

“DOES THIS THESIS MAKE MY BEHIND LOOK BIG?” A MASTER’S THESIS USING
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TO EXAMINE CLOTHING AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL

by

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In Loving Memory of...

Daryl Christopher Vanderburgh, Chaplain (LTC)

June 10, 1935 – December 9, 2010

“Why are fire trucks red?”

“Fire trucks have four wheels and eight men. Eight and four is twelve. There are twelve inches in a foot. A foot is a ruler. Queen Elizabeth is a ruler. Queen Elizabeth’s ships sailed the seas. The seas have fish. The fish have fins. The Fins fought the Russians. The Russians are red.”

&

Deborah La’Nor Bartholomew

September 4, 1958 – October 3, 2010

“H.A.L.T.”

“Never make any important decisions when you’re Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired.”

Abstract

The purpose of this narrative research study is to discover and understand what and how clothing communicates by using carefully selected individuals as studied in their natural environment.

The study utilized Geert Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, which is based on in-depth research and analysis of cultures across the globe and what aspects define each culture. In order to aptly understand clothing as a communication tool, the researcher interviewed participants from both American and Dutch cultures. Many books, articles and the above mentioned interviews were utilized to gain a more in-depth understanding of clothing as a form of communicating and how this impacts members of different cultures.

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Chapter One

Introduction

“Fashion is like a language.

Some know it, some learn it, some never will.”

-Edith Head, The Dress Doctor

There are few objects, phenomena, and occurrences that pertain to every person in every culture the way that clothing does. Every person wears clothing in all its varieties and people have been for thousands of years (Anawalt, 2007). But what does clothing actually say about us? It can convey things like religion, lifestyle and economic status, but only to those who are listening.

Within different cultures and societies, the clothing and choices mean something different for each, and are a result of norms and values set by these cultures (Hofstede, 2001). These norms and values can be derived from both religious and cultural boundaries. The choices in clothing and dress as a whole are representative of religion and culture and express various meaning to the public. These choices can include anything along the lines of the Islamic headscarf, the Christian cross and the Japanese kimono. All these types of dress, and other types, convey different messages to the public eye.

Rationale for Study

To gain an accurate understanding of the topic at hand, much research had to be conducted on clothing and dress as a topic of its own. Books, articles and encyclopedias concerning clothing and its history were studied and referenced. Part of the literature review (Chapter 2), is solely devoted to the history of clothing and fashion, ranging from 1800 to present.

Throughout the research and literature review process, it became clear that the research conducted on the topic of clothing and culture was mostly recent. All research used for this paper and to conduct the original research was written after 1995, with the exception of four sources that range from 1951-1970, which deal more with clothing selection and specific parts of the history of clothing like corsets. The fact that the research found on this topic was mostly recent means that most terms and information found within the studies are still relevant today, and can be used to conduct further, original research.

This particular study is of significance to not one, but two separate areas of study: communication and fashion. The research conducted in this study will be a tool for bridging these two areas of study together and will discover how each influences the other. While the meaning of clothing can be explained through the use of sociology and anthropology, there do not seem to be studies conducted on what clothing communicates and in what way. This study is unique since it will contribute information to both areas of study and will attempt to bridge the gap between these disciplines.

The purpose of this narrative research study is to discover and understand what and how clothing communicates by using carefully selected individuals as studied in their natural environment. More specifically, the researcher hopes to answer the following research question: Can clothing be used as a form of communication? The research methods that will be used to attempt to answer this question will be further explained and explored in Chapter 3.

This paper consists of three chapters: Introduction, Literature Review and Research Methods, followed by a Conclusion and Bibliography. The original research was conducted during winter and spring in 2014 and is compiled and analyzed in this paper.

With the introduction section of this thesis coming to a close, the next section will be a review and discussion of the literature found pertaining to the chosen topic.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

*“She’s developed a technique for being herself
and she never makes the mistake of trying to be anyone else.”*

*-Edith Head, *The Dress Doctor**

This paper is written with the purpose of explaining and cataloging research on the topic of *What and How Clothing Communicates*. This topic has many facets and categories within itself and explored subset will be explored in this thesis. The literature researched and reviewed for this particular project pertains to communication theories, clothing, religion and dress, culture, society and dress, and the history of textiles and clothing. The focus will be primarily on women’s clothing and fashions.

The topic of clothing and dress are of importance to many disciplines. “In sum, most people are unaware of the wide reach of this subject because they have never had the opportunity to think about the topic holistically. They do not realize the rich and textured stories cloth can tell” (Gordon, 2011). The most obvious disciplines it relates to are sociology, psychology and anthropology; however, the topic is also of relevance to the communication discipline. As a result of the breadth of the topic, the research and literature are in depth and broad in nature. Aspects of the topic that were explored through research in literature are the history of clothing and textiles, cultural effects on clothing and clothing selection (by use of the Cultural Dimensions Theory), and the effects of religious beliefs and practices on clothing and clothing choice.

Importance of Clothing

Clothing, in its most basic form, has been around since the creation of the earth. For those of Christian faith, it all began when God created Earth as described in the book of Genesis (New

International Version). Soon after the initial creation, God also created Adam and Eve, who only knew good and nothing of evil. It wasn't until after they learned about evil by disobeying God, that their lives were turned upside down and shame and embarrassment arrived in the picture. Et voilà: clothing. Adam and Eve created clothing that consisted of the most primitive form: nature itself.

If looking at clothing from a "Big Bang" perspective on creation, it has been part of life and survival for much longer. According to anthropologist Patricia Rieff Anawalt in her book *The Worldwide History of Dress* (2007), clothing in its most primitive form has been around since the Upper Paleolithic Era, around 30,000 to 40,000 years ago. She claims that prehistoric man manipulated plant stems to create cord that was then turned into various articles of clothing (p.5).

In other words: clothing is important. No matter who believes in what kind of creation story, clothing has always been an important factor of life and survival. In its most basic form, clothing is meant to serve as protection from the elements, a source of comfort (Marshall, Jackson, & Stanley, 2012; Lurie, 2000). Studies have been conducted on the usage of clothing and the importance of its most basic use. One study in particular explores just about every aspect of clothing, down to the fibers that make up textiles (Fourt & Hollies, 1970). A study was conducted and research findings written in book format. The authors/researchers explored things like which type of material had the best breathability, which was the most durable and which was the most comfortable. Each of these remains important factors when looking at clothing selection and behavior.

From prehistoric to modern times, clothing is a way of expressing oneself and giving the surrounding world a look into one's personality. It can also be used as a status symbol, or social

status. As world-famous Hollywood costume designer Edith Head put it: “You can have anything you want in life if you dress for it” (Head & Donovan, 2006, p.57).

Throughout history, social status and clothing held such a connection that there were even clothing laws created in certain societies. In ancient Egypt for instance, only individuals in high ranks were allowed to wear sandals. In the 1800’s, it was considered foolish and extravagant to dress above one’s station (Lurie, 2000; Anawalt, 2007).

For many people, clothing is functional; they have to be worn because of the fact that it is socially unacceptable not to wear any. Yet to others, clothing means so much more. It is a way of expressing personality, emotions, religious and culture and sometimes is a direct result of societal rules (Condra, 2008; Latzke & Hostetter, 1968; Marshall, Jackson, & Stanley, 2012). Yet pressures from society and culture are not the only reason behind clothing selection. Author Mary Shaw Ryan puts it: “We are as unique and individualistic in the way we dress as in our finger prints” (Ryan, 1966, p.26). This may seem like an overtly profound statement, but within it is much truth. Clothing means something different to each person, and can say profoundly more than we think. It is a part of everyday non-verbal communication, and it can say much. According to Eicher (1995), “Dress is a coded sensory system of non-verbal communication that aids human interaction in space and time” (p.1).

Since the importance of clothing has now been covered, the next section of this paper will discuss the relationship between clothing and the communication discipline.

Clothing and the Communication Discipline

When looking at clothing and dress as a whole, there does not seem to be an obvious, direct connection between it and the communication discipline. It seems to pertain to disciplines like sociology and anthropology, and stop there. However, it very much pertains to

communication as well. As we can discover from research such as author Alison Lurie's book *The Language of Clothes* (2000), clothes are a nonverbal form of communication. Lurie puts it

For thousands of years human beings have communicated with one another first in the language of dress. Long before I am near enough to talk to you on the street, in a meeting, or at a party, you announce your sex, age, and class to me through what you are wearing – and very possibly give me important information (or misinformation) as to your occupation, origin, personality, opinions, tastes, sexual desires and current mood. (p. 3)

Communication as a discipline, and many other disciplines like it, are full of theories. These theories are opinions or conclusions formed as a result of behaviors observed. One theory that pertains to this particular study and research project is Geert Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory. This theory identifies five dimensions that dominate value systems and therefore affect human thinking, feeling and acting (as well as organizations and institutions). This is where the connection lies between clothing and clothing choice and the chosen theory to explore further. The five dimensions identified by Hofstede are: power distance (1), uncertainty avoidance (2), individualism vs. collectivism (3), masculinity vs. femininity (4), and lastly long-term vs. short-term orientation. Research conducted by Hofstede found that within the countries that were studied, all five dimensions were present and each country was positioned somewhere within the margins of each dimension (Hofstede, 2001; Girlando & Eduljee, 2010; Altaf, 2011). When reviewing these dimensions, some seem to be more fitting given the research topic chosen than others, but most could be used to explain different behavior in clothing choice within different cultures. In the opinion of the author, this research topic and its aspects pertain most obviously to

the dimensions of individuality vs. collectivism, and masculinity vs. femininity, so this is where the current discussion will focus.

The individualism vs. collectivism dimension can be explained as the relationship between the individuality and collectivity that exists in any society (p. 209). This dimension is responsible for reflecting on the way people cohabitate. Even though the human race as a whole is mostly gregarious in nature, every society has their own views and beliefs on how much each individual is allowed to be just that. Hofstede (2001) argues that the relationship between individualism and collectivity are not only found in manners of living together, but also in societal norms. These societal norms would be directly linked to the members of the society and the levels of creative and individual freedom they are allowed to have. This in turn affects many parts of their lives, including clothing and dress. Hofstede (2001) offers his outlook on the individual

The individual level of human programming is the truly unique part: No two people are programmed exactly alike, not even identical twins reared alike. This is the level of individual personality, and it provides for a wide range of alternative behaviors within the same collective culture. (p. 2)

It is obvious that this cultural dimension directly correlates to human behaviors within a society or culture and therefore directly correlates to the topic at hand. The social norms that are established within each society are many times a result of religion or other widely accepted beliefs. Religious dress is something that most every society is somehow a part of, and is not exclusive to one religion. The most obvious religion that has a direct correlation with dress and clothing that comes to mind is the Islamic religion. A Muslim woman who dresses herself in a headscarf communicates to society that states her religion. It is the same for the Christian culture.

While many Christians believe that dressing modestly is something of value, this action does not necessarily communicate that the wearer is of Christian faith. However, something like wearing a Christian cross as an accessory can clearly identify religion. Many Christians also have tattoos that establish and communicate their faith to society around them. We will discuss the relationship between religion and clothing a bit more in-depth in a following section.

