

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Judy K. Miler entitled "Retail Apparel Buyer's Purchase Decision: Influencing Factors." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in . . . . .

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RETAIL APPAREL BUYER'S PURCHASE DECISION:  
INFLUENCING FACTORS

A Thesis  
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the internal and external influences that affect the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision of three different levels of women's fashion garments: new fashion, ongoing fashion, and classic fashion. Four major categories of influence were identified as environmental, organizational, group, and individual, with separate influences within each category revealed. A sample of fifteen department store chains with a total of forty-five buyers belonging to Fredrick Atkins Buying Office were sent a questionnaire, resulting in a 87.6% store return rate.

A one-way ANOVA and Duncan's Multiple Range Test were employed to determine significant differences in means between the three fashion garment types. Total weighted scores and frequency distribution were conducted for all forty-six influence questions to determine the weight of influence each question held.

The degree of fashion newness of a garment, and environmental, organizational, group, and individual influences were shown to affect the purchase decisions examined in this study. Nine questions revealed differences between the level of fashion newness of garment types. The most important influences by rank were found to be: expected sales, quality, cost, key seasonal

item, being a "good buy," color(s), fiber, styling, planned retail price, and merchandise mix. All forty-six influences tested did, however, show some influence in all cases.

The buyer's role as decision maker was shown to be multi-faceted. Conclusions indicated that the distinctions between consumer and organizational buying, and industrial and retail buying decision making were unjustified. The four interrelated categories of influences identified in the study were also shown to contribute to the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision, and the purchase of newer fashion garments revealed different decision making strategy than garments that were considered classic fashion. A proposed model of integrated influences on the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision, incorporating all influences identified in the study is presented.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this study was to identify the factors that influence the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision. This chapter provides: (1) an introduction to the background information on areas pertinent to the study, (2) the statement of the problem, (3) definition of terms, (4) justification, (5) the assumption, and (6) organization of the thesis.

#### Background Information

Greenwood and Murphy (1978, p. 86) define the fashion analyst as one "who evaluates the fashion variable and fashion influences to predict fashion trends." They consider the fashion apparel buyer a fashion analyst, as does this researcher.

Forecasting is considered the planning of sales in retailing. It is "both an art and a science" (Sproles, 1979, p. 209). When made on intuition, good judgement, and past experience, it is considered an art. When based on analytical concepts and models it is a science. Forecasting is also used for planning new products and services in other types of organizations (Wilton & Pessemier, 1981).

The buying process is considered a dynamic, multi-person, decision making process (Cravens & Woodruff, 1986;

Engel, Kollat, & Blackwell, 1968; Greenwood & Murphy, 1978; Johnston, 1981; Markin, 1971; Spekman & Stern, 1979; Troxell & Judelle, 1971). Decision making has been called the "core of the organizational buying process" (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 29). Many factors interrelate in contributing to the decision making process within an organization.

"Organizations do not make decisions, individuals do. Individuals, acting in their organizational roles commit the organization to buy" (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 110). People act, not organizations.

There is general agreement, that within the buying process, an individual is given the final purchasing decision (Spekman & Stern, 1979, p. 54; Webster & Wind, 1978, p. 18). This individual is known as a purchasing agent or buyer.

These people are motivated to action based on the desire for obtainable rewards, whether these be monetary, increase in status, or ego satisfaction. Motivation is said to energize, direct and sustain behavior. It is also said to be "the driving force within the individual that impels them to action" (Schiffman & Kunuk, 1983, p. 49).

The buyer's prime responsibility is to meet or exceed budgeted sales plan, while meeting the needs and wants of the consumer (Cravens & Woodruff, 1986, p. 150; Engel, Greenwood, & Murphy, 1978, p. 54; Taylor, 1983, p. 143; Troxell & Stone, 1981, p. 57). To achieve these goals, the

buyer must make buying and merchandising decisions. It is commonly accepted that the buyer bases these decisions on what the manufacturers produce and what the customers will want for the upcoming fashion season. "Purchasing agents must consider many factors in making buying decisions" (Hise, Gillett, & Ryans, 1979, p. 66). Influences on the individual's decision making include four major interactive groups of elements; environmental, group, organizational, and individual (Möller, 1985; Webster & Wind, 1972).

Much research has been done on decision making at the consumer and industrial buying level, however, little has been done at the level of the retail buyer. Past research has been based on behavioral decision theory and social interaction/influence theory (Möller, 1985). Decision making is the buyer's responsibility and considered an inevitable step in the process of buying.

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to identify the internal and external factors that influence the retail apparel buyer's decision in the purchase of fashion garments.

More specifically, the objective was to identify the interactive elements that influence the decision making process of buyers, within a multi-store corporation, who purchase three different styles of garments, new fashion, ongoing fashion, and classic fashion.

### Definition of Terms

Assortment Plan - Planned assortment of goods for a classification of merchandise.

Buyer - Also called a purchasing agent.

Buyer's Experience - Constitutes the total number of years buying fashion apparel, current company tenure, and total number of companies the buyer has bought for.

Buying Group - Those people within an organization that are involved with the purchasing; also referred to as buying members.

Buying Office - "Organization representing group of noncompeting stores, found primarily for buying merchandise; may be independent, store-owned, or own the stores" (Kreiger, 1980, p. 11).

Chain Store Organization - The bureau of Census states that a chain store organization "is a group of twelve or more stores, centrally owned, each handling somewhat similar goods and merchandise and controlled from a central headquarters office" (Troxell & Stone, 1981, p. 239).

Classic Garment - A garment "which is always in style to some extent and almost never completely in style at all" (Wasson & McConaughy, 1968, p. 79); and "a style or design that remains in fashion for an extended period of time," such as the oxford shirt (Troxell & Judelle, 1971, p. 4).

Classification - "All merchandise of given type or use, regardless of style, size, color, model or price as: men's dress shirts" (Krieger, 1980, p. 17).

Customer - Also called a consumer.

Divisional Merchandise Manager - An executive who administers policy for part of a merchandise division, such as Junior and Missy sportswear in the women's division.

Factors - Also called a variable or element.

Fashion Garment - Prevailing style of clothing purchased and worn at a given period of time.

General Merchandise Manager - "An executive who administers policy for an entire merchandise division" (Kreiger, 1980, p. 39), such as women's wear division or men's wear division.

Good Buy - Getting one's money's worth for a purchase.

Key Seasonal Item - Item planned by the retailer to constitute a major portion of their business for the upcoming season.

Market - "Where retailers buy merchandise" (Kreiger, 1980, p. 56).

Market Direction - Movement in fashion trends that apparel manufacturers and fashion media support.

Media - "The means of communication, as radio, and television, newspapers, magazines, etc. that reach or influence very large numbers of people" (Stein, 1980, p. 545).

Merchandise Mix - The different items stocked by a merchandiser's department (Kreiger, 1980, p. 60).

Modified Rebuy - Some relevant buying experience has occurred, but the situations differ so that there is additional information and new supply sources may be considered (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 115).

New Buy - A purchase that has not risen before and therefore little or no relevant past buying experience exists (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 115).

New Fashion - A newly introduced style, such as the London Jumper.

Ongoing Fashion - A style that has been on the market at least one season and is continuing as a fashion item, such as leggings.

Open-to-Buy - "Dollar amount budgeted to spend on purchases" (Kreiger, 1980, p. 71).

Original Retail - "The first price set at which the merchandise is offered for sale (Kreiger, 1980, p. 10).

Perceived Risk - Uncertainty of consequences.

Planned Promotion - A scheduled event designed to increase sales, and is usually advertised.

Planned Retail - The original retail price planned to be set on a garment.

Planned Sales - "Planned or anticipated sales for a given period of time, based on trends and planned increase over a period of years" (Kreiger, 1980, p. 77).

Proven Item - A garment that has already sold successfully.

Proven Resource - A manufacturer whose merchandise has previously been bought and sold successfully by the retailer.

Real Buy - A purchase that has actually been made as opposed to a hypothetical buy.

Retail Price - "The price a retailer puts on his goods for resale to consumers" (Kreiger, 190, p. 90).

Straight Rebuy - A recurring buying situation, where no new information is required and considered to be routine (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 115).

Vendor - "Any individual, firm or corporation from whom purchases are made" (Kreiger, 1980, p. 121). Also called a resource.

### Justification of Research

This research was based on the need to make advances in fashion and retail organizational buying behavior studies. The similarities and differences in consumer and organizational decision making processes for buyer behavior need to be determined. There is also a need to train students to become better buyers and information obtained from research can help address this educational objective.

In the U.S. there are 1,855,000 retailers, according to the U.S. Census Statistical Abstract, 1984 (Cravens &

Woodruff, 1986, p. 148). Retailers account for the second highest number of classified organizations, next to farms, forestry and fisheries. Manufacturing rates further down the list, yet much more published research is available on manufacturing than retailing.

Studies of decision making and the buying process have been done widely on consumers and industrial organizations. Other types of organizations, such as retail, have had little research. Many professionals have expressed the need for further organizational and retail research on decision making (Crow, Olshavsky, & Summers, 1980; Fern & Brown, 1984; Johnston, 1981; Johnston & Bonoma, 1981; Möller, 1985; Spekman & Stern, 1979; Taylor, 1985).

Past retail research has focused on the trade areas, store image, and customer attributes (Hirshman & Stamfl, 1980, p. 70). There is a lack of research at the retail buyer level (Taylor, 1985).

Recommendations for research on the criteria used by the buyer during the selection process have been made by many researchers (Crow, Olshavsky, & Summers, 1980; Möller, 1985; Spekman & Stern, 1979; Taylor, 1981). One important study by Taylor (1985) was found on the retail apparel buyer. Both Crow (1980) and Wind (1978) have expressed the need for more research on the individual buyer level. Cases are also made for field studies of retail and the decision making process. Much of what has been done is hypothetical

and exploratory (Crow, Olshavsky, & Summers, 1980; Wind, 1978). Descriptive research is needed before normative models can be developed (Möller, 1985, p. 1).

Better cooperation is needed between retailing and academics in the study of retail, in order for both to grow. "The world facing the department store is not the orderly situation envisioned by many academicians" (Dickinson, 1966, p. 15).

Findings resulting from this research attempted to:

1. help add to the concept and theory building of retailing, by integrating consumer and organizational buying behavior;
2. aid the retailer in better understanding internal buyer decision making;
3. help vendors improve their understanding of the determinants of buyer behavior in the decision making process and therefore better market to them;
4. help consumer researchers examine organizational buying behavior and possibly generate new research ideas;
5. help educators train better buyers.

Three fashion garments actually purchased for the 1986 Fall and Winter season were used in this study, determined by buyer's consensus in the prestudy.

The instrument was a multi-part questionnaire containing a listing of reflective influences to the

purchase decision. Factors used in the questionnaire were obtained from previous research and focused interviews.

The prestudy was held in June, 1986. The questionnaires were administered in October, 1986.

### Assumption

1. Purchasing decisions are based on a number of factors.

### Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized in the following manner:

Chapter I contains an introduction and summary of the research, which includes the purpose and objectives, definition of terms, justification, assumption, and organization of the thesis. Chapter II presents literature relevant to this study, including the theoretical framework, consumer and organizational decision making, influences on decision making, organizational, retail buyer, and industrial buyer behavior research.

Chapter III explains the procedures carried out in this study, along with the stated hypotheses. Chapter IV presents the discussion of results. Chapter V contains the summary and conclusions, with implications and recommendations.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature is presented under eight major headings: (1) theoretical framework, (2) consumer decision making, (3) organizational decision making, (4) influences on decision making, (5) organizational buying behavior research, (6) industrial buyer research, (7) retail buyer research, and (8) summary.

#### Theoretical Framework

Decision making is considered an inevitable step in the process of buying. Möller's (1985) organizational buying process model in Figure 1 will serve as the basis of decision making, while role theory will provide the framework for this research. In this study, role is associated with the retail purchasing agent (actor) and the post-purchasing decision (behavior) associated with the position of retail buyer.

Kahn et al. (1964) suggested that individual, organizational and interpersonal factors would all have influence on organizational roles. Other researchers have also used role theory as a theoretical background for their studies on purchasing agents (Calder, 1977; Fern & Brown, 1984; Kolchin, 1986; Wind, 1978). Wind and Thomas (1980) reviewed some of the major conceptual and methodological

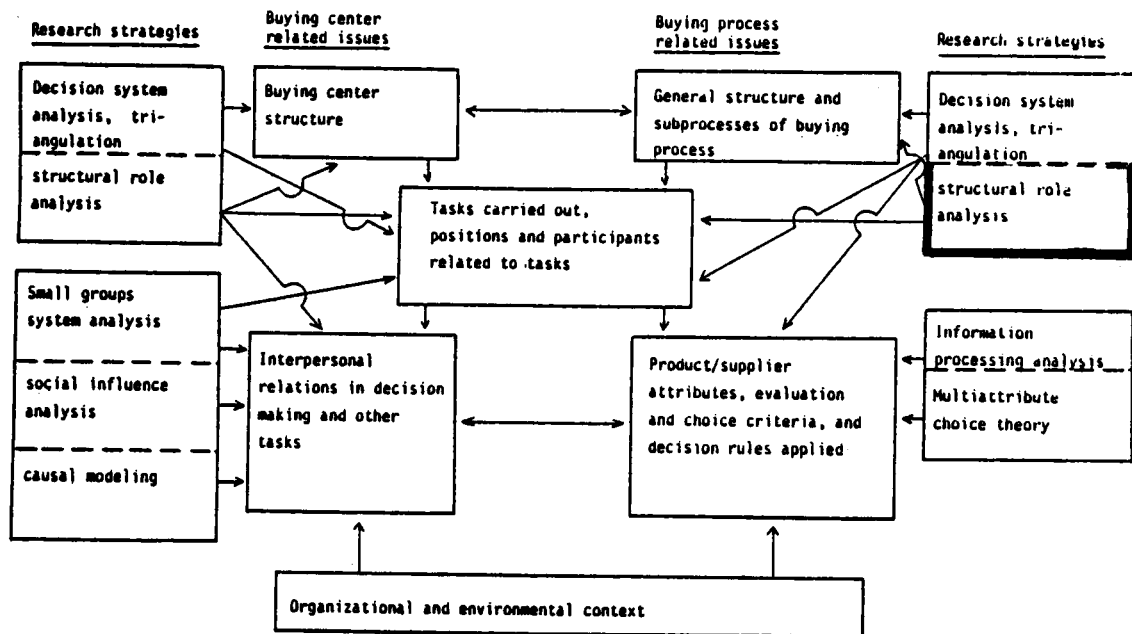


Figure 1. Möller's Organizational Buying Process Model.

Source: Kristian, K. E. (1985). Research strategies in analyzing the organizational buying process, Journal of Business Research, 13, p. 7.

issues involved in organizational buying behavior until 1980 and role theory was the basis of five studies.

Spekman and Calder (1978) use role theory in their study, "Narrowing the Conceptual-Empirical Gap in Organizational Buying Behavior." They link the individual to an organization and buying decision and relate the two. Structural role analysis is specifically used, which concentrates on the structure of role relationship at a micro-sociological level. Role structure is explained by the researchers to involve three elements that depict interaction within the organization: tasks, position, and persons.

The buyer's role is discussed by Webster and Wind (1972, p. 18) to explain interpersonal interaction within an organization. They described the individual's role set as composed of three aspects of role performance: role expectation, role behavior, and role relationships.

Decision making theory is reviewed by Sirgy and Tyagi (1986) and they attempt an integrated theory of consumer psychology and decision making. They criticize decision making theory "for its inability to generate one comprehensive theory to explain decision making" (p. 173). Decision making theory seems to involve the pre-purchase rather than post-purchase analysis.

Many factors are involved in the decision making process to buy. Internal and external factors are present

in consumer and organizational buying (Engel, Kollat, & Blackwell, 1968; Webster & Wind, 1972). If the same factors influence consumer and industrial organizational purchasing, and these same factors have been shown to relate to retail organizational purchasing, then there is no reason that these factors cannot be used to determine what influences they have on the retail apparel buyer's decision to purchase.

Other theories used in studies of purchasing agents are exchange theory (Sirgy & Tyagi, 1986), social influence (Bonona & Zaltman, 1978), social interaction (Sheth, 1975; Wilson, 1978), and expectancy-value theory (Sirgy & Tyagi, 1986).

