater freedoms these women might access at work would shape their private sphere dress practices and their roles within their marriages. Finally, it would be interesting to extend the present work to include a longitudinal component such that one could explore how interactions about private sphere dress may change over time as the marital relationship and its partners mature.

**Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to acknowledge Dr. Mohammed Hirchi, Colorado State University Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, for his assistance with translation of the transcripts from Arabic to English.

**Biography**

**Ms Wijdan Tawfiq** is a graduate student in the Department of Design and Merchandising at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO. Her teaching and research interests focus upon the social and psychological aspects of dress and appearance as well as apparel merchandising. Upon the completion of her graduate education, she will assume a faculty position at King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia.

**Dr Jennifer Paff Ogle** is a Professor of Design & Merchandising and a Faculty Affiliate and Board Member of the Center for Women Studies and Gender Research at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO. Her research interests include the body, appearance, and self in socio-cultural context and socially responsible alternatives in the textiles and apparel industry, particularly as related to advertising and promotion. She is active in the International Textiles and Apparel Association and in Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Business.
References


Chinese and US Teenage Tobacco Consumption and Quality of Life

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*University of Akron, USA; †Kent State University, USA

Abstract

By 2030 tobacco use will be the single largest cause of death worldwide, accounting for about 100 million deaths per year. More than half of those accounting for this morbidity are now children and teenagers. This research applies Family Systems Theory to investigate teenagers’ individual, family and school/community environments in China and the United States (US) regarding tobacco consumption and perception of Quality of Life. Data were collected in ten middle/high schools in China and 5 middle/high schools in the US between 2007 and 2008. Factors promoting the undesirable smoking habit were identified. The research findings showed that gender, age of first trial of tobacco, frequency of tobacco use in the past 30 days, whether parents smoke, and family annual income, are indicators of quality of life. There were gender differences among teenagers regarding tobacco consumption. Whether or not parents smoke also impacts the teenagers’ attitudes towards smoking behaviour. This research contributes to the smoking prevention programs that target teenagers in China, the US, Australia, and other countries, and will promote policy enforcement and public health internationally.

Literature review

Approximately 1.1 billion people smoke worldwide, and in China, over 30% of the population are smokers. This represents more than 350 million people in China (Zhang, 2010) and accounts for nearly one-third of the smokers in the world. Currently, cigarette consumption in China is as high as it was in the United States in 1950, when per capita consumption levels were reaching their peak. At that stage of the United States (US) epidemic, tobacco was responsible for 12 percent of the nation’s middle aged deaths. Today, in a striking echo of the US experience, tobacco is estimated to be responsible for about 12 percent of male middle-aged deaths in China. Researchers expect that within a few decades, if the smoking pattern does not change dramatically, the proportion in China will raise to about one in three, as it did in the US.

The serious situation in China is evidenced by the following statistics:

1. A 2009 survey in China revealed that only 37% of smokers knew that smoking causes coronary heart disease and only 17% knew that it causes stroke (World Health Organization [WHO]). There is also a gender difference; smokers accounted for 71% of the male population and 29% of female population respectively.
2. Many smokers started in adolescence or early adulthood when one is not fully ready to make the right decisions. A tradition in China is to use tobacco as a social instrument to start business conversations. Most new recruits and potential smokers start smoking by getting free cigarettes at social occasions; Huang, et al. (2012) report the average smoker receives five gifts of cigarettes yearly. New smokers underestimate the future costs of smoking, that is, the costs of being unable to stop smoking and harming their own health in later life. Their smoking also impacts the health of family members and the whole society.

3. Tobacco has already been shown to be a burden on family financial life among households (Zhao, Schulze & Wang, 2007).

4. Since China entered the WTO (World Trade Organization [WTO]) in 2001, new foreign products are available and encourage smoking international brands such as State Express 555 (the leading international brand in China), Benson & Hedges, Lucky Strike, Kent, Horizon, Hilton, Airdate and Commodore are available for all smokers and prospective smokers (Shanghai Daily, Jan. 7, 2002).

5. Most convenience stores selling cigarettes are open to all ages with no restriction on young ages. This makes it easy for the young to access tobacco (Zhao, Schulze & Wang, 2007).