Another cultural dimension from Hofstede's (2001) research that is worth exploring further is masculinity vs. femininity. This particular dimension is a look into what the effects of biological differences has on cultural and societal differences, and if there are any to begin with. Hofstede's (2001) research found that almost universally, when looking at men and women in organizations, women attached more emotions to social goals (relationships, helping others, and the physical environment). Oppositely, his studies found that men placed more emotional values in ego goals such as careers and money (p. 279).

What this means in terms of clothing, is that, in most cases, men and women view clothing differently. Lurie (2000) helps understand and explain more of this biological difference by offering that sexual distinction in clothing is distinguished from birth on. Boys' clothing is typically made of more sturdy materials and darker colors such as navy, red and forest green. Girls' clothing on the other hand is generally made of more delicate and lighter materials and lighter colors such as pinks and yellows. In its most basic sense, this is done to establish the difference between the sexes and communicating this difference to society (p. 214).

Whether or not men and women view clothing with more or less regard is up to the individual. Public opinion would most likely state that women not only have a better eye for current fashion and clothing, but that they value it much more. However, especially more so in

our current society, there are many men who value clothing and enjoy it outside of purely necessary reasons.

Next, this literature review will discuss a brief history of textiles before it moves into a more in-depth look into the history of clothing.

History of Textiles

In order to attain a well-rounded look at the history of clothing, we must first delve into a bit of history and background on what creates clothing: textiles.

As mentioned in an earlier section of this Literature Review, clothing, and therefore textiles, has been around for many years. If looking at creation from a Christian point of view, natural fibers were fashioned into textile by Adam and Eve, who created clothing out of fig leaves.

If looking at creation from a strictly scientific perspective, textiles have been around for at least 30,000 years (Anawalt, 2007; Gordon, 2011). Prehistoric man started creating textiles from objects found in their environment, offering protection from the elements.

Textiles, in their earliest forms came from every aspect of our planet: animal, vegetable and mineral. Hair taken from animals such as sheep and goats was fashioned into wool to be turned into other warmth-giving coverings. Even intestines from walruses and other seaborne creatures were used to create water-proof clothing. Another, more well-known fiber that comes from animals is raw silk (Anawalt, 2007; Gordon, 2011; McKinney & Eicher, 2009; Wilson, 1979). Aside from animal parts, different species of plants were also used to create textiles. The ancient Egyptians learned that flax fibers could be turned into linen thread. Flax fiber was very popular due to its outstanding strength and the fact that it gained strength when wet. Textile fibers were also created from different kinds of leaves and seed hairs such as the well-known

cotton fiber (Anawalt, 2007). Other parts of animals and plants were also used to dye materials. As far as minerals are concerned, they are less widely used when considering textiles, but still relevant. Minerals like silver and gold were often used in clothing. Another mineral that was used was asbestos, due to it being lightweight and fireproof (Gordon, 2011).

Today manufacturers are not only using natural fibers to create textiles, they are also using synthetics. In 1938, Nylon was introduced by a company named DuPont, becoming the first truly synthetic fiber in the textile market that was available for in-home use (Worsley, 2011). The growth of synthetics has only grown since then and now includes fibers like acrylic, polyester and Spandex. The reason behind the popularity of synthetics is the few advantages they hold over natural fibers: they dry faster, wear better, stretch more and wrinkle less. It wasn't until later on in the 1900s when synthetics became more widely accepted, when manufacturers started mixing synthetics and natural fibers. This allowed garments to preserve their natural look, but have the added strength, stretch and anti-wrinkle capabilities (Worsely, 2011).

More recently, natural fibers have started making a comeback, most likely due to the new age of reducing the "carbon footprint" and being more environmentally conscious. In 2004, Cotton Incorporated launched a campaign named "The Fabric of our Lives". It promotes cotton and cotton-dominate materials over synthetics. Included in the campaign are TV ads, a website and programs that support the environment, such as a blue jean recycling program (Branden, 2004). The Fabric of our Lives campaign is still in action today.

The end of this textile history section brings this literature review into the discussion of the history of clothing and fashion.

History of Clothing and Fashion

Throughout the literature mentioned in this review, it is now apparent that clothing, in its most basic form, has been around since shortly after the creation of man. For the sake of brevity, we will look at the history and evolution of clothing from 1800 to the present.

Beginning in the early nineteenth century the view of the woman seemed to change (Condra, 2008; Lurie, 2000). Attractive were no longer the women of the Renaissance and Rococo period, with their more curvy and strong bodies. Women were now seen as frail and weak creatures and their clothing reflected this. More delicate and light colored fabrics were chosen and in 1830 the corset was in full use. Cottons and silks were the most popular and important textiles of the nineteenth century (Condra, 2011). There are a few nineteenth century inventions that claimed their influence on bringing fashion to the home. In 1846, Elias Howe patented the first lock stitch sewing machine. By 1850, Isaac Merritt Singer created his own version of the same sewing machine and was awarded his own patent by 1851. He formed his own company that started manufacturing and selling the lock stitch sewing machine. Then, in 1863, Ebenezer Butterick and his wife decided to grow the idea of the at-home sewing pattern. The sewing pattern had already been invented by that point, but they were only available in one size. Butterick and his wife sought to make sewing and fashion more accessible and by 1864 they had their own New York City factory that printed various styles of graded sewing patterns (Condra, 2011). Both the invention of the sewing machine and the evolution of sewing patterns made a great difference in the spread of fashion throughout the nineteenth century.

Later in the century during the Crinoline Period (1850-1870), the crinoline cage was introduced. Daytime dresses changed from a full dress to a two piece dress, constructed out of a bodice and separate skirt. The silhouette of the Crinoline Period was completely dependent on

the crinoline itself, and its structure and shape changed throughout the period. Blouse separates became popular in this time as well. After the Crinoline Period came the Bustle Period (1870-1890). Though the crinoline was still in use during this period, the fullness of the skirt was now being focused towards the back. Towards the end of the century, women's dress changed radically, as the supporting structure under the skirt was no longer used. This changed the silhouette of dress back to an hourglass shape (Condra, 2011).

Perhaps one of the most radical changes that women's fashion has ever seen is the creation and the dissolution of the corset. "The corset is probably the most controversial garment in the entire history of fashion" (Steele, 2001). Corsets were worn by western women from the late Renaissance into the twentieth century, making it an essential piece of fashion for about 400 years. Many historians argue that corsets, especially in the Victorian era, were used as a tool by men to control and exploit women. However, Steele (2001, p. 5) does argue the fact that this is a plausible, yet ultimately unconvincing thesis, since men were not responsible for forcing women to wear corsets. Some women supposedly took part in "tight-lacing", which would achieve a waist measurement of less than eighteen inches, in turn crushing their ribs and internal organs. Looking back to Steele's argument against corsets being a male-driven manifestation: "a number of powerful male authority figures, including many doctors, opposed corsetry" (p. 35).

The beginning of the twentieth century marked the demise of the corset, and its popularity started fading slowly. However, some may argue that the corset never saw its end and that we still use forms of corsets in fashion today. "...some type of foundation garment continued to be an integral component of the female wardrobe until well into the 1960s. Even after that, the corset did not so much disappear as become internalized through diet, exercise and plastic surgery..." (p. 143). Either way, the corset that had been a popular item of women's dress

for 400 years was losing its acclaim and women's fashion started drifting further away from its use.

As far as the rest of the twentieth century, other influences on clothing and fashion were both World Wars. In 1914, at the start of World War I, "fashion for the sake of fashion" became a mentality of the past, and changes had to be implemented (Condra, 2011). There were shortages of materials and dyes and fashions became more utilitarian.

The 1920's brought with them the "*flapper* – a slender, short-haired, short-skirted young woman, her bosom subdued to an androgynous flat silhouette – conveyed in her dress and behavior what in the 1920's was radically new and openly allowed" (Condra, 2011, p.114). The true reason for the flappers' and infamy was that they seemed to threaten social order. Their skirts were short and their manners undignified, shocking the older generations.

The 1930's, at least in the United States, were known for both the Great Depression, and rising Hollywood stars like Katherine Hepburn and Greta Garbo. They were trendsetters in fashion and inspired copycats worldwide. Even though the era of the flappers had just come to a close, hemlines were dropping back to the mid-calf region. Home sewing and hand-me-downs became increasingly more popular throughout the decade, especially in 1939 following the declaration of World War II (Condra, 2011; Worsley, 2011).

With the ongoing battles of World War II, Paris and its fashion scene were put on hold and stopped being a source of fashion influence and advice to the world. This aided in the rise of the American sportswear, mostly created by women for women. The introduction of the pocket was also made and helped women eliminate the need to carry a handbag at all times. Fashions were mostly utilitarian and clothing had to be made out of materials not necessary for the war

effort. The housedress was a very popular garment for any housewife as a result of their washability and versatility (Condra, 2011; Worsley, 2011).

After the war, in 1947, fashion started becoming more of a trend again, and introduced was the “Golden Age of Couture” (Wilcox, 2007). Christian Dior introduced his “Corolle Line” that was quickly re-named “New Look” (Worsley, 2011, p. 100). The New Look collection was made up of skirts that seemed to explode outward from the waist into the shape of flower petals, using many meters of fabric. The amount of fabric used for these new looks was uncommon because of the recent war. Dior stirred up quite a bit of scandal, but his designs really suggested a coming time of abundance and plenty (Worsley, 2011). “Thanks to Christian Dior, in 1947 fashion became an extraordinary and unprecedented spectacle” (Wilcox, 2007, p. 57).

The 1950’s, famous for perfect housewives and perfect domestic life, placed the emphasis on fashion conformity and clothing looking “just right”. There were different outfits and styles for different times of the day and different occasions of life. Materials appropriate for a regular afternoon were not appropriate for a cocktail party. Gaining fame in the ‘50’s were beauties like Audrey Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe, and they both had their influence on style. Another great influence on style and fashion was Jacqueline Kennedy. While the silhouette of the 40s emphasized the cinched waist and full skirt, the silhouette of the ‘50’s grew more relaxed and shapeless (Condra, 2011).

Whereas previous decades prior to the 1960’s were famous for dictating exactly the things that were in style, this decade brought with it some definite changes to the way fashion was viewed. Early in the decade, styles were still being dictated but by the mid part of the decade, fashion began to branch off. There was no longer one hemline, one sleeve or one

waistline that was fashionable. Television and magazines were used largely to distribute fashion and styles worldwide (Condra, 2011; Worsley, 2011).

The 1970's were different still, with consumers making their own fashion choices and turning away from many commercial offerings. Independence was largely established throughout the youth in the decade. One important status symbol that epitomized the entire youth culture was blue jeans. "By the 1970's blue jeans were the uniform of youth. Girls and boys wore matching flared versions, along with their long hair and beads" (Worsley, 2011, p. 89).