The analysis of the buying process, according to Markin (1971, pp. 325-327), consists of four sequences: search, evaluation, selection, and review. This study will focus on the review or post-purchase portion of the buying process. More specifically, the factors that influence the buyer's decision in the purchase (selection) of fashion merchandise.

### Consumer Decision Making

Current retailing philosophy is concerned with consumerism (Cravens & Woodruff, 1986; Markin, 1971; Mason & Mayer, 1981). The retailer must keep up with what the consumer wants and what they will buy. The analysis of consumer needs and use of fashion principles are the tools

the apparel buyer uses to forecast coming trends (Sproles, 1979, p. 209). Interaction between the consumer and buyer at some level must occur in order for the buyer to be effective.

Increasingly, retail management is taking consumerism seriously (Windgate, Schaller, & Miller, 1972, p. 25). Consumer buying behavior can benefit from organizational buying behavior (Wind, 1978). Research done by Fern and Brown (1984) showed the distinctions between industrial and consumer marketing behavior made by scholars was unjustified. Conclusions drew no empirical testing done, no marketing or theory basis, and no logical grounds to create intradisciplinary boundaries.

Research was done by Martin (1972) on consumers of fashion goods to determine the information requirements in making a purchase decision. A basic shirt-waist dress was used and 243 women were asked to give reasons for purchasing the dresses. Pre- and post-information buying decisions were analyzed in examining the choice criteria of the buying decision. Twenty-five percent chose style as a prime reason for purchasing, 67% stated that requested information about the garment was the prime reason for the decision, and 55% said price was the main element in selection.

The results showed that information about price and the physical properties of fashion clothes are the major basis for a buying decision, and the demands for this information are consistent with the purchasing behavior. This study emphasizes the need for marketers to make information available to potential purchasers of clothing.

Companies involved in both consumer and industrial marketing had similar decision making processes. A simple model of individual buying behavior is presented by Webster and Wind in the black box model (1972, p. 54). The various determinants of the decision process are taken into account in this model, which is based on the consensus that individual behavior is a function of three factors: (1) the individual's personality, motivation, cognitive structure, and learning; (2) interaction with environmental factors; and (3) the individual's preference structure and decision model (see Figure 2).

The individual buyer's decision process, according to Howard and Sheth (1969, p. 96), involves three elements: brand comprehension, motives, and choice criteria. These elements are presented in their proposed theory of buyer behavior, where, the variables that relate to the interaction process of decision making are clearly shown. Howard and Sheth refer to these variables as "learning constructs" or "learning subsystem" and they included Motives, Choice Criteria, Brand Comprehension, Attitude Intention,

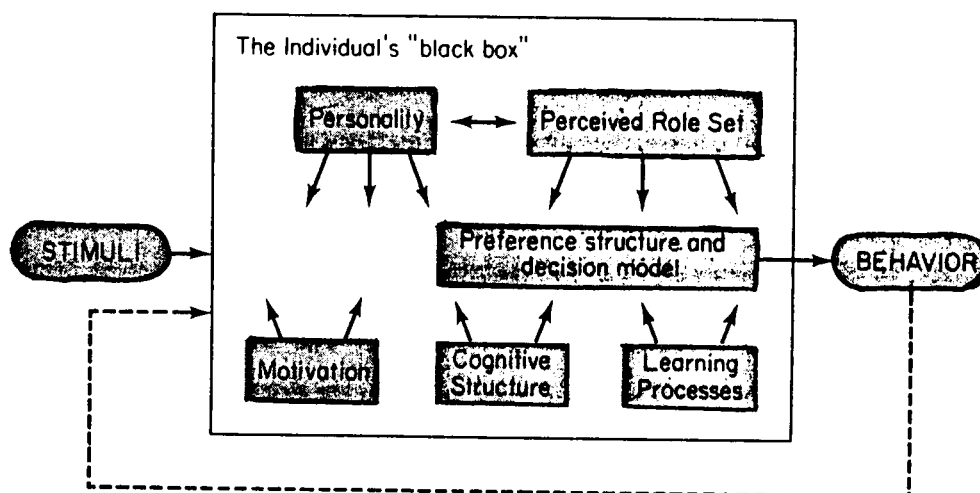


Figure 2. Individual Behavior Diagram.

Source: Webster and Wind, Organizational Buying Behavior, 1972, p. 54.

Confidence, and Satisfaction. These constructs, a part of the Learning System, are related as shown in Figure 3. The solid lines represent straight flow and effects toward purchase or the outcome, while the broken lines represent feedback. Decision making is explained as a problem solving situation, based on learning (see Figure 3).

Many factors are involved in the decision making process to buy. Internal and external factors are present in consumer and organizational buying (Engel, Kollat, & Blackwell, 1969). These include personality characteristics, stored information, and past experience. Background and task orientation are considered by Sheth (1973, p. 53) to be the most important factors involved in the individual buying process.

Three factors have been repeatedly shown to influence the consumer decision making process in purchasing (Bettman, 1970; Howard & Sheth, 1969; Wind, 1968). These are individual, group, and environmental factors. Consumer behavior models such as the Nicosia (1966), Howard and Sheth (1969), and Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (1968) could be used for the study of organizational buying behavior, except that they do not include the additional organizational factors that influence buying (see Figures 4, 5, and 6).

Moore and Lehman (1980, p. 298) studied the internal and external search as aspects of the decision making

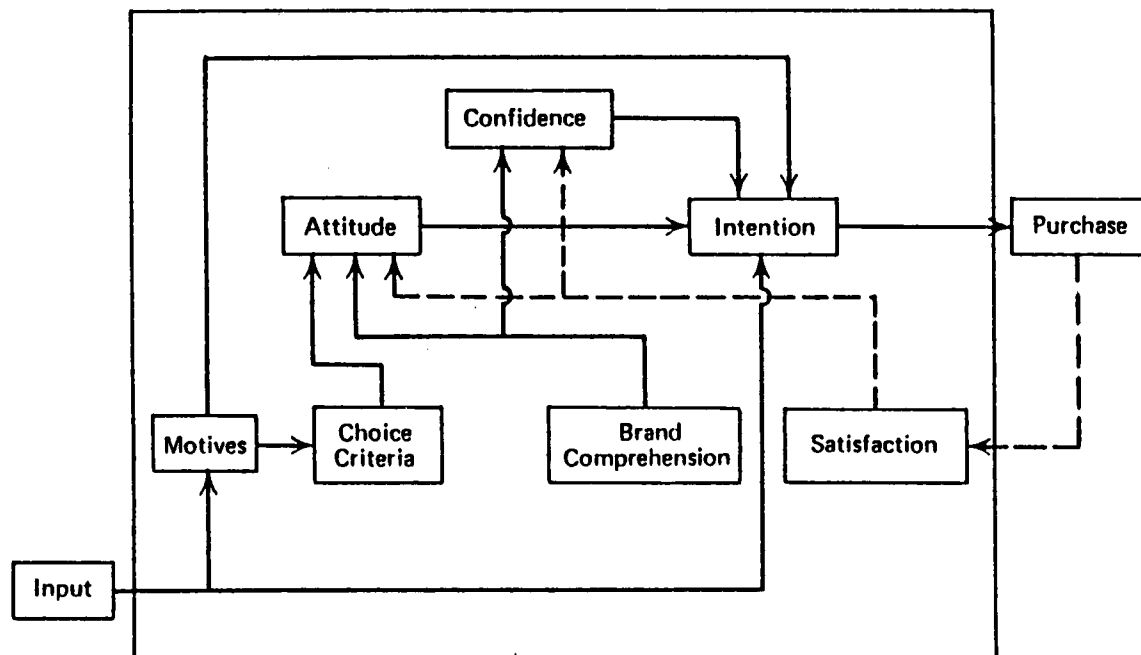


Figure 3. The Learning System.

Source: Howard and Sheth, The Theory of Buyer Behavior, 1969, p. 96.

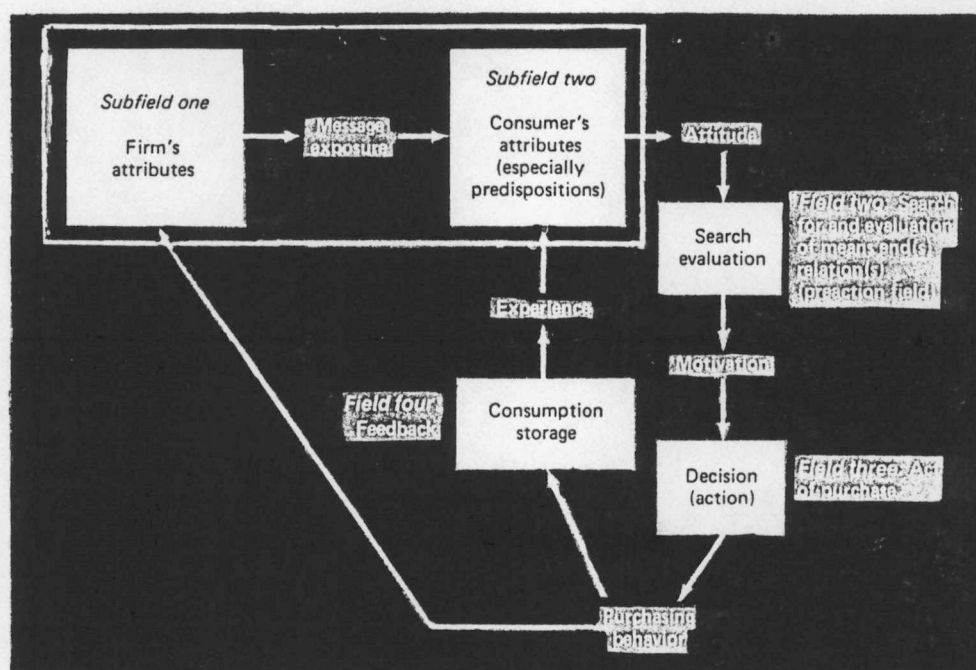


Figure 4. Nicosia's Model of Consumer Decision Processes.

Source: Francesco M. Nicosia (1966). Consumer Decision Processes, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, p. 156.

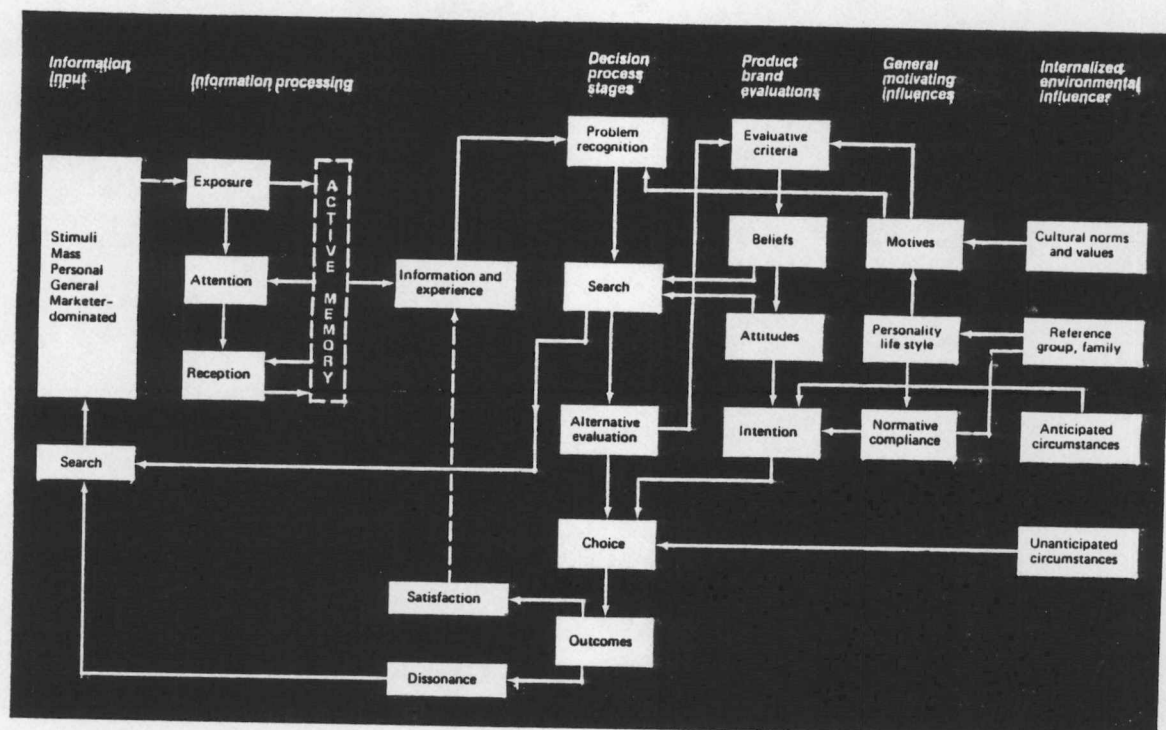


Figure 5. Howard and Sheth's Theory of Buyer Behavior.

Source: John A. Howard and Jagdish N. Sheth (1969). The Theory of Buyer Behavior, New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., p. 30.

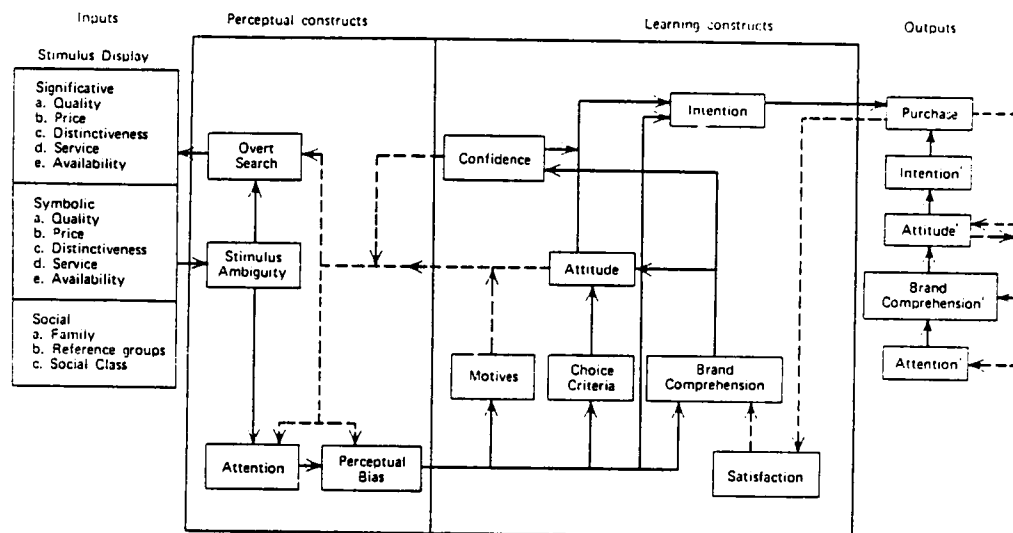


Figure 6. Engel-Kollat-Blackwell Model of Consumer Behavior.

Source: Leon G. Schiffman and Leslie L. Kanuk (1983). Consumer Behavior, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, p. 559.

process of consumers purchasing non-durable goods. Their research focused on individual differences and situational factors and they proposed a categorization of external search determinants combining the market environment and situational variables. These include potential payoff/product importance, knowledge and experience, individual differences, conflict, and conflict resolutions.

Retailers do not create fashion, the consumer does, when they buy and wear a style. Buyer's "act as purchasing agents for their customers: they buy what their customers need and want" (Hise, Gillet, & Ryans, 1979, p. 67). Both manufacturers and consumers are dependent on the selections of the retail apparel buyer. Only what is selected by the retail buyer, will be manufactured and offered for sale to the consumer. "The buyer is the consumer's purchasing agent; in the final analysis, it is the consumers who dictate what will be purchased" (Markin, 1971, p. 318). Profitably meeting the needs and wants of the consumer is the goal of today's retailer, while consumers look to the retailer to meet their needs and wants (Cravens & Woodruff, 1986, p. 150; Greenwood & Murphy, 1978, p. 54; Taylor, 1985, p. 143; Troxell & Stone, 1981, p. 57).