6. Gao, Li, Chan, Lau, & Griffiths (2013) suggested that a risk factor for smoking among adolescents in China is maternal migration to employment; they indicate that addressing self-efficacy in adolescents may prevent smoking. Furthermore, student tobacco experimentation is associated with peer/friend smoking, parental smoking (one or both parents), inadequate smoking control at school, a high level of personal acceptance of tobacco usage, and higher levels of tobacco exposure in the media (Cai, et al., 2012).

In addition to the impact on the health of smokers, it is well established that people who do not smoke also suffer as the result of second-hand smoke exposure, especially children, who suffer from stilted physical development, impaired cognitive abilities, and lower academic achievement. Children who grow up exposed to smoking are also more likely to take up the habit themselves when they reach adolescence (Womach, 2003).

As shown above, there has been some research regarding differences in tobacco consumption as a factor of gender, age, education, occupation and income. In addition, there have been some investigations of the impact of government taxes on tobacco products and tobacco promotion restrictions. However, there have been not enough studies designed with regard to the perception of quality of life and smoking among adolescents.

Theorists generally agree that the quality of life concept in a Family Systems context refers to the overall effect of all the environmental and socioeconomic conditions of a given time and/or place in terms of the effect on human well-being (Campbell, 1981). There is less
agreement about which factors promote higher quality of life since Andrews’ & Withey’s original research was conducted in 1976.

Perception of quality of life is a subjective and a comparative notion, it is contingent on the social science field of interest and the specific focus of research. Proshansky and Fabian (1996) have suggested that a better understanding of perception of quality of life will be obtained from research questions that are more specific in their focus. For example, the research question is “What kind of quality, for what kinds of people, and in what kinds of places?” From the literature, there are at least two basic approaches to the measurement of quality of life in adolescence.

- Health-related quality of life assesses some aspect of health status, using functional scales, symptom check lists, and measures of psychological or psychiatric problems, such as gender, age, sleeping hours, behavioural symptoms, before/after treatment medical indexes or observations, and patient self-reports.

- Conceptual models, or theories, of quality of life: here quality of life is viewed as an emotional response to circumstances, the match between expectation and reality, the ability to meet his or her needs and an individual cognitive approach. The so-called “needs model” posits that quality of life is at its best when all, or most, of a person’s needs are met and gets progressively worse as fewer needs are met (Hunt, 1979).

The two basic research questions are developed based on the previous studies: (1) What is the overall perception of quality of life among teenagers? (2) What is the relationship among elements of the three perspectives of personal, family, and school/community on perceptions of quality of life regarding tobacco consumption within the teenager populations?

This research used the Family Systems model to combine these two topics together and lead a testimony research on quality of life and tobacco consumption among China and US teenagers (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1 Simplified Model of Family System](image-url)
Methodology

Objectives

The goal of this study was to research teenagers’ perceptions of Quality of Life and their attitudes toward tobacco consumption in China and in the US with two specific research objectives:

1. To find out the current tobacco consumption situation among middle/high school students and their exposure the second hand smoke at home or school environment in China and the US; and

2. to determine the relationship among demographic variables associated with teenager smoking in China and the US, such as perception of quality of life, individual view on smoking on gender differences, adolescent saving, parents’ tobacco consumption patterns, family members’ willingness to participate in anti-tobacco community activities, and school/community attitudes with tobacco consumption.

Methods

Various factors associated with teenager smoking are not independent and can be investigated with regard to Family Systems Theory (Rodney, 1995). The researchers adapted the sample questionnaires from International Anti-tobacco Research Institute and the Ohio Commission on Minority Health, and were translated into Chinese for use. Data were collected from ten middle and high schools of urban and rural areas in five middle/high schools in Zhejiang Province and Jiangsu Province, China. The data collection started in May, 2007 and finished by May, 2008. Four hundred and seventy-two middle/high school students participated in the survey in China, and 573 middle/high school students participated in the survey in the US.

Data

China data

The total sample of 472 middle and high school students participated in the survey, aged from 13 to 20, with 218 females and 254 males (see Table 1).