In the 1980's American fashion made its way to the forefront of world fashion with designers like Calvin Klein and Donna Karan. In the United States, there was a significant rise in women being involved in the corporate environment and both designers used this rise to their advantage. Another big influence on fashion in the '80's was the physical fitness craze. In the 1920's, being slim was essential. However, without the help of the lace-up corset, women had to work hard to obtain the same silhouette. This introduced physical fitness. "Aerobics brought disco-style Spandex leggings and leotards, while jogging and skating introduced shorts, legwarmers, and headbands" (Condra, 2011; Worsley, 2011, p. 92).

The 1990's marked the start of a new era. The millennium was fast approaching and in 1994 the Internet became widely available to the public, radically changing the face of communication. Even though the Internet was slower compared to what we experience today, e-commerce became available and everyone seemed to take advantage of the invention. The rise of the Internet also helped fashion become a more global entity. People from all over the world could now look and purchase the same styles and clothing by use of the Internet, making fashion globally accessible. The decade also saw more inventions and innovations in textiles like

Sympatex and Gore-Tex. These fabrics had the ability to both repel water and insulate the body (Condra, 2011; Worsley, 2011).

As far as the early 2000's are concerned, '90's trends were still apparent in fashion. In our current age, Hollywood movies, celebrities and music videos are what influence most of our fashion culture. Styles and fashions are very diverse and even though trends keep surfacing, there does not seem to be one style that is on the forefront of fashion, much like what started to occur in the 1960's.

The next section that will be covered in this review of the literature is the connection between clothing and culture.

Clothing and Culture

Culture seems to be one of those terms, like so many other terms, that are not easy to define. It is used in many different disciplines, each defining it differently to make it fit within their parameters. Therefore, one definition was chosen that fits within the parameters of the topic of this literature review.

Latzke & Hostetter (1968) define culture as "...the complex of distinctive attainments, beliefs and traditions which make up the background of a racial, religious, or social group. Culture also involves that group's accumulation of knowledge and the system of values by which it measures people and events" (p. 28).

As is evident from this definition, culture is something that involves many aspects of life and affects many people living in similar situations. There are countless properties that fabricate a culture, and all are important. As seen in Hofstede's (2001) book on cultural dimensions, every society is different, and this is a result of different emotions being attached to different

dimensions. Michael Solomon (1985), in his book *The Psychology of Fashion* explains that dress or fashion as related to culture can be difficult to understand:

The chief difficulty of understanding fashion in its apparent vagaries is the lack of exact knowledge of the unconscious symbolisms attaching to forms, colors, textures, postures, and other expressive elements of a given culture. The difficulty is appreciably increased by the fact that some of the expressive elements tend to have quite different symbolic references in different areas (Solomon, 1985, p.17).

There are cultures that place great value in the way members of their society dress and others that have taken on more lax values. Many cultures have certain articles or ways of dressing that are specific to their culture and are recognized worldwide. Some of these include Japanese silk kimonos, Indian saris, European dirndls and Middle Eastern burqas and headscarves (Anawalt, 2007). Even though, over the course of history, some these garments or pieces have lost their cultural value, they are still easily reminiscent of each culture. Within each culture, especially in recent centuries and decades, traditional dress has made room for modern fashions, but some cultures still include historical dress. This can simply be a result of nostalgic emotions; wanting to hold onto traditions of the past, and celebrate them. It can also be a result of religious beliefs and values. We will cover more of the ties and relationship between clothing and religion in the next section of this literature review.

Clothing and Religion

Clothing and religion are commodities that go hand-in-hand. Some religions seem to have stricter rules about what dress is appropriate than others, but most religions somehow dictates its followers. “From European governments debating the role of women's head coverings to primary schools in the United States banning the wearing of Christian crosses because they are

suspected to be symbols of gang membership, dress has deep connections to religion and identity” (The Editors, 2010, p. 1). For the sake of brevity, this literature review will only cover two religions: Christian and Islam. We will start with reviewing Christian influence on clothing.

Possibly the most recognized facet of “Christian dress,” especially nowadays, is modesty. Christian women are taught that dressing modestly is appropriate, since they do not want to cause a man to sin, taking notes from Proverbs 31 which describes a wife of noble character (New International Version). These traditions of dressing modestly are not a modern invention by any means. In Imperial times, Christians began to be criticized for their ascetic tendencies and Christian writers and scholar began writing about how Christian values could be communicated through their clothing. Saia (2011) explains:

Clothing was a crucial mode through which early Christian ascetics publicized their identity. For this reason, Christian bishops, councils, and ascetic leaders devoted a great deal of energy exhorting ascetics to adopt particular forms of dress, while also censuring garments and accessories they found troublesome. (p.34)

Throughout the Bible, there are countless references to dressing and behaving modestly that are the guiding light for Christians who want to express Christian values in these ways. As with any religion, and this is visible in Islam as well, many Christians take on different levels of these values within the religion and decide for themselves what is appropriate.

Similarly, in Islam, there seem to be a few clear facets communicating the Islamic religion: the burqa, niqāb and headscarf. These garments are worn by women and all cover the hair, while only the burqa and niqāb also cover the face. However, these garments have not always been part of the Islamic faith.

In many earlier centuries, on the Arabian Peninsula, located between the Red Sea and the Gulf, it was customary to wear an outer garment that enveloped the entire body when traveling from home. According to Anawalt (2007), these garments were customary in this region long before Islam was around. Veiling is widely assumed to be dictated by the Islam, yet the burqa is actually a phenomenon created by culture. Even though the Prophet Muhammad does state that “a woman should guard her modesty” it is actually the hair and bosom that is suggested to be covered, and not the face (Anawalt, 2007, p. 148). The precise origin of the veil is unknown but the practice was known to be common to the Assyrians as far back as 1100 B.C. It was not meant as a religious element, but rather to establish a difference between people of lower standards like slaves who were uncovered (Anawalt, 2007).

With immigration spreading rapidly within the past few decades, Europe’s population is becoming increasingly more Muslim dominated. Therefore, seeing a woman donned in a burqa or headscarf is not uncommon. Even though Anawalt (2007) explains that these garments were not always symbols of the Islamic faith, they have evolved into exactly that. Many European countries have felt the need to discuss abolishing any type of religious clothing within the public school system; and France already has, claiming that they wish their schools to remain religiously neutral (Body-Gendrot, 2007). In other countries, debates are still occurring widely and no hard decision has been made opposing or supporting the religious clothing (Saharso & Lettinga, 2008).

In some countries, one of those being the United States, immigrated Muslims have started taking a more lax approach to the Islamic laws concerning dress. Many parents are letting their children have more freedom in their dress, letting them conform to more modern standards. This

behavior is mostly seen in first and second generation Muslims from societies that are traditionally Islamic like Pakistan and Egypt (Williams & Vashi, 2007).

Now that we have looked at the relationship between the Christian faith, the Islamic faith and clothing, here is a summary of the research and material covered in this literature review.

Summary of Material

As seen in the research presented in this literature review, we have now discussed the following sections: the importance of clothing, how clothing relates to the communication discipline, a brief history of textiles, an in-depth history of clothing and fashion ranging from 1800 to the present, and lastly how clothing relates and is influenced by culture and religion.

Textiles and clothing, each in their most basic form, have been around since the creation of earth. Whether one believes in a Godly creation of earth, or a Big Bang creation, this fact does not change. This makes clothing a vital part of humanity; communicating emotions, personality, status and origin (Lurie, 2000).

Clothing and the degree and type of influence it has on cultures and societies can be explained by employing Geert Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions theory as explored in the section named Clothing and the Communication Discipline. Each society and members of that society places value in five different dimensions, determining social behaviors, like clothing choice (Hofstede, 2001). Every society place more or less emotion and value in each separate dimension, yet each society uses all five dimensions in any case. Two dimensions in particular can explain social behavior like clothing choice: individualism vs. collectivism and masculinity vs. femininity, which is where this literature review's discussion is focused.

Textiles are the base and raw form of clothing and the brief history explained that textiles have been around for many years. From a Christian perspective, textiles were first created by

Adam and Eve, who used fig leaves to sew together garments. From a more scientific approach, textiles were first created from plants and other objects as long as 30,000 years ago. Animals, plants and minerals were crafted into fibers, which were then incorporated into clothing. Silk, cotton and flax are among examples of natural fibers which were used by man to create garments (Anawalt, 2007; Gordon, 2011; McKinney & Eicher, 2009; Wilson, 1979). Textiles have evolved over the years and in 1938 Nylon, a synthetic fiber was created by Dupont. The invention of synthetic fibers completely changed the textile industry, allowing clothing to be more durable and strong (Worsley, 2011).

The history of clothing is certainly broad and full of inventions and innovations. The popularity decline of the corset had a large influence on the course of fashion and determined many changes that were implemented throughout the twentieth century and beyond (Crawford & Guernsey, 1951; Steele, 2001). Trends and styles continued to change and evolve throughout the twentieth century. The 1960's made room for style becoming more of a personal creation than a dictation and one style was no longer in fashion (Condra, 2011, Worsley, 2011).

As mentioned in an earlier section, clothing was and still can be used as an outward symbol of economic status. Expensive brands and fine fabrics could show other members of society the wealth of the individual wearing these items. Along those same lines, economic status of country or culture can also manifest itself in different ways among the members of that society. According to Solomon (1985): "During a period of recession, people are inclined to compensate for the grayness in the economy by wearing more colorful apparel and also by spending more money on expensive jewelry, cars, vacations, for example" (Solomon, 1985, p.29).

Many facets of human life and society are influences on personal dress, appearance and clothing choice. Among these facets are culture and religion; and many times the two are interchangeable. The research for this particular literature review focused specifically on Christian and Muslim religion; both religions that promote modesty in their own ways (Anawalt, 2007; Saia, 2011). Research showed that some have started to abandon their customs in order to adapt to more modern life or different culture, while others are holding on to their beliefs strongly, fighting for religious freedom of expression in clothing.

With the summary of the material coming to a close, the next chapter of this paper will be a discussion of the methodology used to conduct original research.

Chapter Three

Methodology

“A person wears clothes to express personality”

-Edith Head, The Dress Doctor

This study will utilize both natural setting and participant’s meanings as characteristics to conducting the research. Natural setting occurs when researchers “collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study”. Participant’s meaning occurs when “the researcher keeps a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or writers express in the literature” (Creswell, 2009, p. 175). More specifically, the researcher hopes to answer the following research question: Can clothing be used as a form of communication?

Methodology and Strategies of Inquiry

To aptly address the topic of the communication and meaning of clothing to certain individuals, this required a qualitative research design. The use of qualitative design is the best-rounded approach to understanding the individuals and groups who are being studied.

“Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2009, p. 4).

Within the qualitative research design approach, there are several strategies of inquiry that seem fit. The strategy chosen for this particular research is the narrative research strategy. “Narrative research is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives” (Creswell, 2009, p.13). Utilizing this strategy of inquiry will provide the researcher with the most in-depth information about the selected topic of the meaning of clothing. As mentioned in the

Introduction of this paper, the researcher hopes to answer the following research question: Can clothing be used as a form of communication?