Cravens and Woodruff (1986, p. 150) stated that "many aspects of consumer buying behavior ... are true for industrial buying." Both consumers and industrial buyers use a decision process, and are looking for benefits from a

product. The similarities between marketing and consumer purchasing is needed in future research (Wind, 1978). Wind further states that consumer researchers could benefit from an examination of the organizational buying behavior literature from which they can generate new variables, hypotheses, and even methodological ideas (1978, p. 10).

### Organizational Decision Making

According to Webster and Wind (1972, p. 2), organizational buying behavior is

defined as the decision making process by which formal organizations establish the need for purchased products and services, and identify, evaluate and choose among alternative brands and suppliers.

It is the acquisition and processing activities, as well as the processes leading to choice.

Several researchers used the terms industrial and organizational buyer behavior synonymously (Cravens & Woodruff, 1986; Sheth, 1973). There seems to be little or no distinction between the two.

The buyer or purchasing agent is given formal authority within an organization to make the purchasing decision, that is, ultimately selecting the supplier and arranging the terms of the purchase. The buyer's prime responsibility is to meet or exceed budgeted sales plans. In achieving these sales figures, the buyer must make buying and merchandising

decisions. The buyer's planning begins with budgeting the dollars to be spent in purchasing. This dollar plan is referred to as the open-to-buy. Once the open-to-buy is determined, a search begins for the desired merchandise. Either availability of a proven item is sought (a modified rebuy or straight rebuy), or a new item is found (new buy). Resources are investigated in order to meet the predetermined needs of the buyer so final purchase decisions can be made. Generally, planning is used in making the decisions and purchasing occurs several months to more than a year before the merchandise is needed. The buyer's job is to assemble all the information gathered and then determine what to buy. Whether a purchase is a "new buy," "modified rebuy," or "straight rebuy" has impact on the influence of information that a buyer uses in decision making (Campbell, 1985; Lehman & O'Shaughnessy, 1982; Möller, 1985, Webster & Wind, 1972) (see Definition of Terms, pp. 5-6).

Research shows that just as consumers are influenced by others in their decision making, so are buyers within an organization (Burnkvant & Causineau, 1975). The buyer is often times referred to as a member of a buying group, which contains members who interact in making purchase decisions (Johnston & Bonoma, 1981; Spekman & Stern, 1979, p. 54).

Webster and Wind (1972) explore organizational buying behavior in their book, Organizational Buying Behavior, written for the purpose of considering the factors that

influence the buying process, and the interrelationship of these variables. The stages of buying behavior were identified as: problem recognition, problem identification, evaluation, selection, and input (p. 21). They considered the buying center as all members of an organization who interact during the buying decision process (p. 71). Five roles made up the members of the buying center: users, influencers, buyers, deciders, and gatekeepers (see Figure 7). Several members may occupy one role, or several roles. "All members of the buying center can be seen as influencers, but not all influencers occupy other roles" (p. 77). Bonoma and Johnston (1978) studied these roles of the buyer, plus the initiator role. They looked at the dyadic relationship between the buyer and seller in industrial buying, and concluded that the behavior of both should not be isolated, as it is a bargaining system.

#### Influences on Decision Making

Economics, politics, technology, and social/cultural aspects of a society all play a part in the decision making process. It is widely accepted that two major categories of influences, which include four sources of elements, impact decision making in organizational buying behavior (Cravens & Woodruff, 1986; Kennedy, 1982; Möller, 1985; Sheth, 1973; Spekman & Stern, 1979; Taylor, 1985; Webster & Wind, 1972). The two major categories of influences are internal and

|                                                         | <i>User</i> | <i>Influencer</i> | <i>Buyer</i> | <i>Decider</i> | <i>Gate-keeper</i> |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Identification of Need                                  | X           | X                 |              |                |                    |
| Establishing Specifications and Scheduling the Purchase | X           | X                 | X            | X              |                    |
| Identifying Buying Alternatives                         | X           | X                 | X            |                | X                  |
| Evaluating Alternative Buying Actions                   | X           | X                 | X            |                |                    |
| Selecting the Suppliers                                 | X           | X                 | X            | X              |                    |

Figure 7. Webster and Wind's Decision Stages and Roles in the Buying Center.

Source: Webster and Wind (1972). Organizational Buying Behavior, p. 71.

external. The four groups of elements are as follows: environmental, group, organizational, and individual. Internal influences include the group and organizational elements, while external influences include the environment and individual elements.

The following equation expresses the multiple categories of influences that were tested in this study (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 28).

$$B = f(I, G, O, E)$$

where:

B = buying behavior

f = function

I = individual factors

G = group factors

O = organizational factors

E = environmental factors

Environmental elements include government regulations, trends or changes in demand for products, media, consumer, technological developments, supplier or vendor, availability of goods, quality and price of product, delivery capacity, past experience and reputation of supplier, the economy, foreign trade and labor matters, other organizations and business (competition), and social and cultural influences. These factors are a result of other outside characteristics

of the society within which an organization operates and are therefore considered external (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 34).

Group influences are recognized as situational, internal influences (Moller, 1985). They result from the interaction of buying center members who directly interact in the purchasing decisions. The buying center group members consist of users, influencers, buyers, deciders, and gatekeepers (Webster & Wind, 1972, pp. 77-81). The people in the retail buying center may include other buyers, general and divisional merchandise managers, assistant buyers and clerical, fashion and advertising staff members, buying office members, store personnel, and senior executives. At the consumer level, group elements include all reference group members chosen to help influence a buying decision.

Organizational influence is the one type of influence not present in consumer purchasing decision making. It is an internal type of influence that consists of such things as company policies, procedures, goals and objectives, systems, rewards, sales plans, budgets, open-to-buys, trends, previous sales, and rewards. Four sets of interacting variables are said to make up the organizational element according to Webster and Wind (1972, pp. 14-15). These are: tasks, structure, technology, and people. The tasks are the work to be done; the structure constitutes the

systems, authority and rewards; the technology is considered the set programs; and the people are the actors in the setting.

Individual elements include buyer characteristics and are considered external influences. These include: acquired information, preferences, developed thought, personality, perceived role set, cognition, learning, experience, values, beliefs, needs, goals, habits, attitudes, opinions, age, income, sex, education, motivation, length of company service, and level in company hierarchy (Ozanne & Churchill, 1972; Taylor, 1985; Thomas, 1982; Webster & Wind, 1972; Wilson & Little, 1971). Demographic, psychological and personal characteristics make up these influences. Other personal, individual elements include: self-confidence, innovativeness, and self-perception or self-image (Howard, 1973, p. 424). Some researchers separate demographic from individual influences, while others do not.

Möller (1985) asserted that all four groups of factors are interrelated in the organizational buyer's purchase marking decisions. The relationships and influences of all elements may differ for each specific decision making situation (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 75).

### Organizational Buying Behavior Research

Much of the research on organizational buying behavior has been done within industrial buying. Industrial buying research includes the examination of the buying center, buying process, and contextual factors (Moller, 1985, p. 4). Most studies have looked at group rather than individual buying decisions (Spekman & Stern, 1978; Webster & Wind, 1972; Wind, 1972).

Campbell (1985) developed guidelines for purchasing managers based on the interaction strategies they use with buyers and sellers in the packaging industry. An Interaction Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) Group model is presented which incorporates the four major classifications of influence into sixteen variables that are relevant to both buyers and sellers. These include: frequency of purchase, changing costs, product, "concentration, number of alternative partners, intensity of competition," technical change, norms, size of company, "preferred interaction style, relative familiarity, centralization of purchasing," familiarity of individual characteristics, individual interaction style, perceived sales and risk aversion.

Möller (1985) reviewed organizational buying behavior as a process within a buying center and develops a comprehensive framework of methods for analyzing buying behavior. Research strategies, buying center and buying

process related issues are integrated into a buying process model (see Figure 1, page 12).

### Industrial Buyer Research

White (1977) investigated decision making in the purchasing process. He studied 220 purchasing agents from twenty-six different states to examine the importance of choice criteria across six product categories and four product adoption situations. Results were not ranked, but showed that the rating of variables was dependent on product type and situation.

Protocol analysis has been conducted on consumers and individual buyers in hypothetical situations (Beltman, 1970; Crow & Olshavsky, 1980; Wind, 1968). The purpose of protocol analysis is to verbalize thoughts while making a decision or problem solving. Several researchers have expressed the need for more protocol studies (Crow & Olshavsky, 1980; Möller, 1985).

Perceived risk has been researched at the industrial buying level by several researchers. Decision making risk has been studied on three levels: the amount of risk, the attitude regarding risk, and perceived risk (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 19). The least explored is individual risk perception. Just as "few, if any decisions of consequence are devoid of risk" neither is the industrial buyer's decision making process (Blaylock, 1985, p. 210). A recent

study by Blaylock (1985) investigated the three groups of risk and their interrelationships on the individual. His research involved role playing by college students, measuring these levels of risk. He concluded that all three levels of risk simultaneously influenced the decision maker's risk perceptions.

One of the largest studies of buyer behavior has been conducted by Howard and Sheth (1969) over a five year period. This research attempted to put individual, organizational and consumer buying behavior together, and propose a theory of buyer behavior. Seven constructs or stimuli are incorporated into their theory. The constructs are: motives, choice criteria, brand comprehension, attitude, intention, confidence, and satisfaction (Howard & Sheth, 1969, p. 94). The formulation of their theory was based on their recognized need for theories in buyer behavior.

#### Retail Buyer Research

In a rare study of the retail apparel buyer, Taylor (1985) explains that the retail buyer plays a critical role in what apparel will be presented to the consumer. Here empirical, exploratory study had three main purposes:

1. to determine if the fashion apparel selected by a group of retail department and specialty store buyers would be the same as a group of consumers;

2. to determine if department or specialty stores "more accurately represent their constituent markets" (p. 50);
3. to determine if the sales performance differed between the apparel the buyers selected, and those that both the consumers and buyers selected.

The results showed that there was no difference between the two types of buyers meeting the wants and needs of their customers, and that the apparel chosen by buyers and consumers did differ some. The department stores were also shown to more accurately represent their customers than did specialty stores.

In another study, Dickerson (1966) researched game theory and the department store buyer. She attempted to identify the impact of internal influences on buyers' purchasing. Personality characteristics were found to be inconclusive in studying the success of a buyer.

### Summary

The role of the buyer as decision maker has been studied at both the individual consumer level and group organizational level, however, very little research has been done at the individual organizational buyer level. Internal and external factors have been shown to be pertinent in consumer and organizational purchasing decisions. These include environmental (external), organizational (internal),

group (internal), and individual (external) influences. Few researchers recognized the need for all four categories of influence, however, Möller (1985) and Webster and Wind (1972) integrated these categories into their proposed models. Much of the research found through the literature was exploratory or hypothetical, with need recognized for empirical research. This study integrates the four major categories of influence, which includes specific influences identified in the literature in a post-purchase evaluation of the influences on the individual retail apparel buyer's purchase decision.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The procedures carried out in this study are divided as follows: (1) hypotheses, (2) variables, (3) development of the instrument, (4) pretest, (5) sample, (6) data collection, and (7) statistical analysis.

#### Hypotheses

Five null hypotheses were formulated as follows:

1. There is no difference in the influence on the purchase decision due to degree of newness of garments.
2. Environmental elements have no influence on the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision.
3. Organizational elements have no influence on the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision.
4. Group elements have no influence on the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision.
5. Individual elements have no influence on the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision.

#### Variables

1. One of the fashion garments the retail apparel buyer purchased: either the London Jumper, Leggings, or Oxford Shirt (see Appendix C).

2. The factors or elements that influenced buyer's purchase decision (see pages 38 and 39).

### Development of the Instrument

No suitable questionnaire was found in the literature, therefore, the researcher developed an instrument based on the environmental, group, organizational and individual influences identified through the literature review. Demographics are separate from individual influences, and no questions directed toward the purchase were related to them.

The instrument consisted of four parts: Identification questions in the introduction; Part A included demographics and the identification of the garment each buyer purchased; Part B measured the four groups of influences on the purchase; and Part C measured individual psychological and personality influences. Open-ended, yes/no, and multiple choice questions were used in Part A. Parts B and C used five-point Likert scale measurements (see Appendix A). A total of 56 questions were presented on the instrument.

All influencing variables contained in the questionnaire are listed in Table 1. Table 2 presents specific influences and references for each item contained in the questionnaire.

Table 1. Influencing Elements.

---

DEMOGRAPHICS

- A. Age
- B. Marital Status
- C. Gender
- D. Income
- E. Education
- F. Experience
- G. Length of Company Service
- H. Geographical Location

ENVIRONMENTAL - EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

- A. Information
  - 1. Vendor - Expectation and Satisfaction
    - a. Availability and Delivery of Product
    - b. Reputation and Reliability
    - c. Cost of Goods
    - d. Quality of Goods
    - e. Vendor Support
    - f. Recommendation
  - 2. Customer - Consumer Evaluative Criteria
    - a. Fit of Garment
    - b. Style of Garment
    - c. Color(s)
    - d. Ease of Care
    - e. Fiber Content
    - f. Expected Acceptance - Sales
    - g. Being a "Good Buy"
  - 3. Marketing Communications
    - a. Media and Trade Magazines
    - b. Fashion Trends - Market Direction
  - 4. Competition

ORGANIZATIONAL - INTERNAL INFLUENCES

- A. Company's Situational Dimension - Responsibility
  - 1. Organization's Size
    - a. Number of Stores Buying For
    - b. Number of Annual Market Trips
  - 2. Sales
    - a. Trends - Key Item
    - b. Expected Sales
    - c. Previous Sales

Table 1 (Continued)

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ORGANIZATIONAL - INTERNAL INFLUENCES (Continued)

- 3. Budget Restraints
  - a. Cost - Extra Money
  - b. Retail Price
  - c. Open-to-Buy
- B. Assortment Dimension
  - 1. Planned Promotion
  - 2. Inventory
    - a. Merchandise Mix
    - b. Assortment Plan

GROUP - INTERNAL INFLUENCES

- A. Buying Center Members
  - 1. Other Buyers
  - 2. Buying Office
  - 3. Divisional Merchandise Manager
  - 4. General Merchandise Manager

INDIVIDUAL - EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

- A. Psychological Influences
    - 1. Personality Characteristics - Self-Perception
      - a. Confidence
      - b. Aggressiveness
      - c. Innovativeness
      - d. Openmindedness
    - 2. Job Related Characteristics
      - a. Aspirations (desire to achieve and success)
      - b. Attitude
  - B. Purchase Influences
    - 1. Initiative
    - 2. Perception to Quality
    - 3. Preference for Garment
    - 4. Uncertainty of Quantity
    - 5. Perceived Risk
-

Table 2. Buyer Influences, Reference Source and Related Questions.

| Questions          | Influences                                          | Reference                                                        |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ENVIRONMENTAL      |                                                     |                                                                  |
| Part B: 2,15       | Past experience with vendor                         | Lehmann & O'Shaunessy, 1974, p. 39; Sheth, 1973, p. 53           |
| Part B: 3          | Competition                                         | Taylor, 1985, p. 144                                             |
| Part B: 4,16       | Quality of goods                                    | Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 485                                     |
| Part B: 1,5, 11,17 | Fashion trends; styling and color; market direction | Taylor, 1985, p. 144                                             |
| Part B: 6,9, 12,14 | Customer/consumer                                   | Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 49; Taylor, 1985, p. 144                |
| Part B: 7          | Reputation and reliability of vendor                | Lehmann & O'Shaunessy, 1974, p. 39                               |
| Part B: 10         | Price of goods                                      | Handelsman & Munson, 1985, p. 111; Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 485  |
| Part B: 13         | Availability and delivery capacity of product       | Lehmann & O'Shaunessy, 1974, p. 39; Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 485 |
| ORGANIZATIONAL     |                                                     |                                                                  |
| Part A: 5          | Number of stores buy for                            | The researcher                                                   |
| Part A: 6          | Market trips                                        | The researcher                                                   |
| Part B: 18,19      | Previous sales                                      | Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 486; Taylor, 1985, p. 122               |
| Part B: 20,21      | Expected sales                                      | Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 486; Taylor, 1985, p. 444               |