Table 1- Student Questionnaire and Statistic (N=1041)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>China F-qncy</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>China F-qncy</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>US F-qncy</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel your life in general?</td>
<td>Worst</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Better than average /Very good</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How old are you?</td>
<td>15 or younger</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 or older</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Response</td>
<td>China</td>
<td></td>
<td>US</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F-qncy</td>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>F-qncy</td>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How old were you when you first tried a cigarette?</td>
<td>10 years old or younger</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between 11-15 years old</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between 16- 20 years old</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During past 30 days, how often do you smoke?</td>
<td>Once or twice</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three to nine times</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ten times or more</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your parents smoke?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father Only</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother Only</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think cigarettes are harmful to your health?</td>
<td>Definitely/probably NOT</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Probably /definitely YES</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think Second hand smoke is harmful?</td>
<td>Definitely/probably NOT</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Probably /definitely YES</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think of a man smoking?</td>
<td>No response</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of confidence</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stupid</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loser</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Successful or intelligent</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Macho</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think of a woman smoking?</td>
<td>No response</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of confidence</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stupid</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loser</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Successful or intelligent</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sophisticated</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you in favor of banning?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During past 30 days, how many anti smoking media you have seen?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A few</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During this school year, were you taught in your classes about the dangers of smoking?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you get allowance</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In general, respondents expressed *better than average or very good* when asked how they feel about their life in general, accounting for 340 students or 72% of total responses. One hundred ten students expressed feeling *average* about their life in general (23.3%); 22 students felt *worst* about their life in general (4.7%).

When asked, *how old were you when you tried your first cigarette?* 414 students (87.7%) had never tried a cigarette. For the participants who had tried cigarettes, most students were between the ages of 11 and 15 (N=22) at the time. Thirty-six participants reported being 10 years old or younger (N = 18, 3.8%) or between the ages of 16 and 20 years old (N = 18, 3.8%) at the time of their first cigarette. Participants were further asked to report on how often they have smoked in the past 30 days. Considering that the majority of students have never smoked and some may only have tried a cigarette, 95.8% of respondents (N = 452) did not smoke at all in the past 30 days. Of the respondents who did smoke in the past 30 days, eleven (2.3%) reported that they smoked only once or twice, four (.8%) reported smoking three to nine times, and five (1.1%) reported smoking ten times or more in the past 30 days. Participants were also asked if their parents smoked; 277 (58.7%) reported both parents smoked, 176 (37.3%) reported they did not know, and those who reported that either none, father only, or mother only smoked represented 4% of the population.

Participants were asked their viewpoints on smoking. When asked, *do you think cigarettes are harmful to your health? and do you think second hand smoke is harmful?* over 90% of the students (N = 434, 91.9%; N = 445, 94.3%) reported yes. When asked, *what do you think of a man smoking?* there were positive, negative and neutral responses. 3.6% of students (N = 17) reported positive descriptions of male smokers, describing it as *successful or intelligent*. 80.8% reported negative descriptions of male smokers, describing it as *stupid* (N = 177, 37.5%), *loser* (N = 123, 26.1%), and *lack of confidence* (N = 81, 17.2%). 11.7% (N = 55) described it as *macho*, a neutral descriptor. 4% (N = 19) of students did not reply. When asked, *what do you think of a woman smoking?* there were positive, negative and neutral responses. Fifteen students (3.2%) reported positive descriptions of *successful or intelligent* and 111 students (23.5%) reported *sophisticated*, a neutral descriptor. 71.2% of students
reported negative descriptions of female smokers, describing it as stupid (N = 195, 41.3%), loser (N = 98, 20.8%), and lack of confidence (N = 43, 9.1%). 2.1% (N = 10) of students did not respond.

The assessment included questions on smoking in the media. When asked, Are you in favor of banning tobacco? 88.1% (N=416) reported yes while 11.9% (N = 56) were not in favor of banning. When asked, during the past 30 days, how many anti-smoking media have you seen? 76.6% of students have seen anti-smoking media; 59.7% (N = 282) reported seeing a few and 6.9% (N = 80) reported seeing a lot. 23.3% (N = 110) of students reported not seeing any anti-smoking media. When asked, during this school year, were you taught in your classes about the dangers of smoking? 41.3% (N = 195) reported affirmatively while 58.5% reported no (N = 187, 39.6%) or not sure (N = 89, 18.9%).

Students were also asked questions about their financial situations. When asked, do you get allowance from your parents every month? 37.9% (N = 179) replied no and 42.2% (N = 199) reported 100 Yuan or less. 9.7% reported 101-300 Yuan, and 10.2% reported 301 Yuan or more. When asked, Do you work outside your home to get paid? 96.6% (N = 456) reported no. Students were also asked, Do you have your own savings account? 40.9% (N = 193) replied no, 6.6% (N = 31) reported 100 Yuan or less and 14.6% of participants reported 101-1500 Yuan and 37.9% reported 1501 Yuan or more.