Data Collection

As explained in the Introduction of this paper, the main goal of this research is to establish what the meaning of clothing is to individuals from different backgrounds. These backgrounds include cultural and possibly religious facets, as data will be collected and research will be conducted in both Dutch and American citizens. The main reason behind these opposing cultural backgrounds is that they are simply a sample of convenience. This will be explained in more detail in a following section.

As mentioned above, data was collected from these two different groups and their individual understanding of the meaning of clothing, in the hopes to discover a pattern of similarity among people of the same type of group. Throughout the research gathered and reviewed for this paper, it became evident that the meaning that clothing holds can often be derived from cultural or religious norms (Anawalt, 2007). Throughout the process of data collection the researcher gained a better understanding of the reasons behind these cultural and religious behaviors that translate into clothing.

Participant Selection

Creswell (2007) explains that “the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question.” In this case, the participants are being selected based upon their or cultural background and each participant has to meet at least one of four qualifications to be considered for an interview. The four qualifications consist of the following:

1. Is the individual a Dutch citizen?

2. Is the individual an American citizen?
3. Is the individual female?
4. Is the individual between the ages of 18-65?

For this particular study, the researcher is researching strictly women. The broad age range is a result of the researcher's endeavor to gather information from multiple generations if possible. Individuals outside the age range proposed cannot be interviewed since they do not meet the requirements set by the International Review Board's participatory guidelines. Using a broader age range allows the research to be well-rounded and less restrictive, since the meaning of clothing appears to be a phenomenon that is not limited by the age of the individual.

Interviews

Due to the nature of this study and its participants residing in two different countries, the interview process will vary slightly for each group. The method used to interview Dutch participants is described later in this *Interviews* Section.

For the American citizens, this study utilized personal, face-to-face interviews to obtain information, emotions and narratives from every individual. The interviews were conducted at the individual's location of choice. The reasoning behind this decision is that the researcher wishes the participants to be as comfortable as possible during the interview process. Due to the study being qualitative, the nature of the interview questions will be more in-depth and focused on personal opinions, likes and dislikes, tastes, cultural norms and possible religious aspects. As a result of this, the individual needs to feel like they can share as much as they want to, and the researcher believes that location plays a big part in this divulgence.

The interview had a base number of questions that each participant was asked to answer. These questions were anything from name and age (unless they remained anonymous), to

personal opinions and tastes. The base questions consisted of around 26 questions. Every participant had the right to refrain from answering any question they were not comfortable divulging. Upon the participant's request, their names will be changed for privacy purposes.

As part of the interview process, the researcher recorded all interviews by use of a tape recorder. This provided the most accurate transcription of the interview and caused fewer errors when analyzing data gathered from these interviews. The researcher understood that there may be individuals who wish to remain un-recorded and regular pen-and-paper transcription were utilized in these cases.

Beside the use of a tape-recorder to transcribe interviews, the researcher also had a printed version of all base questions explained earlier. The participant and researcher could both use this document as a guide to the interview and this will help the interview to remain structured. The researcher will also require the participant to fill out basic information to help with analyzing data and can be of help if any follow-up questions or interviews are required for more information. Any participants have the opportunity to remain anonymous, even after the interview had taken place. In this case, a pseudonym along with their age was used in the results of the study.

In the case of the Dutch participants, the same questions were asked. However, the participants were asked to answer all questions via email instead of a one-on-one interview. Data was analyzed in the same manner as the data gathered from American participants. Reasoning behind conducting the interview via email was simply the lack of resources and time for international travel.

Data Analysis

After all interviews and research was completed, the researcher transcribed and typed up all information gathered throughout the entire research process. All information was recorded using Microsoft Word. Every document is stored on the researcher's personal, portable computer that only she has access to. The computer and all files will be accessible only to the researcher since it is password protected, to help retain participant's privacy.

All data gathered from the study and research was analyzed using Creswell's (2007) 6 step approach. These steps are as follows:

1. Organize and prepare data for analysis (transcribing interviews and materials, typing up field notes and organizing materials).
2. Read through all data (obtain a general sense of the information and reflect on the overall meaning).
3. Begin detailed analysis with coding process. "Coding is the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information."
4. Use the coding process to generate description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis.
5. Advance how the description and themes will be represented in qualitative narrative (chronological, detailed discussion of several themes or interconnecting themes).
6. Making an interpretation or meaning of the data ("what were the lessons learned") (p. 185-189).

Due to the study being of international nature, part of the data analysis was also the translation of all materials gathered from Dutch citizens. The researcher is fluent in both Dutch and English. Each interview was conducted in the language of the participant and was translated

into English by the researcher herself. The interviews were conducted in this way to stray away from any social and language barriers that could arise if conducting it in a language foreign to the participant. This process should have made the participants feel more at ease when answering questions.

Reliability and Validity

In qualitative studies, even though they are not nearly as based on facts and hard numbers as quantitative studies often are, reliability and validity remain important when analyzing data from research conducted. “Qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while qualitative reliability indicated that the researcher’s approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects (Creswell, 2007, p.190).

The researcher made certain to utilize Creswell’s (2007) reliability procedures when analyzing data collected from research conducted which include: checking transcripts to ensure that no obvious mistakes were made, making sure there is no drifting in definition of codes and possibly cross-checking codes that were developed by different researchers by comparing results. Transcripts were read and edited multiple times to ensure that the research was conducted correctly, that coding was kept the same across all data collections and that there were no spelling errors.

To obtain qualitative validity, different strategies was employed, which includes member checking, using rich, thick description when describing findings, describing any negative or discrepant information that may occur and using an external auditor (Creswell, 2007, p.191).

Member checking occurs when the researcher returns the data to one or more participants after it has been analyzed. This serves the purpose of truly understanding if the participants feel

as if their opinions and answers were conveyed and understood properly. Using rich, thick description will provide all readers with a participatory sense. Providing a detailed description of the different interview locations, people met and behaviors observed makes the readers feel like they were a part of the entire process. Describing negative or discrepant information aids in the credibility of the research as a result of showing the reader that no researcher is perfect. Often times, research does not end up giving the findings that one had hopes for and identifying these things will aid in credibility with readers. Lastly, an external auditor was used who is not familiar with the project or the research that was conducted and therefore provided the researcher with an unbiased opinion on the research, literature and data both collected and analyzed.

Chapter Four

Results

“There is a magic power in clothes.

They can develop personality.”

*-Edith Head, *The Dress Doctor**

As mentioned in previous chapters of this paper, this study was qualitative in nature, and participants were asked to answer a series of survey 25 questions. Due to the number of questions and the nature of the questions being open-ended, the researcher found many results throughout the course of this study. Each question and answer will be explained in detail in this chapter.

First and foremost, the research question as posed in the introductory chapter of this paper can now successfully be answered. To refresh, the research question was as follows: Can clothing be used as a form of communication? The brief answer is yes. To answer this question more in-depth, we will look at the answers of each question that were included in the survey that can correctly answer this research question (see Appendix D for survey).

The first question that was posed to all participants was a closed-ended question that simply asked if participants use clothing to express themselves. Every single participant answered that they, in some form, use clothing to express themselves. Whether this was simply to show their style or to inform others of a religious background, participants could recognize a type of expressing by utilizing their clothing. Kavita Bachasingh, 23 year-old fashion designer, and Dutch participant in this study, expressed: “Clothing, for me, is a way of communicating. It says how I feel and what type of image I want to portray” (K. Bachasingh, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Next, participants were asked what importance they placed on clothing. All participants answered that they valued clothing to a certain degree and that they deemed it important in everyday life. Many explained that they did not think of themselves as very fashion forward, yet this did not hinder the importance they placed on clothing as a whole. Every single participant, after thinking this question through, said that, in some way, the clothing they wear dictates their mood and how they feel about themselves on a particular day. Others explained that clothing was important to them because they liked looking nice or being expressive through fashion trends. One participant in particular, 27 year-old American participant Rachel Webb, explained that clothing became important at a very young age: “I remember when I was younger, I always wanted to dress just like people I admired; my mom for the most part. I don’t remember my mom being very fashionable, but whatever she wore I wanted to wear, because I liked her” (R. Webb, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Another participant, 31 year-old Dutch Kavita Bachasingh, explained that to her, clothing is a form of art: “Clothing is very important to me. I’m not someone who goes with the trends; of course I do research what the current trends are, but I give my own twist to it. Clothing says something about the person themselves and I find it something that is very personal. It’s your identity, like a form of art” (K. Bachasingh, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

The third question asked to participants was how it affected them to wear nice clothing. As part of this question, the researcher left the interpretation of the word “nice” up to the participants. Most participants determined that the word, as it pertains to clothing, meant that it was of nice quality, other determined it to be expensive clothing. All participants said that wearing nice clothing affected them in only positive ways. One participant, 28 year-old Cassie Parker, explained that wearing nice clothing made her feel good about herself: “I feel more

grown-up and sophisticated; and it attracts the right people” (C. Parker, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Others explained that they sometimes wore something nice as a result of being in a bad mood or feeling self-conscious, in the hopes of reversing that mood throughout the day.

The next question that was asked to participants was if they dressed more for style or for comfort. This was a question that received almost equal results for style vs. comfort. Many of the older participants stated that they dressed more for comfort, while many of the younger participants stated the opposite. One younger participant, 25 year-old Brittany Tucker, was different than others in her opinion of comfort vs. style. She explains: “Some people definitely dress more for style, but I do not sacrifice my comfort. I just don’t do it.”

Dutch participant, Kavita Bachasingh explained that her clothing is usually a mix between both comfort and style: “I want to look stylish and sophisticated, but at the same time feel comfortable. So if there’s a day where I don’t feel like wearing heels, I’ll just make sure I look good wearing flat shoes” (K. Bachasingh, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Fellow Dutch participant, 27 year-old Elise van der Stelt, explained that she determined dressing for style or for comfort more on a particular day. She explains: “It depends on the day. If I don’t feel very good about myself, then I’ll dress more for style, because I know that will make me feel better about myself. On the other hand, if I feel more OK I would tend to dress more for comfort, but there’s still style to it” (E. van der Stelt, personal communication, March 23, 2014).

Question five as part of the survey asked participants if they were trying to state a point through the clothing they wear. Most participants explained that it wasn’t so much a point they were trying to state through their clothing, yet more of a mood, a style or a feeling. American

participant Rachel Webb explained that the statement she would chose to make is not a conscious thought that she experiences each morning when getting dressed, yet rather a more subconscious and natural process that is expressed through the clothing she wears: “I would say that generally every day I’m making a statement that I choose style and quality over comfort and ‘cheapness’ of clothing” (R. Webb, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Dutch participant Elise van der Stelt shared a similar perspective on her trying to state a point through the clothing she wears. She explained that it’s not so much that she is trying to state a point, but that other people naturally perceive a point through others clothing choice: “I’m not trying to state a point but it probably looks like that to other people. It shows that I care about how I look and that I like to wear nice things” (E. van der Stelt, personal communication, March 23, 2014).