Table 2 (Continued)

| Questions                      | Influences                                          | Reference                                                |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| ORGANIZATIONAL (Continued)     |                                                     |                                                          |
| Part B: 22,23,<br>26,27,<br>36 | Budget restraints<br>and open-to-buy                | Webster & Wind, 1972,<br>p. 486; Taylor, 1985,<br>p. 444 |
| Part B: 24,25                  | Inventory, mer-<br>chandise mix,<br>assortment plan | Webster & Wind, 1972,<br>p. 485                          |
| GROUP                          |                                                     |                                                          |
| Part B: 32                     | General merchan-<br>dise manager                    | The researcher                                           |
| Part B: 33                     | Buying office<br>members                            | The researcher                                           |
| Part B: 34                     | Other buyers                                        | The researcher                                           |
| Part B: 35                     | Divisional mer-<br>chandise manager                 | The researcher                                           |
| INDIVIDUAL                     |                                                     |                                                          |
| Part B: 8                      | Perception                                          | Webster & Wind, 1972,<br>p. 75                           |
| Part B: 28                     | Attitude                                            | Webster & Wind, 1972,<br>p. 75                           |
| Part B: 29,30                  | Perceived risk                                      | Webster & Wind, 1972,<br>p. 19                           |
| Part B: 31                     | Initiative, goals                                   | Sheth, 1973, p. 53;<br>Webster & Wind, 1972,<br>p. 19    |
| Part C: 1                      | Desire to achieve                                   | Taylor, 1985, p. 144;<br>Wilson, 1975, p. 434            |

Table 2 (Continued)

| Questions              | Influences                     | Reference                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| INDIVIDUAL (Continued) |                                |                                                                                                                              |
| Part C: 2              | Self confidence                | Howard, 1973, p. 424                                                                                                         |
| Part C: 3,5            | Self perception of self-image  | Howard, 1973, p. 424                                                                                                         |
| Part C: 4              | Innovativeness                 | Thomas, 1982, p. 177                                                                                                         |
| Part C: 6              | Aspirations                    | Taylor, 1985, p. 434                                                                                                         |
| DEMOGRAPHICS           |                                |                                                                                                                              |
| Part A: 1,2,4          | Experience, habits             | Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 485; Ozanne & Churchill, 1972, p. 538                                                               |
| Part A: 3              | Length of company service      | Ozanne & Churchill, 1972, p. 538                                                                                             |
| Part A: 7              | Age                            | Ozanne & Churchill, 1972, p. 538; Thomas, 1982, p. 177; Webster & wind, 1972, p. 75                                          |
| Part A: 8              | Gender                         | Thomas, 1982, p. 177                                                                                                         |
| Part A: 9              | Education                      | Levy, 1973, p. 58; Ozanne & Churchill, 1972, p. 538; Taylor, 1985, p. 144; Thomas, 1982, p. 177; Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 75 |
| Part A: 10             | Marital status                 | The researcher                                                                                                               |
| Part A: 11             | Income                         | Levy, 1972, p. 58; Ozanne & Churchill, 1973, p. 539                                                                          |
| Part A: 12             | Residing geographical location | The researcher                                                                                                               |

### Pretest

The pretest was given to fourteen womenswear (missy and junior) buyers from ten retail stores in Knoxville, Tennessee. Two department stores, with five buyers and eight specialty stores, with one buyer each for a total participation of thirteen buyers. The purchasing for twenty- one total store units was represented. Twelve of the buyers were female, and one was male.

The purposes of the test were: to determine the most commonly used terms, to select real purchase garments, to try out the questionnaire for effectiveness and time needed, and to locate gaps or omissions in the questionnaire. The pretest was conducted June 19 through June 30, 1986. The terms and questions used in the pretest are presented in Appendix B. The total pretest sessions took between twenty and forty-five minutes.

The results of the pretest warranted changes in the wording of some questions, development of additional questions, and format revisions for the final questionnaire (see Appendix A). In addition, the pretest resulted in the selection of three women's fashion garments that all buyers purchased for the 1986 Fall and Winter season, which represented three different types of fashion garments. The three garments selected were: the London Jumper (sweater), Leggings, and Oxford Cloth Shirt, representing new fashion,

ongoing fashion, and classic fashion, respectively. Sketches of these garments may be found in Appendix C.

### Sample

Executives of a local department store, a member of Fredrick Atkins Buying Office, helped in locating and contacting the sample. The universe was forty-two groups of department stores which were all members of the Fredrick Atkins Buying Office in New York City. Atkins Stores are located in thirty-one states and the sample represented thirteen, with 16 department stores and one family clothing store included (Sheldon, 1987, p. 537). The selection of the sample was based on two criteria: willingness to participate in past research studies by a member store of Fredrick Atkins and geographical location.

Forty-five buyers, three from each store, were sent questionnaires and asked by cover letter to participate. These were to include missy and/or junior buyers who had purchased the preselected garments.

### Data Collection

Three questionnaires, cover letters, and return envelopes were mailed to the Vice President or Merchandise Manager of each sample store in October 1986 (see Appendix A). One questionnaire was to be completed for each of the three garments purchased by the buyers. A follow-up

phone call was made a week later to ensure receipt of the questionnaire and personally request participation. A postcard reminder was sent to the stores in November if the questionnaire had not been returned (see Appendix A). All completed questionnaires were received by December 20, 1986.

### Statistical Analysis

A one-way ANOVA was employed to compare the three garment types in terms of group means. The Duncan's Multiple Range Test was then used to determine where the significant differences occurred between the three garment types. The significance level was set at  $\alpha = .05$ . The frequency distribution was conducted on all questions. Weighted scores were calculated for the frequencies from the Likert scale using 1-5 from no influence, or strongly disagree, to great influence, or strongly agree, respectively.

## CHAPTER IV

## PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Analyses of data are presented under the following headings: (1) Demographics of Respondents; (2) Hypothesis I - Differences in Influence by Garment Types; (3) Hypothesis II - Environmental Influences; (4) Hypothesis III - Organizational Influence; (5) Hypothesis IV - Group Influence; (6) Hypothesis V - Individual Influence; (7) Other Influences: and (8) Summary.

The data were obtained from thirty-one women's apparel buyers, representing thirteen store chains in twelve states. Table 3 presents a listing of the sample and participating stores by location, and the number of respondents. The stores were located in twelve states, one less than the sample. These were: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee, and Texas. Fourteen department store chains and one family clothing store participated.

Thirteen of the fifteen sample stores returned questionnaires, for a 86.7% response rate of stores, and thirty-three out of forty-five buyers participated, with a 73.3% response rate of buyers. The data were obtained from thirty-one womenswear buyers with one buyer responding for all three preselected garments, resulting in thirty-three questionnaires. The respondents included fifteen Junior

Table 3. Sample and Participating Stores.

| Sample Stores                                            | Store Participation |    | Buyer Participation |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----|---------------------|-----------|
|                                                          | Yes                 | No | Requested           | Responded |
| Buffums<br>Long Beach, Ca.                               |                     | X  | 3                   | 0         |
| Carlisles<br>Ashtabula, Oh.                              | X                   |    | 3                   | 3         |
| D. and L. Venture Corp.<br>New Britain, Ct.              | X                   |    | 3                   | 3         |
| Dillards<br>Arkansas/Louisiana Div.<br>Little Rock, Ark. | X                   |    | 3                   | 3         |
| M. Eptein, Inc.<br>Morristown, N.J.                      | X                   |    | 3                   | 3         |
| Gottschalk & Co.<br>Fresno, Ca.                          | X                   |    | 3                   | 1         |
| Hess'<br>Allentown, Pa.                                  |                     | X  | 3                   | 0         |
| D. H. Holmes<br>New Orleans, La.                         | X                   |    | 3                   | 3         |
| Lovemans<br>Chattanooga, Tn.                             | X                   |    | 3                   | 2         |
| McRae's<br>Jackson, Ms.                                  | X                   |    | 3                   | 3         |
| Miller and Paine<br>Lincoln, Ne.                         | X                   |    | 3                   | 3         |
| Palais Royale<br>Houston, Tx.                            | X                   |    | 3                   | 3         |
| Pizitz<br>Birmingham, Al.                                | X                   |    | 3                   | 3         |

Table 3 (Continued)

| Sample Stores                         |      | Store Participation |            | Buyer Participation |             |
|---------------------------------------|------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------|
|                                       |      | Yes                 | No         | Requested           | Responded   |
| Porteous<br>Mitchell & Braun Co., Me. |      | X                   |            | 3                   | 1           |
| M. M. Cohn<br>Little Rock, Ar.        |      | X                   |            | 3                   | 2           |
| TOTAL                                 | n=15 | 13<br>86.7%         | 2<br>13.3% | 45<br>100%          | 33<br>73.3% |

buyers, sixteen Missy buyers, one activewear buyer, and one hosiery buyer. Each respondent indicated the purchase of one of the three garments, the total of which represented fifteen buyers who purchased London Jumpers, nine who purchased leggings, and nine who purchased oxford shirts.

### Demographics

The great majority of respondents were under 40 years of age, and predominantly female. Almost three-fourths of the buyers held Bachelor's Degrees, with the highest number of salaries reported between \$20,000 and \$29,999. Marital status was varied, but almost 50% were married. Seven out of nine U.S. Census geographical regions were represented with the majority of the respondents residing in the South-Central region (see Table 4).

The length of time as an apparel buyer ranged from less than one year to eighteen years, with the average being about six years (see Table 5). The same classification of merchandise had been bought from one to three years, with two years being the most frequent response. Length of time with their current company ranged from one to nine years, with the average being about seven-and-a-half years. All buyers had bought for only one or two apparel companies, with over three-fourths having bought for one.

Demographics, such as age, experience, education and income were considered influences in organizational buying

Table 4. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.

| Characteristic              | Frequency | Percent     |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| <u>Age</u>                  |           |             |
| 20-29                       | 12        | 38.7        |
| 30-39                       | 16        | 51.6        |
| 40-49                       | 2         | 6.5         |
| 60 and over                 | <u>1</u>  | <u>3.2</u>  |
|                             | n=31      | 100.0       |
| <u>Gender</u>               |           |             |
| Male                        | 5         | 16.1        |
| Female                      | <u>26</u> | <u>83.9</u> |
|                             | n=31      | 100.0       |
| <u>Education</u>            |           |             |
| Some High School            | 0         | 0.0         |
| High School                 | 4         | 12.9        |
| Some College                | 3         | 9.7         |
| Bachelor's Degree           | 23        | 74.2        |
| Master's Degree             | 1         | 3.2         |
| Ph.D., Ed.D., J.D., or M.D. | <u>0</u>  | <u>0.0</u>  |
|                             | n=31      | 100.0       |
| <u>Marital Status</u>       |           |             |
| Never Married               | 9         | 29.0        |
| Married                     | 15        | 48.4        |
| Divorced                    | 6         | 19.4        |
| Separated                   | 0         | 0.0         |
| Widowed                     | <u>1</u>  | <u>3.2</u>  |
|                             | n=31      | 100.0       |
| <u>Gross Income</u>         |           |             |
| \$10,000-\$14,999           | 6         | 22.0        |
| \$15,000-\$19,999           | 9         | 33.3        |
| \$20,000-\$29,999           | 12        | 44.7        |
| \$30,000-\$49,999           | 0         | 0.0         |
| \$50,000-\$69,999           | 0         | 0.0         |
| \$70,000 or more            | <u>0</u>  | <u>0.0</u>  |
|                             | n=31      | 100.0       |

Table 4 (Continued)

| Characteristic             | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------|
| <u>Geographical Region</u> |           |         |
| Pacific                    | 1         | 3.2     |
| Mountain                   | 0         | 0.0     |
| West South-Central         | 9         | 29.0    |
| East South-Central         | 8         | 25.8    |
| South Atlantic             | 0         | 0.0     |
| West North-Central         | 3         | 9.7     |
| East North-Central         | 2         | 6.5     |
| Mid Atlantic               | 4         | 12.9    |
| New England                | 4         | 12.9    |
|                            | n=31      | 100.0   |

Table 5. Buyer's Characteristics.

| Characteristics                                 | Number<br>of Years | Frequency       | Percent         |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Length of Time Buying<br>Apparel                | <1                 | 2               | 6.5             |
|                                                 | 1                  | 1               | 3.2             |
|                                                 | 2                  | 3               | 9.7             |
|                                                 | 3                  | 2               | 6.5             |
|                                                 | 4                  | 3               | 9.7             |
|                                                 | 5                  | 4               | 12.9            |
|                                                 | 6                  | 4               | 12.9            |
|                                                 | 7                  | 1               | 3.2             |
|                                                 | 8                  | 5               | 6.1             |
|                                                 | 9                  | 1               | 3.2             |
|                                                 | 10                 | 2               | 6.5             |
|                                                 | 15                 | 1               | 3.2             |
|                                                 | 18                 | 2               | 6.5             |
|                                                 |                    | <u>        </u> | <u>        </u> |
|                                                 |                    | n=31            | 100.0           |
| Length of Time Buying<br>Current Classification | <1                 | 2               | 6.5             |
|                                                 | 1                  | 6               | 19.4            |
|                                                 | 2                  | 8               | 25.8            |
|                                                 | 3                  | 4               | 12.9            |
|                                                 | 4                  | 2               | 6.5             |
|                                                 | 5                  | 4               | 12.9            |
|                                                 | 6                  | 2               | 6.5             |
|                                                 | 8                  | 1               | 3.2             |
|                                                 | 12                 | 1               | 3.2             |
|                                                 | 18                 | 1               | 3.2             |
|                                                 |                    | <u>        </u> | <u>        </u> |
|                                                 |                    | n=31            | 100.0           |
| Length of Time With<br>Current Company          | 1                  | 1               | 3.2             |
|                                                 | 2                  | 2               | 6.5             |
|                                                 | 3                  | 3               | 9.7             |
|                                                 | 4                  | 3               | 9.7             |
|                                                 | 5                  | 5               | 16.1            |
|                                                 | 6                  | 3               | 9.7             |
|                                                 | 7                  | 2               | 6.5             |
|                                                 | 8                  | 3               | 9.7             |
|                                                 | 9                  | 1               | 3.2             |
|                                                 |                    | <u>        </u> | <u>        </u> |
|                                                 |                    | n=31            | 100.0           |

Table 5 (Continued)

| Characteristics   | Number<br>of Years                         | Frequency | Percent     |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
|                   | <u>Number of<br/>Apparel<br/>Companies</u> |           |             |
| Number Bought For | 1                                          | 24        | 77.4        |
|                   | 2                                          | <u>7</u>  | <u>22.6</u> |
|                   |                                            | n=31      | 100.0       |

research by Ozanne and Churchill (1972), Webster and Wind (1972), Taylor (1985) and Thomas (1982), however, were not categorized as such in this study. Marital status and residing geographical location were not found to be influencing factors in past research, but included in this study as demographic information. Length of company service and the buyer's income was also revealed by Ozanne and Churchill (1972) to affect organizational purchases. The number of years in purchasing, along with the volume responsibility, were shown to be important variables in Crow and Lindquist's (1985, p. 51) study of organizational and buyer characteristics.

#### Hypothesis I - Differences By Degree of Newness of Garment

Null Hypothesis I: There is no difference in the influence on the purchase decision due to the degree of newness of garments.

In order to determine if the degree of newness of the three garments had an effect upon the influences of the purchase decision, Duncan's Multiple Range Test was performed. The responses to nine questions showed a significant difference in the three levels of newness of the garments: the London Jumper being new fashion, the leggings being ongoing fashion, and the oxford shirt being classic fashion. Table 6 shows the significant differences by garment type and influences.