Finally students were asked about their family’s total annual income. 14.8% (N=70) students reported their family annual income to be 20,000 Yuan or below, 20.6% (N=97) reported their annual income to be between 20,001—40,000 Yuan, 23.3% (N=110) reported their annual income to be between 40,001- 80,000 Yuan, 16.1% (N =76) reported their annual income to be between 80,001-100,000 Yuan, and 25.2% (N=119) reported their annual income to be over 100,001 Yuan.

US data

The total sample of 573 middle and high school students participated in the survey, aged from 12 to 21, with 307 females and 266 males (See Table 1). In general, respondents expressed better than average or very good when asked how they feel about their life in general, accounting for 372 students or 64.9% of total responses. One hundred sixty-one students expressed feeling average about their life in general (28.1%); 28 students felt worst about their life in general (4.9%).

When asked, how old were you when you tried your first cigarette? 411 students (71.7%) had never tried a cigarette. For the participants who had tried cigarettes, most students were between the ages of 11 and 15 (N=79) at the time. Seventy-six participants reported being 10 years old or younger (13.3%) and four reported being between the ages of 16 and 20 years old (.7%) at the time of their first cigarette. Participants were further asked to report on how often they have smoked in the past 30 days. Considering that the majority of students have never smoked, 86.7% of respondents (N = 497) did not smoke at all in the past 30 days. Of the respondents who did smoke in the past 30 days, thirty-one (5.4%) reported that they smoked only once or twice, fourteen (2.4%) reported smoking three to nine times, and thirty (5.2%) reported smoking ten times or more in the past 30 days. Participants were also asked if their
parents smoked; 202 (35.3%) reported that both parents smoked, 146 (25.5%) reported none, 106 (18.5%) reported their father only, 89 (15.5%) reported their mother only, and 28 (4.9%) reported I don’t know.

Participants were asked their viewpoints on smoking. When asked, do you think cigarettes are harmful to your health? and do you think second hand smoke is harmful? over 95% of the students (N = 548, 95.6%; N = 537, 93.7%) reported definitely/probably yes. When asked, what do you think of a man smoking? there were positive, negative and neutral responses. 3.6% of students (N = 21) reported positive descriptions of male smokers, describing it as successful or intelligent. 86.8% reported negative descriptions of male smokers, describing it as stupid (N = 227, 39.6%), lack of confidence (N = 174, 30.4%), and loser (N = 96, 16.8%). 3.7% (N = 21) described it as macho, a neutral descriptor. 5.9% (N = 34) of students did not reply. When asked, what do you think of a woman smoking? there were positive, negative and neutral responses. Twenty-two students (3.9%) reported positive descriptions of successful or intelligent and sixteen students (2.8%) reported, sophisticated, a neutral descriptor. 86.2% of students reported negative descriptions of female smokers, describing it as stupid (N = 234, 40.8%), lack of confidence (N = 177, 30.9%) and loser (N = 83, 14.5%). 7.2% (N = 41) of students did not respond.

The assessment included questions on smoking in the media. When asked, are you in favor of banning tobacco? 67.2% (N=385) reported affirmatively while 29.5% (N = 169) were not in favour of banning. When asked, during the past 30 days, how many anti-smoking media have you seen? 85.7% of students have seen anti-smoking media; 44.2% (N = 253) reported seeing a lot and 41.5% (N = 238) reported seeing a few. 11.3% (N = 65) of students reported not seeing any anti-smoking media. When asked, during this school year, were you taught in your classes about the dangers of smoking? 51.7% (N = 296) reported affirmatively while 45.5% reported negatively (N = 153, 26.7%) or were not sure (N = 108, 18.8%).

Students were also asked questions about their financial situations. When asked, do you get allowance from your parents every month? 100% participants (N = 573) reported affirmatively. When asked, do you work outside your home to get paid? 100% participants (N = 573) reported affirmatively. Students were also asked, Do you have your own savings account? 100% participants (N = 573) reported affirmatively. Finally students were asked about their family’s total annual income. Most students did not reply (N = 259, 45.2%). Those that did reply mostly reported their annual income to be $20,000-below (N = 73, 12.7%), $20,001-40000 (N = 60, 10.5%). $40,001-80000 (N = 67, 11.7%), $80,001-100,000 (N = 42, 7.3%), and $100,001 or above (N = 71, 12.4%).