The sixth question that was asked of participants was how much money they spent on clothing per month. This was one of the survey questions that yielded very different and inconclusive results. There was no one age group or culture that answered similarly; this answer depended more on economic status than anything. One participant answered that she does not spend any money on clothing right now: “I make my own clothes, because it goes against my conscious to shop at chain stores. They copy everything and I don’t think that you can look different from someone else (in their clothing). I find that unfortunate. And if you do want to look different, then that can be very expensive” (K. Bachasingh, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

The next question that was asked of participants was how the saying “the clothing makes the man” pertains to them personally. This question yielded some interesting responses, albeit very similar responses from participants of both countries. “If you are a business man and you

show up in sweatpants or jeans and a t-shirt and sneakers, your fellow co-workers might not take you as seriously. And your customers who you meet with face-to-face, how would they want to do business with you? But if you're wearing a nice suit and a tie, I would be more willing to work with you. When you see someone coming to work in their sweatpants, you have to assume that they just don't care. Because they looked like they just rolled right out of bed" (E. van der Stelt, personal communication, March 23, 2014).

American participant, Amanda Poch, had a very similar outlook on how the saying "the clothing makes the man" pertains to her. "In the workplace it matters because dressing professionally people tend to take you more seriously. For me with my job, if I know I have an important meeting, I try to be intentional about wearing something nicer than I would if I knew I would sit behind my desk all day" (A. Poch, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Question eight asked participants what their opinion was on corporate clothing and if they believed it could be more diverse and interesting. Some participants are not part of a corporate workplace, either because they have a job that is not considered corporate, or simply because they are self-employed. Most other participants answered in similar ways, stating that they believed corporate clothing was on the boring side. Others stated that they thought corporate clothing was already becoming more diverse. Dutch participant Kavita Bachasingh explained: "I think that business clothing could have more variety. It should be more exciting and risky. But corporate clothing often times has this stigma that it should be uptight and boring, because that's business and you'll be taken more seriously. In my opinion, prints and colors should be used to make it look more modern" (K. Bachasingh, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Fellow Dutch participant, 55 year-old Karin Smith, had a similar opinion: "Business attire does not always have to be a power suit, it could just be a nice combination of top and

bottom. But there definitely should be a difference between what you wear at home and at work” (K. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2014).

American participant Brittany Tucker explained that she felt as if the image of corporate clothing is already changing: “I feel like that is already changing. Specifically with leggings coming into style and women wearing those in the workplace. As long as things are worn in a presentable way, it can still be considered corporate. I think that you can be very diverse but still look nice” (B. Tucker, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

The next question was a closed-ended question that asked participants if a person’s clothing influences their first impression of that person. Every participant answered, that to some extent, what the other person was wearing did influence their opinion of that person. Most participants answered with just a “yes”, while only a couple elaborated. Kavita Bachasigh explained that this was more of a sub-conscious process and that it’s sometimes a negative viewpoint that forms as a result: “I have a different view of someone who wears more dark colors than someone with a colorful or printed outfit. I’ll already form a view of that person, even though they could be completely different” (K. Bachasigh, personal communication, March 24, 2014).

Question ten asked participants if they were willing to work for a company that had a dress code. Most all participants stated that they would be willing to work for a company that had a dress code. Some expressed that this was contingent on that code not being too strict or working for the company was not worth sacrificing style. American participant, Brittany Tucker, stated that she would only want to work for a company if it did have a dress code: “If a company didn’t have a dress code I would be concerned” (B. Tucker, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Dutch participant Elise van der Stelt expressed that she would only work for a company if their dress code was not a uniform: “I have before. It’s nice to know what you’re wearing in the morning but at the same time I felt like I couldn’t express myself. You always have to wear the same thing” (E. van der Stelt, personal communication, March 23, 2014).

One participant, Dutch native Karin Smith expressed she would never work for a company that had a dress code.

The next question, which fell along the same lines as the previous question, was if participants were willing to attend a school that had a dress code. Since the researcher is currently a graduate student at Liberty University, many participants were either current students or alumni of Liberty University, since they were part of the sample of convenience, as explained in Chapter Three of this paper. Therefore, many participants answered that they would in fact attend a school that had a dress code, since they already do or did.

American participant Rachel Webb explained that even though style is important to her, she would not let a dress code or uniform keep her from doing certain things. “For as important as style is to me, I’m not opposed to a school that has uniforms. I don’t think that’s stifling anyone’s creativity. What’s interesting about uniforms is then seeing how people express themselves even through a forced medium...it’s is not the end of the world” (R. Webb, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Dutch participant Kavita Bachasingh had the exact same opinion when asked about dress code or uniform in a school setting: “These sorts of things don’t hold me back from achieving anything” (K. Bachasingh, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Question twelve asked participants how they shopped for clothing. This was meant to learn exactly what medium they used to purchase their clothing (e.g. in-store, online, catalog.).

This question yielded some results for each medium. With American participants, there were many more who either shopped in-store or online, yet no participants who shopped through catalog. Among Dutch participants there were many more who shopped through using a catalog, as well as in-store and online.

The next question asked participants if they would teach their children about modesty or dressing appropriately. Many participants did not have any children, yet all participants expressed that they would teach their children about how to dress appropriately.

American participant Brittany Tucker expressed that she would teach her children about modesty as a result of what she sees children wearing at her job on a daily basis: “I work in a school and I see what some little girls wear now. I was in a kindergarten class and I saw a little girl wearing long boots with heels on them and I think: who would send their kindergarten student to school with heels on? I wouldn’t necessarily say it’s immodest, but it’s inappropriate for her age. So I think it’s important to teach them about being modest since everything they see is immodest” (B. Tucker, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Dutch participant Kavita Bachasingh expressed that when it came to her children, it wouldn’t be so much a modesty issue as much as it would be a level of appropriateness. “I don’t have any children yet, but when I do, I’ll try my best to teach them what can be worn in what setting and what can’t. But in the end I think it’s their choice as they get older” (K. Bachasingh, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Question fourteen asked participants that if they were religious, how this religion, or their worldview affected the way they dress and value clothing. This question yielded some different answers. As stated above, many American participants were gathered from the researcher’s

sample of convenience. This being the case, these participants were almost all of Christian faith, while only two Dutch participants were also of Christian faith and the others unknown.

American participant Amanda Poch expressed that being a Christian and a woman, how she dresses is very important: "...we have a certain responsibility for the way we dress and a certain obligation to look a certain way, as far as modesty goes. On a spiritual note, the value I place on clothing is probably my biggest struggle, because I probably put too much value on material things. I could probably stand to place less emphasis on that since it's not something of eternal significance" (A. Poch, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

The next question that was asked of participants was if clothing changes the way participants feel about themselves. Every participant answered that, in some way, clothing did change the way they felt about themselves. When looking at whether clothing changed the way they felt about themselves, the researcher noticed that these were both negative and positive feelings. One participant in particular, American participant Amanda Poch, explained: "You have those items or those outfits that you just know will work and look nice. It makes me feel more positive about myself. Especially, in contrast, if I was wearing a t-shirt and sweatpants" (A. Poch, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Dutch participant Kavita Bachasingh explained that she dresses according to her mood or emotions: "If I feel sad I'll dress a bit gloomier. If I feel happy then I'll wear more color and prints. So in that case my clothing choice is different every day. Also if I know I'm going somewhere, I try to create my own style" (K. Bachasingh, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Question sixteen was utilized to ask participants if they thought there was enough variety on what they considered to be a regular budget. All participants explained that they considered

their own budget to be a regular budget and explained that there usually is enough variety for them personally.

Dutch participant Karin Smith explained: “I think there is enough variety, but I do look at second-hand stores, outlets and sale items” (K. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2014).

Fellow Dutch participant Kavita Bachasingh gave an interesting answer to this same question, by explaining that in her opinion, there is almost too much choice: “There is too much choice for little money. Not that this is necessarily bad, because someone with a small budget can look really trendy. Except I’m really against the fact that we throw so much away and that people in poor countries are being taken advantage of just so we can buy who knows what and toss it away. We just don’t put any value in things anymore” (K. Bachasingh, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

The next question was asked in hopes to determine if participants would rather go with trends that cost less to purchase, or have their clothing last longer. Most participants explained that they would rather have clothing that last longer, rather than going with the current trend. Only several participants answered that they would rather have more clothing that was of cheaper quality.

American participant Rachel Webb explained that for her personally, she has made a recent shift in spending more money on her clothing, instead of going with all the trends: “I’ve gotten to the point in my life where I’m not riding all the trends, but have just decided: these are the things I like. I feel more confident in my clothing choices just because I know that they’re going to last longer or their more durable. The fabric in higher quality clothing lays nicer and I

appreciate things of higher quality because they're normally tailored better...I would rather have fewer clothes of better quality" (R. Webb, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Fellow American participant Cassie Parker explained that she likes her clothes more durable than trendy, especially when it comes to her jeans: "I like clothing that lasts. The one thing I splurge on is my jeans. Most pairs I have are around \$100. But the first pair I bought that were very expensive, I still have, and that was about 6 years ago. So that's well worth it" (C. Parker, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Dutch participant Karin Smith explained that in the case of trend vs. durability, it depends on the item of clothing she is purchasing: "Most times if it's a shirt, I'll buy it cheaper. If it's a pair of pants, a skirt or a dress I'll spend more" (K. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2014).

Question eighteen asked participants how they believed their culture influences the way they dress or how they view clothing. Many participants explained that they believed their culture in fact had little influence on the way they dressed or even how they view clothing. Some expressed that they thought culture had an influence on members of society as a whole, for example when concerning trends.

Dutch participant Kavita Bachasigh explained that she believed her culture didn't have a very big influence on the way she dresses or how she views clothing: "I don't believe my culture really influences the way I dress, but I do love Indian roots. The process of incorporating prints on fabric are amazing" (K. Bachasigh, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Fellow Dutch participant Elise van der Stelt explained that she thought culture did not have as big of an influence on the way she dresses than family does: "I think it's not so much a

culture thing, but has more to do with what type of family you're raised in. At least that's how it was for me" (E. van der Stelt, personal communication, March 23, 2014).

American participant Brittany Tucker identified what role culture can have in influences certain societal behaviors: "Our culture is very influenced by trends; there's always a certain trend that's out... and culture influences what trends are" (B. Tucker, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Similarly, fellow American participant Cassie Parker explained her opinion on American culture and its tendency to be driven by capital gain: "I feel like Americans just try to capitalize on everything. Anything they can do to make a dollar. We put so much emphasis on what we can buy with a dollar" (C. Parker, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

The next question asked participants how they determine the level of appropriateness for clothing worn in certain places and situations like church, school and work. Most participants expressed that they had no "hard rule" for determining levels of appropriateness, and each had their own determining factors.