Table 6. Results of Duncan's Multiple Range Test.

| Question                             | Garment       | Duncan Grouping | Mean* | N  |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------|----|
| B3<br>Competition                    | London Jumper | A               | 3.40  | 15 |
|                                      | Leggings      | B               | 2.67  | 9  |
|                                      | Oxford Shirt  | B               | 1.78  | 9  |
| B5<br>Styling                        | London Jumper | A               | 4.47  | 15 |
|                                      | Leggings      | B               | 4.22  | 9  |
|                                      | Oxford Shirt  | B               | 3.44  | 9  |
| B1<br>Market<br>Direction            | London Jumper | A               | 4.33  | 15 |
|                                      | Leggings      | A               | 3.89  | 9  |
|                                      | Oxford Shirt  | B               | 2.78  | 9  |
| B13<br>Reorder<br>Ability            | London Jumper | A               | 3.87  | 15 |
|                                      | Leggings      | A               | 4.00  | 9  |
|                                      | Oxford Shirt  | B               | 2.22  | 9  |
| B17<br>Repeated<br>Media<br>Exposure | London Jumper | A               | 3.47  | 15 |
|                                      | Leggings      | A               | 3.22  | 9  |
|                                      | Oxford Shirt  | B               | 1.56  | 9  |
| B31<br>Buying<br>Initiative          | London Jumper | A               | 4.00  | 15 |
|                                      | Leggings      | A               | 4.00  | 9  |
|                                      | Oxford Shirt  | B               | 2.89  | 9  |
| B21<br>Key Item<br>Direction         | London Jumper | B               | 4.47  | 15 |
|                                      | Leggings      | A               | 4.67  | 9  |
|                                      | Oxford Shirt  | B               | 3.78  | 9  |
| C5<br>Openmindedness                 | London Jumper | B               | 4.11  | 15 |
|                                      | Leggings      | A               | 4.67  | 9  |
|                                      | Oxford Shirt  | B               | 4.33  | 9  |
| B36<br>Planned<br>Promotion          | London Jumper | B               | 2.73  | 15 |
|                                      | Leggings      | B               | 2.56  | 9  |
|                                      | Oxford Shirt  | A               | 4.22  | 9  |

\*Means with a different letter are significantly different at the .05 level.

Competition and styling had more influence on the buying decision when the purchase was the London Jumper than when it was Leggings or Oxford Shirt. Logically, having the very newest item would help beat the retail competition, and styling would be the factor which makes the item new or novel.

In the case of four items the London Jumper was grouped with Leggings, showing more influence when purchasing these items than when purchasing the Oxford Shirt. Market direction, reorderability, repeated media exposure, and buying initiative exerted more influence when buyers purchased the new or somewhat new (ongoing) fashion items. It seems reasonable that these first three influences would have great effect on the purchase of new and ongoing fashion. However, logic suggests that more buyer initiative would be needed to purchase a newer item than a somewhat new item, or the classic, which is contrary to this data.

Two items showed the London Jumper and the Oxford Shirt grouped together as significantly different from the Leggings. These two influences were key item and open-mindedness. The ongoing garment is naturally a good choice for being a key item because it, or something similar to it, was tested and proven successful at retail the previous season. Where as the newest fashion garment is unlikely to have been tested enough, or the classic garment found exciting enough, to be a key item, why openmindedness had

more influence on the ongoing fashion than either the new fashion or classic fashion garment is unclear.

One item, planned promotion, showed greater influence on the purchase of the Oxford Shirt than either the jumper or the leggings. Would the buyer heavily purchasing Oxford Shirts only do so if a promotion were planned?

Table 7 lists the influences that vary due to fashion newness of the garments by major category of influence. Amount of influence for all questions were determined from either of the two Likert-scale measures. Parts A and B used "no influence" to "great influence" and Part C used "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," with values from 1-5, respectively. The range of possible scores was 33 through 165 for all questions.

Environmental influences included styling, market direction, reorderability, media exposure and competition. Organizational influences were key item and planned promotion, and the individual influences were openmindedness and initiative.

Styling (Question B5), market direction (Question B1), buyer's initiative (Question B31), repeated media exposure (Question B17) and competition held the highest influence in the purchase of the London Jumper. The leggings purchased showed the most influence attributed to reorder ability (Question B13), purchased as a "key item" (Question B21) and buyer's initiative (Question C5).

Table 7. Questions With Significant Differences Due to Degree of Newness of Garments.

| Question | Influence         | Category<br>of<br>Influence** | No<br>Influence |          |   | Little<br>Influence |          |      | Some<br>Influence |          |    | Moderate<br>Influence |          |      | Great<br>Influence |          |     | Total             |
|----------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------|---|---------------------|----------|------|-------------------|----------|----|-----------------------|----------|------|--------------------|----------|-----|-------------------|
|          |                   |                               | (1)<br>N*       | (1)<br>% |   | (2)<br>N*           | (2)<br>% |      | (3)<br>N*         | (3)<br>% |    | (4)<br>N*             | (4)<br>% |      | (5)<br>N*          | (5)<br>% |     |                   |
|          |                   |                               |                 |          |   |                     |          |      |                   |          |    |                       |          |      |                    |          |     | Weighted<br>Score |
| C 5      | Openmindedness    | I                             | 0               | 0.0      | 0 | 0.0                 | 0        | 0.0  | 1                 | 3.0      | 19 | 57.6                  | 13       | 39.4 | 33                 | 33       | 144 |                   |
| B 21     | Key Seasonal Item | O                             | 1               | 3.0      | 0 | 0.0                 | 0        | 0.0  | 4                 | 12.1     | 10 | 30.3                  | 18       | 54.5 | 33                 | 33       | 143 |                   |
| B 5      | Styling           | E                             | 0               | 0.0      | 3 | 9.1                 | 4        | 12.1 | 4                 | 12.1     | 12 | 36.4                  | 14       | 42.4 | 33                 | 33       | 136 |                   |
| B 1      | Market Direction  | E                             | 2               | 6.1      | 1 | 3.0                 | 8        | 24.2 | 13                | 39.4     | 9  | 27.3                  | 33       | 125  |                    |          |     |                   |
| B 31     | Initiative        | I                             | 2               | 6.1      | 2 | 6.1                 | 7        | 21.1 | 15                | 45.5     | 7  | 21.1                  | 33       | 122  |                    |          |     |                   |
| B 13     | Reorderability    | E                             | 4               | 12.1     | 4 | 12.1                | 8        | 24.2 | 7                 | 21.2     | 10 | 30.3                  | 33       | 114  |                    |          |     |                   |
| B 36     | Planned Promotion | O                             | 9               | 27.3     | 4 | 12.1                | 5        | 15.2 | 5                 | 15.2     | 10 | 30.3                  | 33       | 102  |                    |          |     |                   |
| B 17     | Media Exposure    | E                             | 8               | 24.2     | 5 | 15.2                | 8        | 24.2 | 7                 | 21.2     | 5  | 15.2                  | 33       | 95   |                    |          |     |                   |
| B 3      | Competition       | E                             | 9               | 27.3     | 7 | 21.2                | 7        | 21.2 | 3                 | 9.1      | 7  | 21.2                  | 33       | 91   |                    |          |     |                   |

\*N = number given this response

\*\*E = environmental; O = organizational; I = individual

The least influence was involved in the purchase of the oxford shirt. Only planned promotion (Question B36) held a high influence. As a basic garment this seems reasonable, as it would most likely be promoted at a price.

Null hypothesis I was not accepted because nine differences out of 37 were found in influences felt when making the purchase decision by garment, meaning that type of garment purchased affected the merchandising strategy used in the decision making.

The results from the data for hypothesis I supported the literature findings. Taylor (1985, p. 144) found styling, market direction, media exposure, and competition influential in retail buyer's purchasing. Reorderability and reputation and reliability of vendor were found to be influences in organizational purchasing by Lehman and O'Shaunessy (1974, p. 39) and Webster and Wind (1972, p. 485). Openmindedness and buyer's initiative were supported as personality, or individual influences, in organizational purchasing by Howard (1973, p. 424), and Sheth (1973, p. 53), Webster and Wind (1972, p. 11), respectively.

The three garments used in the study differed considerably in physical structure and the emphasis on the level of exposure given to the item by the fashion industry. The differing levels of influence of these garments may well be reflecting the structural and marketing differences.

All nine questions, however, showed some influence in the purchase of all three garments. The six that showed a high degree of influence were: openmindedness, key item, styling, market direction, buyer initiative, and reorderability. Weighted scores were over 100 for these seven questions. With the possible range of scores being 33-165, these six questions showed considerable influence upon the buyer.

Results from data for Null Hypothesis I supported the research done by Campbell (1985), Lehman and O'Shaughnessy (1982), Möller (1985), and Webster and Wind (1972) that the degree and variety of influences varies depending on the type of merchandise purchased.

Thirty-seven of 46 questions that were Likert-scaled showed no significant mean differences between garment types and were included in the testing of the other four hypotheses. The remaining hypotheses were analyzed by frequency and percentage distribution. Weighted scores were also computed for all questions to determine the most and least influential questions.

#### Hypothesis II - Environmental Influences

Null Hypothesis II was: Environmental elements have no influence on the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision.

Four major environmental groups of influence were represented on the questionnaire: vendor, customer,

marketing, and competition. Fourteen separate influences were classified within the major groups. Significant differences between garment's fashion newness were found for five of these influences: market direction, media, competitor, styling, and reordering. With the elimination of these influences, two major groups resulted in being discarded from analysis within environmental influences: marketing and competition.

Part B of the instrument contained eleven questions to ascertain the amount of environmental influence on the buyer's purchase. These questions covered the vendor and customer variables (see Table 8).

The vendor attributes affecting the purchase included vendor recommendation, support, cost, and whether or not the resource was proven, or used successfully in the past (Question B2). Almost two-thirds of the buyers reported cost (Question B10) showing the greatest influence. Over half of the answers indicated that proven resource (Question B2) resulted in some and moderate influence. Vendor recommendation (Question B7) showed no influence in a fourth of the responses, and over two-thirds showed some to moderate influence. Vendor support (Question B15), which includes all selling aids, markdown allowance, co-op advertising, had no influence for the greatest number of responses.

Table 8. Response Frequency Distribution of Environmental Influences Questions.

| Ques-<br>tion | Sub-<br>group** | Influence                | No<br>Influence |      | Little<br>Influence |      | Some<br>Influence |      | Moderate<br>Influence |      | Great<br>Influence |      | Total |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------|---------------------|------|-------------------|------|-----------------------|------|--------------------|------|-------|
|               |                 |                          | N*              | %    | N*                  | %    | N*                | %    | N*                    | %    | N*                 | %    |       |
| B 6           | C               | Sales                    | 0               | 0.0  | 0                   | 0.0  | 0                 | 0.0  | 8                     | 24.2 | 25                 | 75.8 | 33    |
| B 10          | V               | Cost                     | 1               | 3.0  | 0                   | 0.0  | 2                 | 6.1  | 11                    | 33.3 | 19                 | 57.6 | 33    |
| B 14          | C               | Good Buy                 | 2               | 6.1  | 0                   | 0.0  | 3                 | 9.1  | 10                    | 30.3 | 18                 | 54.5 | 33    |
| B 11          | C               | Color(s)                 | 1               | 6.1  | 0                   | 0.0  | 3                 | 9.1  | 16                    | 48.5 | 13                 | 39.4 | 33    |
| B 9           | C               | Fiber Type               | 0               | 0.0  | 2                   | 6.1  | 1                 | 3.0  | 21                    | 63.6 | 9                  | 27.3 | 33    |
| B 12          | C               | Ease-of-Care             | 0               | 0.0  | 5                   | 15.0 | 5                 | 15.0 | 17                    | 51.5 | 6                  | 18.2 | 33    |
| B 2           | V               | Proven Resource          | 3               | 9.1  | 1                   | 3.0  | 7                 | 21.1 | 13                    | 39.4 | 9                  | 27.3 | 33    |
| B 16          | C               | Fiber Content            | 2               | 6.1  | 3                   | 9.1  | 12                | 36.4 | 13                    | 39.4 | 3                  | 9.1  | 33    |
| B 7           | V               | Vendor<br>Recommendation | 8               | 25.0 | 3                   | 9.4  | 10                | 31.3 | 10                    | 31.3 | 1                  | 3.1  | 32    |
| B 4           | C               | Fit                      | 1               | 3.1  | 0                   | 0.0  | 9                 | 28.1 | 12                    | 37.5 | 10                 | 31.3 | 32    |
| B 15          | V               | Vendor Support           | 15              | 45.5 | 8                   | 24.2 | 2                 | 6.1  | 3                     | 9.1  | 5                  | 15.2 | 33    |
|               |                 |                          |                 |      |                     |      |                   |      |                       |      |                    |      | 74    |

\*N = number given this response

\*\*C = Customer; V = Vendor

Customer concern included fiber, fit, color, ease of care, customer acceptance, and whether or not the purchase was a "good buy." Over three-fourths of the buyers stated that expected customer acceptance, i.e., sales (Question B6) had a great influence. Customer's acceptance of fiber was predominantly of moderate influence, while the buyer's acceptance of fiber was almost equally split between some and moderate influence. Color and whether or not the garment was a good buy showed primarily moderate and great influence. Garment fit and ease of care revealed over two-thirds of the buyer's indicating some to moderate influence.

Null Hypothesis II was not accepted as all eleven influences showed an effect on the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision. The weighted scores for seven out of nine environmental influences, fit and vendor support, were over 100, indicating considerable influence coming from the environment. The customer acceptance (sales), customer acceptance of fiber, ease of care, and whether the garment would be a "good buy" were influences that Webster and Wind (1972, p. 49) and Taylor (1985, p. 144) revealed as related to the customer choice in decision making. Retail competition was recognized by Taylor (1985) as an element of influence. Lehman and O'Shaunessy (1974, p. 39), and Sheth (1973, p. 53) found past vendor relations a great influence in organizational purchasing, and being a proven resource,

vendor support, and vendor recommendation could all be classified in this group. Cost of the garment in this research related to the price of goods that Handelsman and Munson (1985, p. 111) and Webster and Wind (1972, p. 485) found to be a strong influencing factor.

Expected customer acceptance (sales) showed the greatest influence of all elements used in the study, with over 75% of respondents stating it had great influence. Cost of the garments was also shown to be of great influence with more than half of the buyers showing "great influence." Vendor support and vendor recommendation held primarily "no influence." Fit, color(s), fiber type, ease of care, and whether or not the purchase was a "good buy" resulted in primarily some to great influence.

### Hypothesis III - Organizational Influence

Null Hypothesis III: Organizational elements have no influence on the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision.

Two major organizational groups of influence were represented on the questionnaire: the company's situational dimension and the assortment dimension. Within these groups were eleven total influences. Significant differences between garment types were found for two of these influences: key seasonal item and planned promotion.

Two open-ended questions in Part A and nine Likert scale questions, from no influence to great influence, in

Part B of the instrument pertained to organizational influences. In addition, store and department sales volume was requested as optional in the introduction of the questionnaire

The nine questions used to ascertain the amount of organizational influence on the buyer's purchase testing Null Hypothesis III included the company's situational and assortment dimensions.

Store sales were given by eight buyers representing six stores, and department sales were reported by eleven buyers representing seven stores. The store sales ranged from \$30 million to \$40 million and department sales ranged from \$1 million to \$4 million (see Table 9). All buyers answered the two open-ended questions that reflected company size. The number of stores bought for showed a wide range, with no extreme frequency. All bought for more than one store, and about half bought for eight stores. Market trips were taken by almost half the buyers every four or five weeks (see Table 10a).

The Likert-scale questions included the company situational dimension (responsibility) and the assortment dimension. The responses to organizational influences are shown in Table 10b, with the variables listed in order of influence.