Analyses
SPSS software was used to run a multinomial regression. The student data were analysed with perception of life as the dependant variable and 16 independent variables. Results of the study are reported using likelihood ratio tests, and a multinomial regression of the model. The Nagelkerke value of Pseudo R-Square of the model was reported and reflected the goodness of fit of the models to the data.
In addition, gender analyses and whether a parent smoked were also analysed regarding teenager’s attitudes of smoking.

Findings

This data set showed an absolute majority of the teenagers felt satisfactory about their life in general for both countries (See Table 1).

The likelihood ratio tests of the multinomial regression showed that four of the independent variables were statistically significant at the level of .05 (see Table 2). These variables included: the age of first trial of tobacco, whether parents smoke, presence of any anti-smoking media during past 30 days, and whether being taught of the dangers of smoke in school classes. These are the factors that may impact the perception of quality of life among this population.

Table 2 Likelihood Ratio Tests (N=1041)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How old were you when you first tried a cigarette?</td>
<td>998.36</td>
<td>14.22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your parents smoke?</td>
<td>101.88</td>
<td>18.78</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During past 30 days, how many anti smoking media you have seen?</td>
<td>997.24</td>
<td>11.13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During this school year, were you taught in your classes about the dangers of smoking?</td>
<td>106.09</td>
<td>12.91</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The chi-square statistic is the difference in -2 log-likelihoods between the final model and a reduced model. The reduced model is formed by omitting an effect from the final model. The null hypothesis is that all parameters of that effect are 0.

*: significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Detailed multinomial regression analyses were shown in Table 3: Parameter Estimates in the Model (N = 1041), the Nagelkerke value of this model is .34. The significant variables are gender, age of the first trial of tobacco, times of trial in the past 30 days, whether parents smoke, presence of any anti-smoke media in the past 30 days, and family annual income.

With quality of life being “worst” as the reference category, parameter estimates are reported using regression coefficients, significance, and odds ratio \( \text{Exp}(B) \) as Table 2 shows.

1. The odds of being in “average” vs. being “worst” for those females are more than 5 times higher than for those males; those who tried tobacco at 10 or younger are significantly lower than those never tried tobacco; those who tried tobacco 3-9 times in the past 30 days are also significantly lower than those never tried tobacco; those who have seen anti-smoke media (a few times) in the past 30 days are about six times higher than those have never seen any anti-smoke media; those with both parent smokers are 100% lower than those with non-smoker parents.
2. The odds of being in “better than average or very good” vs. being “worst” for those females are about 5 times higher than for those males; those who tried tobacco 3-9 times in the past 30 days are 10 times lower than those who never tried tobacco; those who have seen anti-smoking media (a few times) in the past 30 days are about ten times higher than those have never seen any anti-smoke media; those with an annual income 20,000 or below are slight lower than those with higher income.

Table 3 Parameter Estimates in the Model (N = 1041)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Better Than Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regression coefficient</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (F)</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of first trial of tobacco (10 old or younger)</td>
<td>-18.30</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past 30 days tried tobacco (3-9 times)</td>
<td>-19.18</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past 30 days seen anti-smoke media (a few)</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents smoke (Both)</td>
<td>-4.60</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family annual income 20,000 or lower</td>
<td>-2.23</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The reference category is: worst.
***: significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).
**: significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*: significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Nagelkerke value of this model: .34.

From the above results, we can draw the conclusion that perception of quality of life and tobacco consumption have some correlation with variables such as: gender, age of the first trial of tobacco, current use of tobacco, parental use of tobacco, influence from anti-tobacco media, and family income levels.

The results of the gender differences are shown in Table 4. Five of the variables were statistically significant: males were more likely to try tobacco at a younger age than females. During past 30 days, males were also more likely to smoke than females. Regarding a man smoking, female students were found to have more negative attitude than male students. Regarding a woman smoking, female students were found to have a more neutral attitude than male students. Females reported higher savings mean averages than male students when reporting on owning a personal saving account.
Table 4 Results of Gender Differences Analysis (N=1041)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How old were you when you first tried a cigarette?</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During past 30 days, how often do you smoke?</td>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think of a man smoking?</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think of a woman smoking?</td>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have your own saving account?</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***: significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).
**: significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*: significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Results of the effect of parental smoking status were shown in Table 5. Teenagers with parent smokers may report slightly lower perceptions of quality of life. Regarding a male smoker or female smoker, teenagers with parent non-smokers may view them in a negative way compared to teenagers with parent smokers who view them in a neutral way.