American participant Rachel Webb offered insight into how she would determine the level of appropriateness and that, for her, modesty would be a tool she would use: "I think modesty does not have as much to do with showing skin, but it has a lot to do with attitude, how you wear the clothes and your body language... That's another thing that's important is generally dressing appropriately for your age. In the same sense I also don't think it's appropriate for a 50 year-old woman to dress like a 16 year-old. And I think that this is tied to modesty" (R. Webb, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Dutch participant Karin Smith explained her methods for determining the level of appropriateness as a very person thing: "My criteria for determining the level of appropriateness

are a person's own standards and values, etiquette and also the comfort level of the clothing" (K. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2014).

Fellow Dutch participant had a similar opinion to that of Rachel Webb and explained that she believes that the level of appropriateness should be determined on a case-to-case basis rather than a certain scale: "So I think it depends on the person, as well as the location, as well as the clothing. It has to be on a case-to-case basis. I don't think there's a sliding scale that you can use to say: this is appropriate and this is not" (E. van der Stelt, personal communication, March 23, 2014).

Question twenty was asked in the hopes of discovering what participant's opinions were on clothing being manufactured by children in poor countries in bad working conditions. This question was very interesting since it seemed to catch most participants off guard and provided some interesting feedback in this research process. Every single participant, after being asked this question, expressed that they did not agree with these situations and clothes being made in these conditions by children. Words such as "horrible", "sad" and "unfair" were among the emphatic words used by participants to express their dislike of these situations.

American participant Brittany Tucker expressed: "It's sad that children can't be children because they have to work. We as a consumer, promote that (outsourcing) too because we want things cheap. And the only way to do that is to outsource to other countries that do it cheap, and they do it cheap because of child labor" (B. Tucker, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Dutch participant Kavita Bachasingh expressed the following insight on the topic of child labor: "I find it terrible that these children are being used for these types of activities instead of being able to go to school. Except we should take in to account that they are experiencing a different lifestyle. This is their source of income. Then I'd rather they do this (contingent on

good working conditions), instead of going into prostitution or the world of drugs. But I don't think that justifies the situation. I would then want to place a factory in a third-world country where employees are well-cared for. But I wouldn't want to employ any children" (K. Bachasigh, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

The next question concerned the same topic of child labor, but went into even more detail and asked participants if they would stop purchasing their clothing from their favorite company once they discovered this company was using children as employees in poor working conditions. Surprisingly to the researcher, only one out of ten participants answered that they would in fact stop purchasing from this company, even if it was their favorite place to shop. Another participant answered that they think twice about purchasing items from questionable places. The rest of participants said that they either weren't sure or if they would not stop purchasing from a company, even if they knew they employed children in poor working conditions.

The single participant who answered that they would stop purchasing clothing from even their favorite company after this type of discovery was American participant Rachel Webb. She explained that continuing purchasing items from this company would go against her better judgment and parts of her religion as well: "The more seriously I take my religion, the more it requires me to think through these types of issues. I don't want to be someone who is thoughtlessly negligent of say those children in those underdeveloped countries. I think as Christians we have to say: we're against children being maltreated. One of the jobs of the church is to take care of widows and orphans, and so what does that mean then for children in underdeveloped countries who are being mistreated? I'm not an extreme person, but I think that's one of those things that I feel I need to eliminate the desire for their product, if I knew that what it was all built on" (R. Webb, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

The other participant who expressed hesitation against certain places was Dutch participant Kavita Bachasingh. She explains: “I definitely think twice before I purchase something. And often times I won’t choose it” (K. Bachasingh, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

American participant Brittany Tucker expressed uncertainty on the topic: “I think so...but then again maybe not. I don’t know, you know we’re at Starbucks right now, and they support things that I don’t believe in, but I’m still here, drinking their coffee” (B. Tucker, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Another participant, Cassie Parker, expressed that she would think it difficult to know what companies are really up to behind closed doors: “Companies tend to focus on the good things that they do, so it tends to blind us from the bad stuff. So it’s hard to really know what’s going on. Unless you investigate the company, you won’t really know” (C. Parker, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Two other participants answered that they would be unsure about stopping their purchasing from these companies because they were unsure of what difference they would be making for the overall situation to stop or to improve. They felt as if their ‘boycott’ would not create enough of a difference in the overall cause. One of these was American participant Amanda Poch: “I want to say: yeah, of course. What kind of person would I be? If it actually came down to it, would I? I don’t know. I feel like I could only tell you if I was actually in that situation... But then there’s also the fact of, well it’s just me and if I am the only person who doesn’t do it, what difference is it going to make? Well none, so I’m not going to stop” (A. Poch, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Dutch participant Elise van der Stelt had a similar outlook on the situation and expressed the following: “I wish I could say yes, but the answer is no. Because I feel like me not shopping there is not going to make a difference. They’re not going to lose enough money and enough customers for them to notice me stopping shopping there. I think it needs to be a movement of every single customer that all of a sudden stops, in order to make a difference, in order for people to notice that something is going on. So as much as I would like to say I would stop shopping there, I know me stopping is not going to make a difference” (E. van der Stelt, personal communication, March 23, 2014).

The results that the researcher received after asking these two questions concerning child labor were found to be very intriguing and were considered deserving of more research and discussion. This discussion will be covered in the following chapter.

Question twenty-two asked participants what they considered the importance of clothing being comfortable and having easy-care instructions. Most participants answered that they found the easy-care instructions to be very important, since dry-clean only clothing could potentially be a hassle.

Dutch participant Karin Smith expressed that she hardly ever purchases dry-clean only clothing as a result of the hassle: “I like clothing with easy-care instructions. I detest clothing that can only be taken to get dry-cleaned. And I don’t buy those if I can avoid it” (K. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2014).

American participant Brittany Tucker expressed the same feelings toward dry-clean only clothing: I definitely shy away from it (dry cleaning). Like cashmere, I would never buy, because I don’t want to take care of it. So if I know it’s dry clean, I would probably steer clear unless it’s

a nice coat or something... It's an inconvenience to regularly go to the dry cleaner" (B. Tucker, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

The next question that was asked of participants was what their opinion was of clothing options for people who are not average in size, for example an extra-large shoe size, or pants that are longer for taller people. Many participants answered that they did not really have experience with these types of things as they were not in need of any special sizing themselves. One person in particular, American participant Amanda Poch, answered that this was of high importance to her, since she is someone who is taller and requires pants in tall sizes. "As one of those people, I would say that there are not enough options... It does represent a very small percent of the population, especially height-wise. If you're over a certain height you just can't find pants, and then skirts are always really short. It would be nice (to have more variety), because it gets old. One of the reasons I shop online is so I can buy pants that are long enough" (A. Poch, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Dutch participant Elise van der Stelt who is employed by a certain clothing brand explained that this particular brand was very good at providing different sizing options: "we go up to size 16. And I think for as much of a high fashion brand as it is, that's really good. We go from 00 to 16 and shoe sizes for women we go up to size 12. Those might not be available in the store for people to try on, but we have them online. We do offer them to our customers. We have tall clothing options for people who are above 5'8". We have petite for people who are under 5'4" to make sure that their pants fit right. So I think we're very accommodating... The nation is getting bigger, regardless of how much we're trying to stop it, so they need bigger sizes (E. van der Stelt, personal communication, March 23, 2014).

Question twenty-four was asked in hopes to determine what participants thought of fashion that is shown on runways, TV and in magazines. These types of displays of fashion are oftentimes not appreciated by those not included in the fashion industry since the looks that are presented are often not good examples of items that people could wear as part of everyday looks.

Dutch participant Kavita Bachasighh, who is also a fashion designer, explained that she welcomes fashion seen on runways, TV and in magazines as it can offer inspiration: “Many couture pieces inspire me. Especially Balenciage, Elie Saab and Balmain. It makes me extremely happy to see pieces like those. It gives me new ideas to make new creations” (K. Bachasingh, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Fellow Dutch participant, Elise van der Stelt, who received a four-year trade school degree in Fashion, expresses a much different opinion than Kavita: “Most of the time it’s kind of deceiving because it’s not ready-to-wear. Whatever you see on there, it’s not ready-to-wear...I can see the creativity and I can see how they’re trying to express themselves. It’s just hard as a consumer, when you see something you like, and you know it’s unattainable. Eventually some form of that will be available to you. But I don’t like that you can’t always get what you see on the runway.”

American participant Amanda Poch expressed her views of fashion on TV, runways and in magazines as a source of inspiration and a place to find a style she could identify with: “I love it. I think runway is fun to look at and it’s more artistic. With TV, I find people that I can identify with and I try to take on their style” (A. Poch, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

The final question that was asked of participants was what they thought the importance of accessorizing was. This question yielded some varying results that did not seem contingent on age group or culture group. Some participants expressed that they did not enjoy accessorizing

and that it was seen as more of a hassle to try to wear more things, while other expressed that putting the right accessory on completed a look in their mind.

Dutch participant Karin Smith explained that in her every day wear, she always tries to match her clothing to her accessories: “I always try to match. From my red glasses to my jacket, down to my watch and boots” (K. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2014).

American participant Amanda Poch expressed a very similar opinion to that of Karin Smith: “I think it’s very important. Accessorizing is one of those things that ties the whole outfit together, when done well. And when not... it just kind of makes you look like a hot mess” (A. Poch, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

In contrast, Dutch participant Kavita Bachasingh had a bit of a different opinion when asked her opinion of the importance of accessorizing: In my opinion, not everything has to match. It can be a little bit different, a little funky. When everything compliments each other, that’s a little too tame for my taste and I don’t like that. It can stylishly miss-match. That’s what keeps it exciting” (K. Bachasingh, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

With this Results chapter coming to a close the following chapter will consider all the aforementioned results and derive their meaning to the overall research and study conducted.

Chapter Five

Discussion

*“You can have anything you want in life
if you dress for it”*

-Edith Head, *The Dress Doctor*

It seems that through the course of this study, it became clear that many of the answers that were found were contingent not so much on the participant's culture, yet more on their personality. Even though culture can have an influence on personality, it seemed that especially the American participants were almost disengaged from their American culture as a whole. When asked question 18 (see Appendix D), regarding culture and its influence on the participant's clothing choice and view of clothing, most all participant then wondered what their culture was, instead of relating it back to living in an American culture. The researcher was prompted with questions pertaining to what the participant's culture actually was or what the researcher's personal view was; therefore showing a certain confusion or disconnectedness from the American culture. The participants' focus was mostly on which subculture they might belong to and how that influenced their clothing choice and value. While these subcultures are still vitally important to understanding how culture influences clothing choice and value, the researcher was surprised to find that most participants did not necessarily see themselves as American first, then part of another subculture second.

In contrast, when Dutch participants were asked about how they thought their culture influenced their clothing choice and value, all participants first identified themselves as “Dutch”, and then they answered the question. Some said it had no influence on their clothing choice or value and some said it influenced their overall decision-making process, including clothing

choice. Variation of answers occurred among different age groups, possibly explaining the difference in opinion.

When looking at these results and analyzing them through the scope of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, we can draw certain conclusions about the answers received to the survey question pertaining to culture's influence on dress. In *Culture's Consequences*, Hofstede's in-depth research and analysis of cultures across the globe and what aspects define each culture, certain conclusions were drawn. One chapter in particular focuses on masculinity vs. femininity within cultures. Hofstede (2001) explains: "The duality of the sexes is a fundamental fact with which different societies cope in different ways; the issue is what implications the biological difference between the sexes should have for the emotional and social roles of the genders" (Hofstede, 2001, p.279).