The planned retail, planned sales volume, and retail price structure all showed over a third of the buyers

Table 9. Store and Department Sales.

| Store<br>Sales<br>(in millions) | Number<br>of<br>Stores | Department<br>Sales<br>(in millions) | Number<br>of<br>Buyers |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| \$400                           | 1                      | \$4                                  | 1                      |
| \$220                           | 1                      | \$3                                  | 2                      |
| \$ 44                           | 1                      | \$2                                  | 3                      |
| \$ 40                           | 2                      | \$1                                  | 5                      |
| \$ 30                           | <u>1</u>               |                                      | —                      |
| TOTAL                           | 6                      |                                      | 11                     |

Table 10a. Response Frequency Distribution of  
Organizational Influences Questions.

| Question                      | Subgroup  | Number | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------|-----------|---------|
| NUMBER OF STORES BOUGHT FOR   |           |        |           |         |
| A 5                           | Situation | 3      | 3         | 9.7     |
|                               |           | 4      | 3         | 9.7     |
|                               |           | 5      | 2         | 6.5     |
|                               |           | 6      | 1         | 3.2     |
|                               |           | 9      | 3         | 9.7     |
|                               |           | 10     | 3         | 9.7     |
|                               |           | 11     | 3         | 9.7     |
|                               |           | 13     | 3         | 9.7     |
|                               |           | 16     | 3         | 9.7     |
|                               |           | 19     | 2         | 6.5     |
|                               |           | 21     | 1         | 3.2     |
|                               |           | 22     | 1         | 3.2     |
|                               |           | 23     | 2         | 6.5     |
|                               |           | 27     | 1         | 3.2     |
| NUMBER OF ANNUAL MARKET TRIPS |           |        |           |         |
| A 6                           | Situation | 5      | 1         | 3.2     |
|                               |           | 6      | 1         | 3.2     |
|                               |           | 7      | 1         | 3.2     |
|                               |           | 8      | 7         | 22.6    |
|                               |           | 9      | 1         | 3.2     |
|                               |           | 10     | 12        | 38.7    |
|                               |           | 12     | 3         | 9.7     |
|                               |           | 24     | 1         | 3.2     |
|                               |           | 25     | 1         | 3.2     |
|                               |           | 35     | 1         | 3.2     |
|                               |           | 48     | 1         | 3.2     |
|                               |           | 52     | 1         | 3.2     |

Table 10b. Response Frequency Distribution of Organizational Influences Questions.

| Ques-<br>tion | Sub-<br>group** | Influence                               | No<br>Influence |      | Little<br>Influence |      | Some<br>Influence |      | Moderate<br>Influence |      | Great<br>Influence |                   | Total |     |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|------|---------------------|------|-------------------|------|-----------------------|------|--------------------|-------------------|-------|-----|
|               |                 |                                         | N*              | %    | N*                  | %    | N*                | %    | N*                    | %    | N*                 | %                 |       |     |
|               |                 |                                         | (1)             | (2)  | (3)                 | (4)  | (5)               |      |                       |      |                    | Weighted<br>Score |       |     |
| B 23          | S               | Planned Retail                          | 1               | 3.0  | 1                   | 3.0  | 6                 | 18.2 | 13                    | 39.4 | 12                 | 36.4              | 33    | 133 |
| B 24          | A               | Merchandise Mix                         | 1               | 3.0  | 2                   | 6.1  | 6                 | 18.2 | 13                    | 39.4 | 11                 | 33.3              | 33    | 130 |
| B 20          | S               | Planned Sales<br>Volume                 | 4               | 12.1 | 2                   | 6.1  | 4                 | 12.1 | 13                    | 39.4 | 10                 | 30.3              | 33    | 122 |
| B 25          | A               | Assortment Plan                         | 1               | 3.0  | 4                   | 12.1 | 7                 | 21.2 | 13                    | 39.4 | 8                  | 24.2              | 33    | 122 |
| B 18          | S               | Previous Sales<br>of Same Garment       | 7               | 21.2 | 1                   | 3.0  | 4                 | 12.1 | 6                     | 18.2 | 15                 | 45.5              | 33    | 120 |
| B 27          | S               | Retail Price<br>Structure               | 6               | 18.8 | 4                   | 12.5 | 0                 | 0.0  | 10                    | 31.3 | 12                 | 37.5              | 32    | 114 |
| B 19          | S               | Previous Sales<br>of Similar<br>Garment | 8               | 24.2 | 1                   | 3.0  | 6                 | 18.2 | 9                     | 27.3 | 9                  | 27.3              | 33    | 109 |
| B 22          | S               | Open-to-Buy<br>Dollars                  | 12              | 36.4 | 4                   | 12.1 | 7                 | 21.2 | 5                     | 15.2 | 5                  | 15.2              | 33    | 86  |
| B 26          | S               | Extra Money                             | 21              | 65.6 | 4                   | 12.5 | 2                 | 6.3  | 3                     | 9.4  | 2                  | 6.3               | 32    | 57  |

\*N = number given response

\*\*S = Situational; A = Assortment

answering great influence. Previous sales of the same garment was shown to have great influence in almost half the respondents, indicating that fifteen buyers had previously purchased the same item and were participating in a straight rebuy. Previous sales of a similar garment had no influence in eight cases, yet great influence in nine cases. This may be indicative of nine incidents of modified rebuy and eight incidents of new buy.

Previous sales of the same garment had the greatest influence on the purchase decision, so apparently the merchandise had been at least tested before this purchase. Planned retail and retail price structure resulted in the next greatest influence. Open-to-buy dollars and the granting of extra money showed the least influence in the purchase decision.

Merchandise mix showed great influence in over a third of the buyers. A quarter of the buyers indicated that assortment plan had a great influence on the purchase. Two-thirds of the buyers said that open-to-buy dollars and granting of extra money had no influence on the purchase (see Table 10b).

Null Hypothesis III was not accepted as all nine group influence elements showed effect on the buyer's purchase decision. Both groups of organizational influence, company's situational and assortment dimensions, were found to be relevant. Seven of the nine elements had weighted

scores over 100, meaning organizational elements had considerable influence on the retail apparel buyers purchase decision.

Webster and Wind's (1972, pp. 485-486) study on organizational purchasing and Taylor's (1985, pp. 122 & 444) study of the retail buyer both revealed sales, budget restraints, and inventory as important variables in the organizational purchase decision.

Store and department volume, number of stores bought for, and number of annual market trips were not found as influences in the literature; however, past experience by the researcher warranted the inclusion of these two variables.

#### Hypothesis IV - Group Influence

Null Hypothesis IV: Group elements have no influence on the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision.

Group influences on the questionnaire consisted of four buying center members: the General Merchandise Manager, the Divisional Merchandise Manager, the Buying Office, and other buyers. Six questions measured group influence: two in the Introduction and four in Part B.

Approval and repeated requests of approval for the purchase were asked in the Introduction and not answered by two buyers (n=29). Out of 29 buyers, approval was needed by eleven, and repeated approval was needed by only three (see

Table 11a). This group of buyers seem to be freer than some to make decisions on their own.

Four buying center members were included in this portion of questions. The Divisional Merchandise Manager was said to have the most influence, with over half the respondents reporting moderate to great influence. The Divisional Merchandise Manager is usually the buyer's superior who gives approval to purchase orders, however, no approval was given to the majority of buyers, yet their Divisionals had moderate to great influence. The buying office influence was split with approximately a third of the respondents stating no influence and another third stating moderate influence. The General Merchandise Manager was reported as having little or no influence in the purchase by over half of the buyers. The influence of another buyer held the least importance, with over two-thirds reporting no influence (see Table 11b).

All members of the buying group revealed some influence by the buyers, so the null hypothesis was not accepted. However, only the Divisional Merchandise Manager received a weighted score over 100, meaning group influences on the buyer are not considerable. The four members tested did show influence. Webster and Wind (1972) and Zaltman and Bonoma (1977) did research involved with the buying center members finding them to hold influence in the purchasing agent's decision making.

Table 11a. Response Frequency Distribution of Group Influences Questions.

| Questions | Influence                | Yes   |       | No    |       | N  |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----|
|           |                          | Freq. | %     | Freq. | %     |    |
| Intro. 1  | Approval from a superior | 11    | 37.93 | 18    | 62.07 | 29 |
| Intro. 2  | Approval more than once  | 3     | 10.34 | 26    | 89.66 | 29 |

Table 11b. Response Frequency Distribution of Group Influences Questions.

| Ques-<br>tion | Influence                         | No<br>Influence |      | Little<br>Influence |      | Some<br>Influence |      | Moderate<br>Influence |      | Great<br>Influence |      | Total |     |     |    |   |     |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------|---------------------|------|-------------------|------|-----------------------|------|--------------------|------|-------|-----|-----|----|---|-----|
|               |                                   | N*              | %    | (1)                 | N*   | %                 | (2)  | N*                    | %    | (3)                | N*   |       | %   | (4) | N* | % | (5) |
| B 35          | Divisional<br>Merchandise Manager | 6               | 18.2 | 6                   | 18.2 | 4                 | 12.1 | 12                    | 36.4 | 5                  | 15.2 | 33    | 103 |     |    |   |     |
| B 33          | Buying Office                     | 9               | 27.3 | 4                   | 12.1 | 6                 | 18.2 | 11                    | 33.3 | 3                  | 9.1  | 33    | 94  |     |    |   |     |
| B 32          | General Merchandise<br>Manager    | 11              | 33.3 | 8                   | 24.2 | 6                 | 18.2 | 4                     | 12.1 | 4                  | 12.1 | 33    | 81  |     |    |   |     |
| B 34          | Another Buyer                     | 22              | 66.7 | 5                   | 15.2 | 4                 | 12.1 | 2                     | 6.1  | 0                  | 0.0  | 33    | 52  |     |    |   |     |

\*N = number given response

### Hypothesis V - Individual Influence

Null Hypothesis V: Individual elements have no influence on the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision.

The questionnaire contained two major categories of individual influences: psychological influences and purchase influences. Eleven separate influences were classified within the two categories. Significant differences between garment type were found for two influences, buyer initiative and openmindedness, therefore, they were eliminated from analysis.

Individual influences were measured by nine questions, four in Part B and five in Part C of the instrument. The purchase influences were reported in Part B and the individual psychological attributes were reported in Part C of the questionnaire.

All the psychological influences that were tested in Hypothesis V, perception, attitude, perceived risk, goals, initiative, self-confidence, self-perception, and innovativeness/individual elements were found to be relevant with all having a weighted score of over 100 (see Table 12a). These same influences were found to be important organizational purchasing influences by Webster and Wind (1972). Howard (1973) studied self-confidence, self-perception, and innovativeness finding them to be psychological traits that affected the purchase decision of buyers.

Table 12a. Response Frequency Distribution of Individual Influences Questions.

| Ques-<br>tion | Sub-<br>Group** | Influence              | Strongly<br>Disagree |          |    |          |    | Strongly<br>Agree |    |          |    |          | Total |      |                   |     |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------|----|----------|----|-------------------|----|----------|----|----------|-------|------|-------------------|-----|
|               |                 |                        | F*                   | (1)<br>% | N* | (2)<br>% | N* | (3)<br>%          | N* | (4)<br>% | N* | (5)<br>% |       | N*   | Weighted<br>Score |     |
| C 1           | PS              | Desire to<br>Achieve   | 0                    | 0.0      | 0  | 0.0      | 0  | 0.0               | 0  | 0.0      | 5  | 15.2     | 28    | 84.8 | 33                | 160 |
| C 2           | PS              | Confidence             | 0                    | 0.0      | 0  | 0.0      | 0  | 0.0               | 1  | 3.0      | 10 | 30.3     | 22    | 66.7 | 33                | 153 |
| C 3           | PS              | Aggressiveness         | 0                    | 0.0      | 0  | 0.0      | 0  | 0.0               | 3  | 9.1      | 17 | 51.5     | 13    | 39.4 | 33                | 142 |
| C 6           | PS              | Success<br>Aspirations | 0                    | 0.0      | 0  | 0.0      | 0  | 0.0               | 6  | 18.2     | 13 | 39.4     | 14    | 42.4 | 33                | 140 |
| C 4           | PS              | Innovativeness         | 0                    | 0.0      | 0  | 0.0      | 0  | 0.0               | 6  | 18.2     | 16 | 48.5     | 11    | 33.3 | 33                | 137 |

\*N = number given response

\*\*PS = psychological

The purchase variable with the greatest influence was perception to quality of the garment. Perceived risk also scored over 100. The least influence was uncertainty regarding the quantity bought (see Table 12b).

The null hypothesis was not accepted, as all the variables showed some influence. Personality characteristics revealed strong agreement by the buyers, particularly having a strong desire to achieve, and being confident as a buyer (see Table 12b).

#### Other Influences

The buyers were asked to list any other influences not contained in the questionnaire that may have affected their purchase (Part B, Question 37). Ten buyers responded, five for the London Jumper, four for the leggings, and three for the oxford shirt.

Twelve influences were given, with two influences stated twice, which were the Limited Stores success with the London Jumper, and planned promotion. Planned promotion, however, was included in the questionnaire (Question B36). The Limited Stores were the first retailer known by the researcher to introduce the London Jumper successfully. The other influences are listed in Table 13 by garment type purchased.

Table 12b. Response Frequency Distribution of Individual Influences Questions.

| Ques-<br>tion | Sub-<br>group** | Influence                            | No<br>Influence |      | Little<br>Influence |      | Some<br>Influence |      | Moderate<br>Influence |      | Great<br>Influence |      | Total |     |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|------|---------------------|------|-------------------|------|-----------------------|------|--------------------|------|-------|-----|
|               |                 |                                      | N*              | %    | N*                  | %    | N*                | %    | N*                    | %    | N*                 | %    |       |     |
| B 8           | P               | Quality                              | 0               | 0.0  | 0                   | 0.0  | 2                 | 6.1  | 14                    | 42.4 | 17                 | 51.5 | 33    | 147 |
| B 29          | P               | Perceived Risk                       | 5               | 15.6 | 2                   | 6.3  | 8                 | 25.0 | 9                     | 28.1 | 8                  | 25.0 | 32    | 109 |
| B 28          | P               | Buyer<br>Preference                  | 9               | 27.3 | 2                   | 6.1  | 8                 | 24.2 | 10                    | 30.3 | 4                  | 12.1 | 33    | 97  |
| B30           | P               | Uncertainty<br>Regarding<br>Quantity | 8               | 25.0 | 6                   | 18.8 | 9                 | 28.1 | 6                     | 18.8 | 3                  | 9.4  | 32    | 86  |

\*N = number given response

\*\*P = Purchase

Table 13. Additional Purchase Influences.

| Garment       | Influence                                                                                               |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| London Jumper | Replaced shaker sweater and Limited Stores success.<br>Item intensification.<br>Anniversary business.   |
| Leggings      | Timely delivery.<br>Importance of knits.<br>Coordinating with an order.<br>Excellent price and quality. |
| Oxford Shirt  | Always sold for fall.<br>Basic Back-to-School item.<br>Expected moderate sales.                         |

### Summary

Total weighted scores revealed the degree of influence of all 42 Likert-scale questions tested. Some conclusions can be drawn as to the most important and least important influences reflected in the purchases of this study based on the weighted scores. Possible weighted scores for n=33 were 33-165, and for n=32, 32-160. The highest score found was 160 (desire to achieve), and the lowest score was 52 (another buyer).

Scores of above 130 indicate high influence in the purchasing decision and sixteen total questions reveal this. Three of the nine questions that showed significant differences between the fashionability of garments scored high, including one environmental, one organizational, and one individual influence. No group members showed high influence. Table 14 lists the weighted scores of all influences.

Moderate influence is shown with scores from 100-129. These include six organizational influences, four influences with significant differences, two environmental and one individual, four environmental, and one group. Low influence is regarded as scores below 99 and include three group, two environmental, two organizational, two individual and two with significant differences that were environmental.

Table 14. Weighted Scores.

| Influence                                        | Total<br>Weighted<br>Score |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| INFLUENCES FOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GARMENT TYPES |                            |
| Openmindedness                                   | 144                        |
| Key seasonal item                                | 143                        |
| Styling                                          | 136                        |
| Market direction                                 | 125                        |
| Buyer Initiative                                 | 122                        |
| Reorderability                                   | 114                        |
| Planned promotion                                | 102                        |
| Media exposure                                   | 95                         |
| Competition                                      | 91                         |
| ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES                         |                            |
| Expected customer acceptance (sales)             | 157                        |
| Cost                                             | 145                        |
| "Good Buy"                                       | 141                        |
| Color(s)                                         | 139                        |
| Fiber type                                       | 136                        |
| Ease-of-care                                     | 123                        |
| Proven resource                                  | 123                        |
| Fiber content                                    | 111                        |
| Vendor recommendation                            | 109                        |
| Fit                                              | 98                         |
| Vendor support                                   | 74                         |
| ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCES                        |                            |
| Planned retail                                   | 133                        |
| Merchandise mix                                  | 130                        |
| Planned sales volume                             | 122                        |
| Assortment plan                                  | 122                        |
| Previous sales - same garment                    | 120                        |
| Retail price structure                           | 114                        |
| Previous sales - similar garment                 | 109                        |
| Open-to-buy                                      | 86                         |
| Extra money                                      | 57                         |

Table 14 (Continued)

| Influence                      | Total<br>Weighted<br>Score |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| GROUP INFLUENCES               |                            |
| Divisional Merchandise Manager | 103                        |
| Buying Office                  | 94                         |
| General Merchandise Manager    | 81                         |
| Another buyer                  | 52                         |
| INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCES          |                            |
| Desire to achieve              | 160                        |
| Self-confidence                | 153                        |
| Perception to quality          | 147                        |
| Aggressiveness                 | 142                        |
| Aspirations for success        | 140                        |
| Innovativeness                 | 137                        |
| Perceived risk                 | 109                        |
| Buyer's preference to garment  | 97                         |
| Uncertainty of quantity        | 86                         |

Although significant differences in means were found on influences due to the newness of the three garment types, three of these nine influence questions were regarded as high and four held moderate influences. The environmental influences, styling, market direction, reorderability, media exposure, and competition are influences that would most likely vary between types of fashion garments. Higher styled garments would receive more market direction and media exposure than older styles. Reorderability would be important after the initial testing of a new fashion garment like the London Jumper. Competition carrying new items would also influence a buyer's selection of new items, as department store buyers are usually interested in obtaining the competitive edge. Key seasonal items and planned promotions are usually considered for new and/or classic garments. From these findings, the degree of fashion newness of a garment reasonably affects the purchase decision.