Table 5 Results of Parent Smoker /Non-smoker Differences Analysis (N=1041)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Whether parents smoke</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel your life in general?</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think of a man smoking?</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think of a woman smoking?</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-2.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***: significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).
*: significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

This analysis reveals:

1. Perception of quality of life and tobacco consumption correlate on gender among the two populations of the research. Males have a higher possibility of having the first trial of tobacco; the correlations on gender difference can be shown more strongly in the Chinese teenager population with male smokers more acceptable than female smokers. This was not shown in the US data.
2. Perception of quality of life and tobacco consumption correlate on the age of the first trial of tobacco, younger age to trial correlated with lower perception of quality of life;

3. Perception of quality of life and tobacco consumption correlate on current use of tobacco among teenagers, those reporting current use of tobacco showed lower perception of quality of life.

4. Perception of quality of life and tobacco consumption correlate on parental use of tobacco and family income levels. If parents smoke, there is a negative correlation with perception of quality of life. Income has positive correlation with perception of quality of life.

5. Perception of quality of life correlate with teenager’s individual savings/earnings. It is statistically significant that a higher percentage of US teenagers reported having individual saving accounts (no specific amount was reported) or were working to earn money in/outside of home than Chinese teenagers.

6. Perception of quality of life correlates with influence from anti-tobacco media. If the school/community environment has a preventive influence on tobacco consumption, it will result in positive influence on teenagers’ perception of quality of life.

7. The findings reflect that Family Systems theory offers a way forward and can predict tobacco consumption for teenagers of different populations (China and US), and may have utility for future prevention programs.

Discussion

This study attempted to link teenager tobacco consumption with their perception of life. Teenagers' individual, family and community factors were considered. The research results expanded the quality of life research and tobacco consumptions.

Over 95% of the teenagers reported not smoking, less than 5% reported smoking. The smoking rate of teenagers decreased 4-9% compared to 1997 report (Wu, 1997). Over 90% of the teenagers recognized the negative health affects of tobacco consumption and second hand smoking; this is a much higher rate compared to 2000 research. These are positive effects of national and community based anti-tobacco consumption policies or programs.

Since gender differences exist, and male parent smokers are the majority, there is a need to help adult males to control tobacco consumption, and help teenagers to follow non-smoking role models. National policies and regulations also need to be enforced. Programs of anti-tobacco consumption could be designed to influence individual behaviour, create healthier family environments, and school/community non-smoking environments. Since tobacco consumption is a behaviour-related issue, prevention programs need input from individuals, families, communities and at the national level (World Health Organization, 2007).
Study limitations

The findings of this study were limited by the focus on primarily the population in Zhejiang Province and Jiangsu Province, China and the state of Ohio in the US. As a result, these findings cannot be applied to describe the consumption among the whole teenager populations of China and the US.

Although there are limitations in this study, there are several significant conclusions that can be drawn as reported and the methodology can be applied to future research.

Future Research

Regarding future research, three perspectives are worth considering. (1) Tobacco consumption is a personal behaviour resulting in addiction, it is very important to establish a preventive program for teenagers before their first trial use of tobacco. (2) Perceptions of quality of life are highly associated with environmental policies, rules and regulations. Future research can help prioritize the implementation of public policy and investigate the cause of first tobacco use, helping to eliminate the possibility of tobacco consumption in young populations and improve quality of life for the long run. (3) The importance of empirical data demonstrating the negative impact of tobacco use on the perception of quality of life cannot be underestimated (Zhao el. 2007). This study made some initial inroads. Future studies might use longitudinal research designs, monitoring changes in variables over time. A broader and deeper understanding of the quality of life construct and accompanying behavioural issues, contributes to anti-tobacco programs and the improvement of quality of life.

Biography

Baomei Zhao, PhD, Certified Family Life Educator (USA), got Master degrees from in Economics from Zhejiang University (China) and her PhD from in Family Studies from University of Kentucky (USA). Currently she is an Associate Professor at the School of Social Work, College of Health Professions, University of Akron (Ohio, USA). Her research interests are quality of life improvement and consumer behaviours. She has been a member of American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences and American Council of Consumer Interests for over 10 years, and served as a peer reviewer for several International Journals.

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