Throughout his lengthy study that focused on employees of multinational business organization IBM, a total of 72 countries were used in the study. As part of the masculinity vs. femininity segment, Hofstede (2001) was able to conclude a few gender difference trends. For instance, he found that men valued things like Advancement and earnings more than women; whereas women valued a friendly atmosphere and things of a physical nature (including dress) more than men. By use of these gender difference trends, we can ascertain that women do indeed put more value in things of a physical nature, including dress than men do.

To take this a step further, Hofstede (2001), argues that certain countries are either more masculine or feminine in nature. As a result of this, inhabitants of this country will be in tune with what Hofstede calls the gender culture of that country. "Although both nationality and gender cultures are learned, not inborn, we learn their consequences so early that we never know anything else, and we are usually unaware of other possibilities" (p.286). Knowing that some

countries are more masculine and others are more feminine, this can explain some of the differences in opinion between both cultures surveyed in this study on how clothing communicates. Hofstede offers Masculinity Index for 50 different countries, which include both the United States and the Netherlands. On a scale of 0-100, 100 being the most masculine, the United States had an index of 62, which is in the range of being mostly masculine as a culture. In contrast, the Netherlands had an index of 14, which is the range of being very feminine as a culture. In more simplified terms, this would stand to show that American culture, at least in the IBM workplace, places more value on things like advancement, earnings and training; whereas the Dutch culture, again in terms of the IBM workplace, places more value on things like a friendly atmosphere, physical aspects and position security. (p.285-286).

If these same numbers indeed were a look into the overall culture of these countries, it would help explain the results of the survey on culture in relation to clothing choice and value. It could help explain why American participants had a difficult time identifying to being mainly part of American culture and put more of an emphasis on subcultures. Even when they identified with a certain culture, they deemed their culture as non-influential on their clothing choice. In contrast, Dutch participants seemed much more in tune with the feminine trend of the physical, and identified that their culture as a whole had an influence on their clothing choice and the value they place on dress as a whole.

An interesting result of the study that seemed mostly contingent on personality rather than culture, was what participant's opinion and answers were to questions 20 and 21 (see Appendix D), regarding child labor in underdeveloped countries with poor working conditions. The first question that was asked regarding this topic pertains to their overall opinion of clothing being made by children in underdeveloped countries in poor working conditions. Every single

participant replied empathically, using words such as “horrible”, “saddening” and “unfair”. Yet the next question, which pertains to the same topic, yet asking if they would stop purchasing from their favorite company if they found out their clothing was being made in such conditions, most participants did not seem to care. Most responded by saying that it would be a tough decision, that they would need hard evidence in order to stop purchasing from this store, but that even if there was this evidence, in the end, they would remain loyal to the brand. One person’s reply was simply that their desire for the clothing outweighed the fact that these children were being treated unfairly. Only one participant responded positively to this question. This participant was Rachel Webb, a 27 year-old American participant. She informed the researcher that her decision was based mainly as a result of her religion: “The more seriously I take my religion, the more it requires me to think through these types of issues. I don’t want to be someone who is thoughtlessly negligent of say those children in those underdeveloped countries. I think as Christians we have to say: we’re against children being maltreated. One of the jobs of the church is to take care of widows and orphans, and so what does that mean then for children in underdeveloped countries who are being mistreated? I’m not an extreme person, but I think that’s one of those things that I feel I need to eliminate the desire for their product, if I knew that what it was all built on” (R. Webb, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

These results were surprising to the researcher in the following aspects. Since the sample of American participants was all from people somehow associated with Liberty University, it was assumed by the researcher that all, or most, participants were of Christian faith. These assumptions were confirmed in all American participants throughout the interview process. In contrast, there were some Dutch participants who claimed to be non-religious who said they would stop purchasing from companies who mistreated children in regards to working

conditions. With this information in mind, the researcher can conclude that this issue of children in poor working conditions and how this affects participants comes down to more of an issue of conscience, not religion or culture. When answering question 20, regarding the stopping of purchasing from these companies, only one participant said they would and that the driving force behind this answer was their religion. Others, when answering the question, did not consider their religion as a deciding factor.

To specify a bit more, the researcher discovered that when participants were prompted with the question that regarded giving up their favorite brand when finding out this company took part in the maltreating of children that there was a sort of “we-mentality”. Instead of taking individual responsibility for the action of stopping their purchases, it was directed toward a group’s decision and action as a whole. Many participants answered that they would love to give up shopping at these various companies once they found out, but that their opinion or habits as just one person would not make a difference. Yet when they discussed someone else, other than themselves, starting some type of movement or petition, they would love to join. One participant, 28 year-old Dutch native Elise van der Stelt, said: “... I feel like me not shopping there is not going to make a difference. They’re not going to lose enough money and enough customers for them to notice me stopping shopping there. I think it needs to be a movement of every single customer that all of a sudden stops, in order to make a difference, in order for people to notice that something is going on ... I don’t have enough resources to start a movement. It’s almost easier for a celebrity or a group of people to start that” (E. van der Stelt, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

According to Borchers (2013) these feelings of wanting to belong to something bigger are very human and natural behaviors to us that can be explained through a phenomenon referred

to as social movements. “Persuasive movements (social movements) develop when a group of individuals becomes dissatisfied with something in society” (p.342).

Furthermore, these feelings can also be indicative of overall Western culture’s influence, becoming almost a normal part of life that is accepted by most. Collective action taken by many is now, in its own way, a trend that is on the rise within many Western culture settings. This could potentially be attributed to the fact that people feel much more connected to each other through various technologies and social media; therefore feeling like a collective with shared meaning and value. Della Porta & Diani (2006) explain: “...social movements, protest actions, and, more generally, political organizations, unaligned with major political parties or trade unions have become a permanent component of Western democracies” (p.1).

This study of social movements, and the fact that these movements are so prominent in Western cultures, could very well shed some light on why so many participants were willing to join a movement or suggested someone starting one, when it pertained to the social injustice concerning child labor in undeveloped countries.

Furthermore, this raises some questions pertaining to the way other participants would answer these questions if they were prompted to answer based on their religion, or if there were other participants from more varying religions in the sample of this study.

Limitations of the Study

This study, as most all studies conducted, is full of limitations. For the sake of brevity, we will focus on just a few of these limitations.

First, due to the qualitative nature of the study, survey questions were mostly open-ended questions that required the participants to answer lengthily. As a result of this, there was a large amount of data gathered through this process. Only 5 participants were used per culture group,

10 in total. The researcher would have liked to use many more people, to broaden results a bit more. More participants would have returned more results and possibly even more clear results.

Second, both cultures that were used to gather research are considered Western cultures. Therefore, there are many similarities between both cultures which did not allow for much variation in results. Clearly, these cultures are not completely identical and still have certain aspects that make them unique. However, results would have had more variation had one culture been a typical Western culture, and one a culture like Eastern European, or even Middle Eastern. As stated in Chapter 3 of this paper, these cultures were chosen because they were simply a sample of convenience to the researcher. Both cultures were easily accessible and therefore became the main focus of the research.

A third limitation that this study presented is the fact that only female participants were chosen. This was as a result of the research being conducted as part of a Master's Thesis, and having participants of both genders would have created too lengthy of a study to complete. Overall, the female gender is also the gender most in tune with clothing and dress as a part of one's personality and culture. Therefore, the researcher decided to focus mainly on female participants, since that seemed the most appropriate for this particular study.

Lastly, a fourth limitation of this study is that the researcher did not have any financial resources to work with. Having these financial resources would mean that the sample of convenience could be made wider, since travel could become a possibility. Financial aids could also have an influence on the lengthiness of the research conducted. Since this research is conducted as part of a Master's Thesis, there is only so much time that can be spent on the study as a whole.

Conclusion

The research question posed in the Introduction chapter of this paper states: Can clothing be used as a form of communication? As per data gathered from several different participants, analyzing and discussing said data by use of both cultural and social theories, the researcher can now conclude that clothing can in fact be used as a form of communication.

There are a few things that this entire process has made clear to the researcher. One thing that has become clear is that clothing is not just something that shows on the outside, but something that creates emotions and feelings on the inside. It can show someone's true feelings, a certain mood that they might be experiencing that day, and is seen to some people as art. This can show us that clothing serves more than just the purpose of covering and protecting our bodies. It has progressed from something primal to something integral to lifestyles and religions and is always progressing further and broader.

Whether it is to purvey a mood, style or social status, clothing can be used as a mechanism to convey ones personality and even their thoughts about the society and culture around them. In short, the author would like to leave readers with one final quote in order to aptly summarize and characterize this study: "There is a magic power in clothes. They can develop personality" (Head & Donovan, 2008, p.51).

Chapter Six
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LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

February 12, 2014

Lynne Forth
IRB Approval 1766.021214: How Clothing Communicates in Different Cultures

Dear Lynne,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Please retain this letter for your records. Also, if you are conducting research as part of the requirements for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, this approval letter should be included as an appendix to your completed thesis or dissertation.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

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Appendix B – Participation Requests in English and Dutch

Dear Madam,

You are invited to be in a research study of how culture affects clothing choice and value. Before you agree to participate in this study, you will have to meet three out of four qualifications of being a participant. These qualifications are as follows: American citizen, Dutch citizen, between the ages of 18-65, and you are female. If you do not meet three out of four qualifications, you will not be able to participate in this survey. Please disregard the rest of this email, and thank you for your time.

I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Lynne Forth, Communication and Creative Arts. It is being conducted as part of a Master's Thesis. The purpose of this study is to determine what the connection is between one's culture and background, the clothing they choose to wear, and the value clothes have to them.

If you would like to participate in this study, please read the attachment to this email. This document is the consent form to this study that needs to be signed for consent. If you want to participate in an in-person interview, I will try to schedule an appointment with you. This interview process consists of answering a 25 question interview. If you are interested and available, there will be an in-person interview that will take place. This interview should take no longer than one hour. If permission is granted by you, the audio part of the interview will be recorded. You would need to bring your consent form with you at the time of the interview.

If you are not available for an interview, but you would like to participate in this study, I would like to send you a copy of the survey to complete over email. Before I send you the survey, please return the consent form to me via email. You can open the document on your computer and either print, sign and scan, or you can type your name and the date in a different color to indicate you've signed your consent.

If you would not like to participate in this study, please indicate this in a reply email.

Thank you for your time,

Lynne Forth

Best Mevrouw,

Ik zou je hierbij graag willen vragen deel te nemen in een onderzoek dat gaat over hoe kleding communiceert in verschillende culturen.

Je zou mee kunnen doen aan deze studie omdat je in de doelgroep valt waar deze studie over gaat en voldoet aan 3 van de 4 volgende voorwaarden die gesteld zijn door mijn examen commissie: Nederlandse burger, Amerikaanse burger, je bent tussen 18-65 jaar oud, en je bent een vrouw.