The highest influencing variables affecting the purchase were found to be in order: expected sales, perception to quality, cost, key seasonal item, being a good buy, color(s), fiber, styling, planned retail, and merchandise mix. Other individual, psychological variables with high scores were, in order of influence: openmindedness, aggressiveness, buyer's aspirations for success, and

innovativeness. It is hard, however, to speculate on the relationship of these psychological influences to the purchase decision.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter included the following segments:

- (1) Summary, (2) Conclusions, (3) Limitations of Findings,
- (4) Implications, and (5) Recommendation.

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the internal and external influences that affect the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision; more specifically, to identify the four major categories of influence and the separate influences within each category for three different styles of garments: new fashion, ongoing fashion, and classic fashion. The role of the apparel buyer within the decision making process was the theoretical framework of this research. Consumer and organizational purchasing were examined to identify all possible influences involved with a purchasing decision.

A mailed questionnaire containing 46 influence questions and ten demographic questions was used to test the five hypotheses (see page 36) having to do with newness of garment styles, and the four categories of influences, environmental, organizational, group, and individual, on a real purchase by thirty-one women's apparel buyers from thirteen department stores across the United States. All

five null hypotheses were rejected, meaning that degree of fashion newness of a garment, and environmental, organizational, group, and individual influences all affected the purchase decisions examined in this study. The buyer's role was seen to be multi-faceted and interrelated. The majority of influence questions showed no differences between type of garment and the degree of influence on the purchase. Most important influences by rank were found to be: expected sales, quality, cost, key seasonal item, being a good buy, color(s), fiber, styling, planned retail price, and merchandise mix. All forty-six influences tested did, however, show some influence in all cases.

### Conclusions

The findings reinforced Moller (1985) and Webster and Wind's (1972) research on the four interrelated categories of variables contributing to the buyer's purchase decision. They also allow for the conclusion that the distinctions between consumer and organizational buying decisions are unjustified as Fern and Brown (1984) and Webster and Wind (1978) proposed. There also seems to be no basis in differentiating between industrial organization buying decisions and other types of organizational buying decisions, such as the retail organization. As many researchers, such as Spekman and Stern (1979) and Webster and Wind (1978) have stated, organizations do not make

purchase decisions, individuals do, and whether the individual is within or outside of an organization appears to make no difference. The same factors influence the buyer of an organization and the consumer, with the exception of organizational influences.

A second conclusion is that the retail buyer, when in the role of decision maker for the purchase of goods, experiences a multitude of influences. These influences appear to be interrelated in the decision process.

Also, the type of merchandise bought affects the degree and variety of influences on the purchase decision. This substantiates the previous work by Campbell (1985), Lehman and O'Shaughnessy (1982), Möller (1985), and Webster and Wind (1972).

A proposed model of integrated influences on the retail buyer resulted from this research. It contains the four major categories of influence, environmental, organizational, group, and individual, along with the subcategories and specific influences found to be relevant to retail apparel buyer's purchasing decisions (see Figure 8). All elements contained on the questionnaire are included, as they were all shown to provide some influence. The ten highest ranking influences are noted in the model.

Part of the individual influences were the psychological subcategory. The psychological influences are included in the model as past researchers have determined

## EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

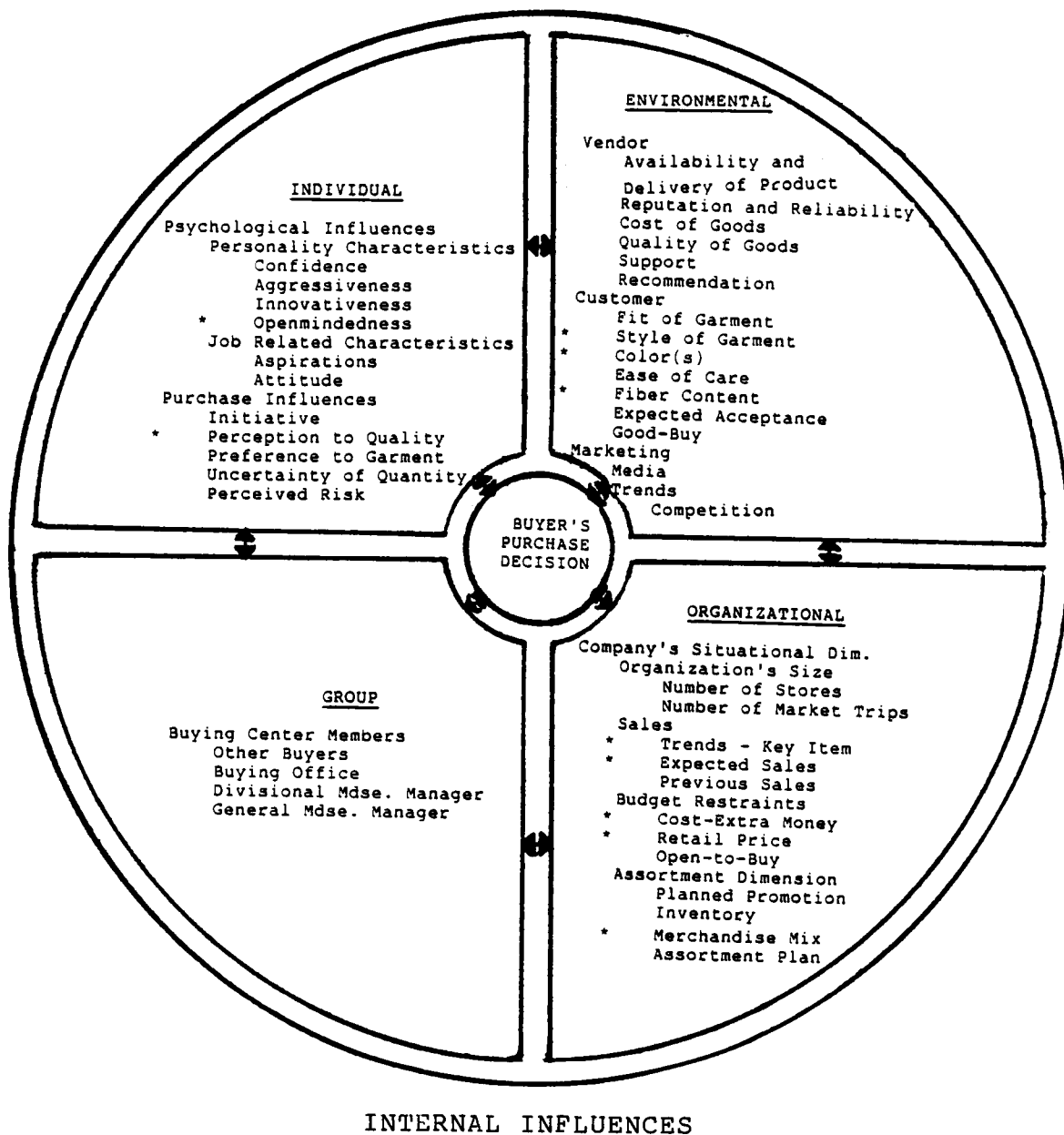


Figure 8. Proposed Model of Retail Buyer Purchasing Influences.

\*Indicates the 10 highest influencing elements.

that they have influence in decision making (Ozanne & Churchill, 1972; Taylor, 1985; Thomas, 1982; Webster & Wind, 1972; and Wilson & Little, 1971). However, it is difficult to speculate from the findings of this study the exact level of influence the psychological characteristics have on the merchandising strategy of purchasing because the respondents were not asked to rate the degree of influence these characteristics had on the purchase.

In addition, the respondents were just asked to report the demographics, rather than relate their influence on the purchase decision. In this respect they are similar to the psychological influences, but were not included in the model.

#### Limitations of Findings

1. The survey was limited to fifteen member stores of Fredrick Atkins Buying Office, therefore, the population studied may not be representative of all U.S. department stores.
2. Seven out of nine U.S. census geographical regions were represented; however, a more complete sample may have provided better regional representation.
3. The small sample size ( $n=33$ ) did not allow for testing of interaction between categories of influence and demographics.

4. Little literature existed on the category of group influences on the retail buyer's decision making, so the researcher generated the items. Additional group influences may exist and could be identified, providing a more complete description of group influences.
5. The environmental, group, and organizational influences may also contain other influences not identified in this study. Therefore, it seemed unwise to try to determine the weight of importance of each category of influence. The researcher was, however, able to establish the importance of the separate influences.

### Implications

This research has attempted to serve four major purposes by the identification of forty-two influences in the purchase decision of a retail apparel buyer. First, the results added to the concept and theory build-up of retail purchase decision making by eliminating the distinctions between consumer and organizational buying behavior by identifying the influences, their multiplicity and complexity in the retail purchase decision.

Secondly, these findings may result in researchers examining organizational buying behavior and possibly generate new research ideas. Thirdly, the results of this study will aid the retailer in better understanding internal decision making and improving the selection and training of successful buyers. Because influences vary depending on the type of merchandise purchased, the buyer needs to be flexible in assigning importance to the influences for each purchase decision. Having a set ranking of influences would be detrimental as the importance of influences should be determined by the type of merchandise bought. For example, when deciding to purchase a large volume item, the fact that it is a key item should have more influence than styling. However, when the buyer wants to beat the competition, the influence of styling should be considered more important than being a key item.

The fourth implication from this research is to improve vendors' understanding of the determinants of buyer decision making behavior, thus improving their marketing efforts to meet both the buyer and consumer's needs. Finally, the findings will aid educators in the training of potential retail buyers. Awareness as to the complexity of different influences necessary to purchase different types of fashion garments can be pointed out, and merchandising strategy formulated to successfully purchase different garments.

### Recommendations

This research has contributed to the understanding of the retail purchasing decision, however, there are other aspects that need to be explored.

- Specialty store buyers and department store buyers can be studied to compare the results and gain better understanding of overall retail buying behavior.
- The inclusion of additional types of buyers would further describe buyer's in general.
- The demographics, buyer characteristics, and psychological influences that have been identified in this research could be used in other studies to further explain the profile of retail apparel buyers and determine if these characteristics are pertinent to the purchase making decision. With a large national sample, these characteristics could be cross-tabulated with the separate influences to determine their affect.
- Additional questions could be asked, such as the number of garments bought to determine if volume affects influence and the retail price of the garment purchased, to see if there is a relationship between price and influences. The country of origin of garments could be requested to determine if it affects the influences. Whether the garments were a

new-buy, modified rebuy, or straight rebuy could make a difference on the influences and their levels of importance.

- Other buying group members may exist and should be identified. Four were identified by the researcher from her retail experience, however, more may be present. In addition, a method needs to be identified or developed to ascertain the importance each category of influences may hold in the retail purchasing decisions.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER, QUESTIONNAIRE, POSTCARD

REMINDER, AND HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

Dear Womenswear Buyer:

Opinions differ as to the important factors that influence the buyer's decision to purchase. You can help to identify the actual factors that current retail apparel buyers use in decision making by participation in this study.

The attached questionnaire will be used to determine what factors influenced you in your decision to purchase the following garments for this Fall and Winter season:

1. The London Jumper (sweater)
2. Knit Leggings
3. Oxford Button Down Shirt

For each garment that you have purchased, a separate questionnaire is required. Each questionnaire will take approximately ten to fifteen minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers. No employee names are requested. Only your retail store and department name, store and department sales volumes and other information needed for analysis of data within these categories. The questionnaire is divided into three sections, with separate instructions for each part.

Please answer all of the questions to the best of your ability. You may use the margins for any additional or explanatory comments that you would like to make.

Please return the completed questionnaire to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_. A summary of the survey will be sent to your \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you very much for your help in this research project.

Sincerely,

Judy K. Miler  
M.S. Candidate

Enclosure

Mary Frances Drake, Ph.D.  
Professor  
Major Research Advisor



1986 SURVEY OF RETAIL APPAREL BUYERS  
DEPARTMENT OF TEXTILES, MERCHANDISING AND DESIGN  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE 37996

card 1

Retail Store Name \_\_\_\_\_ (5-6) Department Name \_\_\_\_\_ (1-4)  
(7-8)

Store Annual Sales Volume \_\_\_\_\_ (9-10)  
(optional)

Department Annual Sales Volume \_\_\_\_\_ (11-12)

Please indicate which garment you are answering this  
questionnaire for:

London Jumper (sweater) \_\_\_\_\_ (13)

Knit Leggings \_\_\_\_\_

Oxford Button Down Shirt \_\_\_\_\_

Did you receive approval of this garment from a superior? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no (18)

Did you have to request approval of this garment more than \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no (19)  
once?

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Part A - THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REFER TO BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT YOU. PLEASE  
FILL IN THE NUMBER OR MAKE A CHECK IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACES FOR THE  
FOLLOWING QUESTIONS: (REMEMBER, THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS)

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1. How long have you been an apparel buyer? \_\_\_\_\_ (20-21)
2. How long have you been buying the current  
classification? \_\_\_\_\_ (22-23)
3. How long have you been with your current company? \_\_\_\_\_ (24-25)
4. How many retail apparel companies have you bought for? \_\_\_\_\_ (26-27)
5. How many stores do you currently buy for? \_\_\_\_\_ (28-29)
6. How often do you go to market a year? \_\_\_\_\_ (30-31)
7. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ (32-33)
8. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_ (34-35)
9. How many professional organizations do you belong to? \_\_\_\_\_ (36-37)
10. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (38-39)

\_\_\_\_\_ some High School

\_\_\_\_\_ High School

\_\_\_\_\_ some College

\_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's Degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Master's Degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Ph.D., Ed.D., J.D., or M.D.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please specify any other professional degree.

11. What is your martial status?

(40)

\_\_\_\_\_ never Married

\_\_\_\_\_ Married

\_\_\_\_\_ Divorced

\_\_\_\_\_ Separated

\_\_\_\_\_ Widowed

12. What was the total gross income that you earned last year?

(41)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10,000 - \$14,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15,000 - \$19,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20,000 - \$29,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$30,000 - \$49,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$50,000 - \$69,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$70,000 or more

13. In which geographic region do you live?

(42)

\_\_\_\_\_ Pacific (WA, OR, CA, AK, HA)

\_\_\_\_\_ Mountain (NV, ID, MT, AZ, NM, CO, WY, UT)

\_\_\_\_\_ West South-Central (TX, LA, OK, AR)

\_\_\_\_\_ East South-Central (MS, AL, TN, KY)

\_\_\_\_\_ South Atlantic (GA, FL, SC, NC, VA, WVA, DE, MD)

\_\_\_\_\_ West North-Central (ND, SD, NE, KS, MO, IA, MN)

\_\_\_\_\_ Mid Atlantic (NY, PA, NJ)

\_\_\_\_\_ New England (CT, RI, MA, NH, VT, MA)

**Part B** - PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS IN RELATION TO THE GARMENT YOU INDICATED ON PAGE ONE THAT YOU PURCHASED THIS FALL. CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER THAT INDICATES THE AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE EACH FACTOR HAD ON YOUR PURCHASE DECISION

NO INFLUENCE = 1  
 LITTLE INFLUENCE = 2  
 SOME INFLUENCE = 3  
 MODERATE INFLUENCE = 4  
 GREAT INFLUENCE = 5

No Influence  
 Little Influence  
 Some Influence  
 Moderate Influence  
 Great Influence

- 
1. To what extent did market direction influence your purchase? 1 2 3 4 5 (43)
  2. Did the fact that this garment was from a proven resource influence your purchase? 1 2 3 4 5 (44)
  3. Did knowledge of a competitor carrying this garment influence your decision to buy it? 1 2 3 4 5 (45)
  4. To what extent did the fit of this garment influence you? 1 2 3 4 5 (46)
  5. To what extent did the styling of this garment influence your purchase? 1 2 3 4 5 (47)
  6. To what extent did expected customer acceptance (sales) influence your decision? 1 2 3 4 5 (48)
  7. Did vendor recommendation influence your decision to buy this garment? 1 2 3 4 5 (49)
  8. To what extent did your perception of the garment influence the purchase? 1 2 3 4 5 (50)
  9. Did your customer's acceptance of this fiber type influence this purchase? 1 2 3 4 5 (51)
  10. Did the cost of the garment influence your purchase? 1 2 3 4 5 (52)
  11. To what extent did the color(s) of this garment influence the purchase? 1 2 3 4 5 (53)

|                                                                                                                                  | No Influence | Little Influence | Some Influence | Moderate Influence | Great Influence |      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|------|
| 12. Did ease-of-care for your customer influence your decision to purchase this garment?                                         | 1            | 2                | 3              | 4                  | 5               | (54) |
| 13. Did the possibility of reordering this garment influence your decision?                                                      | 1            | 2                | 3              | 4                  | 5               | (55) |
| 14. Did the fact that this garment would be a 'good buy' for your customer influence you?                                        | 1            | 2                | 3              | 4                  | 5               | (56) |
| 15. To what extent did vendor support (coop, selling aids, markdown allowance, advertising, etc.) influence the decision to buy? | 1            | 2                | 3              | 4                  | 5               | (57) |
| 16. Did your acceptance of the fiber content influence your decision to buy this garment?                                        | 1            | 2                | 3              | 4                  | 5               | (58) |
| 17. To what extent did repeated media exposure of this garment influence you?                                                    | 1            | 2                | 3              | 4                  | 5               | (59) |
| 18. To what extent did previous sales of the same garment influence this purchase?                                               | 1            | 2                | 3              | 4                  | 5               | (60) |
| 19. To what extent did previous sales of a similar garment influence the purchase?                                               | 1            | 2                | 3              | 4                  | 5               | (61) |
| 20. Did the planned sales volume of this garment influence your purchase?                                                        | 1            | 2                | 3              | 4                  | 5               | (62) |
| 21. Did expectation of this merchandise as a key seasonal influence your decision?                                               | 1            | 2                | 3              | 4                  | 5               | (63) |
| 22. Did your open-to-buy dollars influence the quantity of this item purchased?                                                  | 1            | 2                | 3              | 4                  | 5               | (64) |
| 23. Did the planned retail of this garment influence your purchase?                                                              | 1            | 2                | 3              | 4                  | 5               | (65) |

|                                                                                            | No Influence<br>Little Influence<br>Some Influence<br>Moderate Influence<br>Great Influence |   |   |   |   |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 24. Did the fact that this garment fit into your merchandise mix influence your decision?  | 1                                                                                           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (66) |
| 25. To what extent did your assortment plan fit into this purchase?                        | 1                                                                                           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (67) |
| 26. Did the granting of extra money for this purchase influence your decision?             | 1                                                                                           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (68) |
| 27. Did the fact that this garment fit into your retail price structure influence you?     | 1                                                                                           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (69) |
| 28. To what extent did your preference for the garment influence the purchase?             | 1                                                                                           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (70) |
| 29. Did the perceived risk involved in this purchase influence the quantity bought?        | 1                                                                                           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (71) |
| 30. Did uncertainty regarding this purchase influence the quantity bought of this garment? | 1                                                                                           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (72) |
| 31. To what extent did your initiative influence this purchase?                            | 1                                                                                           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (73) |
| 32. To what extent did your General Merchandise Manager influence this purchase?           | 1                                                                                           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (74) |
| 33. To what extent did your corporate buying office influence this purchase?               | 1                                                                                           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (75) |
| 34. Did another buyer influence your decision to purchase this garment?                    | 1                                                                                           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (76) |
| 35. To what extent did your Divisional Merchandise Manager influence this purchase?        | 1                                                                                           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (77) |

No Influence  
Little Influence  
Some Influence  
Moderate Influence  
Great Influence

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36. Did a planned promotion have any influence on this purchase? 1 2 3 4 5 (78)

37. Please list anything else that may have influenced your purchase decision of this garment:

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

Part C - THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REFER TO YOUR PERSONALITY TRAITS. PLEASE  
CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER INDICATING YOUR AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT  
WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

STRONGLY DISAGREE = 1  
 DISAGREE = 2  
 NEUTRAL = 3  
 AGREE = 4  
 STRONGLY AGREE = 5

|                                                                             | Strongly Disagree<br>Disagree<br>Neutral<br>Agree<br>Strongly Agree |   |   |   |   | (1-5) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|-------|
| 1. I have a strong desire to achieve.                                       | 1                                                                   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ( 9)  |
| 2. I feel very confident in my abilities as a buyer.                        | 1                                                                   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (10)  |
| 3. I regard myself as an aggressive buyer.                                  | 1                                                                   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (11)  |
| 4. Compared to other buyers, I consider myself innovative.                  | 1                                                                   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (12)  |
| 5. I have an open mind regarding the purchasing of new fashion merchandise. | 1                                                                   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (13)  |
| 6. I aspire to more success than other buyers.                              | 1                                                                   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | (14)  |

(PLEASE TYPE ON THIS FORM)  
(Instructions on reverse  
side of this form)

FORM A  
Certification of Exemption from Review  
for Research Involving Human Subjects

CRPA 2/23-7  
Date Received  
in ORC 11/18/1986

A. PROJECT DIRECTOR(s) and/or CO-DIRECTOR(s): (For student projects, list both the student and the advisor)

Dr. Mary Francis Drake - Judy K. Miler

B. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS and PHONE NUMBER OF PD(s) and CO-PD:

7520 Chatham Circle, Knoxville, Tn. 37919

C. TITLE OF PROJECT:

Factors Influencing the Retail Apparel Buyer's Purchase Decision

D. DEPARTMENT: Textiles and Apparel - TMD, College of Human Ecology

E. EXTERNAL FUNDING AGENCY AND ID NUMBER (if applicable):

F. GRANT SUBMISSION DEADLINE (if applicable):

G. STARTING DATE: "Upon certification by Director of Research Compliances"

(NO RESEARCH MAY BE INITIATED UNTIL CERTIFICATION IS GRANTED) June 1986

H. ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE:

(Include all aspects of research and final write-up) Dec. 30, 1986

I. Objective(s) of Project: (see Section 8.4 of Manual)

To identify the interactive factors that influence the decision-making process of retail apparel buyers.

II. Subjects: (see Section 8.5 of Manual)

Junior sportswear buyers from a corporately owned major U.S. chain of department stores will be the research sample. The corporation will voluntarily participate in the study, and represent twelve or more stores.

III. Methods or Procedures: (see Section 8.6 of Manual)

The survey method of research will be used. A two-part three page questionnaire will contain Likert-type questions concerning the environmental, organizational, group, and individual factors involved in buyer decision-making. The corporation and individual store unit names will be identified on the questionnaire, but the individual buyers names will not be identified. The questionnaire will take approximately ten minutes to complete. Dr. Mary Francis Drake is the advisor and Dr. William Sanders will assist in the statistical analysis.

IV. CATEGORY(S) FOR EXEMPT RESEARCH PER 45 CFR 46: 3 (see reverse side for categories)

CERTIFICATION: The research described herein is in compliance with 45 CFR 46 101(b) and presents subjects with no more than minimal risk as defined by applicable regulations.

Investigator Judy K. Miler

Name

Signature

DATE 6-1-86

Advisor Dr. M.F. Drake

Name

Signature

DATE 6-13-86

Dept. Head Dr. Jacquelyn DeJonge

Name

Signature

DATE 6-16-86

CERTIFICATION BY DIRECTOR,  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCES I R CEBIK

Name

Signature

DATE 6-19-86

REVISED 10/85

Several weeks ago questionnaires were sent to you regarding factors that influence the retail apparel buyer's purchase decision.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaires, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. Because you are a part of a select small sample, it is extremely important that your questionnaires be included in the study.

Thank you,

Judy K. Miler  
M.S. Candidate  
The University of Tennessee

APPENDIX B  
PRESTUDY QUESTIONS AND CRITIQUE

Prestudy Questions

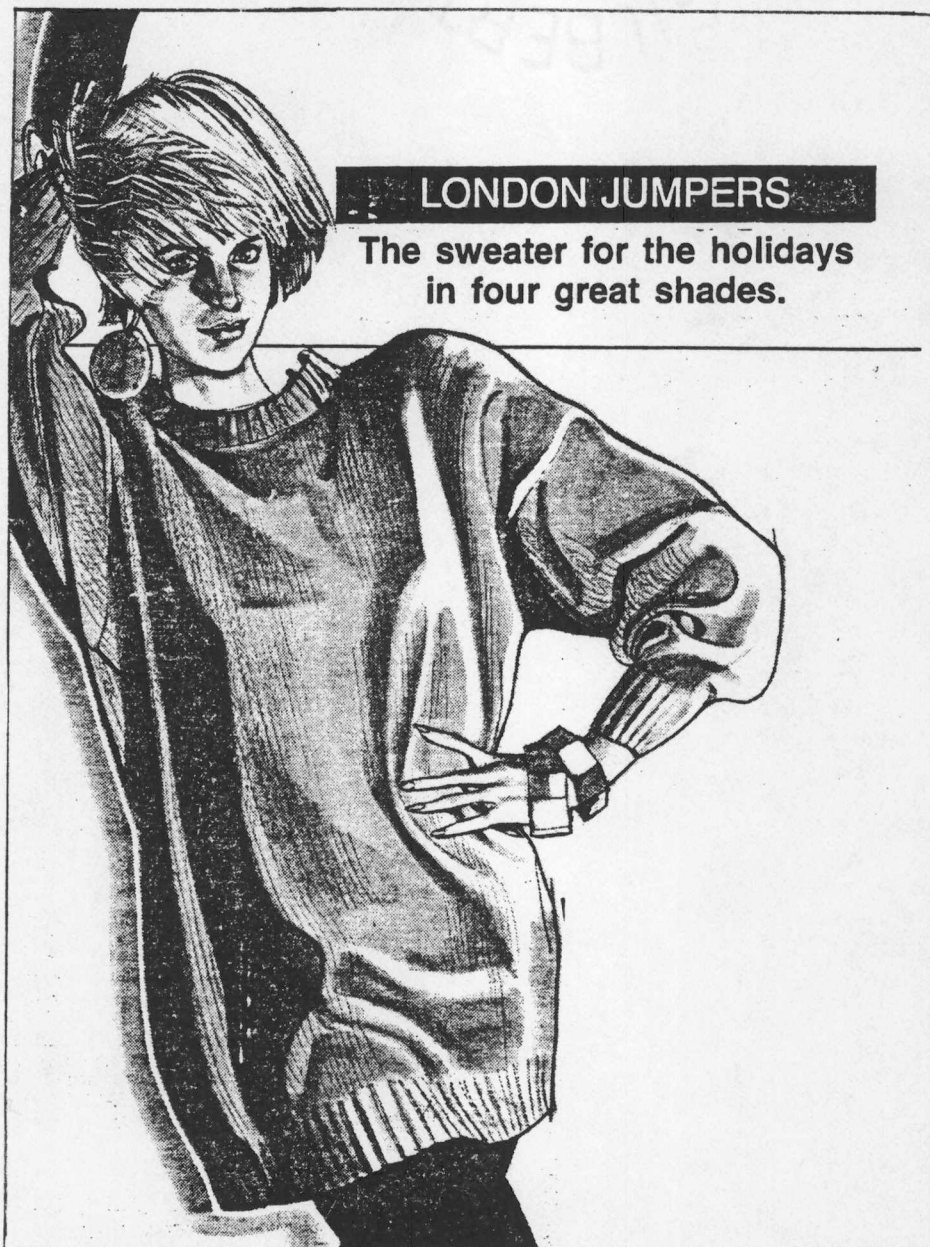
1. What new fashion items will you be purchasing for the upcoming Fall season?  
(Up to five garments will be taken by the researcher)
2. What factors influence your decision in the purchase of fashion garments?  
(All factors offered by the participants will be taken by the researcher)
3. The following terms will be discussed for preferred use:

|                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| market direction  | new buy                |
| proven resource   | vendor support         |
| key seasonal item | retail price structure |
| merchandise mix   | percieved risk         |
| assortment plan   | media exposure         |
4. Did you receive approval of this purchase from a superior?
5. Did you have to request approval for this purchase more than once?

Prestudy Questionnaire Critique

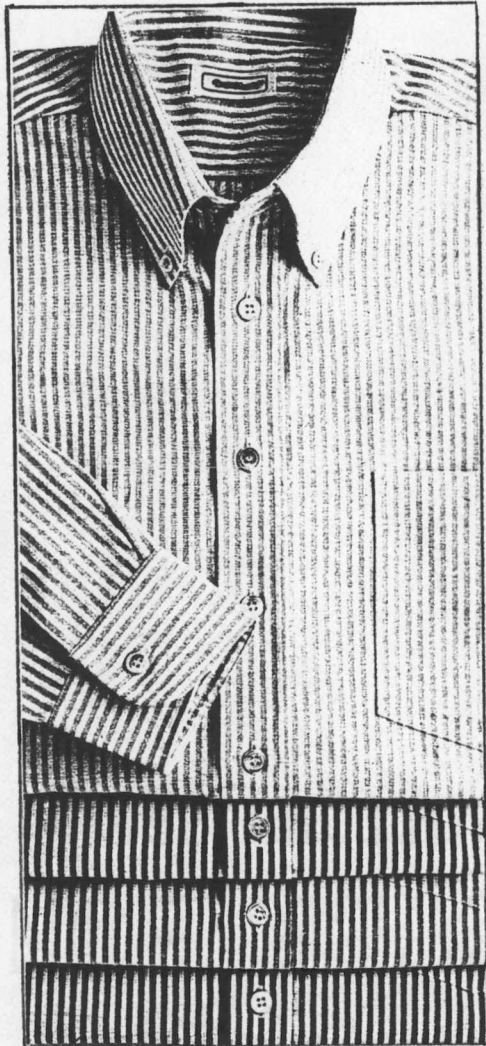
1. Did you have any problems in answering the questions?
2. If so, please indicate which questions (by part letter and number) and the problems that you had.
3. Was the questionnaire easy to read?
4. Was the questionnaire easy to fill out?
5. Are there any other suggestions or comments that would improve the questionnaire?

APPENDIX C  
GARMENTS PURCHASED





100% COTTON FIBRE  
LANCASTER BOND  
GILBERT  
100% COTTON FIBRE



## VITA

Judy Kaye Miler was born in Sapporo, Japan on June 13, 1950. As an American dependent, she lived and attended elementary schools in Thailand, the Philippines, and Ethiopia. She graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in Washington, D.C. in June 1968. The following September she entered the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics, with a major in Merchandising, March 1973. Her last semester was spent at the Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York.

Upon completion of her B.S., she worked in Merchandising and Buying for Lord and Taylor, Levi Strauss & Co., H. H. Brown, American Clothing Company, and Allied Stores for thirteen years, throughout the United States. In the fall of 1985, she accepted a teaching assistantship at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and began study toward a Master's degree in Retailing/Merchandising. This degree was awarded in June of 1987.

The author is a member of Omicron Nu Honor Society, the American Home Economic Association, American College Professors of Textiles and Clothing, Knoxville Association of Women Executives, the Costume Society of America, and is a volunteer for the American Cancer Society. Ms. Miler is continuing her advanced studies toward a Doctor of

Philosophy in Retailing/Merchandising at the University of  
Tennessee, Knoxville.