Dit onderzoek wordt uitgevoerd door Lynne Forth, voor mijn Master studie in Communication and Creative Arts. De doelstelling van deze studie is om er achter te komen wat het verband is tussen iemands culturele achtergrond en de kleding die zij dragen.

Als je wil deelnemen aan deze studie, lees alstublieft de bijlage. De bijlage is het toestemmingsformulier dat je eerst moet ondertekenen en dateren, en dan aan mij terugsturen (een elektronische ondertekening werkt ook; je mag het ook printen, ondertekenen en dan scannen of met je telefoon een foto maken en dan terugmailen). Dan wordt er een tweede email gestuurd die 25 vragen bevat. Ik zou je willen vragen om deze 25 vragen te beantwoorden. Deze vragen gaan allemaal over kleding en cultuur. Je mag deze vragen zo kort of lang beantwoorden als je wil. Ik vraag ook om je naam en waar je woont. Als je liever anoniem wil blijven dan mag dat ook en dan krijg je een pseudoniem.

Als je niet wil deelnemen aan deze studie, laat dat dan even weten, dan kan ik in jou plaats andere vragen om mee te doen.

Bedankt voor uw tijd,

Lynne Forth

Appendix C – Consent Forms in English and Dutch

CONSENT FORM

How Clothing Communicates in Different Cultures

Lynne Forth

Liberty University

School of Communication and Creative Arts

You are invited to be in a research study of how culture affects clothing choice and value. You were selected as a possible participant because you meet at least three of four qualifications of being a participant. These qualifications are as follows: American citizen, Dutch citizen, between the age of 18-65 and you are female. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Lynne Forth, Communication and Creative Arts.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to determine what the connection is between one's culture and background, the clothing they choose to wear, and the value clothes have to them.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

After you sign this form, you will be asked to schedule an in-person interview with me. This interview process consists of answering 25 questions. If you are not available for an interview, you will be asked to answer these same questions via email. You will be asked to answer them to the best of your ability. You will also be asked for your name and country of origin/residence. If you wish not to be named in my thesis you will be referred to by a pseudonym. If an in-person interview does take place, we will use an audio recording device during the interview with your consent. The length of the interview is determined by the length of answers to the questions, but should not last more than one hour.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

This study has minimal risk, no more than you would encounter in everyday life. .

There are no direct benefits to participating in this study, other than being able to share your opinion and observations.

How to Withdraw from the Study

If you wish to withdraw from the study, please inform me by email or by using the phone number provided. If information has already been gathered from you, it will not be used in the study, and records will be deleted.

Compensation:

You will not be given any compensation.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

Data gathered from our interview will be kept on my personal computer, which is protected by password to which only I have access.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Lynne Forth. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at (434) 509-5910. The researcher's faculty mentor is Dr. Stuart Schwartz, and you may contact him at 434-592-3712. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study. *

*If you are consenting to an in-person interview, and you consent to the use of audio recording, please initial here: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Toestemming voor het deelnemen in een onderzoek t.b.v.

Hoe Kleding Communiqueert in Verschillende Culturen

Lynne Forth

Liberty University

School of Communication and Creative Arts

Ik zou je willen vragen deel te nemen in een onderzoek dat gaat over hoe kleding communiceert in verschillende culturen. Je bent geselecteerd omdat je voldoet aan ten minste drie van de vier kwalificaties van dit onderzoek, te weten: Nederlandse burger, Amerikaanse burger, je bent tussen 18-65 jaar oud en je bent een vrouw.

Dit onderzoek wordt uitgevoerd door Lynne Forth, student op Liberty University, College of Communication and Creative Arts.

Achtergrond Informatie:

De doelstelling van deze studie is om er achter te komen wat het verband is tussen iemands culturele achtergrond en de kleding die zij dragen.

Handelingen:

Als je toestemming geeft, dan vraag ik jou om het volgende:

Nadat je dit formulier hebt getekend, moet je die eerst aan mij terugsturen (scan of foto met je telefoon en mij mailen). Dan wordt er een tweede email naar je gestuurd die 26 vragen bevat. Ik wil je vragen deze 25 vragen te beantwoorden. De vragen gaan allemaal over kleding en cultuur. Je mag deze vragen kort of lang beantwoorden.

Ik vraag ook om je naam en waar je woont. Als je liever anoniem wil blijven dan mag dat ook en dan krijg je een pseudoniem.

Risico's en Voordelen:

Deze studie heeft minimale risico's voor een deelnemer. Dat betekent als je deel neemt in de studie, dat er niets gebeurt wat er in het normale leven niet gebeurt.

Er zijn geen voordelen voor deelnemers in deze studie, behalve dat je jouw mening en opvattingen kan delen.

Terugtrekken uit de Studie

Als je wilt terugtrekken uit de studie dan mag dat. Email mij alstublieft of bel mij op het nummer op dit formulier. Als je de vragen al beantwoord hebt zal ik jouw informatie niet gebruiken in de studie en zal ik al je informatie vernietigen.

Compensatie:

Er is geen compensatie voor jou in deze studie.

Vertrouwelijkheid:

Alle gegevens die verzameld zijn tijdens deze studie worden geheim gehouden. Als ik iets uitgeef, en jij wil anoniem blijven, dan zal ik een andere naam gebruiken. Alle gegevens worden op mijn persoonlijke computer bewaard. Ik ben de enige persoon die hiervan het wachtwoord weet. Jouw gegevens worden door mij geheim gehouden.

Vrijwillige Deelneming:

Jouw deelname in dit onderzoek is vrijwillig, en je mag daarom te allen tijde je medewerking beëindigen. Als jij besluit om je medewerking te beëindigen, heeft dat geen negatief effect op jouw relatie met Liberty University, recent of in de toekomst.

Contacten en Vragen:

Als je vragen hebt, mag je altijd contact opnemen met Lynne Forth op 001-434-509-5910. (of per email: levanderstelt@liberty.edu) Haar faculteitsadviseur is Dr. Stuart Schwartz. Je kan ook contact opnemen met Dr. Schwartz op 001-434-592-3712.

Als je vragen of zorgen hebt met betrekking tot dit onderzoek en je zou graag met iemand anders spreken dan de onderzoeker, dan wordt je aangeraden om contact op te nemen met het Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24502 of stuur een email naar irb@liberty.edu.

Verklaring van Toestemming:

Ik heb deze toestemming geheel gelezen en begrijp de informatie. Eventuele vragen die ik had zijn beantwoord. Ik verklaar hierbij mijn vrijwillige deelname aan deze studie en geef hierbij toestemming aan Lynne Forth om mijn antwoorden onder mijn naam of anoniem te gebruiken.

Handtekening van deelnemer

Datum

Handtekening van onderzoeker

Datum

*Appendix D – Interview Questions in English and Dutch**Interview Questions*

1. Do you use clothing to express yourself?
2. How important is clothing to you?
3. How does wearing nice clothing affect you?
4. Do you dress for style or comfort?
5. Are you trying to state a point through the clothes you wear?
6. What do you spend on clothes per month?
7. How would you say that the saying “the clothing makes the man” pertains to you?
8. Do you think corporate clothing could be more diverse and still corporate?
9. Does a person’s clothing influence your first impression of them?
10. Would you be willing to work for a company that has a dress code?
11. Would you attend a school that had a dress code or uniform?
12. How do you shop for clothes?
13. Would you teach your children about modesty or dressing appropriately?
14. If you are religious, how does your religion or worldview affect the way you dress or value clothing?
15. Does clothing change the way you feel about yourself and others?
16. Do you think there is enough variety in clothing for a regular budget?
17. Mostly, expensive clothing last longer. Do you think it’s important that clothing lasts longer or that you go with the trends?
18. How do you think your culture affects your clothing choice and how you view clothing?
19. How would you determine the level of appropriateness that clothing has for certain places like church, school, or work?
20. What is your opinion of clothing being made in underdeveloped countries by children in poor working conditions?
21. If you found out your favorite clothing company had their items made in underdeveloped countries by children in poor working conditions, would you stop purchasing clothing from this company?
22. How important is it to you for clothing to be comfortable and have easy-care instructions.
23. What is your opinion on clothing options for people who are not average? For example, a person with a shoe size that is not carried in every store.
24. What is your opinion about fashion you see in magazines, on runways or on TV?
25. What’s the importance of accessorizing?

Vragenlijst

1. Gebruik jij kleding om jezelf te uitten?
2. Hoe belangrijk is kleding voor jou?
3. Als jij mooie kleding draagt, hoe beïnvloedt dat jouw gemoedstoestand? (blij, neerslachtig, enz)
4. Draag je kleding om een stijlpunt te maken of voor comfort?
5. Probeer je een stijlpunt te maken door de kleding die je draagt?
6. Hoeveel geld geef je ongeveer uit per maand aan kleding?
7. Geldt “kleren maken de man” voor jou?
8. Vind je dat business kleding meer variatie zou kunnen hebben en toch gezien kan worden als “business kleding”?
9. Word je bij het hebben van een eerste indruk van iemand beïnvloed door diens kleding?
10. Zou je voor een bedrijf willen werken die een strikte dress code heft?
11. Zou je naar een school gaan die een dress code heeft of zelfs uniforme kleding of uniformen vereist?
12. Hoe koop je kleding, in de winkel, online, tailor-made, op parties, postordercatalogus?
13. Leer je je kinderen normen en waarden als het gaat om kledingkeuze in het algemeen en/of voor bepaalde gelegenheden?
14. Beïnvloed je geloof of wereldovertuiging of je kledingkeuze?
15. Verandert je kledingkeuze hoe je je voelt en hoe je anderen ziet of benadert?
16. Vind je dat er genoeg keuze is in kleding voor een normaal budget?
17. Koop je duurdere kleding omdat het langer mee gaat, of goedkopere omdat je dan vaker iets kan kopen en de modetrends kan volgen?
18. Heeft je cultuur of achtergrond enig effect op je kledingkeuze en hoe je kleding ziet?
19. Wat zijn je criteria om de juiste kleding te kiezen voor bepaalde gelegenheden, zoals bijvoorbeeld een feest, kerk/religieuze plaats, school, werk, uitgaan, vrije tijd?
20. Wat vind je er van dat veel kleding gemaakt wordt door kinderen in ontwikkelingslanden? En beïnvloedt dat je keuze om wel of niet dat merk te kiezen?
21. Als je wist dat een merk hun kleding maakte in zo een fabriek als eerder gevraagd, beïnvloedt dat je keuze om wel of niet dat merk te kiezen?
22. Hoe belangrijk is het voor je dat kleding makkelijk wasbaar of reinigbaar is met eenvoudige instructies hiervoor?
23. Hoe belangrijk vind je het dat iedereen, kort, lang, dik, dun, alle gangbare mode kan kopen?
24. Wat denk je van de haute couture fashion die je ziet op de catwalk en in magazines?
25. Hoe belangrijk is het voor je dat je hele outfit bij elkaar past, dus kleding, schoenen, tas, hoed, sieraden, jas, enz?